

ACTS 14:1-21 FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY CONTINUES: ICONIUM, LYSTRA, DERBE

Having been expelled from Pisidion Antioch, Paul and Barnabas move east on the imperial highway into the province of Lycaonia whose major towns were Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. Iconium was 80-90 miles east of Antioch, Lystra another 18 miles, then Derbe 16 more. The entire geographic area was considered south Galatia by the Romans. Bible scholars agree that at least one year had passed since this journey began and that this final leg would take another. We are in or close to the year 48 AD.

14:1-6 At Iconium

v. 1 Iconium (present day Konia, Turkey): a flourishing commercial city and capital of the small province of Lycaonia. Enough Jews lived here to have a _____.

Here the pattern of Paul's ministry is reaffirmed; he spoke first in the _____. There he found prepared hearers both of _____ and of _____, but predominantly among the latter. Compare 17:1-4.

v. 2 Negative Response: "*but the unbelieving* (lit., disobeying) _____ *stirred up the* _____;" also a pattern. Here the animosity produced by slander and libelous rumors was directed at the believing brethren.

v. 3 The Nature of Their Ministry

1. "*A long time, they abode speaking...*" How long? 8-9 months.
2. "*they spoke boldly in* (ἐπι/ epi, hence "upon," "in reliance upon" as in NASV) *the Lord.*"
3. "*who* (i.e., the Lord, KJV "which") *kept bearing witness to the word of His grace.*" That is, they kept preaching the grace message of the Gospel as at Antioch (13:43) and He kept confirming their message.
4. "*by granting* _____ *and* _____ (miracles) *to be done by Paul and Barnabas.*" Observe that Barnabas is called an apostle here in the loose sense of the word, i.e., "a sent one with a message" (see also v. 14).

v. 4, 5 Division: A Result of Preaching a Grace Gospel Just as Jesus foretold (Matt. 10:34-37).

A Mob Scene: Jews and Gentiles with their respective rulers (local magistrates, not Roman officials) sought to abuse and to stone Paul and Barnabas.

14:6-20 At Lystra

v. 6 Paul and Barnabas flee 18 miles south to Lystra. Since their antagonists were local magistrates and not Roman officials, they are not pursued by Roman soldiers. Observe that our missionaries instead of retreating in the face of opposition push further into Gentile territory.

v. 7 They evangelize the area; the verb εὐαγγελίζω/euaggelizo is a imperfect periphrastic. Such activity took time as the verb implies. Apparently, there were no synagogues in the immediate area.

The Lame Man Healed at Lystra

Luke is led by the Holy Spirit to record in detail a special miracle and its effect on the populace of Lystra.

(OVER)

v. 8 Detailed Description of the Man by Luke the Physician

- “A certain man... impotent in his feet” - no strength; no mobility
- “A cripple, a lame man, since birth” – not a recent malady
- “Who had never (οὐδεποτε/oudepote) walked” – completely immobile since birth, not one step, ever!

v. 9, 10 Instantaneous, Complete, Lasting Healing by Paul

- “faith to be healed” = σωζω/soso in aorist passive infinitive. *Soso* can be used for physical deliverance or for spiritual deliverance (“to be saved”). For faith and *soso* in the healing sense, see Matt. 9:21, 22. For healing with no mention of faith, see Acts 3:2-11; 9:32-35.
- Paul said, “stand up.”
- “And he leaped (aorist active indicative) and walked (imperfect active indicative).”

v. 11-13 The Dramatic Effect Upon the People of Lystra

- **v. 11** “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men” i.e., “you are actually _____, not _____; only like men!”
Near the city gate of Lystra stood the temple of Zeus, chief god in the Greek pantheon. The people of Lystra worshipped Zeus and all the other Greek gods: Apollo, Asklepios, Ares, Hermes, etc. plus their female goddess counterparts.
- **v. 12** They call (imperfect tense):
Barnabas - _____ (Greek) = Jupiter (Latin)
Paul - _____ (Greek) = Mercurius (Latin)
Observe that Barnabas received the higher title, Zeus, probably due to his bearing; whereas Paul, the chief spokesman, the title Hermes (Son of Zeus and herald of the gods).
- **v. 13** Led by the priest of Zeus with oxen and garlands, the city turns out to worship Paul and Barnabas as gods! Not many days hence, they will stone Paul!

v. 14-18 The Reaction of Paul and Barnabas: “We are men of like passions, like natures.” Paul’s restraining message to these Gentile pagans (note how different from that to the Jews and Greeks in Pisidion Antioch):

1. “there is only one God; He is the living God; turn from these vain ideas about gods;
2. “the one true and living God is the creator; He is omnipotent;
3. “our God witnesses to His essential grace by common providential goodness - rainfall, harvest, abundance, joy. See Rom. 2:4.”

v. 19 The fickle Lyconians with hostile Jews stone Paul, drag him out of the city, and leave him for dead.

v. 20 With a handful of disciples around him, bruised, bloody and weak, Paul rises AND GOES BACK INTO LYSTRA! How Barnabas was spared, we are not told. They leave for Derbe.

14:2-21 At Derbe

Paul and Barnabas’ work in Derbe is covered in one-half of a sentence. Derbe (modern Zoska) was the most eastern town in south Galatia. There they preached the gospel (euaggelizo) and made many disciples, one of whom must have been Timothy (compare 16:1, 2).

At this point, Paul is confronted with a crucial decision; should we follow the imperial military highway another 160 miles east and through the Cilician Gates (pass) and on to Tarsus, my home town; or should we retrace our steps back and establish the believers who got saved this past 1 ½ years? They opt to turn back to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch!

WHAT COURAGE! WHAT CONCERN! WHAT DEVOTION TO CHRIST!