

Unstoppable Kingdom

Globally: Kingdom Responding

Acts 13:5-12, 13:42-14:20

Today we will consider the responses of various people groups to Paul and Barnabas preaching after they were sent out from Antioch with the gospel. To do that, I need to help you see the geography of their mission work!

We will consider the response of people in 5 cities (Salamis, Paphos, Antioch Pisidia, Iconium, & Lystra). This underscores the historical accuracy of your Bible. We aren't reading fairy tales or mythology in the Bible; we are reading actual events that took place in real cities that archaeology confirms. God's Unstoppable Kingdom is REAL!!!

Each of the many responses from various people groups in these five cities fit within three categories.

*"5 When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them. 6 When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. 7 He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. 9 But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him 10 and said, "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? 11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time." Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand. 12 Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord... **13:42** As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath. 43 And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God. 44 The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. 45 But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. 46 And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth." 48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. 50 But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. 51 But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. **14:1** Now at Iconium they entered together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed. 2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. 3 So they remained*

*for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. 4 But the people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles. 5 When an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them, 6 they learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country, 7 and there they continued to preach the gospel. 8 Now at Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was crippled from birth and had never walked. 9 He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well, 10 said in a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he sprang up and began walking. 11 And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" 12 Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. 13 And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds. 14 But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out, 15 "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. 16 In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. 17 Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness." 18 Even with these words they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them. 19 But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. 20 But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe." **Acts 13:5-12, 13:42-14:20***

Main Idea: Kingdom Success is Measured by Faithfulness over Fruitfulness

Three Common Responses to Kingdom Preaching from Acts 13-14

I. Resistant Response

Throughout these towns, there were those who heard the good news of Jesus from Paul and Barnabas, but just refused to embrace or believe it.

Salamis: *"When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews..." **Acts 13:5 – Who knows?***

Iconium: *"But the people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles." **Acts 14:4 – No decision.***

Lystra: *"And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" **Acts 14:11 – Worship the preacher, rather than the King.***

*"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" **John 14:6 – To not choose, is to choose.***

"You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him for a fool, you can spit

at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God.” **C.S. Lewis (Mere Christianity)**

Counting the cost is one thing, but sitting on the fence on the question of Jesus is both inconsistent and foolish. I encourage you to surrender to him as Lord. If you are witnessing to and praying for someone who seems resistant to the gospel, do not get discouraged. Keep praying and preaching!

II. Hostile Response

Some are not content to reject the gospel, they actively oppose anyone else hearing the gospel. They want to stop it from spreading any further.

Paphos: “...they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus... But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.” **Acts 13:6b, 8 - Distract**

Antioch Pisidia: “But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him... But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district.” **Acts 13:45, 50 - Jealousy, Contradiction, Persecution, Expulsion**

Iconium: “But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers... When an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them, they learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country.” Acts 14:2, 5-6 – **Division, Mind-Poisoning, Plans for Violence, Escape**

Lystra: “But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.” **Acts 14:19 - After rejecting worship, they turned on Paul & Barnabas**

Why hostility? Have you ever watched a game where a player gets turned around and tries to score on the wrong goal? What does the opposing team do when that happens? Get out of the way! There’s no reason to harass an opponent who’s not a threat to score. The same is true for our enemy! Hostilities (usually) happen because we’re advancing the Kingdom.

“Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.” **Luke 6:22-23 - Jesus knew this was coming.**

III. Repentant Response

Not everybody resisted or was hostile. Some believed!

Paphos: “...the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God... Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.” **Acts 13:7, 12**

Antioch Pisidia: “The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord... and when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord... And the word of the Lord was spreading

throughout the whole region... And the disciples were filled with joy & with the Holy Spirit.” **Acts 13:44, 48a, 49, 52**

Iconium: “Now at Iconium they entered together into the Jewish synagogue & spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews & Greeks believed.” **(14:1)**

We cannot tell who is ready to repent and trust the Lord as we preach the gospel. Our only call is to share it openly with everyone. But sometimes we let the resistant and the hostile responses keep us from experiencing the repentant response to our preaching. Which is tragic!

“...and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.” **Acts 13:48b**

It’s not up to you! The burden is not on your shoulders. God is at work, drawing people into his Kingdom. He uses preaching, but he does the work!

In Acts 13 there was a man called Bar-Jesus (Son of Jesus). With a name like that, you would think he would be all-in on the sharing of the gospel. But instead, he tried to push the proconsul away from the faith. He had the name, but not the heart of the unstoppable kingdom.

We call ourselves Christians, but a name means nothing if it does not reflect our heart’s cry. **Romans 10** – We SEND so we can PREACH so they can HEAR so they can BELIEVE so they can CALL so they can be SAVED!!!

Kingdom Sending – Kingdom Preaching – Kingdom Responding

Sources and Further Reading Opportunities:

- *CSB Study Bible* – Trevin Wax, General Editor (2021)
- *The Bible Exposition Commentary* – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
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- *The New American Commentary: Acts* – John B. Polhill (1992)
- *Acts: Bible Study Commentary* – F.F. Bruce (2017)
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- *Acts* – K.O. Gangle (1998)
- *The Kingdom of God* – Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1992)
- *The Message of Acts* – John Stott (1994)
- *Kingdom First* – Jeff Christopherson (2015)
- *The Kingdom Agenda* – Tony Evans (1999)
- *Mere Christianity* – C.S. Lewis (1952)