

# WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

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## *The Journeys of Paul*

*(Continued)*

**I**t was probably early October when Paul and Barnabas were driven from Pisidian Antioch. They then went on to Iconium, about eighty miles distant, a large and prosperous city that claimed an origin antedating the Flood. Here, in the midst of bitter animosity, the two Christian laborers continued their work throughout the winter. Then came their ejection under savage abuse and a pelting of stones. Some of their followers were driven out with them and these carried the Gospel into other towns and villages throughout the province.

Paul and Barnabas next made their way to Lystra, largely a Roman colony, about twenty miles from Iconium. It was there that they met Lois, Eunice and Timothy, who were to play such important roles in Paul's life and work. In Lystra Paul healed a man crippled from birth and as a result mistaken by the populace for Hermes, the "Prophet and Interpreter of the Gods."

*Acts 14:8-13*

*And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:*

*The same heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,*

*Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.*

*And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.*

*And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.*

*Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.*

The majesty of Paul's discourses invariably attracted large audiences; his meeting places were filled. Oftentimes many waited outside and followed him to his lodging place. So radiant was his love, so illumined his mind, that it was never possible for him to remain long unknown and unsought. This aroused the envy and incited the animosity of the priesthood and led to frequent beatings, stonings, and exile from various cities wherein he had established centers for the promulgation of the new faith.

As in the case of their divine Master after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the adulation of Paul and Barnabas at Lystra — which sought expression in the bestowing of garlands, proffering of sacrifices and their near-deification — was immediately followed by beatings and stonings almost unto death. "Today ye praise, tomorrow ye crucify." Such are the experiences that enter into the life of every disciple in order that he may learn not to place any reliance on things external. Whether the multitudes praise or blame, it is to this still small voice alone that the disciple pays heed. Though he be in the world, yet he is not of it; whether it be the adulation of the Triumphal Entry or the agony of Gethsemane, he aspires to say with Paul, "None of these things move me."

*Acts 14:20, 21*

*Howbeit, as the disciples stood about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and*



*the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.*

*And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch.*

With the approach of the harvest season, merchants from neighboring cities came to purchase grain in Lystra. One day, as Paul was discoursing in the market place, he was recognized by certain buyers who had come from Antioch and Iconium. They incited against him a mob which pelted him with stones from all sides until he fell unconscious to the pavement. Then they dragged him to the outskirts of the city where they left him for dead.

When he regained consciousness friends took him back to the city, and the next day he and Barnabas departed for Derbe. The record of their work in this town is brief but eloquent: "And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra." One whom they converted was Gaius, who was to become foremost among Paul's workers.

Paul and Barnabas arrived in Derbe in September and remained until midwinter. Then they began to retrace their steps back toward their home church at Antioch, revisiting towns in which they had founded centers. Luke writes of their work in these places: "confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God."

After an absence of almost two years the first journey was ended. About the month of

June, Paul and Barnabas returned to the home center at Antioch.

### *The Second Journey*

After spending the months of the Holy Inflow (Autumn Equinox to Winter Solstice) in Antioch, Paul, with the coming of Spring, made preparation for his second journey. He and Barnabas agreed to separate. This time Barnabas, taking with him his nephew John Mark, went into Cyprus. Paul, accompanied by Silas, returned to the Galatian provinces.

Paul was at heart a pioneer. His soul longed for new worlds to conquer for Christ. While the gentle Barnabas was evidently content to remain in his own homeland of Cyprus and work with the churches already established there, the fiery spirit of Paul drew him further afield. This time he planned to follow the great trade route from Pisidian Antioch, to establish centers in the cities of Colosse, Laodicia, Hierapolis and elsewhere until he reached the extreme western terminus of the route which ended in the famous city of Ephesus.

However, the personal decisions of Paul were to be set aside. Long ago he had affirmed that he would never be disobedient to his heavenly vision. He, too, had heard the voice of the Master saying, "I will send you to preach to the Gentiles."

From Pisidian Antioch Luke accompanied Paul and Silas on this second journey. As the inner work of this journey may be correlated with the Second Degree of the Mysteries, we have a key to the development of Luke and Silas at this time.