

Journey Through Acts
“Through Much Tribulation”
Acts 14:8-28

Introduction:

1. Let's Turn Back In Our Bibles Tonight:
 - To Acts 14 - Where - In Our ***Journey Through Acts:***
 - We Will Be Coming To The End:
 - Of The First Missionary Journey:
 - Of Paul & Barnabas!
 - But First - Paul Will Have To Experience:
 - One Of The Greatest Trials:
 - Of His Life!
 2. Already - We Have Seen:
 - A Mixed Response:
 - To The Gospel Message:
 - In The Cities Of Antioch & Iconium!
 - And - As Some Of The:
 - Unbelieving Jews & Gentiles:
 - Of That Region Sought To Kill Paul & Barnabas:
 - It Was - Once Again - Time For Them:
 - To Move On!
 - And We Read About This:
 - In 14:5-6 - “And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them, / They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about!”
 - Here Is Our Map - That Shows: *
 - The Four Cities That Were Touched By The Apostle:
 - On That First Missionary Journey!
 - Antioch / Iconium / Lystra / Derbe
 - And When One City Became Too Hot & Dangerous For Their Ministry To Continue - They Moved On To The Next!
 - But - What Would They Do?
 - 14:7 - “And there they preached the gospel!”
 - Paul's Life Became A Living Example:
 - Of What He Would Soon Tell Those New Christians - In 14:22 - “That We Must Through Much Tribulation Enter Into The Kingdom Of God!”
 3. And So - Tonight - As We Meet Up With Paul & Barnabas:
 - In The City Of Lystra - About 40 Miles Away:
 - From Iconium!
 - We Can Hear & See:
1. ***The Example Of Paul's Passion:***
 - As He Is Zealous For:
 - The Truth & The Glory Of God!
 - Lystra Was A Smaller City & One That Was A Bit Further Removed From The Influence Of The Jews!
 - * Today - There Is Not Much Left Of The City Of Lystra - Which Was Also The Home Of Timothy - Who Was Likely Brought To Christ By Paul On His Visit There!
 - Today - There Is Just A Large Mound - Known As A “Tel” - Under Which Are The Unexcavated Ruins Of Lystra!
 - * However - There Is Some Evidence Of Its Former Glory - Lying Right On The Surface Of The Hill - Which Is Nearly A Square Mile In Size! Yet - Regardless Of Its Biblical Significance - Farmers Use As Much Of The Hill As Possible For Planting Their Crops!
 - But - In That City - We Read About A Spectacular Miracle & Its Aftermath:
 - In 14:8-19 - “And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked!”

- The Condition Of This Man In Lystra:
 - Was Hard! He Had Never Walked! Not As A Toddler / Not As A Child / This Was Not Caused By An Accident / He Was This Same Way Since He Was Born!
- And Noone Could Help Him!
 - Not His Parents!
 - Not The Doctors!
 - Not Even The Gods They Worshiped In Lystra!
- But - Even Though This Man Could Not Walk:
 - God Gave Him Ears To Hear:
 - So That He Could Listen To The Powerful Message Of The Gospel!
 - And What Happened Next?
- 14:9 - "The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed!"
 - While Paul Was Speaking & Preaching:
 - His Eyes Were Scanning The Crowd!
 - For There Were Many People There!
 - But Somehow, His Eyes Fell Upon This Man – He Saw Him – And Their Eyes Met!
 - There Was Something Different About This Man That Paul Could See! The Man Was Listening Intently! So Paul Kept Looking At Him & Probably Kept Preaching Directly To Him - And Then Paul Sensed Something About Him!
 - Not Just From The Interest He Was Showing, But Ultimately As An Impression From God Himself
 - God Was Working In The Heart Of This Disabled Man! And His Eyes Were The Windows Into His Soul!
- But What Was It That Paul Sensed? (14:9)
 - He "Perceived That He Had Faith To Be Healed!"
 - The Word Translated "Healed" Is An Interesting Word:
 - It Can Be Translated Literally - "Saved!"
 - Paul "Perceived That He Had Faith To Be Saved!"
 - And This Is What I Believe God Was Doing In The Heart Of This Man!
 - This Man Did Not Just Realize His Need:
 - To Be Healed - God Showed Him His Need:
 - To Be Saved!
 - And He Believed In Jesus & In The Gospel That He Was Hearing From Paul's Lips!
 - Because - As We Learn From Romans 10:17 - "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God!"
- And So - As An Aid To This Man's Faith To Be Saved:
 - And Even To Confirm God's Work In His Heart:
 - The Lord Adds Another Miracle Of Healing:
 - In 14:10 - Where Paul - Right In The Middle Of His Message - "Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked!"
 - Now - When Paul Said - "Stand Up!"
 - It Probably Shocked The Crowd!
 - His Words Were Sudden!
 - And To Them - It Would Have Seemed Impossible For This Man To Stand Up Straight On His Feet!
 - And They Were Right - Mark 10:27 - "With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible!"
 - But I Believe - Based On His Immediate Response To Paul:
 - That This Came As No Surprise To The Man!
 - After All - He Already Knew The Power Of God To Save Him!
 - His Feet Would Be No Problem For God!
- So - "He Leaped And Walked!"
 - And Just Like Another Very Similar Miracle Earlier:
 - In Acts 3:8 - He Too Was Probably - "Walking, And Leaping, And Praising God!"
 - What A Great Illustration:
 - Of The Power Of The Gospel!
 - Not Just To Heal The Body!

- But To Save The Soul!
- Are You Trusting:
 - In The Power Of This Gospel:
 - To Save You?
- Well - The Rest Of The People:
 - There In Lystra – Took Notice!
 - They Heard The Same Words:
 - As This Disabled Man!
 - They Saw The Same Miracle!
- But How Did They React / Respond?
- 14:11-13 - “And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. / 12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. / 13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people!”
 - The People Of Lystra Responded - At First:
 - With Great Curiosity & Then, Even Greater Confusion!
 - Because - Even Though They Had:
 - Heard God’s Word For Themselves - And Had Seen God’s Work Of Healing:
 - Their Hearts Were Still Fixed In Idolatry!
 - But - When Paul & Barnabas Heard About What Was Going On - They Were Mortified!
 - And Were Zealous About The Truth & The Glory Of God! They Re-Introduced That Idolatrous Crowd To The One, True & Living God:
 - Who Is Powerful & Longsuffering & Good!
- In 14:14-18 - “Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, / 15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: / 16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. / 17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. / 18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them!”
 - That Was A Close Call!
 - But - Even Though One Crisis Was Averted:
 - Another One Was Waiting At The Door!
 - And Through This Trial - We Will Witness:

2. ***The Example Of Paul’s Pain!***

- Because - In 14:19 - “And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead!”
 - What A Sudden Turn Of Events! The Same People Who Were:
 - Just One Verse Before - And Likely Only A Few Days Before:
 - Trying To Worship & Sacrifice To Paul & Barnabas As Their Gods!
 - Are Now The People Who:
 - Are Ready To Go Along With The Jews:
 - In Their Persecution Of Paul!
 - This Shows The Erratic & Unstable Nature:
 - Of The World In Which We Live!
 - And - Look At What Those Zealous Jews Did:
 - After Persuading & Convincing The People That Paul & Barnabas Were Of No Use To Them:
 - They “Stoned Paul, Drew Him Out Of The City, Supposing He Had Been Dead!”
 - These Jews Tried To & Even Thought They Did:
 - Kill Paul By Stoning Him!
 - Yet - Where Was The Trial?
 - Where Were The Witnesses?
 - Where Was The Justice?
 - It Was Nowhere To Be Found!
 - Now Imagine The Emotional Scene:
 - As Paul’s Lifeless Body Was Dragged:
 - Out Of The City!

- Think About The Disciples!
 - Those New Believers:
 - Who Probably Included The Crippled Man Who Had Been Healed A Few Days Before!
 - What Must Have Been Going Through Their Hearts & Minds?
 - Many Questions!
 - Much Doubt!
 - Great Fear!
- Think About Barnabas!
 - Paul's Partner Through All Of This!
 - What Could He Have Been Thinking & Feeling!
- And Think About Paul!
 - Left For Dead!
 - He Was So Bloody & Bruised!
 - His Breathing Slowed To The Point Where Everyone Thought He Was Dead!
 - What Pain & Suffering He Endured!
 - Yet - In 14:20 - Luke Records In Such A Matter-Of-Fact Way - "As The Disciples Stood Around Him, He Rose Up, And Came Into The City!"
 - Now - Although It Doesn't Say That Paul Jumped To His Feet Or That He Was Perfectly Healed From His Wounds:
 - God Did Strengthen & Enable Paul To Get Up!
- More Than Likely - He Got Up Very Slowly:
 - Still Feeling Intense Pain In His Body:
 - And Then Slowly Headed Back Toward The City:
 - On The Same Path That He Had Just Been Dragged!
- Later In His Letter To Them - In Galatians 6:17:
 - He Wrote - "From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus!"
- They Were The Same Marks He Received:
 - When He Was With Them In Lystra!
 - But Then - In 14:20b - We Hear About:

3. ***The Example Of Paul's Purpose!***

- To Keep On Preaching The Gospel:
 - No Matter Where He Went & No Matter What He Faced!
 - 14:20b - "The [VERY] next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe!"
- Remarkable!
 - He Heads Another 20 Miles Into The Galatian Frontier:
 - To Preach The Gospel There Too!
 - * Here Is The Location Of The Town Of Derbe - Which Is Also An Unexcavated Hill Nearly Forgotten! *
- Now - We Are Not Given Much Detail:
 - About Their Ministry In Derbe:
 - Just That - 14:21a - "When they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many!"
 - But Then - Something Even More Remarkable Happened!
 - 14:21b - "They returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch!"
 - And Here - We Witness:

4. ***The Example Of Paul's Priority!***

- Because What Makes This Remarkable:
 - Is That - Paul - As Battered & Bruised As He Was:
 - Wasn't All That Far From His Home-Town:
 - Of Tarsus!
 - There Was A Well-Known Pass Through The Taurus Mountain Range - Known As The Cilician Gates - Which Would Have Taken Him To Tarsus - And From There - An Easy Trek Or Voyage Back To The Church Of Antioch!
 - Here Are Some Pictures Of The Ancient Cilician Pass:
 - About 100 Years Ago! *
 - And Now! *

- But Instead Of Going That Route:
 - There Was Still More To Do:
 - And So - They Went Back - 14:22-23 - “Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. / 23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed!”
 - When Paul & Barnabas:
 - Went Back To “Confirm” Those New Disciples In Their Faith & To “Organize” Them Into New Churches:
 - They Would Have Listened Very Carefully To Paul’s Words - When He Told Them:
 - 14:22 - “That We Must Through Much Tribulation Enter Into The Kingdom Of God!”
- They Would Have Listened:
 - Because - In Paul - They Had A Great Example:
 - Of What It Means:
 - To Go - “Through Much Tribulation!”
 - As Well As:
 - What To Do:
 - When You Go “Through Much Tribulation!”
- They Had Heard & Seen:
 - The Example:
 - Of Paul’s Passion!
 - As He Was Zealous For The Truth & Glory Of God - Even As The People Of Lystra Were About To Worship Him As A God!
- They Heard & Saw:
 - The Example:
 - Of Paul’s Pain!
 - As He Was - At First - Rejected:
 - And Then Persecuted By Their Own Neighbors And Countrymen!
- They Heard & Saw:
 - The Example:
 - Of Paul’s Purpose!
 - To Keep On Preaching The Gospel:
 - No Matter Where He Went & No Matter What He Faced!
- They Heard & Saw:
 - The Example:
 - Of Paul’s Priority!
 - He Did Not Take The Easy Road Back Home, To Where He Was Likely Know & Respected & Love!
 - Instead - He Went Back To Each City In Order To Establish The New Believers Into Churches!
 - Because - He Loved Them:
 - Even As Christ Himself Loved Them:
 - And Gave Himself For Them!
 - But Then - We Can Also See:

5. ***The Example Of Paul’s Perseverance!***

- In 14:22-28 - “And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. / 25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia: / 26 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. / 27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. / 28 And there they abode long time with the disciples!”
 - Paul & Barnabas Were Faithful:
 - To Both The Members:
 - And The Mission:
 - Of The Church Of Christ!
 - And They Persevered!

Conclusion:

1. One Of The Last Things:
 - Paul & Barnabas Did For Those New Christians:
 - Is Found In 14:23 - "They Commended Them To The Lord, On Whom They Believed!"
 - That Is - They Committed These New Believers:
 - And These Young Churches:
 - To The Lord!
 - After All - It Was The Lord:
 - Who Saved Them!
 - And It Was The Lord:
 - Who Cared For Them - Even More Than Paul & Barnabas!
2. And So - When Our Own Mission & Our Own Ministries:
 - Come To An End:
 - We Must Rely On The Power Of The Lord:
 - To Keep His Own Promises!
 - And To Keep His Own People!
 - Even If & Even When It Is:
 - "Through Much Tribulation!"
3. The Events That Took Place In These Cities:
 - Remained With The Apostle Paul:
 - For The Rest Of His Life!
 - For Paul Later Wrote To Timothy:
 - In 2 Timothy 3:10-11:
 - "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, / Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me!"
 - For Christians & For Churches:
 - It Is Not Always An "Easy Road!"
 - We Find Over & Over Again In The Bible This Truth:
 - "That we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God!"
 - But You Do Not Need To Doubt!
 - And You Do Not Need To Fear!
4. Because - No Matter What Kind Of "Tribulation" You Face:
 - You Can Still Persevere In The Purpose God Has Given You!
 - Knowing - That "Out Of Them All":
 - The Lord Will Deliver You!
 - For - "Greater is he that is in [us], than he that is in the world!" (1 John 4:4)

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