

EVERYONE to EVERYWHERE

Lesson Five • Acts 14:1-21

A Tale of Three Cities

Endurance Required

When OPPOSITION to the Gospel increases, the need for ENDURANCE increases.

My persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. 2Timothy 3:11-12 ESV

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. 2Corinthians 1:8-9 NIV



A Tale of Three Cities

1. Iconium: Reception, Then OPPOSITION!

What Begins with Gospel Reception Ends with Gospel Opposition

Proclaiming the Gospel resulted in DIVISIVE responses to the Gospel, which led to increasing opposition against the Gospel.

Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude of both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord... But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles. Acts 14:1-4

Stages of Increasing Opposition

Stage	Attitude	Action	Reference
Stage #1	"I will not believe the Gospel."	Informed Decision against Christ	"unbelieving" vs. 2a
Stage #2	"I do not want others to believe the Gospel."	Public Campaign against Christianity	"poisoned their minds" vs. 2b
Stage #3	"I do not want Christians to tell others the Gospel."	Intimidation of Christians	"abuse them" vs. 5a
Stage #4	"I do not want Christians around to tell others the Gospel."	Elimination of Christians	"stone them" vs. 5b

2. Lystra: Admiration, Then PERSECUTION!

Admiration One Day

Paul's MIRACLE combined with Greek MYTHOLOGY led to the people's attempt to worship Paul and Barnabas.

And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked. This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet!" And he leaped and walked. 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!" And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. 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. Acts 14:8-13

The Apostles' Response

They REFUSED the misplaced worship and instead REFOCUSed it toward God, urging people to turn from false gods to the living God.

But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out 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, who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. 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." And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them. Acts 14:14-18

Persecution the Next Day

At the persuasion of unbelieving Jews, the same people who wanted to worship Paul, STONED him and left him for dead outside the city.

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. However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. Acts 14:19-20

3. Derbe: Determination, Then TRANSFORMATION!

And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. Acts 14:20-21

Endurance: Sticking to the Task, Regardless!

May we RELY ON THE LORD for the endurance to get the Gospel here, there, and everywhere.

Therefore they spent a long time there speaking boldly with reliance upon the Lord... Acts 14:3 NASB