



“The Christian Life in Three Dimensions”

Acts 14:1-28

Study Guide #17 for the week of
May 22, 2022

In Iconium - [Acts 14:1-7](#)

Some questions to answer and discuss:

1. What are some issues that often cause disagreement among people?
2. How did unbelievers oppose what Paul and Barnabas were doing? ([14:2](#))
3. How did the apostles respond to the opposition? ([14:3](#))
4. How was the city divided? ([14:4](#))
5. What happens to the church when a congregation divides its loyalties among leaders?
6. How can you and others in your church support your ministerial staff?
7. How can you support those whom God has called to lead your church?

Life Application Bible Notes

[14:3, 4](#) We may wish we could perform a miraculous act that would convince everyone once and for all that Jesus is the Lord. But we see here that even if we could perform a miracle, it wouldn't convince everyone. God gave these men power to do great wonders as confirmation of the message of grace, but people were still divided. Don't spend your time and energy wishing for miracles. Sow your seeds of the Good News on the best ground you can find in the best way you can, and leave the convincing to the Holy Spirit.

Continued Ministry in Galatia: Paul and Barnabas, thrown out of Antioch in Pisidia, descended the mountains, going east into Lycaonia. They went first to Iconium, a commercial center on the road between Asia and Syria. After preaching there, they had to flee to Lystra, 25 miles south. Paul was stoned in Lystra, but he and Barnabas traveled the 50 miles to Derbe, a border town. The pair then boldly retraced their steps.

[14:6](#) Iconium ([14:1](#)), Lystra, and Derbe were three cities Paul visited in the southern part of the region of Galatia. Paul probably wrote a letter to these churches—the letter to the Galatians—because many Jewish Christians were claiming that non-Jewish Christians couldn't be saved unless they followed Jewish laws and customs. Paul's letter refuted this and brought the believers back to a right understanding of faith in Jesus (see [Galatians 3:3, 5](#)). Paul may have written his letter soon after leaving the region.

The End of the First Journey: From Antioch in Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas went down the mountains back to Pamphylia on the coast. Stopping first in Perga, where they had landed, they went west to Attalia, the main port that sent goods from Asia to Syria and Egypt. There they found a ship bound for Seleucia, the port of Antioch in Syria. This ended their first missionary journey.

In Lystra and Derbe - [Acts 14:8-20](#)

Some questions to answer and discuss:

1. What would you do if you received an expensive gift that you didn't think you deserved?
2. How did the crowd respond to what Paul had done? ([14:11-13](#))
3. Why did Paul and Barnabas tear their clothes? ([14:14](#))
4. What was the apostles' message to the crowd? ([14:15-17](#))
5. When have you received credit or recognition you didn't deserve?
6. Why is it important to give glory to God?
7. What can you do to direct people's attention to Christ and away from you?

Life Application Bible Notes

[14:11, 12](#) Zeus and Hermes (also known as Jupiter and Mercury) were two popular gods in the Roman world. People from Lystra claimed that these gods had once visited their city. According to legend, no one had offered them hospitality except an old couple, so Zeus and Hermes had killed the rest of the people and rewarded the old couple. When the citizens of Lystra saw the miracles of Paul and Barnabas, they assumed that the gods were revisiting them. Remembering the story of what had happened to the previous citizens, they immediately honored Paul and Barnabas and showered them with gifts.

[14:15-18](#) Responding to the people of Lystra, Paul and Barnabas reminded them that God never leaves himself "without evidence of himself and his goodness." Rain and good crops, for example, are evidence of his goodness. Later Paul wrote that this evidence in nature leaves people without an excuse for unbelief ([Romans 1:20](#)). When in doubt about God, look around and you will see abundant evidence that he is at work in the world.

[14:18, 19](#) Only days after the people in Lystra had thought that Paul and Barnabas were gods and wanted to offer sacrifices to them, they stoned Paul and left him for dead. That's human nature. Jesus understood how fickle crowds can be ([John 2:24, 25](#)). When many people approve of us, we feel good, but that should never cloud our thinking or affect our decisions. We should not live to please the crowd—especially in our spiritual lives. Be like Jesus. Know the nature of the crowd and don't put your trust in it. Put your trust in God alone.

[14:18-20](#) Paul and Barnabas were persistent in their preaching of the Good News, considering the cost to themselves to be nothing in comparison with obedience to Christ. They had just narrowly escaped being stoned in Iconium ([14:1-7](#)), but Jews from Antioch and Iconium tracked Paul down, stoned him, and left him for dead. But Paul got up and went back into the city to preach the Good News. That's commitment! Being a disciple of Christ calls for total commitment. As Christians, we no longer belong to ourselves but to our Lord, for whom we are called to suffer.

The Return to Antioch in Syria - [Acts 14:21-28](#)

Some questions to answer and discuss:

1. What kind of vacation most appeals to you (trips to other cities, backwoods hiking, visits to the beach, etc.)?
2. What did Paul and Barnabas do in Derbe? ([14:21](#))
3. Why did Paul and Barnabas retrace their steps to Antioch? ([14:22](#))
4. What encouragement and help did the apostles give the new Christians? ([14:22-23](#))
5. How does your church disciple new Christians?
6. How can you help younger Christians get established in the faith?
7. What younger Christian can you encourage this week? How?

Life Application Bible Notes

[14:21, 22](#) Paul and Barnabas returned to visit the believers in all the cities where they had recently been threatened and physically attacked. These men knew the dangers they faced, yet they believed that they had a responsibility to encourage the new believers. No matter how inconvenient or uncomfortable the task may seem, we must always support new believers who need our help and encouragement. It was not convenient or comfortable for Jesus to go to the cross for us!

[14:23](#) Part of the reason that Paul and Barnabas risked their lives to return to these cities was to organize the churches' leadership. They were not just following up on a loosely knit group; they were helping the believers get organized with spiritual leaders who could help them grow. Churches grow under Spirit-led leaders, both laypersons and pastors. Pray for your church leaders and support them; and if God puts his finger on you, humbly accept the responsibility of a leadership role in your church.

[14:28](#) Paul probably wrote his letter to the Galatians while he was staying in Antioch (A.D. 48 or 49) after completing his first missionary journey. There are several theories as to what part of Galatia Paul was addressing, but most agree that Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe were part of that region for which the letter was intended. Galatians was probably written before the Jerusalem council ([Acts 15](#)), because in the letter the question of whether Gentile believers should be required to follow Jewish law was not yet resolved. The council met to solve that problem.

Acts Study Guide questions and notes are from