

**Valley Bible Church**  
**Sermon Notes for May 17, 2015**

**The Confusion over Paul in Lystra**  
**Acts 14:8-20**

Acts 13-14 records Paul's first missionary Journey, and Acts 14:8-20 describes Paul's ministry in Lystra, which was about eighteen miles south of Iconium and which was the home of Timothy (Acts 16:1).

Lystra was in an entirely pagan area that followed Greek mythology and had no synagogue.

**1. The miraculous work (14:8-10)**

Luke emphasizes the fact that the man was lame. In a smaller town such as Lystra this man would be well known by all, so this was an undeniable miraculous event.

This miracle parallels Peter's miracle in Acts 3:1-8, and shows the ministry of Paul to be the continuation of the ministry of the apostles. This will become important in the validation of the Gentile ministry in Acts 15:12.

The lame man's faith was demonstrated by his attentiveness to Paul's words, and he was healed because of God's work through Paul, not because of his own faith.

**2. The misplaced worship (14:11-13)**

Barnabas was probably identified with the most powerful Greek god because he was older than Paul.

Greek mythological folklore included gods visiting men, so the response by the multitudes is not surprising. The common Greek response to good fortune was dressing up oxen and cooking a feast for the community.

**3. The ministry of the Word (14:14-18)**

Not speaking Lycaonian, Paul and Barnabas learned of the sacrifice and reacted with strong indignation, not because of the idolatry but because of the blasphemy of their exaltation.

Paul did not refer to Scripture (as at Pisidian Antioch, Acts 13:16-41) or to philosophy (as at Athens, Acts 17:22-31), because he was speaking to a strictly Gentile peasant audience. Our communication to unbelievers about Christ must take into account their prior knowledge of God.

The content of the preaching the gospel included:

- Repentance from vain things (Psalm 135:15-18)
- The living God (1 Thessalonians 1:9)
- The creator God (Psalm 146:6)
- The good God (Matthew 6:45)

Before the time of Christ, God communicated to the nations through Israel and through nature, so that they are without excuse (Romans 1:18-20).

#### **4. The multitudes withdraw (14:19-20)**

The Jews traveled to persecute Paul (cf. Acts 9; 2 Corinthians 11:25; Galatians 6:17). The reason the multitudes were quickly won over by the unbelieving Jews was because the multitudes never learned from Paul. When we respond to truth with only emotional excitement we are destined to lose interest and be led astray.

The disciples faithfully served the Lord by protecting Paul (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:58). The journey to Derbe was another thirty-five miles southeast of Lystra.

May we trust the Lord, like the disciples at Lystra, rather than trust our superstitions, like the multitudes at Lystra.