

Joy and Banishment.  
Acts 13:46-52  
Sunday, December 12, 2010.

I. Jewish rejection and Gentile joy.

A. The implications of “The Christ Event” or the gospel of Christ were difficult for the Jews to accept.

1. The implications were twofold:

- All the Jewish traditions and ceremonies were now useless. They were ready to be set aside now that the reality they foreshadowed had come in Christ. This was difficult for the Jews to accept, not only because of the force of habit; these were things they had practiced, and held as important, all their lives; but more than this, these things were their boast and glory; these things made them superior to the Gentile world in their own esteem.
- A second implication was that the gospel placed the Jew (minus all his ceremonies) on an equal footing with the Gentiles. Both were equally sinful before a holy God. Both were equally in need of the mediatorial work of a Savior. Both were equally acceptable and loveable to God through the finished work of this Savior.

2. The difficulty for the Jew to accept this was twofold also:

- Being special to God; being His chosen people, was the privilege and possession of the Jew alone. Gentiles could only partake in it by becoming Jewish first. Now that all the Jewish special-ness falls away, and the Gentiles are placed on an equal footing with the Jews, jealousy is aroused in the hearts of the Jews. Being special to God as His people should belong to the Jews only, and not to the Gentiles; that is the way it had always been.
- Being put on an equal footing with the Gentiles was humbling for the Jews. All the things they boasted and gloried in were worth nothing anymore. Christ was everything, and He was everything equally for Jew and Gentile alike.

3. Before turning away from the Jews Paul points them to their own Scriptures who clearly foretold of a day when the salvation of God would come to all the earth.

- As far back as the days of Abraham God had said that in Abraham’s seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Genesis 12:3
- Here however Paul confines himself to quoting from Isaiah. His quotation is a blend of two passages in Isaiah. Isaiah 42:6 “I have set you as a light to the Gentiles,” and Isaiah 49:6 “That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.” Both are references speaking of “the servant of the Lord,” a concept in Isaiah finding its ultimate fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ who is the ultimate “Servant of the Lord.”

B. Gentile joy.

1. A genuine joy fills the hearts of the Gentiles. Vs. 48

Imagine that the Gentiles would be rendered equally precious in the eyes of God as were the Jews; and that without ever becoming Jewish; without ever

submitting themselves to the Old Covenant rituals! Gentiles acceptable to God simply because of the finished work of Christ their Savior!

The hearts of these Gentiles overflowed with joy as they entered into the haven of rest provided for them in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Application:

Can you relate to these Gentiles in Antioch? Have you ever come to that place in your life? Have you ever found your sufficiency in Jesus alone, and entered into His rest? Give your soul no rest until you have settled this matter, and take courage from God's promise that all those who seek, ask and knock for salvation at the Lord's door, will most certainly find and receive it! Luke 11:11-13.

2. They glorified the Word of the Lord. Vs. 48

The word "doxazo" from the root doxa (glory, praise, honor) means to esteem something highly; to hold it as precious and glorious.

Application:

How do these young believers put us older ones often to shame! They esteemed and held God's word as precious and glorious while we are often content to simply have it sitting on the shelf. Pray that God's word and ministry might become precious to us once again!

3. As many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. Vs. 48

Here we are looking at these Gentile's conversions through the window of God's eternal purpose, and it takes nothing away from the fact that these Gentiles just the same were converted by proceeding along the pathway of God's promises and warnings.

From our end we can not know God's decrees; so let us always endeavor to seek Him by proceeding along the path of His promises and warnings, all of which direct us to the sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. The Word of the Lord was being spread throughout the region. Vs. 49

This shows us that the Word of the Lord is not only to be "preached," which is the making of a binding proclamation of it by heralds or preachers from the King's court, but it is also to be shared informally by believers, at the kitchen table as it were. Do you ever share God's word this way?

## II. Banishment. Vs. 50

A. Jealousy and perceived humiliation caused the Jews to stir up persecution against Paul and Barnabas. The avenue they chose was the prominent women of the city, who were perhaps more easily influenced, and they may have been married to the prominent men of the city who in turn expelled Paul and Barnabas.

B. They shook the dust from their feet against them. Vs. 51.

This was a Jewish practice; whenever they returned from a Gentile area they would shake the dust of the feet and clothing so as to leave any uncleanness behind. Now these Jews were the unclean ones! This was not vengeful on the part of the Apostles; rather it was meant as a strong message giving the Jews pause to think. This gesture turned the tables on them.

C. The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

There's nothing joyous in persecution, banishment and the separation it brings. These bring sorrow, sadness and pain. But for the Christian walking with the Lord the joy does not go away; it exists right alongside the sorrow and sadness.