

PAUL AND BARNABAS AT ICONIUM AND LYSTRA

Acts 14:1-28

INTRODUCTION

After Paul and Barnabas “shook the dust off their feet” in Pisidian Antioch, they went to the nearby towns of Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. Each visit to the synagogue yielded fruit for the Lord, but it also provoked persecution by the unbelieving Jews. This passage gives us a glimpse into the pattern of evangelism Paul used when witnessing to people unfamiliar with the Jewish God and scriptures.

THIS WEEK:

From Acts 14:1-28 discover how God faithfully reaches the Gentiles open to him despite the Jewish opposition and persecution levied against Him.

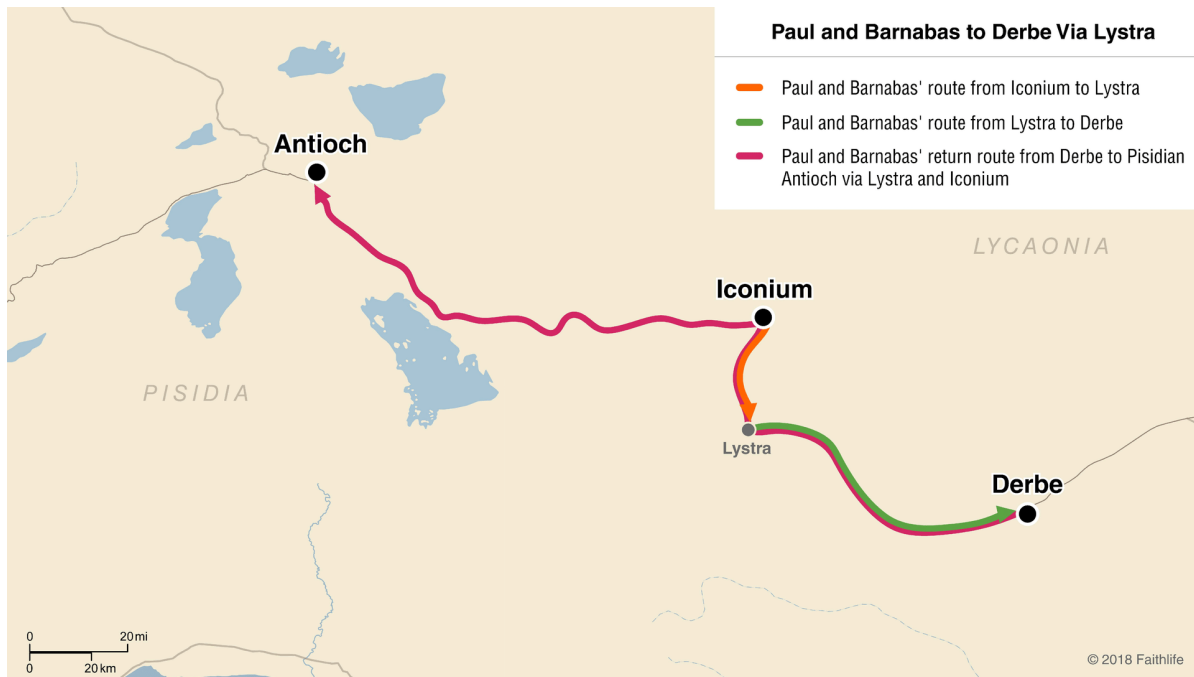
OBSERVATION *What does it SAY?*

Discover key details of the passage by reading Acts 14:1-28 and then answering the following questions:

1. After initial success among many Jews and Greeks, how did the unbelieving Jews react to Paul and Barnabas' success? (v. 2)
2. How did the people of Lystra react when Paul healed the lame man? (vv. 11-13)?
3. How did Paul and Barnabas' respond to being treated as gods? (vv. 14-15)?
4. What two things did the apostles do for the believers on their return trip to Antioch in Syria (vv. 22, 23)?

INTERPRETATION *What does it MEAN?*

Use the Bible to interpret the Bible. Look up the cross references and use them to interpret the passage under study:



5. What was the intent and purpose of the signs and wonders displayed in v. 3 (2 Cor 12:12; Mark 16:20; Heb 2:4)?
6. The healing of the lame man in vv. 8-10 by Paul and Barnabas is analogous to the healing of the lame man by Peter and John in Acts 3:1-10. What message might the Holy Spirit intend to communicate here by orchestrating these two similar events and having Luke record them in the Book of Acts?
7. The content of the message presented by the apostles to the Jews and God-fearers, people who had extension knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures (i.e., Acts 13:1-41), was different than that of the message presented to the Greeks. Notice how Paul's message in Lystra (vv. 15-17) is very similar to his message in Athens in Acts 17:22-31. How would you describe and explain this difference in content?
8. How does the concept of "hardships" to enter God's kingdom (v. 22) relate to Jesus' teachings in Matthew 7:13-14?

APPLICATION *Why does it matter?*

Now that you know what the passage means, think through the various ways it may apply to your life or the lives of others:

9. In contrast to living in the U.S. today, this period in the history of God's people includes many signs and wonders performed by Jesus and the Apostles. Why do you suppose we do not see more in our day? What is different about our situation that was not their situation?
10. When confronted with a more polytheistic non-Jewish audience, the content of the apostle's message shifts away from a Scripture-rich argument about Jesus fulfilling the Messianic promises of the Old Testament. Instead, the apostle focuses his argument on the existence and nature of a living God, the Creator and sustainer of all life (compare vv. 15-17 and Acts 17:22-31). What implications does this have for us in our ever-increasing secular culture?
11. In what ways have you seen God use hardships to strengthen your faith or the faith of someone you know?
12. In what ways can being told that suffering is part of entering the kingdom of God be encouraging?

TAKE AWAY *How does this change me?*

13. What does this passage reveal about God?
14. What does this passage reveal about humanity?
15. What is the Holy Spirit revealing in this passage about your life?