

Acts of the Apostles – 14

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The Inspired History

- A. **Iconium** – Success and Persecution (1-7).
- B. **Lystra** – Healing and Stoning (8-20).
- C. **Derbe** – Confirming and Ordaining (21-26).
- D. **Antioch** – Rehearsal to Home Church (27-28).

The Sense and Meaning

- A. Paul and Barnabas travel to Iconium in Lycaonia after being chased from Antioch (1).
 - 1. Their method this trip (13:5,14), like others (17:1-4), was to visit synagogues (1).
 - 2. Content was history (13:14-22), Jesus (23-29), resurrection (30-37), faith (38-41).
 - 3. Many believed their preaching from among the Jews and among the Gentiles also.
- B. Unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles against the apostles and new believers there (2)
 - 1. The gospel is offensive, for it is contrary to the flesh and to Jews blinded to Moses
 - 2. Mormonism was offensive in Missouri and Illinois for its rampant polygamy.
 - 3. Catholicism has been offensive for its confessional and for sale of indulgences.
 - 4. The cross is offensive exceeding rational explanation (I Cor 1:17-24; Gal 5:11).
 - 5. Satan hates the gospel, and Jesus had warned of hatred, which came (Jn 15:18-21).
- C. Paul and Barnabas stayed long in Iconium with God confirming His word by miracles (3)
 - 1. The apostles were not moved by opposition, but boldly preached the truth in Jesus.
 - 2. The gospel is the word of His grace, for it is God's favorable mercy for repentance.
 - 3. Signs and wonders are not usually revelatory gifts, but rather confirming miracles.
 - 4. Prophecy and knowledge are revelatory gifts, but tongues and healing are sign gifts.
 - 5. For much more about **apostolic gifts**.
- D. Typical for the preaching of Jesus Christ (John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19), there was a division (4).
- E. When the persecution became violent, Paul and Barnabas fled to Lystra and Derbe (5-7).
 - 1. The objective of the opposition was to abuse them and stone them after an assault.
 - 2. There is a time to run and hide rather than pretend to be a hero and oppose openly.
 - 3. They never modified the message. In the new cities they preached the same gospel.
- F. Healing a cripple at Lystra first led the city to worship Paul and Barnabas as gods (8-13).
 - 1. This cripple had been impotent in his feet from birth – a severe malady for sure (8).

2. Paul as an apostle knew this man that had never walked had faith for healing (9).
3. Paul ordered him to his feet, and he leaped and walked, for the first time ever (10).
4. This trumps anything at a Benny Hinn show or by those presuming on Jas 5:14-15.
5. These superstitious devil-worshippers began to worship Paul and Barnabas (11-12).
6. A very similar error was made by the people of Tyre and Sidon to Herod (12:22).
7. The priest of Jupiter prepared to offer animal sacrifices to the humble apostles (13).

G. The apostles rebuked the worship, contrary to how Herod received divine praise (14-18).

1. Paul and Barnabas tore their clothes and ran among them to stop the worship (14)
2. Imagine what the popes of Rome would have done – put out a foot to be kissed!
3. The apostles used this event to further confirm their preaching against idolatry (15).
4. Vanities is the appropriate word for idols – worthless junk (Jer 10:8; Jonah 2:8).
5. They explained, contrary to papal adoration, that they were both only ordinary men.
6. All men are depraved, and they are more alike than different (Prov 27:19; Jas 5:17).
7. The best of men are still but men, and they should never be exalted above reality.
8. Evangelizing idolaters went from ignorance to the living Creator God (17:22-16).
9. Creation is primary truth on earth and in heaven (Jer 32:17; Acts 4:24; Rev 4:11).
10. God allowed nations to be ignorant, but He now ordered repentance (16; 17:30-31).
11. Before the gospel, His clarion call for repentance, God had had His witnesses (17).
12. Creation was a witness (Ps 19:1-6; Ro 1:18-20) and providence here (17:25-26).
13. This Epicurean-like witness by carnal things is found in Ecclesiastes (3:13; 5:19).
14. Paul and Barnabas barely kept the superstitious reprobates from worship (14:18).

H. These idolaters of Lystra showed their character when apostolic enemies came (19-20)

1. How could persons of adult age swing from divine worship to stoning and dragging!
2. The terrible nature of superstition is that it is as fickle as the human imagination.
3. Their supposition of his death would have been based on evidence, not guessing
4. It is traditional that Paul did die and may have visited heaven here (II Cor 12:1-4).
5. But Paul rose up as the disciples looked on his dead corpse and came into Lystra.
6. What courage Paul had to go into the city that had stoned him and dragged him out!
7. Paul and Barnabas then traveled to Derbe, which is the farthest point on this trip.

I. Our two reached the endpoint of the trip and reversed course to confirm believers (21-22).

1. They reached Derbe and taught many, and fruit will be found next trip (16:1; 20:4).
2. From Derbe they returned through Lystra and Iconium back to Antioch of Pisidia.
3. Their purpose was to confirm conversion, exhort to faith, and to endure tribulation.

4. Those that live godly lives in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution (II Timothy 3:12).
5. Jesus had taught continue in spite of personal loss (John 8:31-32; Matt 10:34-37).
6. Church assemblies should be for the same goals (Heb 3:12-13; 10:23-25; 12:1-4).

J. They ordained a plurality of elders in every church they had started in those cities (23).

1. If the time was about 45-48, they were 15-18 after Pentecost and 22-25 before Titus.
2. While elders used loosely fits deacons, we use it as a synonym for ordained leaders.
3. Peter, even as a chief apostle of Christ, called himself an elder this way (I Pet 5:1).
4. Plural elders plied partial gifts (Eph 4:11; I Cor 12:7-11,28; 13:8-10; Rom 12:6-8).
5. Remember how Antioch was a church full of different elders (Acts 13:1 cp 15:2,4).
6. Subsequently there are only bishops and deacons (I Tim 3:1-13; Philippians 1:1).
7. We understand the temporary offices of apostle, prophet, and evangelist extinct.
8. Ordinary bishops can do the work of an evangelist without being Philip (II Ti 4:5).
9. As Baptists, we reject the Presbyterian notion of in-between office of ruling elders.
10. New Testament bishops both rule and teach (I Ti 3:2,5 cp Heb 13:7 cp I Tim 5:17).
11. They are supported, unlike Presby elders (I Cor 9:6-14; I Tim 4:13-16; II Tim 2:4).
12. A N.T. church does not need a plurality of bishops any more than plural deacons.
13. We see Jesus Christ addressing a single star at each church of Asia (Rev 1:20; 2:1).
14. Titus by himself could do all needed for multiple churches in Crete (Titus 1:5).
15. Paul and Barnabas prayed with fasting for these churches and commended to Christ.

K. Paul and Barnabas retraced steps to Attalia and sailed to Antioch, skipping Cyprus (24-26).

1. Having reached Antioch (21), they covered the regions of Pisidia and Pamphylia.
2. They returned to Perga in Pamphylia (13:13), then went down to the port Attalia.
3. They sailed from the port Attalia without stopping in Cyprus for believers there.
4. It was likely impossible to strictly sail to Antioch without using a port like Seleucia.
5. The other elders at Antioch had appointed them to the work, and they finished it.
6. Every minister needs the grace of God – His merciful favor – to achieve any good.

L. Paul and Barnabas called an assembly of the church to relay the events of the trip (27-28).

1. This trip to preach to Gentiles in other parts of the world was a transcendent event.
2. For 4000 years in broad, inclusive terms, the Gentiles had been ignorant in unbelief.
3. Now God was no longer suffering or winking at such vanity, but commanded faith.
4. Paul and Barnabas stayed there until Jewish legalists forced their trip to Jerusalem.