

Acts 14:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

The priest of Jupiter, which was before their city—The temple's location ('before their city,' πρὸ τῆς πόλεως) suggests a prominent sanctuary at Lystra's gates. The **oxen and garlands** (ταύρους καὶ στέμματα) indicate full sacrificial ritual: flower-crowned bulls for major deity worship. The Greek ethelen (would have done) shows official religious establishment mobilizing for what they considered divine visitation.

This wasn't spontaneous crowd enthusiasm but organized cultic response. The priest's involvement escalated the situation from popular acclaim to institutional idolatry, forcing Paul and Barnabas into crisis intervention.

Historical Context

Bringing sacrifice 'unto the gates' (ἐπὶ τοὺς πυλῶνας) may refer to the house where Paul and Barnabas stayed, or to city gates where public ceremonies occurred. The rapid mobilization of priest and people suggests pre-existing temple infrastructure with ready sacrificial animals.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does institutional religion sometimes co-opt genuine moves of God for its own purposes?
2. What does the elaborate preparation for sacrifice reveal about the seriousness of idolatry's deception?

Interlinear Text

τοῖς	δέ	ἱερεὺς	τοῖς	Διὸς	τοῖς	ὄντος	πρὸ	τοῖς
which	Then	the priest	which	of Jupiter	which	was	before	which
G3588	G1161	G2409	G3588	G2203	G3588	G5607	G4253	G3588
πόλεως	αὐτῶν,	ταύρους	καὶ	στέμματα	ἐπὶ	τοῖς		
city	their	oxen	and	garlands	unto	which		
G4172	G846	G5022	G2532	G4725	G1909	G3588		
πυλῶνας	ἐνέγκας	σὺν	τοῖς	ὄχλοις	ἵθελεν		θύειν	
the gates	brought	with	which	the people	and would	have done sacrifice		
G4440	G5342	G4862	G3588	G3793	G2309	G2380		

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 2:46 (Parallel theme): Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him.