

- A Study in Acts -

**Chapter Fourteen – First Journey of Paul Continued**

**ACTS 14:14-18:**

In our previous lessons, we began the first journey of Paul. It began in **Antioch** of Syria and from there; Barnabas, Saul, and John Mark went down to **Seleucia**. From Seleucia, they caught a ship to **Cyprus** and landed at **Salamis**. They would share the Gospel of Jesus as Christ in the synagogues of the Jews.

As Barnabas and Saul came to **Paphos**, they crossed paths with the proconsul and a sorcerer who had been acting as his advisor. As the proconsul wanted to hear from Barnabas and Saul, the sorcerer withstood them.

Saul, who will now be called from this point forward, Paul openly denounced the sorcerer and struck him blind by the power of the Lord. This would give cause for the proconsul to believe the words concerning the teaching of the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas left Cyprus and came to **Perga in Pamphylia** where John Mark would leave them and return to Jerusalem for unknown reasons. From Perga they would travel north inland to **Antioch in Pisidia**, where they would go into the synagogue of the Jews on the Sabbath. As the invitation is given to speak, Paul is going to preach the Gospel, and this becomes Paul's first recorded sermon. At the conclusion of his sermon, the Gentiles requested to hear these words as well. When the city had come out to hear, the Jews became filled with envy. Many of the Jews rejected the Gospel of Jesus as Christ and became antagonistic; however, many Gentiles would become followers of Christ. The Jews stirred up the leaders of the city and forced Paul and Barnabas to flee to **Iconium**.

Paul and Barnabas preached in the synagogue of the Jews and there were those who believed from the ranks of Jew and Gentile (proselytes, as they were in the synagogue). The unbelieving Jews tried to poison the minds of Gentiles against the brethren, which would cause Paul and Barnabas to stay longer. Finally, the Jews stirred up the people to the point that they would attempt to abuse and stone them; this would cause them to leave.

Leaving Iconium, they would then come to **Lystra**. Upon entering the city Paul would heal a lame Paul man that everyone knew. This would cause the people (being idolaters) to cry out they Barnabas and Paul were gods come to earth and attempt to worship them.

**Text #1:**

**Acts 14:14-18** “But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out <sup>15</sup> 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, <sup>16</sup> who in bygone generations allowed all nations to

walk in their own ways. <sup>17</sup> 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.” <sup>18</sup> And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them.”

**Apostles:** It is important to understand that the term “**apostle**” in its generic understanding and use, simply means, “One sent” (Greek – ‘*Apostolos*’; one sent forth, a messenger). It is used in our text by Luke in its generic understanding, those sent by the Spirit of God and the church at Antioch; to whom they would return and report the events of this journey.

The term was also used in these understandings:

- Jesus as an Apostle of God –

**Hebrews 3:1** “Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus”

- Jesus personally selected men, educated them, and commissioned them to be ambassadors, delegates, witnesses, and the ones sent into the world to glorify Him (to include the Apostle Paul, called out of due season). It is this group that we often think of when we think of the term Apostle, and they are marked as unique in this sense by being referred to as Apostles of Jesus Christ (the noun connector missing in Luke’s use of the term here) –

**Mark 3:13-14; Acts 1:2, 13, 14, 1 Corinthians 15:8-10.**

- Generic use of the term as ‘one sent’ –

**2 Corinthians 8:23** “If *anyone inquires* about Titus, *he is my partner and fellow worker concerning you. Or if our brethren are inquired about, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ.*”

Here ‘*Apostolos*’ is translated messenger in the generic meaning.

**Paul’s Sermon:** They had not accepted nor had any knowledge of the Law of Moses; so, Paul for the first time, as recorded by Luke, is going to preach the One True God!

**Outline:**

1. **We are Just Men**
2. **Idols are Vain, Turn to God**
3. **God Created All Things**

#### 4. Allowed Ignorance

#### 5. Gave Evidence

**Intro** – Since this is the first time Luke will record Paul preaching to those ignorant of the One True God, it will become a format (all though brief), for a lengthy sermon that will come in **Chapter 17:22-34**. We will bring up this first sermon when we look at the sermon in Athens for comparison and vise-a-versa.

#### 1. We are Just Men –

I am reminded at this point of Peter when he would meet Cornelius the first time and Cornelius fell down at Peters feet and tried to worship him (**Acts 10:25-26**). If it was God's intent that men should be elevated, it would have occurred in these two places; however, what we see is the universal understanding within the minds of the Apostles of Jesus Christ and all those who served Him in this early period, that there was only One due preeminence – Jesus the Christ.

**1 Corinthians 1:10-13** “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. <sup>11</sup> For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. <sup>12</sup> Now I say this, that each of you says, “I am of Paul,” or “I am of Apollos,” or “I am of Cephas,” or “I am of Christ.” <sup>13</sup> Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”

**Colossians 1:18** “And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.”

#### 2. Idols are Vain, Turn to God –

Idols are vain, in that they are the creation of man's mind, and thus they are not alive. Instead, Paul states that they should turn to the Living God. This links us to the next point.

#### 3. God Created All Things –

Paul will expand on this point in length in the great Areopagus sermon, note:

**Acts 17:24-25** “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. <sup>25</sup> Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.”

Even to this day, men are trying to worship God with things that they make with their own hands; instead of offering the one thing that He truly wants and will accept; Us!!! **John 4:23-24**; our hearts - **Romans 10:9-10; 12:1-2; Hebrews 8:10**.

#### 4. Allowed Ignorance –

This ignorance being mentioned here must be acknowledged as self-imposed by the nations without a written law! We learn from Paul's writing in **Romans 1:18-32**; that God did not give the Gentiles up to their uncleanness (**Romans 1:24**), until they stopped glorifying Him as God and changed the understanding of Him into something made with their hands (**Romans 1:21-23**).

Paul says beyond a shadow of a doubt that God is manifest in us and around us, and that recognition should have caused them to seek Him (**Romans 1:19-20**). This goes hand in hand with what he would state in the Areopagus sermon; that by all that God has created, we should by this nature know to:

**Acts 17:27-28** “so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; <sup>28</sup> for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’”

So we see that although they were ignorant, and for a time God allowed this, it was self-imposed. More importantly, now this ignorance was to be completely shattered by the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all men – **Acts 17:30-31**.

#### 5. Gave Evidence

To seal the deal and impose that the ignorance of these idolaters is purely self-imposed; Paul is going to demonstrate God's witness in all of nature to show that He and He alone is the only giver of good gifts. James would call God the “**Father of lights**”, as a demonstration that God is the giver of good and perfect gifts. This just before he would introduce the greatest gifts God has given, “**The Word of Truth**” (**James 1:17-18**).

**Summary** – In the final verse, Luke records the majority response to Paul's sermon. As good as it is at the commonsense arguments; the background of the majority here would not allow them to see the benefits of this sermon.

On the other hand, we know that Paul would be able to go on and teach some about the method that God has made available for all men to come to Him (Jesus the Christ). We know this because there will be brethren here, based on **verse 20, 21-22**, and when he would come back here on the second journey as well – **Acts 16:1-2**.