

Subject	Lessons from Acts Series	4414
		Acts 14
Title	7 Lessons from Acts 14	
Proposition	To study Acts 14.	
Objective	To consider seven lessons which Acts 14 helps me to consider and appreciate and apply in my own life.	

## 7 Lessons from Acts 14

### Introduction:

1. The first missionary journey continues on into Iconium.
2. Persecution is endured here by Paul and Barnabas.
3. In Lystra another miracle is performed which causes the people to over-react by bowing down to Paul and Barnabas as if they were gods.
  - 1) This mistaken notion was quickly corrected by Paul.
  - 2) Paul comes near to death from stoning at Lystra and yet he gets up and continues his preaching just as vigorously as ever before.
4. After teaching in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Perga, they return to Antioch and report on how God had used them to spread the saving message.

### DISCUSSION: Acts 14 Helps me in that it—

#### I. Tells about a WAY OF SPEAKING that brings forth AMAZING fruit (1).

**Acts 14:1** And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and **so spake**, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.

1. Is there any greater way to use our God-given ability to speak than to speak in such a way that others are led to believe?
  - 1) It is a GIVEN that the CONTENT of their speech was of PRIMARY importance.
  - 2) BUT, when Luke records that they **SO SPAKE**, he is emphasizing the manner in which they spoke.
    - 1- The original word here for **SO** means, *in the manner indicated*.
    - 2- In other words, they spake in such a way that a great multitude of lost souls came to understand that message and believed.
    - 3- The word **BELIEVED** here means they responded to the message in the way the message would have demanded.
    - 4- That is, they **OBEYED THE GOSPEL**.
  - 3) I get the picture that these men had a message from dying men to dying men!
  - 4) They understood that the words they had to speak were of tremendous importance.
  - 5) They **KNEW FULL WELL** that **HOW** they spoke on this occasion could be the difference in someone's eternity.
2. Luke further informs us that they spoke **BOLDLY IN THE LORD** (v. 3).
  - 1) What does it mean to speak **BOLDLY IN THE LORD**?

- 2) They had great confidence that the message they were speaking from the Lord **NEEDED** to be spoken!
  - 3) They had no hesitation in letting others know the love of God for them.
  - 4) They simply **HAD NO DOUBT** that their message, properly understood, was good news to all men!
  - 5) They had no fear that somehow they might be doing something wrong when they **SO SPAKE** the message from heaven.
3. There is a passage that comes to mind when I read Acts 14.1—Ephesians 4:11-15 **And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; (12) For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: (13) Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: (14) That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; (15) But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: Though this is in the context of building up the body of Christ, it seems to me to applicable, also, to the initial message that leads to entry into that body! And ESPECIALLY the first words of verse 15!**
- 1) I am confident that Paul and Barnabas spoke the way they did for no other reason than that they **LOVED** those people.
  - 2) **1 Corinthians 13:1-3** Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not **LOVE**, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. (2) And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not **LOVE**, I am nothing. (3) And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not **LOVE**, it profiteth me nothing.
4. How desperately we need to be encouraging ourselves as Christians to follow the example of Paul and Barnabas as they **SO SPAKE**.

Acts 14 Helps me in that it—

## II. Points to a **DIVIDED** reception of Good News (4).

**Acts 14:4** But the multitude of the city was **divided**: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles. *BOTH in 1<sup>st</sup> Century and the 21<sup>st</sup>.*

1. **BUT THE MULTITUDE OF THE CITY WAS DIVIDED (Acts 14:4).** Luke brings out a *SAD* reality here.
  - 1) How sad it is that **ALL** will not respond properly to the gospel message and thus be united together!
  - 2) “The gospel is **God’s uniting power**: it unites all good people in one grand body (Eph 4:1-6).
2. The gospel is **also God’s dividing power**:

- 1) It divides the believer from the unbeliever,
  - 2) The sinner from the saint,
  - 3) The sincere from the hypocritical,
  - 4) The good from the evil within us.
3. In a manner of speaking, **Jesus came to separate.**
- 1) **John 7:43** So there was a division among the people because of him.
  - 2) **John 9:16** Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.
  - 3) **John 10:19** There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings.

[Frank L. Cox, *Treatises of Luke*, p. 194]. Cf., Matthew 10:34-39.

Acts 14 Helps me in that it—

### III. Distinguishes MAN'S GLORY from GOD'S GLORY (15).

**Acts 14:15** And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? **We also are men of like passions with you,** and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities **unto the living God,** which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

1. They wanted no part of accepting glory and praise from men that should go to God.
2. To exalt men is a mistake concerning which these highly superstitious people of Lystra needed to be warned.
  - 1) They always were on guard not to (in any way) offend a god.
  - 2) **SOURCE:** Robert Jeffries, *Power on Barnabas*. It would have been just about 50 years earlier that Ovid wrote a **FABLE** in *The Metamorphoses*, which pictures the superstition of that culture. According to his writing, ...
    - 1- The supreme god, Jupiter and his son Mercury once visited the hill country of Phrygia.
    - 2- They were disguised as mortal men.
    - 3- In their incognito state they sought hospitality but were refused a thousand times.
    - 4- At last, however, they were offered lodging in a tiny cottage, thatched with straw and reeds from the marsh.
    - 5- Here lived an elderly peasant couple called Philemon (Not the Philemon of the New Testament) and Baucis, who entertained them out of their poverty.
    - 6- Later the gods rewarded them, but destroyed by flood the homes which would not take them in.
    - 7- It is possible that these polytheistic people were aware of that legend and reacted in the way they did because of it.
3. Men gets into trouble for giving the place of **GLORY** belonging to God to gods or to men!

- 1) **Isaiah 43:7** Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.
  - 2) **Matthew 5:16** **Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.**
4. **The Apostle Paul helps us to know that worshiping men in the place of God leads to two DANGERS:**
- 1) **Distraction from Christ.**
  - 2) **Strife and division.**
  - 3) **Listen to Paul: 1 Corinthians 1:10-15** Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. (11) For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. (12) Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. (13) Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? (14) I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; (15) Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.
5. **In our day we may find ourselves tempted to do a similar thing to what these polytheistic people did, but we must resist it.**

Acts 14 Helps me in that it—

**IV. Provides an EXAMPLE of Revelation 2.10 (19).**

**Acts 14:19** And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

1. **...HAVING STONED PAUL, DREW HIM OUT OF THE CITY, SUPPOSING HE HAD BEEN DEAD (Acts 14:19; cf., 2 Cor 11:25).**
  - 1) **Paul remained faithful UNTO DEATH (i.e., even to the point of death, Rev 2:10).**
  - 2) **He continued on to preach the gospel (vv., 20-21).**
2. **2 Corinthians 11:25** Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;
3. **Scenes such as this should help us understand his confidence that he had a crown awaiting him--2 Timothy 4:7-8** I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: (8) Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Acts 14 Helps me in that it—

**V. Teaches me WORDS SOMETIMES HAVE DIFFERENT MEANINGS (22).**

**Acts 14:22** Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

1. ...**WE MUST THROUGH MUCH TRIBULATION ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM...**

*Idea from Wayne Jackson, NOTES FROM THE MARGIN... .*

- 1) We see that Luke is giving the record of the closing down of Paul's first missionary journey.
- 2) The last thing they did was to REVISIT some of the infant churches to strengthen them and encourage them and prepare them for spiritual battles that would surely be in their future.
- 3) We are interested in the last portion of this verse.
- 4) Here, after urging them to continue in THE FAITH, they speak of ENTERING the KINGDOM.
- 5) **Did they not already ENTER the kingdom at their baptism? What is the meaning of this expression?**
  - 1- Of course, this is true.
  - 2- John 3:3-5 Jesus answered and said unto him, **Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.** (4) Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? (5) Jesus answered, **Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**
    - + The obvious and clear implication of these words of Jesus is that when one does experience the NEW BIRTH, that person DOES ENTER the kingdom.
  - 3- How do we explain this usage then in Acts 14?

2. Some premillennialists want to say that this verse teaches that the kingdom has not yet come.

- 1) FALSE, FALSE, FALSE.
  - 1- Easily shown to be false from a study of John's introduction to the Book of Revelation.
  - 2- Revelation 1:9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and **in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ**, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.
 

*John was IN THE ISLE THAT IS CALLED PATMOS, yet he was IN THE KINGDOM.*
  - 3- Colossians 1:13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and **hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:**
- 2) Sometimes words do have different connotations-meanings in differing contexts, however.
  - 1- The term KINGDOM is not ALWAYS equivalent to CHURCH.

- 2- Jesus does use the two interchangeably in Matthew 16.16-18.
  - 3- That is the most common meaning of the term as used in the NT.
  - 4- Sometimes, though, KINGDOM is a reference to the final place of the faithful and thus victorious saints.
  - 5- Sometimes it refers to HEAVEN ITSELF.
  - 6- Listen to Paul: 2 Timothy 4:18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.
3. This is a NT usage of the word KINGDOM with the meaning of HEAVEN.
- 1) So Paul and Barnabas were encouraging these new Christians to remain faithful and be strong and not be surprised by difficulties and persecution that might come upon them.
  - 2) Be faithful and there will be a heavenly reward that will make the trials seem to be nothing in the end!

Acts 14 Helps me in that it—

**VI. Emphasizes the VITAL IMPORTANCE of Elders in the Lord's Church (23).**

Acts 14:23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

1. To me, it is so SAD when I hear about churches that have existed many years and never have become scripturally organized.
  - 1) I well understand that some congregations do not have men who meet the qualifications.
  - 2) Elders should never be appointed who do not meet the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3.1-7!
  - 3) The Lord is NOT going to bless the congregation that veers away from the clearly stated qualifications.
  - 4) But any congregation without elders needs to be URGENT in seeking to qualify men to fill that role at some point in the future.
  - 5) And that project needs to receive very HIGH PRIORITY in the work of that body of believers!
2. In this statement summarizing what took place at the end of this journey, something is EMPHASIZED.
  - 1) Luke did not have to use the word EVERY to modify the word CHURCH.
  - 2) But, the Holy Spirit DID guide him to use that word.
  - 3) That none of these churches were left out, would say that every single one of them NEEDED to have an eldership.
3. The question always is asked, how were they able to develop QUALIFIED men in such a short time?

- 1) We should not forget that some of these men were of Jewish background and would have been studying the OT Scriptures AND developing leadership skills all of their lives, which would be very good preparation for the eldership.
- 2) BUT, the main thing is that we have an APOSTLE here who had the ability to pass on miraculous gifts on whomever he laid hands.
- 3) I have no doubt but that Paul did that very thing, resulting in elders with spiritual gifts, particularly the gift of PROPHECY!

Acts 14 Helps me in that it—

## VII. Shows Authority for Gathering the Church to Receive Evangelistic Reports (27).

Acts 14:27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

1. ...GATHERED THE CHURCH TOGETHER, THEY REHEARSED ALL THAT GOD HAD DONE WITH THEM (Acts 14:27).
2. Here we have apostolic example of evangelists reporting to their supporting church.
3. So we do these same kinds of things today by the authority of an approved account of action of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century Church!

### Conclusion:

1. THANKFUL we should be for the record of the inspired historian Luke!
2. Let's appreciate lessons we can learn from his Spirit-inspired writing!