

We Turn to the Gentiles

Acts 13:42—49

Paul had just preached a very Jewish sermon in the synagogue in the city of Antioch in Pisidia (modern day Turkey). This was to a crowd of Jews and Gentiles who gladly listened and wanted to hear more. Paul preached Jesus Christ, tracing Him through the Old Testament, showing to the crowd that He was the Christ, and that it was through Him that they could have forgiveness of sins. He also preached that justification did not come through the Mosaic Law, but through believing in Jesus Christ. This was a much different message than what Peter had preached in Acts 2 & 3.

A multitude of people, Jews and Gentiles, showed up the following Sabbath to listen to what Paul had to say. When almost the whole city showed up, it didn't set so well with the Jewish leaders who became jealous of the attention that Paul and Barnabas were receiving. Notice that they were not angry with him for preaching against their doctrine, but because they desired the people's attention. They did everything they could to shut down Paul by contradicting and blaspheming what he was teaching. They wanted the people to look up to them as the authorities, not some outsider with a strange message.

To the Gentiles!

Paul and Barnabas do not stand down to the leaders, but become emboldened and stand up against them by telling them that since they wanted nothing to do with the truth of God's word, they had judged themselves unworthy of eternal life. They had once again made the decision to reject the testimony of one of God's men. It is because of this that Paul announced that they were now turning to the Gentiles.

He announced the same thing in Acts 18:6 and Acts 28:28. The first announcement was done in modern-day Turkey. The second announcement was done in modern-day Greece. The third happened when Paul was in Rome. These announcements, that Paul was now going to the Gentiles, are not chronological; rather they are geographic. Paul was offering Israelites the opportunity to understand the new Gospel of Grace that he was now preaching. He does not speak to the nation of Israel, except in describing the dispensational changes that have happened with the stoning of Stephen. They now need to understand how to become saved in the Dispensation of Grace. When the leaders of Israel reject his message and cause dissension, to the point of pushing Paul out of the area, he announces that he will now concentrate his efforts on reaching the Gentiles. He is speaking about the general area of modern-day Turkey when he declares this. He is not saying that he will not preach to Israelites ever again. He is announcing that he will not make a special effort to reach his brethren with the Gospel of Grace in that particular area.

Paul does the same thing in Corinth (modern-day Greece) in Acts 18:6 while on his second major road trip. He does it one last time while he is in Rome as recorded in Acts 28:28. This geographic separation actually begins when God tells Paul to leave Jerusalem because they will not accept his testimony concerning Jesus Christ (Acts 22:17—18). It is repeated as Paul travels to different geographic areas, until the Jews have been given a chance to hear how God has changed His dealings with the nation of Israel, and individual Israelites still have an opportunity to believe the Gospel of Grace.

God had separated Paul out and gave him the ministry of reaching out to Gentiles, Kings and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15). While living and preaching in Jerusalem, God told him to separate

himself from them because of their unbelief (Acts 22:17—18). On his first major journey with Barnabas, he separated himself from the unbelieving Jews in Antioch, Pisidia. On his second major recorded journey, he separated himself from unbelieving Jews in Corinth (Acts 18:6). Finally, in Rome, Paul announced that he was separating himself from the Jews (Acts 28:28). All through Acts we see Paul engaging and interacting with the Jews. By the end of Acts, Paul is no longer giving preference to the Jews, but is still preaching to all who desire to listen.

Ordained to eternal life (verse 48)

Acts 13:48 contains what most Calvinists consider a proof text that God elects certain people unto salvation meaning that when God ordains people to become saved, they, and only they, will be able to become saved. It is actually very hard to find a commentary that says otherwise. Almost all translations use the word *appointed*, *ordained* or *chosen* to describe how God elects people for salvation.

The Greek word, *tá's-sō*, (Strong's G5021) can be defined as arrange, to put in order; or to ordain or appoint. Since Luke is the writer, it may help to see how he uses this word in his other writings.

Luke 7:8 For I also am a man set (placed) under authority, having under me soldiers...

Acts 15:2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined (arranged) that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem...

Acts 22:10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed (arranged) for thee to do

Acts 28:23 And when they had appointed (arranged) him a day, there came many to him into *his* lodging...

In each instance, the idea of arranging or putting in order comes through. In other words, it is about being or getting prepared. This particular definition fits well in Acts 13:48 making this verse to say, "...and as many as were [prepared] to eternal life believed. This actually fits the context of the this passage much better. Notice that the Jewish leaders who were trying to silence Paul were the ones who rejected what he was preaching. This implies that they would have been able to accept his preaching if they wanted to. In other words, it was not God who didn't elect or ordain them to believe as the reason they didn't accept Paul's words. Those who had been prepared to accept what was being taught were the ones who believed and became saved. Those who were saved were prepared to become saved by listening and accepting what Paul was preaching. Also notice from verse 43 that Paul was trying to persuade them. Why would he bother if only a certain few were already ordained to become saved? It was the people's own choice to accept or not accept what Paul was preaching. Those who accepted his teaching became prepared to accept it by listening and evaluating what they heard. It was their choice, and all could have chosen to follow Paul's teaching if they so desired.

I find it interesting that out of almost 60 translations and paraphrases of the Bible, only one (the Names of God Bible) uses the word *prepared*. All others seem to make this verse to say that those who believed were ordained to do so by God. This is absolutely not an endorsement of this translation, but only an observation.

For previous notes and additional mid-Acts materials please visit www.MidActsTruths.com