

Part 36 – Contradicting and Blaspheming Jews

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney Wednesday, May 25, 2016

† Acts 13:42-52

Last Wednesday we covered the last part of Paul's discourse to the people in the Jewish Synagogue. His sermon covered their Jewish history all the way up to God sending his Son Jesus here to be their Promised Messiah and then he warned them not to be like their ancestors and Jewish leaders who rejected Jesus and had him crucified.

We pick up tonight in verse 42 and Lord willing we will finish the rest of this chapter.

42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.

Now this is very interesting. We want to be very careful here that we understand what this verse is meaning. It can look confusing at the onset because here it says; "when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue" but in the next verse it says "when the congregation was broken up". Those that want to cast doubt upon the King James Version of the Bible are real quick to tell you that this verse was mistranslated by the King James translators. They say that it should have read "And when THEY were gone out of the synagogue," meaning Paul and his men. The Kings James haters will then throw in the little jab they like to throw in, "this is not in the BEST manuscripts," meaning the Alexandrian texts (Codex Sinaiticus) which was discovered in the 1800's in a garbage can waiting to be burned, instead of the Textus Receptus, which has been around since Jesus and His Apostles, which the King James Version is based upon, is somehow inferior.

So having said all of that, I'm sticking with the King James translators as written. I am of the belief that the Jews that "were gone out of the synagogue," was referring to a certain group of Jews that left before everyone else, due to their unbelief and anger over Paul's preaching. I believe that based upon verse 45 which mentions them again: "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy"

I like how my very favorite Bible commentator, Matthew Henry, explains it:

"They went out of the synagogue, not only to show that they did not believe the gospel, but because they were resolved they would not, and therefore got out of the hearing of those things that had a tendency to convince them. They stopped their ears like the deaf adder. Justly therefore was the gospel taken from them, when they first took themselves from it, and turned themselves out of the church before they were turned out of it. For it is certainly true that God never leaves any till they first leave him."[‡]

Adam Clarke's Commentary also agrees and he puts it this way:

When the Jews were gone out - That part of them in whom the words of the prophet were fulfilled, viz. those who, though they had the clearest relation of so interesting a history, would not believe it: they shut their eyes against the light, and hardened their hearts against the truth. There were other Jews in the assembly that did believe, and were saved.[§]

After word gets out about Paul's preaching, the Gentiles are eager to hear what he has to say as well, **the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath**. So while some of the Jews refused to listen and believe, we find that the Gentiles are more accepting and hungry to hear God's Word. And according to the next verse many of the Jews did want to hear the truth and stuck around.

You will find the same thing going on in Churches today. I can preach a message from God's Holy Word and there will be some in the congregation that are accepting of the Truth. They hear the preached Word, come under conviction and they want to hear more. But there will be others that hear the same message and reject it, allowing their flesh and sin to draw them away from God.

43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

"The congregation was broken up," that just means when the service ended and they left the Synagogue. Here we read about those Jews that WERE eager to hear more and also the proselytes. Paul and Barnabas is encouraging them to continue in the grace of God, meaning to continue seeking and following the ways of Christ because this is what is pleasing to God.

44 And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

Look at the power of the Word of God! "Almost the whole city," would be a lot of people. I wonder how large the Synagogue was. It must have been of fairly good size to accommodate all of those people.

45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

Here are those Jews that were mentioned leaving in verse 42 of our opening text. They were dead set against Paul and the teaching of Christ and they wanted everyone else to be against them too. Notice that they were jealous of the large crowd that they were drawing, they were "filled with envy." Jealousy can lead a man to do a lot of bad things. It all boils down to pride. If we weren't so prideful we wouldn't have a problem with jealousy.

Notice where they're jealousy and anger led them; "contradicting and blaspheming." Those are some powerful words my friend, and damning words. What they were contradicting was the message of the Gospel. Who they were blaspheming was the Lord Jesus Christ. They are on dangerous grounds and in danger of condemnation in hell because of this because he is disputing the truth about Jesus Christ. To blaspheme means that you are speaking evil against the Lord.

The unpardonable sin mentioned in the Bible is blaspheming against the Holy Ghost. **Matthew 12:31-32: Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. 32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.**

The context of those statements from Jesus was right after he had healed the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath day. Then he healed the man that was possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb.

All of this highly irritated the Pharisees and they tried to find a reason to kill him. While they were contemplating on that, all the people that witnessed the miracles that Jesus performed said this: **Matthew 12:23-24: And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?** In other words they were identifying Jesus as the son of David, meaning the Messiah, which would make him the Christ. Then in verse 24 **But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.**

This is where they blasphemed against him. We have preached about that before and as I explained then, what Jesus is saying is that you might blaspheme against him as the Son of man, the God man in the flesh and find forgiveness, but when you blaspheme against his holy nature, his Holy Spirit, meaning denying his deity, his power, and his glory, then you are rejecting him as the Savior and that my friend will condemn you to hell, because rejecting Jesus as your Savior means that you will not be saved. The Pharisees were denying the power of the Holy Ghost that was working in Jesus and they attributed his power to Beelzebub, meaning, Satan. So, these Jews that were **contradicting and blaspheming** are in grave danger of eternal destruction.

46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

That term, “waxed bold,” simply means that they did not fear these Jews and they were all the more determined to teach and preach the Truth of Jesus.

“It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you.” As we have mentioned several times already in this study, Paul’s desire was to see his fellow Jews be saved. Though Jesus commissioned Paul to preach unto the Gentiles and Peter unto the Circumcision (the Jews), Paul always tried to reach his people first. That is why he said this in **Romans 10:1-3: Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.**

You know, we are always to witness to folks but we need to realize that our duty is to tell them about Jesus, and then allow the Holy Spirit to work in their hearts. We cannot force someone to accept Jesus, they must be willing to do so. Paul says this to those blaspheming Jews: **but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.**”

These religious men have decided against believing in Jesus as their Savior. Paul said that they judged themselves **unworthy**. This is reflective in the teaching of Jesus in **Matthew 10:11-15: And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. 12 And when ye come into an house, salute it. 13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that**

house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. 15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

So, being “**unworthy**” means that they deliberately rejected Jesus and the Gospel, therefore they are unworthy to be saved by it. Let me say this. Anyone who deliberately rejects the Gospel, even one time, is in grave danger. There is no assurance that the Holy Spirit will come by your way again and convict you. I have heard of people that went to a Church service and were convicted by the preaching of the Word but they rejected it and walked out of the service and they never felt conviction again.

47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

Here Paul reveals to everyone God’s plan for his ministry, to be a light of the Gentiles. In other words, the instrument the Lord is going to use to bring the heathen Gentiles out of the darkness and into the glorious light of the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

“They were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord.” What a wonderful testimony of the work of the Holy Spirit. The Gentiles were “glad.” That word “**Gentile**” means; “**a tribe of foreigners, a heathen nation of non-Jews.**” Well I am glad too because I am a Gentile and so are all of you. There’s not any Jewish blood in my family. My descendants were not Jews, that makes me a Gentile. Thank God that he sent Paul to be a light unto the Gentiles.

50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coats.

Those blaspheming Jews were not going to give up until Paul and his team is out of the city. They cause such a disruption among the people that the only thing they could do was to throw them out of the city.

51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

There is that phrase again; “**they shook off the dust of their feet against them.**” That is their sign that they had done their part and were obedient to the Spirit by telling them the Truth of the Gospel, but the Jews rejected it, therefore, they gave them over to their own destruction and shook off the dust of their feet.

† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version

‡ Matthew Henry’s Commentary On the Whole Bible, Acts 13:42

§ Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible, Acts 13:42