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A Vision of Stability

Pastor Ken Sistrunk

Acts 14:8-20 ⁸In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked. ⁹This man was listening to the words of Paul, who looked intently at him and saw that he had faith to be healed. ¹⁰In a loud voice Paul called out, "Stand up on your feet!" And the man jumped up and began to walk. ¹¹When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices in the Lycaonian language: "The gods have come down to us in human form!" ¹²Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. ¹³The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates, hoping to offer a sacrifice along with the crowds. ¹⁴But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul found out about this, they tore their clothes and rushed into the crowd, shouting, ¹⁵"Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news that you should turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. ¹⁶In past generations, He let all nations go their own way. ¹⁷Yet He has not left Himself without testimony to His goodness: He gives you rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness." ¹⁸Even with these words, Paul and Barnabas could hardly stop the crowds from sacrificing to them. ¹⁹Then some Jews arrived from Antioch and Iconium and won over the crowds. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, presuming he was dead. ²⁰But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. And the next day he left with Barnabas for Derbe. (BSB)

I. Here are the details of this passage.

- A. Persecution** had forced the missionaries to leave a town that was showing fruit and go to Lystra.
- B.** There they met a crippled man whom God used them **to heal**. V.8-10
- C.** The Gentiles interpreted the healing through their worldview of **polytheism**. V.11-13
- D.** The missionaries use the Jewish practice of **rending** their clothing. V.14
- E.** Paul speaks of the **goodness** of God using the illustration of the blessing of rain. V.15-17
- F.** The **Gentile mob** continues to try to sacrifice bulls to the missionaries. V. 18
- G.** The Jews from the other towns showed up and **turned** the crowds **against** the missionaries. V. 19
- H.** Paul was stoned and left for **dead**. V.19
- I.** The **disciples** of Jesus Christ in Lystra gathered around Paul and he got up and left for the next town. V.20

II. What can we learn from this passage?

- A.** Our enemy has a pattern of first trying to **corrupt** us and if that doesn't work, he tries to **destroy** us. Please be aware of this.
- B.** Signs and wonders will not happen if there is no **faith to believe** that it can happen.
- C.** Understand that your actions may be getting **misinterpreted** by those whom you are called to reach out to.
- D.** Be willing to **adapt** your message to your audience.
- E.** Accept persecution when it comes. If we are going to be **effective**, we will be persecuted.