

Acts 27:39

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.

Analysis

When it was day, they knew not the land—Daylight revealed unfamiliar coastline. The Greek *epeginōskon* (recognized) indicates the sailors, despite Mediterranean experience, didn't recognize this location. Yet they **discovered a certain creek with a shore**—God's providence provided ideal landing. The *kolpon* (bay/creek) with beach offered protected waters for running aground, better than rocky coast.

If it were possible, to thrust in the ship shows cautious planning despite divine promise. Faith doesn't mean presumption; they assessed conditions carefully. The passive 'they were minded' (Greek *ebouleuonto*, deliberated) indicates corporate decision-making. Even with God's guarantee, human wisdom and prudent planning remained necessary—another example of divine sovereignty working through human means.

Historical Context

The location was later identified as Malta's St. Paul's Bay (Acts 28:1). The sailors' unfamiliarity isn't surprising; Malta was off main shipping lanes. Ancient navigation relied on coastal landmarks; in unfamiliar waters, finding a sandy beach rather than cliffs was crucial for safe grounding. The 'creek with a shore' (suitable beach) was providentially ideal for their desperate need.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does God's sovereignty provide specific, practical solutions to desperate circumstances?
2. What does the sailors' cautious assessment despite divine promise teach about faith and prudence?

Interlinear Text

Ὅτε δέ ἡμέρα ἐγένετο τὴν γῆν οὐκ ἐπεγίνωσκον
when And day it was G3588 the land not they knew
G3753 G1161 G2250 G1096 G1093 G3756 G1921

κόλπον δέ τινα κατενόουν ἔχοντα αἰγιαλὸν εἰς
creek And a certain they discovered with a shore into
G2859 G1161 G5100 G2657 G2192 G123 G1519

ον ἐβούλεύσαντο, εἰ δύναιντο ἔξωσαι τὸ πλοῖον
the which they were minded if it were possible to thrust in G3588 the ship
G3739 G1011 G1487 G1410 G1856 G4143

Additional Cross-References

Acts 28:1 (Parallel theme): And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.

