

ACTS 14:1-20

A. Paul and Barnabas In Iconium: (14:1-6)

1.

Acts 14:1 - And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.
- a. Paul and Barnabas go again into another synagogue. The gospel's **power** is so convincing that a large number of Jews and Gentiles believed.
- b. [so spake] is referring to the **manner** in which he spoke. Paul not only spoke with clarity, but also with zeal and **excitement**.
 - (1) **Their success wasn't due to organization, entertainment, amazing music, or great oratory. These things were not part of a synagogue! It was **solely** the power of their gospel message.
 - (2) **We have to continually remind ourselves that God's Word is **sufficient** to draw, convict, convince, and save-grow people. It is the Word of God that anchors one's soul.
- c. Paul was not offering the Kingdom nor Israel's prophetic program to these Jews. Also, it is good to remember that before Israel was set aside (after Acts 7), she had a spiritual **influence** upon many Gentiles. Many Gentiles had **heard** of God's dealings with Israel. So the synagogue was a good place to find both Jews and Gentiles. It says there was [a great multitude].

2.

Acts 14:2 - But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.

- a. It seems that wherever and whenever God is moving through His believers, Satan raises his **ugly** head to try and prevent truth from converting or entering the minds/hearts of people.
 - (1) Remember, it is Paul's cross message that made an open show of Christ's victory **over** Satan.

I Corinthians 2:7-8 - But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 1Cor. 2:8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.
 - (2) Most of the persecution against believers in Acts is done by, or led by, the **Jews**. Since they had apostatized from God and His Word, anyone else who proclaimed the truth was attacked in order to cover up their **own** unbelief and guilt.
 - (3) The unbelieving Jews' **hatred** of Paul's Christ ramped up the opposition against the grace gospel by trying to poison the minds of the Gentiles. These Jews had a negative influence upon the Gentiles and caused the Gentiles to **also** become upset and angered. They stood against Paul and his grace message.

Remember? I Thessalonians 2:14-16 - For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they *have* of the Jews: 1Thess. 2:15 Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: 1Thess. 2:16 Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

- b. Israel has gone from God's chosen people to reach the Gentiles, to being under God's national **judgment**. Acts is progressively illustrating this fact. In Acts, God is still dealing with Israel (remnant), but He is not dealing or working **through** Israel as the channel.

3.

<u>Acts 14:3</u> - Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.
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- a. Though Paul knew there was opposition, he also knew the importance of being biblically grounded. So **in** spite of the verbal attacks, they boldly continued to teach the gospel's truth.
- b. Question? Why would God give Paul and Barnabas the ability to perform signs and wonders?

Answer:

- (1) Remember that Paul was an **apostle** and Barnabas was a secondary apostle (one who is sent forth). Apostles were given these miraculous gifts at the beginning to give **credibility** to their message.

II Corinthians 12:12 - Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.

Also understand, for awhile there were no Pauline epistles with the new Dispensation of Grace and Mystery Program to know or study. Paul's new message, in synagogues, **needed signs!

- (2) Signs were **required** by the Jews as proof of divine endorsement.

I Corinthians 1:22a - For the Jews require a sign,

- (3) Signs were also a sign of God using **Paul** to establish His ministry to the Gentiles.

Romans 15:16-19 - That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. Rom. 15:17 I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. Rom. 15:18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, Rom. 15:19 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

Acts 15:12 - Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

4.

<u>Acts 14:4-5</u> - But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles. <u>Acts 14:5</u> And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use <i>them</i> despitefully, and to stone them,
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- a. Iconium was **divided** with some in Paul's corner, while many were in opposition to Pauline truth. It all had come to a head.

*Even today, this division happens when one stands for rightly dividing.

"Truth is never preached **unopposed**."

- b. Even with Jesus Himself this happened!

John 6:59-60, 66 - These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. John 6:60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? John 6:66 From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

John 7:38, 43-44 - He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. John 7:43 So there was a division among the people because of him. John 7:44 And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

John 11:45, 48, 53 - Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. John 11:48 If we let him thus alone, all *men* will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. John 11:53 Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death.

- c. Here, unbelievers turn from being a crowd to being a **mob**. They had in mind to stone and **kill** Paul. Israel and other Mid-East places have plenty of rocks!

B. Paul and Barnabas Go to the Regions of Lystra and Derbe:

1. a. Through someone, Paul and Barnabas were informed and made aware of the plot to kill

Acts 14:6-7 - They were ware of *it*, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about: Acts 14:7 And there they preached the gospel.

them. However, as we know, God takes **care** of His own by helping the information about the enemy to become known.

- b. Hearing of this, the missionary team used their heads and **fled** to Iconium in the area of Lystra-Derbe (South). They continued to preach the grace gospel.

Note: When one is moved by God to preach God's truth, regardless of the opposition or persecution, he does not **stop** proclaiming the gospel of grace. He may have to shake the dust off his feet at times, but he continues on preaching **until** - [II Timothy 4:6-7 - For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith:]

2.

Acts 14:8-10 - And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: Acts 14:9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, Acts 14:10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

a.

Paul and Barnabas are not at a synagogue here. They are out among the heathen (Jews and lost Gentiles) who are being pushed **out** by the Jews.

- (1) *Luke is painting the picture that the Jews don't want Paul's message, "Get it away from us!"
- (2) **Do you know of any other man in the book of Acts who healed a lame man? **Peter** did in Acts 3:1-9. As the Acts 3 miracle marked the Little Flock's ministry, the healing of the lame man here marks the Apostle Paul's **Gentile** ministry.

- b. This Gentile man, crippled from birth, was closely and **intently** listening to Paul's message. Paul **perceives** that this cripple believed, had faith within his heart (an Apostle's **insight** - Acts 5:1-5). So Paul shouts at this man to stand up and walk...and he **did!**

* Again remember, at the **beginning** of the Body of Christ the Scriptures were not complete.
* Paul, at the beginning, had gifts of the miraculous given to him by the Spirit. But also don't
* forget that, as scripture was being completed, miraculous gifts were being with**drawn**. Their
* credibility would be found in God's Word as they began to walk **in faith** and **not** by **sight**.

3.

Acts 14:11-13 - And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. Acts 14:12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. Acts 14:13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.

- a. The people of Lystra and Derbe, being pagan **idol**aters, did only what they thought was right. This man who had been crippled since birth, now leaping and walking before them, **moved them** to worship (idols).
- (1) In their pagan blindness of not knowing the true God, they think Paul and Barnabas are gods come down to them. They call Barnabas - Jupiter, the father of gods. Perhaps Barnabas looked **older** than Paul.
 - (2) They call Paul - Mercurius, the speaker of gods, since he was the **main** speaker.
- b. The religious priests of the city brought oxen and garlands to their idol temple to prepare for a sacrifice in the **honor** of Paul (Mercurius) and Barnabas (Jupiter).
- **Now we will see Paul's and Barnabas' response to all of this.

4.

Acts 14:14-18 - *Which* when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard *of*, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, Acts 14:15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: Acts 14:16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Acts 14:17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. Acts 14:18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

- a. When Paul and Barnabas **realized** that the people were wanting to sacrifice in their honor and worship them as gods, they began to **rip**, tear, and pull with violence on their clothes in utter abhorrence.

- (1) In **humility**, Paul tells/begs these idolatrous people to **stop** the music! He tells them that they themselves, Paul and Barnabas, were only worthless and vain. They needed to look only to the true living God. Only God was the true creator and sustainer of all. Their gods were only idols and worse - behind them were **evil** spirits.

1 Corinthians 10:19-20 - What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? 1 Cor. 10:20 But *I say*, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

II Corinthians 10:1, 10 - Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence *am* base among you, but being absent *am* bold toward you:
2Cor. 10:10 For *his* letters, say they, *are* weighty and powerful; but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible.

- (2) Paul explains that [in time past] God allowed all nations to go their **own** way. But also God has given proof of Himself by all the good things He has done for **all** - crops, water, shelter, rain, and provisions - yet they turned from God!

Romans 1:19-20, 28 - Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them. Rom. 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Rom. 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

- b. Paul explains, however, that was [in time past]. But now, your need is to turn from your sin and understand that God is once **again** among the Gentiles (Grace).

*Paul and Barnabas could hardly hold back the people from sacrificing.

C.

Paul Is Stoned

1. How fickle human nature is. Like Jesus when He rode into Jerusalem, the peo-

Acts 14:19-20 - And there came thither *certain* Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, supposing he had been dead. Acts 14:20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

ple cried out, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" - then only days later cried out, "**Away** with Him, crucify Him."

*Now with Paul, the people at Lystra would have worshipped Paul and Barnabas as gods - but they completely turn around to **stone** Paul!

2. Jews from Pisidia Antioch, in their bitterness against Paul and his **message**, had pursued Paul to Lystra. They persuaded those in Lystra that apostle Paul was an evil man, so evil that he should be put to death without delay.
- a. Stoning was a Jewish form of **capital** punishment (Lev. 20:2). They, as in Iconium, had the hatred to change the Gentiles' thinking and turn them around to **want** to stone Paul.
- b. This again shows the **fact** that Israel had already failed/passed her great crisis in her history (Acts 7), and Paul did **not** offer the Kingdom during his early ministry.

*Again, Acts is the primary story of the fall of Israel and God's reason for sending salvation to the Gentiles apart from His apostatized people.

3. Question? Was Paul actually stoned to **death**?
 - a. We know the people meant to put Paul to death, since stoning was a form of execution.
 - b. The word [supposing] doesn't mean imagining, but to conclude upon the **evidence** they saw.
 - c. The suddenness with which Paul arose and went into the city seems to indicate a **miracle**.
 - d. In II Cor. 12:1-5, Paul relates how he had been caught **up** into paradise - the **third** heaven - 14 years prior. This was about the time he had been at Lystra. We just can't be dogmatic about it.

**Paul says: II Corinthians 12:3 - [And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)]
4. Think about Paul's brethren and companions - heartbroken, they surround Paul. What do they **now** do? Then Paul **arises** and shows his courage by walking right back into the city (Lystra) where he had been stoned! The people must have been **influenced to Paul's message by this!**
5. These sufferings were not wasted, because there was **one** individual won to Christ at this time who would mean so much to Paul - **Timothy!**

Acts 16:1-3 - Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father *was* a Greek: Acts 16:2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Acts 16:3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

I Timothy 1:2 - Unto Timothy, *my* own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

II Timothy 3:10-11 - But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, 2Tim. 3:11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of *them* all the Lord delivered me.