

# Acts 14:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

## Analysis

The crowd's response—**The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men**—reveals pagan mythology's grip on Lycaonian thinking. Speaking in **the speech of Lycaonia** (Λυκαονιστὶ) meant Paul and Barnabas initially didn't understand the danger, creating dramatic irony. Local legend held that Zeus and Hermes had visited this region disguised as men, refused hospitality, and destroyed the inhabitants—only Baucis and Philemon survived by welcoming them.

The Greek *homoiōthentes* (made like) shows they believed deity temporarily assumed human form, not incarnation. This polytheistic interpretation completely missed the miracle's true significance: the God of Israel healing through His messengers.

## Historical Context

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (written decades before) recounts the Zeus/Hermes legend about this very region. The Lycaonians' cultural memory of divine visitation made them eager not to repeat their ancestors' mistake. The language barrier initially prevented Paul and Barnabas from understanding the crisis developing.

## Related Passages

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**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

## Study Questions

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1. How does cultural background shape how people interpret God's works today?
2. What safeguards prevent the church from turning ministers into objects of worship?

## Interlinear Text

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οἵ δὲ ὄχλοι ἴδόντες ὃ ἐποίησεν ὃ Παῦλος

G3588 **And** when the people saw what had done G3588 **Paul**  
G1161 G3793 G1492 G3739 G4160 G3972

ἐπῆραν τὴν φωνὴν αὐτῶν Λυκαονιστὶ λέγοντες

they lifted up voices in the speech of Lycaonia saying  
G1869 G3588 G5456 G846 G3072 G3004

Οἱ θεοὶ ὁμοιωθέντες ἀνθρώποις κατέβησαν πρὸς ἡμᾶς

G3588 **The gods** in the likeness of men are come down to us  
G2316 G3666 G444 G2597 G4314 G2248

## Additional Cross-References

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**Acts 8:10** (References God): To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.

**Acts 28:6** (References God): Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

**Acts 12:22** (References God): And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.

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