

'Acts' - Extra Teaching Points #17

Acts 13:44–14:7 (NASB)

Acts 13:44-52

*The next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁵ But **when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy** and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming. ⁴⁶ Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first; **since you repudiate it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.** ⁴⁷ "For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES, THAT YOU MAY BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH.'" ⁴⁸ **When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.** ⁴⁹ **And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region.** ⁵⁰ But the Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and **instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district.** ⁵¹ But they shook off the dust of their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium. ⁵² And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.*

Q: Why were the Jews so upset with Paul?

- They were jealous of the crowds.
 - They rejected the message because it threatened their positions of influence.

Q: When Paul tells the Jews they had judged themselves "unworthy of eternal life", what was he saying to them?

- To understand what Paul is telling them, we have to understand what Paul means by 'eternal life'.
 - Literally the term means '**life in the age**', which doesn't usually turn on any lights for us, but would have been very well understood by the Jews Paul was talking to.
 - The Jews thought of time, or world history, as two different ages:
 - **The Present Age** – defined by sin, separation from God, and corruption brought on by the curse in [Genesis 3](#).

- **The Age to Come** – defined by God setting things right, reversing the curse of [Gen. 3](#), and ending death and corruption.
 - The point is, they weren't thinking of 'eternal life' as a purely spiritual, timeless, spaceless, matterless existence.
 - They thought of 'eternal life/life in the age' as the great restoration of everything—**this world, renewed and restored** ([Acts 2:31](#); [Matt. 17:11-12](#)).
- **What Paul was telling them was, "since you've rejected this message, you are proving that you don't belong to God's coming age."**

Q: Why did "the Word of the Lord" spread through the whole region?

- That's what the gospel does—it spreads and bears fruit ([Col. 1:6](#))!
 - Jesus said His Word is seed ([Matt 13:18-23](#)).
 - A seed reproduces the life of the plant it came from when it lands on the right kind of soil.
 - The *Word* of the Lord reproduces the *Life* of the Lord when it lands on the right heart!
- When the Gentiles heard that they could be a part of God's coming age, (an age without death, corruption, or separation from God), they were overjoyed and couldn't wait to be a part of it!
 - **They also couldn't help but tell others the good news!**

Acts 14:1-7

*In Iconium they entered the synagogue of the Jews together, and spoke in such a manner that a large number of people believed, both of Jews and of Greeks. ² **But the Jews who disbelieved stirred up the minds of the Gentiles and embittered them against the brethren.** ³ Therefore they spent a long time there speaking boldly with reliance upon the Lord, who was testifying to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands. ⁴ **But the people of the city were divided; and some sided with the Jews, and some with the apostles.** ⁵ And when an attempt was made by both the Gentiles and the Jews with their rulers, to mistreat and to stone them, ⁶ they became aware of it and fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the surrounding region; ⁷ and there they continued to preach the gospel.*

Q: We see a pattern beginning to take shape, which will repeat over and over again in the book of Acts: Wherever the gospel is preached, some people are thrilled, while others are very angry! We looked at why some people were thrilled in the verses just before this. But why did other people get so angry when the gospel was preached?

- The Jews were hearing the Gospel say that the purpose of the nation of Israel – that God would use them to bless the whole world – had been accomplished. That meant that anyone could become one of God’s people, just on the basis of faith in Jesus.
 - That meant they were no longer special!
- The Gentiles were hearing the Gospel say that Jesus is the one who is really in charge.
 - That meant they belonged to Him and owed Him their total allegiance.
 - They would either surrender to Him, or be in rebellion to Him!

Q: Today, there doesn’t seem to be the same reaction where the gospel is preached. Why might that be?

- Could it be that we aren’t telling, *or living by*, the Gospel the same way they did in Acts?
 - The full message of the Gospel, which is to be lived out in our lives, is:
 - Jesus is the risen Son of God, and has all authority in Heaven and on Earth.
 - And through Jesus, God has fulfilled His ancient promises to bless the whole world by offering forgiveness of sins, and the hope of being a part of God’s new world.
-

Follow Up Assignment

Q: The Gentiles who believed the Gospel, were thrilled, and couldn’t wait to tell people about it! Is that how *you* feel about the Gospel? Why or why not?

Q: When was the last time someone got upset because you lived the Gospel, and/or told him/her the Gospel?

- Were they upset because it was the same Gospel that Paul and Barnabas lived and told people?

Q: When was the last time someone was thrilled because you lived the Gospel, and/or told him/her the Gospel?

- Were they thrilled because it was the same Gospel that Paul and Barnabas lived and told people?