



Acts Chapter 14

As we move into Acts chapter 14, we almost instantly find that there are some very profound cultural, and religious differences between several different factions of people that were living in that time. Lets go ahead and read Acts Chapter 14 and see what some of those different religious belief systems and cultural differences were all about:

Act 14:1 Now at Iconium they entered together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed.

Act 14:2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers.

Act 14:3 So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

Act 14:4 But the people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles.

Act 14:5 When an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them,

Act 14:6 they learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country,

Act 14:7 and there they continued to preach the gospel.

Act 14:8 Now at Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was crippled from birth and had never walked.

Act 14:9 He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well,

Act 14:10 said in a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he sprang up and began walking.

Act 14:11 And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!"

Act 14:12 Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker.

Act 14:13 And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds.

Act 14:14 But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out,

Act 14:15 "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.

Act 14:16 In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways.

Act 14:17 Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness."

Act 14:18 Even with these words they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them.

Act 14:19 But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.

Act 14:20 But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe.

Act 14:21 When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,

Act 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

Act 14:23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Act 14:24 Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia.

Act 14:25 And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia,

Act 14:26 and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled.

Act 14:27 And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.

Act 14:28 And they remained no little time with the disciples.

One of the first things that we notice are some of the different factions of religious belief systems that existed back in that time. One of those factions was the Jew who may have been from any of at least 4 different factions of Judaism, and we've already discussed those different factions of Judaism in our study of the book of Acts so I won't go back over those here.

Another faction was the gentile, who may have been from any number of Pagan influences, or may have had no religious belief system at all.

Another faction was the Pagan, who may have been a Gentile or may have been an Israelite by blood and part of the diaspora, who lost his way.

We have to remember that the Northern Kingdom of Israel was divorced from God and was dispersed to the four corners of the Earth, so many of them had Israelite blood.. but no longer kept the Torah or the Tanakh and many of them over the generations had all but forgotten who they were.

Even many of the Jews who were Jewish by blood had left Judaism and had assimilated into Babylon after their captivity (remember the Jewish Sorcerer that we read about in Acts chapter

13).

Another faction was the Gentile Pagan who had never even heard of Judaism. All they may have ever heard of was Paganism... so Judaism may have been completely new to them all together.

Another faction of people that Paul and Barnabas had to deal with were the die hard Jews.. known as the Circumcision group which were continuously following Paul around and trying to scare off the new Gentile converts (and we'll get into that more in the next chapter).

What we need to remember is that there were always those who would hear and then believe right away, but their faith would then be stolen away by those Jews who were trying to do anything that they could to sabotage the Gospel Message that Paul and Barnabas were trying to deliver.

The Jew in many respects had become the enemy of the Christian, and more times than not if you were a follower of the way.. and believed in the Jewish Messiah called Yahshua.. the Jewish authorities were more likely to stone you to death than to even listen to the Gospel Message, and this is why Paul calls the Jew the enemy of the Christian in Romans chapter 11:

Rom 11:25 Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

Rom 11:26 And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob";

Rom 11:27 "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

Rom 11:28 As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers.

Rom 11:29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

So Paul had his work cut out for him, and it was because of these cultural differences, and these many different diverse religious belief systems that Paul had to do battle with, that makes him at times sound like he's speaking out of both sides of his mouth.

Anyone who's ever studied the writings of Paul knows that the writings of Paul are difficult to understand and even Peter gives us a warning... telling us that Paul's writings are hard to understand and not to let lawless people cause us to loose our own stability:

2Pe 3:16 as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

2Pe 3:17 You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried

away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.

So anyone that thinks that they can cherry pick a scripture written by the Apostle Paul and turn that cherry picked scripture into a doctrine is most likely going to be lead astray.

And we have many different studies that we've done already on the writings of the Apostle Paul that you can check out at our website at HolyImpactMinistries.com. A good place to start would be with our five part series called "Gods Laws Still Stand" for those of you who are not familiar with how today's modern day version of Christianity has lost it's way.

You can also check out our separate teachings on the writings of the Apostle Paul under our "Holy Impact Teachings" tab for more information, but we won't get into that in much more detail here this evening.

So here's Paul and Barnabas are standing in this room full of Jews and these believing Gentiles in this Synagogue preaching the Gospel message to these people that have never heard the Gospel before, and immediately the Pharisees realize that Paul is essentially taking away their authority.

By preaching that Jesus is the mediator, and High Priest, and preaching that his people would now be lead by the Ruach Hakodesh.. what Paul and Barnabas were saying was that the Pharisees no longer have the authority over the people that they claim to have.

We have to remember that what our Messiah came preaching was exactly what Paul came preaching, and so it's important to go back and remember what our Messiah said himself with his own breath, his own tongue, and his own voice?

Mat 23:1 *Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples,*

Mat 23:2 *"The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat,*

Mat 23:3 *so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice.*

Mat 23:4 *They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.*

Mat 23:5 *They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long,*

Mat 23:6 *and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues*

Mat 23:7 *and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others.*

Mat 23:8 *But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers.*

Mat 23:9 *And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven.*

Mat 23:10 *Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ.*

Mat 23:11 The greatest among you shall be your servant.

Mat 23:12 Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

So it's not hard to understand why these Pharisees and these Saducees were so mortified over what Paul was teaching. If the people believed Paul and Barnabas... the Saducees and Pharisees were out of a job, and they couldn't have that.

And just as our Messiah had prophesied this caused a huge rift of division with in many of these Jewish communities. But then again it should have been no surprise when we take into consideration what our Messiah had already prophesied was going to happen.

Luk 12:51 Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division.

Luk 12:52 For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three.

Luk 12:53 They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

And so it was with in each and every town that the Apostles went to. These words that they spoke were like a sword that caused a great division with in each and every community and it didn't always end up well for the Apostles.

The Crippled Man At Lystra:

In verse 8 we read that Paul comes upon a man in Lystra that was crippled from birth and had never walked before in his life, and because Paul can see that this man believes the Gospel message he knows that this man is able to be healed.

In verse 9 we see that Paul could see that this man had faith and was able to be healed because of the faith that he had and so Paul commands him to stand up and walk... and so the man does.

In verse 11 the crowd sees this miraculous healing and they begin to go wild thinking that their Pagan gods had come down to earth to heal them and so they begin to call Paul and Barnabas Zeus and Hermes which of course are Pagan Greek gods.

And so at this point the Pagan priest goes and gets oxen and garland to do a Pagan sacrifice to honor Zeus and Hermes but we see in verse 14 that Paul and Barnabas begin to tear their garments in anger... and Paul stops the Pagan priest and strengthens him out.. and he tells them that they are not Zeus and Hermes but that they are earthly men made of flesh and bone just like

themselves.

And so I want to stop right here so that we can understand that these people that Paul and Barnabas were talking to were Pagan Gentiles who had no idea what Judaism was. This was one of the factions or groups of people that we just got done talking about... these were Pagan Gentiles.

And I want to make this clear so that we can better understand why Paul sounds like he's preaching two different gospels from time to time. Paul sounds like he's preaching two different gospels because he's preaching to two very different groups of people.

This group of people knows nothing of Judaism, or the God of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob, so Paul has to speak to them as though they are little children. Paul can't preach the meat of Gods Word to them because they haven't been brought up on the milk of Gods Word yet.

Take into consideration what Paul told the church at Corinth:

1Co 3:1 But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ.

1Co 3:2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready,

1Co 3:3 for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way?

And this is important for us to understand as well when we're trying to reach people with the truth of Gods Word. I often times will hear people trying to feed someone the meat of Gods Word before their ready for it, and this often times does nothing more than confuse the person that their trying to reach.

We have to be careful that we don't put the horse before the cart so to speak, and that's just what happened here in Lystra with the crippled man.

Paul called for the crippled man to be healed before he had explained who the healer was. Paul had not sufficiently explained who it was that was going to heal the crippled man.. and so the crowd just automatically assumed that it was their god that did the healing.

And so now Paul and Barnabas find themselves in a difficult position, and they have to stop them from offering Paul and Barnabas sacrifices and worshiping them as gods because Paul gave them the meat of Yahshua's Gospel before they had the chance to be weened on the milk of Yahshua's Gospel.

And of course Paul gets it all straightened out, but it would have been a lot easier if he would

have given them the milk of the Gospel message first... and then healed the man and let them feast on the meat of the Gospel message.

So after Paul finally gets things turned around and all straightened out... here come the Jews from Antioch and Iconium... and they begin to infiltrate the crowd and to get them all riled up against them and even though Paul just healed a man who had been crippled from birth right in front of them... these Jews were still able to entice the crowd against him.

And as we see here they began to stone Paul, and they must have knocked him unconscious. As we read on we see that they thought that he was dead, but once again the Ruach Hakodesh has other plans for Paul, and Paul recovers from the attack to continue on preaching the Gospel message to those who would hear it.

Setting Up Chapter 15:

Now with all of that being said.. we can see that Paul brushes off the dust from his sandals and continues on to preach and teach the Gospel message through out the land, and he continues on his journey but as we move into chapter 15 we're going to soon see that these die hard Jews who have made themselves Paul's enemies are going to follow right along with him and make life miserable for Paul as they find new ways to turn Paul's new converts against him.

As we've already seen in Romans chapter 11 Paul calls the Jews enemies of the followers of the way because of their unbelief, and so they were, but not all Jews were Paul's enemies.

There were some who heard and believed right away, and I think it's safe to say that it was most likely those who knew their scriptures that believed.

To many simply followed after the Saducees and the Pharisees of the Synagogues like lost sheep being lead to slaughter... but those who knew the scriptures for themselves were not so easily deceived, and this should also be a lesson for us in our time.

For those of us who actually read our Bibles and study the scriptures... we go well armed against the deceptions of today's modern day denominational charters of men and their many different denominational doctrines, theologies, and philosophies.

Because we read our Bibles for ourselves and because we study to show ourselves approved as we're commanded.. it's not so easy for our adversary to trick us and to fool us into leading our children into the pit of darkness. We know the truth because we've read it for ourselves and we've prayed for the discernment to understand it.

And so it was with some of the Jews that heard what Paul and the Apostles were preaching.

Some of them were well studied enough to know what Paul was saying was true. Take into consideration what Paul said about the Berians:

Act 17:10 The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue.

Act 17:11 Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

Act 17:12 Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men.

Act 17:13 But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Berea also, they came there too, agitating and stirring up the crowds.

And I want us to stop here for a second and take into consideration what scriptures the Berian Jews were examining to see if these things were so?

I want us to realize that they were not examining the “New Testament” my friends. They were examining the Torah.. and the Tanakh.. and the writings of the profits. Remember the “New Testament” had not been written yet. The “New Testament” would not be put together for another 170 years after the death burial and resurrection of our Messiah Yahshua.

So the only scriptures that the Berian Jews would have had to examine would have been what we know as the “Old Testament”. And because they knew and understood what was written in the “Old Testament”... they knew what Paul was saying was true.

Think about that for just a moment. They could see the Messiah Yahshua in the “Old Testament” writings

Let me ask you my friends... how many Christians today can find Yahshua Messiah in the Old Testament writings today?

How many Christians could point to their Jesus in the Old Testament? I dare say... not many.. even though he's all through the Old Testament writings literally thousands of times over.

You see we Christians today can't see Yahshua Jesus in the Old Testament because we don't read the Old Testament... because today's denominational Christian Churches program us not to read the Old Testament.

According to today's modern day version of Christianity everything in the Old Testament is done away with, and Jesus came to establish his own holidays, his own laws, his own “do as thou wilt” religious system, and his own “once saved always saved, dispensational state of grace” denominational charter... separate and apart from that of his Fathers feastsdays, Sabbaths, appointments, and precepts. Even though that's not found anywhere in the scripture period.

The Berian Jews saw Yahshua all through out the Torah that they had, and they knew that Paul was telling them the truth because they were well studied. They weren't falling for the teachings of the Pharisees and the Jewish hybrid religious system that they had created with their "Halykah" and all of their man made, man created, man fabricated laws, commandments, and precepts.

The Berian Jews much like the Essen's kept themselves separate and apart from the false religion of Judaism that was being taught at the Temple and in the Synagogues. And so it was because they kept themselves separate and apart... that they believed what they heard from Paul and the Apostles and were able to take hold of the truth that they came preaching.

And this is why it's important for us to read the whole book and not just half of it. We as Christians need to understand that no one reads half of any book and then knows whats in any book. You have to read the whole book.

And it's important that we understand that the Scriptures are not just words on a page.

The Scriptures that have been handed down by the prophets, and the Apostles, and the Patriarchs are living breathing words of truth. And only those who pray for the discernment to understand them will understand them.

You can not sit in a seminary school, or a Bible College in front of a professor and think that your going to understand the scriptures my friends... it just doesn't work that way.

With out fervent prayer, and dedication to the search for truth... and with out true faith in the Messiah Yahshua and in his Ruach Hakodesh you will not find what your seeking.

Is there any doubt why the scriptures seem so hard to understand? Is there any doubt why the writings of Paul are so hard to understand? Is there any doubt why our Messiah spoke in Parables in the first place? Do we not know why? Think about it for just a moment.

Mat 13:10 Then the disciples came and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?"

Mat 13:11 And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given."

Mat 13:12 For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

Mat 13:13 This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

Mat 13:14 Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: ""You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive."

Mat 13:15 For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and

their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.'

Mat 13:16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.

Mat 13:17 For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

You see my friends not everyone is supposed to understand. Not everyone is going to understand. Only those who truly want to know the truth and who truly work to study to show themselves approved and ask, seek, and knock... will understand. Our Messiah says so right here in Matthew chapter 13.

Mat 13:14 Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: ""You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive."'

Mat 13:15 For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.'

These Pharisees could recite the Pentateuch... and the law of Moses word for word... they had it committed to memory but they still could not see their own Messiah standing right in front of their faces.

Even Paul who was a Pharisee could not see Yahshua until he knocked him off of his horse on the way to Damascus and struck him blind... why?

Because once again they kept the law as if it were by works... and not by faith.

Rom 9:30 What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith;

Rom 9:31 but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law.

Rom 9:32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone,

Rom 9:33 as it is written, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

Just the exact same way that Christians today are not keeping the law by faith. Christians today are not only not keeping the law by faith.. they're not even keeping the law by works!

Modern day Christianity today teaches and preaches that the law is all nailed to the cross and done away with and that you can live however you want to "Once Saved Always Saved" is their motto, and they pledge their allegiance to "dispensational grace" and a "do as thou wilt" religious system found no where in the scriptures and I mean no where.

All because they... just like the Jews of Paul and the Apostles time do not study to show themselves approved rightly dividing the Word of God.

They can recite the scripture like parrots... but they do not understand the scripture because they're all too ready to pledge their allegiance to any one of over 5000 different denominational charters of men who all teach and preach over 5000 different doctrines and understandings from the same book.

Our adversary has tipped his game of deception 5000 fold from what it was in Paul's time.

If Paul and the Apostles could walk into one of today's modern day denominational churches and see the Pagan steeples, and painted pictures of some dainty looking Frenchmen with long hair hanging on the wall, and they could see people screaming out in tongues and rolling all over the floors, and people all dressed up in their Sunday finest, and women praying with their heads uncovered, and men with their long hair and tattoos everywhere they wouldn't know where they were.

And of course they would probably wouldn't even see anyone because Paul and the Apostles would be waiting at the church on God's 7th day Sabbath which is Saturday... and everyone else would be meeting on the Catholic created first day of the week Sunday.

We as Christians are so far removed from the truth of God's written Word that the Apostles wouldn't even know who we were. And this is exactly why it's written that "not everyone who says to me Lord Lord is getting into the kingdom of Heaven".

Mat 7:21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Mat 7:22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?'

Mat 7:23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

And so it is... that we're just now fighting our way back to the truth of God's Word after 2000 years, in our quest for truth that's only found... in his scriptures and in his scriptures alone. And I commend you for sharing your time with me here today... as we meet every Wednesday evening at 7pm EST to study to show ourselves approved.