

**History in the Making**  
**“Understanding the Book of Acts-Part Twenty-Five”**

**Introduction:** Return to the book of Acts-Remember the prophetic words of Jesus

*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*  
*Acts 1:8 NKJV*

- ✓ Acts 1-7—Church was Jewish only (confined to Jerusalem)
- ✓ Acts 8-12—Church spread (result of persecution) to Judea and Samaria (Saul converted Samaritan revival, Simon saved, Cornelius, Ethiopian Eunuch, Antioch revival)
- ✓ Chapter 13—First of three missionary trips by Paul (he and Barnabas sent out)
- ✓ The ministry of the Gospel to the unreached world begins in chapter 13

Today—chapter 14—2<sup>nd</sup> half of last missionary trip (Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and back to Antioch to report)

Four key truths regarding the church (It is God’s chosen vessel to reach the world with the Gospel)

(Personal Notes: Love for the church; as a kid, teen, Morocco, today, kids. Notion: I don’t want to make my kids go—nonsense. Priority of church is important!

**I. A persistent antagonism to the ministry of the church should be expected (1-7).**

- A. As they entered Iconium, they went, just as they had in Pisidian Antioch—to the Jewish synagogue to preach to the Jews and God—fearing Gentiles.
- B. Jewish religious authorities resisted their message and sought to poison the minds of the hearers.
- C. Continued for some time and God confirmed Word with signs and wonders.

NOTE: Iconium was in South Galatia-Paul wrote later

*Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Galatians 3:5 NKJV*

D. Great division in the city (Jews/Apostles)

NOTE: v. 3...the message was called the “Gospel of Grace”

1. The message was grace
2. The antagonism came from religious legalist NOT the world
3. The attack was great, sought to stone them
4. Forced to leave and go to Lystra and Derbe

E. The greatest antagonism to the authentic church will come from religious attack on grace

1. Grace welcomes the sinner/struggler
2. Grace invites outcast
3. Grace seeks out diversity

VISION FOR GT: As we cross the bridge to the lost, dirty, messed-up world, young people, dirty people, sinful people, God allows them to be a part of us—expect antagonism! NOT A CLUB FOR HOLY PEOPLE!

- ✓ Patiently love sinner
- ✓ Work with the struggling Christian
- ✓ Love without condition the prodigal
- ✓ Embrace them wholly they are dirty
- ✓ Some won't like it

**II. A patient apologetic will be necessary (8-18).**

A. Begins with a miraculous healing at Lystra

*And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked. 9 This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, 10 said with a loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet!" And he leaped and walked. Acts 14:8-10 NKJV*

1. Similar to healing at Gate Beautiful (Acts 3)
2. Clearly incurable lameness-had never walked
3. Paul saw faith as he preached
4. Called out and was healed

B. People thought the gods had visited them

***Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" 12 And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. 13 Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, intending to sacrifice with the multitudes. Acts 14:11-13 NKJV***

1. At first, Paul and Barnabas didn't understand—language barrier
2. Thought Barnabas was Zeus/Paul Hermes
3. Local tradition of divine visit in human form

C. Paul and Barnabas resisted and attempted to preach the Gospel

***But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out 15 and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, 16 who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. 17 Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." 18 And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them. Acts 14:14-18 NKJV***

**NOTE:** Their preaching was to complete pagans with no frame of reference for God (like Paul in Athens in Acts 17).

D. This is where we often fail ourselves today

1. Must adamantly refuse any attempts to make the message or focus about us.

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2. Must not try to prove God by a Scripture they don't embrace
3. Must appeal to created order (universal law, moral law—proves a higher power)
4. Must appeal to His provision

***Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." Acts 14:17 NKJV***

(Acts 17—"In Him we live, and move, and have our being.")

5. Must depend and rely on the Holy Spirit to touch the hearts of those to whom we witness

### **III. A painful journey and a significant price cannot be avoided by the authentic church (19-23).**

*Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. 20 However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. 21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God." 23 So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. Acts 14:19-23 NKJV*

NOTE: Quick reversal of multitude and gods/now stoned

- A. Paul pelted with stones (Jews)
  1. They left him for dead
  2. He spoke about this later in ministry

*Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep. 2 Corinthians 11:25 NKJV*

*From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Galatians 6:17 NKJV*

- B. Quick reversal-a miracle-got up and went into the city. Left next day for Derbe.
- C. Luke certainly records in Acts the irresistible progress of the church but not in a triumphalistic way

“His heroes were traveling the way of the cross.”

- D. They strengthened/encouraged the church
- E. We too must expect a cross on our journey

#### **IV. The Church will both survive and thrive (24-28).**

*And after they had passed through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. 25 Now when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. 26 From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed. 27 Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. 28 So they stayed there a long time with the disciples. Acts 14:24-28 NKJV*

- A. Traveled back to Antioch—first trip had taken the better part of a year
  - 1. Miracles
  - 2. Defections
  - 3. Revival/Resistance
- B. Door to Gentiles was open
- C. Church Jesus promised to build upon—was being built!

**Conclusion:** Great opposition. World is opposed. Doctrine bad. Church will be ok, Jesus is building it!

*It is the peculiarity of the Church of God—to endure blows, not to give them; but yet you will be pleased to remember, that it is an anvil on which many a hammer has been broken.*

*The saying originated in the reply of the Calvinist theologian Theodore Beza (1519-1605) to the King of Navarre after the massacre of the Huguenots at Vassy in March 1562. The king had attempted to excuse the massacre on the grounds of the Protestants' having provoked the Duke of Guise and his followers by throwing stones at them.*