

Acts 14:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

Analysis

With these sayings scarce restrained they the people (μόλις κατέπαυσαν τοὺς ὄχλους)—The Greek molis (scarce/with difficulty) reveals how narrowly disaster was averted. Even after explaining they were mere men, after appealing to natural revelation, the crowd's pagan devotion nearly overpowered reason. The verb katepausan (restrained) suggests forceful prevention, not gentle persuasion.

This verse exposes idolatry's tenacious grip: seeing a miracle, the Lycaonians preferred their familiar polytheism to the foreign proclamation of the living God. Truth barely overcame momentum toward false worship, foreshadowing the violent reversal about to occur.

Historical Context

The crowd's determination to sacrifice despite protest shows how deeply embedded pagan worship patterns were. Within verses, this same crowd will stone Paul (v. 19)—a shocking reversal demonstrating the fickleness of popular acclaim and the shallowness of enthusiasm-based 'faith.'

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What does the difficulty of stopping false worship teach about human religious impulses?
2. How do we distinguish genuine faith from emotional or cultural religious enthusiasm?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ταῦτα λέγοντες μόλις κατέπαυσαν τοὺς ὄχλους
And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people
G2532 G5023 G3004 G3433 G2664 G3588 G3793

τοῦ μὴ θύειν αὐτοῖς
G3588 not done sacrifice unto them
G3361 G2380 G846

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