



1. How does an unbelieving person “poison the mind” (v. 2) of others who have not rejected the gospel message? Can you share an experience where you have witnessed this take place?
2. Verse 3 says Paul and Barnabas remained a long time in Iconium. What does that tell you about them in light of the response and challenges they received in verse 2? How did the Holy Spirit aid their efforts?
3. In Iconium Paul had his third recorded escape from death plots (6). Different groups are mentioned in each case (9:23 Damascus - Jews, 9:29 Jerusalem – Hellenists, 14:5 Iconium – Gentiles and Jews). What do you think kept Paul going (7) in the face of such hostile opposition?
4. Compare and contrast the lame man’s healing in verses 8-10 with the account from Acts 3:1-8.
5. What **first** caused Paul’s attention to be drawn to the lame man in verse 9? What do you think revealed his faith to be made well? Have you discerned faith in others to be made spiritually well? What did you do in response?
6. Compare and contrast *the crowd’s response* to the healing in Acts 3:9-10 to the account here in verses 11-13. What is different about the cultural response in each case? According to these Scriptures, was God ascribed glory by the crowds in either account?
7. What did Paul rely upon in verses 14-18 to dissuade them from worshipping Barnabas and him and attempt to refocus the people to give glory to God? From Romans 1:18-23, why is nature and creation good for men to reflect upon?
8. Harkening back to Stephen’s martyrdom, Paul got a dose of his own medicine by being stoned by a mob stirred up by Jews from Antioch and Iconium (19). In Acts 9:15-16 the Lord told Ananias, Paul would be His chosen instrument to carry His name before the Gentiles, and Paul would suffer for the sake of Jesus’ name. Was Paul being punished by God here? Discuss as a group.
9. *After his stoning and near-death experience in Lystra*, Paul and Barnabas moved on to Derbe, where they preached the gospel and made many disciples. They then doubled back to Lystra, Iconium and finally Antioch Pisidia. In each of these cities they had previously faced severe opposition. Why did they risk returning this way (22-23)? How did they commit the newly appointed elders in each new church?
10. After they returned to Antioch, they gave the church a report of what God had done and the response to the gospel by the Gentiles. Luke states in verse 28, “And they remained *no little time* with the disciples.” Why do you think this time was necessary?



Leader Notes for Acts 14:1-28

Paul and Barnabas were driven out of Antioch Pisidia. In response they shook the dust off their feet (Matthew 10:14). Despite this, they were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:52) as they headed for Iconium.

It is interesting to note that there were both Jews and Gentiles hearing the message in the synagogue (v. 1). We can assume the Gentiles were proselytes who converted to Judaism like the Ethiopian, or God-seekers like Cornelius. The positive response was immediate, but so was the negative backlash by the unbelieving Jews, who sought to “re-educate” the Gentiles. This challenge caused Paul and Barnabas to remain in Iconium for a long time and refute the “poison” with the truth. The Holy Spirit backed up the words from their mouths with signs and wonders performed by their hands.

Paul and Barnabas had to leave Iconium suddenly. Paul boldly refuted the Jews with a vigorous defense of the gospel, leading to the third recorded death plot against him (Acts 9:23, 9:29 and 14:5). You would think Paul may have toned it down a bit, but driven by the Holy Spirit it seems he turned it up a notch when they got to Lystra. The Holy Spirit was the source of this resolve!

The Holy Spirit arranged a “chance” meeting with a lame man, much as He had done before with Peter in Acts 3:1-8. The healing of the lame man provided Paul and Barnabas with a loud introduction and a large audience for the gospel, just as it had done for Peter and John. However, here the audience were mostly Gentiles. The cultural responses were very different. The Gentiles sought to deify* Paul and Barnabas, while the Jews were filled with wonder but would never worship men. Peter and John used the Scriptures and spoke of events the Jews were familiar with, while Paul and Barnabas needed to rely upon the witness of nature to point the audience (who were ignorant of the Scriptures) to God.

The Jewish posse from Antioch Pisidia and Iconium caught up with Paul and Barnabas and turned the fickle crowd from worshipping Paul one day to stoning him shortly after. While Scripture is vague on this point, Paul most likely was killed and miraculously brought back to life by the Holy Spirit. A swoon was not likely since they dragged Paul’s body out of the city after the stoning. Paul’s suffering was a fulfillment of what the Lord told Ananias in Acts 9:15-16. Consider Paul’s suffering in light of Hebrews 12:6-11, Philippians 3:10, 1 Corinthians 1:9, and Romans 2:9-10.

Undeterred, Paul and Barnabas went on to the next town, Derbe, and made many disciples there. At this point they retraced their steps, going back into peril to strengthen and encourage the disciples to continue in the faith. They warned them, as evidenced by their own lives, that the disciples could and should expect tribulations. They also appointed elders in each town. On the return trip they seized the opportunity to preach the gospel in Perga.

They returned to Antioch (26), “where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled.” They reported to the whole church all the Holy Spirit had done and how He had opened the door of faith for the Gentiles. They then enjoyed a long and refreshing furlough there.

* Choosing Zeus for Barnabas may imply he was older and/or larger in stature than Paul. Zeus was the king of the Greek gods, while his son Hermes was an orator acting as the herald or messenger of the gods. From his name we get hermeneutics, the science of interpretation.