

## **Acts 14:8-18**

1. Housekeeping
2. Discussion question
3. Observation and exposition
4. The take-away for us?

### **Housekeeping**

1. Ed asked me to correct one detail:
  - a. He said, “85% of people in America identify as Catholic.” What he meant was, “85% of people in America identify as Christian, with 25% identifying as Catholic.”
  - b. My comments
    - i. Sacraments and ordinances
    - ii. New Covenant Theology
2. Survey: June, July, and August - what should we cover in Sunday school this summer?

### **Discussion question**

1. How should we evangelize the people in our community (world?) who have no background in Christianity or the Bible?

### **Observation and exposition**

1. Read the passage [SLIDES]
2. Historical background of Lystra [SLIDES]
  - a. tel (or tell) = mound or hill, resulting from people living in one place for centuries or millennia
    - i. Compare with modern garbage dumps (i.e. the Grand Rapids landfill)
  - b. Timothy was from Lystra
    - i. **Acts 16:1-2** [SLIDE]
3. Observation and exposition
  - a. A lame man healed **(8-10)** [SLIDE]
    - i. The man “had faith to be made well”
      1. He obeyed Paul in faith
      2. He sprang up (leapt, jumped), as compared with a Turkish get-up
      3. He began walking, for the first time in his life

- ii. Very similar to the healing in **Acts 3:2-10**
  - iii. Luke may be “validating” Paul by comparing with Peter
- b. The crowd’s misguided reaction (**11-13**) [SLIDE]
  - i. To us, as educated, modern, enlightened (!) people, their reaction may seem bizarre, but....
    - 1. There was a local legend, documented by a Latin poet named Ovid in his lengthy poem *Metamorphoses*, of Zeus (Jupiter) and Hermes (Mercury) testing the hospitality of a community. They were rejected by everyone except a very poor couple named Philemon and Baucis. Zeus and Hermes destroyed by flood everyone who had rejected them, and transformed the old couple’s cottage into a temple. [SLIDE]
      - a. *Metamorphoses*: 11,995 lines, 15 books, and more than 250 myths
      - b. Inspired such authors as Dante, Chaucer, and Shakespeare
      - c. Written (published) in 8 A.D.
    - 2. This may explain their reaction - they didn’t want to risk offending any visiting gods!
  - ii. To their credit, they did acknowledge that a deity was involved in the healing.
    - 1. Modern man?
      - a. We (modern humanity) seem to do everything we can to explain away the possible existence of God, or reduce him to not much more than human.
      - b. Evolution
      - c. Dark matter (NPR)
      - d. Physics and the randomness of atoms
  - iii. In their excitement they reverted to their native language, Lycaonian, which Paul and Barnabas did not know or understand [SLIDES]
- c. Paul and Barnabas’s response and speech (**14-18**) [SLIDES]
  - i. First thing? They tore their clothing - Jewish gesture of horror at blasphemy. Visual impact!
    - 1. **Mark 14:63** [SLIDE]
    - 2. Compare with:
      - a. **Acts 10:26** [SLIDE]
      - b. **Revelation 19:9-10** [SLIDE]
  - ii. Compare their reaction with Herod in **Acts 12:21-23** [SLIDE]

- iii. Paul's speech here is one of two examples in Acts of preaching to a purely pagan audience.
  - 1. Unpack the speech...
    - a. "...good news about the possibility of escaping from the futility of idolatry and coming to know the living God..."  
Peterson, 409
  - 2. How does this speech compare with Paul's synagogue speech in **Acts 13**?
    - a. Appealed to natural revelation (general) rather than special revelation (Scripture).
    - b. Need to start where people are, then go from there.
  - 3. What can we learn about God in this short speech?
    - a. God is:
      - i. living (alive) compared with Zeus (zoe = life)
      - ii. one
      - iii. patient, but not indifferent
      - iv. approachable through repentance
      - v. the creator
      - vi. the sustainer (provider = providence)
      - vii. he cares for his creation
      - viii. actively involved in the world
  - 4. Not the only place they encountered idolatry and pagans
    - a. see **1 Thessalonians 1:9-10** [SLIDE]
  - 5. Where is Christ in this speech?
    - a. see **Acts 14:7**
    - b. Implied, perhaps in vv. **15** and **16**
    - c. We know that Paul and Barnabas did proclaim Christ, because people in Lystra were converted and a church was planted there.

### The take-away for us

- 1. See quotes by Peterson and Stott.

### Resources

- 1. *The Acts of the Apostles*, F. F. Bruce, 1990
- 2. *The Book of the Acts*, F. F. Bruce, 1988
- 3. *The Acts of the Apostles*, David G. Peterson
- 4. *The Message of Acts*, John Stott
- 5. *The Acts of the Apostles*, Ben Witherington III
- 6. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tell\\_\(archaeology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tell_(archaeology))
- 7. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metamorphoses>

8. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baucis\\_and\\_Philemon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baucis_and_Philemon)