ACTS 14

A Door of Faith Through Many Tribulations

a divided city, a lame man who leaped, a crowd that called them gods, and a preacher stoned and standing again

> *"strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.""*
> ACTS 14:22

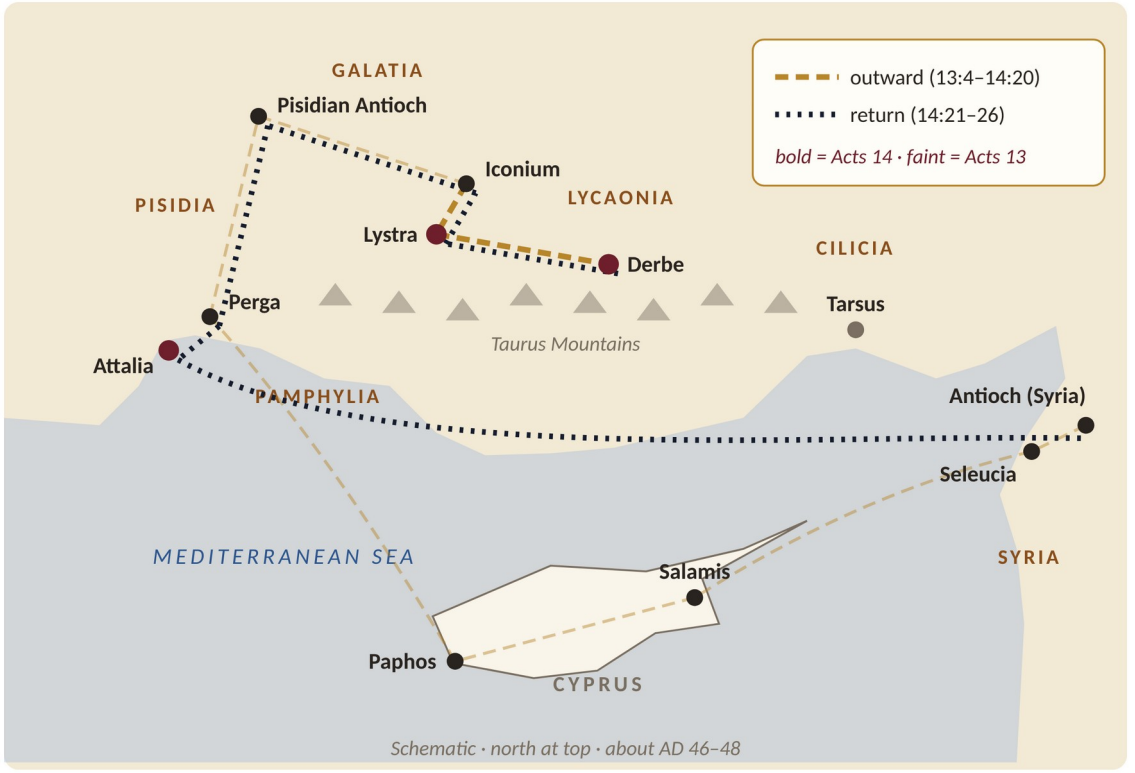
A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · FOUR VOICES: GUZIK · SPROUL · SPURGEON · HENRY

Where Luke has brought us

1. Chapter 13 ended with Paul and Barnabas driven out of Pisidian Antioch, shaking the dust off their feet, and the new disciples “continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit” (13:51–52).

2. The three cities lie east and south-east of Pisidian Antioch on the high plateau of Anatolia.

3. Lystra had a local tale (Guzik retells it) that Zeus and Hermes once visited the region disguised as mortals and were turned away by everyone except one older couple.



Speaking Boldly in Iconium

Many believe, the city splits, signs confirm the word of grace, and the apostles flee to keep preaching

ACTS 14:3

Therefore they spent a long time there speaking boldly with reliance upon the Lord, who was testifying to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands.

DAVID GUZIK

They preached boldly and left only when it was absolutely necessary.

MATTHEW HENRY

Better part of the city to heaven than all to hell.

παρρησιαζόμενοι
PARRĒSIAZOMENOI · "SPEAKING BOLDLY"

From parrēsia, freedom of speech — saying everything plainly, without holding back.

Stand Upright on Your Feet

A man lame from birth listens, Paul sees that he has faith, and he leaps up

ACTS 14:10

said with a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he leaped up and began to walk.

DAVID GUZIK

His ready obedience proved his faith.

C.H. SPURGEON

He listened; Paul saw his faith; sinner, stand up!

MATTHEW HENRY

God won't disappoint the desires He kindles.

ἥλατο

HĒLATO · "HE LEAPED"

From hallomai, to leap or spring up.

Turn to a Living God

Zeus and Hermes, oxen and garlands, torn robes, and the Creator's witness in rain and harvest

ACTS 14:11

When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they raised their voice, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have become like men and have come down to us."

DAVID GUZIK

The miracle saved no one; God's kindness is His witness.

MATTHEW HENRY

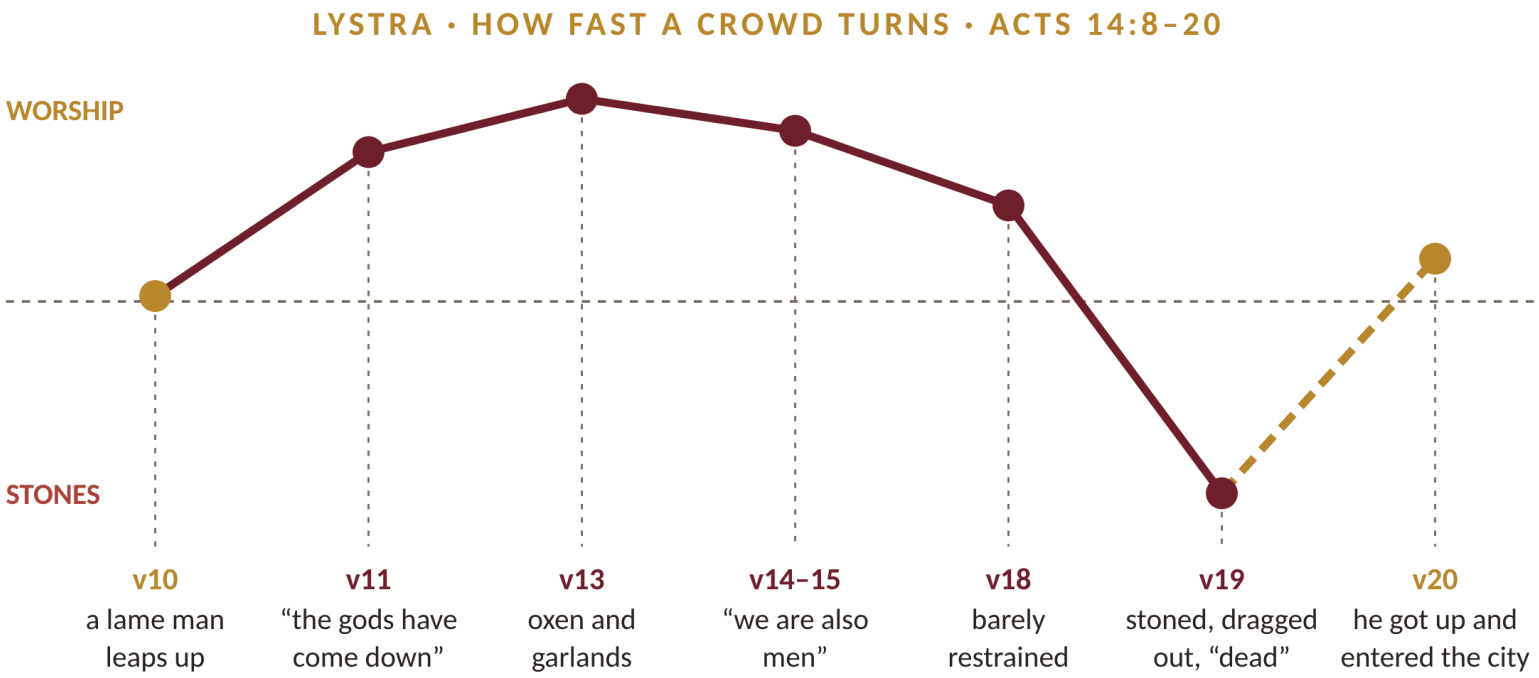
More concerned for God's honour than their own.

ὁμοιοπαθεῖς

HOMOIOPATHEIS · "OF THE SAME NATURE"

Literally "suffering the same things" — having the same feelings, weaknesses and limits.

How fast a crowd turns



Henry: “Popular breath turns like the wind.”

Follow the line from left to right: the same crowd that tried to sacrifice to Paul stoned him a few verses later — and then he got up.

Stoned, and Standing Again

A crowd turned, Paul left for dead, and the long walk back to strengthen the churches

ACTS 14:22

strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

DAVID GUZIK

Miraculously preserved; he preached what he had lived.

C.H. SPURGEON

Chosen in the furnace; the Master went before.

MATTHEW HENRY

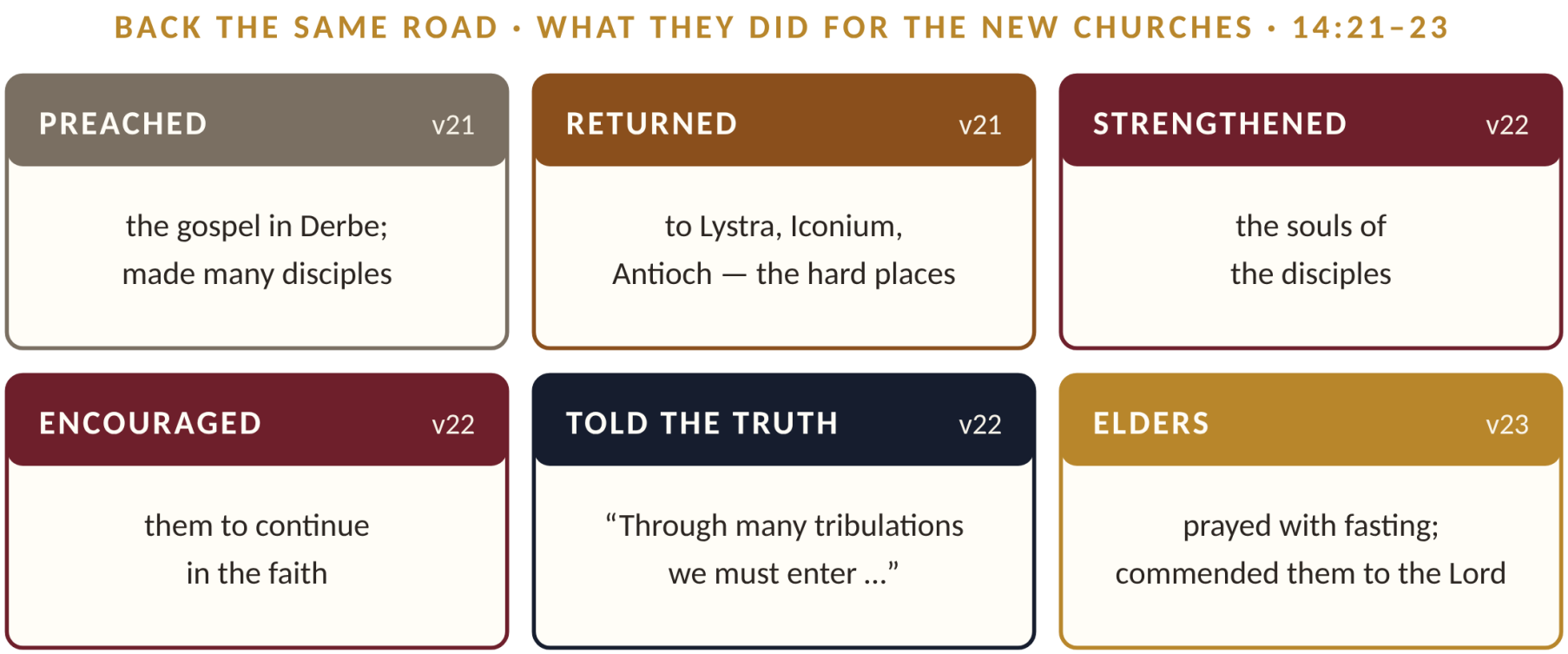
Popular breath turns like the wind; rooted, not just planted.

θλίψεων

THLIPSEŌN · "TRIBULATIONS"

Thlipsis is pressure — the crushing of grapes or olives — and so affliction, distress, trouble.

Back the same road



They walked back into the cities that had stoned and expelled them — because new believers needed shepherds.

Read the six boxes in order: on the way home Paul and Barnabas did everything a young church needs — and none of it was easy or safe.

A Door of Faith to the Gentiles

Through Pisidia and Pamphylia, a word at Perga, and the report to the church that sent them

ACTS 14:27

When they had arrived and gathered the church together, they began to report all things that God had done with them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.

DAVID GUZIK

A great success, though not without great obstacles.

MATTHEW HENRY

No entering the kingdom but by the door of faith.

θύρα
THYRA · "DOOR"

A door, gate or entrance — the NASB has "door" 28 times.

What to carry from this chapter

1

Fleeing is not quitting.

Henry: ministers “may see cause to quit the spot, when yet they do not quit the work.”

2

The Lord confirms the word of His grace.

They spoke boldly “with reliance upon the Lord,” and He testified “to the word of His grace” with signs (v3).

3

The gospel divides.

Schizō (v4) — the word for the torn veil.

4

Faith stands up on legs that never held weight.

Guzik: the man’s faith “was made plain by his ready obedience.”

More to carry

5

Peter’s miracle, Paul’s miracle.

Both lame from birth, both “fixed his gaze,” both leaped (hallomai, 3:8; 14:10).

6

A miracle saves no one by itself.

Guzik: “The miracle itself saved no one.”

7

God has never left Himself without witness.

Amartyros (v17), only here: rain, harvests, food and gladness speak of Him.

8

Crowds turn; God does not.

From sacrifice to stones in a few verses (vv13, 19).

Talk it through

1. They left Iconium when it became dangerous, but kept preaching in the next town (14:5–7). Where do I need wisdom to know the difference between running away and moving on in obedience?

2. The lame man was listening, and Paul saw that he had faith (14:9). What would it look like for me to listen to God's word like that man listened to Paul?

3. The crowd wanted to worship the messengers (14:11–13). Where am I tempted to put a person — a pastor, a sponsor, a hero — in God's place, or to want that place for myself?

4. Paul says God "did not leave Himself without witness" — rain, food, gladness (14:17). Where have I seen God's kindness this week that I have not thanked Him for?

5. Paul was stoned, got up, and walked back into the city (14:19–20), then went back to the towns that had hurt him (14:21). What hard place is God sending me back into?

CLOSING

Acts 14 is the chapter where the gospel costs Paul blood. He is cheered as a god, stoned as a criminal, and gets up to go back to the same towns, because new believers need strengthening and elders. The door God opened is a door of faith — and the road through it runs through many tribulations, with a Master who went that way first.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

Full Deep Dive, O·I·A study and reflection journal: see the Acts study page.