

ACTS 14

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

As we begin to examine the events of the Holy Ghost of this chapter note in verse 1 the word “Greeks.” We didn’t find any “Greeks” mentioned in ACTS 13. In ACTS 13 we found “Gentiles” (verses 42, 46, 47, & 48), “religious proselytes” (verse 43), and a non-Jewish group referred to as “ye that fear God” in verses 16 and 26. Now here in ACTS 14:1 we find “Greeks.” Simply put a Greek refers to a Gentile who speaks Greek. Paul himself spoke Greek having been raised among the Greeks at Tarsus, but Paul was a Jew. (Study ACTS 21:37). Jews who exclusively spoke Greek were referred to in the New Testament as Grecians. (Study ACTS 6). Greeks also refer to the race of people from Greece, who obviously were Gentiles, who also, more than likely, spoke Greek. Timothy’s mother was a Jew, but his father was a Greek. (See ACTS 16:1 & 3). Titus on the other hand was a Greek. (See GALATIANS 2:3). It appears from the way Luke uses the word “Greek” here in verse 1 that there was a different culture or mix of Gentile people here at Iconium, with the majority of Gentiles falling into the category of Greek by race rather than heathen. Conybeare and Howson break down the population of Iconium during the time of Paul like this: a large number of transient Greeks; an older population from the surrounding country that has taken up residence in one quarter of the town; a small population of Roman officials both civil and military, and an old well established colony of Jews, who were merchants and businessmen, most all of whom met on the Sabbath to read the Law in the Jewish Synagogue.

The important point to note here in ACTS 14:1 is ...*that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.* It seems from this statement that those who heard the gospel here in Iconium were somewhat more receptive to the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ than the population of Antioch in Pisidia.

ACTS 14:2 *But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.* The unbelieving Jews were the Christ rejecters, and in the language of today they became activists against the gospel message Paul and Barnabas preached. The Greek verb translated “unbelieving” here is “apeitheo,” number 544 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, meaning: to refuse to be persuaded, to refuse to believe, to refuse or withhold belief, to refuse belief and obedience, not to allow one’s self to be persuaded, and not to comply with. “Apeitheo” is also translated as believe not, believeth not, disobedient, and obey not, but only this one time as “unbelieving.” “Apeitheo” is the most negative of all the Greek words that translate into our English “unbelieving.” If you look up the word “unbelieving” you will find it six times in scripture. Recall that the number six has to do with MAN; SATAN; or SATAN’S INFLUENCE OVER WORLDLY MAN. “Apeitheo” is used in JOHN 3:36, which reads: *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not (“apeitheo”) the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.* Another Greek word used in ACTS 14:2 that is only found in six scriptures is the Greek word kakoo {kak-o'-o}, number 2559 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, meaning: to ill treat, to oppress, afflict, harm, maltreat, to embitter, render evil affected, and to hurt. Here in ACTS 14:2 kakoo {kak-o'-o} is used twice: *But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made <2559> their minds evil affected <2559> against the brethren.* Thus we find here that the unbelieving Jews, who rejected the gospel message preached by Paul and Barnabas at Iconium, aroused the Gentiles, and embittered their minds against Paul and Barnabas, and the disciples.

Let’s learn something here of the character of the full overcomer. In verse 2 we find that it was Satan’s intention to tear down anything that the Apostle Paul and Barnabas were, by the power of the Holy Ghost, building up there at Iconium. We should note that a great spiritual battle was being fought here at Iconium. What is in the heart of a full overcomer to do here? The Apostle Paul answers this question in EPHESIANS 6:10 where he writes: *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* In order to be a full overcomer one must learn to ...*be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* Those who lean on the Lord, trust in the Lord in other

words, and not to their own understanding, unlock the key of faith that leads one to victory. What are the side-effects of **trusting in the Lord**? While you ponder the answer let's look at PROVERBS 3:5, which tells us: *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.* The Old Testament word "trust" equates to the New Testament words "faith" or "believe." If you have a Scofield Bible see the footnote on page 600 concerning the word "trust" found in PSALMS 2:12. The last part of PSALMS 2:12 says: *Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.* The full overcomer is **strong in** the Lord by putting ones faith 100% in the Lord. That is what made the worthies of faith in HEBREWS 11 the hero's of faith they became. We know Abraham to be the father of those who live by faith, and in ROMANS 4:20 Paul writes this concerning Abraham: *He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.* In considering this thought of how to be **strong in** the Lord please note the following: the phrase "**strong in**" is found in exactly eight scriptures, and one of the meanings of the number eight is BRIDE. The Bride of Christ becomes His Bride by being **strong in** Him. Again EPHESIANS 6:10 *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* One more **strong in** scripture is 2 CHRONICLES 16:9, which reads: *For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.* One of the side-effects of **trusting in the Lord** is getting to reign with Him as His victorious Bride! So what did Paul and Barnabas do here at Iconium in ACTS 14:2 after being strongly opposed by the unbelieving Jews, who ...*stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren?* ACTS 14:3 gives the answer.

ACTS 14:3 *Long time therefore abode 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 words "long time" indicate that Paul and Barnabas were at Iconium for a longer period of time than they were at Antioch in Pisidia. Possibly they were at Iconium throughout the whole winter season and even into spring!

One of the things we see here is this edification process, this building up of the church of Jesus Christ that was taking place here at Iconium. Paul especially has much to say about this in the scripture. In reviewing his life at Ephesus to the Ephesian elders he states in ACTS 20:32 *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.* In ACTS 14:3 this "**word of his grace**" is also referenced. The "**word of his grace**" is the main tool of God's building. Thirty-seven times in scripture we find the word "building," and thirty-seven is the number associated with THE WORD OF GOD, which is another name for Jesus. The ...*word of his grace...* found in ACTS 14:3 and ACTS 20:32 points to Jesus: *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace...* EPHESIANS 1:7.

ACTS 14:3 *Long time therefore abode 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.* They spoke boldly in the Lord, and in return the Lord Himself gave testimony, that is He bare witness unto the word of His grace, and He giving **signs and wonders** and marvels to be performed by them, (expounded by various translations). The phrase "**signs and wonders**" is found fourteen times in scripture, and fourteen in the number pointing to DELIVERANCE or SALVATION. The we find that at Iconium various "**signs and wonders**," deliverances, healings, and other miracles were taking place in addition to many receiving salvation for their souls. We have discussed various "**signs and wonders**" earlier in this study concerning the Kingdom Apostles back in Jerusalem in ACTS 5. ACTS 5:12 *And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people;... 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.* Now here in ACTS 14 we find that the Lord granted, by the power of the Holy Ghost, many more unnamed "**signs and wonders**" be performed by the hands of Paul and Barnabas, the Church Apostles sent forth by the

Holy Ghost to this region of Galatia. Note what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians some years later in 2 CORINTHIANS 12:12 concerning himself: *Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.* To the Saints in Rome Paul wrote in ROMANS 15:19 *Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.* Thus we find it not in the least surprising that many “**signs and wonders**” became a part of the ministry of the Apostle Paul, along with the rest of the Apostles. We too should see that these “**signs and wonders**” are confirmed by the word of God, and He bares witness unto the truth of His word by granting “**signs and wonders**” to be done by the power of the Holy Ghost. These were the facts in Paul’s day, the same as they are the facts in our day.

Do you think that all of these “**signs and wonders**” from the Lord were without opposition from Satan? Of course not. We are living in the world, and Jesus Himself said in JOHN 16:33 *In the world ye shall have tribulation.* Tribulation means tests, trials, set backs, trouble, suffering, etc. Tribulation tells us something will go wrong as we view it, and this is inevitable because we are still are living in the world. It won’t be like that when we get to heaven, hallelujah!!! Let’s read the rest of what Jesus said in JOHN 16:33 *In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.* By trusting in Jesus we are trusting in the One who has already overcome all the tribulations, tests, trials, set backs, trouble, sufferings, etc. that we will ever face. We mention all of this to point out that it is not surprising to find in the next verses of ACTS 14 that the Apostles Paul and Barnabas too had their time of tremendous opposition from Satan there at Iconium.

ACTS 14:4 *But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.* Paul and Barnabas didn’t go to Iconium to divide the city, so the city wasn’t really divided by Paul and Barnabas. The city was divided by the word of God, that is ...*the word of his grace...* spoken of in ACTS 14:3. HEBREWS 4:12 clearly explains how this is: *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* Let me give here an expounded translation of HEBREWS 4:12 – “For the word of God is living, and active, and energetic, full of life and power, and effectual, it cuts better than the sharpest two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and [the immortal] spirit, to the innermost intimacies of a man’s being, and it exposes the very thoughts, purposes, ponderings and meditations, and motives of a man’s heart.” The word of God having been preached here at Iconium has split the city into two factions: ...*and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles...* ACTS:14:4. Jesus Himself The Word of God told how it was that He was sent to be a divider of men, as noted in the following scriptures: LUKE 12:51 *Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: 52 For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. 53 The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.* A similar statement is found in MATTHEW 10:34 & 35, and again in MATTHEW 12:30 where we read: *He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.* So it was also at Iconium, that is, there was a division among the people of Iconium because of the good news gospel message of Jesus ...*and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles...* ACTS:14:4.

Another important point to observe here in ACTS 14:4 is that this is the first scripture where we read of Paul and Barnabas being called Apostles! Several years ago in Sunday School we did a study on the 12 Kingdom Apostles, and the 8 Church Apostles. Paul and Barnabas were the first two Church Apostles. In 2 CORINTHIANS 11:5, and again in 2 CORINTHIANS 12:11 we find that the Apostle Paul named the chiefest apostle among all of the apostles, and we know that he also was the Apostle of the Gentiles, ROMANS 11:13 *For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.* An Apostle is defined as a messenger sent from God. The word messenger comes from the Greek word apostolos {ap-os'-tol-os} translated 78 times in the New

Testament “apostle”. The word messenger also refers to a delegate, a messenger, or one sent forth with orders, such as was Paul and Barnabas in ACTS 13:4 -- *So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, . . .* In ACTS 26:17 we read where Saul of Tarsus, our Apostle Paul, was sent forth by Jesus Christ Himself there on the road to Damascus! ACTS 26:17 *Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee. . .* The orders Jesus Christ gave our Apostle Paul on the road to Damascus are found in ACTS 26:18 *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.* Additionally three days later after Paul was saved, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared unto Ananias of Damascus and told him the following in ACTS 9:15 & 16 -- *But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is 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.* So we see here that from the very beginning our Apostle Paul knew he would be preaching to the Gentiles, and Jews, and even kings, and governors and the like, and that the road he would travel as an Apostle would be lined with ...*great things he must suffer for... Jesus name's sake.* Additionally Brother Copley notes that “the word “apostle” is from the Greek words “apo,” meaning “away,” and from “stello,” which means “to set in order, or arrange, to furnish, equip, get ready.” Hence, “apostello,” or “apostle,” literally means to arrange for, to furnish and send away on service.” Obviously by now on this first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas we have seen that Paul and Barnabas have been sent away accomplishing the 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,” and we call them Church Apostles. The Apostle Paul becomes the first Church Apostle, and to him was given dispensation to preach not only of the kingdom of God, but also of the grace of God, and the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, the heavenly calling, the holy calling, and that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs {sugkleronomos, number 4789 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance} with Christ. The Kingdom Apostles were not given the same message to preach as the Apostle Paul was. The rest of the Church Apostles also taught Paul’s gospel message. The eight Church Apostles were Paul, Barnabas, Silas (Silvanus), Timothy, Apollos, Erastus, Titus, and Epaphroditus. So far in the time line of ACTS there are only two Church Apostles, Paul and Barnabas.

Before we read the next three verses, which is one sentence in our King James Bible, we find that the Apostles Paul and Barnabas have now been in Iconium a long time, preaching and expounded the word of God with signs and wonders being done by the Holy Ghost by the hands of the Apostles, and a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed. If we think back to the beginning of this missionary journey, which may have started in 48 A.D. according to Coneybeare and Howson, we see that many had believed in Cyprus, Antioch in Pisidia, and now here at Iconium. But also in all of these place Paul and Barnabas had also faced great opposition as was told Paul by Ananias of Damascus. In Cyprus Elymas the sorcerer opposed Paul, and of course the Lord was victorious here for the governor of the island then became a believer. In Antioch in Pisidia Paul and Barnabas were expelled after gaining many souls for the Lord, and the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. Here at Iconium Paul and Barnabas had preached a long time, and many more became believers on the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour even though Paul and Barnabas here too faced great opposition from the non believers. Now as we read ACTS 14:5-7 we find the opposition against Paul and Barnabas, and their preaching and teaching the gospel message about Jesus Christ being turned up a notch.

ACTS 14:5 *And when 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, 6 They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about: 7 And there they preached the gospel.*

As we examine these three verses we find in verse 5 that ...*there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers,...* against the Apostles Paul and Barnabas. 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 was a physical assault for their intent was murder, to have Paul and Barnabas stoned to death! Furthermore the Greek word translated "despitefully" here is also rarely used (five times) in the New Testament scripture, and is translated "entreated spitefully" twice in scripture; "reproach" once; "use despitefully" once; and "shamefully entreated" once. The reference is to murder here in ACTS 14:5, and 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 by stoning. The point of stoning someone was to kill them in this violent manner, not to just nick them in the arm so to speak. Paul and Barnabas we find in verse 6 were aware of this plot to stone them, *...and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about.*

Lystra and Derbe were cities, and Lycaonia was a region some 20 miles long and 13 wide. 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. The region 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 to pasture in. Lycaonia means land of Lycanon, 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 also 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 that Lycaonia consisted of fourteen cities, and again the number fourteen we learned in our meaning of Bible 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, who later became a Church Apostle being one as is noted in ACTS 16:1, and Gaius of Derbe being the other, mentioned in ACTS 20:4.

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.* 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 in GENESIS 3:21, which reads: *Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.* Let's make sure we understand the teaching here in GENESIS 3:21. Adam and Eve were given just one law to keep, which is found in GENESIS 2:17 *But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* Adam and his wife violated that one and only commandment from God, and became sinners, whose wages were defined here in GENESIS 2:17 *...in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* ROMANS 5:12 further explains this: *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* However TITUS 2:11 also tells us: *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.* The "all men" in GENESIS 3 were just Adam and Eve, so back in GENESIS 3:21 *...the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to...* Adam and Eve, and *...the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.* There was blood shed here for a sacrifice for their sin. Simply stated, they were clothed here by God in His righteousness. HEBREWS 9:22 teaches the fundamental truth that Adam

and Eve learned here, which is without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. The animals killed, and the blood shed in GENESIS 3:21 pointed to the time when Jesus Christ would be slain for sinful mankind the one sacrifice for sins for ever. Adam and Eve were saved by the very same grace of God that you and I are saved by. Adam and Eve were saved contrary to the teaching of many who fail to see, and believe the teaching found here in GENESIS 3:21. God did not create Adam and Eve to send them to a Christ-less eternity. REVELATION 1:5 tells us that Jesus Christ ...loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. 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;....* We mentioned all this because Lystra means “ransoming,” and Derbe means “tanner: tanner of skin: coverer with skin.”

What happened when the Apostles Paul and Barnabas came unto the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe? ACTS 14:7 *And there they preached the gospel.* They were run out of Iconium for preaching the gospel, and now here in Derbe and Lystra they picked up where they left off in Iconium, and continued to preach the gospel! Lystra and Derbe didn’t have a synagogue of the Jews, for had there been a synagogue of the Jews at Lystra or Derbe, Paul would have gone there first to preach. 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. Thus we find 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, so 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.

Luke then records in ACTS 14:8-18 one of the more famous episodes that the Apostle Paul told him concerning what happened in Lystra during this first visit there. There is a lot of things that take place in a short period of time, so let’s read these verses to get familiar with the facts of this story. 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. 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. 13 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. 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. 18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.*

Let’s now look further into some of the details as what took place here in Lystra by the hands of the Apostles Paul and Barnabas. We find in verses 8-10 a similar miracle to the one recorded in ACTS 3 & 4 where a man who had never walked was healed by the hands of the Apostles Peter and John, who prayed in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth for his healing. After that miracle Peter preached his second sermon, and more than five thousand men were saved there in Jerusalem, not to mention the women and children! Recall here what is written in HEBREWS 13:8 *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.* Do you believe that? Paul and Barnabas knew this to be true, and so we read in 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. 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. And further more the ACTS of the Holy Ghost, including manifold untold miracles, are still common place today in Spirit filled assemblies!

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 unnamed 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 Strong’s Greek 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 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. This impotent man of Lystra certainly didn’t pose a problem to God, so God, after seeing this crippled mans simple faith, healed him. How many times did this crippled man hear Paul preach? We are not told this in scripture, but most likely this was his first encounter with Paul, and probably the first time he ever heard the gospel message preached. He had no preconceived idea of what he was about to hear, or what was going to be preached. Verse 9 indicates that he was fascinated by Paul’s preaching, so much so, that Paul himself was found to be ...*stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed*. The Holy Ghost made it known to the Apostle Paul that this impotent man ...*had faith to be healed*. The Greek word translated “healed” here in ACTS 14:9 also translates into our English as “saved.” Question, 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...* 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...* .

There is a sermon here in the phrase ...*stedfastly beholding...* as we are about to see. The Greek word translated ...*stedfastly beholding...* is atenizo {at-en-id'-zo}, number 816 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, a word which we have looked at previously, and here it really means to see with the eyes of the Holy Ghost even though you will never find this definition in a book. Atenizo {at-en-id'-zo} is used fourteen times in scripture, the number having to do with DELIVERANCE or SALVATION. Luke uses this word twelve of the fourteen times we find it in scripture. Atenizo {at-en-id'-zo} always has a strongly intensive meaning, indicating steadfastly beholding, or looking

earnestly. This too is how we are to be found, looking earnestly, and intensively upon our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ the Author and Finisher of our faith; and we do so with our “eyes of faith.” Furthermore we are to be found looking earnestly, and intensively for the immediate twinkling of an eye coming of our heavenly Bridegroom. The Apostle Paul here was seeing with his enlightened eyes of the Holy Ghost a man whom he perceived ...*had faith to be healed*. Back in ACTS 13:9 & 10 the Apostle Paul saw with his enlightened eyes of the Holy Ghost another man, and this man was full of all subtlety, and all mischief, whom Paul called a child of the devil, an enemy of all righteousness. ACTS 13:9 reads: *Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, . . .* That word “eyes” in ACTS 13:9 is the same atenizo {at-en-id'-zo}, number 816 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, that we are reading here in ACTS 14:9 ...*stedfastly beholding*... . Paul ...*stedfastly beholding*... Elymas the sorcerer in ACTS 13 saw with his enlightened eyes of the Holy Ghost a man who had no faith in God, and proclaimed to him ...*the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season...* ACTS 13:11. That miracle of sudden blindness, along with the word of God preached by the power of the Holy Ghost through Paul and Barnabas, enabled the governor of Cyprus to become a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ. Now here in ACTS 14:9 we find atenizo {at-en-id'-zo} translated ...*stedfastly beholding*... meaning Paul saw with his enlightened eyes of the Holy Ghost a man that he perceived ...*had faith to be healed*.

We need to further examine this sight Paul saw with his Holy Ghost eyes of faith, that being Paul here was ...*stedfastly beholding*... what the natural eye could not see, which was a man who Paul perceived ...*had faith to be healed*. The Greek word translated “healed” here is sozo {sode'-zo}, number 4982 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, a word found 110 times in the New Testament, which 93 times is translated as either “saved,” or “save.” Thus we find in our text of ACTS 14:9 that Paul saw with his Holy Ghost eyes of faith, a man that he perceived ...*had faith to be... saved!* That further includes the fact the Paul here not only saw a man that he perceived ...*had faith to be... saved*; healed from his sins in other words, but he also saw a man that he perceived ...*had faith to be healed*... from his crippled condition he was born with. We all were born with a crippled condition called sin! We all are conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity as PSALMS 51:5 informs, and each one of us must be born again as Jesus told Nicodemus in JOHN 3:7. When we accept Christ as our personal Saviour we are saved, and we are then healed from our crippled condition from birth that sin left us in. At that point in time we then our enabled to walk with the Lord for the first time in our life. The unnamed lame man in ACTS 14:8-10 when he got saved, at the same instance he also leaped and walked, a triple miracle!

Paul in ACTS 14:10 *Said with a loud voice, (to the crippled man) Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.* Certainly this crippled man at Lystra was delivered from his physically crippled condition for ...*he leaped and walked*... for the first time in his life in ACTS 14:10 after the Lord healed him. And as we have just learned, this man not only ...*leaped and walked*... but he more importantly believed the Lord for his salvation. Most likely this healed crippled man from Lystra may have been one of the “disciples” spoken of at Lystra in ACTS 14:20, who was standing by after Paul was stoned, and raised from the dead. Recall that the crippled man healed in ACTS 3 became exhibit A in ACTS 4:8 & 14 when the Sanhedrin council scolded Peter and John for healing in Jesus name, so it would be hard to imagine that this healed lame man in ACTS 14 would wander too far away from Paul and Barnabas, the ministers of the word of God, who had by the power of the Holy Ghost set him free. Recall back in JOHN 6:68 Peter said to Jesus ...*Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.* I can see the healed lame man saying the same thing to Paul and Barnabas.

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 heathen 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.

ACTS 14:13 *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.* Paul and Barnabas were not on a mission of their own doing, or to build themselves up in the eyes of ignorant men, for 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. 18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.* 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 14:6, 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. Jesus Himself said in JOHN 14:6 ...*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.*

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 15 thru 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 "suffered" 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 to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance...* 2 PETER 3:9. 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. 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 stated 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...* ACTS 14:17. 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.* Interestingly the phrase "the grace of God" is found twenty times in scripture, the number pointing to 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.

In ACTS 14:15 we find Paul and Barnabas saying that we ...*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.* Truly the Holy Ghost inspired these words, which contrast the worship of vanities with the worship of the One true living God. A couple of statements to pay attention to in this verse is the word "vanities," and the phrase "the living God." The Greek word translated "vanities" is mataios {mat'-ah-yos}, number 3152 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, meaning: futile, useless, worthless, devoid of force, of no purpose, profitless, empty of truth, of no success, and of no result. The word "vanities" is only found one time in the New Testament (here in ACTS 14:15), and is found a total of thirteen times in scripture. Thirteen is the number of REBELLION, and commonly speaks to sin against God. The Greek word mataios {mat'-ah-yos} is found six times in the New Testament, and is most commonly translated "vain." The number six the number associated with MAN, SATAN, and SATAN INFLUENCE OVER WORLDLY MAN. Let's take our examination of the word "vanities" a step further. Satan wants man to be influenced by anything other than God. When we did our meaning of Bible numbers study we found that the number thirty-eight meant MAN LOOKING AT SOMETHING OTHER THAN GOD. So what does the number thirty-eight have to do with the word "vanities?" Let's read a couple of verses of ECCLESIASTES to learn our answer to this question. ECCLESIASTES 1:2 reads: *Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.* Near the end of the book of ECCLESIASTES we find this concluding statement in ECCLESIASTES 12:8 *Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.* The author of this book was Solomon, the second son born to David and Bathsheba. In 1 KINGS 3:12 we find these words of God recorded about Solomon: *Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.* So we note that Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived. ECCLESIASTES is part of Solomon's own testimony; a partial autobiography of Solomon, which begins and ends with an overriding theme that we just read ...*Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.* The Hebrew word hebel {heh'bel}, number 01892 in The Strong's Hebrew Concordance, translates into our English as vanity, vanities, and vain thirty-eight times in ECCLESIASTES! Thus we find from the wisest man who ever lived vanity, vanities, and vain written thirty-eight times to emphasize that when MAN is found LOOKING AT SOMETHING OTHER THAN GOD what the natural man will find is emptiness. These vanities mean to "chase after the wind." So back here in ACTS 14:15 we find Paul and Barnabas saying that we ...*preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God,...* meaning serving dead idols is like chasing the wind, futile, useless, worthless, devoid of force, of no purpose, profitless, empty of truth, of no success, and of no result. Paul and Barnabas were challenging those at Lystra, and instructing them ...*that ye should turn... ...unto the living God.* 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. The Apostle Paul on future missionary journeys would again face men strongly influenced, and involved in idol worship, and all that goes with it. Paul grew up in Tarsus, a settlement steeped in Greek mythology, so the Greek gods were something Paul was familiar with. In ACTS 17 when Paul gets to Athens, he will find the ...*city wholly given to idolatry,...* which by the time Paul got there had been going on for centuries. The same was true in Corinth in ACTS 18, and also in Ephesus in ACTS 19. Again in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians Paul wrote 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.*

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...* EPHESIANS 4:21. 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. ACTS 14:15 ...*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.* (1) The truth in verse 15: ...*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, (see verse 12). (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...* verse 15. 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, which was what Greek mythology taught. (4) The truth: This one living God ...*suffered all nations to walk in their own ways...* verse 16. God 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. (5) The truth: This one living God ...*did good...* verse 17. 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, which again was what Greek mythology taught. (6) The truth: This one living God ...*gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons...* verse 17. The lie that was being refuted with this statement: That Jupiter (Zeus) was responsible for sending rain, and causing crops to grow. 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 all 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.* The meaning of verse 18 is that even with all of these words spoken by Paul and Barnabas it was all they could do to keep the crowds from offering sacrifices to them.

We now come to a very important verse in scripture, ACTS 14:19, where the Apostle Paul is stoned here at Lystra. 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.*

There are several significant points to note here in this remarkable verse, so let's start by mentioning the obvious fact 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 speaking boldly in the Lord, and after many signs and wonders were done by the grace of the Lord, 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 (Paul and Barnabas) despitefully, and to stone them.* This was the first mention of an attempt to stone Paul and Barnabas

in scripture, so this was where the seed was planted 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 about their Greek gods, 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*. Remember 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. These kinds of statements, no doubt, upset a large number of those of Lystra, since they all their life had worshipped these idols, and had no intention of stopping. 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*. Recall when the Jews stoned Stephen in ACTS 7:57 & 58 that they did so out of the city limits according to Jewish tradition, but here at Lystra the people, the heathen people, stoned Paul within the city limits, and then dragged his lifeless body through the city for all to see, and then dispose Paul’s lifeless out of the city limits. Paul becomes the second man stoned in the book of ACTS; Stephen was the first. Both men were stoned for preaching the truth, and joined a long list of Old Testament worthies, who also faced stoning; a point we will now examine further.

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; in other words kill them. After this the law of Moses had stoning as one form of punishment for certain offenses as noted in the following scriptures, which you can study further on your own: 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, which reads: *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?* Moses and David were never stoned, but both are noted to be heroes of faith in HEBREWS 11 for placing their trust, and confidence totally in the Lord. Paul in HEBREWS 11 records the following of those Old Testament worthies who obtained a good report through faith, writing in HEBREWS 11:35 *Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth*. So now Paul having been stoned here in ACTS 14:19 at Lystra finds himself in good company, for the reason he was being stoned was because of his trusting totally in the Lord, like Moses before him, like David before him, like these heroes of faith we just read about in HEBREWS 11, and like 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.*

Let's read ACTS 14:19 again: *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.* The word "persuaded" here shows that these Jews from Antioch and Iconium won over the heathen people of Lystra, and convinced them that Paul and Barnabas were imposters, and influenced them to stone Paul. The word "supposing" here means exactly what it says, that is they assumed Paul was dead. So was Paul stoned to death here at Lystra? This question has been debated ever since Paul was stoned. 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." The people who dragged him out of the city were under the impression that Paul was dead. 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 curious 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 upon himself, and his sufferings, but turns his attention to putting his trust in the Lord as he explains in the rest the succeeding verses of 2 CORINTHIANS 12, which you can study further on your own. Was Paul dead after being stoned at Lystra? The above scriptures seem to indicate that he was without specifically so stating it as fact. If Paul was referencing himself as being stoned to death at Lystra he gives us the time frame when this occurred, which was ...*above fourteen years ago,...* which is to say above fourteen years before he wrote 2 CORINTHIANS.

Before moving on here in ACTS 14 let's reflect for a moment on some fact our Brother in the Lord, Luke, wrote us in scripture concerning stoning. Luke is the only writer of New Testament scripture to tell the details of Stephen, and Paul being stoned, and Luke did so under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, so let's reflect on a some things we learn from these two horrible events. Saul of Tarsus got saved after the stoning of Stephen, and Stephen's sermon, and testimony at his death pricked the conscience of Saul of Tarsus until the day Saul got saved on the road to Damascus. Luke never knew Stephen, but Luke did know the Apostle Paul, the former Saul of Tarsus, who told Luke Stephen's testimony. Furthermore Luke got to spend time with Philip the evangelist, and interview him concerning Stephen. No doubt it was Philip who told Luke that Stephen was a man full of the Holy Ghost, a man full of faith, and power, who did great wonders and miracles among the people there in Jerusalem as is noted in ACTS 6:5 & 8. Perhaps it was Paul who mentioned to Luke that Stephen's countenance as he spoke to the Sanhedrin in ACTS 7 was that ...*his face as it had been the face of an angel...* ACTS 6:15. It had to have been the Apostle Paul who told Luke Stephen's final words, both before, and after being stoned. Immediately prior to being stoned to death, Stephen ...*being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God...* ACTS 7:55 & 56. They then cast Stephen out of the city, and stoned him, and Saul of Tarsus, our Apostle Paul heard his final words recorded in ACTS 7:60 ...*Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.* The Lord answered Stephen final prayer when Saul of Tarsus got saved on the road to Damascus! Note this about Stephen, that he was a fully mature man in Christ, full of the Holy Ghost when he was stoned to

death, and he died in victory! Now compare what we know about Stephen before he was stoned, with what we know about the Apostle Paul before he was stoned. Paul too, like Stephen, was a man full of the Holy Ghost, a man full of faith, and power, who did great wonders and miracles among the people, for isn't that why the people of Lystra were trying to do sacrifice unto both Paul and Barnabas? Luke told us as much in what he wrote in ACTS 13 & 14. We don't read any last words by Paul when he was stoned at Lystra, however fourteen years later Paul himself writes what we read earlier in 2 CORINTHIANS 12:2-4 -- *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.* Scripture teaches us that Paul knew at least three languages: Hebrew (his native tongue, see ACTS 21:40 & 22:2), Greek (see ACTS 21:37), and no doubt Latin (study ACTS 22:25-28). Yet here in 2 CORINTHIANS 12:4 we find Paul himself stating that there was no language to tell the wonderful heavenly words he heard, even though Paul knew three languages! Before being stoned Stephen got a glimpse of ...*the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God...* ACTS 7:55 & 56. This was a testimony to Paul, and all who heard Stephen say these words. And now in 2 CORINTHIANS 12 we find Paul caught up to the third heaven, and hearing the unspeakable language of heaven, which is a testimony to you, and me, and all who believe.

We are not yet finished examining 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.* There are many who are skeptical that our beloved Apostle Paul was stoned to death here at Lystra for Luke didn't specifically say that Paul was dead, but those who stoned him ...*drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.* Let us also suppose Paul was dead here; is any thing hard for God? The Lord spoke to Abraham in GENESIS 18:14 and asked him: ...*Is any thing too hard for the Lord?* In JEREMIAH 32:27 we read: *Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?* If nothing is hard for the Lord, then would it be impossible for the Lord to raise Paul from the dead here at Lystra, ...*supposing he had been dead?* The answer to all of these questions of course is no, and as we read in LUKE 1:37 *For with God nothing shall be impossible.* Jesus told His disciples the following in MARK 10:27 *And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.*

For a moment let's consider the examples left for us in scripture of people who were raised from the dead, besides Jesus, and besides Paul. There are eight, which happens to also be a number of RESURRECTION or NEW BEGINNING. In the Old Testament we find three examples of people raised from the dead: a widows son, a rich persons child, and a dead man during the time of burial. (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. In the New Testament Jesus raised from the dead a widows son, a rich persons child, and a dead man during the time of burial, proving the statement He made in JOHN 11:25 true, where Jesus said: ...*I am the resurrection, and the life...* . During His ministry on earth Jesus raised from the dead (4) a widows son in LUKE 7:11-18, a (5) rich persons child, in LUKE 8:41-56 and MARK 5:35-43, and (6) a dead man during the time of burial, that being Lazarus in JOHN 11. The last two examples of people raised from the dead in the new Testament, besides Jesus, and besides Paul, revolve around the ministries of the (7) Apostle Peter, who in ACTS 9:36-42 raised Tabitha from the dead, and (8) the Apostle Paul, who raised Eutychus from the dead in by the prayer of faith in ACTS 20:9 & 10. So having reviewed all of these

scriptures we must conclude that Paul was indeed stoned to death here at Lystra in ACTS 14:19, and then raised from the dead, for the very next verse of ACTS 14:20 tells us: *Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city:....* . We will dive into the details of this verse shortly, but not before concluding that the Lord raised Paul from the dead here at Lystra, and if he wasn't dead here, he certainly was unresponsive as they dragged him out of the city ...*supposing he had been dead.*

Let's take this one step further, 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 that famous 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, (see 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 in our chronological 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. Note also from the very first week Paul got saved he was told by Ananias of Damascus how the Lord explained to Ananias that ...*I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.* You can review a partial list of the many things Paul suffered on his Christian journey in 2 CORINTHIANS 11:20-33, and this is where he mentions this time in Lystra, where in verse 25 he writes ...*once was I stoned.* Those who follow Paul as he followed Christ should also expect a race-course full of trials, tests, and suffering. The Apostle Paul even writes about this in PHILIPPIANS 1:29 *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.* If Paul had been left for dead here at Lystra we wouldn't know PHILIPPIANS 1:29. Neither would we know PHILIPPIANS 3:10 *That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.* Do you think that Paul knew a little more about the power of His resurrection after being stoned here at Lystra. And certainly Paul also experienced the fellowship of His sufferings knowing full well that he was sent forth unto such places as Lystra by the Holy Ghost. Furthermore 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 one word, or any epistles or letters that we have a record of! That means there would not have been the 14 books written by Paul in our New Testament, the one hundred chapters that 100% complete, that fill up, that fulfil the word of God. In COLOSSIANS 1:25 Paul writes: *Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God.* The Greek word translated "fulfil" here is pleroo {play-ro'-o}, number 4137 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, which means: 1) to make full, to fill up, i.e. to fill to the full; to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally; to render full, i.e. to complete; to fill to the top: so that nothing shall be wanting to full measure, fill to the brim; to consummate; to make complete in every particular, to render perfect; to carry through to the end, to accomplish, carry out, (some undertaking), and to bring to pass. Paul's gospel message found in his one hundred chapters he wrote us what will ...*present you as a chaste virgin to Christ...* 2 CORINTHIANS 11:2 tells us. If Paul hadn't rose up supposedly from the dead here in ACTS 14:20 then we wouldn't have the gospel message that enables us to be the Bride of Christ! Furthermore we probably wouldn't have Luke's account, or John Mark's gospel record either, for in due time they also were close followers of the Apostle Paul and learned Paul's 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.

Before we move on let me point out something important here that we may have passed over, and that being why we are studying what Luke wrote us in scripture along with why we are spending so much time now studying about the Apostle Paul. As we have noted many times before in this study our brother in the Lord, Luke, wrote what he did under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and between The Gospel According to St. LUKE, and THE ACTS of the Apostles, Luke chronicled about 62-65 years of chronology in the early church. Luke was a very close follower of the Apostle Paul, and as such Luke knew very well Paul's gospel message. Luke didn't have Paul's epistles to study, but rather learned Paul's gospel message from the mouth of Paul himself. And Luke had the unique opportunity to observe our beloved Apostle Paul for many years. Paul was a testimony to Luke, and Luke was a testimony to Paul. We are given very few close friends in our short time on earth, and Luke and Paul had this close friendship. What brought these two together was their fellowship in the Lord, and their common love for the Lord, and their desire to individually have God's best in their own life. The reason the Holy Ghost has left for us in scripture their writings, their combined 152 chapters of New Testament scripture, is to document for us what it takes to be a full overcomer. A lot of what the Apostle Paul went through in his life we wouldn't know anything about had not Luke wrote about it here in ACTS. And as we go through these tests, and trials of Paul's everyday life, may we too realize that this is the pattern we too must follow to have God's best. Stated another way, our studying about what Luke wrote in scripture, and what the Apostle Paul wrote in scripture, teaches us what it takes to be a full overcomer; what it takes to be the Bride of Christ, His joint-heir wife. Luke's life, and Paul's life were well-tested lives of faith, for they both placed their confidence one hundred percent in the Lord. It was our brother in the Lord, Luke, who heard Paul say his final words to the Ephesian elders, some of which are recorded in ACTS 20. ACTS 20:18 ...*Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, 19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: 20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, 21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: 23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. 24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.* Paul said some other things to the Ephesian elders after this, but these words of verse 24 summarize the spirit of the overcomer. Brother Hill, and Brother W. J. Franklin taught me this when I was a teenager, and now fifty years later I am pointing this out to you. Luke and Paul are both New Testament worthies of faith, and in studying their lives, and what they wrote, we learn how they became the full overcomers they are. And as we move on here in ACTS 14 we will find the overcoming heart attitude of the full overcomer in our Apostle Paul, who didn't quit running his race even though he had been stoned here at Lystra. And Paul will return to Lystra twice more after this stoning testifying to us that ...*none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.* {Study ACTS 14:21, and ACTS 16:1 & 2.}

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.* This verse also contains a lot of

information that may not be apparent at first glance. Let's begin by saying a few words about "the disciples" mentioned here. In reading the previous verses about what happened here at Lystra, we get the opinion of very few becoming believers. Certainly the healed crippled man would now be a follower of the Apostle Paul and Barnabas, but up until verse 20 we don't find mention of any others becoming believers here at Lystra. The word "disciples" refers to a learner, a pupil, a follower of any teacher, thus the word "disciple" here refers to Christians. We haven't read of any believers being with Paul and Barnabas since they fled from Iconium, 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. Let's now read something from 2 TIMOTHY 3 that Paul wrote a couple of decades later unto Timothy as he reflects back on when he first became acquainted with 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. The following takes place at the beginning of Paul's second missionary journey. 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? It would have had to been during Paul's first missionary journey. 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.

These disciples in ACTS 14:20, it seems, were mourning Paul's death, no doubt crying unto the Lord, when all of a sudden Paul rose up. One meaning of "rose up" is to arise up from the dead! Certainly Paul's rising up from this brutal stoning was a miracle. 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 all the effects of the stoning. Obviously 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. And we read here in ACTS 14:20 that Paul walked right back into the city of Lystra; right back to where he was stoned! Could he do so without also thanking, and praising the Lord? Imagine this sight to the superstitious people of Lystra, who stoned Paul, to see him alive, vibrant and rejoicing, and walking back into the midst of the very ones who stoned him. What must they have thought? They previously thought Paul to be the god Mercurius, and Paul himself had told them he was not a god, but that they should turn to the One true God, but the unbelieving Jews from Antioch in Pisidia, and Iconium, had convinced the heathens of Lystra to stone Paul, which they did, and they were convinced they had killed him. Now here Paul is alive, and well, healed from all the effects of being stoned a few short hours before. Paul was a living walking testimony to those who now saw him at Lystra, walking tall with the crippled man who had been healed earlier. When Paul and

Barnabas got back into the city of Lystra, no doubt, they were the guest 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 the next day departed together to Derbe. 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.*

Recall what we learned previously about Derbe when Luke first mentioned this city in ACTS 14:6. Luke wrote here about Paul and Barnabas fleeing Iconium starting in ACTS 14:5 *And when 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, 6 They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about: 7 And there they preached the gospel.* Remember also that the region Lystra and Derbe were in is called Lycaonia, which consisted of fourteen cities, and fourteen is the number that 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. We learned previously that Lystra means “ransoming,” which points us to Jesus Christ for 1 TIMOTHY 2:6 tells us that Christ Jesus ...*gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.* 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 in GENESIS 3:21.

Derbe is the eighth city mentioned in scripture that Paul and Barnabas visited on this missionary journey. These eight cities are: (1) Seleucia, (2) Salamis, (3) Paphos, (4) Perga in Pamphylia, (5) Antioch in Pisidia, (6) Iconium, (7) Lystra, and now (8) Derbe. Recall the five meanings associated with the number eight: NEW CREATION; NEW BIRTH; NEW BEGINNING; RESURRECTION; and BRIDE. The Apostles 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 as Luke also noted in ACTS 14:7. ACTS 14:21 also 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 the BRIDE of Christ. It was Paul found here in Derbe once again preaching Paul’s gospel message, 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. Notice too that no mention is made of any more persecution against the Apostles Paul and Barnabas at Derbe. Scripture later records two famous people that came from Lystra and Derbe. The first one was Timothy, who later became a Church Apostle, who is first is noted in ACTS 16:1, and Gaius of Derbe being the other, mentioned in ACTS 20:4.*

Luke covers a lot of territory in ACTS 14:21 & 22 where he writes: *And when they had preached the gospel to that city, (Derbe) and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, (in Pisidia) 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.* This becomes a theme in Paul’s life, exhorting Christians ...*to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.* Paul lived his life as an example of this statement. We have mentioned PHILIPPIANS 1:29 many times in this study. PHILIPPIANS 1:29 *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.* “To believe on Him” for everything is how one lives “by faith.” Ask yourself: “How hard is it to believe on Him, who is before all things, and by whom all things consist?” {COLOSSIANS 1:17.}

We are not yet through examining ACTS 14:21 & 22, but we need to also note what is said in verse 23 before we tie all of this together. ACTS 14:23 finishes the thought on what Paul and Barnabas did as they departed each city they visited on this missionary journey. ACTS 14:23 *And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.*

There are seven items mentioned in ACTS 14:21-23 that Paul and Barnabas did as they established these churches in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia. The first two things that happened before a church was established is found in ACTS 14:21, (1) they **preached** the gospel, and (2) they **taught** the gospel. They **preached** to everyone who came to hear them, but not everyone believed. However to those who did believe, and accept Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour, they then **taught** these new disciples Christ's precepts, and instructions to follow.

The third item we find is in ACTS 14:22 where they are found (3) **Confirming the souls of the disciples...**. The word "**confirming**" is another Lukeism, meaning Luke is the only one who uses the Greek word translated "**confirming**" in scripture. The Greek word used here is episterizo {ep-ee-stay-rid'-zo}, number 1991 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, meaning to make to lean upon; to establish besides; to strengthen more; to render more firm; or to strengthen. Luke uses this Greek word episterizo four times in ACTS. Here in ACTS 14:22 Luke mentions ...**Confirming the souls of the disciples...**. In ACTS 15:32 Luke tells of **confirming** the brethren. In ACTS 15:41 Luke informs about **confirming** the churches. And in ACTS 18:23 Luke writes of ...**strengthening all the disciples**.

The fourth of the seven items found in ACTS 14:21-23 that Paul and Barnabas did on their establishing these churches is (4) ...**exhorting them to continue in the faith**... ACTS 14:22. The word Greek word here translated "**exhorting**," number 3870 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, is a verb used 109 times in New Testament scripture, and translates into our English beseech, besought, comfort, exhort, desire, pray, and intreat. In our text of ACTS 14:22 "**exhorting**" means to urge one to pursue some course of conduct with the prospect of always looking upward, and to the future. Barnabas was good at "**exhorting**" as is noted of him in ACTS 11:23: *Who, when he (Barnabas) came, (to Antioch, Syria) and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.* Barnabas was good at encouraging Saints ...*that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.* Paul and Barnabas in establishing these churches in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia, were ...**exhorting them to continue in the faith**.... To ...*continue in the faith*... means: to remain in; to hold fast; to be true to; to abide by; and to keep (the faith). Paul in his own words later **exhorted** those at Colosse to ...*continue in the faith*... in this statement found in COLOSSIANS 1:23 ...*continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;*... (There is a rich study in searching out the depths of this statement ...*the hope of the gospel*,... which the majority of Christians never see, for as Brother Copley notes: "It is far beyond our finite minds to comprehend, or the deepest depths of our hearts to fathom, the infinite riches of glory into which we are invited to enter by this revelation. The vast wealth of Christ's life - His wisdom, righteousness, power, and holiness - may be reproduced in those who believe and let Him have His way with them. They are thus fitted for glory - fitted to inherit the riches of the glory which are the inheritance of Christ and jointly reign with Him, His equal upon the throne of glory." {End of quoting Brother Copley.}) COLOSSIANS 2 goes on to show how Paul further **exhorted** Saints. COLOSSIANS 2:4 *And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. 5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ. 6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: 7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. 8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*

Our final three items of the seven items found in ACTS 14:21-23 that Paul and Barnabas did on their establishing these churches is found in ACTS 14:23. ACTS 14:23 *And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.* Number five on our list is (5) ...*ordained them elders in every church...* Nineteen times in the New Testament we find the word “ordained,” which is translated into English from fourteen different Greek words. Nineteen is the number of FAITH, and fourteen is the number of DELIVERANCE or SALVATION. Thus we get a hint as whom the Apostles “ordained” elders in every church, that being those who had the FAITH to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ to give DELIVERANCE, and SALVATION to all who believe in Him. The Greek word translated “ordained” here in ACTS 14:23 is cheirotoneo {khi-rot-on-eh'-o}, number 5500 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, with the meaning to appoint, and in ACTS 14:23 it means Paul and Barnabas had appointed those who had been manifesting themselves as gifted of God to discharge the functions of elders. Certainly Paul and Barnabas had the leading of the Holy Ghost in their appointments. Those qualified as an “elder” would have been the ones who showed the most devotion to the Lord; the ones who had taken in the most, and thus would have learned the most, and yielded the most unto the teaching of the Holy Ghost as inspired in the teachings of the Apostles Paul and Barnabas. These appointed persons were then to watch over and instruct the rest of these small assemblies, having themselves the most experience in the faith when compared to the others of their particular assembly. In short those found “ordained” to be an “elder” would have been found to show the greatest devotion to the Lord.

Thus we find that Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in every church, but only after a prolonged times of waiting upon the Lord. This prolonged waiting upon the Lord is what is meant by when they had (6) ...*prayed with fasting...* . **Prayer and fasting** is the sixth thing listed that Paul and Barnabas did as they established these churches. Recall back in ACTS 13:2 & 3 that much **prayer, and fasting** took place prior to Paul and Barnabas being chosen by the Holy Ghost to be Apostles. ACTS 13:2 *As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.* Brother Copley defines fasting as “a spontaneous cessation of everything that might interfere with a prolonged waiting upon the Lord.” {ACTS study book page 38.}

The seventh and final item that Paul and Barnabas did on their establishing these churches is (7) ...*they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.* The Greek word translated “commended” is paratithemi {par-at-ith'-ay-mee}, number 3908 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, and as used here it means: to place (trust) with someone, to entrust; or to commit (to someone’s care or trust). This is a statement of FAITH, and FAITH is associated with the number nineteen. Nineteen times in scripture we find the Greek word paratithemi {par-at-ith'-ay-mee}. For the context of ACTS 14:23 we find that Paul and Barnabas by FAITH were committing these newly ordained elders to the safe keeping of the Lord, who then would direct and guide their steps in overseeing their particular church affairs. While it may seem on the surface that men were left in charge of these churches, the reality was that it was the Lord on whom they believed who was left in charge. By faith Paul and Barnabas left these assemblies in the hands of the Holy Ghost to guide them into all truth as the Lord had told His disciples in JOHN 16:13.

Having now established some order in the churches in these places where they had spent much time, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas now resume their journey back toward Antioch in Syria, to the church there from whence this missionary journey had started some nearly two years earlier. We read this account of the remainder of their journey in ACTS 14:24-26. ACTS 14:24 *And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. 25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia: 26 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.*

Paul and Barnabas have been retracing their steps here since ACTS 14:21, and we find this additional fact mentioned in verse 25, that being Paul and Barnabas for the first time now had the opportunity to preach ...*the word in Perga*... which was the place young John Mark left them, and departed for Jerusalem back in ACTS 13:13. Recall that when Paul and Barnabas first came to Perga, the city had few people left in it as most had retreated unto the cooler mountains during the summer time. However now here in ACTS 14:25 Paul and Barnabas did get to preach ...*the word in Perga*. Recall that Perga means: earthy, much earth, or very earthy, thus we get a hint of the kind of worldly people who lived there, and we never read of the Apostle Paul, or Barnabas ever returning there again. In verse 25 we find the only mention of Attalia in scripture, which was the seaport that Paul and Barnabas visited to get on a ship bound for the home port of Antioch, Syria, which was the church that sponsored all of the Apostle Paul's missionary journeys.

Recall at this point in our study the importance of Antioch, Syria, and what we noted early on in this study of what Luke wrote us in scripture. As we began this study we pointed out that a noted historian, and scholar of the Bible named Eusebius, who lived in the 4th century, wrote that Antioch in Syria was Luke's native city. The Bible Cyclopediad by A. R. Fausset further mentions that "tradition connects Theophilus with Antioch," Syria. It seems obvious to me that Theophilus, the prominent man Luke addressed both of his letters to, and Luke knew each other from Antioch in Syria, and must have had hours of wonderful fellowship together. When Barnabas brought Paul to Antioch, Syria in ACTS 11:26 can't you see Theophilus being among the first to get acquainted with Paul? No doubt Theophilus and Luke were also star students of the Apostle Paul.

Again recall that nineteen is the number of FAITH. The name Antioch is found 19 times in scripture. Certainly the church at Antioch, Syria was an assembly of FAITH, thus it is no wonder that we read in ACTS 11:26 that ...*the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch*. Of the nineteen times we find "Antioch" in scripture, fifteen of these times reference the church of Antioch, Syria. Fifteen is the number of REST, and those of Antioch, Syria found REST and comfort in the gospel of Paul.

One more point of review concerning this important city of Antioch, Syria. Previously we mentioned that Antioch means both "driven against," and "speedy as a chariot." Putting the two meanings together you get the picture of a driven speedy chariot faster than any mode of transportation of that day. Elisha in 2 KINGS 2:11 & 12 witnessed the fastest transportation that anyone has ever witnessed: 2 KINGS 2:11 *And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.* 12 *And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.* This was the time when Elijah was translated, one of two translated in the Old Testament, Enoch being the other. The "driven speedy chariot" then is a symbol of translation; a symbol of a heavenly appearance.

ACTS 14:26 *And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.* Quietly in the book of ACTS this Gentile hub city of Antioch, Syria has become the supporting force used by the Holy Ghost to spread the gospel throughout the world of Paul's day. Curious too is the fact that Antioch, Syria has become the adopted home of this well educated Jewish Pharisee named Paul! Pharisee's were famous for being strict observers of the law, thus they were prominent amongst the Jews, and were looked highly upon in Jewish circles. But Antioch, Syria wasn't a hub for Pharisee's. Antioch, Syria was a business center, and because of this fact had also attracted a large number of Jewish business men, who were very successful in Antioch, Syria. History records that the Jews flourished in Antioch, Syria, especially after the stoning of Stephen, for many had fled Jerusalem to make a new home in Antioch, Syria. Recall again that ACTS 11:26 records that ...*the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch*. No doubt the number of disciples that were first called Christians here at Antioch, Syria were Jews, but quickly the ratio of Jews to Gentiles grew in that assembly to the point that the Gentiles outnumbered the Jews in the church that was at Antioch, Syria. This meeting was extremely

privileged to have among it's teachers the Apostle Paul. Recall that on the road to Damascus was when Jesus anointed our beloved Apostle Paul to be an Apostle, which is to say, one sent forth with orders from the Lord, and Paul's orders specifically were that he would be a witness unto the Lord, sent unto the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness unto light, Jesus Himself being the Light of the world, and to turn them from the power of Satan unto God; to preach that the Gentiles may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith in Jesus Christ! This is found in ACTS 26:16-18. The Apostle Paul magnified this office of being the Apostle of the Gentiles, and writes in ROMANS 11:13 *For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.* Paul didn't have a shingle to hang on a building somewhere that he could call an office, but if he did, it would have been here in Antioch, Syria. So at the end of what we call Paul's first missionary journey we find this statement in ACTS 14:26 *And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.* Conybeare and Howson date Paul and Barnabas' return from this missionary journey as being in 49 A.D.

Consider for a moment this word “recommended” in ACTS 14:26. According to Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words “recommended” means: to give or deliver over, or commanding, or committing servants of God to Him. But recall from ACTS 13:2 whom it was that “recommended” Paul and Barnabas for this missionary journey: *...the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.* We will again find the Apostle Paul being “recommended” for another missionary journey in ACTS 15:40; another recommendation *...to the grace of God.*

ACTS 14:26 *And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.* Let's spend a few moments discussing once again this large subject, which we will never exhaust, that being “the grace of God.” The phrase “the grace of God” is found in twenty verses of scripture, all of which are written by either Luke, or the Apostle Paul. Twenty is the number pointing to REDEMPTION. (There are also exactly twenty verses where the word “redemption” is found.) Paul wrote the phrase “the grace of God” in fourteen verses of scripture, fourteen being the number associated with DELIVERANCE or SALVATION, which was exactly the message our Apostle Paul preached everywhere he went, and he preached “the grace of God” to both the Jew, and the Gentile, and he did so in all three of the different languages he spoke; Hebrew, Greek, and Latin! To the Jew Paul preached “the grace of God” in HEBREW, his native tongue. To the Greek Paul preached “the grace of God” in Greek, the language of Tarsus where he grew up. To the Roman Paul preached “the grace of God” in Latin, the common language of the world of Paul's day. Paul preached DELIVERANCE, and SALVATION, and “the grace of God” everywhere he went; everywhere he was sent by the Holy Ghost. Our brother in the Lord, Luke, whom we are studying what he wrote in scripture, used the phrase “the grace of God” six times in his writings, and five are found in ACTS.

“The grace of God” was foundational to Paul's gospel message, and he tells us this in 1 CORINTHIANS 3:10. 1 CORINTHIANS 3:10 *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.* The foundation is Jesus Christ, who was given us by “the grace of God.” Previous Paul had told the Corinthians in 1 CORINTHIANS 1:4 *I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ.* Paul preached Christ, and “the grace of God” everywhere he went. Our brother Luke recorded this in ACTS 20, verses we have looked at before, where Luke records Paul's words spoken unto the Ephesian elders. ACTS 20:24 *...neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.* ...ACTS 20:32 *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

Do you know what ...*the gospel of the grace of God*... is? “**The grace of God**” as we noted above was foundational to Paul’s gospel message. We have briefly discussed Paul’s gospel before noting that the Apostle Paul became the first Church Apostle, and to him was given dispensation to preach not only of the kingdom of God, but also of **the grace of God**, and the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, the heavenly calling, the holy calling, and that the Gentiles should be {sugkleronomos, number 4789 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance} fellowheirs with Christ. The Kingdom Apostles (Peter, John, James, Matthew etc.) were not given the same message to preach as the Apostle Paul was. Paul’s gospel message of **the grace of God** is highlighted in the following verses of EPHESIANS 3. EPHESIANS 3:1 *For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, 2 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: 3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; 6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, {sugkleronomos 4789} and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: 7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. 8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: 10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, 11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.* This is snap-shot of what ...*the gospel of the grace of God*... is about.

Later in life Paul wrote an epistle to a fellow Church Apostle named Titus, a Greek Gentile according to GALATIANS 2:3, and Paul wrote in TITUS 2:11 *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 Literal Translation of TITUS 2:11 reads: *For the saving grace of God appeared to all (sorts of) men,.... .* Paul and Barnabas on this first missionary journey had preached “**the grace of God**” to all sorts of men, hadn’t they?

Brother Hill had this to say about “**the grace of God**.” **The grace of God** “is the most wonderful thing in the universe. How it can reach down to the moral depths to which sinners can sink, and raise them up to heights of privilege and blessing far beyond all imagination of man to conceive, is marvelous. Christ alone could make it possible.” {End of quoting Brother Hill.} Indeed the subject of “**the grace of God**” is endless, so take some time on your own to research this subject further.

ACTS 14:26 *And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.* Finally note here the word “**fulfilled**” here in ACTS 14:26, it simply means completed, that is to carry through to the end, to accomplish, to carry out. Paul and Barnabas completed their missionary journey by returning to Antioch in Syria. Part of this completion process is giving their testimony of what has happened unto them during this journey, and this they did in verse 27, which we will get to shortly. The other part of this completion process concerns those of the church at Antioch in Syria, who daily were praying for the safe keeping of Paul and Barnabas, and that the Lord would have is way with them on this missionary journey. So now Paul and Barnabas will give a report to the assembly at Antioch, Syria when they truly “**fulfilled**” their missionary journey. No doubt one of the disciples that heard their testimony was our brother in the Lord, Luke, whom it seems, took good notes.

ACTS 14:27 *And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the*

Gentiles. The Greek word translated “rehearsed” here is anaggello {an-ang-el'-lo}, number 312 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, which sounds to me like an angel. We learn in HEBREWS 1:14 that angels are ministering spirits, and by following the leading of the Holy Ghost the Apostles Paul and Barnabas too were ministers announcing the word of God everywhere they went. Anaggello {an-ang-el'-lo} means: to tell, to show, to declare, to rehearse, to speak, a report to announce, to make known, to report, or to bring back tidings. The good tidings was ...*all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles*. Did they highlight all that went wrong, and all the opposition they faced? Probably not, for what we find here is a highlight of ...*all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles*. How long did it take Paul and Barnabas to declare in their report all that the Lord had accomplished in this work that the Holy Ghost had sent them to? Probably this was an all day, and well into the evening event, and the subject of many Bible studies in future days. I am sure they didn’t get it all out in one session, but perhaps they did. For us ACTS 13 & 14 is our introduction to the teachings and preaching of the Apostle Paul, and how it was that the gospel of **the grace of God** and the door of faith was, in the beginning of his ministry, opened up, especially unto the Gentiles. The assembly at Antioch in Syria now was primarily an assembly of Gentiles as indicated in ACTS 13:1; GALATIANS 2:11 & 12; and ACTS 15.

ACTS 14:28 *And there they abode long time with the disciples*. We are not told how much time a “long time” was here in Antioch, Syria that Paul and Barnabas continued strengthening the Christians. We can be assured that they were not idle during this period of a “long time,” and also got some much needed rest, and Godly fellowship in this friendly environment.