

## THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

### Acts 14:1-18 | Session 36 | Amazement and Rejection

Chapter 13 was a pivotal point in the book of Acts. Saul and Barnabas left Antioch for their first missionary journey to take the Gospel abroad. From here on out, Saul is no longer referred to by his Hebrew name, rather from this point forward he will be identified by his Roman name, Paul. During this first journey, the Apostle Paul begins to preach a brand new aspect of the gospel which had never been preached before; a message that had been revealed to him by Christ; that is, not just the Jews, but ALL who believe in Jesus Christ are now justified (declared righteous by God) from ALL things, from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses. This was huge. Until now in chapter 13, the Gentiles were without Christ, had no hope, and were without God (Ephesians 2:12). The only hope a Gentile had was to become a Jew. Otherwise, there was no salvation for the Gentile. Therefore, we see Paul and Barnabas preaching the national kingdom gospel to the nation of Israel, and also the individual gospel of salvation by grace through faith.

Paul's preaching method was to go to the Jew first, to convince them that Jesus was Messiah. If the *nation* of Israel as a whole including the religious leaders of the Jews would believe, Jesus would honor their belief, come back, and set up his earthly kingdom. Jesus laid out the requirements for his return in Matthew 23:39. This was not an individual requirement, but national. With the revelation of grace given to Paul (Ephesians 3:1-9), God ushered in a NEW dispensation (The dispensation of grace) whereby, apart from the Law, any man, woman, boy, or girl can have everlasting life by receiving the gift.

In chapter 13:51, the Jews did not believe the message of grace or the national kingdom message, and Paul and Barnabas *shake the dust from their feet* (13:51) due to the *persecution* in Antioch Pisidia, and move eastward, about 90 miles, to the city of Iconium.

Chapter 14:1—

**Went both together into the synagogue...and so spake...both Jews and also...Greeks believed.**

Although we don't see it here specifically, we can confidently conclude Paul and Barnabas were preaching the exact same message they spoke in Antioch Pisidia.

Verse 2—

The result in Iconium is exactly the same as the response they received in Antioch Pisidia.

**Antioch Pisidia – contradicting and blaspheming (13:45).**

**Iconium – stirred up the Gentiles...made their minds evil affected against the brethren (14:2).**

Verse 3—

**Long time...abode...speaking boldly in the Lord.** Again, Luke makes it clear that any persecution they received only made them bolder. What were they *boldly testifying*? **The word of his grace.** They preached the grace message. And, they performed *kingdom signs and wonders*. These were apostolic miracles done by *apostles* during the time of transition.

Verses 4,5—

And, ironically, when the grace message is preached, it **divides** people as it did with those in Iconium where **part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles**. In this case, the haters made up of **both Gentiles, and Jews**, planned an **assault...and to stone them**. *Litho* – having to do with types of stone, and, *boleo*—to thrust or throw.

Verses 6, 7—

**Fled, katapheugo: pheugo** is to flee. When the prefix *kata* is placed before a word it intensifies it. They fled as quickly as possible. They didn't wait around but got out of town quickly, fleeing **unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia...** What did they do there after escaping death? **And there they preached the gospel.**

Verses 8-10—

**Perceiving that he had faith to be healed.** How was Paul able to heal this man? The answer is in verse 3, Paul and Barnabas were, by the Lord, **granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands**. These miracles were selectively performed by APOSTLES during the time of transition. Modern day faith healers should beware of presuming they have this apostolic power granted to them; they do not. The man stood up and **he leaped and he walked**. This reminds us of Peter's healing of the man who had been born crippled in Acts 3. These were miracles to validate the promises of the future kingdom as in Isaiah 35:6.

Verses 11,12—

The **people, saying in the speech of Lycaonia** (which Paul and Barnabas most likely did not know) said, **The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men**. The people undoubtedly had a mythical, pagan worldview. **Jupiter** is the Roman designation for the Greek god **Zeus**. Likewise, **Mercurius**, or Mercury is the Roman designation for the Greek god **Hermes**. The KJV translates them into their Roman names. **Jupiter** was the *father of gods (perhaps Barnabas was older?)*. **Mercurius** was the *messenger of the gods. (Paul was the main speaker?)*. The people were most likely thinking of a particular myth where Jupiter and Mercurius came down to the people of Phrygia, when all but one couple responded hospitably, the gods destroyed everyone else in a flood. Therefore, it is most likely fear driving their response to Paul and Barnabas healing the man.

Verses 13,14—

**Brought oxen and garlands...and would have done sacrifice.** At this point Paul and Barnabas figure out what is going on in that they would have recognized a sacred procession with sacrificial oxen. They would have certainly understood when the procession seemed to be directed toward them, not passing them by. **They rent their clothes**. The custom of tearing garments for mourning was a standard practice among Jews as well as among Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas ran into the midst of the crowd in order to make them understand what had really happened.

Verses 15-17—

**We also are men of like passions with you.** But, Paul goes on to say *we are here to tell you to turn from these vanities unto the living God...* We might say today, "I wish I could perform a miracle so people would believe!" But the response of the people was not belief in the one true God. Rather the evidence of a living God is the Creation! When Creation is denied, the One, True God is denied. That is why true evangelism begins with Genesis 1:1.

Verse 18—

**Even with these sayings...**After pleading and trying to get the truth across to the people, they barely **restrained** them from offering **sacrifice unto them**. Next time we will see just how quickly a crowd can change from worshipping a person to wanting to kill him.