

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Acts: The Continuing Earthly Ministry Of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Part VI: The Ministry Of The Universal Church In Its Spread To The Ends Of The Earth, Acts 8:26-28:31

E. Christ's Use Of The Apostle Paul To Spearhead Worldwide Outreach, Acts 13:4-28:31

3. Understanding Acts 13:48 In Christ's Contextual Shift From Rejecting Jews To Receptive Gentiles (Acts 13:46-48)

I. Introduction

- A. Acts 13:48b in the major versions claims one trusts in Christ only if God ordains him to do just that.
- B. However, this view logically contradicts John 3:16: if God so loves the whole world that He wants to save everyone in it (John 3:16), we cannot say how He could ordain only certain ones to believe to be saved!
- C. Then, tolerating such logical contradiction undermines the inerrancy of the Word of God, for that which is in logical contradiction is not true! (cf. Clark H. Pinnock, A Defense Of Biblical Infallibility, 1967, p. 17)
- D. The solution is found in viewing the broad context of the book of Acts and the New Testament Greek text:

II. Understanding Acts 13:48 In Christ's Contextual Shift From Rejecting Jews To Receptive Gentiles.

- A. In light of the book's context, at Acts 13:48, "The Gentiles' reception and the Jews' rejection (v. 50) of the gospel is, from here on, a recurring theme in Acts", Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed., fn. to Acts 13:48.
- B. In support of this claim, Luke's word selection shows Acts 13:46-48 is a key passage in the book of Acts:
 1. The two important expressions, "eternal life" used once in Acts 13:46 and once again in 48 appear only in these 2 verses in all the Greek text of Acts, Moulton & Geden, Conc. to the Greek Test., p. 422-423.
 2. Then, Paul's use in Acts 13:46 of the Greek verbs *apothéo* and *strepho* borrow from Stephen's great and very pivotal sermon in Acts 7 as these verbs appear in Acts only in Stephen's sermon and in Acts 13:46, *Ibid.*, p. 103, 907. Also, both verbs show great comparisons in their respective contexts:
 - a. In Acts 13:46, Paul claimed the Pisidian Antioch Jews had rejected (*apothéo*) the gospel like Stephen in his Acts 7 sermon had twice told of Israel's rejection (*apothéo*) of Moses, Acts 7:27, 39.
 - b. Paul there also said he turned (*strepho*) from the Jews to minister to the Gentiles like Stephen had said in his Acts 7 sermon that God turned (*strepho*) from Israel's faithless generation, Acts 7:42.
- C. So, the **extended context** shows Acts 13:46-48 is a watershed passage in Acts, exposing Luke's view that the Jews' rejection of the gospel and its reception by Gentiles led Paul to shift his ministry accordingly.
- D. Thus, the translation of the Greek verb behind "were ordained" in Acts 13:48 KJV must harmonize with this important contrast, and it does so only if it is translated other than how the major versions render it:
 1. The Greek verb rendered "were ordained" (KJV) is *tetagmenoi*, a perfect participle, and in the perfect tense, it is spelled the same **either** as a *passive* (to mean "were ordained") **or** as a *middle* in voice (to mean "had marshaled themselves"), cf. Richard B. Rackham, Acts of the Apostles, p. 221.
 2. Since Luke's aim in Acts 13:46-48 is to contrast the responses of the Jews and the Gentiles to the Gospel, *tetagmenoi* in Acts 13:48 is best translated in the **middle** voice to describe the receptivity of the gospel by the Gentiles versus its rejection by the Jews in Acts 13:45-46.
 3. Otherwise, for *tetagmenoi* to be treated as a passive as do the major versions, making it have God ordain certain ones to trust in Christ, is to **exchange** Luke's **watershed thrust** of contrasting **Jewish** and **Gentile responses** to the Gospel to the contrast of those **God** either does or does not **predestine**!
 4. Yet, nowhere after this Acts 13:46-48 **watershed** passage is there any reference to predestination in the responses of people to the gospel, cf. Acts 14:1-6, 7-19; 17:1-9, 10-14; 18:1-6, 7-17; 19:8-10; 20:2-3; 21:27-22:24; 24:1-27; 25:1-12; 26:1-32; 28:1-10, 17-28! Such silence is deafening!!
 5. Thus, in view of Luke's context, *tetagmenoi* must exist in the **middle** voice to mean "had marshaled themselves" and **NOT** in the passive voice to mean "were ordained" like the major versions translate it!

Lesson: *The extended context, Luke's aim in the passage and his word usage in the Greek text reveals Acts 13:48b must be rendered "as many as had marshaled themselves for eternal life believed"!*

Application: *(1) Acts 13:48 does NOT teach God ordains certain ones to believe as the major versions translate the verse, but that those who heard the gospel and desired the eternal life it offered believed it and were saved! (2) John 3:16 thus logically harmonizes with Acts 13:48, and God's Word is inerrant!*