



WHAT PETER, PAUL, AND OTHER DISCIPLES TOOK TO THE WORLD

His Salvation, His Ekklesia, His Body of Christ with
the Gifts and Mark's Gospel

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SCALE



The Apostles asked the ekklesia-church to select some men full of the Holy Spirit to take care of the widows. The Apostles were busy telling more and more people about Jesus. Stephen was one of these. **AB Acts 6:8. Now Stephen, full of grace-divine blessing and favor-worked great wonders and signs (miracles) among the people.** Notice Luke said he was full of grace. When Luke said grace he meant revelations from God or Spiritual Gifts. Stephen was accosted by some of the militant Jews. They were not able to resist his intelligence, inspiration and wisdom the Spirit provided to him. So they brought forward false charges against him. He was brought before the Sanhedrin probably because he was not an apostle. By this time, I think high-ranking Jews were a little apprehensive about the Apostles and thought they could intimidate a man like Stephen. Boy were they wrong, he delivered a most learned history of the Jews leading up to Jesus with divine inspiration. Then he rebuked them for being stiff-necked and resisting the Holy Spirit. **AB Acts 7:51-52. You stubborn and stiff-necked people, still heathenish and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are always actively resisting the Holy Spirit. As your forefathers (were) so you (are and so you do)! Which of the prophets did your forefathers not persecute? And they slew those who proclaimed beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you now have betrayed and murdered.** Resistance such as this to the Holy Spirit has been shown throughout church history. The Jews couldn't take this, so they dragged him out of city and stoned him. Notice they took him out of city to get away from the Romans. Incidentally there was a Pharisee named Saul, who held some of their coats.

This incident, which occurred about 35 A.D., caused consternation among the ekklesia in Jerusalem. It caused many of the disciples to scatter throughout Judea and Samaria. One of the deacons named Philip went to Samaria. Remember this was the land of the Samaritans which was hated by the devout Jew. When the Jews rebuilt the Temple in 515 B.C. they would not let the Samaritans participate. Of

course, Jesus had previously ministered to them, so Phillip decided to go there with the Gospel. **AB Acts 8:5-6 & 12. Philip (the deacon, not the apostle) went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed the Christ, the Messiah, to them (the people). And great crowds of people with one accord listened to and heeded what was said by Philip, as they heard him and watched the miracles and wonders which he kept performing (from time to time). . . But when they believed the good news (the Gospel) about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, as Philip preached it, they were baptized, both men and women.** The Samaritans readily accepted the Gospel and some of these were the one's Jesus ministered to at the beginning of His ministry. Remember, they had Agoras and Stoas even in Samaria, so the ekklesia could be used in Jesus' name to spread the Gospel.

When the Body of Christ in Jerusalem heard the Samaritans had received Christ, they sent Peter and John to see if they had received the Holy Spirit. **AB Acts 8:14-17. Now when the apostles (special messengers) at Jerusalem heard that (the country of Samaria had accepted and welcomed the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, And they came down and prayed for them that the Samaritans might receive the Holy Spirit; For He had not yet fallen upon any of them, but they had only been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then (the apostles) laid their hands on them one by one and they received the Holy Spirit.** By now the Apostles had realized the ekklesia-church must have spirit-filled members. So they saw to it that these people were empowered by the Spirit. When the Spirit fell on them, I'm sure they showed the same signs of being filled with the Holy Spirit as at the beginning.

In Jerusalem there was a growing conflict between the believers in Jesus, the participants in the ekklesia and the Jewish establishment. Remember the couple whose son was healed by Jesus and they were afraid they would be kicked out of their synagogue. There was a man named Saul who was going around to the synagogues and ferreting out the believers of Jesus and putting them in chains. It was on such a mission to the city of Damascus in about 37 A.D., that Saul saw a bright light. This light, brighter than the sun, completely engulfed him

and those traveling with him. **AB Acts 26:14-15.** *And when we have all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice in the Hebrew tongue, saying to me, Saul, Saul, why do you continue to persecute Me-to harass and trouble and molest Me? It is dangerous and turns out badly for you to keep kicking against the goads-(that is,) to offer vain and perilous resistance. And I said, Who are You, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus Whom you are persecuting.* Here again, we see the power of God put some people on the ground (slain in the Spirit) Jesus told him to get up, "I have some important things for you to do." This story from Acts 26 was the third time in Acts that Paul related his testimony. Paul was taken to a man in Damascus named Ananias. Ananias, a devout Jew, was obviously a believer and probably a member of the ekklesia of Jesus in Damascus. It had been revealed to him about Paul so he prayed for Paul's sight and gave a prophecy that Paul would be Jesus' witness unto all men. He then told Paul to rise and be baptized. Ananias called on Jesus' name to wash away his sins (Acts 22). After this Paul was on his way and would become the greatest of all men for Christ.

Even though there was a conflict with the Jewish establishment, the ekklesia-church continued to grow throughout the land. **AB Acts 9:31-32.** *So the church throughout the whole of Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was edified-growing in wisdom, virtue and piety-and walking in the respect and reverential fear of the Lord and in the consolation and exhortation of the Holy Spirit, continued to increase and was multiplied. Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he went down also to the saints who lived at Lydda.* Peter set out from Jerusalem to towns like Lydda, Plain of Sharon and Joppa on the coast. There were stoas and colonnades in these places so the ekklesia-church could come together and miracles happened because of the Gifts. A lady named Dorcas was raised from the dead in Joppa and many believed because of this miracle.

During this time, around 40 A.D., Paul was introduced to the ekklesia-church in Jerusalem by Barnabas. He proved to be too controversial for them because of his past, so they sent him to his hometown, Tarsus in Cecilia. About 41 A.D., while Peter was in Joppa a divinely orchestrated meeting occurred between him and a Gentile named

Cornelius. He had venerated God and had a visit from an angel who told him God had answered his prayers. Peter at the same time had a vision from God telling him if God said something was clean then that thing was clean. So as God planned, Peter received a Word of Knowledge. **AB Acts 10:19-20.** *And while Peter was earnestly revolving the vision in his mind and meditating on it, the (Holy) Spirit said to him, Behold, three men are looking for you! Get up and go below and accompany them without any doubt (about its legality) or any discrimination or hesitation, for I have sent them.* These men told Peter that Cornelius, a Roman Centurion, had sent them because an "angel told him to send for you and act upon what you had to say."

Well, it didn't take long for Peter to understand what God was telling him. Peter went with them up the coast to Caesarea and met with Cornelius. **AB Acts 10:34.** *And Peter opened his mouth and said: Most certainly and thoroughly I now perceive and understand that God shows no partiality and is no respecter of persons.* He then preached the Gospel to Cornelius and his household. **AB Acts 10:44-48.** *While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all who were listening to the message. And the believers from among the circumcised (the Jews) who came with Peter were surprised and amazed, because the free gift of the Holy Spirit had been bestowed and poured out largely even on the Gentiles. For they heard them talking in (unknown) languages and extolling and magnifying God. Then Peter asked, Can any one forbid or refuse water for baptizing these people, seeing that they have received the Holy Spirit just as we have? And he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Then they begged him to stay on there for some days.* Peter had seen and heard this before and he knew full well that these Gentiles had received salvation and were to be a part of Jesus' ekklesia-church. The Apostles and brethren throughout Judea were excited that the Gentiles had received and accepted the Word of God. However, a group back in Jerusalem was not so sure. **AB Acts 11:2.** *So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party (the Jewish Christians) found fault with him-separating themselves from him in a hostile spirit, opposing and disputing and contending with him--* As time goes on, this group will be more and more of a problem for the ekklesia-church.

Meanwhile those brethren that scattered because of Stephen's death had traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch in Syria. They were only preaching to the Jews in the stoas of the public places. But at Antioch, they had already included the Gentiles. ***AB Acts 11:20-22. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on returning to Antioch spoke to the Greeks also, proclaiming (to them) the good news, the Lord Jesus. And the presence of the Lord was with them with power, so that a great number (learned) to believe-to adhere to and trust in and rely on the Lord-and turned and surrendered themselves to Him. The rumors of this came to the ears of the church (assembly) in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. (FIGURE 6)***

Barnabas was sent much like Peter and John were sent to Samaria. ***AB Acts 11:23. When he arrived and saw what grace (favor) God was bestowing upon them, he was full of joy; and he continuously exhorted-warned, urged and encouraged-them all to cleave unto and remain faithful and devoted to the Lord with (resolute and steady) purpose of heart.*** What Barnabas found was truly exciting. This ekklesia-church had lots of revelation from God and as Luke said, they had Grace (favor) from God. All the Gifts of the Holy Spirit were active in Antioch. They were obviously doing the same thing that was happening in Jerusalem. Barnabas, full of joy, continuously preached encouragement in their ekklesia-church.

It's interesting; this ekklesia was started by people who had only five years before witnessed Stephen's martyrdom in Jerusalem. Although there were no Apostles involved, the ekklesia in Antioch was well on its way only twelve years after Pentecost. By this time, the ekklesia-church had put Jerusalem on its ear, spread the Gospel throughout Judea, Samaria, Phoenicia, Syria and the island of Cyprus. These Christians were meeting in public places and proclaiming Jesus as their Lord and Savior while performing miracles such as healing, prophesies and casting out demons. The Romans were watching all this and comparing Jesus' ekklesia to the Jewish Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was stuffy heavy on the management with long robes, and spent their time judging and condemning people. The ekklesia on the

other hand was made up of ordinary people who loved each other and showed the power of God.

Peter, the apostle, was certainly not the boss of this group although he was an integral part along with John, Stephen, Phillip and Barnabas. What was happening, the ekklesia-church was operating by and through the revelations from God just like Jesus said it would. **AB Matt 16:18. And I tell you, you are Peter (Petros, masculine, a large piece of rock), and on this rock (petra, feminine, a huge rock like Gibraltar) I will build My church and the gates of Hades (the powers of the infernal region) shall not overpower it-or be strong to its detriment, or hold out against it.** At this point Jesus' ekklesia with the revelations from God was very active in many areas. Jesus meant for his ekklesia to be guided by ordinary people. **AB Luke 10:21. In that same hour He rejoiced and glorified in the Holy Spirit and said, I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have concealed these things (relating to salvation) from the wise and understanding and learned and revealed them to babes-the childish, unskilled and untaught. Yes, Father, for such was Your gracious will and choice and good pleasure.** He had warned the disciples about the leadership. **AB Matt 20:25-26. And Jesus called them to Him and said, You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men hold them in subjection, tyrannizing over them. Not so shall it be among you; but whoever wished to be great among you must be servants,** and in **AB Matt 23:8-11. But you are not to be called rabbi (teacher), for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. And do not call any one (in the church) on earth father, for you have one Father, Who is in heaven. And you must not be called masters (leaders), for you have one Master (Leader), the Christ. He who is greatest among you shall be your servant.** The ekklesia-church was all about the "revelations from God" empowering ordinary people in a group effort to spread His Word throughout the world. The ekklesia-church had spread to almost all the southeastern part of the Roman Empire. It's no wonder Jesus said before this generation passes I could come back. The potential was there; however, the drawback was the weakness of man when he left out the Holy Spirit.

Meanwhile back in Jerusalem, Herod was trying to appease the high-ranking Jews and had Apostle John's brother, James killed and Peter arrested in about 44 A.D. While Peter was being guarded by sixteen soldiers, four at a time, to make sure he didn't escape, the ekklesia-Body of Christ was fervently and persistently praying for him. As he was sleeping between two of the soldiers and secured with two chains, an angel appeared and the chains fell off of Peter. The angel said to follow him out of this place. **NIV Acts 12:12. When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.** Peter told them to inform James (brother of Jesus) and the brethren. He then left and went to some other place which was probably Galilee or some place he could lay low for a while. I'm sure the Jews of the Sanhedrin were totally perplexed about this.

Barnabas some three years before had introduced Paul to the brethren in Jerusalem. He remembered that he was the Pharisee of Pharisees and I'm sure thought the ekklesia-church in Antioch could use some of Paul's knowledge of the Old Testament. So he went to Tarsus to find Paul and bring him to Antioch. **AB Acts 11:26. And when he had found him, he brought him back to Antioch. For a whole year they assembled together with and were guests of the church, and instructed a large number of people; and in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.** Paul got to see a lot of action in Antioch. It seemed they possessed all kinds of "revelations from God." They had prophets, inspired teachers and interpreters of the will of God, some of which came from Jerusalem from time to time. This was where Paul received his theology, especially about the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. These were the revelations from God and later on he called them the Gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Body of Christ.

During Paul's time, Antioch had many places for the ekklesia-church to meet because on both sides of the main street there were colonnades or staos for almost one half mile. (FIGURE 6) This ekklesia-church came together and sent Paul and Barnabas on a mission trip. **AB Acts 13:1-3. Now in the church (assembly) at Antioch there were prophets inspired interpreters of the will and purposes of God-and teachers, Barnabas, Symeon who was called Niger (black), Lucius of**

Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Separate now for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Then after fasting and praying they put their hands on them and sent them away. Here we see the ekklesia-church in action with no one in charge. The Holy Spirit simply said through one of the members, "send out Paul and Barnabas for the work I called them." So they obediently left and went down to the coast and caught a ship bound for Cyprus. There they went to a synagogue to preach to the Jews. Paul always went to the synagogues first when he came to a new city. The reason for this was, first to explain that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah and second, the leader of the synagogue always asked someone new, if they had anything to say to the group. Paul always had something to say to the group.

As they passed through the island of Cyprus they met a false prophet named Bar-Jesus. He was closely associated with the Roman proconsul named Sergius Paulus. When Paul witnessed to the proconsul, this false prophet tried to keep the proconsul from accepting the faith. Paul looked him in the eye and said, "The hand of the Lord is upon you and you shall be blind for a time." As a result of this, the proconsul believed and became a Christian. Paul and Barnabas sailed on to Perga and then to Antioch in Pisidia, a Roman outpost many miles inland. **NIV Acts 13:14-15. From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue rulers sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have a message of encouragement for the people, please speak."** This was what Paul expected, so he told them the history of the Jews and how all that led to Jesus whom God had raised from the dead. Here Paul's knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures made the people want more, and they asked him to return the next Sabbath. **AB Acts 13:33. The next Sabbath almost the entire city gathered together to hear the Word of God-concerning the attainment through Christ of salvation in the kingdom of God.**

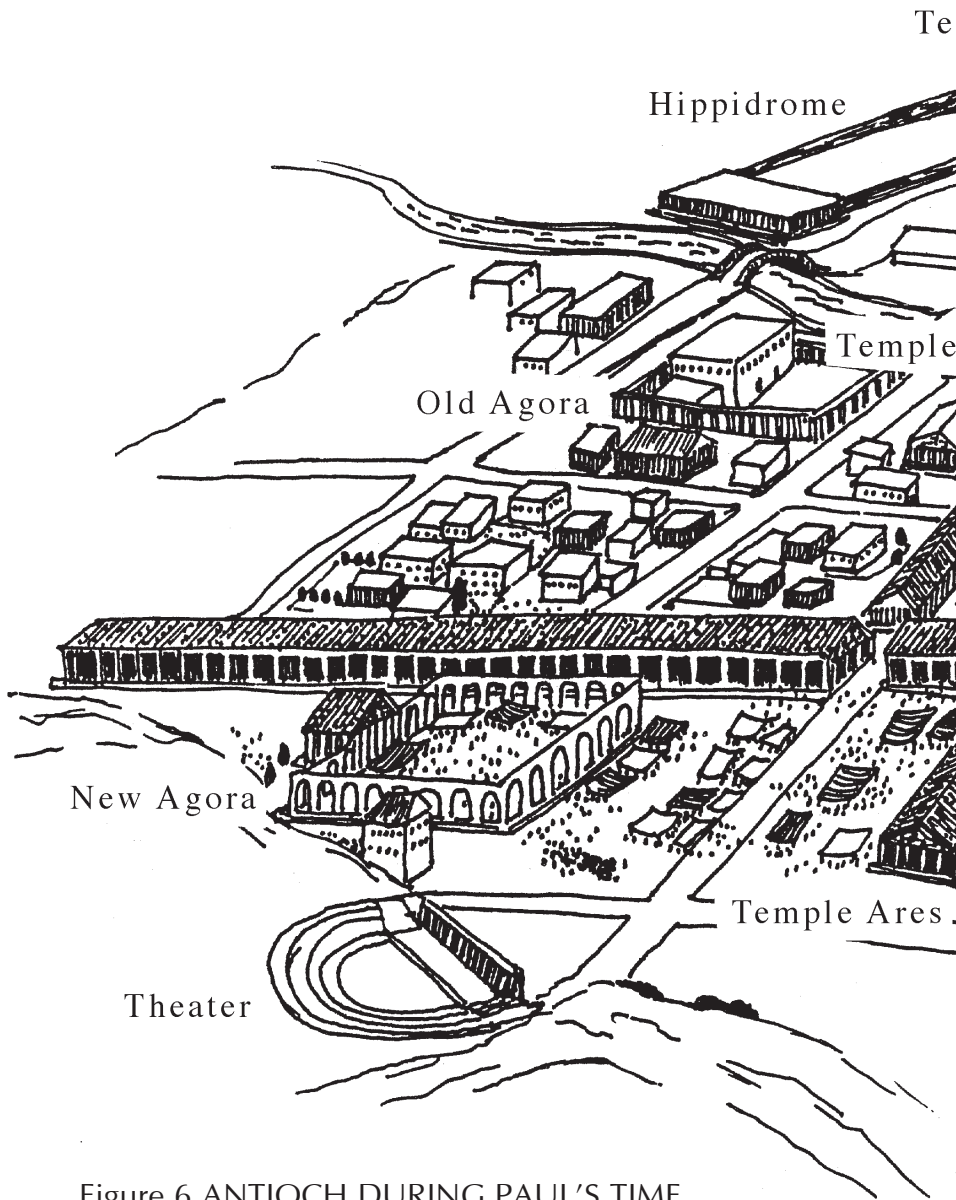


Figure 6 ANTIOCH DURING PAUL'S TIME

Acts 13: 1-3 Now in the church (assembly) at Antioch there were prophets---inspired interpreters of the will and purposes of God--and teachers, Barnabas, Symeon who was called niger (black), Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Separate now for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Then after fasting and praying they put their hands on them and sent them away.

Temple Heracles



Roman Palace



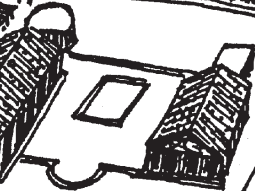
Temples of Apollo



Colonnade
(where ekklesia-church met)



Temple Artemis



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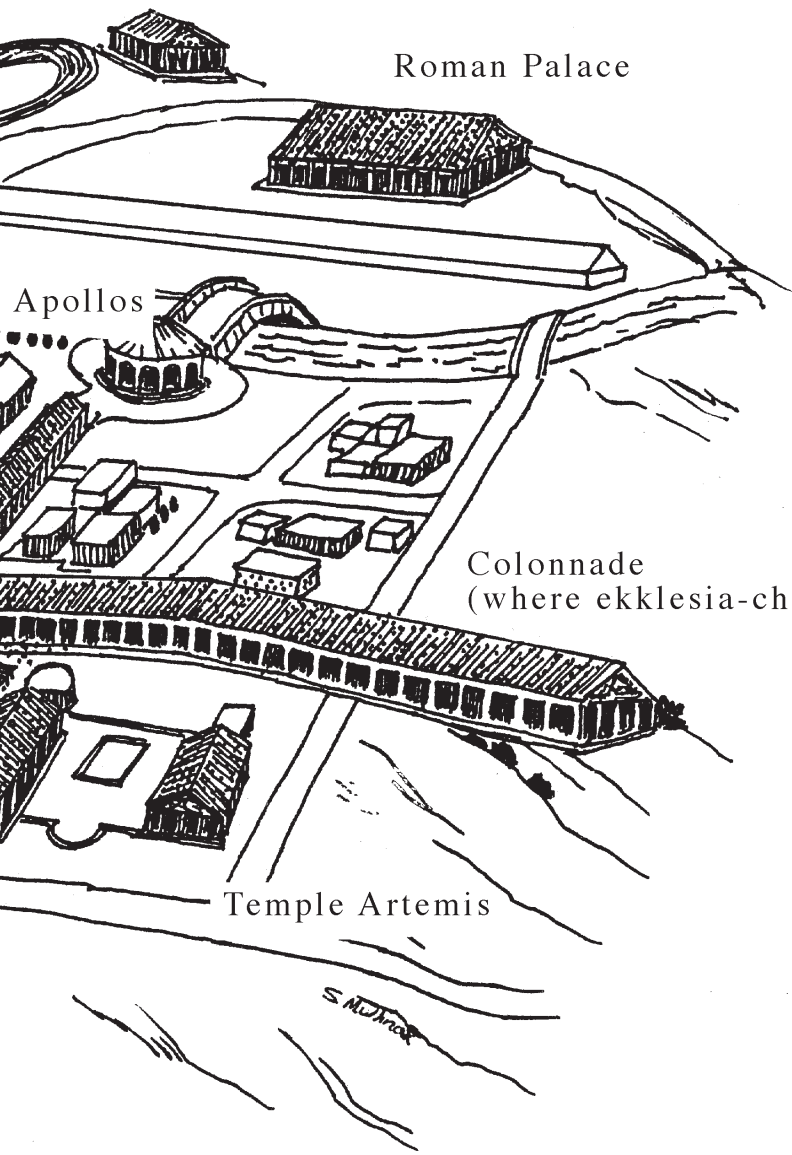




Figure 7 PAUL STONED AT LYSTRA, DISCIPLES PRAY FOR PAUL

AB Acts 14:19-21 But some Jews arrived there from Antioch and Iconium; and having persuaded the people and won them over, they stoned Paul and (afterward) dragged him out of the town, thinking that he was dead. But the disciples formed a circle about him, and he got up and went back into the town; and on the morrow he went on with Barnabas to Derbe. When they had preached the Gospel to that town and made disciples of many of the people, they went back to Lystra and Iconium and Antioch.



The Jews, however, were more concerned with associating with Gentiles than receiving the Word of God. So Paul told them I go to Jews first, but God told me I'm to be a light to the Gentiles. "Behold, we turn to the Gentiles". **AB Acts 13:48-49, 52. And when the Gentiles heard this, they rejoiced and glorified (praised and gave thanks for) the Word of God; and as many as were destined (appointed and ordained) to eternal life believed-adhered to, trusted in and relied on Jesus as the Christ and their Savior. And so the Word of the Lord (concerning eternal salvation through Christ) scattered and spread throughout the region. And the disciples were continually diffused (throughout their souls) with joy and the Holy Spirit.** These disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. The Jews so riled the important men and women of high rank, that Paul and Barnabas had to leave town. They went on to Iconium and at first went to the synagogue. They spoke with such power that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed on Jesus. **NIV Acts 14:3-4. So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders. The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, other with the apostles.** This indicated Paul took his message to the public places or the stoas in Iconium.

These signs and wonders divided the townspeople and the Jews made plans to stone Paul and Barnabas. They again escaped, this time to Lystra, a neighboring town. In Lystra, it seemed Paul went to the public place, first, proclaiming the glad tidings of the Gospel. He ministered in a stoa where a man was healed and the on-looking crowd became excited and declared Paul and Barnabas gods in human form. Paul and Barnabas tried to dissuade them; however, some Jews followed them from Iconium. **AB Acts 14:19-20. But some Jews arrived there from Antioch and Iconium; and having persuaded the people and won them over; they stoned Paul and (afterward) dragged him out of town, thinking he was dead. But the disciples formed a circle about him, and he got up and went back into the town; and on the morrow he went with Barnabas to Derbe.** This was a perfect example of Luke being the master of the understatement. Look what happened here! Paul was stoned to death, at least the people who stoned him thought so, because they dragged him out of town so the

dead body would not pollute the town. (FIGURE 7) After this the disciples formed a circle about him. These were the people who had been ministered to by Paul at Lystra. I'm sure he told them about the healing power of the Holy Spirit, as they had just seen a cripple man healed. All they knew to do was form a circle about him and pray. This they did and Paul got up. In fact, he went back into town; I'm sure showing the people he was not dead. This was definitely a learning experience for Paul because here he was the recipient of the healing power of God through the ekklesia-Body of Christ. These people were not apostles, nor learned men; in fact they had just received the Good News and instructions from Paul. I'm sure Paul felt bullet-proof from here on in his ministry.

After going on to Derbe, Paul and Barnabas retraced their steps back to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch Pisidia. I'm sure all those people had heard what happened. In each of these towns Paul and Barnabas established and strengthened the souls and hearts of disciples and their ekklesia-churches, and appointed elders (older people) to oversee, not to over manage the ekklesia-church. From these towns they went back thru Perga and on to Antioch, their home ekklesia-church. ***AB Acts 14:27-28. Arriving there, they gathered the church together and declared all that God had accomplished with them, and how He had opened to the Gentiles, a door of faith (in Jesus as the Messiah, through Whom we obtain salvation in the kingdom of God). And they stayed no little time with the disciples.*** Notice they had to gather the ekklesia-church together in Antioch. This showed it was a meeting in the stoas and required a word of mouth notice to bring the ekklesia together for a meeting.