

How did Paul preach the Gospel to the people of Galatia?—part 2
Acts 13:13-14:28
(especially to the **Gentile** aspect of their culture—14:1-28)

Introduction:

- 1) The area was noted for its lawless mountain tribes. Neither the Persians nor the Greeks could subdue these tribes.
- 2) Iconium, while located on the main commercial road in the region known as the *Via Sebaste* (the Royal Road), was in a rugged region of what we know as Turkey. It is a comparatively insignificant city on the outskirts of the same district as Pisidian Antioch
- 3) This is the spring of 48 AD. The swans have arrived. The air is cool, the snow is still in the shadows of the hillsides and in the many ravines. Water is scarce, and there are few trees to be seen as they travel.

Paul ministers to a mixed culture in ICONIUM [modern Konya]—14:1-7 (similar to Pisidian Antioch in 13)

- 1) The first audience is in the Jewish synagogue, the community center—14:1a
- 2) A large group of Jews and Greeks trust—14:1b
 - a) However, this is not because of Paul's winsomeness or speaking ability
- 3) The opposition begins, again—14:2
 - a) The Jews who refused to believe [ἀπειθέω] stir up the Gentiles, and poison their minds (lit. "turned their souls toward harm") against the brothers.
- 4) Jesus' response to the opposition—14:3
 - a) The ministry team stays a long time, speaking courageously in the Lord Jesus, who is bearing witness to the message of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by the ministry team.
- 5) As a result, Iconium becomes a divided city—14:4
- 6) The opposition plans violence—14:5-6 They intend to mistreat and stone them
 - a) Paul and his team leave Iconium and head down the road to the more rustic town of Lystra, some 20 miles south. This is Timothy's home area (cf. 16:1)
 - b) Lycaonia ("wolf land") was a different legal jurisdiction. It was officially known by this title for only 35 years (37-72 AD).
- 7) And they were gospelizing [εὐαγγελίζω] there—14:7

Paul ministers to predominantly Gentiles in the region of Lycaonia, specifically Lystra and Derbe—14:8-20 (3 important incidents take place)

- This is a predominantly Gentile area, as there is no mention of a synagogue.
- 1) Incident # 1—**HEALING**—God heals a crippled man through Paul—14:8-10
 - a) This is Paul's first public miracle (cf. Peter & John's in Acts 3)
 - 2) Incident # 2—**SUPERSTITION**—14:11-18 (this section contains the Gospel)
 - a) There was an ancient myth of how the people of Lystra had previously ignored Zeus/Jupiter and Hermes/Mercury, resulting in a devastating flood that killed many in their area.

- b) Paul makes no direct appeal to Scripture, but used Biblical ideas.
 - NB that this is specifically called the good news [εὐαγγελίζω]; the NKJ translates this as “preach” (cf. 14:15)
 - Paul is building on the principles of Romans 1:19-20
 - i) Paul rejects their offer to worship him—14:14-15
 - (1) What some people in their culture would have welcomed (remember Herod’s response in Acts 12:22-23)
 - (2) But the people still recognize the power to heal is supernatural
 - ii) Paul tells them of their responsibility to respond—14:15
 - (1) Repentance—they must turn **from** useless/worthless things—14:15a
 - (2) Trust—they must turn **to** the living God the Creator of all—14:15
 - iii) Paul tells them of God’s patience—14:16
 - iv) Paul tells them of God’s goodness through common grace—14:17
- 3) Incident # 3—STONING—14:19-20 (cf. Acts 7 & Stephen; 2nd Corinthians 11:25)
- a) A long way for obstinate Jews to travel to express their jealousy—14:19
 - b) Paul and Barnabas leave the next day for Derbe—14:20
 - i) About 35 miles to the southeast
 - ii) No opposition is noted
 - iii) One of the disciples may have been Gaius, a future coworker (cf. 20:4)

Lastly, the ministry team returns to Antioch of Syria—14:21-28

- It would have been easier/shorter to go from Derbe directly east to Tarsus, but they opted to return to all the cities they have visited earlier—14:21
- 1) They focus on the disciples and leadership in the congregations—14:22-23
- a) Strengthening [pres. act. ptc. ἐπιστηρίζω] their souls
 - b) Encouraging [pres. act. ptc. παρακαλέω] them to persevere in the faith
 - i) That the kingdom of God is entered through many pressures [θλίψεις]
 - (1) Like Paul had just experienced in Lystra
 - c) Entrusted them to the Lord (Jesus) in whom they trusted
 - i) Having appointed elders in every congregation
 - ii) Having prayed with fasting
- 2) They travel through the region of Pamphylia—14:24 (cf. Acts 2:10)
- 3) They speak the Word in Perga (of Pamphylia)—14:25
- a) There was no ministry of the Word in Perga at the beginning (cf. 13:13)
- 4) They sail back to Antioch in Syria—14:26-28
- a) They had completed [πληρώω] the work to which the congregation in Antioch had commended them to the grace of God—14:26
 - b) They report [ἀναγγέλλω] all that God had done with them and that God had opened the door of faith for the Gentiles—14:27
 - i) Both God-fearers and basic Gentiles
 - c) They remain [διατρίβω] a long time with the disciples in Antioch—14:28
 - i) This would probably be when Paul writes Galatians.
 - ii) Perhaps Peter visits at this time? (Galatians 2:11-16)

Take-home truth:

- 1) The Gospel is the good news of what God has done to accomplish His purpose for His glory and our good.
 - a) Content: we must be careful in our statements concerning what is presented, the content of the Gospel.
 - i) Let us not wrongly assume that certain aspects of the gospel are the entirety of the gospel.
 - b) Communication: we must be careful in our statements concerning how the Gospel is to be presented.

Next time we will look at the source and content of the Gospel message.