

“Garlands and Gods: Misplaced Worship in Lystra” - Acts 14:8-18

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[What follows is the transcript of a sermon. It was originally intended to be heard, not read, so the tone is more conversational than academic. It has only been loosely edited, so forgive any grammatical, syntactical, or spelling errors. If you have questions, please contact Southern Oaks Baptist Church through their official website, www.welovethegospel.com.]

Take a Bible and meet me in Acts 14...

Last Sunday we left two men, Paul and Barnabas, walking out of Iconium with a price on their heads. A plot had been formed to seize them and stone them, word of it reached them, and they fled south into the region of Lycaonia. If you had asked Paul and Barnabas that morning to name the greatest threat to their ministry, I think they would have said stones.

They would have been wrong. Because the most dangerous hour on that entire first missionary journey was not the hour the rocks began to fly. It was the hour the flowers came out. Kent Hughes says it well: “It is difficult to say which was worse—having stones thrown at them or this blasphemous attempt to worship them as gods.”¹

Here is what I want you to see this morning. Every single one of us is a worshiper. That is not a decision you make; it is a description of what you are. You were built to attribute, to credit, to admire, to give yourself away to something. And the question this text presses on us is not whether we will worship. The question is what we will worship. Because the human heart, even when it stands in the presence of God’s undeniable power and receives God’s undeniable kindness, has a bent in it. It will take a gift that came from heaven and mail the thank-you note to the wrong address.

That is what happens in Lystra. And it happens in a way that is almost funny until you realize you have done it yourself, probably this week.

Now let me set the scene. Lystra sat about eighteen to twenty miles south-southwest of Iconium, a small, rural colony town that Augustus had fortified as a frontier outpost. And here is what makes this stop different from every stop before it: as far as Luke tells us, there was no synagogue in Lystra.² Every place Paul had preached until now, he walked into a room where people already knew the Scriptures, already believed in one God, already had a category for a promised Messiah. Not here. In Lystra, for the first time in the book of Acts, the gospel steps out onto open pagan ground.

Let us look at God’s Word together. If you are able, let me invite you to stand to your feet in recognition of the authority of God’s Word over our lives. Follow along as I read, beginning in verse 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, ¹⁰ said in a loud voice, ‘Stand upright on your feet.’ And he sprang up and began walking. 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. 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. ¹⁴ But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out, ¹⁵ “Men, why are you doing these things? 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.”
¹⁸ *Even with these words they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them.”* (Acts 14:8-18)

This is God’s Word. You may be seated...

There are four primary lessons from this text that I would like to work through with you today. These lessons, as usual, correspond to the flow of the narrative itself. Here’s the first one...

God Shows His Power to the Helpless (14:8-10)

Look at how carefully Luke describes this man in verse 8. He “*could not use his feet.*” He “*was crippled from birth.*” He “*had never walked.*” Three descriptions, and every one of them slams another door. This is not a man who took a bad fall and hopes to recover. This is a man whose situation was, humanly speaking, completely helpless. He had never once in his life stood up under his own weight.

And what is he doing in verse 9? “*He listened to Paul speaking.*” Do not skip past that. Before there is a miracle, there is a message. Luke tells us in verse 7 that Paul and Barnabas were already preaching the gospel in these cities. The healing did not launch the ministry in Lystra; the preaching did. This man is sitting in a public square somewhere, probably begging, and words about Jesus Christ are landing on him.

Charles Spurgeon made a wonderful observation about that preaching. Paul had just come from a synagogue full of people who knew the Old Testament backward and forward. Now he stands in a marketplace in front of farmers and shepherds who have never heard of Abraham. Does he change the message? Spurgeon says no: “The very gospel which he preached at Damascus in the synagogue he preaches here at Lystra in the marketplace.”³ Paul will adjust his starting point, as we will see in a few minutes. He will never adjust his gospel.

Then Paul does what Peter did at the temple gate years earlier.⁴ He looks “*intently*” at the man—Luke uses the very same verb he used in Acts 3—and he sees “*that he had faith to be made well.*” The word underneath “*made well*” is the ordinary Greek word for salvation. Most commentators take it here in the plain physical sense: this man had faith to be delivered from his crippled condition.⁵ But Luke’s vocabulary has a way of reverberating. When a man who has never walked believes that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ can do the impossible for him, you are not far from the kingdom.

And Paul gives him a command he cannot obey: “*Stand upright on your feet.*” Think about that. He might have said, “I can’t. That is the one thing in all the world I cannot do.” Instead, verse 10: “*he sprang up and began walking.*” The verb Luke uses for that leap is the same one he used of the man at the Beautiful Gate, and it echoes the prophet Isaiah, who said that when God comes to save His people, “*the lame man shall leap like a deer.*” Jeremiah promised that when God gathered His people home, the blind and the lame would be among them. Micah said God would assemble the lame. Zephaniah said God would save the lame.⁶ So when this man leaps up in a backwater Lycaonian town, something enormous is being announced. The day of salvation has reached the edges of the map.

The early church saw that clearly. Bede (c. 673-735 AD), for example, wrote that “just as that lame man whom Peter and John cured at the door of the temple prefigured the salvation of the Jews, so too this sick Lycaonian prefigured the people of the Gentiles.”⁷ The gospel that healed a beggar in Jerusalem has walked all the way out to or near a temple of Zeus, and it has lost none of its power on the road.

Here is what I want you to take from these three verses. God moves toward helplessness. Paul does not seek out the magistrate of Lystra or the wealthiest household in the colony. The first person God touches in that city, as far as we can tell, is a man sitting on the ground with nothing to offer and no way to get up. That is not an

accident. The qualification for receiving grace is need; the disqualification is the belief that you do not have any.

Some of you have been sitting a long time. You have a condition that has not changed in years—a habit, a grief, a fear you seemingly were born with—and you have quietly concluded that you are the exception. Hear this: the God of this passage specializes in people who have never once stood up, helping the desperate, helping the helpless. He can help you too. Indeed, He probably already is, even if you are not yet recognizing His kindness. And this brings us to the next lesson...

Human Hearts Distort the Gifts of God (14:11-13)

Now watch what the crowd does with it. Verse 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!’*” Notice they shout in their own language. That detail matters, because it explains why Paul and Barnabas are slow to react. Two Jewish preachers who speak Greek are standing in the middle of a crowd going wild in Lycaonian, and they do not have the first idea what is being said about them.

And what is being said is rooted in local history. About fifty years earlier the Latin poet Ovid had written down an old legend set in this very region. Zeus and Hermes—Jupiter and Mercury to the Romans—once came down to the Phrygian hill country disguised as ordinary men, looking for lodging. They were turned away from a thousand doors. Finally an elderly couple, Philemon and Baucis, took them into a little cottage of straw and reeds and fed them out of their poverty. The gods rewarded that couple lavishly—and then destroyed with a flood every home that had refused them.⁸ If you watched Christopher Nolan’s *Odyssey* in theaters this past week, you heard them repeatedly reference “the law of Zeus,” relating to showing hospitality to strangers, which was probably based on this very legend, even if Ovid wrote it down centuries after Homer wrote. What is more, archaeologists have since found inscriptions and a stone altar near Lystra showing that Zeus and Hermes were in fact worshiped together as the local patron deities.⁹

So put yourself in that square. Two strangers arrive. A man everybody in town knows to be lame from birth stands up and walks. And the collective memory of Lystra says: it happened before, and last time we missed it, and last time the valley flooded. Barnabas is the more dignified of the two, so he must be Zeus. Paul does most of the talking, so he must be Hermes, the messenger. And the priest of Zeus, whose temple stands right at the entrance to the city, comes hurrying up with oxen wearing garlands on their horns, ready to sacrifice.

Now here is what I do not want you to miss, because it is the whole point of this section. These people were not entirely wrong. They looked at that healing and concluded that divine power had come to their town, and they were exactly right about that. Calvin saw it: on seeing the healed cripple, “the people of Lycaonia decide that it is a work of God, and they are right so far. But then they go wrong, because, in keeping with habitual error, they make false gods for themselves in Paul and Barnabas.”¹⁰ One commentator even points out that these so-called rustics had better instincts about the supernatural than the sophisticated elites of Athens would have two chapters later—the Lystrans at least knew something from beyond had shown up.¹¹

Do you see what that means? Idolatry does not usually begin by denying that God is good. Idolatry begins by receiving something good and crediting it to the wrong source. It is not typically a refusal of God’s gifts. It is a misdirection of God’s glory.

And that is why this passage is not a museum piece about superstitious ancient farmers. We do this constantly, and we do it with a straight face. The surgery goes well and we praise the surgeon and never once thank the God who made the hand that held the instrument. The account balance is healthy and we feel secure—not because God is our provider, but because the number is our provider. The child turns out well and we take the credit; the promotion comes and we describe our own work ethic; the marriage is sweet and we quietly build

our identity on being loved by that person. None of those gifts are bad. Every one of them is from God. The sin is not in enjoying the gift. The sin is in terminating on it.

Frederick Buechner defined idolatry as “the practice of ascribing absolute value to things of relative worth.”¹² That is precise, and it indicts us. Money has real value; it is not absolute. A career has real value; it is not absolute. Your family has enormous value; it is not absolute. The moment any of those things becomes the thing you cannot live without, the thing you organize your fears around, the thing that would take the floor out from under you if you lost it—that thing is wearing garlands, and there is a priest headed your way with an ox.

R. C. Sproul used to point out that if you stand in the rotunda of the United States Capitol and look up, you will see an enormous painting on the ceiling of a man being carried up into the clouds among the gods of Olympus. It is titled “The Apotheosis of George Washington.” Apotheosis means deification. We do not have a Zeus and a Hermes. We have this instead, and Sproul’s point was simply that the tendency to elevate human beings to a place that belongs to God alone “is so deeply rooted in our souls that we have to be on guard against it in every circumstance.”¹³

So do not read verse 13 and feel superior to Lystra. Read verse 13 and ask what is being led toward your altar this week, decorated and ready. Then watch what the apostles do about it.

The Faithful Redirect Glory to God (14:14-17)

Verse 14 reads: “*But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out...*” That is not a calm response. Tearing your clothes was the Jewish reaction to blasphemy—you find it all through the Old Testament, and you find it in the courtroom where Jesus was condemned. It is the physical expression of horror. And with that horror comes the rushing, and the shouting. Chrysostom said it beautifully: they reacted this way because “their very beings were turning away in horror from what had happened. For truly it was grief, a grief inconsolable—they were about to be called gods and so introduce idolatry, the very thing they came to destroy!”¹⁴

Set that beside Acts 12. Do you remember how Herod put on his royal robes, gave a speech, and the crowd shouted, “*The voice of a god, and not of a man!*”—and Herod said nothing. He let it stand, and an angel of the Lord struck him down. Two chapters later, two men are offered the same thing and tear their clothes to stop it. Same offer. Opposite response. That difference is not temperament. It is whether you actually believe glory belongs to God.

Then comes the sermon—and it is the first address in Acts delivered to a purely pagan audience, people with no Bible, no synagogue, no Moses, no prophets. John Stott called it Paul’s “only recorded address to illiterate pagans.”¹⁵ And Paul builds it around four claims.

First, we are not what you think we are. “*We also are men, of like nature with you*” (14:15). The Greek phrase means they are made of the same stuff, subject to the same weaknesses, prone to the same aches and fears. Do not miss how quickly Paul disqualifies himself. He does not say, “Well, we are not gods exactly, but the Lord has certainly been using us.” He collapses the distance entirely. Whatever you saw in that lame man’s legs, it did not come from us.

Second, turn from these *vain* things. That word “*vain*” is the Old Testament’s word for idols—empty, useless, powerless, unable to deliver. Jeremiah used it.¹⁶ And here is the sharp edge of it: Paul is not asking the Lystrans to add a name to their pantheon. He is asking them to demolish it. As one scholar puts it, this is not an admonition “to tweak a rite or halt a ceremony,” but a summons that “involves the destruction of an entire mode of being religious.”¹⁷ Conversion, for these people, was not going to be an addition. It was going to be a demolition and a rebuild.

Third, turn to a *living* God, “*who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them*” (14:15). The word “*living*” is doing all the work. Their gods were carved and cast and stationed in a temple at the edge of town, and not one of them had ever done anything. Paul says: “The God I am telling you about is alive, and He made everything you can see, including the sky over your head and the mountains behind you and the sea past those mountains. He is not one of the things in the world. He is the one who made the world.”

Fourth, this God has never been silent. Verse 16: “*In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways.*” That is not a comfortable verse. It means God did not give the nations the special revelation He gave Israel; He let them go. But verse 17 comes in immediately: “*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.*”

Do you hear what Paul does there? Zeus was the weather god. Zeus was the one you thanked for the rain. And Paul stands in front of a priest of Zeus and says: the rain that filled your barns came from my God. The harvest you celebrated came from my God. The gladness you felt at your own table came from my God. He has been writing you letters your entire life and you have been thanking the wrong sender.

And notice, this is a witness of kindness, not merely of power. God’s testimony to the nations was not lightning; it was lunch. It was a full stomach and a glad heart. Every good meal you have eaten, every evening you have laughed with people you love, every sunrise, every harvest, every ordinary satisfying day has been God bearing witness to Himself in your life. Are you aware of that? And do you ever say so out loud, to anybody?

Now, I have to guard something here, because there is an obvious question hanging over this sermon. Where is Jesus? Paul does not mention Him. Not once.

Two things. First, this speech was cut off—verse 18 makes that plain. Paul never got to finish. Second, and more importantly, Paul is doing on purpose what has to be done first. If he had jumped straight to the death and resurrection of Jesus, this crowd would simply have filed Jesus into the pantheon as one more deity among many. As one commentator puts it, “One cannot discuss Jesus without first establishing that God is one.”¹⁸

But do not misunderstand the point. Nothing here suggests that a person can look at the rain and the harvest and be saved without ever hearing of Christ. Derek Thomas is right that such a view “is entirely unsustainable.”¹⁹ Jesus said, “*I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*” (John 14:6). Peter said there is “*no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved*” (Acts 4:12). Creation is enough to leave a man without excuse (Rom 1:20). It is not enough to save him. Paul is not offering an alternate road to God. He is clearing the ground so the only road can be laid.

So let me press this on us in two directions.

To those of us who talk to unbelieving people—which is all of us—learn Paul’s flexibility. He did not have one script. In the synagogue he opened the Scriptures; in the marketplace he pointed at the sky. He began with what his hearers actually had. Your neighbor may not accept the authority of a Bible verse, but he has felt the ache of wanting his life to mean something, and he has enjoyed a thousand good gifts he cannot account for. Start there. Just do not stop there. Rudolf Gwalther, preaching this text in the Reformation, said that faithful ministers of Christ must join two things together: “they must both overthrow false religion and plant the true one.”²⁰ Pull up and plant. Do only the first and you have made a cynic. Do only the second and the weeds strangle the seed.

And to all of us: guard the glory. Paul and Barnabas tore their clothes over this. We are considerably more relaxed about it. We build platforms around personalities. We attach ourselves to a favorite preacher or author or podcast the way Lystra attached itself to Hermes. Hughes puts it bluntly—we have “our own Christian pantheon—our own Christian matinee idols.”²¹ Gratitude for the people God uses in your life is a virtue.

Dependence on them is idolatry. And if you are ever tempted to enjoy being in someone's pantheon, remember the sound of tearing cloth and repent before it's too late. But know this...

Idolatry Is Stubbornly Persistent (14:18)

And this is the final warning of this text. Verse 18 is one of the most sobering half-sentences in the chapter: *"Even with these words they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them."* Scarcely. Barely. With difficulty. Understand what has just happened. A genuine, undeniable miracle has been performed in front of them. Two men have torn their clothes in horror. A clear, true, urgent sermon about the *living* God has been preached. And the best result Luke can report is that the crowd was talked out of it—just barely. Luke is not writing propaganda here. Schnabel notes that this report is "evidently realistic, surely not triumphalistic."²² Paul's words did not convince these people to abandon their gods. They just barely managed to stop the sacrifice.

Why? I. Howard Marshall answers plainly: "their superstition was deeply entrenched."²³ Schreiner says, "Hardwired practices and beliefs are difficult to change in a moment."²⁴ And Calvin, four hundred years earlier, made the observation that has stayed with me all week. Reflecting on how these people clung to what they had been taught as children, he warned "how evil it is to be habituated to errors in our tender years, because it is by no means easy for them to be eradicated from our minds."²⁵

People do not surrender their idols easily. They do not surrender them because they lost an argument. They do not surrender them because a sermon was clear. An idol is not merely an idea in the mind; it is a set of hands wrapped around something the heart believes it cannot live without. And you do not get a heart to open its hands by explaining to it that it should. Only God can do that. Only grace can turn a human heart from created things to the Creator.

That truth cuts two ways, and I want you to feel both.

First, it should make you patient. Some of you have been praying for the same person for five, ten, fifteen, twenty years. You have said the true thing kindly a dozen times and watched nothing happen, and you have started to wonder whether you said it wrong. Paul preached this sermon flawlessly and scarcely restrained them. Faithfulness is not the same as immediate fruit. Anxiety about evangelistic results, one commentator notes, "can be a sign of unbelief in the power of God or of forgetting that God does everything according to his will and in his time."²⁶ And do not miss this: there were disciples in Lystra later. Timothy came out of this town (16:1). The seed went in that day even though the harvest was nowhere to be seen.

Second, it should make you honest about yourself. If idolatry is this stubborn out there, it is this stubborn in here. You have known for years what that thing is. You have been convicted about it, prayed about it, resolved about it—and it is still standing. That is not a reason to despair. It is a reason to stop expecting your own willpower to demolish what only grace can demolish, and to go ask God for the thing only He can give.

Conclusion

Let me take you back to what that crowd actually shouted, because it is one of the most remarkable lines in the book of Acts. *"The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!"*

They were wrong. Barnabas was not Zeus, and Paul was not Hermes, and the whole thing was a mess of legend and panic. But listen to how close their mistake came to the truth. They were standing in the street of a small town in Asia Minor announcing that God had come down and taken human form. And they had no idea that a few years earlier and a few hundred miles away, that had actually happened.

R. C. Sproul said it exactly right: “Only once did the *living* God become incarnate. This is no myth but sober history. The Son of God lived on earth under the law of God, and He was delivered up and crucified.”²⁷

And I want you to see one thing about Him in light of this passage. When men fell down before Paul, Paul tore his garments. When men fell down before Jesus, Jesus received it—because He is not a man of like nature with us only. He is God the Son who became truly man. And the one time in the Gospels someone did tear his garments over Jesus, it was Caiaphas, the high priest, who ripped his robes at the trial and cried blasphemy—because Jesus would not deny what Paul rightly denied. Paul tore his clothes to refuse worship. Caiaphas tore his because Jesus would not refuse it.

So the crowd’s longing was not silly. It was aimed at something real. Every culture on earth has told stories about heaven coming down, and every one of them is a distorted memory of what we were made for. In Jesus Christ it stops being a story. The *living* God really did come down—not as Zeus, not as Hermes, but as a carpenter’s son who healed the helpless, absorbed the wrath our idolatry deserved, and rose to give life to people who had spent their whole lives crediting their gifts to the wrong god.

And notice what He does for people like us. Every idol you have ever served has taken more from you than it gave, and none of them has ever once forgiven you for failing it. Your career will not forgive you. Your reputation will not forgive you. This God will. He is the only master who, if you have Him, will satisfy you, and if you fail Him, will forgive you.

So if you are here this morning and you have never come to Christ, hear this text as it was first preached: turn from these *vain* things to the *living* God. Not add Him. Turn. Repent of building your life on things that cannot hold it, and trust the Christ who was crucified and raised for people exactly like you.

And church, in just a moment we are going to come to this table—and I want you to notice what we do not bring to it. Lystra brought oxen. Lystra brought garlands. Lystra brought a priest. And all of it was aimed at two men who could not have saved anybody. When we come to this table, we bring no ox, no garland, and no priest but one—because the reader of Acts already knows “the true sacrifice has been made in Jesus.”²⁸ There is nothing left to offer for sin. There is only bread and cup, and a Savior who says, take and eat.

So come to this table with empty hands, like a man who has never walked and is about to.

Let’s pray...

[Deacons serve the Lord’s Supper]

¹ R. Kent Hughes, *Acts: The Church Afire*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1996), 186.

² I. Howard Marshall, *Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 5 of Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980), 249–250.

³ C. H. Spurgeon, “The Cripple at Lystra,” sermon no. 559, preached at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington, 1864.

⁴ These sorts of parallel miracles and events in the lives of Peter and Paul are common in Acts, likely because part of what Luke is showing is that the same Spirit who worked through Peter is working through Paul. This apologetic would have gone a long way to reassuring Christians who may have remained cynical of the legitimacy of the conversion and apostleship of the church’s former persecutor. The following chart is drawn from J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God’s Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible*, Fourth Edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2020), 314:

Peter	Paul
Peter's sermon at Pentecost (2:22–36)	Paul's sermon at Pisidian Antioch (13:26–41)
Healing of a lame man (3:1–10)	Healing of a lame man (14:8–11)
Shaking of a building by prayer (4:31)	Shaking of a building by praise (16:25–26)
Rebuke of Ananias and Sapphira (5:1–11)	Rebuke of Elymas (13:8–12)
Healing by the shadow of Peter (5:15–16)	Healing by the handkerchiefs of Paul (19:11–12)
Laying on of hands (8:17)	Laying on of hands (19:6)
Rebuke of Simon the sorcerer (8:18–24)	Rebuke of Jewish sorcerer (13:6–11)
Resuscitation of Tabitha (9:36–42)	Resuscitation of Eutychus (20:7–12)
Removal of chains in prison (12:5–7)	Removal of chains in prison (16:25–28)

⁵ Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 475; David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 407. Schnabel argues that because Luke's readers know Paul's message connects faith to Jesus the Savior, the man's faith "probably includes" forgiveness and eternal life as well. See Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts*, Expanded Digital Edition, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 606.

⁶ Patrick Schreiner, *Acts*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen and Brandon D. Smith, Christian Standard Commentary (Holman Reference, 2021), 399–400, citing Isa 35:6; Jer 31:8; Mic 4:6–7; Zeph 3:19.

⁷ Bede, *Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* 14.8, in Francis Martin and Evan Smith, eds., *Acts*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 174.

⁸ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church & the World*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 230–231; Peterson, *Acts of the Apostles*, 408.

⁹ F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 274, noting the inscriptions from Sedasa discovered by W. M. Calder and the altar found near Lystra in 1926 by Calder and W. H. Buckler.

¹⁰ John Calvin, *Commentary on Acts* 14:11, in Esther Chung-Kim et al., eds., *Acts: New Testament*, vol. VI of Reformation Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 194.

¹¹ Bock, *Acts*, 476–477.

¹² Frederick Buechner, quoted in Dean Pinter, *Acts*, ed. Scot McKnight, The Story of God Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019), 330.

¹³ R. C. Sproul, *Acts*, St. Andrew's Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 255.

¹⁴ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles* 31, in Martin and Smith, *Acts*, 176.

¹⁵ Stott, *Message of Acts*, 231.

¹⁶ The word is μάταιος, see Jer 2:5; 10:3; cf. μάτην in 2:30; 4:30; εἰς κενόν in 46:11.

¹⁷ C. Kavin Rowe, quoted in Schreiner, *Acts*, 402.

¹⁸ Bock, *Acts*, 478.

¹⁹ Derek W. H. Thomas, *Acts*, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2011), 386.

²⁰ Rudolf Gwalther, Homily 98, Acts 14:14–18, in Chung-Kim et al., *Acts*, 196.

²¹ Hughes, *Acts*, 187.

²² Schnabel, *Acts*, 611.

²³ Marshall, *Acts*, 253.

²⁴ Schreiner, *Acts*, 404.

²⁵ Calvin, *Commentary on Acts* 14:11, in Chung-Kim et al., *Acts*, 194.

²⁶ James M. Hamilton Jr. and Brian J. Vickers, *John–Acts*, ed. Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar, vol. IX of ESV Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), 475.

²⁷ Sproul, *Acts*, 255.

²⁸ Schreiner, *Acts*, 401.