****

***“Our Testimony in Trials & Tribulations!”***

**ACTS CHAPTER 14**

***> (v1-6) The Trial! (Opportunity to Opposition)***

**(v1) The City of Iconium- means “little image” - One of the chief cities in the Southern Roman Empire, this region was called Galatia. For computer folks we get the term “icon.”**

**(v2) How are minds poisoned today? False religions, evolution, humanism, hedonism, secularism.**

**(v3) *“bearing witness to the word of His grace”* - grace- Gk. *charis*- God’s grace is that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, good will, loving-kindness, and favor. It is this grace that reveals the merciful kindness by which God, exerting his holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ, keeps strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, affection, and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues.**

**(v4-7) Opposition to the gospel- Religious & secular (Jews & Gentiles)- Jesus said, Matt 5:11-12- *"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.***

***> (v7-20) The Testimony! (Preaching to Persecution)***

**(v7) Notice they were “preaching the gospel”- Do you know the gospel and are you preaching it? The word “gospel” means “good news!” The good news is that Jesus Christ died on the cross for the sins of the world, that He was raised from the dead on account of our justification, and that by Him all who believe are justified from all things.**

**- *The Scriptures describes the gospel:***

**(1) *“of God”* (Rom. 1:1) for it originates from His love.**

**(2) *“of Christ”* (2 Cor. 10:14) because it flows from His sacrifice, and because He is the object of faith.**

**(3) *“of the grace of God”* because it saves those whom the law curses.**

**(4) *“of the glory of Christ”* (2 Cor. 4:4) because it concerns Him who is in the glory and who is bringing many sons to glory (Heb. 2:10).**

**(5) *“of your salvation”* (Eph. 1:13) because it is “the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” (Ro. 1:16).**

**(6) *“of peace”* (Eph 6:15) because through Christ it makes peace between the believing sinner and God and makes inward peace possible.**

**(7) *“of the kingdom”* (Mt. 4:23) God purposes to set up the kingdom of Christ, the Son of David, in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:16; Is 9:6-7; Mt. 9:35; Mt. 24:14);**

**(8) there is also the *“everlasting gospel”* (Rev. 14:6) this is described as the announcement of divine judgment upon the wicked in the great tribulation.**

**(9) Finally, we are warned of those who would come with a *“different gospel”* (2 Cor. 11:4; Gal. 1:6) which Paul states is “not another” but a perversion of the Gospel of the grace of God. – C.I. Scofield**

**(v8-10) The crippled man walks! Paul is observant of those who have faith. Let us do the same.**

**(v11-13) Beware of Satanic deception - This was a superstitious crowd that interpreted events in the light of their own mythology. They identified Barnabas as Jupiter (Zeus), the chief of the gods; and Paul, the speaker, they identified with Mercury (Hermes), the messenger of the gods. Jupiter was the patron deity of the city, so this was a great opportunity for the priest of Jupiter to become especially important and lead the people in honoring their god.**

**(v14-18) Paul’s discourse reveals God as (1) “a living God” (2) “a giving God” (3) “a forgiving God” (v20)**

**(v19-20) This event may be described in 2 Corinthians 12:2-5- *I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago -- whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows -- such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man -- whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows -- how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.***

***> (v21-28) The Tribulations! (Exhortations & Elders)***

**(v21-22) Notice: They preached and made disciples.**

**- What was the theme of their discipleship?**

**(1) Strengthening their souls.**

**(2) Exhorting them to continue in the faith.**

**(3) To expect tribulations.**

**(v23) Qualifications of an Elder- Titus 1:6-9- *An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless-not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.***

**(v24-28) Back home to Antioch & the report was *“God opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.”* Praise God! (This was Paul’s first missionary journey lasting approximately one year.)**