

THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

SESSION 45 | ACTS 14:3-13

ACTS 14:1-6 | PAUL'S MINISTRY IN ICONIUM

- Verses 1-2 included on session 44
- Verse 3 –
 - As they were **speaking boldly of the word of his grace** (i.e.: the Pauline gospel), the Lord **granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands**.
 - These signs and wonders are something that appear to be given to the Jews, **for the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom** (1 Cor. 1:22).
 - It was not immature for the Jews to **require a sign**, but rather based on their Hebrew Scriptures which demanded visible evidence of new prophetic utterance.
 - God is not condescending to their demands, but rather providing them that which He instructed them to expect.
 - Note that, beginning in verse 8, there were often disastrous results when **signs and wonders** were displayed in Gentile audiences.
- Verse 4 –
 - With the Gentile world eager to hear the new message and the Jewish world concerned that the new message was cultic, it is no surprise that **the multitude of the city was divided between the traditional Jews and with the apostles**.
 - Here, the apostolic title is given both to Paul and to Barnabus (see also v. 14).
 - Note that while we normally only refer to 12 apostles plus Paul, the 13th, the Bible is not as strict in its usage of the term.
 - However, there is no indication that apostles existed prior to the time of Jesus nor after the time of the Kingdom offer.
 - One mark of apostleship was the performance of signs and wonders.
- Verses 5-6 –
 - The Greek word for **assault** is ὄρμη [hormey], but it is only used and in James 3:4, where it is not even translated in the KJV.
 - In James 3:4, the Young's Literal translates as *impulse*.
 - In verse 6, it becomes clear that an actual **assault** was not carried out, but the plan was in motion.
 - With this threat, they left to the nearby cities, moving eastward, where they would preach the same grace Gospel.

ACTS 14:7-13 | PAUL VIEWED AS A DEITY IN LYSTRA

- Verse 7 –
 - This verse encompasses all that took place in **Lystra and Derbe...and unto the region that lieth round about**. Beginning with verse 8 the focus is on Lystra itself.
 - Having fled Iconium, they did not stop proclaiming the good news. This is a perfect example of Paul doing what he would later instruct Timothy, to **preach the word; be instant in season, out of season...** (2 Tim. 4:2). It was **out of season**, but this did not stop them!

- Perhaps our English translations have caused confusion in **the gospel**. What is being preached here is *the gospel as we know it*. But our English translations give us the idea that there has always been only one gospel, which is **the gospel**. If the Greek phrase had been transliterated, it would say something like, *and there they evangelized*. The Greek word is a form of εὐαγγελίζω [euangelizo], *to announce good news*.
- Note, Timothy is from Lystra (Acts 16:1) and could have been a convert from this preaching expedition.
- Verses 8-10 –
 - What a miraculous healing! Paul (like any experienced speaker) was able to tell that the man **had faith to be healed** and so Paul declared the crippled man to **stand upright on thy feet**, and the man **leaped and walked**.
 - Be reminded that in verse 3 the Lord had **granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands**. Such a “grant” must be made for anyone to command such a miracle as this, and one should not presume that they have been given this miracle power.
- Verses 11-12 –
 - There was a doubtlessly well-known myth of the Greek gods Jupiter and his son Mercury who, in disguise, visited an elderly couple, Philemon and Baucis, in neighboring Phrygia. The couple was rewarded with a wish of whatever they wanted because of their hospitality and spared from the devastation brought on their village.
 - This is a potent reminder that worldview affects conclusions that a person makes from their surrounding circumstances (thus worldview education is of paramount importance).
- Verse 13 –
 - This is an entirely different response than any of the similar miracles in Israel. The Jews would have never made such a response, giving evidence that this is a purely gentile (and pagan) crowd.
 - When some call for "power evangelism" (the use of miracles in evangelism) today, they are misguided. It doesn't lead to commitment to Christ, but to celebration of pagan deities.
 - What kind of pagan people would deify men?
 - When Cortez entered the Aztec temple in what is now Mexico, Montezuma II welcomed him as a god.
 - Also consider the *Apotheosis of Washington* in the U.S. Capitol (see information at <https://www.aoc.gov/art/other-paintings-and-murals/apotheosis-washington>).
 - Jupiter is the Roman name of the Greek god Zeus. Mercury is the Roman name for the Greek god Hermes.