

## Acts 14: The Introduction

**The Problem:** No matter how true or important a history might be, it's easy for the parts that are alien to our experience to outweigh the parts we find familiar. Stonings and beggars at the gate belong to 'then', not to 'now'. Places like Iconium and Derbe are 'there', not 'here'. Names like Theophilus and Ananias belong to 'them', not 'us'. So we read about 'them' over 'there' back 'then' and it becomes easy for 'us' right 'here' and 'now' to alienate ourselves from our own history to our detriment. We begin counting minutes and wondering if 'Iconium' is a legal play in 'Words With Friends'. We miss learning how the gospel was spread, and therefore miss knowing how to spread the gospel. We miss seeing the hope of the persecuted, and therefore we remain hopeless in the face of persecution.

### I. The Acts Church and the Modern Church:

The church that the Modern Church aspires to be: Acts 2:41-47

The result from which the Modern Church prays to be spared: Acts 4:1-3, Acts 4:17-18, James 1:1-4.

### II. The Acts Church is the Modern Church

We are the adopted sons and daughters of the same Father, believing the same gospel, of the same Christ, empowered by the same Spirit.

The reality of God's presence and work is not dependent on our perception of God's presence and work. Jacob was the chosen heir of God's promise, and would be given the name by which God would later call all of his people. If there was a short list in those days for 'most likely to sense God's presence', Jacob was at its top. He was lying in a place where God was present and actively working and in his own words "I did not know it." Gen 28: 11-17

When we say that there was some human quality in the believers in the Acts church that is absent in the modern church we make God's work dependent on man's qualities. God says otherwise. Acts 4:13

In the sense that Acts is scripture, then the book of Acts is closed because the scriptures are complete. In the sense that Acts is the history of the Christian church, then we are the current chapter in that same history, which is the record of the work of Christ in the life of his bride.

### III. The people to whom the gospel was proclaimed

As we study the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of Acts, we'll see the gospel proclaimed in two different ways to two different kinds of people. The first type were the Jews and God-fearing Gentiles whose obstacle to the gospel was their belief that they already had the complete truth of God. The second were the pagan or secular Gentiles whose obstacle was that they didn't believe that they needed God at all. We proclaim the gospel to those same two kinds of people today.