

## Acceptance and Rejection

Have you ever had a day when it seemed everything was going your way, and everyone treated you with love and acceptance? You've probably had other days when everything seemed to go wrong, and you felt like everyone was out to get you. Have you ever had both of those experiences on the **same** day? Those are certainly extremes of emotion!

In this week's lesson, we will see that Paul and Barnabas continued their Missionary Journey in central Turkey. While there, they experienced the height of acceptance and adoration, but also the extreme depths of rejection. Read Acts 14 to learn all about it.

- Acts 14:1** In last week's lesson Paul and Barnabas were thrown out of Antioch. They traveled about 70 miles southeast to Iconium, and went to the Jewish synagogue. A \_\_\_\_\_ of Jews and Greeks believed and were saved.
- Acts 14:2-5** The city was divided. What did the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles plan to do to Paul and Barnabas?
- Acts 14:6-7** Paul and Barnabas learned of the plot to kill them, so they fled to Lystra (18 miles south of Iconium; see the **Map** on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**). What did they do there?
- Acts 14:8-10** In Lystra they encountered a man who had been crippled from birth. What happened?
- Acts 14:11-12** What did the people say about Paul and Barnabas?
- Acts 14:13** The people spoke in their native language, which Paul and Barnabas did not understand. Thinking they were gods, the pagan priest brought animals to sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas.
- Acts 14:14** What did Paul and Barnabas do?
- In Judaism, tearing one's clothing was a sign of great blasphemy (Matt. 26:65) or grief.
- Acts 14:15-17** Paul and Barnabas said they were not gods, but men. They said they had come to tell the people to turn from idolatry to serve the true and living God, the Creator of everything.

- Acts 14:18** Were they able to stop the crowd from sacrificing to them as if they were gods (contrast Acts 12:21-23)?
- Acts 14:19** Unbelieving Jews came from Antioch and Iconium. What did they do to Paul?
- Acts 14:20** Paul's attackers thought he was dead. Was he?
- Note that Paul got up and went right back into the city, where his attackers were. Where did he and Barnabas go the next day?
- Acts 14:21** After preaching the Gospel in Derbe, Paul and Barnabas retraced their steps, going back through Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch.
- Acts 14:22-23** Why did Paul and Barnabas go back through those cities?

Paul's actions reveal his heart of concern for the new converts he had reached in those cities. In each city there were people who wanted to kill Paul. By retracing their steps through these cities of central Turkey, they traveled nearly 300 miles. If they had gone directly to the coast rather than back through those cities, they could have saved themselves almost 200 miles of travel. Besides this, when they were in Derbe, Paul's hometown of Tarsus was less than 100 miles away. Rather than take the easy way, Paul went back through those towns to help establish and build up the churches he had planted there. He deeply cared about the new Christians.

- Acts 14:24-28** Paul and Barnabas returned to their starting point (Acts 13:1-3), at the city of Antioch in Syria. They told the church everything God had done, including how He had opened the \_\_\_\_\_ of faith to the \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 27). Paul's First Missionary Journey was completed.

**Concluding Thoughts:** Some people Paul and Barnabas encountered on their missionary travels accepted the Gospel, and a few even wanted to worship them as gods. Other people hated the Gospel and tried to kill Paul. That is the way it goes with spreading the Gospel: there are some folks who accept the Gospel joyfully, but there are others who get mad at you for telling them about Jesus. It has been that way since the beginning of Christianity.

**Don't let rejection stop you.** Contact a prospect for your Sunday School class this week. Talk to a lost friend or work associate about Jesus Christ. Paul was stoned and left for dead, but he didn't let that stop him. Don't let a little rejection stop you, either. Remember, everywhere Paul went, some people happily received the Gospel. Someone you encounter will do the same.

---

**Project:** Share the Gospel with someone this week. If you need help, ask your Sunday School teacher. Perhaps you could go with him or her to visit a prospect for your class or a lost friend. Don't let rejection slow you down. Be sure to pick up a *Sunday School Member Quarterly* for the Winter quarter, so you can begin the **Daily Bible Reading Guide** on Monday.