

# Easy as Opening a Door

## Acts Chapter 14

Act 14:1  
Iconium

### 1) Iconium vs 1 - 7

In Iconium they entered the synagogue of the Jews together, and spoke in such a manner that a large number of people believed, both of Jews and of Greeks.

- Again they first went to the synagogue.
- Speaking in such a manner.
  - 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching [was] not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."
  - Paul learned that it was by the Holy Spirit and not by his great oratory skills.
  - They know that persecution will come, they will have to leave and their faith better be based upon the Holy Spirit and not on a man with skilled speech who will not be there.
- Both Jews and Greeks believed. Same message; both believed and received salvation.

Act 14:2

But the Jews who disbelieved stirred up the minds of the Gentiles and embittered them against the brethren.

- The Cycle Continues. Faithful is the opposition. Count on it.
- Embittered them (KJV = evil affected; NKJV+NIV= poisoned)  
(GK= 'kakoo' means to embitter, render evil affected, to vex or to harm)
  - 1 Peter 3:13-15 "And who [is] he that will ('KAKOO' you) harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy [are ye]: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and [be] ready always to [give] an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:"

Act 14:3

Therefore they spent a long time {there} speaking boldly {with reliance} upon the Lord, who was testifying to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands.

- Because these new converts would be under attack:
- Therefore they spent a long time there.
- Therefore they spoke boldly about reliance upon the Lord.
- Therefore they spoke concerning grace not rules and performance.
- Grace was the only means by which both Jew and Gentile could be saved
- Therefore signs and wonders confirmed the Word.

Act 14:4

But the people of the city were divided; and some sided with the Jews, and some with the apostles.

Act 14:5

And when an attempt was made by both the Gentiles and the Jews with their rulers, to mistreat and to stone them,

- While many were believing, (verse 1) there were still those who did not like the message and came against this Gospel.
- This Gospel was offensive to Jews - Grace is offensive to the religious
- This Gospel was offensive to Gentiles - Gospel is foolishness to them.
- 1 Corinthians 1:23 "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;"
- A plan was made to stone Paul and Barnabas. They heard of it and fled to the next cities.

Act 14:6

they became aware of it and fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the surrounding region;

Act 14:7

and there they continued to preach the gospel.

- Here we see that Paul wasn't foolish and have a death wish.
- Though some disbelieved, though some threatened or attacked, Paul and Barnabas new what their mission was and stayed the course. -- Because some did believe.

Act 14:8  
Lystra

## 2) Lystra vs 8 - 19



Maps by Gordon Smith <http://www.ccel.org/bible/phillips/JBPhillips.htm>

At Lystra a man was sitting who had no strength in his feet, lame from his mother's womb, who had never walked.

- This is one of many crippled who were healed in the book of Acts.
  - Acts 3 at the Beautiful Gate with Peter and John gave such as they had, and a beggar was healed.
  - Acts 8:7 Philip in Samaria preached and paralyzed people were healed
  - Acts 9:32-35 Aeneas was crippled for 8 years and Peter announced Jesus Christ heals you and he got up.
- So we know how severe the condition was Luke records.
  - No Strength in Feet
  - Lame from Mother's Womb
  - Had Never Walked

Act 14:9 This man was listening to Paul as he spoke, who, when he had fixed his gaze on him and had seen that he had faith to be made well,

- Paul fixed his gaze on the lame man, and perceived healing is possible. Peter in Acts 3:4 the same thing. It says "Peter, along with John fixing his gaze upon him said..."

Act 14:10 said with a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he leaped up and {began} to walk.

- Again, in Acts 3:8 after Peter told the beggar to WALK he leaped up and walked.
- It is interesting that there is a similar pattern but it is not a formula. There were accounts of healing of people who were dead. They had no faith. There are Centurions that had faith. All kinds of patterns and methods.
- No explanation of how or what method. Just a simple account that God encounters man and He heals.

Act 14:11 When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they raised their voice, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have become like men and have come down to us."

Act 14:12 And they {began} calling Barnabas, Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker.

Act 14:13 The priest of Zeus, whose {temple} was just outside the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds.

- The crowds thought Paul and Barnabas was Zeus and Hermes respectfully.
  - In Ovid's moralizing fable (*Metamorphoses VIII*), which stands on the periphery of Greek mythology and Roman mythology, *Baucis and Philemon* were an old married couple in the region of Tyana, which Ovid places in Phrygia, and the only ones in their town to welcome

*disguised gods Zeus and Hermes (in Roman mythology, Jupiter and Mercury respectively), thus embodying the pious exercise of hospitality. (Wikipedia)*

- This is a hideous attack. This is straight out of Satan's playbook. Remember Genesis chapter 3. If you cannot pull a man into temptation, pull him into pride.
- Gen 3:4-8 "The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make {one} wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden."
- Here lies the difficulty of miracles. Consistently, man doesn't desire God after a miracle they either desire the power for themselves or the focus turns to the one doing the miracle.
  - Acts 3 - Peter & John at the Gate Beautiful, while the healed man glorified God, the people and the rulers focused on Peter and John. Peter said "Men of Israel why are you amazed at us?"
  - Acts 8 - Simon the Sorcerer wanted to buy the magic.
  - Here Acts 14 the People thought Paul and Barnabas were gods and wanted to sacrifice to them.

Act 14:14 But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their robes and rushed out into the crowd, crying out

Act 14:15 and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you 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.

- Paul and Barnabas don't entertain these compliments even for a moment.
- They tell them "We are trying to turn you from these vain thoughts. And here you are calling us Zeus and Hermes and desiring to sacrifice to us. Stop It!"
- We are just men like you but men with the gospel.

Act 14:16 "In the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways;

Act 14:17 and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness."

- Nations went their own way but God always has shown Himself as good and caring for man. In *Metamorphoses*, Zeus and Hermes had disasters come upon the land because of the lack of hospitality from the other inhabitants. Paul was telling the people that God is good.
- God is good and has shown himself to all men.
- Romans 1:20-22 "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools,"
- John 14, Philip asks Jesus to show them the Father. Jesus said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father"

Act 14:18 {Even} saying these things, with difficulty they restrained the crowds from offering sacrifice to them.

Act 14:19 But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.

- They have a hard time keeping the crowds from sacrificing even though they are telling them they are not Gods.
- In the mean time trouble follows them. Persistent are the Jews to silence the gospel. In Antioch and Iconium Paul and Barnabas escaped from the jealous Jews who were out to mistreat or stone them. But they didn't give up that easily.
- Now they were able to stone Paul and drag him out of the city for dead.
- It is always remarkable how fickle we humans can be. One moment we hold up people as gods, and after they show themselves simple human we throw rocks at them. This is the danger of receiving praise that is not due you. God is to receive all the glory. If you take it one day your flesh will reveal itself, someone will notice and rocks will fly.
- 2 Corinthians 11:25 Paul is defending his apostleship. In this he is speaking about how he wasn't in it for the money or glory and listed his trials. Here he said "once was I stoned,"

- 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 relates an out of body experience. It is suggested that this was Paul when he died and experienced heaven. (this is only conjecture) *"I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."*
- Acts 16:1 There was a young man in Lystra named Timothy. During Paul's second missionary journey Paul takes Timothy along and is with Paul the remainder of Paul's ministry.
- 2 Timothy 3:10-11-12 Paul writing to Timothy *"thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of [them] all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."*

Act 14:20 **3) Derbe and Back Again** vs 20 - 28

Derbe

But while the disciples stood around him, he got up and entered the city. The next day he went away with Barnabas to Derbe.

- The group stood around possibly wondering what to do. How to have a decent burial. Where to go now that Paul is gone. What a loss.
- But He got up Miracle #1. All supposed he was dead. But he got up.
- Miracle #2 he went into the city. I would have left.
- Miracle #3 he walked 20 miles to Derbe the day after being stoned to death.

Act 14:21 After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,

- Miracle #4 He preaches and Souls are saved
- Miracle #5 He goes back to encourage the disciples.
- Just some 80 miles to the east was Paul's home town of Tarsus.
  - Paul didn't quit. Paul didn't even take a break.
  - Paul saw that strengthening the disciples was the call. It wasn't about him.
- Did seeing the 3<sup>rd</sup> heaven solidify his purpose? Did it grant him the ability to not fear what man can do to him but only fear the one who could kill his soul? **Matthew 10:28** *"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."*

Act 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and {saying,} "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." ,

- Paul is encouraging the disciples to continue with a unique message. A message that is lost in our day and age.
- The message that encourages is " **THROUGH MANY TRIBULATIONS WE MUST ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD.** " Tough times are in store, and yet it is a good thing in that it ushers us into the kingdom of God.

Act 14:23 When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

- Brand new churches with opposition, ordaining elders and leaving. How could they do that?
- By praying and Fasting. They must have actually believed their prayers.
- By commending them to Jesus. They trusted that Jesus was in control and that Jesus can handle the difficulty and train the leaders.

Act 14:24 They passed through Pisidia and came into Pamphylia.

Act 14:25 When they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia.

Act 14:26 From there they sailed to Antioch, from which they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had accomplished.

- They passed back through the cities they had converts in and headed back to Antioch Syria.
- Antioch - where it all started by God's grace for this work. It was accomplished

Act 14:27 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.

- The Church came together to hear the events the stories.
- They came and heard how God had opened the door, not just in Antioch but to the whole earth.

- 1 Corinthians 16:9 " *a wide door for effective {service} has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.* "
- 2 Corinthians 2:12 " *Furthermore, when I came to Troas to [preach] Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord,*"
- Colossians 4:2-4 " *Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with {an attitude of} thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.*"

Act 14:28    **And they spent a long time with the disciples.**

- About a year.
- Yet Satan isn't done attacking yet. Chapter 15 we'll see Satan's ugliness rise up even here in all this good time in Antioch.

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