

Acts 14:1 ¶ And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.

Acts 14:2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.

The next stop in the travels of Paul and Barnabas was Iconium, the capital of ancient Lycaonia, today known as Konya, the seventh most populous city in Turkey. Again, they went first to the synagogue and spoke; and a great multitude of Jews and Greeks became believers. As in Antioch of Pysidia, the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentile population and turned them against Paul and Barnabas.

NIV Commentary: "The name 'Iconium' is probably Phrygian, but a myth was invented to give it a Greek meaning. According to the myth, Prometheus and Athena recreated humankind after a devastating flood by making images of people from the mud and breathing life into them. The Greek for 'image' is 'eikon,' hence the name Iconium."

Acts 14:3 Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

Acts 14:4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.

Acts 14:5 And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use *them* despitefully, and to stone them,

Acts 14:6 They were ware of *it*, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about:

Acts 14:7 And there they preached the gospel.

Active opposition against them did not deter Paul and Barnabas; they stayed a long time speaking boldly about the grace of God and doing signs and wonders attesting to the truth of their message. Still, the city was divided in opinion about the apostles. Eventually, some of the Gentiles and Jews led by the Jewish religious leaders planned to stone them; and their plan became known by the apostles. They then fled to the nearby cities of Lystra (about 20 miles away) and Derbe (about 20 miles from Lystra) to continue spreading the gospel.

Acts 14:8 ¶ And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:

Acts 14:9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

Acts 14:10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

Acts 14:11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

Acts 14:12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.

Acts 14:13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.

In Lystra Paul and Barnabas encountered a man that had been crippled since birth; he had never been able to walk. Paul noticed his expression as he listened and could tell that the man “had faith to be healed.” I think this would have to have been a revelation to his spirit by the Holy Spirit. Paul spoke loudly and told the man to stand up on his feet, and immediately the man leaped up and walked! The people that saw this recognized it as a mighty miracle, and concluded that Paul and Barnabas were “gods” in the form of men; they identified Barnabas as Jupiter and Paul as Mercury (messenger god of Jupiter) since he was the main speaker. Since the people were speaking in Lycaonian, it seems that Paul and Barnabas didn’t fully comprehend what was happening until the priest of Jupiter came out to offer sacrifices before them at the gates of the city.

Interesting explanatory note from Guzik: “The people of Lystra had a legend that once Zeus and Hermes visited their land disguised as mortals, and no one gave them any hospitality except for one older couple. In their anger at the people, Zeus and Hermes wiped out the whole population, except for the old couple. This may help explain why the Lystrians were so quick to honor Paul and Barnabas.”

Acts 14:14 Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

Acts 14:15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

Acts 14:16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

Acts 14:17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

Acts 14:18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

Once Paul and Barnabas realized what was happening, they tore their clothes as a sign against such blasphemy and ran out to put a stop to what was happening. They told the people in no uncertain terms that they were not gods; they were only men. They basically told them that they should turn away from belief in their impotent false gods to “the living God,” the creator of heaven and earth and everything in them. They added that although God had allowed men to live according to their own choices, He had not left Himself without a witness to His sovereignty and goodness throughout creation—providing rain from heaven, crops in their seasons, and many blessings to fill both tummy and heart. They barely kept the people from sacrificing unto them despite their strong protests against it.

I think it is important to note how important it was to Paul and Barnabas to turn

all attention away from themselves toward God. It seems that there are far too many “pastors” and leaders in the church today that are far more interested in directing the attention toward self.

Acts 14:19 ¶ And there came thither *certain* Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

Acts 14:20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

Once again Paul and Barnabas face opposition being stirred up by some of the same Jews that opposed them in Antioch and Iconium. They were so convincing in their accusations that the people stoned Paul, drug him outside the city and left him for dead. Thankfully, they were wrong. The disciples who had chosen to follow him witnessed a miracle of healing and restoration, and Paul returned to the city only to depart the next day with Barnabas to Derbe.

Acts 14:21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and *to* Iconium, and Antioch,

Acts 14:22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

Acts 14:23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel and taught many in Derbe; then they retraced their steps through Lystra, Iconium and Antioch. As they traveled through each city, they sought to strengthen and encourage the new believers there in their faith. They didn't make false promises, however, as so many do today. They warned the believers that it was through much tribulation that they would enter God's kingdom. They also ordained elders in every church through fasting and praying, and commended them to the Lord for His keeping and protection.

Acts 14:24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.

Acts 14:25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia:

Acts 14:26 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

After passing through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia; after preaching the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia, which served as the harbor for Perga, the capital of Pamphylia. They finally returned to Antioch of Syria, the starting point of that first missionary journey.

Acts 14:27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the

door of faith unto the Gentiles.

Acts 14:28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.

The church gathered together to hear a report from Paul and Barnabas of all that God had done through them and how so many Gentiles had come to faith in Jesus. They stayed a long time with the disciples in Antioch to be refreshed and strengthened for their next journey.

I like this quote from David Guzik: "It can and should be asked of each follower of Jesus, "What will it take for you to back down from doing God's will? What kind of temptation or obstacle or opposition will do it?" Nothing stopped Jesus from doing God's will on our behalf; as we look to Him, we won't be stopped either."