

Acts 077  
Israel's Purpose  
Acts 13:44-49  
May 21, 2025  
Dr. Andy Woods

Let us take our Bibles this evening and open them to Acts 13:44.

We are wrapping up our spring quarter In our verse-by-verse teaching through the Book of Acts. The Book of Acts has a three-part outline. Jesus said,

*"...and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem [Acts 1-7], and in all Judea and Samaria [Acts 8-12], and even to the remotest part of the earth [Acts 13-28]" (Acts 1:8).*

We are in the third part of the Book of Acts. We are right in the middle of the first missionary journey (Acts 13-14). Paul and Barnabas have been selected by the Holy Spirit for this journey, and Mark is on the voyage early on before he bails out.

They travel to the island of Cyprus, and have a very effective ministry there; and from the island of Cyprus they set sail for Perga. From Perga on the mainland, they make their way to Antioch. This is not the Antioch of Syria where they were launched from, but it is a place called Pisidian Antioch in southern Galatia, modern-day Turkey.

As is Paul's custom, he goes right to the synagogue first, because that is the place where he has common ground. He has Hebrew Bible, and he can use that as a springboard to talk about Jesus. The leaders of the synagogue see Paul and Barnabas sitting there, and they say, "Brothers, do you want to say something?" Paul says, "You bet I do!" He gives this incredible speech here, which I would assume is coming from Scriptures he has memorized.

He shows that the point of Hebrew Bible, that we call Old Testament, is to point towards Yeshua, Jesus Christ. That really is God's purpose for bringing the Nation of Israel into existence—to bring to the world the Messiah. What follows in Acts 13:42-52, are the results of Paul's message.

Paul's message had an impact. There were some immediate results, (Acts 13:42-52) that we studied last week, where the people in the synagogue say, "You need to come back next week and tell us more." A lot of people did not even want to wait for the next Sabbath. They started following Paul and Barnabas around. The idea is probably that a lot of them got saved.

As we concluded last week Paul tells these folks to continue in the grace of God (Acts 13:43). You cannot continue in something that you do not have. It is a beautiful teaching

on God's grace that yes, we are saved by God's grace, but then as you live for Christ, you do that on the basis of grace as well. He will unfold that more in the first of his 13 books that he is going to write, called the Book of Galatians.

It really is an amazing sermon, because this is the first teaching we have of Paul. There is a lot coming in the New Testament from Paul. This is the first we have—this serendipitous, spontaneous talk that he gave by immediate invitation in this synagogue in Pisidian Antioch.

What we are going to look at tonight are the subsequent results. What happened a week later? We pick it up there in Acts 13:44-49. First of all, notice what happened to the citizens of that city. It says,

*"The next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of the Lord."*

Word had spread over the prior seven days, and I guess grace is more popular than law. All these people from this synagogue knew was Law—obedience to the Law. Paul says, "It is not obedience to the Law that justifies; it is faith alone in Christ alone by grace alone."

You have to understand that they had never heard anything like that. So, practically the whole town assembled to hear Paul speak; but very sadly, what you start to see is the unbelief of the Jewish leadership. This is the same kind of Jewish leadership that rejected Jesus as their king.

When you go down to Acts 13:43, you see immediate opposition. By the way, you cannot be in ministry unless you are ready for opposition. I wish it was not that way, but that is just how it is. The moment you trust Christ as your Savior, you get three enemies that you did not have before: the world, the flesh, and the devil. You might be a very nice person and not want any enemies, but it does not work that way. Now you have three entities that are opposing you.

The more you make progress in Christ, the more you experience opposition. When I first came to Christ, I would start complaining to my mentor, "This happened to me, this happened to me, this happened to me." He would always say the same thing. I really did not like it when I heard it, but it was true. He said, as he was talking to me over the phone, "I am grinning from ear to ear. That is what he told me all the time.

What he meant by that was, "You are exactly where God wants you. That is how it is as a disciple of Christ." If you are not making someone mad, you are probably not doing it right. What I mean by making people mad is not being a jerk, but just living for Jesus. People will hate it because they hate God. We have to learn not to take things personally.

It reminds me of what God said to Samuel when they rejected God's choice for a king. If I remember the story correctly, Samuel was down on that, but God said to Samuel, "They are not rejecting you, Samuel. They are rejecting me." Jesus said, "They hated Me long before they hated you." It is really not you they hate; it is Jesus through you.

Here comes the opposition. Later, Paul is going to say,

*"Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted"*  
(2 Timothy 3:12).

We have these little booklets today about the promises of God. Do you guys read those little booklets? They always have nice promises. I find that 2 Timothy 3:12 is hardly ever in one of those booklets, even though that is a promise from God—"*...all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*"

Acts 13:45 says,

*"But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken of by Paul, and were blaspheming."*

The success and effectiveness of his ministry brought jealousy. When I met my wife, we were at a church teaching a pretty large singles ministry, that was at that time very fruitful and very effective. We came back from our honeymoon and they were like, "Your services are no longer needed here. See you later." We believe a lot of that was jealousy on the part of the leadership, because our ministry was bearing a lot of fruit and theirs really was not.

You have to understand that the more effective you become, the more people will be jealous of that and write nasty emails and say nasty things on your YouTube channel and do whole videos against you—people you have not even met. These are things that have happened to me. I am not holding myself out as some martyr. I am just saying this is the normal, natural, outgoing of things. That is what my mentor meant when he said, "I am grinning from ear to ear." I quit telling him my problems because I did not want to hear that; but sometimes you need to hear things that you do not like.

Acts 13:45 says.

*"But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken of by Paul, and were blaspheming."*

We have tried to make the point that Paul is replicating Peter in this book. Luke is therefore using this to teach Theophilus, who was most likely reached through the influence of Paul, "You do not have to second-guess your salvation because it came to you through Paul rather than Peter; because Paul is just as legitimate as Peter is."

From Peter to Paul				
Reference	Center	Person	Place	Outreach
Acts 1–12	Jerusalem	Peter	Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria	Jewish
Acts 13–28	Antioch	Paul	Uttermost parts	Gentiles

I have been showing you this chart. I think this comes from Talk Thru the Bible—this is not my original chart, and I should have put a footnote there or something. You will notice in the left hand column, the third one down, that Peter was very successful in his ministry (Acts 5:17). That caused jealousy on the part of the unbelieving Jews. As you move to the right, the third one down. The exact same thing is now happening to Paul. This is one of many parallels that Luke uses to show that Paul, even though he was not one of the original Twelve and was not even converted until after the Ascension of Christ, is just as legitimate as Peter.

You will notice what these Jews are doing—they are not only jealous, but now they are contradicting the things spoken of by Paul. This most likely is the beginning of what we would call non-Messianic Judaism. Because Paul, as is his custom, uses Hebrew Bible, no doubt he pointed to Isaiah 53 and many passages like that to show who Jesus was—that He is a long awaited Messiah. What you see now is the Jews start to twist the Scripture to make it sound like Jesus is not in Hebrew Bible at all.

One of the guys in history that did this is a Jewish authority named Rashi. This would take us to about a couple centuries after the time of Christ, where the early Christians would do what Paul did—they are using Old Testament to point towards Jesus, some obvious Old Testament fulfillment in Jesus. Rashi came along and gave them interpretations that had nothing to do with Jesus. Isaiah 53, he said, has nothing to do with Jesus. That really has to do with the Nation of Israel as a whole. It does not point to an individual Messiah, even though how do you pierce a nation? That is hard to do. It seems like it is talking about a person.

I was in law school, and I was around a lot of Jewish people (not to be overly stereotypical, but a ton of Jewish people go into the legal profession—a ton of Jewish professors). At law school, during open discussion conversation with students, I would point Jewish students to Jesus Christ from Isaiah 53. I could see in their eyes they were

really nervous about that, and what would happen is they would run off to their synagogue, their rabbi, and he would say to them, "Isaiah 53 is not about Jesus, it is about the Jewish nation." He would give this Rashi interpretation. Then they would come back to me and give me that Rashi sort of view.

You will find this in Jewish evangelism, when they are not open to the truth, they are going to go to some authority that knows how to explain away these passages by going back to Rashi, second century AD. This is what makes the work of Dr. Michael Rydelnik important, if you are familiar with him, out of Moody Bible Institute. He has a dictionary of Messianic prophecy. I actually had a chance to contribute an article or two to that. He has a book called "Messianic Hope" where he explains all this.

One of the sad things that is happening in Old Testament studies is that the Old Testament scholars in evangelical schools, including the one that I went to, are going more towards a rabbinical interpretation rather than a Messianic interpretation. A lot of these interpretations that they are coming up with today have more in common with rabbinical authorities than with what the text actually says.

This is the sort of thing that Paul is facing here. They are coming back and they are contradicting what he said in that beautiful speech in the synagogue, twisting the Bible around, making it sound like the Old Testament Hebrew Bible has nothing to do with Jesus. of course, when they do that, they are "blaspheming" it says. It is blasphemy to do that, to deny the obvious.

The whole Old Testament points towards Jesus. You do not have to be the sharpest knife in the drawer to see that. If I can see it, you can see it. The very first Messianic prophecy in the whole Bible is Genesis 3:15, that there is coming one, from the seed of the woman, who is going to crush the serpent's head. The rabbis and some evangelical scholars come along and say that Genesis 3:15 has nothing to do with Jesus; it is talking about the female's fear of snakes. That is honestly what they say; and it is just tragic. That is not what that verse is talking about, but that is a rabbinical Rashi type of interpretation.

What is interesting is that Judaism held to all these Messianic interpretations that we hold to, until the Christians became very effective in using those Messianic interpretations to point to Jesus. Then the authorities and unbelieving Judaism went in and said, "Those do not have anything to do with Jesus at all, or a Messiah at all." Everybody understood those as Messianic until people started to use them to point towards Jesus Christ. I think when it says, *"they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming"* this is the beginning of that non-Messianic interpretation.

As you go down to Acts 13:46-47, the apostles make a decision in light of this unbelief. It says,

*"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'" (Acts 13:46).*

Paul, in the Book of Romans (which was yet to be written from our standpoint here in Acts 13), is going to write:

*"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16).*

Paul's habit, no matter where he goes, is to go to the synagogue first and to acknowledge that Israel is the chosen nation, and to give the gospel to the Jewish people in that particular city (except in Philippi where they did not have a synagogue). If there is a synagogue in the Book of Acts, that is on Paul's stop, that is where he goes first. Because they are the chosen people, he is giving them the first opportunity to receive the gospel.

When they reject it, he shakes the dust off his feet. You are going to see that happening later on in this chapter (Acts 13:51), and then he moves on to the Gentiles. He typically reaps a great harvest amongst the Gentiles. What he is announcing here is something regional, not permanent. When he says, "I gave you the first chance and you would not receive it, I am now turning to the Gentiles." He is making that statement in the area where he is, the region he is. It is not some permanent statement, because in the next town that he goes to, he does the exact same thing.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum, who is obviously a pretty important voice on all this being a Hebrew Christian himself, writes in his Acts commentary:

"Chapter 13 shows the pattern of evangelizing activity. The apostles proclaimed the gospel to the Jews first, and when that proclamation was rejected, only then did they turn to the Gentiles. This is not a once-and-for-all turning to the Gentiles in general, as some seem to think. As the Book of Acts continues, and as the apostles entered the next city, they again went to the Jews first. So, the turning away from the Jews in Antioch Pisidia was only a local, regional situation. The Jewish people there rejected the gospel, so Paul and Barnabas turned to the Gentiles. In a new locality, they would once again adopt the same procedure of going to the Jews first, because that mandate was never rescinded."<sup>1</sup>

I am of the view that that is the mandate we should follow today, because it is specified for us in an epistle that Paul wrote called the Book of Romans (Romans 1:16). Why not

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<sup>1</sup> Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Acts*, 301.

go to the Gentiles? Because God's purpose was always to reach the Gentiles through Israel. That is why Paul quotes Isaiah 42:8 in Acts 13:47. He says this,

*"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.""*

"You Jewish authorities should not be upset at the fact that I am now turning to the Gentiles, since you have rejected the gospel. that should not bother you at all." Because God's whole purpose in raising up the Nation of Israel was to be a blessing to the Gentiles. In fact, that is the whole point of the Book of Acts:

*"and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)*

At the end of the day, God is a missionary. He wants the gospel to go everywhere. The reason He raised up Israel was to be a blessing to the rest of the world. That is what Israel forgot. Israel thought that her blessings were for Israel. That is why you have scenarios in the Bible, like the prophet Jonah, where God says to Jonah, "Go, preach My grace to the Ninevites," a key Gentile city in Jonah's day. Jonah in the Spanish translation says, "No way, Jose! No way am I going to preach the gospel to those people."

He was probably justified in some of the prejudice that he had towards the Gentiles in Assyria when he understood how wicked the Assyrians were. The crucifixion that we talk about all the time? It Was not Romans that came up with that. It was the Assyrians. The Romans just reached back in history and said, "What a swell idea to keep the rebel-rousers in line. We will publicly execute our criminals and we will have less criminals." We give them credit for inventing the crucifixion, but it was the Assyrians that invented it.

The Assyrians practiced something that was so wicked, I do not even know if I could describe it accurately here in a family-friendly environment. It was grotesque what they did to people. One of the things they practiced was flaying where they peeled the skin of people off and left people to die on metal rods that went up through their backside, right through their body.

These are all known practices that the Assyrians practiced, and God said, "Give them the gospel, give them grace." Jonah said, "No way." So, Jonah was put in time out in the belly of a fish till he had an attitude adjustment. Even then, at the end of the book, he was sulking that they all repented. In fact, in Jonah 4, he basically set up what was almost like a lawn chair, to watch a firework display. That is what was going on in Jonah 4.

Lawn chair is a loose translation, but it was as if he wanted to see these people get nuked. "Sodom and Gomorrah, baby. Bring it." When God showed grace to these

people who all repented, Jonah was a sourpuss—he was the sulking prophet. In Jonah 1, he was the rebellious prophet; in Jonah 2, he was the praying prophet; in Jonah 3, he was the preaching prophet; and in Jonah 4, he was the pouting prophet.

Jonah is the only prophet that we have in the Old Testament that was successful in terms of creating a massive repentance, and he was very upset about his success. The name Jonah, when you track it down, means "silly." You are supposed to read the Book of Jonah and just start laughing, because what he is doing is ridiculous. He lost sight of Israel's missionary purpose. He became such a patriot that he forgot that the point of Israel is to be a blessing to the world.

That is why Paul says, "You Jews should not be upset that these Gentiles are now getting saved, because after all, that was your purpose from day one—to bless the Gentiles." That is why he is quoting Isaiah 42:6 there.

8 New Promises Genesis 12:1-3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Land (Gen. 12:1b)</li><li>• Great nation (Gen. 12:2a)</li><li>• Personal blessing (Gen. 12:2b)</li><li>• Great name (Gen. 12:2c)</li><li>• Blessing to others (Gen. 12:2d)</li><li>• Blessing to blessers (Gen. 12:3a)</li><li>• Cursing to cursers (Gen. 12:3b)</li><li>• <b><u>Blessing to the world (Gen. 12:3c)</u></b></li></ul>

He could have quoted a lot more; he could have quoted Genesis 12:1-3, where God formed Israel and gave Israel eight promises. One of those promises is why Israel exists. One of those purposes is to be a blessing to the world. In Genesis 12:3 God said to Abraham, the beginning of what would become the Nation of Israel,

*"...and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."* (Genesis 12:3)

Paul could have quoted Isaiah 49:6, where God says of Israel,

*"I will also make You a light to the nations  
So that My salvation might reach to the end of the earth."*

Israel's blessings were never for Israel completely, they were always supposed to have this spillover effect to the rest of the world. That is why Jonah is silly. That is what his name means, "silly," because he lost sight of that purpose.

It is like a church where they put the whole focus on their building or something, and they forget that the purpose of the building is to reach the neighborhood. That is why we have churches. We are not here just for us; we are here to be a blessing to the world.



When we lose sight of that, we lose sight of our missionary calling. We just look silly, which is what Jonah is supposed to teach us all.

"You, Jews do not be bent out of shape now that the gospel is going to the Gentiles. That was God's purpose from the beginning." They rejected it, so Paul said, "I am now going to go share this with the Gentiles." He reaps this huge harvest, and this is pretty much the pattern in every single town Paul goes into.

Then you come to Acts 13:48-49, which are the results of the apostles' decision. What happened? Salvation to the Gentiles (Acts 13:48).

*"When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord..."*

You might remember back in Acts 11:18, the church at Jerusalem church that heard about the conversion of Cornelius. What was their reaction when they heard these things about Cornelius, the first full-fledged Gentile conversion in the Church Age?

*"When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God..."*

That is what these Gentiles are doing as they are learning the truth of the gospel, something that did not get across to the Jewish nation. The Gentiles just start glorifying the Lord. Compare that to Israel. They were not glorifying God at this stage in their history. Remember Herod in Acts 12:22-23, who was a puppet of Rome, but he was trying to please the Jews?

*"The people kept crying out, 'The voice of a god and not of a man!' And immediately the angel of the Lord struck him down because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died." (Acts 12:22-23)*

The church, in Acts 11:18, at the news of Cornelius' conversion, glorified God. The Gentiles, because they are hearing for the first time the pure gospel of grace, are rejoicing and glorifying God. What is the Nation of Israel doing in between those two chapters as Herod is trying to please them? They are not giving God the glory.

If you look at the glory of God in Acts 11, 12, and 13, and how each chapter treats the glory of God, you start to see why God is now setting aside Israel for a season and raising up the predominantly Gentile church. Israel would not glorify God; the church would glorify God. This becomes an apologetic, or reasoning, as to why God's hand is now on the church for the last 2,000 years, rather than on the Nation of Israel. It is not to say there is not a future for Israel, because there is one in the End Times; but that time is yet future.

Then you come to the rest of Acts 13:48. Are you ready for this? Even if you are not, here it comes. This is Calvinism's key verse:

*"When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many had been appointed to eternal life, believed." (Acts 13:48)*

The Calvinists, as I have covered in our Calvinism series in Sunday School, take this to mean that the reason these people got saved is because God elected them from the foundations of the earth to get saved, and He forced them to believe. That is such a prevalent belief. It pains me to even bring this up. Even Arnold Fruchtenbaum, the guy I quote more than anybody else, goes down this road with Acts 13:48. He says,

"Verses 48-49 record the decision to turn to the Gentiles produced two results. The first result was the salvation of the Gentiles (v. 48). Luke wrote: 'As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.' According to The Bible Knowledge Commentary"<sup>2</sup>—

Who wrote the Acts section of The Bible Knowledge Commentary? Another one of my heroes, Dr. Stanley Toussaint. Who was Dr. Stanley Toussaint's mentor? It was a guy at Dallas Seminary named S. Louis Johnson, a Greek scholar who was a five-point Calvinist. What you are getting here is straight Calvinism. When Louis Johnson moved to five-point Calvinism at Dallas Seminary, he said to the authorities of the school, "I cannot teach here anymore because my beliefs go against the doctrinal statement." Louis Johnson was a man of integrity. Dr. Toussaint is a man of integrity as well, and his form of Calvinism was not as aggressive as Louis Johnson's.

I bring that up because a lot of people, when they teach at a school and their beliefs go against the doctrinal statement, just start to play subterfuge. They start to rewrite the doctrinal statement or say they cannot understand the doctrinal statement, coming up with all these excuses to stay at a school when they are trying to change the school from within. That agitates me to no end.

I believe if you are going to teach at a school or be at a church and your beliefs start to go against what that church has historically stood for, you ought to just leave and go to another church. That is what I think, but that is not what people do today. They try to be change agents from the inside.

I point this out with S. Louis Johnson because he was a man of integrity, even though I did not agree with him on this issue. We need more people like that. We do not need more deception and underhandedness.

Here comes Louis Johnson through Toussaint, and to Arnold Fruchtenbaum; and watch how they handle Acts 13:48. The influence of Calvinism is all over what they are saying here.

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<sup>2</sup> Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Acts*, 300.

"Verses 48-49 record that the decision to turn to the Gentiles produced two results. The first result was the salvation of the Gentiles (v. 48). Luke wrote: 'As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.' According to The Bible Knowledge Commentary, the Greek term for 'ordained,' 'tetagmenoi,' "comes from the verb 'tasso,' a military word meaning 'to arrange' or 'to assign.' Luke used it here to show that God's elective decree included the Gentiles." Those who were appointed to eternal life believed. This is a clear statement of God's sovereignty and the doctrine of election and predestination: Those whom God ordained to eternal life were the ones who believed; those who believed were the ones who were appointed to believe; only those who were appointed believed. As a result, many of the Gentiles were saved."<sup>3</sup>

That is a Calvinistic interpretation. Dr. Toussaint has wonderful things in the Book of Acts, as does Arnold Fruchtenbaum, but here come things into interpretation that are heavily Calvinistic. In other words, God in ancient corridors of time appointed who was going to be saved and who was going to go to hell. The people that believed were the ones that God appointed.

Lawrence Vance says,

"Every Calvinist, no matter what else he believes, uses this verse [Acts 13:48] to prove Unconditional election. Every Calvinist claims that on the basis of this verse, every person who has ever been saved (Old or New Testament) or ever will be saved (Church age or Tribulation or Millennium) was 'ordained to life' before the foundation of the world by a sovereign, eternal decree."<sup>4</sup>

In our Calvinism series, I gave you some problems with their understanding of this, and I will just recycle through those if I could. I have about six or so things to say. Number one, one verse cannot be used to undo hundreds of others, because the Bible is very clear that God wants all men to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4).

Second Peter 3:9 says,

*"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for anyone to perish, but for all to come to repentance."*

If you play this game of God picking this person and assigning this other person—picking this person for life, assigning the other person unto damnation—then you have to throw away 2 Peter 3:9 and 1 Timothy 2:4. That shows me that maybe I am not

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Laurence M. Vance, The Other Side of Calvinism, rev. ed. (Pensacola, FL: Vance Publications, 1999); citing Calvin, Institutes, 345..

interpreting Acts 13:48 correctly when it goes against these two passages and hundreds of others.

Number two, sometimes the Greek word for "appointed" (in the NASB95) or "ordained" (in the King James translation), is translated "wanted" or "disposed" in other English translations. If those other English translations are right, then it softens the Calvinistic influence here.

Number three, the verb "tasso" for "appointed" is used (rather than "proorizo"). "Tasso" never refers to predestination unto salvation in any of its other New Testament usages. It is used of a lot of different subjects, but it is not used the way the Calvinists understand Acts 13:48. If the Calvinists are right with "tasso" here ("appointed"), then they have something going on here that is completely unique in comparison to how that verb is used everywhere else in the New Testament.

Number four, is about the corrupted, Roman Catholic Latin Vulgate, which is the Latin translation from the Old Testament. It is a translation created by Jerome in the fourth century. Martin Luther, the great church reformer who translated the Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament into German, did not trust the Latin Vulgate translation because he thought it was a Roman Catholic translation. Where do we get this idea that "tasso" means "preordained?" From the very Latin Vulgate that Luther mistrusted.

I have actually been to Wittenberg, Germany, and taken a tour where Luther did his translation work; and I asked the guide, who knows this issue backwards and forwards, "When Luther did his translation work—Old Testament and New Testament into German—did he rely upon Jerome's fourth-century Latin Vulgate to do that? Or did he go directly back to the Hebrew and Greek to do the translation?"

The guide was very clear that Luther did no translation work from the Latin Vulgate, because he considered it a corrupted Roman Catholic translation. Where does this idea come from that "tasso" equals "preordained?" From the Latin Vulgate, the very translation that Luther was suspect of.

Number five, the context of the Book of Acts pertains to the predisposition of the Gentiles rather than the Jews, towards the gospel. That is what is being said here. It says,

*"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." (Acts 13:48)*

It is not talking about God marking out one person for salvation and another person for hell before the foundations of the earth. What it is dealing with is the general wanting or disposing of the fact that the Jews are hardening themselves to the gospel, and the

Gentiles are becoming open to the gospel. That is what it is dealing with, which fits the whole context of the Book of Acts.

Number six (this is very important), there is no textual or exegetical evidence that the divine appointing ("tasso") caused the believing ("pisteuo"). The Calvinistic interpretation is: God appointed, which caused some to believe.

Dennis Rokser, in an email to Andy Woods, originally written by Thomas Stiegel, says,

"[It is incorrect to say that]...the Greek verb for 'believe' ('episteusan') is the result of the perfect passive participle 'appointed' ('tetagmenoi'). Grammatically, all that the aorist tense verb of 'believe' shows when it is combined with the periphrastic construction of 'had been appointed' is that the appointing on God's part preceded the believing on man's part. NOTE: the grammar does not prove that one is the result of the other! In order to show that the act of believing was the result of or caused by God's prior appointing, there would need to be a causal conjunction in the Greek text after 'believed' ('episteusan'), so that the verse would say: 'and believed ['episteusan'], because ['hoti,' 'hina,' 'hos,' 'hoste'] they had been appointed to life eternal.'"

What is the point that is being made here? The point is: the Calvinists say God appointed and therefore that caused belief. Except the word "cause" is not in the passage. What they have done is they have read their theology right into the passage, appointing causes belief; but the word "because" or "cause" is not even in there. That is a pretty big omission.

Stiegall continues,

"The conjunctions ['hoti,' 'hina,' 'hos,' 'hoste,'] are all used at times in Greek (most often 'hoti') to show purpose, result, or cause. But Acts 13:48 contains none of these! Calvinists assume that God foreordains certain people (those unconditionally elected to salvation) to receive the gift of faith. If that were the case, then the verse should say, 'and as many as were appointed to believe received life eternal.'"

Again, the verse does not exactly say, you know what it is they are talking about. There are no verses in the Bible that say we are preordained to believe. Acts 13:48 simply does not say why the Galatians (because this occurred in southern Galatia) were appointed to life. However, since the context of the passage involves human responsibility, it is consistent with Scripture elsewhere that we should interpret Acts 13:48 to mean that God's ordaining must have been factored in their faith, which He foresaw. That is a completely different interpretation.

What he is saying here is that God knew that these people would trust Him. He looked down through the corridors of time (because He is omniscient) and saw that these

people would trust Him. He appointed or picked winners. That is totally different than saying God ordained someone to believe and caused their faith. God picked them because He saw what they were going to do. That is called the prescience view.

Number seven, contrary to many English translations, the word order of Acts 13:48 in the Greek text places the verb "believed" before the Greek verb preordained "appointed." How does it read in your English translation? Here is how it reads in the NASB95:

*"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." (Acts 13:48)*

What comes first in the English translation—appointed or believed? What do you guys think? Appointed is first; believed is second. Now, when you read that in English and appointed occurs first, you would think the appointing is more important than the believing, would you not?

What if I were to tell you that when you read it in Greek, the order is exactly reversed? Here is the Greek word for "believed" ("pisteuo"); it is first. Here is the Greek word for "appointed" ("tetagmenoi"); it is second. That is the exact opposite of what the English translation says when it puts appointed first and believed second. This is why everybody is confused about this. We are relying upon English translations that did not do a very good job here, in my opinion. That is something that has to be factored in as well.

Then number eight (this comes from Ron Merryman),

"The verb 'believed' (aorist tense, active voice, indicative mood) stands first in the word order in the Greek text, thus it is emphasized."<sup>5</sup>

If you are reading this in English, you would think the appointed is the most important thing; but if you are reading it in Greek, you would think believed is the most important thing because believed occurs before appointed.

"The statement literally is, 'And they believed, as many as were ordained unto eternal life' (a perfect tense periphrastic in Greek). They did not believe because they were ordained unto life."<sup>6</sup>

To make this say that God picks someone and it causes them to believe is to take the word order and switch it around; and is to put the word because in there, which does not exist. The Greek language has words for "because," but it is not in the Greek text. Yet, this is the Calvinist's favorite verse to prove predestination and election and all of this kind of stuff.

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<sup>5</sup> Ron Merryman, "Election & Acts 13:48," Grace Family Journal, September-October 2000.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Here is the clincher. Number eight, in Acts 13:48, "believed" is in the active voice. The active voice is something you do; the passive voice is something that is done to you. If this was saying God picked and caused belief, then belief would be in the passive voice; but it is not in the passive voice, it is in the active voice.

Ron Merryman says this:

"Simply, they believe; that is, they actively (active voice) expressed positive volition toward the Gospel.. 'Believed' or 'believe' is consistently active in voice in its over 100 uses in the New Testament relative to trust in Christ and Him alone. That means the person who believes is actively, not passively, trusting in the Gospel. They are exercising their faith"<sup>7</sup>—

When you get saved, God's not going to believe for you. He is going to bring you to the point of decision via conviction, but He is not going to override volition. It is your call. If you are one of those that does trust in Christ, God saw that happening before the foundation of the earth and He picked you.

"They are exercising their faith, not someone else's and not a faith given to them... Contrasted to the ones that believed in the context are those that did not. We are told that 'they spoke against the things that were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming' (v. 45). Again, the verbal voice is active... They were actively expressing their negative volition to the Gospel, so that Paul follows their blasphemies with the statement '...you put it (the word of God expressed in the Gospel he had just spoken) from you and you judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life' (v. 46). These verbs are also in the active voice. They could not blame their negativeness on Satan or any other. Paul did not say that God declares these unbelieving Jews unworthy of eternal life: he says that they declared themselves unworthy of it!"<sup>8</sup>

When Paul is talking here to these unbelieving Jews, he is saying, "You guys do not believe and you have no one to blame but you. It is your fault (active voice)."

Then why would he turn around and say, "Those of you that believed did not have any volition in the matter?" That is a disharmony in the passage where you are treating unbelievers (active voice) differently than believers (active voice). Essentially what this is saying is the Gentiles had a predisposition to believe; the Jews did not. It was all through their own volition.

God looked down through the corridors of time and knew exactly what was going to happen. That is why He appointed the Gentiles here and not the Jews. It is not saying

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<sup>7</sup> Ron Merryman, "Election & Acts 13:48," Grace Family Journal, September-October 2000.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

He appointed them and therefore caused unbelief or caused faith; the passage is not even saying that.

That is a great way to understand foreknowledge ("proginosko"). Romans 8:29-30 says,

*"For those whom God foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified."*

Calvinism starts the whole passage with predestined when the passage does not start with predestined, it starts with foreknowledge. Who did God predestine? Those that He knew would pick Him. That is why foreknowledge is first. I am telling you, you want to talk about fighting words? They will get you in the back alley, as Biden said, "behind the gym," and just beat the daylights out of you for teaching this way publicly.

The truth of the matter is: "proginosko" can mean "knowledge beforehand." That is how it is used in 2 Peter 3:17.

*"You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand ['proginosko'], be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness."*

"Proginosko," knowing something ahead of time, fits the meaning of the word. That is what foreknowledge means in Romans 8:29-30. Who does God predestine? Who does God appoint? He appoints those whom He knows are going to trust in Him. If you have trusted in Christ, God has appointed you because He knew you would trust in Christ. "What if I do not trust Christ?" God saw that, too. He did not appoint you.

It is not a situation where God appoints and then forces someone to believe, as Calvinism teaches. Yet, this is their main verse that they use. I am trying to show you that the verse does not say what they are saying. I do not like to use the word hijacked these days, but basically they have a preexisting theology that has completely hijacked this verse. In other words: the thought, the theology has gobbled up the verse rather than using the verse to correct a theology. It is completely backwards.

Acts 13:49, the results of the apostles' decision. Gentiles start getting saved like crazy, because through volition, they did not do what Israel did: they actively received the truth and God, in eternity, knew that would happen and He selected them.

The second result is the spread of the gospel. It says,

*"And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region."*  
(Acts 13:49)



This is one of our great progress reports. Remember that the point of the Book of Acts is to present Theophilus with an orderly account of the birth and growth of the church, so as to affirm him and what he has believed. The birth and growth of the church, therefore, is documented throughout the Book of Acts numerically, geographically, and ethnically.

What you are seeing is a numerical growth in the church, and a geographical growth in the church, because there is an emphasis here on the fact that this message of grace spread through the whole region (southern Galatia), that is untouched territory. They had never heard anything like this before. All they knew from synagogue was law keeping.

Luke is also documenting the progress of the church ethnically, how it started off as an offshoot of Judaism, but it ended up as an institution dominated by Gentiles, Theophilus being one. "Because this is how God works, Theophilus, you do not have to second-guess your Christianity just because you are not Jewish." The church is changing. It is progressing in every way it can change, right here.

In fact, when we get back from our break, we are going to discover that there are so many Gentiles now that are saved, the question for the church leadership is: What are we going to do with all these people? Do we put them under the Law of Moses to join the church? The church has to have a big powwow called the Second Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 to figure that one out. They have to think this through, because look at what is happening: the Jews are rejecting it, and it is the Gentiles that are getting saved like crazy. This becomes one of our great progress reports there in Acts 13:49.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum says,

"In verse 49, the second result was the advancement of the gospel"<sup>9</sup>—

See how I can agree with Arnold on this quote, but disagree with him on another? Because we are big kids now; we do not find one thing we disagree with and throw everything the man says out. We do not do that because we are maturing; we can chew up the meat and spit out the bones, which is what you should do for everybody. You should do that for me, too.

"In verse 49, the second result was the advancement of the gospel. The Greek word for 'was spread,' 'diephereto,' means 'to carry in different directions.' The strategic location of Antioch of Pisidia would help the spread of the gospel 'throughout all the region.'"<sup>10</sup>

That is why Paul went there: it was strategically located and he knew if it bore fruit there, it would go other places. Paul is the master theologian, master pastor, and he is

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<sup>9</sup> Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Acts*, 300.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

the master missiologist. If you want to understand missions, look at Paul, what he does in the Book of Acts.

"The ministry grew in spite of determined opposition."<sup>11</sup>

Just because people are opposing it does not stop the spread of the gospel. With all of that said, we are going to pick it up after our summer break in Acts 13:50.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.