

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 1



MAN NOT TO BE WORSHIPED

Scripture Text: Acts 14:1-18

In this quarter we continue to look at what God did in those saints of the Book of Acts, how they understood the teachings of Christ and the Apostles, and how they were led by the Holy Spirit. The results of these give us the pattern of the ideal Church of God that we have. We should ask ourselves, "How did those saints attain to these virtues?" The answer will give you the blueprint for your life, both personally and in the church.

It was so urgent that the early church take the Gospel to the world that no other need compared with it. Today with the critical condition of the world, closing doors to the Gospel, and the growing flood of evil covering the land, it is most urgent. These studies in Acts are not only to give us knowledge, but to add equipment for our task. What is not done today will not be done. The responsibility rests upon us.

MEMORY VERSE: *Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

—*Matthew 4:10*

DAILY READINGS:

Mon.—**1 Corinthians 2:1-5** Preaching Christ in power.

Tue.—**1 Corinthians 1:18-24** Christ, the wisdom of God.

Wed.—**1 Thessalonians 2:9-13** Believing the message.

Thu.—**1 Corinthians 9:15-23** Dedicated lives spread Gospel.

Fri.—**Philippians 3:7-15** Knowledge of Christ is precious.

Devotional Reading: Matthew 28:16-20 The great commission.

They So Spake

Acts 14:1-3 Paul and Barnabas had been driven from Antioch by unbelievers. Undiscouraged, they continued preaching in Iconium. Here they followed their usual procedure. They went first to the Jewish synagogue and preached Christ. They **so spake, that a great multitude . . . believed**, both Jews and Greeks. As everywhere, the main body of Jews did not believe. These **stirred up the Gentiles**, poisoned their minds **against the brethren**. It is easier to tear down by evil stories than to build up by true teaching. Paul and Barnabas were not frightened. They continued **speaking boldly in the Lord**. God supported their words by empowering them to do **signs and wonders**—miracles. It was **the word of his grace**—the Word which He gave, the Word telling of the gift of Himself to man.

They so spoke that their preaching brought results. Their hearers believed. Here are some things we can learn from their preaching. Consider these points: (1) The theme was Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Savior (**1 Corinthians 2:2**). (2) The Apostles believed the message (**1 Thessalonians 2:13**). (3) They experienced the message (**1 Corinthians 1:18**). (4) They were dedicated to the spread of the message, not shunning suffering or death (**1 Corinthians 9:15-16**). (5) They humbled themselves and exalted Christ (**1 Corinthians 2:1-5**). (6) They preached in the power of the Holy Spirit (**1 Corinthians 2:4**).

God's plan was that the Law should blossom into the Gospel. The people of the Law were to be led by it to Christ, then to go on to enjoy salvation through His Gospel. For this reason the Apostles went in each town first

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to the people of the Law, or the Jews, who were expected to enter first into the open door. That they did not is tragic evidence on the hardness and blindness of the human heart.

Driven From Iconium

Acts 14:4-7 The fury of the Jews and the miracles of God were each powerful enough to gain a following. The city was divided. A strong force of people with their rulers assaulted the Apostles, meaning to stone them. Paul and Barnabas **fled unto Lystra and Derbe** where **they preached the gospel**.

Some things in the history in Acts stand out so continuously that we may overlook them like green in a landscape. One is the never-slackening zeal of the Apostles in preaching the Gospel. Another is the protecting hand of God upon them always. Imprisoned, threatened, beaten, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. Driven from one town, they preached the Gospel **boldly in the Lord** in the next. That "in the Lord" is the secret. Why? Something within them resembled an unquenchable fire, and they desired to spread it to others. For us to adequately spread the Gospel as they did, we need to gain the driving force that these men had.

A Lame Man Healed

Acts 14:8-10 As Paul preached at Lystra, a lame man listened and believed. His feet were crippled. He **never had walked**. Paul perceived he had **faith to be healed**. He cried, **Stand upright on thy feet**. He did not stretch out his hand and ask for help. Without learning, the man **leaped and walked**.

Paul and Barnabas Refuse Worship

Acts 14:11-18 The people were heathen worshipers of false gods. Seeing the healing, they shouted, **The gods are come down to us**. They mistook the source of this supernatural power. What was already in their minds formed their thinking. **They called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius**, Roman names of Greek gods who they thought had come down from Mount Olympus to bless them. **The priest of Jupiter . . . brought oxen . . . and would have done sacrifice** to them as gods. Let us never forget that there is much heathenism in America. Thousands of people neither attend church nor send their children to Sunday school. They look to good luck more than God's grace. When the Apostles realized what was taking place, they were horrified at the blasphemous worship. **They rent their clothes**—signifying great concern, **and ran in**—urgency, **crying out**—strong opposition. "Don't do this." **We also are men of like passions**—the same nature—**with you**. They were not gods, only men. What the people had said exalted men above their place and lowered God from His. The insult to God pained the Apostles. They immediately pointed to **the living God, Creator of heaven . . . and all things**. Similar praise was given to Herod. Herod accepted and gloried in the blasphemous praise. The Apostles rejected it with fear. The difference lay within their hearts. Herod, selfish and proud, sought his own glory. The Apostles desired God's glory. God punished Herod, but was pleased with the Apostles. The power of creation sets God infinitely above man who is created. Even in past times before Christ came to reveal God; God gave witness of Himself through His gifts of nature, rain, fruitful seasons, etc. Nature speaks to all the world of a good Heavenly Father. The heathen has this much revelation of God. **Romans 1:19-25** describes the opportunity and the idolatry of people such as at Lystra. It was all the Apostles could do to restrain the people from sacrificing to them. Paul brought good tidings that they should turn from these vain things unto a living God.

JUST A THOUGHT

Carnal men love the praise of men. Godly men love the praise of God.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.

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