

# Acts Week 38

## Chapter 14, The Word Moves Forward

We finished off last week with verse 13:52, **“And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.”**

Run out of the region of Pisidia by the elite Jews jealous and convicting would not stand for this new message of salvation. How many of us in Barnabas and Paul's place would just go back to where we felt safe? Remember what Jesus taught, **Mark 6:11; “And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!”** “As a testimony against them.” The Word itself renders testimonies against those who choose not to hear or understand. Prejudice has been present all through history but the denial and prejudice of this teaching brings eternal punishment, for what? Not believing in the Son of God and His sacrifice for our sins. How did this affect Barnabas and Paul? As I understand Paul through all his writing he probably felt worse about the fact his own countrymen would not believe. **Romans 9:3; For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh,** However, they did not cave to their opposition but instead simply moved on to the next town.

**Acts 14:1-7; 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. 2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. 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.**

Moving with what seems as a denial of the abuses they have undergone and the threats of new persecution they move forward as though they would not be scared or defeated and give up. Where do we find this assurance in these two, how could they so boldly continue? When we look back to the last verse of Acts 13 we see that they found joy and were filled with the Holy Spirit. I know what it is like when the Holy Spirit leads you in word and prayer, as though you are just a third party, words coming out of you leaving you wondering where they came from. We can be both strong and pervasive, as in Mark 1:28, And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee. Or we can be persuasive in convincing others that Jesus is real, lived amongst those He taught, died, and has risen.

**4 But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles. 5 And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them, 6 they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region. 7 And they were preaching the gospel there.**

I want to take a moment to reflect on several verses and what is taking place in the hearts of those who rule over Israel. We read all that David did under King Saul, the King became an envious person, jealous of David's victories, and yet David still protected the King. The Pharaoh in Egypt, having complete power over the people, felt a threat and a loss of control when Moses asked to let God's people go. The wonders that Aaron and Moses performed through the power of our Lord God made the Pharaoh even more resistant toward the Jews, his power and sovereignty being challenged. When David and King Saul returned from battle they were met by the women of the cities singing with joy. **1 Samuel 18:7; So the women sang as they danced, and said: "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands."** That would be difficult to ride through when you are the king and pride fills your heart.

We go back to our verse for a minute and read, verse 5, **With their rulers,** This seems to be where so much of the trouble originated, and still does, was in those governing the people. What is at work in people when we experience such an attitude? Is it not pride and power that makes man jealous of others? Political posturing is nothing new, and the church has always had to work around such attitudes. Herod wanted every male child born in and around Bethlehem to be murdered to prevent Jesus from living and being the one the Old Testament pointed to. Look here to the prophecy of Jesus sitting on David's Throne. Jesus will not be as the rulers in Iconium, He will rule with the compassion He has already exhibited. **Romans chapter 13 tells us, Verses 3 and 4, For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.** Are today's rulers championing the good and giving them praise or are they more like a jealous King Saul? These next verses show us how far back the idea of Jesus someday sitting on David's throne goes so there is a very good chance that Herod and others feared our Lord Jesus.

**Isaiah 9:6; For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.**

How is Jesus the firstborn, He came so many centuries later in time. Look here at the importance of Jesus and being the firstborn.

**Colossians 1:15-21**

**"And He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to**

***dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.”***

We know that Jesus is not created, He has always been, so the term used in Colossians 1:18, Romans 8:29, Hebrews 1:6, and Revelation 1:5, implies that the firstborn of the resurrected means we have a path to eternal salvation, it was God’s plan all along. Jesus was born in the incarnate flesh so that He would become fully man and yet remain as fully God in order to remove our sins.

***Psalm 89:27; Also I will make him My firstborn, The highest of the kings of the earth.***

***Psalm 132:11; The LORD has sworn in truth to David; He will not turn from it: “I will set upon your throne the fruit of your body.***

***Luke 1:32; “He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.***

Back to our verses in Acts, Paul and Barnabas have just fled Iconium for their safety.

**Verses 8- 13; 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.**

I think it is important we pay attention to what just took place here. Paul had no superpowers as did Jesus, they were given certain powers to perform certain miracles, but, interestingly, Paul saw that the man had faith. I like this because all of us should be casting that attribute daily in our own lives. ***Mark 2:5; When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.”*** In addition to this, we find that Jesus sometimes says that He knew their thoughts.

### **Misplaced Honor**

**11 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.**

Years ago I was listening to a news report and they were talking about people in North Korea getting their eyesight back. There was an ophthalmologist who got permission from the North Korean Government to bring a team of aids in to treat cataracts in people with poor vision. Cataracts that go untreated can lead to blindness, this team was there to save eyesight, but upon successful surgeries, the people gave all honor to Kim Jong-Il and there was no thanks given to the doctors. Misplaced honor seems to be a part of Satan’s deception, no matter who performs the task, respect can often go where it is not showing sincere appreciation.

We find this throughout the Bible, those whom God made his children failed Him time and again. They complained about everything God did because they felt it did not serve them as they saw fit. Today many of our nation's poor bless the social security system instead of God. You may find this difficult to believe but I once was addressing a group one night in which I was teaching about putting your trust in the Lord and not the government when I finished one of the members in the group told me how many people in the group are on welfare and they probably didn't feel good about what I said. I told her our faith must be in God first in all things. Government programs will at some point fail because of spending and budget woes.

**14 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.**

Paul seeks to correct the misled attention and praise they are giving him and Barabas. We find this same misleading honor when John bows to the angel in *Revelation 22:8-9; Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. 9 Then he said to me, "See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."*

Today we find children worshiping actors and singers, college students worshiping evil, and politicians basking in their fame and power, no matter if what they do is good or evil, recognition is what is important. Paul did what was right and placed the focus on God the Father, yet they still went on to sacrifice animals.

**19-20; 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.**

Left for dead. Stoned and considered dead, Paul later goes back into the town that just thought to kill him, he remains there overnight before leaving.

**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. 24 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.