

On the Mission Field, Part V: Lystra to Derbe

Text: Acts 14:19-21a

Introduction:

We left off with Paul and Barnabas, seeking to preach the Gospel to the people of Lystra, very clearly, a people with little Judaistic influence. There is no synagogue present, idolatry of the Greek, myth gods, is rampant, and therefore, they have tailored their approach, to this utterly heathen people. They gain an ear with the people there, especially when a man, lame from birth, is healed by the Apostle Paul. However, the audience responds by sending for the priest of zeus, as they presume that the Greek gods, zeus and hermes, have come to them, in the Apostles Paul and Barnabas. And so, as they prepare to offer a sacrifice to them, Paul and Barnabas tear their clothes, and they run out to stop them. And they plead with them, on behalf of the True and Living God, to repent of their gross idolatry, and to seek the Living God, who created heaven and earth and all things. And we left off last time, seeing that, even with their pleading, they were hardly able to restrain them from still offering the sacrifices.

This morning then, we move on to see what happens, following this, as further conflict, infiltrates the ministry of the apostles.

I. From Lystra to Derbe

"Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead" (vs. 19).

And so, here we find that, unbeknownst to Paul, a group of Jews from the last two cities they had visited, had joined together, to chase after Paul, even in Lystra, so as to put him to death. [See 13:49-52; 14:4-7]

And so, there was a coordinated attack, made up of Jewish aggressors from both Antioch (of Pisidia) and Iconium, directed toward Paul.

Question #1: What can we note about the multitudes in Lystra, considering what had happened in verses 11-18, and now verse 19? What does that tell us about the natural heart of man?

Question #2: Again, what does this tell us about miracles *alone*, and the scope of their salvific power?

Question #3: Looking back at questions 1 and 2, can we see anything reflective of the ministry of Jesus, found here? [From palm branches and praises (see Matthew 21:7-11; Luke 19:37-38) to "Crucify Him!"; John 6 also]

Question #4: What are some facts that we can note about the type of suffering that Paul endures here? Paul had escaped potential persecution, when in Antioch and Iconium. What can we note about God's providence here? Ponder again Acts 20:22-24. What application/s for us, might we take from this event? [Surrounded by a mob, stoned with large stones, knocked unconscious, dragged out of the city, thought to be dead; Why didn't Paul die?]

"However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe" (vs. 20).

Question #5: Describe Paul's actions here. How might Paul's sufferings here, have been used by God (aside from his own personal sanctification), in the light of what we are told in 2 Timothy 3:10-12? Could our sufferings be used in the grooming or edification or salvation of others? [Note: "the next day..."! Comment on 2 Tim. 3:13ff---end times views...etc]

Question #6: Paul was just stoned, presumed dead, and dragged out of the city. Where does he go the next day, before departing to Derbe? Why might he have done this? [To encourage any disciples, who thought he was dead? To get medical attention?]

"And when they had preached the Gospel to that city, and made many disciples..." (vs. 21a)

Question #7: Describe Paul's unnatural boldness and faithfulness here. What happens as a result? Is it worth it? Why?

Amen!!!