

Acts 14:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.

Analysis

The multitude of the city was divided—The Greek eschisthē to plēthos uses the verb 'schizō' (split, divide), from which we get 'schism.' The gospel inevitably creates division, fulfilling Jesus' prophecy that He came to bring not peace but a sword (Matthew 10:34). Some **held with the Jews** (the opposing party), others **with the apostles**. Luke's use of 'apostles' here (not just 'them') elevates Barnabas alongside Paul as commissioned messengers, though technically only Paul held formal apostolic office. This division wasn't compromise failure but gospel fruit—Christ forces decision.

Historical Context

This civic polarization in Iconium mirrored dynamics throughout Roman provincial cities where Christian preaching disrupted social cohesion. The 'division' wasn't primarily theological debate but growing social fault lines threatening civic peace, making missionaries vulnerable to expulsion.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How do you navigate situations where gospel truth unavoidably divides families or communities?
2. What does this verse teach about measuring ministry success when division results from faithful proclamation?

Interlinear Text

ἐσχίσθη δὲ τὸ πλῆθος τῆς πόλεως καὶ οἱ μὲν
was divided But the multitude of the city and oi part
G4977 G1161 G3588 G4128 G3588 G4172 G2532 G3588 G3303
ἥσαν σὺν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις οἱ δὲ σὺν τοῖς
held part with the Jews But part with G3588
G2258 G4862 G2453 G1161 G4862 G3588
ἀποστόλοις
the apostles
G652

Additional Cross-References

Acts 28:24 (Parallel theme): And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

Acts 14:14 (Parallel theme): Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,