

Fact Sheet for **“Responses”**

Acts 14:8-28

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ESV ⁸ ¶ **Now at Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was crippled from birth and had never walked. ⁹ He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well, ^{10a} said in a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet."**

He had faith to be made well. Did this man's faith heal him? Would he have been healed without Paul? Was the healing effected through Paul?

^{10b} **And he sprang up and began walking.**

This was the third time in Acts that a cripple was healed (Acts 3:1-10; 9:33-35).

¹¹ **And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" ¹² Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker.**

Zeus is the "Father of Gods and men" who rules the Olympians of Mount Olympus.. Hermes was his son. Zeus is frequently depicted by Greek artists in one of two poses: standing, striding forward, with a thunderbolt leveled in his raised right hand, or seated in majesty. Hermes is the emissary and messenger of the gods

¹³ **And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds.**

These woolen¹ garlands were placed on the sacrificial animals.

What is a possible reason for their actions? "Approximately half a century before Paul's first missionary journey, Ovid (c. 43 B.C. – A.D. 17) in the *Metamorphoses* (8.626-724) retold an ancient legend that may have been well known in southern Galatia and may in good part explain the wildly emotional response of the people to Paul and Barnabas. According to the legend, Zeus and Hermes once came to "the Phrygian hill country" disguised as mortals seeking lodging. Though they asked at a thousand homes, none took them in. Finally, at a humble cottage of straw and reeds, an elderly couple, Philemon and Baucis, freely welcomed them with a banquet that strained their poor resources. In appreciation, the gods transformed the cottage into a temple with a golden roof and marble columns. Philemon and Baucis they appointed priest and priestess of the temple, who instead of dying, became an oak and a linden tree. As for the inhospitable people, the gods destroyed their houses. Just where in "the Phrygian hill country" this was supposed to have taken place, Ovid does not say. But it appears that, seeing the healing of the crippled man and remembering the legend, the people of Lystra believed that Zeus and Hermes had returned and wanted to pay them homage lest they incur the god's wrath."²

This also shows just how fake the priest's belief in Zeus was. He was eager to sacrifice with the crowds to something that was not true! In contrast we have much evidence for what we believe.

Paul and Barnabas were slow to pick up on the reaction of the crowd because the people spoke in Lycaonian...

¹ Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, *στέμμα*, p. 772; and The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 392.

² The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol. 9, p. 435.

¹⁴ But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out, ^{15a} "Men, why are you doing these things? ^{15b} We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. ¹⁶ In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. ¹⁷ Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness."

Notice that their words to the crowd did not assume any knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures. They were speaking to a non-Jewish crowd. Think about General Revelation (Ps. 19:1-6) and Specific Revelation (Ps. 19:7-11). Compare also Romans 1:18-20.

¹⁸ Even with these words they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them.

¹⁹ ¶ But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.

Some wanted to sacrifice to Paul, others wanted to kill him (based on the ire of the non-believing Jews). Were these the same people, or different people? Remember Jesus' words in Jn. 15:20.

²⁰ But when the disciples gathered about (*literally "surrounded" or "encircled"*) him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe.

There were those who believed! Compare Acts 13:48.

²¹ When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, ²² strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

They retraced their steps. It would have been shorter to go right to Antioch of Syria.

²³ And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

"appointed elders" – These were new believers, but not new to the scriptures (1 Tim. 3:6).

²⁴ ¶ Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. ²⁵ And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia, ²⁶ and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled. ²⁷ And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.

How God "had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles" (not by works of the Law)

²⁸ And they remained not little time with the disciples.

"Thus ends the first missionary journey which lasted between one and two years and in which Paul and Barnabas traversed more than 700 miles by land and 500 miles by sea."³ "Probably Paul wrote the book of Galatians from Antioch shortly after his first missionary journey and before the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)."⁴ Compare Gal. 6:17.

Think also about 2 Cor. 2:14-16 as we get responses from people.

³ The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 392.

⁴ The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 392.