

ACTS 14:14-18 | PAUL RESTRAINS THE PEOPLE

- Verses 14-15 –
 - Concerning **the apostles, Barnabus and Paul**, see note on verse 4.
 - The two reject the conclusion of the people and seek to convince them that **we also are men**, and further clarification, **men of like passions with you**.
 - The Greek ὁμοιοπαθής [homoioopathes] is “the same pathos.”
 - Pathos relates to feelings, the things one suffers from (“that’s *pathetic*”), or even the nature of things (*pathology*).
 - Paul calls the worship of Jupiter and Mercury **vanities** (that is, “empty,”) and encourages them to turn **unto the living God**.
 - Note that Paul refers to creation as his only evidence that his God was **the living God**.
 - This speaks to the importance of creation theology in theology proper as well as in evangelism.
- Verses 16-17 –
 - As is so much of Scripture, these words speak to a dispensational framework of Scripture, one which is rejected at great cost.
 - In these verses, Paul speaks completely to **times past**, in which God was doing something very different than He is now doing.
 - At one time God **suffered** (i.e.: *permitted*) **all nations to walk in their own ways**. His work in the world was wholly focused on the Jewish nation.
 - This truth is testified in Acts 17:30, Psalm 147:19-20, Ephesians 2:12, and others.
 - Yet even in this past time, God **left not himself without a witness**. That witness was what is called *natural revelation* that speaks to the existence of deity, and the evidence of deity demands investigation of identity and requirements (Rom. 1:20-21).
- Verse 18 –
 - Paul and Barnabus were able, with their speech, to get the people to avoid the sacrifice.
 - The next verse shows how fickle the adoration of man can be.

ACTS 14:19-28 | PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY CONCLUDES

- Verse 19 –
 - Historical linguistic note: The English word **thither** is no longer used, but has no modern equivalent. It has been replaced with *there*. The word *thither*, however, denotes motion (“moving toward there”) where the word *there* only denotes location.
 - The Jews who had previously chased them off now chased them down and **stoned Paul** and left him, **supposing he had been dead**.
 - Was he dead? The Greek word translated **supposing** is νομίζω [nomizo], which is based on *nomos* (law). It is a *conclusion* word, not a definitive word. Thus, “based on the natural laws that govern life, Paul should be dead.”
 - The language of this verse, along with verse 20, appear to say that he was not actually dead.

- Verses 20-21 –
 - Paul “should have been dead” by the “laws of nature,” but he survived. The **disciples** (presumably believers in the Pauline message) were surrounding him when **he rose up**.
 - The Greek word ἀνίστημι [anhistami] (“to stand again”) does not require the supernatural (it is used in Acts 15:7, very naturally).
 - Whether this was a miracle or just a tremendous fortune and/or strength on Paul’s part, he certainly was not working again.
 - Since there is no mention of the miraculous, there is really not any need for us to assume a “resurrection” here.
 - Note once again that though it was “out of season,” Paul was not about to stop preaching the Word. We are not told how long they remained in Derbe, but long enough to have **taught many**. After this they reversed their course back to **Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch** (Pisidian).
- Verse 22 –
 - Paul and Barnabus were **confirming** (i.e.: *giving a strong foundation*) **the souls of the disciples**. This was done, no doubt, through theological teaching. They were also **exhorting them to continue in the faith**, not because the gift of eternal life can be lost, but because the strength of a faith-filled life can be lost.
 - Why did Paul teach that **we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God**?
 - This is problematic on the surface because the believer is *raptured* before the tribulation, and because the kingdom is not about the church, but about the nation of Israel. So, why was this “Israel” message given to the church?
 - It is not so problematic that Paul includes **tribulation**, for this does not have to be the seven years of tribulation (compare 1 Thes. 3:4).
 - The problematic portion is that tribulation is the means of entry into **the kingdom of God**.
 - If this kingdom is the Christian life, then the message conflicts with the grace gospel.
 - If this kingdom is the future, physical, fraternal messianic kingdom, then the message conflicts with the pre-tribulational nature of the rapture.
 - However, if the message is a message to the Jewish nation, then the problem goes away.
 - To answer the question, one must first determine the identity of **we**.
 - The most recent use of an identifying first-person plural pronoun is in Acts 11:15 and refers to those present at the day of Pentecost (i.e.: Jews).
 - Because of the transition of pronouns from **them** to **we**, and then back to **them** again in verse 23, it appears that Paul is teaching “we the Jewish nation” that the tribulation is still in order.
 - But do the Jews of Pentecost (and up to the revelation of the mystery) enter into the Body of Christ and thus they would have been raptured had the rapture come? I do not think so. That group was given one set of promises, and God is true to His Word. God gave *another* set of promises to those saved under the Pauline message (a group that Luke refers to as **them** in vv. 22-23).