

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

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

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

οἱ	δὲ	ὄχλοι	ιδόντες	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	G3588	voices	G846	in the speech of Lycaonia	saying		
G1869		G5456		G3072	G3004		
Οἱ	θεοὶ	ὁμοιωθέντες	ἄνθρωποις	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

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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