

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study guide is to facilitate the study of Acts 13:42-52 as a supplement to the sermon. It is based on my (Michael's) study and meditation on the passage. This handout can be used for personal study or community group conversation. (I hope you join a group!)

ACTS 13:42-52 ESV

42 As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath. 43 And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God. 44 The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. 45 But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. 46 And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, "'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'" 48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. 50 But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. 51 But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

STRUCTURE

- I. **Hearing the Word of the Lord (42-44)**
 - a. Seekers beg for God's Word (42)
 - b. Apostles teach converts God's Word (43)
 - c. Crowds gather to hear God's Word (44)
- II. **Rejecting and Receiving the Word of the Lord (45-48)**
 - a. Unbelieving Jews attack Paul and God's Word (45)
 - b. Apostles explain their ministry in light of God's Word (46-47)
 - c. Gentiles celebrate God's Word (48)
- III. **Further spread and persecution of the Word of the Lord (49-51)**
 - a. The broader region receives God's Word (49)
 - b. Antioch Pisidia expels the messengers of God's Word (50)
 - c. Apostles testify against the city and spread God's Word to another (51)
- IV. **Conclusion: God's Spirit blesses the preaching of God's Word—with supernatural joy (52)**

GENERAL COMMENTARY:

The primary theme of this section is the Word of the Lord. The phrase (and its variants) appears four times in this short passage: "the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord" (Acts 13:44); "it was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first" (13:46); "they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord" (13:48); "And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region" (13:49). Even when Luke does not employ this precise phraseology, the theme of divine speech through apostolic messengers occupies every verse.

We learn to esteem God's Word by noting people's responses. In the first section, eager seekers beg to hear it preached, apostles comply, and crowds gather (13:42-44). The rest of the passage dances between the reception of God's Word and the rejection of God's Word. Those who reject God's Word do so out of jealousy and with ad hominem attacks (13:45), stirring crowds to repudiate the gospel by inciting gullible influencers (13:50). Their rejection of God's Word is a rejection of God; the reason is not intellectual or philosophical but moral. Jealousy, foolishness, and rage mark these unbelievers.

Paul and Barnabas issue two prophetic responses to their persecutors. First, they display how Jewish rejection of the gospel fulfilled the prophecy about Isaiah's suffering servant (13:46-47). So far in Scripture, Jesus has been

portrayed as the servant who blesses Israel and the nations through suffering and proclamation; now, Paul and Barnabas step into that same high calling. All of us must. Because we are “in Christ,” God calls us, like Paul and Barnabas, to align ourselves with Isaiah’s suffering servant (cf. Isa. 49:1-7). He calls each believer to lay down our lives to reach the world. Day in and day out, this looks like proclaiming Christ often, praying for the lost, and financially supporting His global cause.

Paul and Barnabas’s second prophetic response to their persecutors was shaking the dust off their feet against the city of Pisidian Antioch for rejecting the Word of the Lord. Fortunately, their rejection in one city would lead to a reception of God’s Word in the broader region. This has been a theme throughout Acts. The Word of God is a divine agent. You can quash the messengers but not the message. As the divine Word is received, surprisingly, people also glorify it—a word often used to depict worship (13:48). This reminds us of the Psalms, where celebrants praise God’s Word (Ps. 56:4, 10), tremble with reverence for God’s word (119:20), and lift their hands to God’s Word (119:48). The intimate association between God and God’s Word explains why no one can prevent its triumph.

VERSE-BY-VERSE COMMENTARY:

42 As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath. 43 And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

—“begged”:

- “invited” (NIV), “urged” (CSB), “repeatedly begged” (NASB), “were urging” (NET)
- The word can obviously connote a range of intensity, spanning from “invited” to “repeatedly begged.” All translations besides the NIV tilt toward greater intensity.
- Supporting the more intense translation is the verb tense, which suggests continual activity. Even if we render it “invited,” it would be a continual invitation, which justifies translations like “begged” or “urged.” Furthermore, an outline of NT usage more commonly translates the word with greater intensity. For instance, demons “begged” Jesus to send them to some pigs rather than the place of judgment (Mark 5:12).
- Their intense, continual begging Paul and Barnabas to return reflects a proper hunger for God’s Word. We should “crave” God’s Word like “newborn babies” (1 Pet. 2:2).
- Many folks will miss church for any reason that arises. These begged for the opportunity to hear the gospel preached.

—“many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas”:

- They “followed” them like the disciples followed Jesus. They were not creepy stalkers of Christian celebrities; they were hungry disciples who longed to be taught.
- “many” suggests large numbers of eager converts from among both “Jews” and Gentile “converts to Judaism”.
- Not only were they eager to convert; they actually did. Paul and Barnabas urged them to “continue in the grace of God,” which presumes that they began in God’s grace by receiving Jesus.

—“as they spoke with them, [Paul and Barnabas] urged them to continue in the grace of God”:

- See comment above. The “many” who followed Paul and Barnabas received the gospel.
- Paul and Barnabas model new Christian follow-up. The responsibility of new disciples is to follow teachers of truth; the responsibility of teachers is to follow up with converts.
- The eager converts “urged” Paul and Barnabas to teach them more. Paul and Barnabas “urged” them to continue in God’s grace. Although the Greek word differs, the idea of eager “urging” stands out. Believers cannot be neutral about everything. We must plead, urge, implore, beg, and entreat that others keep preaching and obeying Jesus.
- Other examples of the Greek word for “grace” (*charis*) in Acts:
 - [Acts 2:47 ESV] 47 praising God and having **favor** with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.
 - [Acts 4:33 ESV] 33 And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great **grace** was upon them all.
 - [Acts 6:8 ESV] 8 And Stephen, full of **grace** and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people.

- [Acts 7:10, 46 ESV] 10 and rescued him out of all his afflictions and gave him **favor** and wisdom before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who made him ruler over Egypt and over all his household. ... 46 who found **favor** in the sight of God and asked to find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob.
- [Acts 11:23 ESV] 23 When he came and saw the **grace** of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose,
- [Acts 14:3, 26 ESV] 3 So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his **grace**, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. ... 26 and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the **grace** of God for the work that they had fulfilled.
- [Acts 15:11, 40 ESV] 11 But we believe that we will be saved through the **grace** of the Lord Jesus, just as they will." ... 40 but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the **grace** of the Lord.
- [Acts 18:27 ESV] 27 And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through **grace** had believed,
- [Acts 20:24, 32 ESV] 24 But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the **grace** of God. ... 32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of his **grace**, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.
- [Acts 24:27 ESV] 27 When two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And desiring to do the Jews a **favor**, Felix left Paul in prison.
- [Acts 25:3, 9 ESV] 3 asking as a **favor** against Paul that he summon him to Jerusalem—because they were planning an ambush to kill him on the way. ... 9 But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a **favor**, said to Paul, "Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and there be tried on these charges before me?"
- What do these examples teach us about "grace" in Acts?
 - Examples of beginning in the grace of God can be found in 4:33, 11:23, and 15:11. This exhibited itself in power (4:33) and salvations (11:23; 15:11). To "continue" in the grace of God means that we continue relying in faith on the goodness of God, which at first saved us.
 - Put differently, the same grace that saves, sanctifies.
 - Here's how Paul articulates it in Rom. 5:2: "Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God."—in other words, the same grace that saves us from sin helps us continue standing in faith.
 - "grace" and "power" are again linked in 6:8, describing Stephen.
 - "grace" enables us to believe (18:27). Faith does not just open the funnel for grace to flow; more than that, grace enables faith to exist. In other words, grace precedes faith, regenerating our hearts to believe.
 - We commonly see language such as "the word of his grace" (14:3; 20:32) and "the gospel of the grace of God" (20:24). The entire story of Jesus is one of "grace." He is the fullness of "grace and truth" (John 1:14). While it's true that wrath and judgment comprise part of the story, the message cannot be characterized as "the word of his wrath." Wrath exists because God is love, and love repudiates evil. However, "grace" provides the best one-word description of the gospel. It is the "word of His grace."
 - We also see numerous examples of folks "commended to the grace of God" (14:26; 15:40; 20:32). Each example relates to individuals separating. It is another way of saying, "I won't be here to nurture your faith, so I trust God's grace to take it from here." The example from 20:32 provides elaboration. The grace they are commended to "is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all who are sanctified." Grace is treated like a human

agent, able to work. It is a metonymy (figurative device), meaning that God Himself will build you up and give you an inheritance in an expression of grace.

- Bringing to bear these revelations about Luke's usage of "grace" elsewhere in the present passage, what do we glean?
 - Paul and Barnabas exhort the new converts to continue standing in the grace that once saved them. We do not start with grace and finish in the flesh, as Paul would warn the Galatians (Gal. 3:3; 5:4). We need God for salvation and sanctification; we need God to believe and keep believing; we need God to build us up and give us an inheritance among all who are sanctified.
 - This does not suggest we do nothing. Paul and Barnabas exhort them to "continue" in the grace of God. Sanctification (continued growth in holiness) requires cooperation. As Paul tells the Philippians, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to do for His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12-13). God works in us first; we work it out second.

44 The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. 45 But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him.

—"Sabbath": this implies it was a synagogue gathering. However, "the whole city" implies that they must have met outside the building, which could not have contained a crowd that presumably numbered in the thousands. Perhaps they found another public venue.

—"to hear the word of the Lord": the gospel—like what Paul preached the previous Saturday.

—"But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy":

- Earlier in Acts, "jealousy" drove the religious leaders to imprison some apostles. Now, it happens again.
- Their persecution did not begin on doctrinal grounds. They only "began to contradict what was spoken by Paul" after their hearts erupted with jealousy.
- This is often the case. Theological controversy often finds its roots not in textual disagreements but in turf battles. Here, the religious leaders feel threatened.
- One evidence that theological disagreements have veered off is the tone. The religious leaders contradicted Paul's doctrine by "reviling him"—resorting to personal attacks.

—How did they contradict Paul's doctrine? We are not told. Perhaps it related to the many "Gentiles" turning to the Lord, whom Paul would not have required to maintain Jewish customs. This was the continual issue faced by first-century believers.

46 And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.""

—"It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you":

- When the apostles say "word of God," they are not *just* talking about the Scripture. Jews read from "the Law and the Prophets" every Sabbath. Surely, they would not object to Paul quoting passages from their own Scriptures to teach things Jews already believed.
- "word of God" in this context refers to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel can be articulated from the Scriptures, and it fills the pages of Scripture, but it is not identical with Scripture. These Jews had the Scripture; they did not understand the gospel.
- I am reminded of John 5:39-40: "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life." The Jews had Scripture, but they could not see how the Scripture pointed to Jesus—or the gospel He brings.
- I have already explained in another Study Guide why it was "necessary" for them to begin with the Jews. God made His promises to Jews; therefore, Jews had the right to hear first how God had fulfilled these promises in Jesus.

—Paul and Barnabas do not turn to the Gentiles out of favoritism, as though they have a non-Jewish agenda. Having offered the gospel first to the Jews, who rejected it, they turned to the Gentiles.

Throughout Paul's ministry, people would accuse him of being anti-Jew (which is funny—Paul was Jewish). This story among others should put that theory to rest.

—Paul explains his actions of turning from Jew to Gentiles by quoting Isaiah 49:6. The rejection of Jews was not his sole reason for turning to Gentiles. It was "necessary" that he begin with Jews, but it was also necessary to continue with Gentiles to fulfill the passage from Isaiah. In short, it was not just a matter of Jewish rejection but God's calling that provoked the Gentile mission.

- Here is the full context for Paul's quote of Isaiah: *1 Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name. 2 He made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away. 3 And he said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified." 4 But I said, "I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my right is with the LORD, and my recompense with my God." 5 And now the LORD says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him; and that Israel might be gathered to him— for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD, and my God has become my strength— 6 he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; **I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.**"*
- This belongs to one of four "servant songs" in Isaiah. These songs depict the "servant" as an atoning and suffering redeemer of Israel and all nations. Isaiah 49:3 equates the servant with Israel; Isaiah 49:6 distinguishes the servant from Israel. That's because the identification, Israel, is complicated. See below under "Putting this all together".
- Luke 2:32 alludes to Isaiah 49:6. There, Simeon prophesies that the infant Lord will be "a light for revelation to the Gentiles and glory to your people Israel." Just like Isaiah 49:6, Jesus would serve both Jews and Gentiles with revelatory light—the gospel.
- In Acts 1:8, Luke also alludes to Isaiah's prophecy: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." That last part—"to the end of the earth"—appears in Isaiah 49:6 to convey the extent of God's salvation.
- Putting this all together:
 - Jesus is the suffering servant, "Israel," who atones for sins, restores Israel, and reveals the good news to the ends of the earth.
 - The reason "Israel" is both equivalent to and distinct from the servant in Isaiah 49 is that the text presents these two contrasting "Israels": the "Israel" that has rebelled and needs restoration and the "Israel" that restores the rebellious nation. The former Israel is the elect nation; the latter "Israel" is Jesus. Jesus is "Ideal Israel," arising from the broader nation of "Israel." The ideal servant, Jesus, behaved as the nation should have. He also restored (and is restoring) the broader nation.
 - At the same time, the Spirit-empowered church can be called "Israel" from Isaiah 49:6. Why? To use Paul's language, we are "in Christ." Jesus is "Ideal Israel," and in Him, we too become the "chosen of God." Just as Jesus provided light to the Gentiles, we who are in Him, empowered by the Spirit, enable that light to continue shining "to the ends of the earth" (Isa. 49:6; Acts 1:8).
 - This does not mean that God no longer observes any distinction between Jew and Gentile. Paul began by preaching to the Jews for the very reason that God does see a difference. We must speak with nuance here. In Christ, "there is neither Jew nor Gentile" (Gal. 3:28), meaning Gentiles are co-heirs of the promises made to the Jewish patriarchs. In our flesh, however, God does see a difference. Israel was the "OG" chosen people, and their corporate election is "irrevocable" (Rom. 11:29). For this reason, when "the fullness of the Gentiles has come in" (11:25), God will soften Jewish hearts and save them (11:26-32).
- Applicationally, believers should feel the weight of Paul's quotation of Isaiah 49:6. Jesus is the original "suffering servant" who brings "light" to the world; however, the church steps into that identity and assignment because we are "in Him."

- Suffering, servitude, and light run together. The more we shine into darkness, the more we must humble ourselves and endure the pushback.

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region.

—“the word of the Lord... the word of Lord”: variants of this expression (including “the word of God”) also occur in vv. 44 and 46. That amounts to four references in eleven verses. It’s enough to identify it as a theme of this section. Luke intends to show how Jews and Gentiles responded to “the word of the Lord.”

—“glorifying the word of the Lord”:

- This word for “glorifying” often connotes worship (Matt. 5:16; 9:8; 15:31; etc.).
- Did they worship the word of God?
 - This is theologically complex. Let’s explore this rabbit hole.
 - Here’s what Dr. John Frame says about God’s Word: “How, then, should we define the word of God? God’s word is, certainly, the sum total of his communications, everything that he has said, is saying, and will say. But it is even more than that, for... there is a sense in which God’s word is God himself. God eternally communicates his love and purposes within the Trinity: Father to Son, Son to Father, both to the Spirit, and the Spirit to both. This communication is essential to God’s nature. He is, among all his other attributes, a speaking God.... We can say, then, that God’s eternal inter-Trinitarian speech is a necessary divine attribute, an attribute without which God would not be God. As such, speech, like all other necessary attributes, designates the essence of God, what God really and truly is. Ultimately, God’s word is God, and God is his word.
 - Frame continues: “And given the teaching of John 1:1-15... the term Word also designates specifically the second person of the Trinity. There is no contradiction between thinking of the word as a divine attribute and thinking of Word as the name of the eternal Son of God. Fatherhood is a divine attribute, but Father is also the name of the first person of the Trinity. Similarly Spirit: a divine attribute, and the name of the third person of the Trinity. So God’s word is God himself, understood as a speaking God, one who eternally communicates.”
 - Frame goes on to say that we must “distinguish the word of God itself, which is purely divine, from the created media through which the word comes to us... The Creator-creature distinction in Scripture is fundamental and nonnegotiable.”
 - In other words, we don’t worship Scripture, for Scripture is a medium for God’s Word. But we can “glorify” the Word of the Lord.
 - More Frame: “God’s speech has divine attributes. These include righteousness (Ps. 119:7), faithfulness (119:86), wonderfulness (119:129), uprightness (119:137) purity (119:40), truth (119:142; John 17:17), eternality (Ps. 119:89, 160), omnipotence (Gen. 18:14; Isa. 55:11; Luke 1:37), perfection (Ps. 19:7ff). These attributes are not merely the attributes of something in creation, such as human faithfulness, righteousness, or truth. Clearly, in context, these passages are saying that the words of God are different from merely human words because they embody the unique qualities of God’s own nature.”
 - Frame then cites Hebrews 4:12-13 about how the Word of God judges to say that “the word not only has distinctively divine attributes but also performs distinctively divine acts.”
 - Finally, he adds that the Word of God is an object of worship: “The psalmists view the words of God with religious reverence and awe, attitudes appropriate only to an encounter with God himself. The psalmist trembles with godly fear (Ps. 119:120; cf. Isa. 66:5), stands in awe of God’s words (Ps. 119:161), and rejoices in them (v. 162). He lifts his hands to God’s commandments (v. 48)... He praises God’s word in Psalm 56:4, 10. This is extraordinary since Scripture uniformly considers it idolatrous to worship anything other than God. But to praise or fear God’s word is not idolatrous. To praise God’s word is to praise Himself.”
 - More Frame: “Does this worship justify ‘bibliolatry’? The Bible... is God’s word in a finite medium. It may be paper and ink, or parchment, or audiocassette or a CD-ROM. The medium is not divine, but creaturely. We should not worship the created medium; that would be

idolatry. But through the created medium, we receive the authentic word of God, and the word of God should be treasured as if God were speaking it with his own lips."

- Schreiner: "God and his message are not separate for Luke (cf. 2 Thess. 3:1). The word is a divine agent to be received as God. Though some get nervous about bibliology (worshipping the Father, Son, and Holy Scripture), Luke is not afraid to see a close relationship between the Lord and his speech."
- If that's over your head, don't sweat it! Just ponder it. It's over my head, too.

—"as many as were appointed for eternal life believed":

- "all who were chosen for eternal life became believers" (NLT); "all who were appointed for eternal life believed" (NIV, ESV, CSB, NASB, NET).
- There seems to be universal agreement among major translations that God initiates appointing/choosing, which leads to our response: believing. This presents a strong case that "predestination" does not mean "seeing that folks will choose Jesus and then retroactively choosing them." Instead, it means that God predestines some for salvation.
- Despite this, God still blames the unbelievers for refusing to believe in Christ. The Jews "thrust aside" the message of salvation and judged themselves "unworthy of eternal life." Left to ourselves, everyone chooses to reject Christ. Only by grace do we believe (18:27); only by grace does God appoint us to salvation (13:48).
- How can this be fair?
 - It is fair because unbelievers are getting what they choose. They choose to reject God in this life so they receive their wish for all eternity.
 - The "unfair" part is that God shows mercy at all. He could have condemned us all to hell like the rebel angels (2 Pet. 2:4; Heb. 2:16). Instead, He sent Jesus to become like us so we might become like Him.
 - Still, the question remains: how is it fair that God chooses some for eternal life but not others? Paul poses this question in Romans 9:19, but he doesn't fully answer it. He mostly just says, "You can't argue with God."
 - In my mind, we do well to affirm what Scripture teaches while not going beyond it. Scripture teaches predestination; Scripture teaches that God is perfectly just; Scripture teaches that God gives everyone a real choice; Scripture teaches that man uses that choice to reject God; Scripture teaches that God shows mercy to some despite their rejection; Scripture teaches that God is beyond finding out. Scripture does *not* teach, however, that God arbitrarily elects some to heaven and others to hell with a sick game of eeny-meeny-miney-moe. God's "reason" for choosing accords with God's "good pleasure" and His "glory," but we can't plunge the mystery of election any further than that. In the end, those who enter life will say, "Thank You, God," not "I was smarter than the others by choosing God." Those who enter hell will say, "I have myself to blame."
- Those who disagree about this verse will say that the Greek word for "appoint" does not have to suggest predestination; it can be translated in the middle voice. If so, this would suggest that God was not the one who "appointed" them for eternal life; they appointed or disposed their own hearts toward Paul's message. They say this would create a contrast to others who judged themselves "unworthy of eternal life" (13:46). In other words, some disposed their hearts against the message (13:46) and others for it (13:48).
- I disagree with that interpretation because: (1) no major translations render the verb in the middle voice, (2) Luke elsewhere portrays our natural disposition to be one of rejecting the message and requiring God's prior action (16:14; 18:27).
- Stott: "Some commentators, offended by what they regard as an extreme predestinarianism in this phrase, have tried in various ways to soften it. But the Greek verb *tasso* means to 'ordain' (AV, RSV), sometimes in the sense of to 'assign someone to a (certain) classification' (BAGD). F.F. Bruce refers to the papyrus evidence that it can mean 'inscribe' or 'enrol', in which case it is a reference to the 'book of life'."

- Schnabel: "The verb from which this form comes means 'to assign someone to a certain classification, to be classed among those possessing. The expression stresses God's sovereign work in moving people to come to faith in Jesus, the crucified and risen Messiah and Savior."

50 But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. 51 But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

—"devout women of high standing... leading men of the city": some theorize that the "devout women" may have been benefactors to the synagogue. But they just as well might have been Gentiles, devout in their paganism. Jews routinely incite the Gentiles against the gospel in Acts. It usually works because of how the gospel threatens powerful Gentiles. In this case, perhaps the threat was that Christianity proclaimed a higher king than Caesar.

—"persecution":

- Paul refers to this persecution in 2 Tim. 3:10-11: *"You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me."*
- Just like the servant in Isaiah, the apostles are persecuted. They have fully identified with Jesus' mission; they also share in its outcome: pain.

—"shook off the dust from their feet":

- Just like Jesus instructed (Matt. 10:14; Luke 9:5; 10:11).
- This was a prophetic act of testifying against the unbelievers. The statement in Luke 10:11 clarifies the meaning: 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.' When a town rejected the disciples, the disciples, in turn, rejected the town. Removing the dust from their feet testified that they would bring nothing from that town with them. They rejected it outright and fully, symbolizing God's rejection of the town.
- There comes a time when we need to move on in evangelism. Some people spend years plowing the ground that won't yield, but if they planted elsewhere, they'd see success.
- Paul and Barnabas saw success and would later return to appoint elders. However, the broader region had turned against them. It was time to move on.

—"Iconium": about a 93 mile walk—roughly the distance from OKC to Tulsa.

—"filled with joy and the Holy Spirit":

- After being rejected by mobs, they were filled with joy. How? By the Holy Spirit. Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives (Gal. 5:22).
- The unbelieving Jews were filled with jealousy (13:45); the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.
- If our satisfaction in life derives from having power, we'll be jealous of those who have more. If our satisfaction is in Jesus, the Spirit will fill us with such contentment that even if we are placed on the outside, rejected by a whole city, we will not lose sleep over it.