



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## Leadership in Lystra: Three Responses

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**Acts 14:8-18** *“And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother’s womb, who had never walked. 9) This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, 10) said with a loud voice, ‘Stand up straight on your feet!’ And he leaped and walked. 11) Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, ‘The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!’ 12) And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. 13) Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, intending to sacrifice with the multitudes. 14) But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out 15) and saying, ‘Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, 16) Who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. 17) Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.’ 18) And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them.” (NKJV)*

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*“THEN PETER SAID, ‘SILVER AND GOLD I DO NOT HAVE, BUT WHAT I DO HAVE I GIVE TO YOU: IN THE NAME OF JESUS*

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*CHRIST OF NAZARETH, RISE UP AND WALK.’ AND HE TOOK HIM BY THE RIGHT HAND AND LIFTED HIM UP, AND IMMEDIATELY HIS FEET AND ANKLE BONES RECEIVED STRENGTH. SO HE, LEAPING UP, STOOD AND WALKED AND ENTERED THE TEMPLE WITH THEM—WALKING, LEAPING, AND PRAISING GOD.” (ACTS 3:6-8)*

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Why is this cripple man’s lame condition emphasized three times? What was Paul talking about while he was speaking? How did this lame man respond to Paul’s message? Did Paul command him to do the impossible? Why did most in Lystra misinterpret the miracle? Did they act the opposite of which the miracle was intended? What characterized the leadership of this first mission team?

### FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES AND EVENTS:

- FEBRUARY 9: ACTS 14:19-22 *THE GREATEST MISSIONARY IS MARTYRED*
- FEBRUARY 16: ACTS 14:23-28 *THE DOOR OF FAITH OPENED TO THE GENTILES*

So simple yet explosive in the minds of the God-fearers was Paul’s first recorded message in the capital of Pisidia Antioch that *“the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the Word of God”* (Acts 13:44). What an awakening in this great city, *“And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. And the Word of the Lord was being spread throughout all that region”* (13:48-49). When legally forced out of that capital by the leaders, they went to the next closest capital, Iconium, *“and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed”* (14:1). Most likely the majority in both of these capitals had believed. Their preaching was so successful that again, the jealous Jews manipulate others to persecute them and they were forced to flee into the neighboring province of Lycaonia to the cities of Lystra and Derbe. Though neither of these cities were capitals and there was no synagogue, they remained committed to their singular focus: *“They were preaching the Gospel there”* (Acts 14:7).

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### BIBLE STUDIES

THURSDAY @ 6:30 AM—PRAYER MEETING – GAB 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR EAST CONFERENCE ROOM

THURSDAY @ 7:00 AM—BIBLE STUDY – GAB 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR EAST CONFERENCE ROOM

THURSDAY @ 4:30 PM—BIBLE STUDY – GAB 330-SENATOR CARRICO’S OFFICE

# Virginia

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**“FOR IF I PREACH THE GOSPEL, I HAVE NOTHING TO BOAST OF, FOR NECESSITY IS LAID UPON ME; YES, WOE IS ME IF I DO NOT PREACH THE GOSPEL.” 1 CORINTHIANS 9:16**

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### I. THE RESPONSE OF FAITH

**ACTS 14:8-10**

Their leadership in Lystra is launched with the cripple man making sure that he *“heard Paul speaking.”* The focus of the lame man was singularly on the message of the Gospel that Paul is presenting. Luke emphasizes this immobilized man’s hopeless condition with a threefold description, reminding the reader of the impossibility of him walking. Yet Paul, *“seeing that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, ‘Stand up straight on your feet!’”* This man, who had never even stood up straight in his life, suddenly *“leaped and walked.”* The point is that the man obeyed, even though the command was humanly impossible. Jesus Christ made it clear that the same faith is necessary for salvation, especially for the wealthy.

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**“CHILDREN, HOW HARD IT IS FOR THOSE WHO TRUST IN RICHES TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD! IT IS EASIER FOR A CAMEL TO GO THROUGH THE EYE OF A NEEDLE THAN FOR A RICH MAN TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD.’ AND THEY WERE GREATLY ASTONISHED, SAYING AMONG THEMSELVES, ‘WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED?’ BUT JESUS LOOKED AT THEM AND SAID, ‘WITH MEN IT IS IMPOSSIBLE, BUT NOT WITH GOD; FOR WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE.’” MARK 10:24-27**

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### II. THE RESPONSE OF FUTILITY

**ACTS 14:11-13**

Though Paul is given the gift of this miracle, both he and Barnabas are lacking the gift of tongues. They do not understand the Lycaonian language as those of Lystra shout, *“The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men,”* and they proceed to name these missionaries after the primary gods of their pantheon, Zeus and Hermes. Paul

and Barnabas don’t understand what is happening until *“the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, intending to sacrifice with the multitudes.”* These people have completely misinterpreted the miracle given to confirm the truth of the Gospel. Instead, they were trying to make this God-given miracle prove the existence of their false gods.

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**“IT WAS, OF COURSE, A CASE OF REJECTION IN THE FORM OF ACCEPTANCE. THE LYCAONIANS HAD THE WRONG END OF THE STICK ENTIRELY. THEY SAW ONLY THE MIRACLE; THEY WERE UNCONCERNED WITH THE CONTENT OF PAUL’S MESSAGE.” GORDON KEDDIE**

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### III. RESPONSE OF FERVENT WITNESS ACTS 14:14-18

Paul and Barnabas not only tear their clothes, but they run away from their potential worshippers and *“run in among the multitude.”* In order to be heard above the noise of this crowd, they are *“crying out and saying, ‘Men, why are you doing these things?’”* And what was the clear message these Gentiles had missed entirely? It is obvious that Paul is repeating it, *“We ... preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all thing that are in them.”* They have emphasized their idolatry and false gods which Paul has been describing as *“useless”* or literally *“vanities,”* from which they need to turn away in repentance and place their faith in *“the living God.”* This singular Creator they were accountable to because He had also made them! These nations had neither had the privilege of revelation nor had they been objects of immediate wrath as in the flood. Yet they still had the witness of Creation and the goodness of God demonstrated in His continual gifts of *“rain”* and *“fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.”* Paul is always a fervent witness of the Gospel.

#### Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Have you obeyed the command of God to repent from your sin and place your faith in Jesus Christ?
- 2) Do you continue in unbelief like the atheist who uses God’s Creation to try to prove his lie of evolution?
- 3) Is the Gospel your priority such that you seek to be a fervent witness to those around you and even above you?