

Readings

Scripture

¹ Now at Iconium they entered together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed. ² But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. ³ So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. ⁴ But the people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles. ⁵ When an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them, ⁶ they learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country, ⁷ and there they continued to preach the gospel.

- Acts 14:1-7 (English Standard Version)

Reflection

The historical account of Acts reveals a pattern in the missionaries' experience. God appoints his servants and sends them out to proclaim the gospel of salvation. These men boldly preach and teach his Word with the result that numerous people listen, are converted, and become members of the church. Then Jewish antagonists, aided at times by Gentiles, instigate persecutions, banishment, and even imprisonment of God's servants. But God delivers his workers from their predicaments and blesses the church. Wherever God directs his ministers and missionaries to speak boldly in his behalf, the forces of Satan try to interfere and create opposition to them and to the Word. Ministers are harassed, and ridiculed, and mocked not only by the world but sometimes by members of the church. In spite of the difficulties God's servants face, God's grace is sufficient. He sustains them in the task.

- Simon J. Kistemaker, *Acts* (p. 509-510)

Sermon Outline

The More Things Change...
Acts 14:1-7

The Acts of the Apostles
Brad Anderson

Jesus consistently presents as the soul's continental divide... (Acts 13:44-49; 14:3)

What remains consistent as the good news about Jesus spreads?

The message remains consistent... (Acts 14:1, 3)

The response to the message remains consistent... (Acts 14:1, 4)

The reality of persecution remains consistent, but is often used by God to spread the good news about Jesus... (Acts 14:2, 5-7)

Reflection Questions (taken in part from the *Serendipity Study Bible for Groups*)

- What was the most heated argument you have had in the past six months? Who was it with? What was it about? How did it get resolved?
- How does Paul and Barnabas' experience in Iconium (Acts 14) differ from Antioch (Acts 13)? How is it similar?
- What is the purpose of signs and wonders here? (See also Acts 6:8) Why are the people divided (Acts 14:4)?
- Trace the pattern identified in the sermon outline in Acts 7-8. How have you seen this pattern repeated in other passages of scripture and in the book of Acts? How does this shape the way you view the true nature of the real conflict?
- What responses might you anticipate as you share the good news of Jesus?
- Seeing Paul and Barnabas' courage, faith, and endurance, how are you challenged to serve the Lord more completely?