

The Gospel Polemic

Acts 13:42-52

Introduction

Our gospel, the gospel of Jesus Christ, is a polemic. It is an attack, an assault against every false religion.

“polemic” = ‘contentious rhetoric intended to support a specific position by forthright claims and undermining the opposing position.’

Wherever Jesus went, whenever He spoke, His Words and His ways were *polarizing*.

The gospel intrudes, it interrupts and disrupts people’s lives. The gospel divides.

Jesus’ Words immediately divided people into one of two categories:

- 1) those who are drawn and want to hear more, and
- 2) those who are repulsed and walk away.

Paul preaches Jesus Christ in Pisidian Antioch and the city splits in two.

The faithfulness of God in fulfilling Simeon’s prophecy: Luke 2:25-35

Jesus was well aware of the polemical nature of His mission:

Luke 12:51-53

John 3:19

John 3:36

Psalm 38:20

John 10:32

We have been *conscripted* to fight in a war between God and Satan, good and evil, truth and error.

Those who faithfully proclaim the gospel, the whole gospel, will have the same effect today because as Christians we become *cobelligerents* together with Jesus Christ.

v42

v43

Paul and Barnabas understood that it was only by God’s grace that they desired to hear more of His Word.

It is only by God’s grace that true seekers of truth are drawn to the Word of God.

1 John 2:19

It is only by His grace that genuine seekers of truth will continue to hunger to know more of God’s Word.

John 8:31

It is only by God's continuing grace that a true believer will *bear fruit* (Matthew 3:8; John 15:5).

Matthew 13:20-21, 23

The true gospel that divides but saves is by God's *grace* (freedom), not by works (bondage) (cf. v39).

v44

v45

"For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up." Matthew 27:18

The Word of God – the gospel of Jesus Christ is a polemic – it divides people and either draws or repels.

v46

The danger of dismissing the Word of God preached

Psalms 50:17

"Nevertheless, they were disobedient and rebelled against you and cast your law behind their back and killed your prophets, who had warned them in order to turn them back to you." Nehemiah 9:26

"you...judge yourselves"

John 3:18

John 12:47

John 12:48

People who resist the Word of God and reject Christ determine their own destiny.

v47

Paul is reminding them that their own prophets prophesied that God would include Gentiles in His plan of salvation. So why should they be jealous?

v48

The Jews were perishing because of their pride, jealousy and blatant disregard for God's Word while the Gentiles were getting saved, savoring God's Word, and rejoicing.

"appointed"

They are those whose names are written in "the Lamb's Book of Life" (Rev. 13:8; 17:8).

John 6:65

John 10:16

Ephesians 1:3-4

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14

v49

v50

v51

v52

The Words of Jesus are polarizing – they either draw you to Him, or cause you to resent Him.

I pray that you are among those who are drawn to Him, grown to love Him, and follow Him all of your life.