

Acts 14:1-28
Acceptance and Opposition to the Gospel

Acts is the record of the Sending of the Spirit; the Sending of the Church; and the Sending of the Gospel. The Spirit of Christ sends the Church of Christ to proclaim the Gospel of Christ.

- I Gospel preaching to those with some knowledge always brings results.
 - A. Such preaching results in division.
 - 1. Gospel preaching often results in acceptance.
 - a) Acts 13:48 **“And when the Gentiles heard (the bold preaching of Paul and Barnabas), they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord: and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.”**
 - b) Acts 14:1 Paul and Barnabas **“...spoke in such a manner that a great multitude believed, both of Jews and Greeks.”**
 - 2. Gospel preaching also results in opposition.
 - a) Verse 2: **“...the Jews who disbelieved stirred up the minds of the Gentiles, and embittered them against the brethren.”**
 - b) Gospel preaching divides believers from unbelievers. Verse 4: **“...the multitude of the city was divided; and some sided with the Jews, and some with the apostles.”**
 - B. Gospel preaching results in persecution.
 - 1. Verse 5: **“...an attempt was made by both the Gentiles and the Jews with their rulers, to mistreat and to stone them.”**
 - a) Word attempt is actually assault.
 - b) The word means a violent, tumultuous mob action.
 - 2. Jews and Gentiles were enemies, yet they joined together with their rulers, against the Gospel.
 - C. The Good News (Gospel) is often spread by persecution.
 - 1. Verses 6-7: The apostles **“...became aware of it and fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the surrounding regions; and there they continued to preach the gospel.”**
 - 2. Acts 8:1 and 4 **“...a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem; and they were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria...those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.”**
 - 3. Acts 11:19 **“So then those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose in connection with Stephen made their way to Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking...to Jews alone.”**
- II Gospel preaching to those without knowledge always brings results.
 - A. Gospel preaching may result in confusion and misunderstanding.
 - 1. Paul and Barnabas were mistaken for gods because of their healing miracle.
 - 2. They were preaching the gospel so that the Gentiles would turn away from idols/gods.
 - a) Idols are “vain things”, verse 15.
 - b) Idols are the imaginings of men and therefore are of no good to anyone.
 - 3. Only God does good to believers and unbelievers alike, verse 17.
 - B. Gospel preaching results in division.
 - 1. Verse 19: **“But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.”**
 - a) The action of the Jews was contrary to God’s command.

- b) Numbers 15:36: Guilty party was to taken outside the camp (city) and stoned.
 - 2. Verse 18: The multitudes had with difficulty been restrained from sacrificing to (Paul and Barnabas).
 - C. Persecution of those preaching the Gospel spreads the Gospel to new regions. Verse 20: Paul "...went away with Barnabas to Derbe.
 - III This passage is not a record of Paul's actions, but those of God.
 - A. Verse 3: "...**they spent a long time there speaking boldly with reliance upon the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands.**"
 - B. Verse 17: God "...**did good and gave you rains from heaven...**"
 - C. Verse 27: "...**they began to report all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.**"
 - IV It is God; it is Christ; it is the Living Word who divides.
 - A. The Living Word divides throughout Scripture.
 - 1. Genesis: the Word of God separates (divides) the light from the dark.
 - 2. Heb. 4:12 "**For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit... able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**"
 - 3. Matt. 25:32-33 "...**and He (the Son of Man, Jesus Christ) will separate them (the nations) from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats...**"
 - B. On which side of Jesus are you?
 - 1. Are you on His right, standing in the light; trusting completely in the God of mercy, the Living Christ; secure in your salvation?
 - 2. Or are you standing on His left; His sinister side; groping your way in the dark; hostile to the Almighty God; trusting in yourself; unsure of anything?
 - 3. You can not serve God and Mammon.
 - 4. You can not serve God and whatever is not God.
 - C. You must either accept the Good News of salvation and turn in faith to Jesus Christ or you must oppose the Living God.