



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

Study 22: **UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO THE EVANGELISTIC MINISTRY** **Acts 14:1-28**

"The Apostles, Barnabas and Paul" (Acts 14:14) were so committed in the first missionary journey, they travelled from city to city, traversing more than 1,200 miles within a period of twelve months. Within that period, they preached everywhere and multitudes of men and women, young and old, Jews and Gentiles were saved. New churches were planted, the converts were disciplined, leaders and pastors were appointed and equipped to strengthen the established churches. **"They went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following"** (Mark 16:20). Basically, there were two methods in the evangelization of the early Church – mass evangelism and personal evangelism. The Apostles were gifted and guided by the Holy Spirit as they strategically moved from large cities to big towns, planting churches whose members evangelized the surrounding communities. The book of Acts is a model for the Church today. Local churches were established wherever people responded to the gospel. These assemblies gave permanence and stability to the work. Though pastors were trained and appointed over the congregations, the Apostles revisited the churches to strengthen and encourage the believers.

COMMITMENT TO THE SOUL-SAVING MINISTRY DESPITE PERSECUTION

Acts 14:1-10; 17:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16; Acts 19:8-10; Matthew 10:23-26; 2 Timothy 3:10-14; 4:2-5; Romans 10:17; Mark 9:23.

Wherever we find the Apostles and the believers in the Acts of the Apostles, they were always **"preaching the Word"**, that is, preaching the gospel, proclaiming the good news of God's saving grace. See them in temples or synagogues, in chariots or ships, in prisons or houses, in deserts or cities, at the riverside or by the hillside, with strangers or friends, everywhere and anywhere they were always **"speaking boldly in the Lord"**, declaring **"the word of His grace"**. Responding to the preaching of the gospel, **"a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed."** Their message produced saving faith, thousands repented of their sins and believed on Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. Their lives were transformed and **"the Lord granted signs and wonders to be done"**. The word was faithfully presented and it produced **"faith to be healed"** in the hearers. **"A cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked, leaped and walked"** and many other **"signs and wonders"** were wrought.

CONFRONTATION OF SUPERSTITIOUS MEN BY DEDICATED PREACHERS

Acts 14:11-20; 10:25,26; 3:11,12,16; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; Romans 1:21-25; Acts 17:22-31; 13:45,50; 2 Corinthians 11:23-26; 1:8-10; Acts 26:22,23.

Seeing the great miracle which was performed by faith in Christ's finished work of redemption, the ignorant, superstitious observers attempted to worship the ministers of Christ. The idolatrous people thought that their gods had paid them a visit in the person of the two preachers. The priest and the people were already preparing to make sacrifices to **"the gods"** which they thought **"are come down to us in the likeness of men."** As soon as the Apostles heard and realized what the pagans were trying to do, they spoke out to stop the false worship. Paul immediately turned their attention away from himself and his companion in ministry. He convincingly redirected their mind, focus and faith to God, the true God, **"the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein."** He called them to repentance, exhorting them to **"turn from these vanities unto the living God."** Performing miracles without preaching the message of repentance and faith in Christ clearly can lead sinners to false worship and damnable heresy. Preach Christ the only Saviour.

CONFIRMATION OF SAVED, STEADFAST MEMBERS IN THE DIVINE PURPOSE

Acts 14:21-28; 11:23,26; 13:43; 18:23; 20:32; 1 Corinthians 1:8,9; 1 Thessalonians 3:2,12,13; 2 Timothy 1:12-14.

The Apostles considered the salvation and eternal destiny of souls to be saved more important than their personal safety. After preaching the gospel in Derbe ***“they returned again to Lystra”*** (verse 21) where they had earlier been severely persecuted (verses 8-19). The Apostles did not count their evangelistic ministry fulfilled and finished until they revisited the converts and the churches to establish and strengthen them. For them, preaching the gospel and seeing souls won to Christ the Saviour was only the beginning. They laboured tirelessly and sacrificially to build up the believers in their most holy faith by teaching them the truth, the whole truth revealed by Christ and His Apostles. Strengthening and ***“confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith”***, they also appointed elders – pastors and teachers – in every church who would continue to ***“preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus”*** (Colossians 1:28).

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