

Acts 14 Acceptance and Opposition

In Iconium they entered the synagogue of the Jews together, and spoke in such a way that a large number of people believed, both of Jews and of Greeks. 2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the minds of the Gentiles and embittered them against the brothers.

3 Therefore they spent a long time there speaking boldly with reliance upon the Lord, who was testifying to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be performed by their hands. 4 But the people of the city were divided; and some sided with the Jews, while others, with the apostles. 5 And when an attempt was made by both the Gentiles and the Jews with their rulers, to treat them abusively and to stone them,

6 they became aware of it and fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the surrounding region; 7 and there they continued to preach the gospel. 8 In Lystra a man was sitting whose feet were incapacitated. He had been disabled from his mother's womb, and had never walked. 9 This man was listening to Paul as he spoke. Paul looked at him intently and saw that he had faith to be made well,

10 and he said with a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet!" And the man leaped up and began to walk. 11 When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they raised their voice, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have become like men and have come down to us!" 12 And they began calling Barnabas, Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, since he was the chief speaker.

13 Moreover, the priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds. 14 But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard about it, they tore their robes and rushed out into the crowd, crying out 15 and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men, of the same nature as you, preaching the gospel to you, to turn from these useless things to a living God, who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND EVERYTHING THAT IS IN THEM.

16 In past generations He permitted all the nations to go their own ways; 17 yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness." 18 And even by saying these things, only with difficulty did they restrain the crowds from offering sacrifices to them.

19 But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, thinking that he was dead. 20 But while the disciples stood around him, he got up and entered the city. The next day he left with Barnabas for Derbe. 21 And after they had preached the gospel to that city and had made a good number of disciples, they returned to Lystra, to Iconium, and to Antioch,

22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "It is through many tribulations that we must enter the kingdom of God." 23 When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they entrusted them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

24 They passed through Pisidia and came into Pamphylia. 25 When they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. 26 From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been entrusted to the grace of God for the work that they had accomplished. 27 When they had arrived and gathered the church together, they began to report all the things that

God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. 28 And they spent a long time with the disciples.

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

What questions were provoked within you?

Did anything confuse you?

Did anything move you emotionally?

Did God instruct you to do something?

Did you gain any insight into God's character?

Paul's Questions and insights

1. In a town that was receptive to the Gospel, a mixed community receives the message and believes. Why was that?
2. The trouble makers amongst the Jews create trouble for the mission, by provoking the Gentiles to be angry with the young evangelists.
3. How do you go about embittering someone against someone else?
4. Why was it, that even though they were under attack from the Gentiles, they remained in the town a long time?
5. What does it mean to you to rely on the Lord as they did?
6. God was confirming their proclamations with supernatural works and demonstrations of power!
7. In these days does God still work in this way?
8. To set captives free from sickness and demons – what does that mean?
9. Because of these destructive Jews the city was now in conflict. Can we expect conflict in these days?
10. Jews and Gentiles came together, made Christians their enemy and began to violently stone them, under physical attack the Christians fled the city.
11. Entering the new cities they pick up from where they left off and preach the gospel.
12. A lame man, lame from the womb, with no strength to walk, fixed his gaze on what the evangelists were saying. What does it mean to 'fix your gaze'.
13. Paul saw in him an expectation of faith to believe as he listened to the message.
14. He saw that he had faith to be made well.
15. Paul spoke to the man to act and to walk.
16. The man did and he did.
17. They tried to make disciples objects of worship, deity, but Paul and Barnabus dispel their intentions quickly.
18. Why do people worship what they don't know?
19. What would be the point of offering sacrifices to Paul and Barnabus?
20. The very thought of this intention appalled Paul and Barnabus, they knew what had happened with Aaron in the wilderness.
21. They found it hard to stop them and wanted to restrain them from making this dreadful mistake by saying 'we are as you are'.
22. Paul was fully aware of his need of salvation.
23. Historically, God had allowed all the nations to place themselves with the hope that they would remain faithful.
24. How was it obvious to Paul that the man had faith to believe he could be well?
25. Notice Paul spoke to the problem to change from a non-walking man to a walking, 'stand up' was his prayer.
26. Paul recognised that the worshipping of idols was a vain thing to do.
27. But faith in the God of all creation is where we need to direct our worship.

28. Historically, God permitted the nations to go their own way.
29. The only thing that God left for the nations to remain faithful was His provision and the continuation of the seasons.
30. How did the Jews persuade the crowd to go from worshipping Paul to stoning Paul?
31. Having been stoned they thought Paul was dead but he rose and went back into the city!
32. Even in the midst of this physical persecution, Paul continues to preach the gospel in the city.
33. Paul and Barnabus revisit the churches in the other cities that had received the message, with more teaching, truth and revelation.
34. Don't stop believing, keep on preaching, never give up despite persecution.
35. To safeguard the new Christians future to remain faithful, they appoint elders to oversee the new churches.
36. To commend to the Lord is to trust people to the Lord.
37. They returned to Antioch and reported to the rest of the church all that God had done through them.
38. Paul's great joy revealed how God had opened up a door of faith to the Gentiles, to come to Him through Jesus Christ.
39. The Antioch recovery period, they spent a long time in the city establishing God's people