

## The Conclusion of the First Missionary Journey

### Acts 14:1-28

#### Introduction:

Some people glorify the life of a missionary. The truth be told, the life of a missionary is often filled with danger, deprivation and sacrifice. That is true today, and it was true for Paul and Barnabas as well. In this chapter we read of the last stops on the first missionary journey. This mission lasted about two years, but was filled with danger and challenge and triumphs. The apostles had been chased out of Antioch of Pisidia, and so they move on to a city called Iconium. Though located in a Roman province this city was more Greek than Roman. It was an important Roman military base, which may have given Paul some security due to his Roman citizenship. While God affirms their ministry, there are those who soundly oppose what they are doing. Not easily discouraged the two continued to new town, new crowds, with the message of life through faith in Jesus. Would we be so determined and committed to the task? Are we?



### **Paul and Barnabas in Iconium – Acts 14:1-7**

1. Where do Paul and Barnabas begin their ministry in Iconium? (v. 1) Who do they meet there? What was the initial response to their preaching?
2. Who causes the problems for the disciples (v.2)?
3. Verse 3 starts with an interesting transition – “so” (NIV & ESV) or “therefore” (NASB). (KJV simply ignores the transition word). How would you understand the transition from persecution to staying longer to minister?
4. How did God confirm that the disciples made right choice to stay and preach longer? (v. 3)
5. What was happening in the city even as the disciples continued their ministry? (v. 4) Is this unusual?
6. What caused the apostles to leave the city and head for Lystra and Derbe? (vss. 5-6) (Please note: there is a time to stand and turn the other cheek, and there is a time to flee for your safety) What did Paul and Barnabas do in these cities? (v. 7)

### **Miracle in Lystra – Acts 14:8-18**

7. In Lystra the apostles meet a man in need. Describe his circumstances. (v. 8)
8. In verses 9-10 we read how God ministers to this man through Paul. Describe what happens. Compare this to Acts 3:1-7.
9. When the crowd sees what has happened, how do they respond? What do they think is happening, and what is their plan? (vss. 11-13)
10. In verse 11 we are told that the people are speaking a dialect called Lycainian, so Paul and Barnabas may not have understood what was

happening at first. When they discover what the crowd was going to do, how did they respond? (vss. 14-15)

11. In verse 15 Paul attempts to shift the focus from the Greek gods to the one true God. What event does he take the people to demonstrating the power of God?
12. Paul goes on to tell of what theologians call “General Revelation,” which refers to the way God can be known by everyone, whether they heard the Gospel of Jesus or not. Describe the general revelation Paul mentions. (v. 17)
13. What did the people want to do for the disciples? (v. 18) Imagine the emotions of the crowd as they thought they had gods among them and then told they were just human.

#### **Paul Stoned at Lystra – Acts 14:19-23**

14. Talk about highs and lows: who shows up and persuades the crowd that Paul is dangerous? (v. 19) What do they do to Paul? (v. 19)
15. In verse 20 it appears the believers gathered around what they assumed was a dead Paul. Imagine their surprise when Paul got up! Where did he go? (v. 20)
16. We notice that after a successful ministry in Derbe, the Apostles retrace their steps and go back to the cities they preached in on the way to Derbe. Imagine going back to Lystra after being stoned there! What was the purpose of the second visits to these communities? (v. 22)
17. Paul speaks about tribulations coming upon believers. How credible is his message?
18. What important step is taken in each of the cities where the Apostles ministered? (v.23) What shows the importance of his step in this verse?

## **The Last Leg of the Journey – Acts 14:24-28**

19. We are told that Paul and Barnabas travel through Pisidia, Pamphylia, Perga and then Attalia before arriving back in Antioch. What indicates that this is the home base for their ministry? (cf. v. 26)
  
20. What did Paul and Barnabas do in Antioch according to verse 27 and 28? Was this important?

### **Conclusion:**

Among the Greeks there was a story of Zeus and Hermes appearing in a village in disguise, and the village treated them poorly, all except for one old couple, Philemon and Baucis. Though poor and elderly they did what they could to entertain these strangers in the village. The gods then revealed themselves and punished the village but rewarded the old couple by turning their house into a temple.

This was in the minds of the people of Lystra as they saw the lame man healed. This must be a visitation by the gods, and they were careful not to be found inhospitable. Of course, they were wrong about who Paul and Barnabas were. As they clearly indicated, they were mere mortals like everyone else.

Why do people want to look everywhere but to the living God for their hope? We might think the people of Lystra are very naïve and childish, but people today look for gods to sacrifice to that are not the true God: science, philosophy, governments, even false religions. May God grant us the courage and wisdom of Paul to point people to the one true God revealed in Jesus Christ. And may there be those, like the lame man, who will walk into a new life of faith.