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THE APOSTLE PAUL – LESSON 10

FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY – PART 3

LYSTRA: PAUL STONED AND TIMOTHY CONVERTED

Driven from Pisidian Antioch, Paul and Barnabas now go to Iconium about 100 miles SE of Antioch. As they preached in the synagogue, a great multitude of Jews became believers. Many of the gentiles were also converted. They continued on a long time in Iconium, but eventually the unconverted Jews stirred up animosity among many of the other gentiles to the point that the city was greatly divided. Many stood with the apostles while many others bitterly opposed them and sought to stone them.

This caused the two apostles to flee again for their lives. They went 20 miles south to Lystra and preached all around that region. Lystra was the home of Timothy who became a believer as he heard their preaching and saw the miracles performed.

One particular miracle at Lystra was performed as Paul was preaching. He noticed a man who had been lame from birth. Perceiving faith in the invalid, Paul called out to him in the audience in a loud voice to stand up on his feet. The man leaped up and walked. The reaction of this pagan crowd was unanticipated. They immediately began to chatter in their native Lyconian tongue that these two men were gods who had come down in the likeness of men.

They said that Barnabas was Jupiter (Zeus) and Paul, the spokesman, was Mercury (Hermes). Lystra had a temple of Jupiter, so the priest of Jupiter brought garlands to adorn him and oxen to sacrifice in worship to him.

The now distraught apostles rent (tore off) their outer garments and ran out among the people protesting this sacrilege. They said that they were just ordinary men, not gods, and that they had come to share with them about the true God of creation. They could barely stop the people from worshipping them.

Then certain of the unbelieving Jews from Antioch and Iconium showed up and persuaded the people to turn against Paul and Barnabas. The people then took up Paul, dragged him out of Lystra and stoned him until he was unconscious. They presumed him to be dead and left him lying there. Yes, they left for dead the one they earlier had thought to be the god Mercury.

Disciples came around, probably praying and interceding for Paul who then revived to life and rose up and went back into Lystra. I'm sure they must have been shocked to see alive the very one of whom they were certain was dead.

The next day Paul and Barnabas left Lystra, going now to Derbe.