

service of the Lord as directed by the Holy Ghost everywhere they have went. So here in ACTS 14:4 we note that Paul and Barnabas for the first time are called "apostles."

The full force of the negative note hinted at in verse 4 is fully manifest in verse 5. The unbelieving Jews of verse 2 have stirred up the Gentiles to the point where it is stated in ACTS 14:5 *...there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them,...* . The word "assault" itself is only found twice in scripture (ESTHER 8:11 and ACTS 14:5), and is defined by Webster's Dictionary as a violent attack, either physical or verbal. Obviously the assault referred to here in verse 5 is a physical assault for their intent was to have Paul and Barnabas stoned! The Greek word translated "despitefully" is also rarely used (five times) in the New Testament scripture, and refers to murderers in MATTHEW 22:6 & 7. This then was the plot of the Jews with their rulers, to infuriate the heathen Gentiles against Paul and Barnabas and lead them to the point where they were with mob violence seeking to kill the apostles. However keep in mind that Paul and Barnabas were on this missionary journey *"...sent forth by the Holy Ghost..."* {ACTS 13:4}, and they were just getting a good introductory start with the plans that God had for them.

Iconium to Lystra and Derbe

So we read in verse 6 that Paul and Barnabas were aware of the plot against them at Iconium, and they fled. This also falls in line the instructions that Jesus gave his disciples in MATTHEW 10. MATTHEW 10:11 *And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. 12 And when ye come into an house, salute it. 13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 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. 15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city. 16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. 17 But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; 18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. 19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. 20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. 21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. 22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. 23 But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another:...* . ACTS 14:6 & 7 reads: *They (Paul and Barnabas) were ware of it, (the plot against them at Iconium) and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about: 7 And there they preached the gospel.*

Lystra and Derbe were cities of Lycaonia. Lycaonia was a region some 20 miles long and 13 wide that some historians claim was erected into a separate province by Caesar Augustus. Other historians claim it was part of the Province of Galatia, though in another political district called a Regio, to which was granted a tetrarchy. Lycaonia was bordered by the Provinces of Galatia on the north, Pisidia and Cilicia on the south, Cappadocia on the east, and Phrygia on the west. Lycaonia consisted of fourteen cities of which three are mentioned in scripture: Iconium, Lystra and Derbe. We have already mentioned something of Iconium, which was the most famous city of Lycaonia. Lycaonia for the most part was a dreary plain, void of trees due to the lack of much fresh water, probably much like the plains of eastern Colorado and Wyoming. It was a high table land suited okay for sheep pasture in. Lycaonia means land of Lycan, which translates to us "wolf land," which makes some sense, for usually where there are sheep, there are wolves. Not only is this true in the natural sense, but also in the spiritual. Often times in His teaching Jesus referred to the believers as sheep, and warned of non-believers comparing them to wolves. For example in MATTHEW 7:15 we read these words of Jesus: *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.* Paul to warned of evil men being like grievous wolves

stating in ACTS 20:29 *For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.* It was a wolf like attack from men that Paul would later experience here at Lystra, these wolves dragging him out of the city after stoning him {see ACTS 14:19}. We mentioned above that Lycaonia consisted of fourteen cities, and again the number fourteen we learned in our NUMBERS study has to do with DELIVERANCE or SALVATION. Lystra and Derbe were cities of Lycaonia that offered DELIVERANCE for Paul and Barnabas from those pursuers of Iconium. Also the scripture records two famous people that had accepted SALVATION in Lystra and Derbe. Timothy being one as noted in ACTS 16:1 *Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus,...* and Gaius of Derbe being the other, as noted in ACTS 20:4 *And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.* Derbe means “tanner: tanner of skin: coverer with skin,” and reminds us of the time when God first slew animals to make a covering with skins to cover sinful Adam and Eve. This is found in GENESIS 3:21, which reads: *Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.* GENESIS 3:21 pointed to the time when Jesus Christ would be slain for sinful mankind the one sacrifice for sins for ever. These next two scriptures summarize this fact. EPHESIANS 5:2 *And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.* HEBREWS 10:12 *But this man, (Christ Jesus) after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;... .* Lystra means “ransoming,” and this too points us to Jesus Christ as noted in these next two verses: MATTHEW 20:28 *Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.* 1 TIMOTHY 2:6 *Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*

Paul and Barnabas ...fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about: And there they preached the gospel. {ACTS 14:6 & 7}. There are some things to take note of here. Everywhere that the Apostle Paul went he first went into the synagogue of the Jews, a fact which we have mentioned many times before. Luke, the author of the book of ACTS, even makes a point to note this as one of Paul's “manners,” stating it like this in ACTS 17:1-3: *Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: 2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, 3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.* Here at Lystra there was not a synagogue of the Jews, for had there been a synagogue of the Jews at Lystra, Paul would have gone there first to preach. The same can be said for Derbe. This indicates to us that there was not a significant population of Jews at Lystra, or Derbe, for had there been a number of Jews in these locations, surely they would of had a synagogue, just like they did in every other city where there was a significant population of Jews. ACTS 16:1-3 gives us some history on one of the Jews from that area, Timothy, and infers that travel was necessary by these Jews in order to fellowship with other Jews. ACTS 16:1 *Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: 2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. 3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.* Note how Timothy (Timotheus) was well known by those of Derbe and Lystra, where there wasn't a Jewish synagogue, and by those brethren of Iconium, where there was a Jewish synagogue. Obviously Timothy's mother took Timothy to Iconium and to the Jewish synagogue there as often as she could so as to familiarize Timothy in the Jewish customs which his mother grew up knowing. Thus when Paul and Barnabas arrive at Lystra, which is where we read of them immediately next preaching after departing Iconium, ...there they preached the gospel..., however the location where they preached isn't exactly told. The preaching of any Jew at such a remote location would attract the attention of fellow Jews, as well as curious Gentiles, and so we assume it was during one of these occasions that Timothy's mother brought young Timothy to hear Paul preach, and there they became believers. 2 TIMOTHY 1:5 records Paul's recollection of this time, stating: *When I call to*

remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also. Obviously Paul got well acquainted with Timothy and his family during this first visit to Lystra and Derbe and the regions round about.

Next note that Paul and Barnabas continued preaching the gospel, even though they had been run out of Antioch in Pisidia and Iconium for preaching the gospel. Here in this 14th chapter of ACTS we note the Christian character of both Paul and Barnabas, but especially Paul. In ACTS 14:4 both Paul and Barnabas are called "apostles." Isn't this an interesting place in scripture for the Holy Ghost to inspire, and make note of such a promotion? Paul and Barnabas have gone from being prophets and teachers (see ACTS 13:1) to being called "apostles." Our natural thinking then would make us think that Paul and Barnabas were now some kind of well promoted "big shots," and would next take their missionary on to bigger and better places; cities and towns with more people in them than Antioch in Pisidia, or Iconium. But once again we are reminded that God's ways are not mans ways, nor are His thoughts on a par with mans thinking process. ISAIAH 55: 6-11 states it like this: *Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: 7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. 8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. 10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: 11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.* With a heart attitude in tune with the leading of the Holy Ghost, Paul and Barnabas, now with the title of "apostle" tied to their names, move on to a smaller couple of cities (Lystra and Derbe), *And there they preached the gospel.* {ACTS 14:7}. The characteristics that we need to take note of here concerning Paul and Barnabas is that they were willing to humbly do the Lord's work, and not to seek a promotion for themselves. They were in the building business, that is the Lord's building business, and were busy doing their appointed work of laying the foundation upon which this Gentile church age was and is to be built, and of course, as noted in 1 CORINTHIANS 3:11, that foundation is Jesus Christ. 1 CORINTHIANS 3:11 *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* Note these important scriptures concerning the Lord's building business. ROMANS 15:20 *Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:...* 1 CORINTHIANS 3:9 *For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.* 10 *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.* 11 *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* EPHESIANS 2:10 *For we are his workmanship, (a product of His building business, and a work in progress) created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. ...* 13 *But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.* 14 *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;* 15 *Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;* 16 *And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:* 17 *And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.* 18 *For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.* 19 *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;* 20 *And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;* (HEBREWS 3:1 *Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;...*) 21 *In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:* 22 *In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.* Now as Christians we are individual members of the body of Christ, a fact which

the Apostle Paul stated like this in 1 CORINTHIANS 12:27 *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.* To us members in particular of the body of Christ He sent apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, and this fact is again noted by the Apostle Paul in EPHESIANS 4:11 and 12, which reads: *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying (the building up) of the body of Christ:...* In this present church age who is our Apostle? Again Paul in his gospel has given us the answer, which is found in ROMANS 11:13 *For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:...* Who made Paul our Apostle? Again the Apostle Paul himself answers this question in many different scriptures. ROMANS 1:1 *Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,...* 1 CORINTHIANS 1:1 *Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God,...* 2 CORINTHIANS 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,.* GALATIANS 1:1 *Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;).* EPHESIANS 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,...* COLOSSIANS 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,...* 1 TIMOTHY 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope;...* 1 TIMOTHY 2:7 *Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity (truthfulness).* 2 TIMOTHY 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,...* 2 TIMOTHY 1:11 *Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.* TITUS 1:1 *Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;...* So we see that God made Paul the Apostle of the Gentiles, and furthermore Jesus Christ personally gave him a gospel message for this present church age. GALATIANS 1:11 *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.* In this present church age it is our enlightened privilege to learn and to know Paul's gospel, and furthermore we need to know Paul's gospel for the following two reasons: ROMANS 2:16 *In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.* ROMANS 16:25 *Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,....* One of the greatest mysteries still hidden from most of God's people yet plainly stated in Paul's gospel record is the mystery of the Bride of Christ. Paul in his building process of explaining his gospel to us, revealed the mystery of the Bride of Christ in these following scriptures: EPHESIANS 5:21 *Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. 22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.* So far in this portion of our lesson we should make note that not only is Jesus Christ the foundation upon which His church is to be built (1 CORINTHIANS 3:11), but he is the head of the church (EPHESIANS 5:23), the head of the body of Christ, and we are individual members in particular (1 CORINTHIANS 12:27). To further explain this mystery of the Bride of Christ found in Paul's gospel we need to understand the comparison between the two Adam's found in 1 CORINTHIANS 15. 1 CORINTHIANS 15:44 *...There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. 45 And so it*

is written, *The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. ...47 The first man (Adam) is of the earth, earthy: the second man (Adam) is the Lord from heaven. ...1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: ... 20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 21 For since by man (Adam) came death, by man (the second man Adam, that is Jesus Christ) came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.* Thus we should further note the comparison between the two Adams: The first Adam being the natural man Adam, and the last Adam being none other than the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven. 1 TIMOTHY 2:13 notes: *For Adam was first formed, then Eve.* Eve was the bride of Adam, Adam's wife. Jesus Christ too, like the first man Adam, will have a wife, as noted above in EPHESIANS 5:32. Recall from GENESIS 2 how Eve was formed: GENESIS 2:21 *And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made (built, builded) he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.* The wife of Jesus Christ, like the wife of Adam, will come out of the sleeping body of Christ, (the church), a small closest to the heart rib portion of full overcoming Saints, and she will be called the Bride of Christ. Certainly in this present church age this fact has remained a mystery, but not all of Adam became Eve, only a small rib portion. No wonder Paul writes to us in 1 THESSALONIANS 5:6 *Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.* All of this has been said in connection with the fact that the Apostle Paul was in the building business; that is the business of establishing and building upon the foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ, a church subject to Christ, whom is its head. To the Ephesian elders spoke these words of the Apostle Paul: ACTS 20:28 *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.* These same words of warning need to be heeded by the pastors and teachers and evangelists preaching the gospel to His church in the world today! One final verse from ROMANS tells us Paul's motive in going to these remote places preaching the gospel that was given him to preach, and this verse is found in ROMANS 7:4 *Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.*

Having now examined the character and motive of Paul and Barnabas on their missionary journey(s), let's again note and marvel at the sometimes apparent strange leadings of the Holy Ghost. Paul and Barnabas had recently been preaching to some record crowds. Nearly the whole city had come out to hear them at Antioch in Pisidia {see ACTS 13:44}, and in Iconium the "multitude of the city" must have heard them preach also, for the city was divided because of their preaching. Furthermore they had now been called "apostles" for the first time. Had their focus been on themselves and their mission they never would of humbled themselves to go to the smaller so called insignificant cities or little towns of Lystra and Derbe. However they weren't focused on their own agenda; they weren't focused on quantity for themselves; rather they were focused on doing the will of the Lord, thus following the leading of the Holy Ghost they were lead to some humbling places, where they found some quality Saints, such as the family of Timothy (who later himself became a church Apostle), and Gaius of Derbe, a renowned man in scripture. After years of experience as a well traveled Apostle, the Apostle Paul wrote in PHILIPPIANS 4:12 *I know both how to be abased, (to be humble; to be ranked below others who are honored or rewarded) and I know how to abound: (to abound, overflow; to be abundantly furnished with, to have in abundance) every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to*

suffer need. So again we note that the mission that Paul and Barnabas were on was not to win a popularity contest everywhere they went, but rather they had been separated by the Holy Ghost for the work that the Lord had called them to do. {See again ACTS 13:2}. They were now sent to the humbling cities of "wolf land," which is again what Lycaonia translates to. Lystra and Derbe were for the most part Gentile cities. Brother Copley notes that to the Gentile crowd Paul and Barnabas would preach with a different approach than they did to the Jews. The Jews were familiar with Old Testament scripture, thus when preaching to the Jews Paul and Barnabas would often quote Old Testament scripture. To the Gentile's however Paul and Barnabas would announce Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, and the Saviour of men, and they would do so without especially trying to prove these facts with Old Testament scripture.

ACTS 14:8-10 points out that the Lord confirmed His message by healing an impotent Gentile man. ACTS 14:8 *And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: 9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, 10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.* There are several thoughts to point out concerning this portion of scripture. First of all let's consider for a moment the ministry of Paul and Barnabas on this missionary journey. Recall that ACTS 14:3 pointed out that while they were at Iconium for a long time speaking and preaching boldly in the Lord, the Lord gave testimony unto the word of His grace, and granted untold signs and wonders to be done by their hands. Miracles. Many miracles were done by the hands of the Apostles through the power of the Holy Ghost through out all the book of ACTS. To the Apostles miracles were just a part of their everyday ministry; a result of their being full of the Holy Ghost, and their preaching the gospel in the power of the Holy Ghost. In this missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas an untold number of miracles has followed them all along the way, but most of these were not allowed of the Holy Ghost to be recorded by Luke lest the focus of the reader turn from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ unto the performance of miracles. Miracles are a result of HEBREWS 11 type faith. That is to say miracles are the impossible results obtained by believing that with God all things are possible. The last part of MATTHEW 19:26 reads: *...with God all things are possible.* LUKE 1:37 tells us: *For with God nothing shall be impossible.* It was by faith in Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, and in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ that these many untold miracles were allowed to be done by the hands of the Apostles. One of these many miracles is recorded for us here in this portion of scripture that we just read in ACTS 14:8-10. Why were not more of these miracles recorded in scripture? JOHN 21:25 probably gives us the best answer: *And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.* I believe that the few miracles that are recorded for us (especially in the book of ACTS) are recorded for the unusual results surrounding the miracle itself.

Let's examine ACTS 14:8 a little closer: *And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:...* Again let's consider what we said earlier about Lystra. Lystra means "ransoming," and this too points us to Jesus Christ as noted in these next two verses: MATTHEW 20:28 *Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.* 1 TIMOTHY 2:6 *Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.* So we see that Jesus Christ gave His life a ransom for all, for as many who would believe on Him. Further we read this of Jesus Christ in the following two verses: ISAIAH 53:5 *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.* 1 PETER 2:24 *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.* This "ransoming" power of Jesus Christ is about to be displayed in a man there at Lystra, who never had walked, a cripple from birth, and powerless in his feet.

Several examples in scripture are left for us of physically lame people who were healed. Both in MATTHEW 11:5 and in LUKE 7:22 we have an account of the time when John the Baptist, who was now in prison, sending two of his followers to ask Jesus if He really was Jesus. And in LUKE 7:22 here is Jesus answer to them: *Then Jesus answering*

said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. How many of the blind were healed, and how many of the lame were healed we are not told, but obviously more than one, for there are also other examples of such healings. For example in MATTHEW 15 we read: 29 And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there. 30 And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them: 31 Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel. Again the number that were healed here is not mentioned, but obviously more than one. In JOHN 5 we find yet another example specifically of an impotent (lame) man being healed. JOHN 5:2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. 3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. 4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. 5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? 7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. 8 Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. 9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. Next going to the book of ACTS we find Peter and John, who recently on the day of Pentecost having been filled with the power of the Holy Ghost, performing in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, a miracle to yet another lame man. ACTS 3:1 Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. 2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; 3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. 4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. 5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. 6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. 7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God: 10 And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. 11 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. This miracle precipitated much of the action that we read of in ACTS 3 and 4. Peter and John were then called in before the Jewish Sanhedrin, and the following events took place: ACTS 4:5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, 6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, 9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; 10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. 11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. 12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. 13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. 14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with

them, they could say nothing against it. 15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. 17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. 18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. 21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done. 22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed. ACTS 5 further records this of the ministry of the Kingdom Apostles: 12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. 13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. 14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) 15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. 16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one. In ACTS 8 we read of the ministry of Philip, and contemporary of Stephen, and verses 5 through 8 records: 5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. 6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. 8 And there was great joy in that city. So we have noted many miracles in scripture of those that were lame who were healed before this crippled man of Lystra.

ACTS 14:8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: 9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, 10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. The Holy Spirit is careful here to have Luke in verse 8 note three things about this certain man at Lystra: (1) he was impotent in his feet; (2) he was a cripple from birth; and (3) he never had walked. There then should be no question in our mind that this man was lame, for we have his crippled condition explained to us three distinct times in verse 8. If you look up the Greek word translated "impotent" in the Strongs Concordance you will find it is number 102, and is used ten times in our King James version translating into the following English words: impossible (6 times); impotent (1 time); could not do (1 time); weak (1 time); and not possible (1 time), for a total usage of ten times in the New Testament. The number ten we learned in our NUMBERS study has to do with RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO ABILITY. This crippled man at Lystra is another classic example of RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO ABILITY. We noted this fact in our NUMBERS study concerning the number ten: "The Christians ability is only limited by his faith, for "without faith it is impossible to please " God, and the "just shall live by faith, " {HEBREWS 11:6 and 10:38}. Our responsibility as man is to believe in God, and His ability, thus in so doing God becomes responsible to man." This impotent man at Lystra seems to have been worse off than the other crippled and lame ones we mentioned earlier, for his lame condition carries with it the thought of "impossible," meaning he had always been incapable of ever walking; this was a condition he was born with, and he had never walked; walking to him was an impossibility. This is the kind of impossible situations and circumstances which God specializes in. Again the last part of MATTHEW 19:26 reads: ...with God all things are possible. And LUKE 1:37 again tells us: For with God nothing shall be impossible. The New American Bible translates a statement from God in the last part of JEREMIAH 32:27 this way: is anything impossible to me? {See also GENESIS 18:14}. HEBREWS 11 is full of impossible situations, all of which God handled with no problem. This impotent man of Lystra certainly didn't pose a problem to God, so God, after seeing this crippled mans simple faith, healed him.

Let's notice some typical teaching here in the book of ACTS. In chapter 3 and 4 we read of an crippled man, lame from his mothers womb, healed at the gate called Beautiful before the temple in Jerusalem. Brother Copley notes that the healing of this lame man was an object lesson to all of Israel of what God was about to do for them as a nation, if they only would have received Jesus. The fact that this beggardly man was lame illustrates Israel's utter helplessness after some 1500 years of tutorage under the law, as pointed out in GALATIANS 3:21-25, which reads: *Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. 22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. 23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. 24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.* ROMANS 6:14 tells us in part: *...ye are not under the law, but under grace.* Brother Copley notes that when Christ came, the Law, the tutor, or school-master, was no longer needed. The Law could not give life, nor sustain life. The Law could only chide, correct, curb and chastise its pupils until Christ should come. The Law cannot make people walk uprightly, leap and shout for joy, nor could the law heal the sick and alleviate pain. The Law only further illustrates the crippled condition that Israel as a nation was in. The lame man's wonderful healing in ACTS 3 foreshadows the healing of the whole nation of Israel, when Jesus comes again, and the nation Israel is born at once as foretold in ISAIAH 66:8. { ISAIAH 66:8 *Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once?*}. At that time the whole nation Israel will be healed, like the healed lame man, and leap and praise God, for they will accept the Christ whom they have as a nation rejected these twenty centuries. In that day they will gladly acknowledge Jesus to be the Son of God, the Holy One and the Just, the Prince of Life, whom their father's killed. {See ACTS 3:14 & 15 and 13:27}. His name thru faith in His name will give them perfect soundness in soul and body. Brother Copley goes on to note that in the 7th chapter of ACTS, after about seven more years of Israel as a nation rejecting Christ, we find Jesus standing at the right hand of God, ready to return and be Israel's king if they only would have welcomed Him. This was at the end of Stephen's sermon, which was addressed specifically to those of the Jewish Sanhedrin. Instead they "stopped their ears" to what Stephen had to say to them, and as a nation again they were in essence rejecting Jesus. Not to long a time passes by and Saul of Tarsus (Paul) is arrested by Jesus on the road to Damascus, and told that he was to be a minister and a witness to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ Jesus. {See ACTS 26:16-18}. After a personal training period of time by the Lord Jesus Christ, Saul of Tarsus becomes the Apostle Paul and reaches out to both the Jew and the Gentile, but the Jews, for the most part, rejected his gospel message. The nation Israel wasn't any better off than Elymas the sorcerer {see ACTS 13:6-12}, who, by the power of the Holy Ghost, was left blinded by the preaching of the Apostle Paul. Brother Copley notes again that the blindness of Elymas is typical of Israel's religious blindness for this age. Next we find Paul in Antioch in Pisidia, where the rejecting Jews are told: *It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.* {ACTS 13:46}. It is to the lowly impossibly spiritually crippled heathen Gentiles of Lystra where we now find Paul and Barnabas preaching. These people were a group of spiritually crippled, dead in trespasses and sins {EPHESIANS 2:1} group, who had never had walked with the Lord, nor had they ever even heard of the Lord. Brother Copley notes that the physical impotency of that man in Lystra expresses the inward impotency of all mankind. All men are crippled in their feet from birth. None have ever walked uprightly before God since Adam and Eve stumbled and fell. ROMANS 3:23 tells us: *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.* 1 CORINTHIANS 15:22 further tells us: *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* Then 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 states: *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* EPHESIANS 1:7 tells us why this is: *...we have*

redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;... EPHESIANS 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; ...5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;.) ROMANS 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. COLOSSIANS 2:6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him. And so we see the picture of how it is that an impossibly spiritually crippled soul that we are born with can be made wholly alive in Christ Jesus, and take our first steps in walking with Him. We can not expect to run for the prize if we haven't first learned to walk with Him. Again this hopelessly crippled man at Lystra pictures to us the utter hopelessness of all mankind without Christ Jesus in their hearts and lives.

ACTS 14:8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: 9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, 10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. In verse 9 we find that this hopelessly crippled man "heard Paul speak." How many times he heard Paul speak we are not told, but quiet probably only this one time. We know from verse 7 that Paul and Barnabas were preaching the gospel, so when this crippled man hears Paul speak we know he was hearing the gospel message being preached. Signs and wonders were done by the Apostles hands at Iconium {see verse 3}, so we would expect no less everywhere they would travel and preach. However those at Lystra didn't know this. Those of Lystra had no expectations of Paul or Barnabas. In 2 CORINTHIANS 4:5 Paul writes what he preached about: For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. In ROMANS 10:8 Paul wrote again what he preached about, which was ...the word of faith, which we preach. Paul then goes on to write in ROMANS 10:9-17 these important words: ROMANS 10: 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. 12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? 17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. No doubt words similar to these were being preached that day at Lystra when the crippled man heard Paul speak. The crippled man having now heard the word of God, received into his heart this wonderful gospel message that Paul was speaking about, ...the word of faith, and believed in his heart what he was hearing. Paul ...stedfastly beholding him... it says perceived that this crippled man ...had faith to be healed. The Greek word translated "healed" here in ACTS 14:9 (number 4982 in our Strongs Concordance) also translates into our English "saved." We note the same Greek word in the following verses: MATTHEW 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. JOHN 3:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. ACTS 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. ACTS 16:30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. ROMANS 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. EPHESIANS 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;). ...8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:... . These are just a few examples of the scriptures showing that the Greek word translated

"healed" here in ACTS 14:9 also translates into our English "saved." Which is harder for the Lord, to heal a cripple from birth, or to heal a sinner from birth? Both are equally simple for the Lord. Paul *...stedfastly beholding him...* it says perceived that this crippled man *...had faith to be healed,* and as we have just learned, Paul also perceived that this man had faith to be saved. To further emphasize this point let's examine for a moment the phrase the Holy Spirit left for us here: *...stedfastly beholding him...* . The usage of the Greek word translated *stedfastly beholding* is number 816 in the Strongs Concordance, and is used 14 times in scripture. The number 14 again jumps out at us as the number we learned in our NUMBERS study having to do with DELIVERANCE or SALVATION. Certainly this crippled man at Lystra was delivered from his physically crippled condition for *...he leaped and walked...* {ACTS 14:10}, after the Lord healed him. And as we have just learned, this man believed the Lord for his salvation. Quiet possibly this healed crippled man from Lystra may have been one of the "disciples" spoken of at Lystra in ACTS 14:20.

ACTS 14:8 *And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: 9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, 10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.* Next let's examine some thoughts concerning the phrase found in verse 9 about the Apostle Paul in his observing this crippled man, *"...perceiving that he had faith to be healed..."*. In studying this word translated "perceiving" here in verse 9 has its roots in a text we have twice before referred to in this study, and that being ISAIAH 6:9 & 10, which reads: *And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.* Back in ACTS 13:16 in his opening words to those in attendance of his first sermon at Antioch in Pisidia, Paul encouraged the hearers to pay close attention with their ears and to attend to, and consider what is about to be said, with considerable focus as if to give ear to a teaching or a teacher, which in fact is what they would be doing as they listened to Paul preach. Even though Paul strongly encouraged everyone in attendance on this Sabbath day in Antioch in Pisidia to *...give audience... to ...hearken... to ...listen to me...*, all in attendance did not open their heart to receive *...the grace of God that bringeth salvation...* {See TITUS 2:11}. However here at Lystra things were different, and a crippled man heard with his ears, and believed in his heart to receive *...the grace of God that bringeth salvation...*, and be converted, *...and be healed.* {ISAIAH 6:10}. The Lord opened up the very perceptive eyes of faith of the Apostle Paul to the fact that this crippled man had faith to be healed, so without hesitation the Apostle Paul *...Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet.* And immediately without doubt or fear or lack of belief the crippled man, *...being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: ...he leaped and walked.* It was events like this that one day led the Apostle Paul to make this statement unto the Jews at Rome, (found in ACTS 28:28) -- *Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.*

Perceiving also has to do with the thought of "to perceive with the eyes." One of the charges that the Lord Jesus Christ left with Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus was the fact that he was going to be sent unto the Gentiles *...To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me...* {ACTS 26:18}. Certainly the eyes (of faith) of the crippled man were opened here at Lystra, but what were the perceptions of the rest of the people there at Lystra? They saw something different entirely, which is briefly explained in verses 11 and 12. ACTS 14:11 *And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. 12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.* What the superstitious heathen Lycaonian people were looking for, and from their mythological traditions were expecting to see, was the Greek gods appearing unto them in the form of men in order to punish the evil and to reward the good. Paul and Barnabas fit their expectations; their perceptions. Immediately they identified

Barnabas with the Greek god Zeus, whom the Romans called Jupiter, a fatherly figure, the national Greek god and supreme ruler of the heathen world. Rains and storms are supposed to come from Jupiter, for he was the mythological Olympian ruler of the divinities of earth and sky, who supposedly was responsible for sending rain, lightning and thunder, and causing crops to grow. In ACTS 19:35 another reference is made as to the high importance the heathen placed on Jupiter. Jupiter was known to these heathens as always having a traveling companion, which was supposed to be his son Mercury. Mercury was the name the Romans used to identify with the Greek god Hermes. The heathen people of Lystra identified Paul with the Greek god Mercury (Hermes), who was also known as the god of eloquence, the herald and messenger of the gods. Mercury, as Hermes is called here in scripture, was also closely connected to bringing dreams to mortals. From these crude descriptions we can see how that these uneducated heathen people of Lystra could identify Paul and Barnabas with their perceptions of the two Greek gods Mercury and Jupiter. Barnabas must have been noticeably older than Paul, portraying a more fatherly figure. And Paul we know of the two was the chief speaker, obviously very educated, and very eloquent with words, to the point that he often may have spoken more than one language to an audience. (ACTS 22:2 indicates that Paul knew the Hebrew tongue, his native language, and ACTS 21:37 tells us that he also spoke Greek). Further ACTS 17:22-34 indicates that Paul also knew something of Greek mythology when he disputed with the Greeks of Athens on Mars' hill. However I don't think that Paul or Barnabas were at all prepared for what was about to take place at Lystra next. Certainly the perceptions of the people of Lystra were 180 degrees opposite of what Paul and Barnabas were expecting them to be.

Before we examine further the results that Paul and Barnabas had to face in their dealings with those superstitious heathen Lycaonian people, let's consider the people we live among today. When Paul and Barnabas visited Lystra they didn't find a bunch of people who were trusting in God, rather they found a bunch of people who were trusting in something other than God. The same could be said of the people of most any town today. What you may ask, are the people we live among today just as superstitious as those people that Paul and Barnabas found at Lystra? Who do people (for the most part) trust or turn to today for help? Anything and everything but God. Instead of turning to God for help, we find people today turning to doctors, psychiatry, psychologists, and psychotherapists like the ones who are now here on trial in the death of a ten year old who they were trying to help with a so-called new birth experience. Jesus told Nicodemus in JOHN 3:3 *...Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* Accepting Jesus as your personal Saviour is the true new birth experience, and is a must in obtaining everlasting life. Jesus again told Nicodemus in JOHN 3:7 *...Ye must be born again.* We go on to read in JOHN 3 these statements of fact: *...15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. ...36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.* Being truly born again is the first step in receiving the supernatural help we need in our lives. Being born again is truly a life changing experience. Again I am reminded of the statement that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ made unto the future Apostle Paul on the road to Damascus found in ACTS 26:16-18 where Jesus told him: *...I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.* Being born again takes us out of that darkness and into the light. Jesus again stated in JOHN 8:12 *...I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* And again I ask how many people today trust or turn to God today for their help? We as Christians need to know in our heart the following scriptures: PSALMS 46:1 *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in*

trouble. PSALMS 60:11 *Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.* PSALMS 115:11 *Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD: he is their help and their shield.* PSALMS 118:8 *It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.* PROVERBS 3:5 *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.* HEBREWS 4:16 *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* Having reviewed these scriptures, let me again ask each and every one of us to note how many among us today in our town truly trust the Lord for their help? And I think you will agree that the people today, as a whole, are not that much different than the superstitious heathen Lycaonian people of Paul and Barnabas' day; people who where looking to, and trusting something or someone other than God for their help.

ACTS 14:13 explains briefly the results of the perceptions of the people of Lystra: *Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.* How many preachers today are after such recognition? Seemingly a lot, especially of the so called TV evangelists. They want and need good ratings and good recognition or their program will be taken off the air, which in most cases is where it should be. However Paul and Barnabas were not on a mission of their own doing, or to build themselves up in the eyes of ignorant men, they were sent forth of the Holy Ghost to the work whereunto the Lord had called them. Lystra was one of these places. Jupiter (Zeus) had a temple at Lystra, which was just outside the gates of the city. I imagine that when Paul and Barnabas first arrived at Lystra and noticed this temple, their comments to each other may have been something like: "well it looks like we are up against superstition here in this city," not fully knowing what problems this could pose for them later. These superstitious people of Lystra, supposing Paul and Barnabas to be gods, were expressing their approval of them by decking a couple of oxen with garlands of flowers, and offering the sacrifices of these animals to Paul and Barnabas. Of course Paul and Barnabas wanted no part in these proceedings, and when Paul and Barnabas finally recognized what was about to take place they took the following action: ACTS 14:14 *Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, 15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: 16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. 17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.* With these words and actions Paul and Barnabas were doing their best to turn these superstitious idol worshipping heathen Lycaonian people to God from idols, and get them to worship the living and true God. Paul later wrote of similar adventures he had at the first to those of Thessalonica, stating in 1 THESSALONIANS 1:9 *For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.*

This expression in ACTS 14:14 *...they rent their clothes...* is something that we probably don't identify with to much in our society. To those of Paul's day this action of ripping apart their clothes was an outward expression of the abhorrence with what the Lycaonian people were attempting to do, and showed their deep grief and extreme indignation with these people. Paul and Barnabas were in good company in "renting their clothes" for so did Joshua and Caleb (Old Testament worthies of faith) back in NUMBERS 14, when Joshua and Caleb were showing their total disgust with the children of Israel in not trusting the Lord to take them into their promised land. Further Paul and Barnabas by this action of rending their clothes were trying to prove to these ignorant people of Lystra that they were not gods. And so Paul and Barnabas urgently stated: *We also are men of like passions with you, ...why do ye these things?* {ACTS 14:15}. This question *...why do ye these things?*... shows how far apart the thinking of the people of Lystra was from that of Paul and Barnabas. The people of Lystra were so caught up in their superstitions and idol worship that they failed to perceive the truth. They fall right in line with the majority of unbelievers still today. Pilate asked Jesus face to face in JOHN 18:38 *...what is truth?* Jesus Himself already in His earthly ministry had answered the question of *...what is truth?* And He did so in JOHN 14:6 (among many other places) where He states *...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto*

the Father, but by me. And again in JOHN 8:32 Jesus made this statement: *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.* In EPHESIANS 4:21 we read these words written by the Apostle Paul, *...the truth is in Jesus.*

After years of experience as an Apostle, and after experiencing several situations with idol worshippers, like those in the town of Lystra, Paul wrote to us these facts in ROMANS 1. ROMANS 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.* Certainly those people of Lystra fell into this kind of thinking, vain in their imaginations, and worshipping creatures of their vain imaginations made in the likeness of man; creatures such as Jupiter and Mercury.

In ACTS 14:15-17 we have recorded for us the impromptu sermon that Paul and Barnabas preached unto the heathen people of Lystra as they were attempting to do sacrifice unto Paul and Barnabas. ACTS 14:15 *And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: 16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. 17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.* Why do ye these things Paul and Barnabas asked. The reason that these heathen people of Lystra were trying to do sacrifice unto Paul and Barnabas was because they hadn't really listened to, or heard with their heart the gospel message that Paul and Barnabas were sent forth of the Holy Ghost preaching. ACTS 14:7 tells us that in Lystra: *...there they preached the gospel.* Further the people of Lystra had witnessed a miracle in the healing of the crippled man, which was a direct result of the crippled man believing the gospel that Paul and Barnabas were preaching. The gospel message that Paul and Barnabas were preaching was an unchanging message of grace as was noted in ACTS 14:3 *...they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.* The gospel message of the word of His grace was again being emphasized here at Lystra with these words found in verses 16 and 17 of our text: *...God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: 16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. 17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.* The word "suffer" in verse 16 means: to allow one to do as he wishes, not to restrain, to let alone. It was the grace of God that allowed *...all nations to walk in their own ways.* The reason God allowed *...all nations to walk in their own ways...* is because He is longsuffering. Longsuffering carries with it the thought of patience: to be patient in bearing the offenses and injuries of others: to be longsuffering, slow to anger, slow to punish. The reason God is longsuffering and allows even *...nations to walk in their own ways...* is because He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 2 PETER 3:9 tells us this: *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* EXODUS 34:6 & 7 in part states it like this: *...The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression*

and sin,... . Further to emphasize God's grace that is displayed to all nations Paul and Barnabas state this of God: *...he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.* Years later to Titus Paul writes in TITUS 2: 11 *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* The phrase "the grace of God" is found twenty times in scripture. The number twenty we learned in our numbers study has to do with REDEMPTION. In explaining the grace of God to these heathen people of Lystra, Paul and Barnabas were showing their true motive for coming to that city, which was to point these heathen people to Jesus Christ, and to the redemption that only is in Him. ROMANS 3:24 *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:...* . So again we see that the message of God's grace was being preached here at Lystra.

Next Paul and Barnabas did their best to explain to these superstitious heathen crowd that they should turn to the living God, a term that was used to distinguish God from vainly worshipped idols. The phrase "the living God" is found 30 times in scripture, and the number 30 points us to THE BLOOD OF CHRIST or THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST. That was exactly what Paul and Barnabas were trying to do, that is point those of Lystra to the ministry of Christ, the Son of the living God. In MATTHEW 16:16 when Jesus asked His disciples if they knew who he was, we read this answer: *And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* JOHN 6:68 & 69 further reveals another part of the answer of Peter to Jesus when Jesus asked if the twelve disciples would also leave and no more walk with Him: 68 *Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.* 69 *And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.* HEBREWS 9:14 further ties in the thought of the blood of Christ in connection with the living God by stating: *How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?* Certainly those of Lystra were also involved in "dead works" by worshipping mythological gods, and doing sacrifice unto them. Paul called this worshipping of idols there at Lystra "vanities," stating it like this: *...and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God.* The word "vanities" found in verse 15 means; devoid of force, truth, success, result, useless, of no purpose. Paul and Barnabas were also doing their best to explain to these superstitious idol worshippers that their actions in trying to worship them were void of result, and totally useless. In other words their trying to worship Jupiter and Mercury was totally useless, and of no purpose; void of result. Stated yet another way Paul and Barnabas were saying these unreal idols are really lying vanities because they have no power to help because they are unreal, and because confidence in them is vain.

We have noted (along with the Apostle Paul) that the unbelieving world fails to recognize, or is blind to the fact that *...the truth is in Jesus*. Certainly those at Lystra were blind to this fact or they wouldn't have tried to do sacrifice unto Paul and Barnabas, whom they had failed to see as men. The fact was that these people of Lystra had been brought up believing a lie, and that lie was Greek mythology. And we know who is behind all lies, for the scripture plainly tells us in JOHN 8:44 that Satan *...is a liar, and the father of it.* Paul and Barnabas, by their actions of renting their clothes, and crying out were trying to break this chain of darkness that was leading those of Lystra straight to hell. And Paul and Barnabas were doing this by pointing out the difference between the truth and a lie. Note some of what was said in verses 15 through 17, and how these words brought attention to the difference between the truth and a lie. (1) The truth: *We also are men of like passions with you.* The lie that was being refuted with this statement: that Paul and Barnabas were the Greek gods Jupiter and Mercury. (2) The truth: *we preach unto you about the living God.* The lie that was being refuted with this statement: That there was more than one God. (3) The truth: *This one living God made ...heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.* The lie that was being

refuted with this statement: That these different Greek gods were responsible for heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein. (4) The truth: This one living God ...*did good*. The lie that was being refuted with this statement: that the mythological god of their temple was good for them, and was their protector and guardian. (5) The truth: This one living God ...*gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons*. The lie that was being refuted with this statement: That Jupiter (Zeus) was responsible for sending rain, and causing crops to grow. (6) The truth: This one living God ...*suffered all nations to walk in their own ways*. He did not punish them nor threaten them with terror. The lie that was being refuted with this statement: that Jupiter, the supposed god of thunder and lightening, threatened the people with thunder and lightening. I am sure that there were many other differences that Paul and Barnabas were pointing out between the truth that is in the living God, and the lie that was Greek mythology, however I don't know what they may have been. The end result of Paul and Barnabas efforts to persuade the people of Lystra to turn to the living God is mentioned in verse 18: ACTS 14:18 *And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.*

Paul stoned at Lystra

ACTS 14:19 is a remarkable verse. ACTS 14:19 *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.* This verse is remarkable in the sense that just prior to being stoned Paul had been an object of worship by these very same heathen people who stoned him. Why did the people of Lystra stone Paul? And why didn't they stone Barnabas? Why the sudden change in attitude toward Paul? The answers to these questions comes from previous verse that we have already studied. Recall that Paul and Barnabas were expelled out of Antioch in Pisidia by an uprising incited by the unbelieving Jews there, as noted in ACTS 13:50. ACTS 13:50 *But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.* Paul and Barnabas next came to Iconium, where we read in ACTS 14:2 *But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.* After a long time in Iconium we find in ACTS 14:5 that *...there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them.* Paul and Barnabas then fled to Lystra, and now here in ACTS 14:19 we find these hostile Jews catching up with Paul and Barnabas, and convincingly persuaded the heathen people of Lystra to stone Paul. Why stone Paul? Because he was the chief speaker, as noted in ACTS 14:12. Why was it that these heathen people of Lystra all of a sudden changed their actions toward Paul? In part because of what he had said to them, which these hostile Jews used to persuade the people of Lystra into stoning Paul. Recall this statement found in verse 15 *...that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God.* Recall also that the word "vanities" found in verse 15 means; devoid of force, truth, success, result, useless, of no purpose. Paul in using this term of vanities was explaining to these superstitious idol worshippers that their actions in trying to worship him were void of result, and totally useless. In other words those of Lystra who worshipped Jupiter and Mercury were worshipping something that was totally useless, and of no purpose; void of result. Paul in stating that these unreal idols are really lying vanities, that they have no power to help because they are unreal, and confidence in them is vain, no doubt upset a large number of those of Lystra. The hostile Jews from Antioch and Iconium whose minds already were evil affected against Paul and Barnabas used these statements of Paul as a trigger to incense the heathen people of Lystra to stone Paul. Riot mob mentality ensued, and Paul was stoned, apparently instantaneously in the city, for they then *...drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.*

The first mention of the thought of stoning in scripture is in EXODUS 17:4 where *...Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.* Obviously for Moses to make such a statement he must have been familiar with the results of being stoned, which of course was death. It seems that if a group of people didn't like the actions of one individual then they would stone them to