

Acts 13:38-52

“38 Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. 40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; 41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. 43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. 44 And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. 46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. 50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts. 51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.” (Ac 13:38-52)

The account I just read is the events following the sermon that Paul preached in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia on the Sabbath day to the Jews. I preached on this a couple weeks ago. Paul made three very important points in his conclusion, which shows the nature of the gospel that he preached. 1. The promises of the Gospel were made to the Fathers in ancient times; 2. These promises are glad tidings that were fulfilled in the death and resurrection Christ, purchasing forgiveness of sins for all people who believe; 3. Solemn warnings were given to those who despised this message; this warning was from the prophet Habakkuk.

Today I would like to look at the results of this sermon, that so powerfully affected the entire city, beginning in the synagogue. I. The Great Power of the Apostles; II. The Great Evil of Envy and Strife; III. The Great Success of the Divine Purpose.

- I. The Great Power of the Apostles;
 - A. Paul preached the cross of Christ. Verses 27ff.
 - B. By Jesus of Nazareth is preached forgiveness of sins.
 - C. The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but to we who are saved it is the power of God.
 - D. Justification is promised to all those who believe.
 - E. Every time the Gospel is preached we will see the results that Jesus described in the parable of the sower.
 1. Some will simply ignore the word and the devil will snatch it away.

2. Some will believe, temporarily, like seed sown in shallow ground. Some life appears and causes temporary joy, but it is soon blasted by persecution and tribulation.
 3. Some will believe, also temporarily, but the cares and business of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke out the word so there is no fruit.
 4. But some, because the soil of the heart has been prepared of God, receive the word and bring forth fruit of different quantities, according to the purpose of God.
- F. The word preached will affect in some way everyone who hears it, because it is the word of God and comes with authority. This effect depends upon the will and purpose of God; even Christ was not received the same every time he preached, and neither were the apostles. But the cross is to be preached, no matter what the effect of it might be.
- II. The Great Evil of Envy and Strife;
- A. Ungodly desires and ambition are the great enemies of the church and the Gospel.
 - B. The Jews were jealous of the reception of the gospel by the Gentiles. After all, THEY were the people of God and the Messiah, whoever he was, belonged to THEM, not the Gentiles.
 - C. Contradiction and blasphemy were the fruit of envy and unbelief. This was a very different seed than the seed of the Gospel that Paul preached, and brought forth a very different fruit.
 - D. Beware of ambition and worldly desire, for they will spawn an evil and perverse generation
 - E. But though the envy caused the disciples to be expelled from the city, the purpose of God was not turned aside.
- III. The Great Success of the Divine Purpose.
- A. God had intended that the Gospel be preached first to the Jews, to take out a godly remnant. The elect among the Gentiles would be added to this remnant to create the church.
 - B. This was in the plan of God, according to Romans 11. There was a remnant according to the election of grace, as there had always been in the Old Testament, and the rest were blinded, to provoke Israel to jealousy, until the fullness of the election is brought in, of both Jews and Gentiles.
 - C. This began to be fulfilled by the turning of Paul to the Gentiles.
 1. These were glad tidings to the Gentiles: verse 46-48
 2. Not all the Gentiles were saved, only the election of Grace. Vs. 48. This is the beginning of the fulfillment of:
 - a. Isaiah 42: 1, 6, 7, 13.
 - b. Isaiah 49:7,8
 - c. Acts 2:38, 39 As many as would be ordained to eternal life and called.
 - D. The Jews used their influence with the chief men and the honorable women to expel Paul and Barnabus from the region.
 - E. But God’s purposes for the world were fulfilled and the Gospel would now go to the Gentiles, through the ministry of Paul. This filled them with joy. Vs. 52

Application.

1. God often has more than one purpose in the faithful ministry of the Word. Not only to call the elect, but to gather by the gospel for a time those who only have shallow faith. He has a purpose for them also. The gospel is also very divisive and confrontational, and provokes envy and strife.
2. The purposes of God include not only the gathering of the elect, but bringing to shame the enemies of Christ and exposing them for what they are: contradictors and blasphemers.
3. Not many wise and honorable are called. Paul was a complete failure with the chief men and the honorable women of Antioch of Pisidia and they threw him out of town.
4. The wise and honorable often have more than one ax to grind, more than one ambition to fulfill and the gospel often gets in the way of their ambition for power and wealth. Hence, the Gospel generated envy and strife, and exposes corruption and greed and worldly ambition.
5. We have the great promise of the Gospel: Galatians 6:
 - 6 Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.
 - 7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.
 - 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.
 - 9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.
 - 10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Amen and Amen. God bless you.