

"The First Missionary Journey Continues"

Part 13

Acts 13:13-14:28

Introduction: For 13 weeks we have been traveling with Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey. Last week we followed them into the city of Lystra. They were there because they were made aware of a planned attack in the city of Iconium where they previously were. When they came to Lystra they encountered a man who was born with a disability and was unable to walk. Paul perceived that the man had faith and he commanded him to rise up and when he did God healed him. This stirred the entire city and the people thought Paul and Barnabas were gods. The people then planned to offer sacrifices to them as they offered them worship.

Notice Acts 14:8-13

Paul and Barnabas would not allow the people to sacrifice to them and so the entire movement was stopped. Paul then explained that God alone was worthy of worship. Then Paul gave them a short review of the goodness of God.

Notice Acts 14:14-18

This is where we stopped last week. Keep in mind in these verses the people are viewing Paul and Barnabas as gods.

"Continued Persecution"

Part 3

Notice Acts 14:19

Some of the Jews from the other cities came and persuaded the people of Lystra to turn on Paul. Remember that minutes or hours before they saw Paul and Barnabas as gods. Now they were ready to kill Paul and they stoned him to the point that they believed he was dead and they then dragged him out of the city. There are some people who believe that Paul actually died in this stoning but the Bible does not say that. It does tell us that they believed that he was dead and these people would have known the difference between someone who was dead and someone who was alive. If Paul was not dead, he was certainly very close to death. I cannot help but wonder if his mind reflected back to what had happened to Stephen when he held the garments of those who were throwing the stones at him?

Notice Acts 14:20

This is nothing short of a miracle! He is stoned to the point of death, gets up, goes into the city, and the next day he continues on preaching the Gospel. Let me point out that some teach that this stoning is connected with what Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 12.

2 Corinthians 12:1-4

It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

² *I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.*

³ *And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)*

⁴ *How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*

Here in these verses Paul writes about when he was caught up to the third heaven and heard unspeakable words that he was not permitted to repeat. There are some who teach that this happened in Lystra when he was stoned in Acts 14. But Paul tells us here that he did not know if he was in the body or out of the body. We can be sure that if his body left the earth and was caught up to heaven that the disciples would have been able to testify to that. For this reason, what happened in 2 Corinthians 12 did not happen when he was stoned in Lystra.

Application:

There is an application in Acts 14 that I want to touch on briefly. We have not been stoned by Jesus' haters but there are times when accusations from others that are hurled at us can really get us down. Sometimes the accusations come from Satan and they enter into the mind and these can be the most difficult to deal with.

Ephesians 6:12-13, 16

¹² *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

¹³ *Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

¹⁶ Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

It is the fiery darts of Satan that can be so difficult to deal with. They are the darts of worry, darts of doubt, darts of accusations and the list goes on and on. This battle is real and the darts are real and they sometimes stick into us and they bring on anxiety, feelings of failure, false guilt, and fear. Let us notice what happened to Elijah.

1 Kings 17:1

And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

Elijah stood in the face of Ahab and announced there would be no rain. This would be a hammer blow to heart of Baalism because Baal worshipers believed that Baal was the god of rain!

1 Kings 18:1-2

And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.

² *And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And there was a sore famine in Samaria.*

After three years of drought which brought on the famine Elijah comes out of hiding to face Ahab again. Then there would be a showdown on Mount Carmel.

1 Kings 18:18-20

¹⁸ *And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.*

¹⁹ *Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.*

²⁰ *So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.*

The prophets of Baal could not call their false god to bring down fire on their sacrifice so Elijah called upon God and the fire fell from heaven. Elijah had exposed the false worship of Baal.

1 Kings 18:37-40

³⁷ Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

³⁸ Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

³⁹ And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.

⁴⁰ And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

Elijah had all the false prophets killed and then word got back to Jezebel. She then made a threat and it was a fiery dart from Satan. Notice how Elijah went from being bold and courageous to frightened man who wanted to die.

1 Kings 19:1-4

And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.

² Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time.

³ And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there.

⁴ But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

This is what can happen to each of us. We most likely will not be stoned with literal stones anytime soon but the fiery darts of Satan can really get us down. Getting back to the Apostle Paul's situation, we can be beat down by this world and it happens at times but praise God for the strength that He gives to us. Just as He raised up Paul to continue on so He does the same for us when we are down.

Philippians 4:11-13

¹¹ *Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

¹² *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.*

¹³ *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

Looking at Paul's journey I can safely say that there are many believers who would never sign up for a journey like this. But I want to point out some of the blessings of the sufferings that Paul endured on this mission trip. First of all, this brings to mind what Paul wrote in Colossians.

Colossians 1:24

²⁴ *Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:*

Through the sufferings of Paul many people would come to know Jesus Christ as their Savior. This was why Paul could rejoice in his sufferings. Then there was the personal gain for Paul from what happened on this first journey. When Paul and Barnabas preached the Gospel in Derbe and Lystra there was a certain young man who was saved as a result.

Acts 16:1-2

Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek:

² *Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.*

This was the second journey but we get the idea that Timothy was saved from the first journey. Let us notice something about Timothy.

Philippians 2:19-23

¹⁹ *But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.*

²⁰ *For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.*

²¹ *For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.*

²² But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.

²³ Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.

Conclusion:

This first journey was far from easy but it was a real blessing to those who were saved and to Paul personally. Let us understand that there are going to be times in life when we get knocked down and the attacks of others may even leave lifetime scars on our hearts but God is there to pick us up and there is much more to be accomplished. Who knows who we will meet as we continue to press on? It may be someone like Timothy who will turn out to be a true blessings as they help us along in our lives.