

If It's Acceptance You Crave, Forget Christianity

Acts 13 & 14 – August 22, 2010

➤ **When Gentiles _____ Jews**

Acts 13:46-48

Romans 10:9-10, 13

Salvation comes

By _____ alone

Through _____ alone

By _____ alone

*The elect are the whosoever _____ and the
non-elect are the whosoever _____.*

Luke 10:20

Revelation 21:27

Acts 13:46

Men pronounce judgment on _____
when they reject Christ

➤ **When the Gospel _____ the Crowds**

Acts 14

2 interesting things

Theology concerning healing

The sermon

Can an unregenerate man know there is a God?

Psalm 145:9

Matthew 5:45

Romans 1:19-20

Psalm 19:1

II Corinthians 12:2-4

II Timothy 4:7-8

II Corinthians 5:6

I Thessalonians 4:13-18

I Corinthians 15:50-58

Wrap Up

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Intro: Before we get into chapter 14 ... where popularity was not being pursued by the apostles ... and the acceptance of everyone was the furthest thing from the priority of the apostles ... let's look at the acceptance of God that we should all crave! Turn to Acts 13:46

It is refreshing to read how some responded to the gospel in Paul's missionary journeys. Most Jews rejected the gospel though not all. Many Gentiles, on the other hand, received the gospel and believed.

➤ When Gentiles APPRECIATED Jews

Paul preached to a crowd comprised of both Jews and Gentiles ... but singled out the Jews in the crowd when he said (13:46)

Acts 13:46-47

And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; since you repudiate it, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.

13:47 "For thus the Lord has commanded us, 'I have placed You *as a light for the Gentiles*, That You should bring salvation to the end of the earth.'"

The Gentiles present realized ... a select nation – Israel ... was a nation designed to get every other nation on the earth word about salvation.

Acts 13:48

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.

Their attitude towards this discovery???

JOY and PRAISE!

“rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord”

God chose Jews to be the first recipients of the Gospel ... so that Gentiles would get salvation next!

GENTILES WOULD NOT BE EXCLUDED FROM SALVATION!

The Gospel is for everyone!

DON'T MISS THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN SALVATION HERE!

Acts 13:48

“... and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.”

When is a person appointed to eternal life?

✓ Before the foundation of the world ... appointed in eternity past!

Who makes this appointment? God!

Believing in Jesus Christ is something known and DETERMINED by God in eternity past

Questions that come up from time to time ... often from children
I'm afraid God did not choose me – how can I know if I'm elect of God?
How can I know I've been predestined to eternal life?

Answer:

Romans 10:9-10, 13

that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved;

10:10 for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

10:13 for "Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved."

It is helpful to understand:

To start ... the person who has been chosen of God ...

- Will **Confess** with their **mouth** that Jesus is Lord
 - Will **Believe** in their **heart** that God raised Jesus from the dead
- With the result ... **THEY SHALL BE SAVED**

Furthermore ... the person who has been chosen of God ...

- Will *call upon the name of the Lord* (Romans 10:13)

If you call on the name of the Lord ... you are calling out to Him as a sinner believing that Jesus alone forgives sin

Jesus said: *Repent and believe*

Repent means to turn from sin ...

Believe means there is an object of your faith – the Lord Jesus Christ

In other words

Calling on the Lord comes when one recognizes their sin and believes in Jesus Christ

Salvation comes

By **GRACE** alone

Through **FAITH** alone

By **CHRIST** alone

After a salvation experience (I don't know what other term to use than *experience*)
 Examine **YOURSELF**

Look for evidence that:

#1 – Jesus **DWELLS** in you

II Corinthians 13:5

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you-- unless indeed you fail the test?

(Look for evidence that)

#2 – Your **LIFE-STYLE** exemplifies self-control, perseverance, godliness and love for other Christians

II Peter 1:10

Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;

The point

Those who practice what is found in the verses of II Peter 1:5-9 make certain they are the elect of God ... predestined by God for salvation

Perhaps the simplest answer for children concerning who is elect and who is not
(D.L. Moody)

*The elect are the whosoever **WILLS** and the non-elect are the whosoever **WON'TS**.*

We do not have an ability to look into the book of life to see whose name is written there ...

The only way we can know who is elect of God is by observing (correct beliefs and a changed life) who has come to God as a sinner seeking forgiveness in Christ alone!

Luke 10:20

"Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven."

GREATER THAN ANY SUCCESS, ACCOMPLISHMENTS OR FAME
ON EARTH IS THE JOY OF KNOWING ... *YOUR NAME IS
RECORDED IN HEAVEN*

Revelation 21:27

and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into [heaven], but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Question

It would seem that if God did not elect some ... God is responsible for these people's damnation. And herein lies some tension in theology.

When I talk about tension in theology ... I'm talking about truths concerning the sovereignty of God and human responsibility that seem to contradict each other. There is no tension with God ... the tension is only with us.

But notice what Acts 13:46 says ...

Acts 13:46

"... since you repudiate it, {you} judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life ..."

Don't miss this

Men pronounce judgment on **THEMSELVES** when they reject Christ

Charles Spurgeon

I have sometimes stood in this pulpit, and I could not have pleaded harder for my own life than I have pleaded with you. In Christ's name, I have cried, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." I have wept over you as the Saviour did, and used his words on his behalf, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." And you know that your conscience has often been touched; you have often been moved; you could not resist it. God was so kind to you; he invited you so affectionately by the Word; he dealt so gently with you by his providence; his hands were stretched out, and you could hear his voice speaking in your ears, "Come unto me, come: come now, let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as wool; though they be red like crimson they shall be whiter than snow." You have heard him cry, "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." You have heard him say with all the affection of a father's heart, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Oh! God does plead with men that they would be saved, and this day he says to every one of you, "Repent, and be converted for the remission of your sins. Turn ye unto me. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; consider your ways." And with love divine he woos you as a father woos his child, putting out his hands and crying, "Come unto me, come unto me." "No," says one strong-doctrine man, "God never invites all men to himself; he invites none but certain characters." Stop, sir, that is all you know about it. Did you ever read that parable where it is said, My oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage." And they that were bidden would not come. And did you never read that they all began to make excuse, and that they were punished because they did not accept the invitations. Now, if the invitation is not to be made to anybody, but to the man who will accept it, how can that parable be true? The fact is, the oxen and fatlings are killed; the wedding feast is ready, and the trumpet sounds, "Ho every one that thirsteth, come and eat, come and drink." Here are the provisions spread, here is an all-sufficiency; the invitation is free; it is a great invitation. "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." And that invitation is couched in tender words, "Come to me, my child, come to me." "All day long I have stretched forth my hands."

And note again, this invitation was very frequent. The words, "all the day long," may be translated "daily"—"Daily have I stretched forth my hands." Sinner, God has not called you once to come, and then let you alone, but every day has he been at you; every day has conscience spoken to you; every day has providence warned you, and every Sabbath has the Word of God wooed you.

Transition: Let's move to chapter 14 ... that

➤ **When the Gospel DIVIDED the Crowds**

Acts 14:1-4

In Iconium they entered the synagogue of the Jews together, and spoke in such a manner that a large number of people believed, both of Jews and of Greeks.

14:2 But the Jews who *disbelieved* stirred up the minds of the Gentiles and embittered them against the brethren.

14:3 Therefore they spent a long time there speaking boldly with reliance upon the Lord, who was testifying to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands.

14:4 But the people of the city were divided; and some sided with the Jews, and some with the apostles.

The gospel messages always divides a crowd

14:4 "... the people of the city were divided"

Some on the side of the Jews ... and some on the side of the apostles

And things got hot ...

Acts 14:5-6

And when an attempt was made by both the Gentiles and the Jews with their rulers, to mistreat and to stone them,

14:6 they became aware of it and fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the surrounding region;

Notice:

The Lord would let the apostles know of their danger so they could flee.

Acts 14:8

At Lystra a man was sitting who had no strength in his feet, lame from his mother's womb, who had never walked.

A lame man in the audience

Never ever walked ... he was lame since birth

2 interesting things

1st –The **FAITH** of the lame man

Acts 14:9

This man was listening to Paul as he spoke, who, when he had fixed his gaze on him and had seen that he had faith to be made well

"he had faith to be made well"

This man believed the message and believed that the Lord was powerful and could heal him.

2nd –Paul's ability to **RECOGNIZE** faith

Acts 14:9

... Paul ... fixed his gaze on him and had seen that he had faith to be made well

Theology concerning healing

We cannot compel God to perform a miracle ... but an apostle periodically had that ability

Acts 14:10

[Paul] said with a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he leaped up and began to walk.

Praying for healing

1. We do not have the right to demand healing
2. But we have the privilege of asking for healing

The great challenge for believers

Blending **CONFIDENCE** in God's ability to heal now with a willingness to accept God's answer of no!

The response of the crowds at first ...

Acts 14:11-13

When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they raised their voice, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have become like men and have come down to us."
14:12 And they began calling Barnabas, Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker.

14:13 The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds.

Old Legend (Mythology that people believed)

Several centuries before these people were taught that two gods, Hermes and Zeus had come to Lystra. But only two people were hospitable. In response to the inhospitality of the city ... Zeus and Hermes sent a flood to destroy the city.

But the people were taught that these gods would some day return and give the people another chance.

This would explain why the priest of Zeus got into the act right away ...

The tearing of clothes demonstrates Paul and Barnabas' protest.

(Acts 14:14: Barnabas and Paul tore their robes.)

The sermon

Acts 14:15-18

and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, WHO MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM.

14:16 "In the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways;

14:17 and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness."

14:18 Even saying these things, with difficulty they restrained the crowds from offering sacrifice to them.

Point #1

Mere men should never be worshipped

“We are also men of the same nature as you”

Point #2

Worship should be for the Creator of the universe ... a living God

“turn from these vain things to a living God”

Point #3

God has given nations *FREEDOM* to choose their own way

“He permitted all the nations to go their own ways”

Point #4

But God has been testifying about Himself to all nations

“He did not leave Himself without witness”

The witness:

Acts 14:17

“... He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.”

Some important questions

Can an unregenerate man know there is a God?

Can an unregenerate man know that this God is a good God?

Psalms 145:9

The Lord is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works.

Matthew 5:45

“... He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Romans 1:19-20

because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

Psalms 19:1

The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.

The heavens are telling EVERYONE there is a God ... not just believers

When Paul preached to Gentiles ... he did not reason with them in the same way he did with Jews. But he always ended at the same place. He always ended with the need for sins to be forgiven by Jesus Christ!

Notice how fickle the mob is ...

One moment they want to worship Paul and Barnabas ... and sacrifice animals to them. And then the sentiment changes ...

Acts 14:19

But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, **supposing him to be dead.**

It is this pastor's perspective ... that this is when Paul had his II Corinthians 12:2-4 experience

II Corinthians 12:2-4

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a man was caught up to the third heaven.

12:3 And I know how such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows—

12:4 was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.

Paradise ... what Jesus promised the thief on the cross.

My dear friend, Jim Galbraith ... the former pastor at Fellowship Bible Church here in Fresno ... went home to be with the Lord on Friday. Jim was 55 years old. Many of you may remember him for he preached here May 3rd of last year.

So many things have been racing around my head since Jim's death ...

Jim knew ... the time of his departure was close ...

What a joy for me to have a friend like Jim ... one for whom I can say ...

II Timothy 4:7

[He] fought the good fight, *[he]* have finished the course, *[he]* kept the faith;

II Timothy 4:8

in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Good reminders ... as I remind myself

II Cor. 5:6

Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord

I Thessalonians 4:13-18

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope.

4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

4:15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep.

4:16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

4:17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.

4:18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

I Corinthians 15:50-58

Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

15:51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

15:52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

15:53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

15:54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory.

15:55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

15:56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law;

15:57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

Jonathan Edwards

It becomes us to spend this life only as a journey toward heaven ... to which we should subordinate all other concerns of life. Why should we labor for or set our hearts on anything else, but that which is our proper end and true happiness.

One of Jonathan Edwards resolved statements reads:

Resolved, to endeavor to obtain for myself as much happiness, in the other world, as I possibly can.

Charles Spurgeon said about heaven...

To come to Thee is to come home from exile, to come to land out of the raging storm, to come to rest after long labour, to come to the goal of my desires and the summit of my wishes."

Wrap Up

Colossians 3:1-2

Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

3:2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.