

Acts 14

Responses to the Gospel

Jews from Pisidian Antioch who were opposed to the gospel tracked Paul down, following him through a number of towns and villages over 100 miles in order to rile up non-Jews in a distant town and stone Paul. This meant taking off work, travelling at their own expense for about a week, and engaging in illegal and risky behavior to kill a man they obviously hated.

Why do some people object so violently to the good news?

The pattern of responses to the gospel has a certain predictability to it. Responses fall into three general groups:

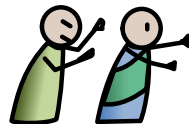
Acceptance: this is rather common among ordinary people, both Jews and Greeks.



Ambivalence: there are some who are intrigued, but hesitate to embrace the gospel, at least for a time; but they are not violently opposed.



Violent Opposition: this seems most often to be the reaction of Jewish religious leaders, who ought to know better. It is their own Messiah they reject.



What motivates such violent opposition?

What response is called for in such situations?

How do we avoid being those who cause persecution?

NOTE: Any theological disagreement can be turned into an issue of salvation/inerrancy/heresy by one who is not a peace-maker.

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Some sage advice was given by Gamaliel when he recommended,

“Stay away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or action is of men, it will be overthrown, but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God” (Acts 5:38-39).