

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

get rid of them, ie. kill them. Later even the law of Moses had stoning as one form of punishment for certain offenses as noted in the following scriptures: LEVITICUS 20:1-3; 24:13-17; DEUTERONOMY 13:6-10; 17:2-7; and 22:20-24. David too once was faced with stoning, as mentioned in 1 SAMUEL 30:6 *And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.* PSALMS 56:4 and 118:6 indicate somewhat on how David encouraged himself in the Lord his God when faced with such dire circumstances as being stoned. PSALMS 56:4 *In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.* PSALMS 118:6 *The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?* Further in ACTS 7 we read of that great man of faith Stephen being stoned. Stephen's testimony was one of the pricks of the goad to Saul of Tarsus conscience. With Moses and David and Stephen we have three overcomers faced with the prospect of being stoned, and we know that Stephen was stoned and died as a result of being stoned. So now Paul having been stoned here in ACTS 14:19 at Lystra was in good company, for the reason he was being stoned was because of his trusting totally in the Lord, like Moses before him, and David before him, and Stephen before him. Thus later we find it no surprise when Paul writes unto the Hebrews this statement of his confidence in the Lord found in HEBREWS 13:6 *...The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.* 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.*

Was Paul dead, when stoned at Lystra? This has been debated for centuries. There are eight examples left for us in scripture of people who were raised from the dead, besides Jesus, and besides Paul, if he was dead here at Lystra. {These 8 are: (1) the widows son raised by the LORD because of the prayer of faith of Elijah in 1 KINGS 17:17-25. (2) The son of the Shunammite, a wealthy woman, who was raised from the dead because of the faith of Elisha in 2 KINGS 4:32-37. (3) In line with the double portion of the spirit of Elijah granted to Elisha, another man was resurrected from the dead during his burial after touching the bones of Elisha in his sepulchre, as told in 2 KINGS 13:20 & 21. (These three resurrected from the dead in the Old Testament were a widows son, a rich persons child, and a dead man during the time of burial. Jesus in the New Testament raised from the dead a (4) widows son in LUKE 7:11-18, a (5) rich persons child, in LUKE 8:41-56 and MARK 5:35-43, and a dead man during the time of burial, (6) Lazarus in JOHN 11). (7) Peter raised Tabitha from the dead by the prayer of faith in ACTS 9:36-42. (8) Paul raised Eutychus from the dead in by the prayer of faith in ACTS 20:9 & 10. Plus there have been countless others who have been raised from the dead in similar fashion over the years since the writing of the New Testament, and only the Lord knows the number for sure.} And we know with God all things are possible. {See MATTHEW 19:26; MARK 9:23; MARK 10:27 and MARK 14:36}. So if Paul, after being stoned at Lystra, was dead, the Lord raised him from the dead in verse 20. Obviously a miracle either way. Brother Copley refers us to 2 CORINTHIANS 1:8-10 concerning this question of whether or not Paul was dead when stoned at Lystra. 2 CORINTHIANS 1:8 *For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: 9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: 10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;...* Brother Hill has often referred us to 2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-4 as an answer to this question of whether or not Paul was dead when stoned at Lystra. 2 CORINTHIANS 11:25 plainly states that Paul was stoned once, and after all the results of a stoning were supposed to be death, so only one stoning is recorded of Paul. 2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-4 records some strange language by the Apostle Paul, stating: *It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) 4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.* It seems nearly impossible for the Apostle Paul to be referring to anybody besides himself in these verses, and yet he is ever so careful not to focus the attention on himself, but rather on Jesus, as is noted

in 2 CORINTHIANS 12:5 *Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.* Was Paul dead after being stoned at Lystra? The above scriptures seem to indicate that he was without specifically so stating it as fact. Adam Clarke's Commentary on this verse states: "They did not leave stoning him till they had the fullest evidence that he was dead, and so, most probably, he was."

What if Paul had been left dead by God? Other scripture would be left telling a lie, and we know from TITUS 1:2 and HEBREWS 6:18 that it was impossible for God to lie. One of the things that was told the old disciple Ananias at Damascus concerning Paul (then called Saul of Tarsus) is found in ACTS 9:15 & 16, where he was told by the Lord, who can not lie, {TITUS 1:2} in a vision that Paul was "...a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." We haven't yet read of Paul having appeared before kings yet in our account of ACTS, for in fact that didn't happen until years after this time, like in ACTS 26, for example, when Paul was before king Agrippa. Had Paul been left for dead by God here at Lystra, we wouldn't have any of Paul's gospel record today, for up to this point in time Paul hadn't written any epistles or letters that we have a record of! That means there wouldn't have been the 14 books written by Paul in our New Testament, and probably we wouldn't have Luke's account, or John Mark's account either, for in due time they also were close followers of the Apostle Paul and learned his gospel, which became an inspiration for them to write the three books that they collectively wrote (MARK, LUKE, & ACTS). Here in ACTS 14:19 those of Lystra were persuaded by the unbelieving Jews to stone the chief speaker Paul. Later in ROMANS Paul would write that he too was persuaded of something, and he stated it like this in ROMANS 8:38 *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Ten items are specifically listed here that are powerless to separate us from the love of God. Ten is the number of RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO ABILITY. Our responsibility as man is to believe the true living God and in His ability, knowing that ...*with God nothing shall be impossible.* {LUKE 1:37}. Interesting, isn't it, that the first of these ten items Paul listed in ROMANS 8:38 & 39 is death? In 1 CORINTHIANS 4:9 we read this statement of the Apostle Paul: *For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.* It again seems that death briefly visited Paul at Lystra here in ACTS 14:19.

ACTS 14:20 *Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.* We here again find reference to "the disciples." This word "disciples" refers to a learner, a pupil, a follower of any teacher, and as we have previously noted here in ACTS the word "disciple" refers to Christians. Recall in ACTS 11:26 that ...*the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch...*, Syria the place from where Paul and Barnabas started this missionary journey. We haven't read of any believers being with Paul and Barnabas as they fled from Iconium to Lystra, nor have we read of any believers here at Lystra other than the crippled man who was healed. Yet here in ACTS 14:20 we read of more than one disciple standing round Paul after he was stoned. One translation of this verse states that "the disciples formed a circle about him." Still another translation reads: "The converts formed a ring round him." The number of disciples surrounding Paul is not told us, but several are hinted at. Obviously willing listeners to the truth rallied around the lifeless body of the Apostle Paul, and no doubt most of these "disciples" were from Lystra; people who had believed what Paul had preached unto them, and had become Christians. Paul had been a testimony unto them. When we started this study we referred to a scripture found in 2 TIMOTHY 3:10-12, which is a reflective statement that Paul makes unto Timothy concerning Paul's own testimony to Timothy. 2 TIMOTHY 3:10-12: *But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, 11 Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. 12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.* In short Paul was saying "Timothy, you know that my life has been a testimony to you since you first knew me." It seems that Timothy, though a youth, may have been one of the disciples

surrounding the body of the Apostle Paul here at Lystra. ACTS 16:1-3 further indicates that there were several brethren, including Timothy, at Lystra familiar with the doctrines of the Apostle Paul. 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;....* . Why would Paul have Timothy to go forth with him? Because Paul knew the kind of man Timothy was from his first visit to this region, and the Holy Ghost shewed Paul that it was a good thing to ask Timothy to go forth with him on his next missionary journey. Besides this the brethren that were at Lystra, and Iconium knew Timothy, and gave a good report to Paul on Timothy's behalf. When did these disciples at Lystra become disciples? During Paul's first missionary journey there. Obviously when Paul returned to Lystra in ACTS 16:1 & 2, they knew who Paul was, and gave this good report concerning Timothy. Many of these disciples, Christians of Lystra and recent converts of the Apostle Paul, were those disciples who stood around the body of Paul after he was stoned here in ACTS 14:20.

Again ACTS 14:20 reads: *Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.* The inference from verses 19 and 20 is that Paul's recovery from this brutal stoning was miraculous. Had those of Lystra done a good and proper stoning, (and no doubt they did), Paul would have been dead. And as we pointed out earlier most probably he was dead. Jesus told the lawyers in LUKE 11:49 *Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute:* and certainly the Apostle Paul fits this mold. It was a miracle then that Paul rose up from this stoning. Furthermore after being stoned like he was it would have been nigh impossible to walk, or even function had not the Lord healed him from the effects of the stoning. Certainly Paul was miraculously healed here, and this sudden recovery must have left a lasting impression in the minds of these few disciples who witnessed this miracle. Paul then went with the disciples back into the city of Lystra, and no doubt were the guest there that night of one of these disciples. They must of had a wonderful prayer meeting that night, thanking the Lord for His many benefits. PSALMS 68:19 *Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.* PSALMS 142:7 *Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.* In a similar fashion as we read in ACTS 13:51 and 14:6, after being severely persecuted at Lystra, Paul and Barnabas departed together to Derbe.

Derbe is the eighth city mentioned in scripture that Paul and Barnabas visited on this missionary journey. Recall that Paul and Barnabas started from the church at Antioch, Syria, which was their home base as far as missionary journeys were concerned. The first city that they had visited on this missionary journey was Seleucia, Antioch's seaport. {ACTS 13:4}. From Seleucia they sailed to the island of Cyprus and the scripture mentions two cities that they visited there, Salamis and Paphos. {ACTS 13:5 & 6}. From Paphos they had sailed north to Perga in Pamphylia where John Mark left them. {ACTS 13:13}. Finding Perga nearly deserted they followed the people to the high country and came to their fifth city on this journey, Antioch in Pisidia. {ACTS 13:14}. We spent a lot of time studying the sermon that Paul preached there at Antioch in Pisidia. From Antioch in Pisidia they came to the sixth city of their journey, Iconium, and abode there a long time. {ACTS 13:51 & ACTS 14:3}. The next and seventh city that they came to was Lystra, where Paul was stoned. {ACTS 14:6 & 19}. And now we find them in the eighth city of this journey, Derbe. Again from our numbers study we learned that the number eight has multiple meanings, namely: NEW CREATION; NEW BIRTH; NEW BEGINNING; RESURRECTION; and BRIDE. Paul and Barnabas didn't go to Derbe to rest and relax from their recent persecutions, but rather there they continued preaching the gospel to that city. ACTS 14:21 tells us this. ACTS 14:21 *And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many,...* . And what did they there preach about? The new birth, the new creation, the new beginning that we have in Christ Jesus after being born again, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and then they preached to those at Derbe about their opportunity to be in the bride of Christ. After all it was Paul found here again preaching Paul's gospel, and Paul's gospel includes preaching about

the bride of Christ. The phrase *...had taught many...* in the Greek means "had made many disciples." Note that no mention is made as to how long they stayed in Derbe, but also note that it was long enough to make many disciples. Further note that no mention is made as to any persecution against them at Derbe. Probably because the Jews who were so violently against them were convinced that they had killed Paul back at Lystra, and had no idea that the Lord had raised him from that awful stoning, so obviously they didn't know that Paul was back preaching.

While at Derbe Paul probably realized that he wasn't that far away from his boyhood home of Tarsus. The thought may have crossed his mind to go home, and visit Tarsus. It would be fairly simple to do, for the road from Derbe to Tarsus was a well traveled road through a mountain pass know as the "Cilician Gates." However Paul didn't go home to Tarsus for this reason, he was only interested in doing the will of the Lord. Recall on the road to Damascus that Paul had asked the Lord, "*...Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*" Probably many times since that day he had asked the Lord the same question. And now guided by the Holy Ghost he waited for the proper leading as to where to go next. Here we see the heart attitude of the full overcomer, that is one willing waiting for the proper guidance from the Holy Ghost. Jesus too had waited many years before starting His public ministry. And what was Jesus waiting for? The proper guidance from the Holy Ghost. We get a glimpse into the heart attitude of the Apostle Paul in the following scriptures. 1 CORINTHIANS 2:1 *And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.* 2 CORINTHIANS 2:4 *For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.* PHILIPPIANS 2:1 *If there be therefore any consolation {a calling near, summons (for help), exhortation, admonition, encouragement, comfort, solace; that which affords comfort or refreshment} in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.* With these scriptures and many others like them we see that the Apostle Paul had a deep love for the saints. Furthermore the saints were always on his heart, and so he prayed for them. Note how Paul states this in the following scriptures: 2 CORINTHIANS 5:20 *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.* EPHESIANS 6:18 *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; 19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.* PHILIPPIANS 1:3 *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, 5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; 6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: 7 Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. 8 For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. 9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; 10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; 11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.* COLOSSIANS 1:3 *We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you. COLOSSIANS 1:9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. 2 THESSALONIANS 1:11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: 12 That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you,*



and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. There are many other scriptures that you can look up, which further state Paul's deep love and concern for the saints, and that they have God's best. To him they were now of more concern than his immediate family. The passion that Paul displayed in wanting God's best for his life caused him to follow the leading of the Holy Ghost, who inspired Paul and Barnabas to now turn around and go back and revisit the cities where there were many new saints because of their ministry.

Now we know that Paul's life and testimony and his gospel record are left for us, especially in this church age, as an example and encouragement to us to go on and have God's best. A lot of the testimony portion of Paul's life to us are found here in the book of ACTS. Put yourself in the shoes of Paul and Barnabas for a minute here at Derbe, and think about the prospect of returning again to Lystra, and Iconium, and Antioch; cities which all seemed more glad to get rid of you than they were to have you visit them in the first place. Would you want to return again to these cities? Probably not. None of us want to go through sufferings. Yet nearly all of us wants God's best. Paul and Barnabas both fit this same mold of wanting God's best in their lives. We just talked about the deep love Paul especially expressed for the saints everywhere he went, and that they too have God's best. So it came down to this, how bad did Paul and Barnabas want to have God's best? Did they want God's best bad enough to return to these same cities where they had suffered such persecution? Obviously yes they were willing to return to these same cities, and again face the prospect of further persecution, and further sufferings, because they wanted God's best in their lives bad enough to follow the leading of the Holy Ghost. Do you think that the Lord had much of a problem convincing Paul and Barnabas to return to these cities? Probably not. If Paul and Barnabas put up an argument, and I doubt that they did, it may have been in objection to the fact that they didn't want to face anymore sufferings. To which the Lord would have replied; "What is the worst thing that could possible happen to you? Getting killed! Paul you have already been there, and I raised you from the dead! I have delivered you from out of all of your afflictions. Come on now and follow my leading, and be an example, a testimony to the many saints who will follow your gospel, and return with me to Lystra, and Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia, and encourage these saints to go on with me, and even suffer persecution for my sake, if need be." So we see that an argument against suffering persecution for Jesus' sake wouldn't do.

Still glimpsing the heart attitude of the full overcomer, let's next consider the word "sufferings" found as number 3804 in our Strong's Concordance (Greek). Obviously Paul went through considerable suffering again here at Lystra having been stoned there. This word "sufferings" is found ten times in our King James translation. Ten again is the number of RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO ABILITY. In our numbers study we pointed out that 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 & 10:38}. It is God's responsibility (and privilege) to honor faith and trust in Him, even to the accomplishment of impossible things on the believers behalf. Seven times the Apostle Paul uses the word "sufferings." Seven again is the number of SPIRITUAL PERFECTION or SPIRITUAL COMPLETION. The Bride of Christ will be spiritually complete and perfect, and will have gone through various "sufferings" in her walk with Christ Jesus while here on earth. We talked about this fact extensively when we did our Sons of God study a few years ago. Some of the things we pointed out in that study concerning suffering were as follows: First, as noted in ROMANS 8:16-18, it is God's plan for the joint-heirs with Christ Jesus to be willing to suffer with Him, and to go through some "sufferings" with Him. ROMANS 8:16 *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* Secondly we learned that God is not out to torture his sons, for God loves us far more than we can humanly imagine. Remember here that we are considering the heart attitudes of those that are willing to be the closest to Jesus, the joint-heirs, the Bride of Christ. These are the ones God tests the most. Why? To the end that *...ye may be mature and complete, lacking nothing...* {see JAMES 1:2-4}. Consider this thought for a brief moment, Jesus while here on earth

was constantly being tested by God, and even more so as He approached the time of His crucifixion. Think about it! Sixteen is the number concerning LOVE. 1 CORINTHIANS 13 is known as the LOVE chapter in the Bible. Sixteen things are found in 1 CORINTHIANS 13 verse 4-8 concerning LOVE. The Greek word *pathema* (number 3804 in our Strong's Concordance) translated into our King James "sufferings" is found sixteen times. This word *pathema* is translated sufferings 10 times, suffering 1 time, affliction 3 times, affection 1 time, and motion 1 time. Since He loved us so much he tests the potential full overcomer want to be's with "sufferings," to ...*Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. {HEBREWS 13:21}*. Thirdly we pointed out that the thought of "sufferings" seems to have to do more often with an inward state than an outward state. Remember from JEREMIAH 17:10 that the Lord searches the hearts, the inward state, and He does so, and test us in this area to reveal to us where we are in our growth and progress with Him. HEBREWS 12:6 *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?* The thought of "sufferings" then takes us both to external hurts, calamities, misfortunes, and afflictions, as well as to internal hurts, trials, tests, aggravations, passions and emotions, the things that bring us to feel hurt, distresses, pain and "sufferings." Fourth, we noted the many "sufferings" that Jesus went through while here on earth, even to the ultimate suffering of death on the cross for all mankind. In so doing He became a captain to us in the following fashion: HEBREWS 2:9 & 10 *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.* Fifth, we noted that Jesus suffered in this old world, and the sons of God, and especially those sons of God who are willing to rule and reign with Him the Son of God, should expect to suffer with Him also. Sixth, we pointed out that this pattern of suffering with Him, though foreign to the teaching of most pastors and Christians today, has been taught in scripture since the book of GENESIS. In the twenty-fourth chapter of GENESIS there is much typical teaching concerning the Bride of Christ. In this twenty-fourth chapter of GENESIS Abraham is a type of God, Isaac is a type of Jesus, the servant is a type of the Holy Spirit, and Rebekah is a type of the bride of Christ. There are many other things typified also in this chapter, and we noted that the camels also are representative of the trials and testings, the suffering way that a Christian must be willingly to take on the road to meet the heavenly bridegroom. There was no other way for Rebekah to get to her future husband, but to ride the unruly stinky old camels. And note in GENESIS 24:61 that Rebekah was willing to ride these camels as long as it took to get to Isaac. Further note that there were many camels, ten to be exact, (see verse 10). Ten again as noted above is the number showing Responsibility According to Ability. Rebekah's responsibility in GENESIS 24 was to willingly ride the camels, and to follow the tender leading of the servant, the only one who knew the way to Isaac, and how to win his heart. We need to note also that the word "camels" is found seventeen times in GENESIS 24, nearly a third of the number of times found in the rest of all scripture. Seventeen is the number representing Victory in Christ Jesus. Rebekah willingly rode the camels until the day she saw Isaac, and when her long trying suffering journey was now over, she thankfully lighted off the camel, grateful for the way she had come, and what she had come to. The Apostle Paul stated it like this again in ROMANS 8:18 *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* As you read and re-read this twenty-fourth chapter of GENESIS notice the way that Rebekah treated the camels, and note that not one time is it recorded of her complaining about the camels, and the amount of water they drank, the foul smell that they smelled, and the lousy ride that they gave, for Rebekah knew that these very same camels had brought her unspeakable gifts and jewels and special priceless tokens of love from a far away land. Note also that before Isaac saw Rebekah he took note of the fact that it was the camels who were bringing his bride on her way towards him, (verse 63). Seventh, we learned that the Old Testament full overcomers, mentioned in the 11th chapter of HEBREWS, all became

full overcomers by being willing, by faith, to follow a path, if need be, of suffering along the pathway the Spirit of God was leading them on. David is just one such example, and he wrote: PSALMS 34:19 *Many are the afflictions of the righteous; But Jehovah delivereth him out of them all.* Also PSALMS 34:6 *This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.* And that is just a part of what he wrote about suffering in one PSALM! Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and others are listed in the 11th chapter of HEBREWS as Old Testament worthies of faith, all who were willing to follow a path, if need be, of suffering along the pathway the Spirit of God was leading them on. In ROMANS 8:17 above we read of being willing to suffer with Christ. What does it mean to ...*suffer with....* Jesus? It means to let the Holy Spirit led our lives, each and every step of the way as we walk with the Lord, realizing that there may be obstacles and hazards along life's pathway, especially designed for us by God Himself, to test us and to prove us New Testament worthies of faith. HEBREWS 12:1 *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* We concluded our section in the Sons of God study on suffering noting that the Apostle Paul learned in his walking with the Lord to take everything, every little thing, every big thing, every suffering thing that came his way from the Lord. Read 2 CORINTHIANS 11 & 12 and you will see that this is so. The Apostle Paul is our first and best example of what a New Testament full overcomer should be. We are encouraged by the Apostle Paul twice in scripture to ... *be ye followers of me.* {1 CORINTHIANS 4:16 & 11:1}. 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1 *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.* If we do follow the Apostle Paul, and the tender leading of our precious Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, through the guidance He gives us through the Holy Ghost, then we should expect to go on the pathway he takes us, which is a suffering pathway. Paul stated to King Agrippa in his own defense while on trial for preaching the gospel ...*That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.*{ACTS 26:23}. The Apostle Paul also noted in 2 CORINTHIANS 1:5 (Authorized Version) *For as the sufferings of Christ abound unto us, even so our comfort also aboundeth through Christ.* Probably one of the closest human companions the Apostle Paul had was Timothy, whom Paul no doubt met on this first missionary journey, and the Apostle Paul encouraged Timothy to take it from the Lord, stating in 2 TIMOTHY 2:3 *Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.* Paul then goes on to write Timothy this concerning suffering: 2 TIMOTHY 2:8 *Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: 9 Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound. 10 Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. 11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: 12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: 13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.* And again later in this letter to Timothy Paul writes more concerning suffering with the Lord, stating in 2 TIMOTHY 4:5 *But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.* The joint-heir sons of God have learned, like Paul and Timothy to take everything from the Lord. The joint-heir sons of God have learned in their walking with the Lord that His concern for them is far greater than even their own concern for themselves. Think about it for a minute, how concerned and loving is someone for you who has taken the time to know ...*even the very hairs of your head...* (LUKE 12:7)? The joint-heir sons of God have also learned in their walking with the Lord how He has taken charge of every single detail in their lives, both big and small, both exterior and interior, everything. The joint-heir sons of God have learned with the Psalmist what is stated in PSALMS 139:14; *I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.* In short the joint-heir sons of God have grown up in their relationship with Christ Jesus to the point that they can say ...*I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me.* {SONG OF SOLOMON 7:10}. Since we have made a quick reference to THE SONG OF SOLOMON, let's note the following fact. Myrrh is mentioned 8 times in the SONG OF SOLOMON. (17 times total



in scripture). 8 is a number for the BRIDE, and 17 is the number pointing to VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS. Sister Mooneyhan in her notes on the SONG OF SOLOMON notes this of myrrh. "Myrrh is always connected with sorrow and suffering. It seems to have been a custom of the women of that time (of THE SONG OF SOLOMON) to carry a bundle of myrrh between the breasts - to hang it around the neck with a chain, and wear it as a token of suffering. This is what it means to us -- suffering with Christ. We learn to welcome this, because suffering for Christ brings great good into our lives. We remember when the disciples were persecuted for Jesus' sake, they rejoiced because "...they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name..." -- ACTS 5:41. The Apostle Paul said, "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake:..." -- 2 CORINTHIANS 12:10." (End of quote from Sister Mooneyhan). Those Saints that are truly running for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus go on through "sufferings" (if need be), to become full overcomers. REVELATION 3:21 *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*

I would be remiss if I didn't here mention the after affects of suffering with Christ Jesus. Actually we touched on this same point in our lessons on the Sons of God. In that study we noted that the sufferings that the full overcoming sons of God willfully and patiently endure are taken by the full overcomer as blessings from the Lord! How is this possible? It is a matter of love, specifically that "first love" noted in REVELATION 2:4, which the Ephesian church left. The full overcomer has that first pre-eminent love for the Lord, thus with their focus on Him, they are willing to suffer with Him. We noted that this willingness to suffer with Him that a few sons of God demonstrate shows the fact that the love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has taken first place in their lives; they want Gods best so they are willing to suffer with Him, that they may be also glorified together with Him, as noted by Paul in ROMANS 8:17. ROMANS 8:18 goes on to state: *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time [are] not worthy [to be compared] with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* Peter stated it this way in 1 PETER 4. 1 PETER 4:12 *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. 14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. ...16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.* Paul in HEBREWS 2 focused on Jesus and stated: HEBREWS 2:9 *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. 10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.* The full overcomers will be the ones who have taken this pathway of trial and suffering with Christ, by faith, for they are the ones who are looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of their faith, and with the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit in their lives they endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, they fight a good fight of faith, and they go on and finish their race course, keeping the faith, and win God's best, and go on to be also glorified together with Him. HEBREWS 12:2 tells us that Jesus ... *who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* Ask yourself who was the who that is being referred to in this verse? The joy that was set before Him goes way beyond saving sinners though there is great joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth {see LUKE 15:7 & 10}. The joy that was set before Jesus as He endured the cross was the joy He will have in taking His wife, and the close fellowship that He will eternally have with her! Paul having a perfect understanding of this bridal truth stated in 1 THESSALONIANS 2:19 & 20 -- *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? 20 For ye are our glory and joy.* Paul's glory and joy was in pointing others to Christ Jesus, and encouraging them to go on and run the race, pursuing God's best. Thus regardless of the trial or testing at hand Paul wrote these encouraging words: PHILIPPIANS 3:1 *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. PHILIPPIANS 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again*

*I say, Rejoice. 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16 Rejoice evermore. 1 THESSALONIANS 5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

## Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch, Syria

Having gone aside from our lesson in the above section we now perhaps have a better understanding of what it means to go on with the Lord, and so we find it no surprise that Paul and Barnabas turned around after visiting Derbe, and returned unto the very places that they had faced such persecution. ACTS 14:21 *And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, 22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.* Note that their teaching to the saints was in agreement with the last few pages of these notes: *...to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.* Note also, though unstated here, their tremendous love for the saints. Several times in later epistles the Apostle Paul makes reference as to his deep concern for the saints, including those whom he has seen, and those whom he hasn't seen. Note Paul's heart felt attitude toward the saints in these following statements from his epistles. 1 THESSALONIANS 2:8 *So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.* 1 THESSALONIANS 2:17 *But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.* Certainly that was Paul's desire also here in ACTS 14:21 & 22, to see again the faces of the believers in Lystra and Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia. Again in ROMANS 1:11 Paul expresses his concern for the saints, stating: *For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;...* ROMANS 15:24 *Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company.* PHILIPPIANS 1:8 *For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.* These are just a few of the many references Paul has in his epistles as to his deep love and concern for the saints. It was because of their love of Jesus, and their wanting these new Christians to be established in the truth that Paul and Barnabas returned unto these cities where they had faced such persecution before.

However on their return, their mission was a little different, for they didn't go unto the synagogues, but rather unto the disciples, the new born Christians of these different cities. Seeing again these saints no doubt brought great joy and rejoicing into the hearts of Paul and Barnabas, not to mention the great emotion that must have been felt by the saints of these cities. ACTS 14:22 states, in part, the reason that they returned to these cities: *Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith,...* The Greek word translated "confirming" here is 1991 in the Strong's Concordance is a verb, and is only used by Luke (4 times) all in the book of ACTS. (There is one other word in the New Testament translated into our English "confirming," but it is a different word, a noun, found in MARK 16:20, and it's usage there is different from our text in that it validates the authority that the Lord had given unto the kingdom apostles. MARK 16:20 reads: *And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.*) The word "confirming" used here in ACTS 14:22 is a verb meaning -- to establish besides; to make to lean upon; to strengthen as in to strengthen upon by use of a prop or support, the result being to strengthen more; to render more firm; to confirm. Luke also uses this same word in the following scriptures: ACTS 15:32 *And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed <1991> them.* ACTS 15:41 *And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming <1991> the churches.* ACTS 18:23 *And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening <1991> all the disciples.* The thought of "confirming" here then is to give additional spiritual strength to the saints, the disciples of these cities, and this additional spiritual strength came by Paul and Barnabas in the form of additional instruction in the truth and faith of the gospel. Keep in mind