



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## A Capital Divided—From Miracles to Murder

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Pastor David Andersen / PO Box 2020, Chesterfield, VA 23832 / David.Andersen@capitolcom.org

**Acts 14:1-7** *“Now it happened in Iconium, according to the same manner, that they went together into the synagogue of the Jews and so spoke that a great multitude of especially Jews and Greeks believed. 2) But the disobedient Jews instigated and poisoned the minds of the Gentiles against the brothers. 3) Therefore, still, they continued a long time speaking boldly on the Lord Who was witnessing to the Word of His grace by giving signs and wonders which were happening through their hands. 4) But the multitude of the city was divided, and some consistently were with the Jews, but others were with the Apostles. 5) But when there was an attempt of especially the Gentiles and the Jews with their rulers to assault and stone them; 6) Perceiving, they escaped into the cities of Lyconia, Lystra and Derbe and the region; 7) And there continually they were persistently preaching the Gospel.”*

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*“BEHOLD, I SEND YOU OUT AS SHEEP IN THE MIDST OF WOLVES. THEREFORE BE WISE AS SERPENTS AND HARMLESS AS DOVES... YOU WILL BE BROUGHT BEFORE GOVERNORS AND KINGS FOR MY SAKE, AS A TESTIMONY TO THEM AND TO THE GENTILES... NOW BROTHER WILL DELIVER UP BROTHER TO DEATH, AND A FATHER HIS CHILD; AND CHILDREN WILL RISE UP AGAINST PARENTS AND CAUSE THEM TO BE PUT TO DEATH. AND YOU WILL BE HATED BY ALL FOR MY NAME’S SAKE. BUT HE WHO ENDURES TO THE END WILL BE SAVED. WHEN THEY PERSECUTE YOU IN THIS CITY, FLEE TO ANOTHER.”*

MATTHEW 10:16, 18, 21-23

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What similar situation had happened in the previous capital? Is this “*great multitude*” about half or more of this great capital

city? How many different nationalities are primarily populating this great city? Does God consider unbelief as disobedience and rebellion against Him? Were these believers immediate in their reception of the truth? Did these Apostles respond to the persecution with even greater boldness and persistence? Were the unbelieving leaders again manipulated by the persecutors? Why did they have to resort to violence? What were these missionaries always doing wherever they went?

### FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- FEBRUARY 2: ACTS 14:8-18 *THE LAME HEALED AND THE BARBARIC RESPONSE*
- FEBRUARY 9: ACTS 14:19-22 *THE GREATEST MISSIONARY IS MARTYRED*

Since their time was so short in Pisidian Antioch, Paul and Barnabas must have been concerned about the believers they left behind as they entered Iconium, the next closest capital on the Sebastian Way, the main Roman road connecting the East and the West. God had used their witness so effectively that, though the leaders had been manipulated against them and had legally expelled them, they had planted a thriving church in a little more than a week which would be a lighthouse to the surrounding region of Galatia for years to come.

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*“THEREFORE WHOEVER CONFESSES ME BEFORE MEN, HIM WILL I CONFESS BEFORE MY FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN. BUT WHOEVER DENIES ME BEFORE MEN, HIM I WILL ALSO DENY BEFORE MY FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN. DO NOT THINK THAT I CAME TO BRING PEACE ON THE EARTH. I DID NOT COME TO BRING PEACE BUT A SWORD.”*

MATTHEW 10:32-34

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### I. YOUR WITNESS—A DOUBLE RESPONSE ACTS 14:1-2

This great capital was populated by four kinds of people primarily, the native Phrygians, the Greeks, the Jews, and most recently the Romans when it had become part of

### BIBLE STUDIES

THURSDAY @ 6:30 AM –PRAYER MEETING – GAB 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR EAST CONFERENCE ROOM

THURSDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – GAB 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR EAST CONFERENCE ROOM

# Virginia

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the Roman Empire. Just as they had done in the last capital, they went into the synagogue and preached powerfully almost exactly the same message, so that, for the first of only two times in the entire book of Acts, a “*great multitude*” believed. Most of the city must have shown up at the synagogue as news of their success in Antioch must have preceded them. By the use of the word “*multitude*” in Acts, it is probable that over half of the population of the city believed! The two ethnic groups were “*especially Jews and Greeks.*” The “*disobedient Jews*” who were so proud that they rejected their promised Messiah, included primarily the leaders and immediately they began instigate evil manipulation to “*poison the minds of the Gentiles against the brothers.*”

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“BEHOLD, TO OBEY IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE, AND TO HEED THAN THE FAT OF RAMS, FOR REBELLION IS AS THE SIN OF WITCHCRAFT, AND STUBBORNNESS IS AS INIQUITY AND IDOLATRY.”  
1 SAMUEL 15:22-23

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### II. YOUR BOLDNESS—A GREATER DIVIDE ACTS 14:3-4

The initial answer to the persecuting Jews was greater commitment, continuance and courage. Just as they had answered the persecuting Jews in the previous capital with greater boldness, so here they decide to continue “*a long time speaking boldly on the Lord.*” Are they intimidated by the malice of their opponents? Not at all! Instead they proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ more faithfully, frequently, and forcefully. This is not done in a spirit of competition or of returning evil for evil. They realize that the souls of this city will be lost for all eternity! It is about love for the lost and especially “*the Lord,*” and “*witnessing to the Word of His grace.*” The Gospel is all about God’s grace. That grace was even further demonstrated by Christ as He was “*giving signs and wonders which were happening through their hands.*” All this wonderful witness and incredible evidence brought more and more to Christ and more and more deeply entrenched the divide.

### III. YOUR WISDOM—FLEE PERSECUTION ACTS 14:5-6

When these persecutors realize that they do not have the numerical or factual support for legal action, they resort to mob violence and lynching. Unexpectedly, “*there was an attempt of especially the Gentiles and the Jews with their rulers to assault and stone them.*” Now this terrorist group is led by Gentiles (Phrygians, Greeks and Romans) with their leaders, though the Jews with their leaders have been the instigators and manipulators all along. Do people ever pull off such ploys in other capitals? Once the missionaries became aware of the life-threatening plot, they obediently escape immediately into the province of Lyconia for both safety and even greater opportunity to share the Gospel with other cities.

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“AS IT HAD DONE EARLIER IN ACTS (8:1-4), PERSECUTION MERELY PUSHED THE GOOD NEWS OF FORGIVENESS AND SALVATION INTO NEW REGIONS.”  
JOHN MACARTHUR

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### IV. YOUR GIFT—THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST ACTS 14:7

Paul and Barnabas knew the greatest gift they could ever give anyone was the Gospel. The verb tenses make it clear they understood that the power of God is in His Gospel and they put their full confidence in it to change lives because the Gospel was persistently presented wherever they went. They proclaimed that God was not only the sovereign creator over all, but that He has always kept his promises and He has promised a Savior, Jesus Christ. Though He is absolutely holy, He died for our sin (Isaiah 53) because we are hopeless sinners who cannot possibly please Him (Romans 3:10-18). He paid the penalty of eternal death in hell for our sins (Rev. 21:8) upon the cross and requires that we repent and receive Him (Acts 17:30-31, Romans 10:9-13). They believed that the only hope for any capital was the Gospel of Christ.

#### Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Are you willing to cause division and assume its risks to present the Gospel to others in our capitol or wherever you are?
- 2) Are you intimidated by those who oppose the Gospel or when challenged respond with greater boldness for Christ?
- 3) Are you salt and light by your words and works which reveal to others that your greatest priority is the Gospel?