

BRIEFLY CORRECTING ERRANT VIEWS ON DIVINE ELECTION

III. Biblically Explaining Acts 13:48

I. Introduction

- A. Many believers struggle to understand and/or to accept the teachings they hear or read about divine election.
- B. Actually, much error exists on the doctrine, so it needs to be explained in a brief but thorough, Biblical way.
- C. We thus offer a seven-lesson series on election, and in this third lesson, we Biblically explain Acts 13:48:

II. Biblically Explaining Acts 13:48.

- A. Acts 13:48 KJV states that "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed," a phrase Calvinists often use as a proof text to claim that God chose who would believe in Christ to be justified. However, we before learned that this view makes faith logically unnecessary, what in turn conflicts with the inerrancy of the Bible.
- B. Thus, for the correct interpretation that aligns with the Bible's inerrancy, we Biblically explain Acts 13:48:
 1. The verb "were ordained" translates the Greek **perfect participle** *tetagmenoi* from the verb *tasso*, meaning "appoint, determine," and this **participle** is *interpreted* by *all* the *major versions* to be in the **passive voice** (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 470; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 813)
 2. Yet, the **perfect passive** and **perfect middle participles** are *spelled the same* (J. G. Machan, N. T. Grk. for Beg., 1951, p. 186), and *tetagmenoi* in the **middle** voice makes the phrase read, "as many as marshaled themselves on the side of eternal life believed," R. B. Rackham, The Acts of the Apostles, 1901, p. 221.
 3. We must view the *context* to discern the **voice** of *tetagmenoi*, and the *context* supports the **middle** voice:
 - a. Some people were so interested in Paul's preaching the first Sabbath that they caused nearly the whole town to show up to hear him the next Sabbath. (Acts 13:39-44) Many of them then "marshalled themselves" on the side of eternal life, what easily supports interpreting *tetagmenoi* in the **middle** voice.
 - b. Also, Acts 13:48 **begins** Luke's *contrast* of the **Jews' rejection** of the Gospel with the **Gentiles' reception** of it (Ryrie St. Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Acts 13:48). Thus, Paul's use of *apothéo* ("reject") in the **middle** voice shows the Jews' rejection of the truth and *strepho* ("turn") in the **middle** voice describes Paul and Barnabas turning from rejecting Jews to receptive Gentiles, Acts 13:46. (Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., The An. Grk. Lex., p. 49, 470, 378, 110) *Tetagmenoi* is then **best** interpreted in the **middle** voice to depict the **Gentiles' reception** of the truth *in contrast to* the **Jews' rejection** (*apothéo* in the **middle** voice) of it!
 - c. In addition, the key term "eternal life" in Acts 13:46 and 48 appears *only* in these *two verses* in **all** of **Acts**. (Moult. & Geden, A Conc. to the Grk. Test., 1974, p. 422-423) If Acts 13:48 starts to contrast Jewish and Gentile responses to the Gospel and *tetagmenoi* is linked to **one** "eternal life" term, *tetagmenoi* as used of those who accept the Gospel is best interpreted in the **middle** voice to parallel the **middle** voice of *apothéo* that shows the Jews' rejection of the truth and which verb is also linked to the **other** "eternal life" term.
 - d. Besides, Paul's use of *apothéo* and *strepho* in Acts 13:46 borrows from Stephen's pivotal Acts 7 sermon (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 369), what supports the **middle** voice for *tetagmenoi*: Paul claimed the Jews rejected (*apothéo*) the Gospel like Stephen told of Israel's rejection (*apothéo*) of Moses (Acts 7:27, 39), so Paul turned (*strepho*) from the Jews to the Gentiles like Stephen said God turned (*strepho*) from Israel's faithless generation in the wilderness. (Acts 7:42; Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 470, 441-443) Since Paul used the **middle** voice for **both** *apothéo* and *strepho* in Acts 13:46, in view of Luke's contrast in Gospel responses, *tetagmenoi* in Acts 13:48 is best interpreted to be in the **middle** voice to stress the **Gentiles' acceptance** of the Gospel *in contrast* to Stephen's stress of **Israel's rejection** of Moses the man of God!
 4. Conversely, to view *tetagmenoi* in the **passive** voice in Acts 13:48 *strains against* the **context**: The phrase "as many as" in Acts 13:48 KJV translates the correlative pronoun *hosoi*, meaning "all who." (Ibid. U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 470; Blass-Deb., A Grk. Gram. of the N. T., 1973, p. 159) *Hosoi* with *tetagmenoi* in the passive voice makes Luke claim that *all* who were **present** in that **multi-racial, multi-gendered crowd** who **believed that day** would **EVER** do so since **only they** were **ordained** to do so! That would mention a level of predestination not described elsewhere either in the immediate context or in all of Scripture, but yet do so briefly with no explanation! That would counter Luke's aim: Luke 1:1-4 with Acts 1:1-2 shows he meant to give his reader "certainty" about what the reader had heard of the faith, but *tetagmenoi* in the **passive** voice in Acts 13:48 would only arouse unsettling questions in Luke's reader about predestination!

Lesson: The Acts 13:48 perfect participle "tetagmenoi" is in the middle voice, not in the passive voice.

Application: May we view Acts 13:48 as teaching that motivated people simply believed in Christ for eternal life.