

“The Stoning Of The Apostle Paul”

Acts 14:1-20

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Teaching Aim: To follow Paul and Barnabas during some of the more difficult days in their First Missionary Journey. To realize, the harder the attacks came against them, the more persistent Paul and Barnabas were to carry out their mission. To recognize, God blessed Paul's ministry with signs and wonders done through the power of the Holy Spirit. To realize Paul and Barnabas would not take the credit for what God had done but were quick to give all the glory back to Him.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD'S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: Paul and Barnabas minister in Iconium for many days (Acts 14:1-7)

1. As we join today's study, Paul and Barnabas were having great success in reaching the Gentiles in the region of Galatia. In **Acts 13:48**, Luke writes, *“Now when the Gentiles heard this (meaning the gospel), they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.”* Who were the ones who believed? Who was stirring up trouble behind the scenes? (See **Acts 13:49-50**) How did Paul and Barnabas react to the persecution coming against them? (See **Acts 13:51-52**)
2. What was the next city that Paul and Barnabas traveled to (**vs. 1**)? Where did they choose to minister? Why? What was the result of their ministry?
3. Who began to poison the minds of many Jews along with the Gentiles (**vs. 2**)? Why do you think they did this? Do you still find unbelievers today stirring up trouble against Christians when they live out their faith and openly share the gospel with others?
4. How did Paul and Barnabas respond to the opposition against them (**vs. 3**)? How did the Lord respond to the boldness of the apostles? Were miracles the norm throughout the days of the Bible, or only in a few transitional periods? In what three periods of biblical history do we find a flurry of miracles taking place? What was God's purpose in performing miracles? Do you think Paul was referring to these same miracles in **Gal. 3:2-4**?

5. According to **verse 4**, how did the city respond to the teaching of Paul and Barnabas? Who was trying to draw the people away from them? Note: When people preach the gospel boldly without compromise, it inevitably causes division. Why do so many churches sacrifice the Scriptures today to avoid controversy? What do you see happening in those churches that do compromise the truth of the gospel?

6. What are the essential elements of the gospel message? How can you use each of the following verses to share the gospel message? (See **Rom. 3:23; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; John 3:16**)

7. What does the word “*apostle*” mean? (Hint: Search Online) Notice that Paul and Barnabas are both referred to as “*apostles*” in **verse 4**. Are they “*apostles*” on an equal level? Why or why not? Why is Paul often included on the same level with the original 12 apostles? (See **Acts 9:1-9**) The Bible talks about a second group of apostles at a lower level, they are similar to modern missionaries who are “*sent out by a church*.” Who are some of the lesser apostles in the Bible? (See **Acts 14:14; Rom. 16:7; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2:6-7**)

8. What caused Paul and Silas to finally depart from Iconium (**vv. 5-6**)? What horrible plan had the Jewish religious leaders come up with to get rid of them? Was it the Jews alone, or had many Gentiles joined them in their wicked scheme? Where did Paul and Barnabas flee to? How do we know that the Jews inspired this evil uprising (**vs. 5**)? What appears to be the charge? (See **Lev. 24:15-16**)

Part II: The healing of a man born crippled in Lystra (Acts 14:7-14)

1. What did Paul and Barnabas do as they fled to Lystra, Derbe, and to the surrounding region (**vs. 7**)? Note: It is important to realize that persecution did not stop the apostles from preaching the gospel everywhere they went. Why do you think most Christians do not share the gospel with anyone else today? When is the last time that you shared the gospel with a non-believer?

2. While in Lystra, God began to work through the Apostle Paul in a powerful way. Who did Paul come across as he was preaching in Lystra (**vs. 8**)? How severe was this man’s disabilities according to **verse 8**? Who else came across similar situations? (See **Acts 3:1-8; 9:32-35**) What was the result in both cases?

3. Apparently, while Paul was preaching at Lystra, he observed this crippled man who was watching him intently. What did God supernaturally reveal to Paul (**vs. 9**)? How did Paul respond to this nudge from the Holy Spirit (**vs. 10**)? Have you ever followed the Holy Spirit's leading in your life?

4. What did the crippled man do in response to Paul's command (**vs. 10b**)? How do we know that this healing had to be a miracle from God? What are the similarities between the healings in **Acts chapter 3** and **Acts chapter 14**? How does the miracle in **Acts chapter 14** demonstrate that Paul was now equal to Peter in apostleship?

5. How did the people respond when they saw the man who had been crippled from birth walking and leaping (**vs. 11**)? Did Paul and Barnabas realize what was happening at this point? Why or why not?

6. Why do you think the Lyconians called Barnabas "Zeus" (**vs.12**)? Why did they call Paul "Hermes?" Note: John MacArthur writes: *"The strange reaction by the people of Lystra to the healing had its roots in local folklore. According to tradition, the gods Zeus and Hermes visited Lystra incognito, asking for food and lodging. All turned them away except for a peasant named Philemon and his wife, Baucis. The gods took vengeance by drowning everyone in the flood. But they turned the lowly cottage of Philemon and Baucis into a temple, where they were to serve as priest and priestess."* Why do you think the people of Lystra didn't want to make the same mistake as was in this legend?

7. What do we find the priest of Zeus preparing to do in **verse 13**? What brought alarm to Paul and Barnabas? What was their response in **verse 14**? How was this different from the way King Herod Agrippa I responded when the people of Tyre and Sidon worshiped him in **Acts 12:21-23**?

Part III: Paul and Barnabas reject worship from the people of Lystra (Acts 14:15-20)

1. What question did Paul ask the people in **verse 15a**? Did Paul refute them by using the Hebrew Scriptures, or did he reason with them from creation? Why? What did Paul say in **verse 15a** that angered the masses in Lystra? Why would this anger them?

2. The people of Lystra were guilty of doing what Paul describes in **Rom. 1:18-24**. How do you see our nation today becoming more and more guilty of the same? What kind of gods do you see the American people worshipping? Are they worthless things?

3. According to **verse 16**, in bygone generations, God had allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. What can we learn from **Acts 17:30-31**? Should we still be calling people to repentance today as we share the gospel?

4. Rather than using the Scriptures, Paul uses “*general revelation*” in his effort to connect with his hearers (**vs. 17**). W. Robert Godfrey says, “*General revelation, properly speaking, is God’s clear display of His glory and power in the works of creation and providence.*” What aspect of general revelation did Paul use in **verse 17**? How do we see the goodness of God in this?

5. How did the people of Lystra respond to the pleas from Paul and Barnabas not to worship them (**vs. 19**)? What dramatically changed the situation in Lystra (**vs. 19**)? How far had these angry Jews traveled to kill Paul? Where was Barnabas as this went on?

6. What makes a mob mentality so dangerous? What are some ways that you see the mob mentality at work today? Why do you think the mob turned so quickly on Paul? What did the Jews persuade the people of Lystra to join them in (**vs. 19**)? Do you think Paul was actually dead? (See **2 Cor. 12:2-6**) Is it more likely that Paul was knocked unconscious with serious injuries? Why did the citizens drag the body of the Apostle Paul outside of the city?

7. What incredible miracle took place in **verse 20**? Do you think this was an answer to the prayers of God’s people? How can we be sure this was a miracle healing from God? What did Paul do once he got up? Would you have gone back into the city, or would you have gotten as far away as you could from the murderers? Why?

8. What kind of an impact do you think Paul’s return into the city made on the residents? Who may have been watching as Paul was stoned and then raised up to minister once again? (See **2 Tim. 1:3-5**) Do you think it is possible that Timothy remembered this incident when Paul wrote to him **2 Tim. 1:6-7**? There is a lot of truth to the saying, “Right now counts forever.” How can the way we handle our trials today make an eternal impact on others?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- Paul and Barnabas chose cities to preach in from which the gospel message could spread.
- Preaching at the synagogue in Iconium, a great number of Jews and Gentiles came to faith in Jesus.
- Jewish opposition led Paul and Barnabas to stay in the area longer.
- Only after Paul and Barnabas were threatened with death did they leave Iconium.
- Signs and wonders accompanied the ministry of the Apostle Paul.
- The healing of the man crippled from birth put the Apostle Paul on an equal level with the Apostle Peter; the miracles in **Acts 3:1-8** and **Acts 14:8-11** are very similar.
- In contrast to King Agrippa I's reaction, Paul & Barnabas refused to accept human worship.
- Paul and Barnabas were quick to give all glory to God, so should we.
- God did a great miracle in healing the Apostle Paul following his being stoned and left for dead.