

At their next stop at Iconium, where did Paul and Barnabas go (v. 1)? As was their custom, they went initially to the local synagogue.

What was the initial response to their preaching? Their preaching was so effective that a lot of Jews and Gentiles believed. The Holy Spirit was clearly blessing the apostles' ministry.

What did they encounter next (v. 2)? Persecution. Anytime a work of God is going on, persecution from Satan inevitably follows. **That includes our efforts today. What's the plan to counter or prevent this type of attack?**

What form did the persecution take? The Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against Paul and Barnabas.

In the Book of Acts the unbelieving Jews were the instigators of much of the persecution of the apostles, though they themselves did not necessarily administer the punishment. The Jews were masters at persuading the *Gentiles* to carry out their wicked purposes.¹

How did Paul and Barnabas respond to the impending threat (v. 3)? They spent a long time there and spoke boldly. They didn't shrink from potential persecution.

How did the Lord help them? He confirmed the divine nature of their message by empowering them to perform miracles.

How did the people of the city respond to all this (v. 4)? They were divided. Sides were taken. Some favored the Jews, others the Gentiles.

What divided the people? The Gospel message (1 Corinthians 1:18). **What divides the people in our day?**

What did Paul and Barnabas uncover next (v. 5)? There was a plot devised by the opposition to mistreat and stone them.

How did they respond to the news of the murderous plot (v. 6)? They left Iconium and fled to other cities. As Kenny Rogers sang...."Know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em."

What did they do when they reached Lystra and Derbe (v. 7)? In addition to going to Lystra and Derbe to escape persecution, Paul and Barnabas continued to preach the gospel with no fear and no lessening of passion.

When Paul and Barnabas were threatened with stoning, they fled to Lystra and Derbe. At other times in their missionary labors, they seemed to remain in a place in spite of danger. Why did they escape at some junctures and stand their ground at others? There does not seem to be any neat explanation. The great controlling principle in Acts is the guidance of the Holy Spirit. These men lived in close, intimate communion with the Lord. Abiding in Him, they received marvelous communications of the divine mind and will. To them, this was the important thing, rather than a well-arranged set of rules of conduct.²

Who did Paul and Barnabas encounter in Lystra (v. 8)? A crippled man who had never walked in his entire life.

What did Paul perceive about the crippled man (v. 9)? He had legitimate faith that Paul would be able to heal him.

As the crippled man listened to Paul, what did Paul say to him (9-10)? Stand up on your feet.

What did the man do? He stood up and began to walk.

How did the crowd respond (vv. 11-13)? The people were greatly impressed. They began worshiping them identifying Barnabas as Zeus, and Paul as Hermes. The people actually believed that their gods had paid them a visit in the person of the two missionaries. One of the problems with miracles is that they often draw more attention to the miracle worker than to God. People may center their spiritual attention, not on Christ, but on His servant.

How did Paul and Barnabas respond to the crowds actions (vv. 14-17)? They were horrified because *they* were getting the glory. They urged their hearers to turn from their cultic gods to the *one* true and living God who In His kindness has given you rain and crops, plenty of food and has filled your hearts with joy.³ Their tearing of clothes was a way of showing strong aversion to blasphemy. Usually rips were made four or five inches into the neckline of the garment.⁴

It is noteworthy that Paul and Barnabas did not quote the Old Testament to these Gentiles, as they did to the Jews. The Gentiles would not understand a word of what they would be saying. Rather, they began with the story of creation, a subject of immediate interest to Gentile peoples in all countries and in all ages.⁵

When other Jews from Antioch and Iconium arrived what happened (v. 19)? They succeeded in turning the Gentiles against the Paul and Barnabas. The same crowd that wanted to reverence them as gods now stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that they had killed him.⁶

What do these encounters tell us about mob rule/mob mentality?

What did Paul do after he had been stoned and left for dead (v. 20)? Went back into the city! Considerations of personal safety were not uppermost in the minds of any of the apostles. Then he left the following day for Derbe where he preached the good news and won a large number of disciples.

Where did they go next (vv. 20-26)? They retraced their steps to encourage, strengthen, and organize the new converts into groups of elders in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidian. Their purpose at this time was what we call “follow-up work.” They were never satisfied merely to preach the gospel and see souls won to the Savior. For them, this was only the beginning. They then sought to build up the believers in their faith, especially by teaching them the truth of the church and its importance in God’s program.⁷ They finally returned to Antioch completing their first missionary journey.

As they gave their after-action report to the church at Antioch, what would have been the most dramatic news (v. 27)? The fact that God had granted salvation to Gentiles on an equal basis with Jews, simply by faith in Christ.

Thus ends the first missionary journey which lasted between one and two years and in which Paul and Barnabas traveled more than 700 miles by land and 500 miles by sea.

¹ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1624.

² Ibid.

³ Stanley D. Toussaint, “Acts,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 392.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1625.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.