

- A Study in Acts -

Chapter Fourteen – First Journey of Paul Continued

ACTS 14:19-28:

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 man that everyone knew. This would cause the people (being idolaters) to cry out that Barnabas and Paul were gods come to earth and attempt to worship them.

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.

Text #1:

Acts 14:19-20 “Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul *and* dragged *him* out of the city, supposing him to be dead. ²⁰ However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.”

Stoned: The hatred among Jews that did not believe the Gospel of Jesus as the Christ, was so intense, they were willing to travel from Antioch and Iconium to get at him. The people of Lystra were so fickle, they initially thought him to be a god, and now are willing to kill him.

After the stoning, they took the body outside the city and left it lay as dead. Even the disciples thought him dead, as no mention of assistance is offered; yet he would rise up before them and go right back into the city.

The very next day, in whatever state he was in, he traveled 30 miles away to Derbe.

Derbe: this is a city in the southeast corner of Lycaonia. Not much is known about the history of this city before the Gospel would come; however, it will be a strong Christian city afterwards.

Summary of Lystra: Paul came to **Lystra** and had to use a different approach to preaching the Gospel, as there was no synagogue here. After healing a man at the city gate, the people flocked to him and Barnabas, thinking them to be gods.

Paul would preach his first recorded sermon to those who were not familiar with the One True God. At the conclusion of the sermon, the majority would still attempt to worship them as gods; but we know that there would be some who would obey the Gospel.

Jews came from **Antioch** and **Iconium** and stirred the people to stone Paul and leave him for dead. Dragged out of the city, he rose up and went back into the city, and the next day came to **Derbe**.

Text #2:

Acts 14:21 “And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch”

Many Disciples: Not much is stated about what transpires here in Derbe, except that the Gospel is very successful among the citizens of this city. It should be noted here, before we move to the second half of the verse, that Paul did not go into Cilicia, as he has already been there – **Acts 9:30; 11:25-26**.

Back in the Lion’s Den: The length of time that Paul stays in Derbe is not recorded, and can give a false impression that he was here then gone. The success of the Gospel would require him and Barnabas to do here, before they leave, what they are about to do in the cities they have already been to.

At the conclusion of their time in Derbe, they are now going to return to the very places where they have known hatred and violence (lion's den reference). This return is not without purpose, and we will discuss this in the next segment.

Summary of Derbe: Paul came to Derbe and by the Gospel created many disciples (**Mathew 28:19**). The details of Paul's preaching or the founding of these brethren are not mentioned. They will use this city as the turning point in the journey and return through the cities they have already visited.

Text #3:

Acts 14:22-23 “strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and saying, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”²³ So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”

Strengthening: This is a process of further instructing them in doctrinal truth, which in turn would give them the strength to stand fast.

Exhorting: Charging them to do their duty; to continue without wavering in the faith.

Many Tribulations: Paul would give them a realistic view of the labor and path for Christians working diligently to achieve their true home, by true doctrine.

Order for the Body: The word “**appointed**” comes from the Greek understanding of, ‘set in order’ or ‘put in place’ (**Titus 1:5**). These older men were set in place by a system of Spirit revealed qualifications (**1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9**).

In all these cities, whether a synagogue was present or not, older wise and noble men were already looked to as guides; this coupled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit that accompanied the early Body of Christ (**1 Corinthians 12:7-11** – especially knowledge and wisdom!), would allow these men to prove their qualifications among the brethren and be placed over this work as shepherds.

It should also be noted that they are appointed in plurality, which creates an eldership, not a dictatorship!

As the Gospel came to these early churches, they were not left to the wolves. Paul as an Apostle of Christ made sure they were able to have protective shepherds who would then keep them from the wolves.

Commended Them to the Lord: This is the first time this is spoken of in this fashion. The next time it will be used will be with the elders of the Body at Ephesus, and the details describe the process:

Acts 20:32 “So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”

Text #4

Acts 14:24-28 “And after they had passed through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. ²⁵ Now when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. ²⁶ From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed.

²⁷ Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. ²⁸ So they stayed there a long time with the disciples.”

At the conclusion of the return through the cities with Bodies of Christ, Paul and Barnabas began to return back to where they had begun this journey.

Perga: The first time they came through Perga, the only thing Luke would record was that John Mark left to go back to Jerusalem. Here, however, this time coming back they would preach the Gospel. Luke does not record if they were successful or not.

Attalia: This is a seaport of Pamphylia near Perga and was the main seaport for the Gulf of Adalia; no activity is mentioned here other than departing by ship.

At the conclusion of the sea journey, they would return back to Antioch of Syria, where this journey would begin (this officially concludes this first journey). Having been selected by the Spirit of God and sent by these brethren for this work, they reported back to them upon arrival.

The Report:

- God given all the credit!
- The door of faith had been opened for the Gentiles – and we know that this took place by preaching to them the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Two Summaries:

Places Paul visited before this journey:

Acts 9; 11:27-30; 12:25; Galatians 1:11-17

Jerusalem – Damascus – Arabia – Damascus – Jerusalem – Caesarea – Tarsus – Antioch of Syria – Jerusalem – Antioch of Syria.

Paul’s first journey:

Acts 13-14

Antioch of Syria – Seleucia – Salamis – Paphos – Perga – Antioch of Pisidia – Iconium – Lystra – Derbe – Lystra – Iconium – Antioch of Pisidia – Perga – Attalia – Antioch of Syria.