

Acts 13:51

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.

Analysis

But they shook off the dust of their feet against them (ἐκτιναξάμενοι τὸν κονιορτὸν τῶν ποδῶν)—Paul and Barnabas enacted Jesus's instruction from the sending of the Twelve (Luke 9:5) and the Seventy (Luke 10:11). The symbolic act of ektinassō (to shake off thoroughly) declared a solemn witness: the messengers had fulfilled their obligation, and the rejectors now bore full responsibility for refusing God's salvation.

This dramatic gesture testified that Pisidian Antioch's Jewish leaders, despite their covenant privileges, had judged themselves **unworthy of everlasting life** (v. 46). The apostles turned to Iconium, continuing the pattern that would characterize Paul's missionary strategy—proclaim first to Jews, then to Gentiles when rejected. The shaken dust symbolized both judgment and release: the apostles were clean of their blood (Ezekiel 3:18-19).

Historical Context

Pisidian Antioch was a Roman colony in Galatia where Paul preached in the synagogue (13:14-43). After initial interest, jealous Jewish leaders expelled Paul and Barnabas (13:50). Iconium, their next destination, was another major city in south-central Asia Minor along the Via Sebaste. This incident (c. AD 47-48) occurred during Paul's first missionary journey.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. When have you needed to 'shake the dust off' and move forward after faithful witness was rejected?
2. How does this gesture demonstrate both the seriousness of rejecting the gospel and the freedom of the messenger?

Interlinear Text

οἱ	δὲ	ἐκτιναξάμενοι	τὸν	κονιορτὸν	τῶν	ποδῶν	αὐτοὺς
G3588	But	they shook off	G3588	the dust	G3588	feet	them
G1161		G1621		G2868		G4228	G846
ἐπ'	αὐτοὺς	ἥλθον	εἰς	Ἴκόνιον			
against	them	and came	unto	Iconium			
G1909	G846	G2064	G1519	G2430			

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 10:14 (Parallel theme): And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

Acts 18:6 (Parallel theme): And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

Luke 9:5 (Parallel theme): And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.

Acts 14:21 (Parallel theme): And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch,

Acts 14:1 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.

Acts 14:19 (Parallel theme): And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

Mark 6:11 (Parallel theme): And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

Acts 16:2 (Parallel theme): Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.