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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Acts 13.

(2013).

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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Acts 13.

Topics.

- God sets apart Barnabas and Saul for the work of the Lord.
- Laying on of hands and ministry today.
- Barnabas, Saul and John teach in the synagogues of the Jews at Salamis.
- Elymas (bar-Jesus) a magician and false Jewish prophet are struck blind.
- Paul brilliantly exhorts in a synagogue Israel's history and introduces Christ.
- From David's offspring God has brought to Israel a saviour as He promised.
- I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will not believe.
- The people in Antioch beg Paul to continue to teach the Gospel.
- The whole city of Jerusalem gathers to hear Paul.
- Paul and Barnabas turn to the Gentiles.

The Previous Chapter: in the previous chapter Herod had James killed and Peter imprisoned, but overnight an angel miraculously freed him. Herod in his royal robes and on the kings' throne gives such a great speech the people cry out the voice of a god and not a man and he is stuck dead. The chapter ended with Barnabas, Saul and John Mark returning to Antioch.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

God sets apart Barnabas and Saul for the Work of the Lord.

Acts 13:1-5 ----- ¹Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ²While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. ⁴So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. ⁵When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them.

Tetrarch: (tetrarches) means the ruler of a fourth part of a country (tetrarch) a plural number four.

Antioch: was a Syrian town and the capital of the province of Syria in Turkey. It was one of the largest cities in the Empire and a great commercial center of ancient times. Being the meeting point of the Orient and Greek civilization it had business connections all over the world. The population of over 500,000 was governed by a proconsul who was in charge of two legions and the third city in the Empire with its own Games.

The cities tremendous building program was financed jointly by Augustus and Herod. It was populated by a large and influential Jewish population, but was predominantly pagan it contained Hellenic cults of Zeus and Apollo and was a place full of mystery religions that had messages of death and resurrection, initiation and salvation

NOTICE: the Holy Spirit says, "Set apart for me" (v2) meaning set apart for God, showing that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God it is called the Holy Spirit because God is Holy and the words, "So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit" (v4) means those

belonging to Christ are sending them as opposed to the secular world sending a person out as an ambassador for their nation or for a political journey.

Laying on of Hands.

When laying hands on a person was for sending them out for ministry it was a sign that evidenced that they were approved of by brothers and sisters in Christ who others in the body of Christ knew and respected. Practically it was a form of protecting those seeking God from false prophets and teachers. Based on this principal some today believe a servant of Christ must have hands laid on them by church elders or at least a religious certificate of approval from a Bible college or an established church before they can minister or establish a Church in Christ's name, but there is a positive and negative aspect to this mindset.

Today there are literally millions of churches and Bible colleges around the world that all claim to be the only ones teaching the truth and yet much of what they teach is contrary to each other obviously not all can be right thus even if a person does have the approval of church elders and a Bible College certificate it is still no guarantee that they are teaching the Bible correctly.

In fact many will simply be supporting errors that have been around for years for the following two reasons: -

1. Because of tradition.
2. Because the errors in their teachings have such a great stronghold on the religious institution that to change them might mean the collapse of the entire organisation.

In actual fact this could be the best outcome, since then the new could arise out of the ashes and be free to correct the errors that have been perpetuated by the disciples they trained up, sent to Bible Colleges and finally sent out.

Ministry Today: today anyone in Christ can pioneer a church if they have a knowledge of the Good News of the gospel, a humble spirit, a compassionate heart and a willingness to serve others since these credentials override the approval of elders or a religious certificate and God will bless anyone in Christ with a humble and compassionate heart who is willing to serve.

In fact all around the world there are literally thousands of house churches being established today by people who have a passion for the word of God and a love for Christ. Remember the early church did not have the Good News of the Gospel put together in print as we do today (there were no printing presses) people seeking God had to trust those who were teaching the Scriptures.

The safety for a new convert today is that they are able to do what the early church could not they are able to read the words of Christ, of the apostles and of Paul for themselves and examine whether what they are being told is actually what has been written and of course we are all warned to discern for ourselves the character of those we are listening to i.e., is it one of pride and ego or of humility and compassion.

Barnabas, Saul and John Teach in the Synagogues of the Jews at Salamis.

The words, "They proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews" (v5) shows us that Barnabas and Saul with the help of John took the Good News of the Gospel of Christ to the Jewish nation.

Elymas (Bar-Jesus) a Magician and False Jewish Prophet is struck Blind.

Acts 13:6-12 ----- ⁶When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. ⁷He was with the proconsul (Deputy of the country) Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. ⁸But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. ⁹But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him (Elymas the

magician) ¹⁰and said, "You son of the devil (diabolos, false accuser, slanderer) you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? ¹¹And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you (Elymas the magician) and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time." Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand. ¹²Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

NOTE: this is the first time Saul is called Paul (v9), Saul (Saulos) was the Jewish name of Paul.

Elymas: (Elumas) means; a wizard.

Magic: the word magic originally referred to the science of art of the Magi, the Persian priestly caste, who, like the Levites, were devoted to the practice of religion. With the wide extension of the term magus, the word magic, too acquired broader significance. It came to refer to all occult rituals or processes deigned to influence or control the course of nature, to dominate men or circumstances by the alliance, aid, or use of supernatural powers, and generally to tap and to employ the forces of an unseen world.

Divination, the art of forecasting the future with a view to avoiding the perils and pitfalls, might be included under the same classification. Its methods were frequently "magic." In lands ethnologically stratified, magic was often associated with the religion of a conquered or depressed class, or with imported faiths. Hence the frequency with which magic is found in the hands of foreign elements, and is secret in its practice and frequently under official ban as anti-social and illicit, hence the stern prohibitions of the Bible against all forms of wizardry and sorcery (Exod. 22:18) (Lev. 19:26) (Lev. 20:27) (Deut. 18:10-11).

Hence too the security precautions surrounding the royal visit to the witch of Endor (2 Sam 28:7), it was part of the advanced wisdom of the Mosaic code to show that active faith in a worthy deity, moral responsibility and true religion were not promoted by superstition and the practice of the occult, while genuine prophecy (in the wider sense of the word) was vitiated (drastically reduced in effectiveness) by such perversion. It was also realized that magic arts were part of the surrounding paganism from which it is the first preoccupation of the Old Testament to separate the Hebrew race.

Elymas the Jewish False Prophet and Magician.

Sergius Paulus the deputy of the country and a man of intelligence (meaning he thought for himself) wanted to hear what Barnabas and Saul had to say regarding the word of God so he called for them. It appears he accepted what Barnabas and Saul said, but Bar-Jesus a Jewish false prophet (also known as Elymas the magician) obviously had a certain amount of spiritual control over Sergius Paulus and did all he could to turn the deputy of the country away from the faith Barnabas and Saul had shared with him.

Filled with the Holy Spirit.

Filled with the Holy Spirit in this context carries the idea that Paul was totally against Elymas not only because he was standing against God's will and the Good News of the Gospel, but was also coming as a robber to steal the faith of the proconsul whose God's Spirit was moving on and hindering him from accepting the faith Paul was sharing with him.

Devil: (diabolos) means false accuser and slanderer it is because Elymas is not only full of wickedness but is deceitfully opposing what is right in God and standing against what the Lord desires to do in the heart of the proconsul and hindering him from entering into God's Kingdom that Paul addresses Elymas as the son of the devil.

For further information see the title: -

- Devil in Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Crooked and Straight Paths.

Making the straight paths crooked, means making the right way wrong, while making the crooked paths straight means, making the wrong way right. Another way of stating this is to say, stop perverting what is true and get your life right before God (v10).

NOTICE: Pauls says, "The hand of the Lord is upon you and you will be blind (v11). The expression the hand of the Lord means the Spirit of the Lord, showing that it is not Paul who is blinding Elymas, but the Spirit of the Lord (the blindness was only temporary).

Elymas blindness was a sign miracle to evidence to the proconsul that God's favour and power was with Paul to witness to the words he spoke. The Proconsul was absolutely stunned by what he saw and because of this wonder knew that God was with Paul and therefore was overwhelmed with what he had spoken (v12).

John leaves Paul and Barnabas.

Acts 13:13-21 ----- ¹³Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. And John left them and returned to Jerusalem, ¹⁴but they went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia. And on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. ¹⁵After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent a message to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it." ¹⁶So Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said: "Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen. ¹⁷The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. ¹⁸And for about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness. ¹⁹And after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance. ²⁰All this took about 450 years. And after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. ²¹Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.

Paul and those with him left Paphos and went to Antioch while John returned to Jerusalem. On a Sabbath day they were sitting in a synagogue in Antioch listening to the reading of the Law and the Prophets. At the end of this the rulers of the synagogue ask Paul and his group if they have any word of exhortation for the people they are welcome to say it.

Paul's Knowledge and Wisdom.

This brilliant exhort not only shows the knowledge Paul had of the Old Testament Scriptures and his understanding of them, but also clearly shows his wisdom in giving an exhort. Remember Paul's only desire since his conversion is to preach Christ, but he is fully aware that he is speaking to Jewish men of Israel who may be offended (which many were) (v45) so rather than beginning his exhort with Christ he starts with their history which beautifully leads him into proclaiming Christ.

Paul exhorts in a Synagogue the History of Israel.

Paul begins his exhort by telling the congregation sitting in the synagogue at Antioch that God chose their fathers and made the people great during their bondage in Egypt, He led them out by His great power and tolerated them in the wilderness for forty-years then after destroying seven nations God gave them the land they are now in as an inheritance. Paul then begins to bring his message closer to introducing Christ by talking about the judges and of Saul their first king.

NOTE.

Most of those listening to Paul are Jewish so they would already know what he is telling them, but it is most likely Paul is exhorting this way gain their respect and to win their favour and by doing so gain their attention so that they will be willing to hear his message of Christ.

Paul continues his Exhort and introduces Christ.

Acts 13:22-31 ----- ²²And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.' ²³Of this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Saviour, Jesus, as he promised. ²⁴Before his coming, John had proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. ²⁵And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but behold, after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.' ²⁶"Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to us has been sent the message of this salvation. ²⁷For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognise him nor understand the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. ²⁸And though they found in him no guilt worthy of death, they asked Pilate to have him executed. ²⁹And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. ³⁰But God raised him from the dead, ³¹and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people.

NOTICE: the words "And those among you who fear God" (v26) allows Paul's message to embrace anyone who may be in the synagogue that is not a descendant of Abraham.

From David's Offspring God has brought to Israel a Saviour as he Promised.

Paul knowing all Jews held David in high esteem now arrives in his exhort where he intended to go from the beginning which was to bring them to King David. Paul points out to his Jewish listeners in the synagogue at Antioch that after Saul God raised up David to be their king of whom God testified and said: -

- I have found in David a man after my heart, who will do all my will (v22)

Then Paul tells his assembly: -

- From David's offspring God has brought to Israel a Saviour, Jesus, as he promised (v23).

Paul now begins to focus on the beginning of Christ's appearing to the nation of Israel by telling his Jewish congregation

- Before the promised offspring of David came.

God raised up John the Baptist not only to proclaim a message of repentance to all Israel, but also to tell them that the next great prophet to come to Israel after him would be the promised offspring of David, their Messiah and their Saviour the Christ. This is why Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist" (Matt 11:11) (Luke 7:28) because John had the privilege and honour of introducing Christ to the world.

God has Given the Message of Salvation to the Apostles.

Paul then tells his Jewish congregation in Antioch that God has given Paul and Barnabas the message of salvation in Christ because the Jewish religious rulers (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes) and those who lived in Jerusalem did not recognise him nor did they understand the words the prophets had spoken of him which they read every Sabbath in their synagogues, but instead fulfilled the words the prophets had spoken by condemning the promised offspring of David, their Saviour and their Messiah the Christ even though they could not find him guilty of any crime or worthy of death.

Paul goes on to tell those in the synagogue at Antioch that the Jews at Jerusalem added to their evil by enticing Pilate to have their Messiah the Christ executed, but after being laid in a tomb God miraculously raised him from the dead, and he appeared to a certain few who are now his witnesses to the people.

When the Jews had carried out all that was Written of Christ.

Paul's words, "And when they had carried out all that was written of him" (v29) clearly shows that Judas betrayal of Jesus, the horror Jesus suffered, the spiritual blindness of the religious rulers, Pilate executing Christ and his death and resurrection were in the foreknowledge of God since the foundation of the world.

This is a stunning mystery to the human mind but majestically manifests the wisdom of God. God has given mankind free will to do as they please but come what may in God's foreknowledge He is able to work man's free will in such a way that it is working within His Sovereign will and bringing about His eternal plan that He set in motion before the beginning of time. How true are God's words: -

- For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9).

The Good News of God's Promise.

Acts 13:32-37 ----- ³²And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, ³³this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, " 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you.' ³⁴And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, " 'I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.' ³⁵Therefore he says also in another psalm, " 'You will not let your Holy One see corruption.' ³⁶For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, ³⁷but he whom God raised up did not see corruption.

Corruption: (diaphthora) in this context means decay, decompose and rot. Paul now tells those in the synagogue of Antioch that he, Barnabas and those with them are bringing to them the Good News that God has now fulfilled the promised He made to their fathers and by extension to them being the father's children by raising up their Messiah the Christ who is spoken of in the second Psalm.

The Wonder Beauty and Majesty of the Bible.

Paul mentions the following few words of Psalm two "You are my Son, today I have begotten you" (v33). No-doubt at the end of Paul's exhort the Jewish rulers at Antioch would have gone to their scrolls and looked this Psalm up and in doing so be astonished to find the entire Psalm is echoing the Lord Jesus Christ, his death and his final Kingdom.

For further information see: -

- Psalm Two in, Commentary Old Testament (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Paul continues his brilliant exhort by referring to David's writings saying, God raised Christ from the dead to eternal life (no more to return to corruption) (v35) and told Christ that He would give him the holy and sure blessings of David referring to David's throne over the Kingdom of God (v34).

The words, "You will not let your Holy One see corruption" (v35) are cited from Psalm sixteen which says, "God will not abandon my (David) soul to Sheol, or let your holy one (Jesus) see corruption (Psalm 16:10) meaning that God would not allow Christ's body to decay in the Tomb. It is clear that David understood that God would not abandon him to the grave (meaning forget him) he was confident God would raise him, but also understood it would not be as quickly as Jesus was (i.e., in three days) in fact David words show that he understood that his body unlike Christ's would decay in the grave (v36).

NOTICE: the words, "David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation" (v36) though God never changes He does move differently in different generations. During the generation of Moses God worked awesomely with Moses and with Elijah's generation God moved differently again as He did with the generations of the Minor Prophets.

Now God in the generation of the apostles is moving through them by stunning miraculous healings in a way He has never done with any previous generation or with any future generation.

The climax of Paul's Exhort.

Acts 13:38-41 ----- ³⁸Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything ³⁹from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. ⁴⁰Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the Prophets should come about: ⁴¹" 'Look, you scoffers, be astounded and perish; for I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you.' "

Paul now reaches the climax of his exhort, telling his Jewish congregation sitting in the synagogue of Antioch that that he is proclaiming to them this very day that through Jesus forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to them and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything that the Law of Moses could not free them from (v37-39).

Forgiveness could be said to be the most needful blessing since it brings in every other blessing and is the first experienced blessing of the Gospel. It means the removal of the power, guilt, and pollution of sin by a non-imputation of them, a non-remembrance of them, a covering of them and putting them away, and blotting them out. All of this is an act of God's free grace and mercy and it is through the blood of Christ that the guilty condemned by the Law receive it.

Paul's words, "Through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed" refers to the risen Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world only through him does God offer pardon. The Old Covenant of Law acts as a schoolmaster designed to awaken us to our sin before it brings us to ruin and takes us to the grave without any hope of being delivered from its darkness.

The great concern of convicted sinners is to be justified to be acquitted from all their guilt, and accepted as righteous in God's sight, for if any guilt is left charged upon the sinner they are undone, but whoever humbles themselves before God in honest heartfelt repentance and accept Christ as their Lord and Saviour should never doubt God's forgiveness that comes to them through Christ or God's grace. This is because whoever is redeemed in Christ is fully justified from all things; from all the guilt; from all the stain of sin and from all things that the Law of Moses could not justify them of.

Every faithful brother and sister in Christ is fully forgiven and fully justified, not only by God the Father, but also by Christ as their Judge and by him as the Lord of their righteousness. What the Law could not do for us, in that it was weak, the Gospel of Christ does.

I am doing a Work in your Days, a Work that you will Not Believe.

Paul concludes his brilliant exhort by quoting the words of Habakkuk who said to the people of his generation: -

- Look, you scoffers, be astounded and perish; for I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you (cited from Hab 1:5).

Paul then warns his congregation to beware that they do not act like their fathers did in Habakkuk's generation who refused to believe what the prophets had told them (v40-41), but rather walk out of the synagogue believing in the Lord Jesus Christ the promised Seed of David who God raised from the dead to eternal glory.

The people in Antioch beg Paul to continue to teach the Gospel.

Acts 13:42-47 ----- ⁴²As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath. ⁴³And 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. ⁴⁴The next Sabbath almost the whole city (Antioch) gathered

to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁵But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. ⁴⁶And 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. ⁴⁷For 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."

NOTICE: Paul urges those following him to continue in the grace of God (v43) meaning in His kindness, favour, mercy and love contrasted to the legalistic laws and rules of the religious Jewish rulers they have been influenced by.

The whole City of Jerusalem Gathers to Hear Paul.

Paul finished his exhort and as he walks out of the synagogue with Barnabas many of the congregation not only begged them to come back and teach, but many Jews who were devoted to Judaism also followed them, what an enormous thrill this must have been for Paul and Barnabas.

After Paul's first brilliant exhort in the synagogue at Antioch almost the entire city (Jews and Gentiles) come to hear the word of the Lord, but sadly when the Jews of the city of Antioch saw the mega crowds, they were filled with raging jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him.

The Hypocrisy and Pride of the Jews.

This is simply stunning these Jews aren't rebuking Paul and Barnabas because they are teaching a gospel contrary to Moses Law but because they are jealous of the crowds Paul and Barnabas were drawing. This is the epitome of religious pride and people being in the ministry or priesthood for their own gain and selfish ambition because they love the wealth, power and importance they get from holding such a high position of authority.

Paul and Barnabas speak against the Jews.

Paul and Barnabas tell the Jews at Antioch, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to them" (46) this statement refers to Jesus words to the apostles when he sent them out saying, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 10:5-6). Jesus himself said, "He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt 15:24) and they crucified him. Now Paul and Barnabas have taken the Good News of the gospel to the Jews in Antioch and they not only contradicted what Paul was saying, but insult, abuse and condemn both him and Barnabas and incite leading men and woman of high standing in the city to stir up persecution against them.

NOTICE: Paul and Barnabas boldly tell them that by turning away from the Gospel they are judging themselves unworthy of eternal life, showing that by rejecting God's Son a person brings judgment on themselves.

Paul and Barnabas turn to the Gentiles.

The words, "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth" (v47) refer to the words of Christ when he said to Paul on the road to Damascus that he has chosen him to be an instrument to carry Christ's name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15), and Matthew tells us that the Kingdom of God will be taken away from Israel and given to a people producing its fruits (Matt 21:43).

The Jews certainly showed they were not producing fruit fit for the Kingdom and therefore not worthy of eternal life, thus God shifts his focus to the Gentiles to find amongst them those who will produce fruits fit to his Kingdom. Nevertheless Paul warned the Roman Gentiles that they should always remember: -

- If some of the branches (Jews) of the tree were broken off because of their unbelief and a wild olive shoot (Gentiles) were grafted in because of their faith the Gentiles should be careful not become proud otherwise they also will be cut off (Rom 11:17-22).

This clearly shows that the two most important things to God and the way to bring joy to His heart is to have faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ and to develop the fruits of the Spirit i.e., love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control in ones' life (Gal 5:22-23).

The Gentiles rejoice Glorifying the Lord.

Acts 13:48-52 ----- ⁴⁸And 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. ⁴⁹And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. ⁵⁰But 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. ⁵¹But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. ⁵²And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

When the Gentiles heard Paul and Barnabas were turning from the Jews to the Gentiles (v46) they rejoiced and glorified the word of the Lord which spread throughout the entire region of Antioch, but Jewish men and women in positions of authority drove Paul and Barnabas out of their district.

NOTICE: Paul, Barnabas and the disciples' reaction, they don't get stressed, or worry but wipe the dust of their feet and move on to another city (Iconium) filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. Jesus does not want those serving him stressing and losing sleep over those who reject their witnessing.

The Lord is thrilled whenever his brothers or sisters share the Good News of the Gospel and also understands that how the one being witnessed to responds is totally out of the control of those witnessing to them since the decision must always remain the free choice of those being witnessed to. No-one who witnesses should feel bad because a person rejects the Gospel, but rather do what Paul and Barnabas did, shake of the dust off their feet meaning the negativity and move on with joy to the next opportunity.

As many as were Appointed to Eternal life Believed.

The words, "As many as were appointed to eternal life believed" (v48) does not mean that God has predestined some to believe and some to wrath we know this because then mankind would not have free will. There are two ways this statement can be explained: -

1. God in his foreknowledge knows who is going to believe and who is not, thus the reason Paul is able to say those appointed to eternal life believed.
2. It means that whoever does believe is appointed to eternal life.

God's foreknowledge is a stunning mystery to the human mind but majestically manifests the wisdom of God who has given mankind free will. By foreknowledge God is able to allow us to do as we please and come what may our free will is still mysteriously working within God's Sovereign will and bringing about His eternal plan that He set in motion before the beginning of time such is the beauty and wonder of God's foreknowledge and His wisdom.

My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways
And my thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9)

End