

# “FROM VAIN THINGS TO A LIVING GOD”

Acts 14:8-18

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## INTRODUCTION

My kids learned a saying when they were teens that I hope has stuck with them over the years: “Just two choices on the shelf: pleasing God or pleasing self. Life is really not that complicated unless we allow it to become so—our responsibility is to **Please God**.

In this passage we note two significant matters

- The Lord’s ability to make the impotent (lame) walk
- The necessity of turning from vain things to the Living God.

Far too many live life in impotency—powerless to overcome temptation, besetting sins, addictions, controlled by temper, materialism, lust, greed, selfishness, pride. Jesus is the SAVIOR who delivers from sin and who sanctifies.

Moreover, many are dominated by idols—things that control their lives and to which they give their attention so that they do not “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.”

**You must turn from vain things in order to serve the living God.**

### I. MAKING THE IMPOTENT TO WALK (8-13)

A. The Wonderful Deed (8-10) (compare Acts 3—Peter’s healing of lame man)

B. The Worthless Worship (11-13)

1. The wrong conclusion: “The \_\_\_\_\_ have become like men and have come down to us.”
2. The wrong identification (12)
  - a. Barnabas is \_\_\_\_\_—Jupiter, the chief of the gods, because of his age, dignity and that he seemed to have a spokesman.
  - b. Paul is \_\_\_\_\_(Hermes—cf. “hermeneutics”)—the spokesman for the gods—
3. The wrong worship (13) The action of the pagan priest of Zeus

### II. TURNING FROM VAIN THINGS TO THE LIVING GOD (14-18)

A. The Shock of the messengers (14)

Godly men, and even angels, always refuse religious adoration.

B. The Statement of the messengers (15-18): “Why are you doing these things?”

1. Human messengers sent by heaven (15a)
  - We also are men.
  - We have the same humanity—“nature”—as you with same sensations (Js. 5:17—Elijah).

- We preach the “\_\_\_\_\_ to you”—the good news of salvation from sin and eternal life in Jesus Christ. **They did not PREACH THEMSELVES.**
2. Heavenly message of hope (15b-17)
    - a. \_\_\_\_\_ is necessary—“turn from these vain things to the living God”
      - Beliefs and practices outside of Jesus Christ are **empty—vain**
      - One must “turn”—having a change of mind and heart—resulting in a change of life, a **new direction**.
      - Compare I Thes. 1:9.
    - b. God is the \_\_\_\_\_ of all things (15b)
      - He is “the Living God”—not a dead, lifeless, and helpless idol.
      - He made the \_\_\_\_\_—do not worship **the sun or the stars** (astrology)
      - He made the \_\_\_\_\_ and everything in it—do not worship animals or men
      - He made the \_\_\_\_\_ - and all in it—do not worship sea creatures. Ex. 20:11.
      - **Note the importance of the doctrine of creation.**
    - c. God is the Preserver (16-18)
      - (1) He has had patience with mankind (16)—*Not only the God of Creation, also the God of\_\_\_\_\_.*
      - (2) He has graciously made \_\_\_\_\_ for mankind (17)  
He has always “had a witness”—spoken through general revelation
  3. Hearts confused by false teachings and demonic distortions (18)  
These people were still confused and wanted to “offer sacrifice to them.”  
An important lesson: *Do not be impressed and prideful with the accolades of people; **these words and acts of praise and “worship” can turn to criticism and anger and hatred.***

## CONCLUSION

God is not responsible for the deadness and darkness of humanity. He has always borne witness to the truth and has provided even for wicked sinners—offering them hope and a way out of their dilemma. Now he has gone even farther—He has sent out His messengers with His message of salvation.

The Lord preached this message in **two ways**:

- 1) Visually in healing the impotent man.
- 2) Verbally with the preaching of Barnabas and Paul.

Man has no excuse; **you have no excuse.**

It is time to rise and walk in the name of Jesus Christ.

It is time to turn from the vain things in your life, and to turn to the Living God.