

# Lesson 13: The First Missionary Journey Continues

## Acts 14

At the end of this first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas retraced their steps through the cities they'd visited to strengthen the souls of the disciples there and to encourage them to continue in the faith (Acts 14:22). I don't know about you, but that sounds so good to me. Who couldn't use a little soul-strengthening encouragement? Sometimes we find encouragement directly from the Lord, alone with Him. Sometimes His Spirit infuses strength directly into our weary or troubled hearts. But sometimes we need another to be the hands and feet of Christ, the tangible presence of Him in our midst. Let's pray this week that our fellowship would be one in which we remember to strengthen and encourage one another. Let's be eager to give. Let's be hungry to receive.

*“When they had arrived and gathered the church together, they began to report all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.”*

*Acts 14:27*

### At Iconium

Read Acts 14:1-7. Continue to chart Paul and Barnabas' travels on your map of *Paul's Early Ministry and First Missionary Journey* as you go through this lesson.

1. Looking back to Acts 13:50-51, why had Paul and Barnabas gone to Iconium?
2. What repeating patterns do you notice about Paul and Barnabas' ministry in Iconium?

Paul probably wrote his letter to the Galatians to the same groups of believers that he visited on this and later missionary journeys. We will look occasionally at the inspired words of that letter to gain further insight into some topics presented in Acts 14.

3. In Iconium, as in many of the places the apostles had ministered, signs and wonders took place among the believers. What does Paul ask in Galatians 3:5?

4. In our culture, we might be less tempted to ascribe God's favor or miracles to our obedience to the Mosaic Law as the Galatians were apparently tempted to do. But what are some things that we might believe we can do to earn God's favor and procure a miracle?
  
5. According to Acts 14:3, why was God granting signs and wonders among the Galatians in Iconium? What does that suggest about why the Lord would perform miracles today?

Walking with the Lord, submitting to His call on their lives, even performing the miracles He granted them, Paul and Barnabas still didn't win over every person they encountered. In Acts 14:4-6, we see that some of the people of Iconium believed the gospel, while others sided with the Jews in actively opposing the gospel and the men who preached it.

6. What did Paul say in Galatians 1:10?
  
7. How are you tempted in your own life to perform for people instead of the Lord? What might change if your perspective shifted to that of Paul?
  
8. What eventually happened in Iconium, and how did Paul and Barnabas respond?

### **At Lystra**

Read Acts 14:8-18.

9. Compare the healing of the lame man in Acts 14:8-10 with the healing of the lame man in Acts 3:1-8.
  
10. According to Acts 14:9, what did Paul see that the lame man had? According to Peter in Acts 3:16, from where does that come?

11. Jesus provided even the faith needed for the lame man to be healed! Is there a situation in your life right now in which you don't have the faith to hope for a miracle or perhaps even to hope for a response from the Father? What does it mean that God could supply the faith that you need to believe?
  
12. When the lame man of Acts 14 is healed, how do the people of Lystra respond (Acts 14:11-13)?

Once Paul and Barnabas realized what was going on, they were appalled and desperate for the people to stop.

13. What appeals did Paul make in an effort to convince the people to stop worshipping them in Acts 14:15-17?

I thought it was interesting that the people of Lystra, practitioners of Greek mythology, believed that Zeus provided water or rain and that Hermes was the giver of food.<sup>18</sup> In his speech in verse 15, Paul was effectively saying that the living God was responsible for both of those provisions, and the people of Lystra were worshipping the wrong source.

14. How do we, like the people of Lystra, sometimes ascribe our provisions to someone or something other than God?

Paul begged them to turn from those “vain things to a living God” (Acts 14:15).

15. How effective was Paul at redirecting the people according to Acts 14:18?

### **The End of the Journey**

Finish reading Acts 14:19-28.

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<sup>18</sup> Utley, Robert James. *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts*. Study Guide Commentary Series. Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2003. Page 176.

16. What ended up happening to Paul at Lystra according to Acts 14:19-20?
17. What did he and Barnabas do after that? What was their purpose? See Acts 14:20-23.
18. What did Paul and Barnabas realize the believers in the region needed?
19. What does Paul teach about tribulations in Romans 5:3-5?
20. In Acts 14:22, Paul told the Galatians that through many tribulations they would enter the *kingdom of God*.
  - ❖ What does Acts 1:3 say that Jesus taught about during his forty days on earth after His resurrection? How important do you think it is?
  - ❖ What do we learn about His kingdom in Luke 1:31-33?
  - ❖ What do we pray every time we pray the Lord's prayer? See Matthew 6:10.
  - ❖ How is that kingdom described in Hebrews 12:28?
  - ❖ What will eventually happen to the kingdom of this world according to Revelation 11:15?
21. The kingdom of God is a vast and confusing subject. It could be a study of its own, and we still might not fully understand it. But based on what you do understand about it, how does it shape your perspective on the kingdom of *this* world?
22. Where did Paul and Barnabas go when their journey was over? What did they do there? See Acts 14:26-28.

23. Why do you think it was important for them to share their experiences with the people who had sent them?

**Prepare for Life**

When he was healed, the lame man “leaped up” (Acts 14:10). With his healing came excitement, enthusiasm, happiness. He didn’t hold back. He wasn’t reserved. Life isn’t perfect. Sometimes it’s hard. But sometimes it’s really good. Sometimes we get a glimpse of heaven right here on earth. Sometimes excitement and gladness are in order. Sometimes we need to leap around and celebrate our healing or our blessings – or perhaps another’s.

24. What is the last thing you really celebrated? Is there something you need to rejoice over? Take some time as a small group to share some stories worth leaping about!

**Lecture Notes: Lesson 13**