
a ***Grace Notes*** course

The Acts of the Apostles

an expositional study

by Warren Doud

Lesson 218: **Acts 14:1-7**

ACTS, Lesson 218, Acts 14:1-7

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Acts 14:1-7**Acts 14:1**

14:1 And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke, that a great multitude of Jews and Greeks believed.

As Paul and Barnabas proclaimed the gospel, they selected cities situated along major Roman highways. From Pisidian Antioch they traveled east to Iconium, which at that time was an influential city. They stayed longer here than at any other place on their first missionary journey.

Iconium

[See description in the notes for Acts 13:50-52]

The teaching of Paul and Barnabas was undoubtedly on the same themes that they had developed in Antioch, presenting Christ as Messiah through the exposition of Old Testament scriptures. It was very effective, many Jews and Gentiles accepted Christ as Savior.

These converts laid the foundation of a Gospel church state in this place; for that there was a church here, is certain from (Acts 14:21-23). In the 1st century, Sospater is said to be bishop, or pastor of this church, and also Tertius, who are both reckoned among the “seventy” disciples of Christ.

In the 3rd century, Celsus was bishop of this church; and in the same century, several synods were held here, about the error of Novatus; and in the same century, Nicomes bishop of this place, assisted at the council at Antioch, which condemned the heresy of Samosatenus. The history of the Christian congregation at Iconium continues throughout several more centuries. ¹

It was at Iconium that, according to Roman Catholic writings, Paul converted Thecla. Her

¹ Gill, Acts 14:1

Acts, as it has come down to us, belongs to the latter part of the second century, and is not in its original form ; but its nucleus is a very early document, probably of much the same date as Luke's *Acts* : and it is generally accepted as giving a substantially true narrative of an incident of Paul's ministry at Iconium. Although it is marked by some of the characteristics of the Apocryphal literature, many of the details have historical probability, especially as the doctrinal motive is in the background. One detail of great interest, in Thecla's *Acts*, is the description of Paul's personal appearance, which may well rest on some true tradition: bald, bow-legged, strongly built, small in stature ; with large eyes and meeting eyebrows and longish nose ; full of grace ; sometimes looking like a man, sometimes having the face of an angel. ²

It seems that the response in Iconium was much greater than it was in Antioch.

Acts 14:2

14:2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.

The unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles

The animosity of the Jews, and the Gentiles they were able to persuade, was directed against the whole Christian community, not just against Paul and Barnabas.

made their minds evil affected against the brethren

“evil affected” is from **kakow** “to embitter; to poison someone's mind against.”

NAS: “embittered them against the brethren”

NIV: “poisoned their minds against the brethren.”

It's easy to encourage mental attitude sins in people who are not experienced in thinking grace.

² Furneaux

Topic: Mental Attitude; Sin of Not Thinking Grace

Failure to order one's thinking according to Grace involves several aspects of mental attitude sin, including the following:

- A spirit of pride
- Love for approbation or praise
- Self-will
- Magnifying others' faults while emphasizing one's own virtues
- Negative disposition
- Apathy
- Jealousy, envy, bitterness, hatred

Acts 14:3

14:3 For a long time they spoke boldly in the Lord, who gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

For a long time

There were no violent attempts to expel the apostles for a considerable period, possibly as long as six months. The whole missionary journey is estimated to have lasted three to four years. The apostles tried to stay in each city long enough to see a church established and one or more men trained enough to be ordained as elders. Of course the more success the Lord gave them, the more persecution they could have expected.

the spoke boldly in the Lord, who gave testimony unto the word of his grace

By giving the apostles the power to work miracles. Miracles, such as healing the sick, curing the lame, casting out demons, were a proof that Paul and Barnabas had a divine commission to the Gentiles.

Acts 14:4

14:4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.

The whole population of Iconium was divided into two great factions: one party took the side of the apostles, the other that of the Jews.

This is the first time in Acts that Paul and Barnabas are called apostles. Before this, in Acts, the word was restricted to the twelve, of which neither Paul nor Barnabas were members.

Topic: Apostleship**Acts 14:5**

14:5 And when there was an assault made both by the Gentiles, and also by the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them,

an assault by the Gentiles, and also by the Jews with their rulers

From **οἰμνη** "violent attempt; assault". NIV. "there was a plot afoot", *but* there is nothing in the Greek about a plot; the translators of the NIV are inserting an idea here that is not in the original, I suppose in an attempt to make the story more interesting.

It looks like the same sort of group that persecuted the apostles in Antioch, Gentiles and Jews in a violent assault, instigated and led by the rulers of the synagogues (not the rulers of the city; it is unlikely that civil leadership would be involved in this sectarian conflict).. However, this time they were using direct violence, stoning.

to use them despitefully

From **υβριζω** to expose them, bring them into contempt, to reproach them with harsh language, to accuse them of sedition; and then to stone them for blasphemy, which was the punishment among the Jews for that crime.

Acts 14:6

14:6 They were aware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lies round about:

Paul and Barnabas knew well what the Jews were attempting to do, so they made their escape to neighboring districts in Lycaonia, where they might be more secure and have more liberty to preach the gospel.

While the site of Iconium has never been forgotten, and that of Antioch in Pisidia has now been clearly identified, those of Lystra and Derbe remain are somewhat uncertain.³

Lystra

...seems to have been located south of Iconium, north of the modern village of Hatunsaray, which itself is about 15 km north of a small town called Akoren, 30km south of Konya(Iconium). There is a small museum within the village of Hatunsaray that displays ruins from ancient Lystra. The Roman Empire made Lystra a colony in 6 BC, possibly to allow better control of the tribes in the mountains to the west. Soon after, the Romans built a road from Lystra to Iconium in the north.

Paul preached the gospel in Lystra after he had been driven by persecution from Iconium. (our current passage). Here Paul healed a man lame from birth (Acts 14:8). Paul visited this city again on his second missionary tour. (Acts 16:1) Timothy, who was a young disciple there (2 Tim. 3:10,11), was most likely one of those who were on the previous occasion witnesses of Paul's persecution and courage in Lystra. Timothy left Lystra and joined Paul and Silas on rest of the 2nd Missionary Journey.

Derbe

The ruins of Derbe lie north of the Turkish town of Karaman. A distinctive church ruin there is believed to be the home of the last Bishop of Derbe, about 1000 AD.

In ancient times, Derbe was a Christian city and was used as a refuge for traveling Christians. Its Christian church was burned and buried under a mountain of soil by the Roman Emperor Diocletian, during the Diocletian Persecution, in

300 AD. After the destruction of Derbe, there was a mass exodus of the population.

Acts 14:7

14:7 And there they preached the gospel.

They did not sit still, nor hide themselves in these places; but, as in others, they preached the Gospel. Artemas, of whom mention is made in Titus 3:12, and is said to be one of the seventy disciples, is reported in some histories to have been bishop of Lystra. Some manuscripts say that the people of these towns were greatly influenced by their preaching and that many came to Christ.

It seems that there was no interference from Jews in this part of the ministry. There were probably not very many Jews there, and doesn't seem to have been any synagogue. However, we know that there was at least one Jewish family, that of Eunice, with her mother Lois, and Eunice's son Timothy. Paul and Barnabas might have lodged with them, even on this first visit. (Acts. 16:1)

Apostleship

INTRODUCTION

The word "apostle" (**apostolos**) is from the Greek, meaning "an ambassador; one who is sent; a delegated authority." The word was used for high-ranking naval officers in classical Greek times. An apostle of Jesus Christ was the highest ranking official in the local churches, 1 Cor. 12:28.

Apostles of Jesus Christ were appointed by God the Father for the purpose of establishing churches and spreading new truth, Eph. 3:1-10. There were both the spiritual gift and office of apostleship. The spiritual gift was the divine enabling to function as an apostle, Eph. 4:11, 1 Cor. 28,29. The office of apostleship was the authority to function as an apostle, Rom. 1.5, ACTS 1:25, GAL. 2:8.

Some of the uses of (**apostolos**) outside of the Bible are:

³ Conybeare and Howson

- In the classical Greek period (4th and 5th centuries B.C.), (**apostolos**) was used by Lysias and Demosthenes to refer to the commander of a naval expedition. When the Athenians went to war, there was a number of men qualified to command the fleet. One of these was elected by lot and sent to the fleet to command it. He was called *apostolos*.
- During the Hellenistic period (323 B.C. and following) (**apostolos**) was used to refer to a person commissioned and authorized by one of the gods.
- In the Papyri of the koine period (**apostolos**) was used to refer to a civil agent sent to transact official business.

In the New Testament, the apostles of Jesus Christ fall into two classes:

- The apostles of Jesus Christ to Israel, Luke 6:12-16. These were appointed by Jesus Christ according to the will of God the Father. These men were authorized to announce to Israel that their Messiah was present; and they were endowed with miraculous powers, Luke 9:1,2.
- The apostles of Jesus Christ to the Church. These included the eleven disciples (Acts 1:26), Paul (Rom. 1:1, etc.), James the brother of Christ (Gal. 1:19), Barnabas (Acts 14:14), Timothy and Silas (1 Thess. 2:6,7 cf. 1:1).

The Qualifications of an Apostle

An apostle had to have the spiritual gift of apostleship. The gift was provided by Jesus Christ after His ascension into Heaven, Eph. 4:8-11. The gift was imparted by the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, 1 Cor. 12:11; Acts 2.

The apostle received his gift and office by the sovereign decision of God the Father, 1 Cor. 1:1; 12:18; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1.

The apostle had to have been an eyewitness of the resurrected Lord, Acts 1:22; 1 Cor. 9:1.

The Credentials of an Apostle

An apostle was endowed with miraculous powers of miracles, Heb. 2:4; 2 Cor. 12:12.

An apostle had success in evangelism, 1 Cor. 9:2; 2 Cor. 3:1-3; Gal. 2:7-9.

An apostle had the capacity to suffer patiently, 2 Cor. 12:12.

The Function of an Apostle

Apostles received and communicated new revelation, Eph. 3:2-6.

Apostles communicated the gospel effectively and people accepted Christ in response to their preaching, 1 Cor. 9:1; Gal. 2:7-9.

Apostles helped organize local churches and appointed officers, Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5.

Apostles trained new believers in doctrine, 1 Thess. 1:5 to 2:12.

Apostles had the authority to administer discipline to believers, Acts 5:1-10; 1 Tim. 1:20; 1 Cor. 4:21; 2 Cor. 13:2.

The apostle had authority over all local churches because he was the channel of New Testament revelation. Since the time of the apostles, no one has been given authority over more than one local church.

The apostle Paul was the most Grace-oriented apostle. He realized that he was the least deserving to be an apostle, 1 Cor. 15:9. He was the most productive because of Grace, 1 Cor. 15:10.

There were false apostles who communicated false information, 2 Cor. 11:13; Rev. 2:2.

Mental Attitude

INTRODUCTION

As a believer progresses in his Christian life, he experiences many profound changes in his thinking. His standards change gradually but radically; his frame of reference changes; his mental attitude soon becomes very different from what it once was. His previous way of thinking is replaced by the "mind of Christ" - God's viewpoint is becoming his own.

The greatest occupational hazard faced by a Christian is the failure to grow in Christ. Persistent personal sin carried on without repentance and confession keeps the Christian out of fellowship with the Lord and hinders the work of the Holy Spirit in the life.

The normal Christian life is a supernatural life. This life cannot be lived apart from the daily intake of spiritual food, the sustenance which comes with the study of the Bible accompanied by the continuous control and ministry of the Holy Spirit. Inattention to the teaching of the Word of God concerning the mechanics of daily Christian living results in failure to grow in Christ. The believer who will not overcome these problems will not be able to enjoy the benefits and blessings of the Christian life, and he will certainly not be productive as a child of God.

This article reviews several factors relating to the subject of the believer's mental attitude. First, we note several categories of mental attitude sin which are the result of "not thinking Grace". Then we see the methods by which God arranges for human viewpoint thinking to be replaced with divine viewpoint thinking. This study will also show some of the important results in the life of the Christian who develops a godly mental attitude.

The Sin of Not Thinking Grace

A Christian decides many times every day whether he will follow God's plan for his life. In decisions great or small he expresses either his dependence on the Lord or his desire to be independent of God's direction. A believer has access to the perfect plan of God for his life, a plan which has certain predetermined divine standards by which every situation can be measured, by which every decisive opportunity can be judged. Many promises and blessings are available for use by the person who orders his life according to the patterns laid out in the Bible.

The person who is not positive to the plan of God, and who would apply his own human standards to life situations, does not operate by

divine standards. He becomes involved in a variety of mental attitude sin problems stemming from his original decision to be independent of God. His life takes on the characteristics of one who does not "think Grace".

Grace is that characteristic of God which is an extension of His love for the human race and which causes Him to provide for every human need for time and eternity. The sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the Cross was the Work which made it possible for God to view every person as free from the guilt of sin and as an object of God's Grace provisions.

Failure to order one's thinking according to Grace involves several aspects of mental attitude sin, including the following :

A SPIRIT OF PRIDE -- this is an exalted feeling based on personal success or position, or based on good training or education, on personal appearance, or on some natural gift or ability. Sinful pride is an inner feeling of self-importance which does not take into account God's provision of every resource and quality which goes into one's human traits and capabilities.

LOVE OF, OR DESIRE FOR, HUMAN APPROBATION AND PRAISE -- this is a secret fondness for being noticed and recognized. It is a love of supremacy, or it is the drawing of attention to oneself by various types of exhibitionism or by spiritual one-upmanship.

SELF WILL -- this is the concept of the stubborn or unteachable nature, or implacability. Self will is a disposition to be argumentative, harsh, bitter, which causes one to be a "nit picker" or critical in the extreme, or to mind the business of others, or to fail to recognize the rights and privacy of others.

SINFUL REACTION TO SOCIAL PRESSURES -- these are the sins of anger, impatience, touchiness, or of having a sensitive nature. There is often resentment and retaliation when disapproved or contradicted. This area of sin generates jealousy, sour grapes, envy, and the

accompanying bitterness, hatred, carrying of grudges, revenge tactics, and so forth.

Magnifying the faults and failings of others while emphasizing one's own virtues.

NEGATIVE DISPOSITION -- this is peevishness, a fretful disposition, one that loves to be coaxed and honored. It is a dishonest, deceitful attitude. It is a disposition that tends toward discouragement and despondency under pressure along with the attempt to solve one's problems by hysteria and tantrums.

APATHY -- this sin is that of indifference to doctrine and to the Word of God in general. It is indifference to the lost condition of unbelievers or to the carnal condition of other believers.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A BELIEVER'S MENTAL ATTITUDE

The true character of a believer in Jesus Christ is determined by his mental attitude. Prov. 23:7, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he". See also 1 Pet. 1:13; 4:1; Heb. 12:3; Col. 3:1,2; 1 Cor. 2:16; 2 Cor. 10:4,5.

A Christian's mental attitude is not always apparent in his actions, but God always knows perfectly what a person is thinking. Heb. 4:12,13; Prov. 21:2. The following are examples of mental attitude thinking.

Worldliness is a mental attitude. Worldliness is not the doing of something wrong; it is the thinking which takes place independently of God's viewpoint. The remedy to the problem of worldliness is not in turning over a new leaf. It is a change in thinking (repentance) rather than a change in activity. Divine viewpoint must replace human viewpoint before a change in character can be expected. One can have an outward life which appears good, yet be filled with mental attitude sins. Col. 3:2; James 4:4.

Toughness, strength, and determination are mental attitudes. One is not beaten until he gives up mentally.

True Christian inner peace is a mental attitude. It is the relaxed mental state which enables one to enjoy the Christian life regardless of people

or outward circumstances. With a good mental attitude, the believer can be joyful, relaxed, and can even enjoy the battle.

Mental stability is the result of thinking from a proper frame of reference, that is, Biblical thinking. The Christian who has mental fear, who is a chronic worrier, who cannot think clearly under pressure, who blames others for his problems, who cannot make correct decisions -- that believer is unstable. His emotions interfere with his thinking. Since emotion always follows thinking, emotional instability will always follow from incorrect (HVP) thinking. But God's Plan of Grace leads to rock-solid mental and emotional stability.

MAN'S IDEAS VS DIVINE VIEWPOINT

Thinking requires words - vocabulary. Divine thinking requires divine vocabulary. "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Under any kind of spiritual pressure, human vocabulary, or human thinking, is not adequate. Only God's words can give the ability to think correctly under pressure. The Christian's ability to think correctly is based on how much Bible teaching is resident (applied) in the soul of the believer.

The Christian is commanded to have a new mental attitude. Col. 3:1,2; 2 Cor. 10:4,5; 1 Cor. 2:16; Phil. 2:5.

The warfare between two viewpoints in the believer's soul must be fought from within, first by knowledge of doctrine, and then by the application of truth to the life. 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 John 1:9.

Every believer has a mind which is capable of looking at life from God's point of view. Rom. 1:18 ff. Mental attitude divine viewpoint is obtained only through Bible study accompanied by the controlling ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Christian who habitually studies the Word learns to concentrate and to think from God's point of view, and thus he becomes stabilized. The "mind of Christ" (the source of God's viewpoint) is made clear in the Bible.

The Christian can be "transformed by the renewing of the mind" through study, knowledge, and application of Bible truth. By this means his decisions and actions are most likely to be in agreement with Bible principle. And this is the only sure sign of Christian maturity and victorious Christian living.

THE HUMAN CONSCIENCE

The conscience is located in the mind and is the center for the operating standards of the human soul. Titus 1:15. The conscience convicts the Christian of evil or wrongdoing. John 8:9. The conscience establishes standards for both human and divine relationships. Acts 24:16.

The conscience functions on thinking; and the believer in fellowship has a conscience which functions from resident (applied) divine viewpoint. Rom. 2:15; 9:1, as related to applied Bible teaching. The conscience establishes standards for serving God. 2 Tim. 1:3; Heb. 9:14. But false operating standards in the conscience produce legalism. 1 Cor. 8:7.

The more the believer uses applied Bible doctrine, the stronger his conscience becomes in using such things as the Law of Liberty and the superseding laws of love and sacrifice. 1 Cor. 10:24-29. Conscience is the basis for enduring mistreatment and misunderstanding without defending oneself. 1 Pet. 2:19; 3:16. The conscience can be damaged or destroyed with false doctrine and with a callused soul. 1 Tim. 4:1,2.

THE MECHANICS OF REPLACING HUMAN VIEWPOINT WITH DIVINE VIEWPOINT

The Christian life is a supernatural life and cannot be lived without the filling of the Holy Spirit and the daily function of applied Bible teaching. Rom. 8:2; 7:6; Gal. 5:25; Eph. 5:18. All changes must come from within, and the Holy Spirit must originate divine good by applying doctrine to the life.

We begin a change of viewpoint at the moment of salvation. At that time we changed our mental attitude toward the Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 3:19. That was repentance and faith, and it

resulted in our regeneration. John 3:16. At that moment many benefits were made available to us, blessings and promises from God which enable us to live in a manner which is both acceptable to the Lord and which also produces great happiness for us. We are given the ability to think those things which will bring honor to the Lord. Eph. 5:18; 4:23; Col. 3:2.

The choice of whether to make use of the divine operating assets is made by the believer every day. The power of our walk with the Lord depends on Bible teaching, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the believer's positive volition. Daily Bible teaching under the controlling ministry of the Holy Spirit builds up divine standards in the human soul and conscience. 1 Tim. 1:5,19; 3:9.

THE BENEFITS OF HAVING A PROPER MENTAL ATTITUDE

With the proper mental attitude, the Christian will have victory, peace, power, and mental stability. Phil. 2:5; 2 Tim. 1:7. The Christian can experience perfect inner peace, ever during times of difficulty and suffering. Phil. 4:7. Inner peace comes from what we think. Isa. 26:3. Divine viewpoint brings mental stability and eliminates discouragement, anxiety, instability, fearfulness, and double-mindedness. Stability of mind and character is a mental attitude of strength.

The believer with divine viewpoint has a gracious attitude toward others. He is a mature believer characterized by mental attitude love who is a channel of the Grace of God. Deut. 6:5; 11:13. A mental attitude from DVP produces confidences based on absolute values and standards. 2 Cor. 5:1,6,8.

MENTAL ATTITUDE AND THE BELIEVER'S MINISTRY

The mature believer "thinks Grace", which is the "mind of Christ". Therefore, the Christian's life and personality are characterized by many of the qualities of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. 8:29; Gal. 5:22 ff. In every one of these characteristics the Christian has one basic

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ingredient - correct thinking according to divine viewpoint. 1 Pet. 3:8

Therefore, the mature believer is gentle, compassionate, caring, and has a gracious attitude toward others. These are essential life qualities in any believer who is a good witness for Christ. With these qualities, and with the knowledge of the Word of God being acquired on the way to maturity, the believer cannot help but be an outstanding witness for Christ and a skilful practitioner in the use of his spiritual gifts.
