

Acts 14:1- 21 Talking to pagans about God

Paul's First Mission: The journey so far ...



At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles (*who were part of the congregation*) believed.

First stop – the synagogue

What did they believe?

They needed saving from their sins.

Jesus is the Messiah and Saviour.

God forgives as we believe (put our trust in what He has done)



Bad influence

But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers.

Resistance doesn't stay personal - it is infectious. It is driven by the devil – but they are responsible for their attitudes and actions.



So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders.

Undeterred –they keep on...
For the present it was time to stay.

Boldly for the Lord

He wants the message to go out
they were his servants

Heaven's back up!

God confirms the message and enables
(it is God who works) but they 'do' the
miracles and signs

What's the difference between signs and
miracles?



The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews,
others with **the apostles**.

You can't sit on the fence when it comes to the gospel.



There was a plot afoot among the Gentiles and Jews,
together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them.

Some hate the message and so
try to destroy the messengers.

Why is there such resistance?

Stones are dangerous!



God's protection – they found out!

But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, where they continued to preach the good news.

God's protection and human wisdom – they got out of harm's way.

Next stop Lystra (20m) and Derbe
Preaching good news in pagan territory.



In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul as he was speaking.



It was a captive audience
but he listened!

His permanent condition
was about to change!

Faith comes from hearing
the message Romans 10:17

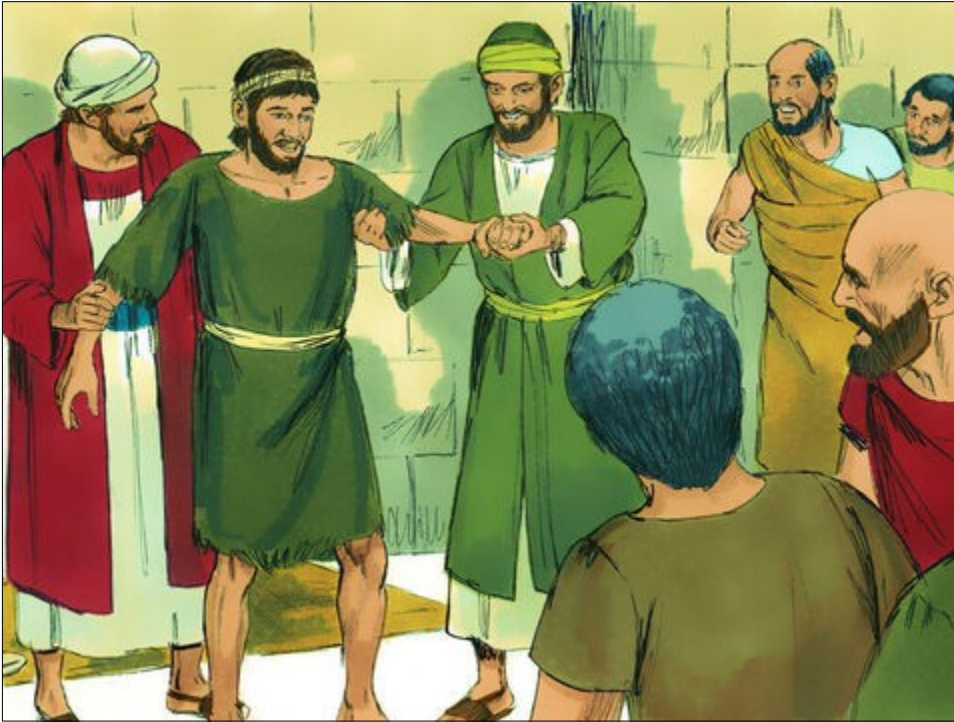
Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed



A meeting of minds

What did Paul see?

Paul called out, "Stand up on your feet!"
At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.



He called out so that all could hear.

His response to words of power

The power was not in the words
alone but combined with faith.

There were 3 miracles!

He had faith in the Saviour, Jesus.

His body was healed.

He never needed to learn to walk.

When the crowd saw what Paul had done,
they shouted in the Lycaonian language,
"The gods have come down to us in human form!"

The crowd that was present were amazed and in their excitement go native! They speak in their first language – not Greek.

They show their pagan beliefs in multiple gods and imagine that Paul and Barnabus are divine visitors.



"The gods have come down to us in human form!"
Barnabas they called Zeus,
and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker.

Greek gods -

Zeus (the older boss)

Hermes (the messenger)

At least it tells us about
how they saw the roles
that Paul and Barnabas
played.



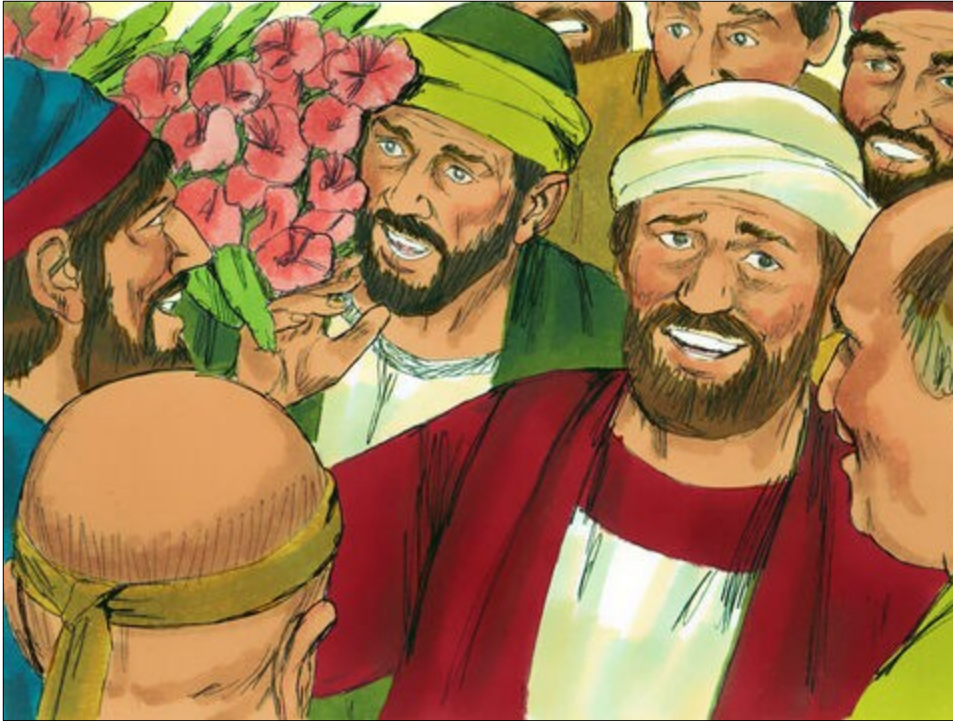
The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the (city) gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them.



The local 'priest' comes to celebrate
(Their temple is close by)

Do they want to make a thank offering for the healing and the visit?

But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting..
"Men, why are you doing this?"



Somebody interpreted for them.
Action was needed. They got
the wrong message

Torn clothes were a sign of
mourning. People can see they
are not wanting to look so
impressive.

Why doing 'this' – it's idolatry!

The good news for people who know nothing about God

We too are only men, human like you.
We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these
worthless things to the living God,

The priest of Zeus wouldn't like what he was doing being called 'worthless'. But Paul says even though such things are costly they achieve nothing. Part of the gospel is that some things have to be left behind.



Back to basics about God

We too are only men, human like you.

We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them.

The ONE real living God
(vs. imaginary/dead gods)
is the Creator of everything.

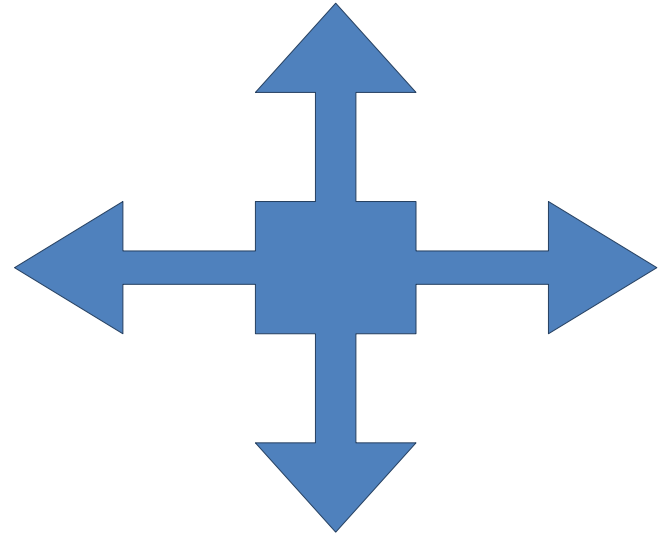
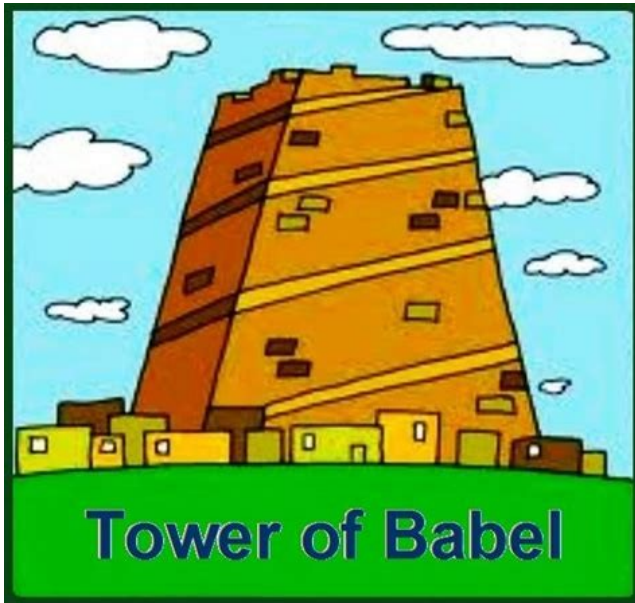
Three environments of life:-
earth, sea and sky.



God's testimony

In the past, he let all nations go their own way.

Previously nations had been left to their own devices
– all nations except Israel



God's testimony

Yet he has not left himself without testimony.. He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy."

But can you hear/see God's testimony
(the heavens declare Psalm 19:1
Romans 1)

His favour is seen in :-
seasons – rain, crops, food, joy

He wants you to know and
acknowledge him



Even with these words,
they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them.

Their enthusiasm got the better of them but reason began to prevail.

PHEW!!



Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead.



Persecutors from BOTH previous places turn up. There is no escape this time. Stones can kill.

Good riddance!

They thought wrong!

But after the disciples had gathered around him,
he got up and went back into the city.



What do you think they did?
Prayed for his healing.
The prayer was answered –
There's more work for Paul to do!

He got up and **WENT BACK**

Quite a shock for the citizens?

An illustration of gospel power

The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe.



Moving on further inland
directed by the Holy Spirit
Alive for a reason...

What will be next ?

They preached the good news in that city
and won a large number of disciples.



People in Derbe needed the
good news too and many
believed –
They became disciples not
simply ‘converts’ and started a
new way of living for the Lord.

Acts 16:1 shows that Timothy’s
grandmother and mother were
living either in Lystra or Derbe.



Seeking God's direction, they see that follow-up work needs to be done.
This comes in the remainder of the chapter.

Mission can be rewarding and dangerous
God calls US to be his witnesses too.