

Bible Study on CONNECT in ACTS — Acts 14:1-20

For Sunday July 31, 2022

Acts 14:1-20 (ESV)

Paul and Barnabas at Iconium

14 Now at Iconium they entered together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed. ² But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. ³ So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. ⁴ But the people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles. ⁵ When an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them, ⁶ they learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country, ⁷ and there they continued to preach the gospel.

Paul and Barnabas at Lystra

⁸ Now at Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was crippled from birth and had never walked. ⁹ He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well, ¹⁰ said in a loud voice, “Stand upright on your feet.” And he sprang up and began walking. ¹¹ And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!” ¹² Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. ¹³ And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds. ¹⁴ But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out, ¹⁵ “Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. ¹⁶ In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. ¹⁷ Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.” ¹⁸ Even with these words they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them.

Paul Stoned at Lystra

¹⁹ But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. ²⁰ But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe.

1. Think about a time you faced opposition. What was your response? How do you wish you had responded differently?

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2. Read Acts 14:4-6 and 19-20. What is different about each encounter? How would you have responded? What enabled the apostles to keep going?

3. After Paul and Barnabas get wind of a plot against them, they decide to leave Iconium (vs. 4-6). How do we know when to hold our ground and when the battle is not worth pursuing?

4. In verses 8-20, how do the people of Lystra misunderstand the miracle that they witness?

5. Why did the people mistake Paul and Barnabas for “gods”? What did Paul and Barnabas do when they realized the people of Lystra intended to worship them?

6. Who has been impactful spiritual leaders in your life? When have you been tempted to worship, or put a Christian leader on a pedestal?

7. First the crowd hailed Paul and Barnabas as gods. Then suddenly they wanted to kill them. Why do you think the crowds turn against the apostles so abruptly?