

Comments About Acts 14

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BIG SANDY, Texas—Recently, I began a series of brief articles to discuss chapters in the book of Acts. This week, we will talk about chapter 14.

May this project encourage you to review the valuable history found in the book of Acts.

Overview of Paul's travels

As we entered into Acts 13, we began reading about Paul's missionary journeys. According to some Bible commentaries, the trips can be categorized in the following manner.

- First missionary journey—Acts 13:1 until Acts 14:28
- Second missionary journey—Acts 15:36 until Acts 18:22
- Third missionary journey—Acts 18:23 until Acts 21:16
- Trip to Rome—Acts 21:17 until Acts 28:31

Preached at Iconium

In Acts 13, we saw that Paul and Barnabas preached in various cities—including Cyprus and Antioch.

Chapter 14 begins with the two men going to Iconium.

- When they spoke in the synagogue of the Jews, many Jews and gentiles believed (verse 1).
- Unbelieving Jews stirred up the gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren (verse 2). The city was divided when part of the people sided with the Jews and part of the people sided with the apostles (verse 4).
- A violent attempt by both gentiles and Jews (including the rulers) was made to abuse and stone them (verse 5).
- They fled to Lystra and Derbe (verse 6).

Humility at Lystra

An unusual event happened to Paul and Barnabas in Lystra.

- A man, who was crippled from birth and who had never walked, rose to his feet (verses 8-10).
- The people reacted to the healing by describing Paul and Barnabas in the following manner: “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men” (verse 11).
- The people called Barnabas Jupiter and called Paul Mercury—because Paul was the main speaker (verse 12).
- The priest of Zeus (whose temple was in front of their city) brought animals to the gates with the intent to sacrifice with the multitudes (verse 13).
- Paul and Barnabas reacted humbly and praised God (verses 14-17).
- Even their correct response could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them (verse 18).
- Jews from Antioch and Iconium persuaded the multitudes to stone Paul and drag him out of the city—supposing him to be dead (verse 19)

Continued preaching

After that brush with death, Paul and Barnabas continued traveling and preaching.

- They went to Derbe (verse 20).
- They returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch (verse 21).
- They strengthened the brethren by saying: “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God” (verse 22).
- They recognized elders in every church with the help of prayer and fasting (verse 23).
- After preaching in Perga and Attalia, they returned to Antioch (verse 24-26).
- They shared the news how God had opened the door of faith to the gentiles (verse 27).
- In chapter 15, we will see that many disciples had trouble viewing the news of salvation being offered to the gentiles as good news from God.