

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Acts: The Continuing Earthly Ministry Of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Part VI: The Ministry Of The Universal Church In Its Spread To The Ends Of The Earth, Acts 8:26-28:31

E. Christ's Use Of The Apostle Paul To Spearhead Worldwide Outreach, Acts 13:4-28:31

5. Christ's Use Of Paul To Minister Properly Amid Repeated Spiritual Opposition

(Acts 14:1-20)

I. Introduction

- A. If a believer does God's will, since God's will conflicts with Satan's will, he **will** face godless *opposition*!
- B. However, such opposition can become so strong that the believer can be confused and wonder if he has done something wrong, tempting him to cease doing what actually is God's will! If that occurs, Satan defeats him in his life and/or ministry.
- C. Paul faced repeated ungodly opposition in Acts 14:1-20, and viewing the circumstances involved and how he responded to it all instructs us on discerning what constitutes godless opposition that we must oppose:

II. Christ's Use Of Paul To Minister Properly Amid Repeated Spiritual Opposition, Acts 14:1-20.

- A. In arriving in Iconium, Paul began preaching the Gospel of Christ in the synagogue so that, as had occurred at Pisidian Antioch, a large group of both parties initially trusted in Christ, Acts 14:1 with 13:43.
- B. However, as had also occurred at Pisidian Antioch, unbelieving Jews at Iconium poisoned the minds of lost Gentiles against those who believed and against Paul and Barnabas, Acts 14:2 ESV with Acts 13:45.
- C. This **repeat kind of opposition** that Paul and Barnabas had **before discerned** to be **evil** (Acts 13:45-47) revealed the opposition faced was **SPIRITUAL**; thus, instead of feeling guilty and so modifying their efforts, Paul's team **KEPT ON SPEAKING for a LONG time** in Iconium, Acts 14:3a.
- D. In **confirmation** of this **response** by **Paul, GOD** granted **miraculous signs** and **wonders** to be performed by the hands of Paul and his coworker, Barnabas, Acts 14:3b.
- E. However, the godless opposition intensified to where the whole city not only divided between approving or disapproving of Paul's team (Acts 14:4), but where the group against them composed of both Gentiles and Jews with their **rulers** attempted to capture and **stone** Paul and Barnabas, Acts 14:5.
- F. Learning of this plan, and realizing **it conflicted with God's Acts 13:2 with Acts 9:15-16 will that they minister in other towns**, Paul and Barnabas fled to Lystra and preached the Gospel there, Acts 14:6-7.
- G. At Lystra, Paul noticed a man who had been crippled from birth, and perceiving with his spiritual gift as an Apostle that he had the faith to believe to be healed, Paul commanded him to stand up, Acts 14:8-10a.
- H. This **miracle** revealed **God's continued approval of Paul's ministry**, but it elicited from its pagan onlookers belief that Paul and Barnabas were their false gods, Jupiter and Mercury, Acts 14:10b-12.
- I. The pagans thus tried to worship Paul and Barnabas by offering them a sacrifice, but the apostles tore their clothes and rushed out among the people, objecting that such worship was wrong, for they were but mere men like the people who had a message from the one true God, Acts 14:13-18.
- J. However, unbelieving foes from Pisidian Antioch and Iconium who had previously wrongly opposed Paul and Barnabas arrived at Lystra and persuaded these pagans that Paul and Barnabas were evil men. They thus stoned Paul and dragged his body out of the city, believing him to be dead, Acts 14:19.
- K. Some Bible teachers believe Paul's experience recorded in 2 Corinthians 12:1-4 occurred at this time. If so, since it was God's will at the time that Paul continue to minister on earth, He gave Paul special insight in heaven that was normally not given to mortals to encourage Paul, and sent his spirit back into his body, reviving it so that Paul could rise and reenter Lystra to encourage the terrified new believers there, Acts 14:20a. Thus, **GOD supernaturally** confirmed and directed Paul to continue his missionary work!
- L. After that, Paul and Barnabas went to the city of Derbe and had a very fruitful ministry there where many people turned to Christ, Acts 14:20b! (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 392)

Lesson: (1) *When Paul and Barnabas faced ministry opposition that (a) was a REPEAT response of a past opposition that was KNOWN to be EVIL, and (b) God supplied BIBLICALLY CREDIBLE EVIDENCES of His SUPPORT of their ministry efforts, (2) they KEPT ON MINISTERING! (3) GOD then equipped them to CONTINUE to do His will against great odds so they could fulfill their calling!*

Application: *May we heed the example of Paul and Barnabas if facing opposition in life and ministry!*