

THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Doctrine and Duty for Disciples Series

Acts of the Apostles

"Persecutions Followed by Blessings"

Acts 14:1-18

The Gospel Reaches Iconium

[1] Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed. [2] But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. [3] Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. [4] But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles. [5] And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them, [6] they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region. [7] And they were preaching the gospel there. [8] And at Lystra there sat a certain man, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked. [9] The same heard Paul speaking: who, fastening his eyes upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be made whole, [10] said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up and walked. [11] Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" [12] And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. [13] Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, intending to sacrifice with the multitudes. [14] But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out [15] and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, [16] who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. [17] Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." [18] And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them.

Discussion Questions:

1. If the leaders of the synagogue in Antioch expelled Paul and Barnabas, why would they again start preaching in the synagogue in Iconium?
2. In retrospect, what blessing came from being persecuted in Pisidian Antioch and moving on to Iconium?
3. What was the reason for Paul and Barnabas to *stay a long time* (vv.2) in Iconium and how did the new believers' benefit?
4. At Lystra what do you supposed Paul *observed* of the crippled man to realized that he had faith? How is it obvious to others that a person has faith in Jesus?
*Self-Reflection: Do you think it's obvious to others that you have faith in Jesus?
5. Paul was able to heal with the power of God, but is biblical to advertise a *healing service*? Why do some churches do this?
6. Although Paul and Barnabas were preaching Jesus in Lystra, why would the people think they were Zeus and Hermes? How were their response honoring to God?
7. How did Paul preach differently here than to the Jews? (vv. 15)
8. Paul and Barnabas obviously lived a life as disciples of Christ. They traveled afar to preach the gospel and faced persecution, humiliation, and opposition but it did not deter them from their mission. They continued using their time, talent, and treasures to further the gospel.
 - What temporal things/relationships did they sacrifice for the gospel and eternity?
 - Discuss how these verses may discourage or encourage you.
 - How does your mind set on eternity change how you live your life daily?