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### **Ordained To Eternal Life**

Acts 13:48 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.

Arminians want very much to deny this verse, as it soundly destroys their man centered doctrines that deny the clear bible teachings of election and predestination of God's people, and their placing of belief prior to regeneration. Calvinists often approach this verse with an overly broadly application it out of all context. Nevertheless, there are very clear teachings that we can understand from this verse.

We can clearly see that the ordination to eternal life, i.e. election of persons by God, is a very real bible doctrine. We can also establish that belief in Christ is a result of this this ordination to eternal life, not the cause of it. Additionally, the context of Acts 13:42-52 shows that not even one of these Gentiles who was NOT ordained to eternal life believed. In other words, there was no believing found among these Gentiles who was not included in God's ordination to eternal life. Often Arminians want to claim that ordination to eternal life, election, is based on God foreseeing belief in a person. This verse shows the opposite is the case.

Finally, let us consider the context of this verse, and its use of the phrase "as many as". Who believed? As many as of these same Gentiles (contextually, proselyte Gentiles from the synagogue who are said in the surrounding context to have heard the apostles the previous week and desired to hear more of the gospel

message) who were ordained unto eternal life believed. (Note: The phrase "as many as" in English indicates that a surprising large number of the group involved are included, not a comparative few. This phrase also tells us that up to the maximum number of the indicated group are included, in this case, all the proselyte Gentiles that returned the next Sabbath to hear the apostles preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ again.) Additionally, there is nothing about this text that forces the Calvinist conclusion that all that are elect, i.e. ordained unto eternal life, in every time and place are guaranteed to both hear and believe the gospel. To form such a conclusion based on this text is to stretch it out of all context. However, we can be certain from this text that when and where one finds people believing the gospel message, these same ones were assuredly numbered in the ranks of them already ordained to eternal life, which was the root cause of their believing in Christ. It is indeed this ordination to eternal life that makes any gospel preaching profitable and upon which the success of all true evangelism depends. In closing, we see a notable example of this principle of the necessity of ordination to eternal life prior to belief in Christ demonstrated with respect to the evangelizing of the city of Corinth where we find the Lord said as much to Paul in Acts 18:9-11, "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them."