

# Proselytes and Apostates

Acts 13:38-52

*Halifax: 2 September 2012*

## **Introduction:**

Last week in our sermon series in Acts we saw how the grace of God reached Pisidian Antioch.

- This is not the Antioch that was in Syria where the church was that sent Paul and Barnabas out as missionaries,
  - but the Antioch that was in Pisidia in Southern Galatia.
- I spoke to you about how it was so gracious of God to bring the gospel to this place, for He is the One that brought it about in His providence that Paul and Barnabas should go there.
  - We also saw that the message that Paul preached to them in their synagogue was a message of grace.
    - He showed the Jews how God had acted in history to choose them to be His people, and then to establish them, and then to shepherd them.
  - All this was standard fare for a first century synagogue sermon,
    - but then Paul spoke to them of an even greater act of God's grace—one that had not been told to them!
    - He told them the Messiah had come and that by Him there was complete justification and forgiveness of sin for all who believe.
      - He supported all that he said about Jesus from testimony and from Scripture.
      - And then he concluded with the warning in verse 40-41 in which he warned them to beware lest they reject the message.
        - **Acts 13:40-41: Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you: "Behold, you despisers, marvel and perish! For I work a work in your days, a work which you will by no means believe, though one were to declare it to you."**
      - These are truly sobering words.
        - We do well to take them to heart and to be sure that we are not among those who do not believe the gospel that is declared to us.

We did not go on to look at how the people at Pisidian Antioch responded,

- but that is what we are going to do this week, the Lord willing.
- We just read about their response in Acts 13:42-52.

In this passage, you see that there is a great contrast presented to us...

- It is a contrast between the proselyte and the apostate.
  - The proselyte is the one who truly comes to the Lord and who freshly experiences His grace when the gospel is proclaimed.
    - In our passage, the proselyte is represented mainly by the Gentiles, some of whom were already proselytes to Judaism and who immediately became proselytes to Christ...
  - The apostate is the one who has long had the grace of God, and so who ought to be the first to rejoice in the good news of Christ,
    - but who instead coldly rejects the gospel as soon as he hears it and ends up being accursed.
      - In our passage, the apostate is represented by the Jews who have had the promises of God for generations,
        - but who here reject Christ.
- I would urge you all to examine yourselves as we look at this contrast between the apostate and the proselyte to see which you are.
  - Are you among those who welcome the gospel, or among those who reject it?
  - And consider also where some of your friends and relations are...
    - Are they among the apostates or among the proselytes?
      - Or perhaps they are among those who have never yet heard the gospel.
    - Consider where they all are and pray for them.

**I. The first contrast that is presented to us here is the difference in initial response of the apostate and the proselyte when they first hear the gospel.**

A. The one who is destined to become a proselyte begs to hear more!

1. Look at what it says about these Gentiles in verse 42:

- **Acts 13:42: So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath.**
- a. Grammatically this can be translated in a way that I believe fits the context a little better:
  - If you have a New King James, you can see it in the margin:
    - **Acts 13:42: “And when they [Paul and Barnabas] went out of the synagogue of the Jews, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath.”**
  - It seems more reasonable to suppose that as soon as Paul and Barnabas stepped out of the synagogue,
    - the Gentiles went to the synagogue officials and begged them to have Paul and Barnabas come back and speak on the next Sabbath!

- They approached the officials and said,
    - “That was tremendous! Please have them come back and preach to us again next week!”
  - Of course even if you keep the translation that is in our text, the effect is essentially the same...
    - Then you have the Jews going out and the Gentiles chasing them down and begging them to have Paul back again.
      - The main point is that these Gentiles are hungry for the gospel and they want more!
- b. This hunger is quite easy to explain!
- They just heard the best news that anyone could ever hear—a message that is worth having God repeat to you again and again...
    - They have just been told that Messiah came as promised to David,
      - and that He actually went to the cross according to God’s plan,
      - and that according to God’s plan, He was raised up to God’s right hand to reign forever,
        - and that whoever believes in Him has eternal life—being justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses.
    - This is the way to God!
      - This is the revelation of His mercy and grace to all peoples!
      - This is the way to complete peace with God!
      - This is the way to eternal life.
    - It is understandable that those who really believe this are going to want to hear it again and again!
      - If a young man meets the girl of his dreams, he doesn’t just think about her once for a few minutes...
        - he keeps on thinking about her.
  - How much more does a sinful soul who meets Jesus Christ who delivers from Hell become gripped with that!
    - I remember when I was first saved in university and people knew how I would get excited about something for a while and then get tired of it—
      - and my friends told me that it would be the same with Jesus, but it has been over thirty years now and it has not happened.
    - I do not say this to boast about my devotion...
      - I say this to boast about my Saviour and His inexhaustible beauty and glory.

- When I tell you how much I like my wife's cooking, I am not boasting about my appetite, but about the food she makes!

2. Hunger for the word is a mark of the elect.

- Does this hunger characterise you?
  - When you have once tasted of Him, you will beg for more—not because you have an extraordinary appetite, but because He is great.
- a. I don't mean to say that the elect are hungry for the gospel as soon as it sounds on their ears—
  - but I mean that the day will eventually come, if they are indeed elect, when they will truly hear the gospel and then they will beg for more.
  - The elect may be completely uninterested in the Word for years—or they may even utterly despise it...
    - but if they are truly elect, the time will come when they will have an insatiable appetite for the Word.
  - They will not be able to get enough of it.
    - You know Psalm 1—that we sang earlier
      - It says that the blessed man is the man who delights in the word of God and who meditates on it day and night!
      - He doesn't just walk away from it.
    - Proverbs 8:34 says:
      - **Pr 8:34 Blessed is the man who listens to me, Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at the posts of my doors.**
- b. Listen, I know that we all go through dry times.
  - Most often, these dry times come because of sin in our lives and because of worldly lusts that we are filled with,
    - They sap our spiritual vigour and make us cold toward the Word...
    - There are times when we, in our wretchedness, lose our focus...
  - But if you have never known hunger for the Word—
    - If you have never had your Saviour deal with you while listening to a sermon—
      - If you have never come to see the gospel as the best news you have ever heard—
      - If it has never gripped your soul and caused you to yearn to hear more...
        - then I have concerns for you—
        - You may not even be a true believer.

- It is very hard to truly believe the gospel and not be desirous to hear more!
  - It is a message the captures the attention of the elect—
    - It speaks to his innermost being and he hungers and thirsts for more.
- And I say, if you were once this way and are no longer this way,
  - you had better find out what has become between you and your Saviour.
    - Has your heart been taken captive by some sinful lust that dominates your mind? drinking? pornography perhaps?
      - I heard about an industrious man who only used the bottle occasionally—when his conscience bothered him...
        - And for years that kept him from ever coming to Christ.
        - Do you have something you run to instead of to God's Word? What is it? What will you do about it?
    - Or are you swallowed up by bitterness or fear or anxiety?
    - Or maybe it is something else that has taken the place that God's Word ought to have—
      - sports, shopping, fashion, movies, eating, gaming, music, your career, your hobbies—whatever.
      - Whenever you come to the word, you can't listen because all you can think about is these things.
  - Look, you very well ought to be zealous about your career and even about your hobbies—
    - but if you are zealous for these and have no appetite for God's word—
      - your soul is like a barren desert—a veritable wilderness and you need to be awakened to what it is to have God speak the gospel to you.
      - You have been blocking it out and you must stop at once.
    - Identify what it is and root it out if you must.
      - That's right, cut it completely out of your life if it is destroying your ability to receive the word.
      - Jesus said it was better to enter eternal life without a hand or an eye than to perish with them.
  - There is nothing so sweet and so excellent as the voice of the Lord and you are missing it.

TRANS> And I tell you, when the Lord's Word really has reached you and you want to hear more...

B. You will be industrious to find ways to hear more!

1. I am amazed at how industrious even little kids can be when they really want something.
  - If you ask them help and they don't want to, they can't figure out how to get the broom down and use the dust pan,
    - but if they are really taken with the candy jar,
      - you will see amazing skills at climbing and at getting through child protective locks with the greatest dexterity.
2. In our text, we find that those who are hungering for Christ are skilled at finding ways to learn more of Him.
  - Not only do they request that Paul and Barnabas be invited back the next Sabbath,
    - but they also track them down outside the synagogue and the follow them.
  - They follow them all through the week—
    - Verse 43 says:
      - **Acts 13:43: Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.**
    - You see that there are a number of Jews here as well as those who are called devout proselytes—
      - that is, Gentiles who had recently converted to Judaism.
    - This group is following Paul and Barnabas around and Paul and Barnabas are speaking to them and encouraging them to continue in God's grace.
      - They are already in the way of grace, and they encourage them to keep it up—to let nothing deter them!
        - Paul and Barnabas know that opposition will come so they encourage them to continue.
3. If you have the kind of hunger for the Word that I am talking about, you will do like these did who followed Paul and Barnabas...
  - You will read God's Word during the week and you will listen to sermons and you will read Christian books.
    - You will read blogs from God's servants or listen to messages on the internet.
    - We have so much available to us and you will make use of it.
    - If you don't know how to read, you will try to learn, just so you can read the Word.

- I see men in liberal churches where the word is not preached—and their wives have to drag them along...
  - but when a man is gripped by the gospel, he starts leading his family to the Word—
    - He seeks out places where he can hear the gospel and be fed because he loves the gospel.
    - When he travels, he looks for places where the Word will be heard.
      - He is industrious about finding the Word.
    - He will not move to a new place unless there is a solid church.

C. But the apostate wants to avoid the gospel.

1. An apostate is not merely someone who is not interested in the gospel...

- though that is true...
  - Nor is he merely someone who hates the gospel—though that is also true of him...
- But an apostate is a person who grew up in the covenant or at least has been the church for a long time,
  - and who has long had the promises of God,
    - sometimes in a fuzzy way like many of the Jews in the first century,
    - but whatever the case, the word is near to him and he despises...
      - especially if some upstart preacher like Paul starts to impress it upon him.
  - Many times, such persons will remain in a church where the gospel is not preached for generations...
    - They substitute being religious for following Christ.
    - And if anyone comes into the church and preaches the gospel, they will be very intolerant of it.

2. This is the case with many of the Jews at Antioch.

- They had long had the promises and the covenants that held forth the hope of Christ,
  - They had the law that set Him forth by types and shadows before their eyes at the temple,
    - but the word had not done them any good.
  - And so it was that when Christ was presented to them as finally come, they did not recognise Him.
    - They should have been the very first to recognise Him!
    - They should have been the first to rejoice that God had fulfilled all of those ancient promises.
      - Remember that Paul showed this to them!
      - But they were strangely cold and indifferent.

3. This is what you all need to watch out for—especially some of you covenant children.
  - It is your privilege to grow up with the gospel.
    - That means that you ought to love it best of all because you have had more time to consider what Christ has done!
    - You have had more time to search the scriptures and to understand the things of God.
      - But sadly, there are many covenant children that are cold and indifferent to the gospel that they hear each week.
        - They find ways to avoid it and get around it—developing avoidance skills.
      - They, in fact, have never truly heard the gospel—
        - Even though it is all around them, they have never really heard the voice of Christ calling them in their heart.
  - If that is the case with you,
    - you just need to come to Jesus at once and ask Him to have mercy on you.
    - He will.
      - You don't have to get it all worked out—you just need to come to Christ and ask Him for His saving grace.
      - But the one who is headed for apostasy is just cold and indifferent when the gospel comes to him.

TRANS> So that is the first contrast—

- The one destined to be a proselyte hungers for more when he hears the gospel...
- The one destined to be an apostate is indifferent when he first hears the gospel.

## II. The second contrast has to do with the spread of the gospel.

- **The hunger of the future proselyte is contagious...**
  - **But it stirs up the anger of the future apostate.**

A. Look first at the contagious enthusiasm of the future proselyte...

1. We are told in verse 44 that:
  - **Acts 13:44: On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God.**
  - a. Some have referred to this as hyperbole—and it is certainly possible that it was...
    - But I am not so sure.
    - Pisidian Antioch was a city of about 100,000 people, and when news reached everyone that men had come to town who were proclaiming that the Messiah had come,
      - You can imagine that the whole town would be abuzz.



- There would be a lot of curiosity about it if nothing else, and many people would want to check it out.
- b. What's more, we are not told that they went into the synagogue this time...
- There was an amphitheatre in town.
    - It may be that they had to go there to accommodate the crowd that came.
    - Whatever the case, there was a huge crowd that came to hear the word of God.
      - In verse 45, it is referred to as "the multitudes."
        - There were a **lot** of people!
2. I can assure you that this crowd did not gather because Paul and Barnabas promised to give out door prizes, or even because they put up posters around town to announce the event.
- I can also assure you that it was not because of those who were indifferent to the message.
    - It was on account of the enthusiasm of those who had been gripped by the gospel and were begging to hear more.
    - They had been meeting with Paul and Barnabas and the more they heard the more encouraged they were...
      - And they told their friends and their relatives and people came.
3. When the gospel grips you, you are like the woman at the well when she first met Jesus...
- She told everyone—
    - "Come see a man that told me all that I ever did—Could this be the Messiah?"
    - She encouraged them to come and see for themselves and many did.
  - You won't be able to keep quiet about the gospel when it has gripped you.
    - Especially when it first grips you!
      - After a while, people get used to you and you have already told them all about it,
        - but initially, there is a great stir and everyone wants to find out what has gotten hold of you.
- B. But look at what happens to the old dusty church goer (or synagogue goer) when the true gospel comes into his church and people start to get interested!
1. This future apostate liked it a lot better before the gospel came.
- He would like to see these upstart preachers silenced.

- They have no right to have all of these ignorant silly Gentiles following them.
  - They are making it too easy—with all this talk about justification apart from law-keeping.
  - So he begins to scoff and speak against the gospel they are proclaiming.
    - Verse 45 describes this for us:
      - **Acts 13:45: But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul.**
2. This is so sad!
- a. The apostate wants to justify his rejection of the message when everyone around him is accepting it—
    - And so he labours to find fault with the message and starts speaking against the gospel and even against the Lord Himself.
  - b. Envy is also such a destructive force.
    - Sadly, I would venture to say that envy has fuelled many doctrinal controversies in our day...
      - Some preacher seems to be getting more attention than others, and soon all the others are finding fault with him.
    - But don't misunderstand me here either...
      - I am not at all saying that we should never point out false teaching.
        - I showed you recently on Sunday afternoon how almost every epistle in the New Testament warns against false teachers...
          - Pointing out false teaching was a constant theme of Jesus and of His apostles and should be something we do too.
        - We should not do it because of envy, but because we care for the sheep who were being led astray.
          - But we must be careful that we do not speak against the truth because of envy.
  - c. When the truth is what is being spoken against—even the very gospel itself—
    - that is a very serious matter indeed!
      - There is perhaps nothing that Jesus hates more than those who war against the gospel that He did so much to obtain!
      - It is His gospel—the good news of what He has done for us—and it is very wrong of us to despise it.
- C. Paul and Barnabas now step forward to declare to the apostates that by their scoffing against the gospel, they cut themselves off from the hope of salvation!

1. They tell these Jews that they had first dibs on the gospel, but have now lost their privileges...
  - Look at verse 46:
    - **Acts 13:46: Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.**
  - Paul and Barnabas are not saying that they would not have turned to the Gentiles if the Jews had accepted the gospel...
    - They are saying that it is God's will that the Jews should be the first to hear—
      - after all, it was to them that all the promises had been made!
      - Christ came to fulfill the promises made to them—and to their fathers—to Abraham and Moses and David!
        - They were entitled to hear the news first and should have erupted with joy.
        - But instead they were unmoved,
          - and now when others are interested, they are attacking the gospel!
    - So now Paul and Barnabas are going to turn to the Gentiles.
      - The Jews have had their chance and they do not want it—at least many of them did not—so the day of opportunity is over for them!
      - And it will be for you too if you go on rejecting it.
    - Paul makes it clear that in opposing the Messiah that God sent for their salvation,
      - they are forfeiting the hope of eternal life!
      - They are cutting themselves off from the hope of their fathers.
        - With deepest irony, he says,
          - You judge yourself unworthy of eternal life.
      - It is so sad to have the word so near and still to reject it.
        - I mentioned this last week—there are so many people that will live and die without ever hearing the gospel.
          - How sad that there are those who hear it often and still count themselves unworthy of it.
          - Please don't deepen your rebellion by speaking against it as these Jews did!
            - That is the worst thing you could ever do!

2. Paul shows from scripture that it is God's will for him and Barnabas to take the gospel to the Gentiles.
  - Look at verse 47 in our text:
    - **Acts 13:47: "For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.'"**
  - a. This is a quote from Isaiah 49:6 about the Messiah who is called "the servant of the Lord."
    - And the overall thrust of the prophecy is that God is going to give the nations to Jesus to be saved by Him.
      - But Paul applies this to himself and Barnabas because he begins the quote with the words,
        - "The Lord has commanded **us**: I have set you as a light to the Gentiles."
        - Paul is serving as Jesus' agent in preaching the gospel of salvation,
          - so he sees the command to be a light to the Gentiles as a command to himself and Barnabas.
    - b. Understand that in a certain respect, this was a command for all of the Jews...
      - It was determined in the counsels of God that the Messiah would come for them,
        - And then that they would go out for Him to take the gospel to the nations.
      - All those Jews who received Christ were united with Christ, the light of the world, in that privilege.
        - Paul and Barnabas were Jews, and they are going out as light to the nations in the name of Jesus!
          - What a privilege!
      - The apostates might have joined them.
        - They did not need to be so envious.
          - They might have had the privilege of bringing in the harvest of the world for Christ!
          - What a privilege this would have been for them.
  - c. And this privilege is for all of you who are in the church today...
    - The gospel is here for us first, and the Lord has commanded us, saying:
      - **'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.'**
      - This is our privilege and if we do not do it, it will still get done, but it will be done without us.

TRANS> So you see what a contrast there is between the soon to be apostate and the soon to be proselyte.

- The one initially rejoices in the gospel, the other is indifferent...
- The one promotes the gospel, the other begins to speak against it...
  - And now see the final contrast...

### III. See where each ends up.

A. The apostate ends up accursed...

- We are told in verse 49 that the word of God is spreading—all throughout the region—
  - It is believed that Paul and Barnabas spent a good bit of time here.
- 1. But you see that the apostates, seeing the gospel spread, only increase their opposition.
  - a. This is something that we must always expect...
    - Whenever the gospel starts to spread, you can be sure that opposition will come.
      - And the quarter from which it will come will usually be from apostate religion using political rulers.
    - The opposition comes from apostates because they are filled with tons of guilt for rejecting the truth...
      - They may not face the reality that it is true, but truth has a way of haunting them because it keeps testifying to be true!
        - It bothers them to no end and they just want to crush it and make it go away.
      - Those who are the most religious are, you see, trying to prove that they are okay with God...
        - And those who proclaim the gospel make them feel uneasy because they keep saying things like,
          - “No one can be justified by the works of the law, but only through faith in Jesus...”
          - Apostates can’t stand to hear it!
            - That’s why they get so angry—their anger is not irrational—
    - b. So you see in verse 50 how they take up political machinery against Paul and Barnabas—anything to get rid of them!
      - **Acts 13:50: But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.**

- Notice that they enlist women in their campaign against the new preachers.
  - We are told by Josephus as well as some of the Roman writers that many women in the Roman Empire were attached to Judaism in the first century.
    - One Roman Satirist says that they were addicted to Judaism.
    - Many of these woman help high positions of influence,
      - some through their husbands, but some of them even held office as civil authorities.
    - These woman are probably mentioned first because there were more of them.
      - And as is often the case, they, being rich, were not as ready to receive the gospel...
      - And when the synagogue leaders complained to them about Paul and Barnabas,
        - they, along with the chief men in the city, were happy to pass an ordinance to expel them.
- As with the crucifixion of Jesus, the Jews are the ones who bring this about through the hands of the Roman magistrates in their region.

2. Now look at the awful response of Paul and Barnabas.

- a. I don't mean that it was wrong of them, but it was dreadful and awful for the apostates!
  - I am sure that the apostates had a hard time shaking the memory of the awful thing that Paul and Barnabas did.
  - I am sure that it was something that kept coming back to haunt them.
- b. They shake the dust off of their feet against these apostates!
  - Look at verse 51
    - **Acts 13:51: But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium.**
  - Do you know why I say that this is awful?
    - I say that because this was what the Jews did to show that people were accursed of God!
      - They are leaving the defilement behind and moving on.
      - They were putting these fellow Jews on the level of unclean Gentiles!
      - They are pronouncing that they are the bond-slaves of Satan, men that are past hope and worthy to be banished from the earth.

- Jesus appointed that this be done against those Jews that rejected and spoke against the gospel...
    - He did not command it be done for adulterers or perjurers or liars—but against those covenant people who refuse the word of God.
      - There is nothing worse than that!
  - c. This is the terrible curse that is spoken about in the first Psalm—
    - Their way perishes and they do not stand in the day of judgement.
    - By shaking the dust off of their feet against them,
      - Paul and Barnabas are pronouncing them to be apostates.
      - This is what becomes of those who are indifferent to the promises... who then begin to speak against the gospel... and then go on to scoff at it.
      - This is a dreadful thing.
- B. But the proselyte becomes a proselyte—he believes!
1. You see first of all that he is very glad to hear that Christ has room for him in His kingdom...
    - He wants nothing more than to be a part of this kingdom where there is total forgiveness and eternal life—
      - where there is reconciliation with God Almighty through such a gracious act as the sending of Jesus.
    - You see how the Gentiles’ response to Paul’s words that he and Barnabas were now to be lights to the Gentiles is described in verse 48:
      - **Acts 13:48: Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord.**
    - It always brings glory to God when people are glad about His saving work.
      - It has to bring glory to Him, because they are looking at what God has done and they are saying how gracious and excellent it is...
        - They are seeing how kind He has been and how beneficial His gospel is and how it brings them into union with the triune God.
        - And so they are able to see the glory of God—and to be His true worshippers.
      - But notice that it says in particular that they glorified the Word of the Lord!
        - Just as the apostates opposed and spoke against it, the Gentiles glorify the gospel.
        - It only makes sense to glorify the good news that salvation has come through God’s Son!
          - And Paul has just declared that this salvation is for them—in Christ!
            - That it is given to Him to be the salvation to the nations!

2. And so right here, and right now, they believe the gospel.
  - Verse 48 goes on to say:
    - **Acts 13:48: And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.**
  - a. Believing is the way we come to Christ and receive all His benefits.
    - When we believe we turn from trusting in our own way, or just trusting that everything will be all right or trusting in nothing at all...
      - and we trust in Jesus who was given to save sinners.
      - When you believe, you obtain everything because you take hold of Jesus who has every spiritual blessing for you.
  - b. But look at who it was that believed!
    - It was “as many as had been appointed to eternal life.”
      - This shows us that they did not come because they were better than the apostate Jews.
      - They came because God had chosen them to eternal life.
        - They could not boast in anything but Christ.
        - They would never have come if God had not appointed them to eternal life—
          - The word appoint that is used here often means to enrol—
            - God enrolled them, not in response to their believing,
            - but He had already enrolled them and that is why they believed.
    - My brothers and sisters,
      - You cannot boast if you have believed on Christ.
        - It is all of God’s free gift of grace.
        - The reason you had that hunger for the gospel was because God opened your eyes to see clearly how much you need it and how good it is.
        - And the reason you went on to promote that gospel when others were opposing it was because the Lord caused you to love the gospel and see what it would do.
        - And the reason you believed is because He had appointed you to eternal life and therefore gave you the gift of faith.
          - You would never have come to Him otherwise!
            - So give thanks!
            - Give much thanks to Him!

TRANS> Especially when you see where His salvation leads...

3. It leads to unquenchable joy!
  - Look at the very last verse—verse 52:



- **Acts 13:52: And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.**
- a. You see that it says that they were *filled* with joy and with the Holy Spirit.
  - The one goes with the other...
    - The Holy Spirit is the one who imparts new life to us and who attaches us to Jesus and His life.
    - He is the One who causes us to understand the Word and then to believe it and apply it and to love it.
    - He brings us into communion with God.
- b. And this is such a supreme joy that nothing can quench it...
  - The context is important here...
    - Paul and Barnabas have just been thrown out of town and yet these new proselytes are full of joy at this time!
      - Not because they are glad to see Paul and Barnabas go, but because they have been given new life with God.
  - What began with a delight in the gospel,
    - led to believing the gospel and receiving new life from Jesus as those who are completely justified by Him.
- c. When this is your possession, it doesn't really matter what happens to you.
  - Persecution can come but your joy will remain through it all.
  - You have everything if you have Jesus!

### **Conclusion**

So beware for familiarity that leads to contempt of the gospel.

- You are in grave danger if you are indifferent to the gospel now...
  - because soon you will be speaking against it...
    - and you will then be not far from being cursed of God.
- It makes no sense to despise the gospel...
  - It is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.
    - It leads to unquenchable joy through life in the Holy Spirit.
- What a difference there is between the apostate and the proselyte.
  - Which are you?