

Abounding Grace Christian Church

The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Church – Part 45

I. Exposition of Chapter Fourteen.

A. Adventures at Iconium.

1. Verse 1 – **“Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed.”**

a. **“...went together to the synagogue...”** – Notice they followed the same pattern of going into the synagogues first.

b. **“...and so spoke...”** – As seen from **13:15**, the custom was to allow visitors an opportunity to speak. Dr. Stanley Horton comments:

“Arriving there, Paul and Barnabas followed their practice and went to the synagogue. As guests, they were accorded the Jewish custom of being given the opportunity to speak. Luke does not record their sermon. He simply indicates that they “spoke so” (thus), in their usual manner, that is, just as they did in Pisidian Antioch.”¹

c. **“...a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed.”** – As in the case of Antioch Pisidia, many believed the Gospel that was preached. In this case, however, Luke states that there was a **“great multitude”** who believed. Dr. Robert Utley says concerning this:

“This phrase shows the purpose of Acts. The gospel is spreading vigorously among various people groups. The implications of the OT promises to all humanity (cf. Gen. 3:15; 12:3) are now being realized. These summary statements relating to the rapid growth of the church are characteristic of Acts.”²

2. Verse 2 – **“But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren.”**

a. Also as in the case of Antioch Pisidia, the unbelieving Jews stirred up opposition against the Apostles (cf. **13:45**). The words **“stirred up”** mean: **“to raise or excite against.”** This basically tells us that they hyped up the people with angry emotion by their words. The phrase, **“...poisoned their minds...”** is sometimes translated as **“embittered”**. Dr. Utley writes:

“This is another common term in the Septuagint to describe evil, oppressive people who mistreat others. Luke uses this term often in Acts (cf. 7:6, 19; 12:1; 14:2; 18:10).”³

3. Verse 3 – **“Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.”**

a. Apparently the opposition took some time before it became serious enough for them to get out of town. In spite of the resistance, the apostles stayed for a **“long time.”** Concerning this, Grant Osborne suggests:

“Probably the ‘considerable time’ meant weeks and perhaps months, as they made certain the church was strong enough for them to go on to the next town.”⁴

b. **“...bearing witness to the word of His grace.”** – The message of the Gospel is a gracious message of God’s **“unmerited favor”** to those who put their trust in Christ.

c. **“...granting signs and wonders...”** – The word **“sign”** is defined as: **“an unusual occurrence, transcending the common course of nature.”⁵** The word **“wonders”** is a word for miracles and essentially things which are supernatural that cause people to “wonder” or be amazed!

“As they did so, the Lord bore witness to the ‘message of his grace’ by giving miraculous signs and wonders to be done by them. Consequently many recognized them as Christ’s agents doing His work by His authority.”⁶

d. **“...done by their hands.”** – The doctrine of **“the laying on of hands”** is one of the foundational doctrines of Christ (**Hebrews 6:1-2**). Jesus laid hands on the sick at times (**Luke 4:40**). The believer can lay hands on the sick, believing for healing (**Mark 16:18**).

¹Stanley M. Horton, *Acts: A Logion Press Commentary* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2001), 250.

²Robert James Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts*, vol. Volume 3B, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2003), 174.

³Ibid.

⁴Grant R. Osborne, *Acts: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 257.

⁵Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House., 1977)

⁶Horton, 251.

“Signs do not guarantee belief; they merely make the message impossible to ignore, usually demanding faith or rejection. Yet they appear important for the gospel breaking into new regions (Rom 15:18–19; 2 Cor 12:12).”⁷

4. **Verse 4 – “...the city was divided...”** – The truth of the Gospel will often cause division (cf. 17:4–5; 19:9; 28:24; Matthew 10:34–36).
5. **Verse 5 – “And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them,”**
 - a. **“...a violent attempt was made.....to abuse and stone them...”** – The word “violent” means; “to excite, arouse. Violent impulse, assault, attempt. Used metaphorically of the mind, impulse, will (Act_14:5; Jas_3:4). often times has in view motion toward an object with the purpose of propelling and repelling it still further from oneself.”⁸
6. **Verses 6-7 – “they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region. And they were preaching the gospel there.”** – Somehow the apostles became aware of the fact that the opposition wanted to attack them and kill them. This led them to escape to two other cities in the Province of Galatia – Lystra and Derbe, where they continued to preach the Gospel. Their first stop was Lystra about 20 miles southwest of Iconium.

B. Adventures at Lystra.

1. **Verses 8-10 – “And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked. This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, ‘Stand up straight on your feet!’ And he leaped and walked.”**
 - a. A man who had never walked in his entire life is healed! This is the third time a crippled man is healed in the book of Acts (3:1-10; 9:33-35). **Verse 9** says that this man “...heard Paul speaking...” We know in the previous verse, the Scripture states that what he was speaking or, preaching was the “Gospel.” (NOTE: It doesn’t mention a synagogue this time so presumably there wasn’t one so Paul was preaching in the public square.)
 - b. **“Paul observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed...”** – How did Paul “see” that the man had faith to be healed? It seems probable that Paul perceived the man had faith to be healed by the Holy Spirit. Perhaps the Holy Spirit pointed out this man to Paul even as he was preaching. A gift of the Holy Spirit called a “word of knowledge” (I Corinthians 12:8) could have been in operation here. A “word of knowledge” is defined as: “A supernatural revelation of facts—past, present or future—which were not learned or developed through the efforts of the natural mind.”
 - c. **“...faith to be healed...”** – The Bible tells us that “...faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.” (Romans 10:17). So, if faith to be healed came by hearing what Paul was preaching, and Paul is said to be preaching the Gospel, then it must be that **Divine healing is part of the Gospel!**

“We should not ignore any part of the Gospel. Our Substitute bore both our sins and our sicknesses that we might be delivered from them. Christ's bearing of our sins and sicknesses is surely a valid reason for trusting Him *now* for deliverance from both. When, in prayer, we definitely commit to God the forgiveness of our *sins*, we are to believe, on the authority of His Word, that our prayer is heard. We are to do the same when praying for healing.”⁹

1) Faith is often mentioned as a prerequisite for healing. (e.g. Matthew 8:5-13; Mark 5:22-43; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 5:18-26.)

- d. **Verse 10 – “(Paul) said with a loud voice, ‘Stand up straight on your feet!’ And he leaped and walked.”** – No doubt Paul was led by the Holy Spirit to give this command. Dr. Horton writes:

“Paul encouraged the activation of the man’s faith by commanding him in a very loud voice to stand (erect) on his feet. Not only did the man jump up, he also ‘began to walk.’ He was totally healed.”¹⁰

⁷Craig S. Keener, *Acts: New Cambridge Bible Commentary*, (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2020), 349.

⁸Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, (AMG Publishers; Revised edition, 1993)

⁹F.F. Bosworth, *Christ the Healer*, 8th edition, (Old Tappan, NJ, Fleming H. Revell Company, 1973), 8.

¹⁰Horton, 253.