

## 1. The Gospel Brings Jealousy

- a. It is the crowd which incites the jealousy
  - i. Size?
  - ii. Gentiles?
- b. Grace of God incited jealousy
  - i. V43 “urging them to continue in the grace of God”
  - ii. The idea that somebody who hadn’t made all the sacrifices that I have could receive the same benefit belittles my efforts
    1. Self-righteousness
      - a. Religious
      - b. Irreligious
    2. Opposed to the type of grace which opens its doors to those unlike us
      - a. Not opposed to “grace”
      - b. Only to the “grace” which grants “late-comers” the same reward as the “early-birds”
        - i. Parable of the workers – Matt 20:1-16
        - ii. It is God’s generosity towards “bigger sinners” that bothers us.
- c. Jealously opposes the true Word of God
  - i. They “opposed”, or “spoke against” Paul in the synagogue
    1. What they originally had been interested in, they rejected when it was shown to include the Gentiles
    2. Therefore, they started opposing the message of the gospel, particularly the comprehensiveness of the gospel (anyone) and the means (through Jesus and not the Law of Moses)
  - ii. They opposed “the things which Paul had spoken”
    1. That is, they opposed not only the apostles, but their message
  - iii. They refused the Word of God and instead substituted their own version of it
    1. What I mean is that Paul had just shown that the good news of the supremacy, substitution, and salvation of Jesus is the true Jewish faith!
    2. Rather than accept this as the true Jewish faith, the Word of God, they substituted their own version of the Jewish faith, called it true Judaism, but rejected what God has said
      - a. People do that today with Christianity – having a form of godliness, but denying the power of justification through faith, the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, etc.
      - b. They call it true Christianity, but it has rejected Jesus as the exclusive means of salvation, of justification with God coming through Him (many deny the need to be justified, only strengthened), of the veracity of judgment apart from Him, the necessity of holy living as the response of true faith, etc.
      - c. There is only one Word of God, fulfilled in Jesus Christ, revealed in the Holy Scriptures of the prophets and the apostles (Eph 2:20)
      - d. To deny the authority, sufficiency, and absolute necessity of His Word is to deny Him – don’t be deceived
        - i. Many who call themselves Christians, and get many points right, are not Christians and will debate the things which Paul had spoken
  - d. Jealously slanders its opponents
    - i. They not only opposed the apostles verbally, but they “blasphemed” or “reviled” them.
    - ii. That is, they “slandered” Paul and Barnabas

1. There is a tendency in debate to attack a person's character and use this as a definitive rebuttal of their position (ad hominem)
  2. Thus, they felt that by questioning their character, i.e. slander, they could rebut the report of God's work of justification of anyone who believes in Jesus
- e. Jealousy coerces its opponents by force
- i. They didn't just want P & B out of the synagogue, but they worked politically to get them out of the "region"
    1. They rounded up the "prominent women" and the "first ones of the city"
    2. That is, they formed a coalition, an alliance, with the powerful people of the city, both women with money and men with position, to 'persecute' them
      - a. Persecute literally means "to chase or pursue"
      - b. Thus, they chased Paul and Barnabas out of the boundary of their city
  - ii. When our righteousness is threatened, and we do not trust the Lord, then we feel that we have to control our circumstances and control others via power

## 2. The Gospel Brings Judgment

- a. The apostles "speak boldly" in proclaiming the facts of what it means to reject the gospel
  - i. First, when the apostles were challenged, they *spoke out about the implications of rejecting the message*
    1. They report that it was "necessary" to proclaim the gospel to the Jews first, for they had received the Scriptures and knew the works of God through their own history
    2. They were to hear "the word of God" first, i.e. the gospel
      - a. Again, they emphasize that the gospel of Jesus is the Word from God
      - b. The implication is that to reject the message is to reject God's revelation of Truth – to reject God
  - ii. That is, the apostles didn't physically fight back, they didn't form a coalition to remove the "synagogue leaders" from office, or to boycott Jewish businesses they owned
  - iii. It is also true that they didn't bend over backwards, or alter the message, in order to garner some kind of favor or goodwill from those who rejected the message
    1. Some so-called Christians have done just this – altering the message of the superiority and exclusivity of Jesus as our means of justification in order to garner favor with those who reject it
  - iv. Christianity tolerates unbelief in others, even as it speaks of the implications, as dire as they may be, about such unbelief
  - v. Christianity does not tolerate the alteration of the gospel message and its implications within the bounds of the Church
    1. 2 Thess 3:6,14; 1 Cor 5:9; Rom 16:17; 2 Peter 2; Jude 1:12-13; 1 Tim 1:8-11; 6:3-5; Titus 1:9-11
- b. The fact that they rejected, or repudiated, the gospel is a judgment upon themselves
  - i. In other words, they didn't value the gospel, which indicates that they don't value (unworthy) eternal life
  - ii. The logic goes like this: The good news of justification with God through Jesus is the promise of eternal life. If you repudiate the good news, then you repudiate what it promises, thus counting it, and thus yourselves, unworthy of eternal life
- c. What is interesting is that Paul says that they "judged themselves unworthy"
  - i. That is, they were already judged by God, but they wouldn't want Jesus anyway.
- d. Paul and Barnabas also judged them because of their violent opposition
  - i. The turning to the Gentiles is not a judgment upon the Jews, for the Lord had already commanded them to be a light to the nations
  - ii. The judgment was when they "shook the dust off their feet"

1. This is a common Hebraic act of judgment upon a village or city who deny the prophets of the Lord
2. This is most likely an act which was meant for the leadership who rejected the gospel and indicated, with a warning of judgment from God, that they had nothing to do with such unbelief
- e. Judgment is the consequence for repudiating the gospel, both upon oneself and from the authority of God's Word
  - i. We must not shy away from announcing this truth, or we can "love" people straight into the judgment which we failed to proclaim, which is not truly loving, of course.

### 3. The Gospel Brings Joy

- a. When the Gentiles hear that the gospel is for them, too, they rejoice
  - i. Those who know that they have not kept the law hear the message that through this Jesus they can be justified before God is a joyful message
- b. They also "honor the word"
- c. Those who believed did so because they were "having been appointed to eternal life"
  - i. The cause of their faith is the "appointment" of God
    1. Perfect passive, indicating that it doesn't go away and is done by another, i.e. God
  - ii. There is never an appointment by God, i.e. election, without faith
    1. "as many as" – it is a 1:1 correspondence
    2. As many as were appointed believed
  - iii. Nor is there ever faith without an appointment by God
    1. Often, people bristle at the doctrine of God's sovereign election because we feel it unfair
    2. But this sense of unfairness is only because we make an assumption that people would believe if God did not act to overcome our unbelief
      - a. Yet, what we see here in Acts is not that Luke says anything about appointment to unbelief, but only appointment to belief
      - b. That, unbelief doesn't have to be appointed by God, because all men choose it willfully, joyfully, and affectionately
      - c. However, when we do believe, it is clear that we believe because God has appointed it – He has overcome our hearts and "born us anew" so that we see and freely believe in Jesus as our joy
      - d. Everybody gets what he or she *wants* and does so *joyfully*
    3. "Some say, 'It is unfair for God to choose some and leave others.' Now, I will ask you one question: Is there any of you here who wishes to be holy, who wishes to be regenerate, to leave off sin and walk in holiness? 'Yes, there is,' says someone. 'I do!' Then God has elected you. But another says, 'No, I don't want to be holy; I don't want to give up my lusts and my vices.' Why should you grumble, then, that God has not elected you? For if you were elected, you would not like it, according to your own confession."  
- C. H. Spurgeon
  4. There are no people whom joyfully love and treasure and believe in Jesus who are not appointed by Him to life
  5. There are also no people who joyfully reject the gospel who are appointed to eternal life
    - a. These two categories of people don't exist
    - b. Matrix of faith/election
- iv. This brief phrase is one of the clearest statements on God's sovereign election and a person's faith in all of the Bible
  1. Not everyone is affected the same way at the preaching of the gospel.

2. God must open hearts, to enable people to listen and respond with faith (see 16:14 and 18:10 for further examples).
- v. Luke is making it clear that God has *chosen*, a word used much by the Jewish people, Gentiles for the inheritance of eternal life
  1. God has already claimed these Gentiles as his own
  2. The means by which they are claimed is through faith in His Son
  3. The evidence of their faith is “rejoicing in the Word of God” and “honoring the Word of God”
- d. They were being filled with joy and the Holy Spirit
  - i. Carrying the Word of God throughout all the region
  - ii. At the end of this pericope, the result is that the self-righteous are jealous and intolerant of the gospel, the apostles are continuing to preach the gospel, and the repentant believing ones are rejoicing and glorifying the good news of Jesus Christ