

Acts 14

Vs. 1-7 Paul and Barnabas are once again in a synagogue – in Iconium. The treatment of the Apostles escalates to attempts to stone them. This is not the result of Jewish law as punishment for blasphemy. It is a political conflict over power.

Once again a group of unbelieving Jews stirred up Gentiles and the apostles had to run. So they went to Lystra and Derbe, cities in Lyconia.

Luke appears to want his readers to understand that the missionaries did all they could to convert their kinsmen.

Vs. 8-20 Verses 1-7 were in the order of a mission report giving a summary of Paul's work in the Lycaonian district. Luke follows this general report with a narrative of a specific event in Lystra.

This healing by Paul is reflective of the healing by Peter in chapter 3:1-8.

See handout

Luke appears to be establishing for Paul the same kind of authority Peter had received from Christ.

The healing is followed by an almost comic interlude in which the crowd – essentially pagan proclaim Paul and Barnabas to be gods an observant Jew such as Peter encountered would never have entertained such a possibility but this is the gentile world.

V. 8-20 Paul and Barnabas tear their clothes a gesture understood to express extreme inward grief – often because of perceived blasphemy.

Paul's speech – in opposition to the pagan response - asserts three traditional Jewish beliefs.

- 1) He and Barnabas are mortals just like the crowd and it is as mortals that they bring the good news.
- 2) The subject of that good news is the living God, who made heaven and earth, and the sea and all that is in them.
- 3) This living God has maintained a witness to the nations even though they have routinely rejected God in ignorance in order to follow their own ways

V 20b -23

This verses are to establish the protocol Paul typically followed in establishing Christian congregations in the diaspora. He retraces his previous steps to strengthen and encourage the new converts along the way – to keep Christians “Christian” in an environment hostile to the faith.V 24-26

Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch where their congregational support lay.