

Acts 27:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.

Analysis

There the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein. Alexandrian grain ships were the empire's largest vessels, vital for feeding Rome's million inhabitants. Egypt provided one-third of Rome's grain supply, transported in fleets of massive ships (this vessel carried 276 people plus cargo, v. 37). The Greek *heuron* (εὑρον, "found") suggests providential availability rather than guaranteed connection—Julius located suitable transport. **He put us therein** (enebibesen, ἐνεβίβασεν) indicates official transfer of prisoners and escort.

This ship change proves significant: the larger Alexandrian vessel could attempt direct Italy crossing but proved vulnerable to autumn storms. God's sovereignty appears in seemingly mundane details—which ship, which captain, which route. The vessel's size and passenger count set the stage for Paul's dramatic testimony during crisis (vv. 21-26, 33-36). Reformed theology recognizes that casual decisions (boarding this ship rather than another) operate within God's comprehensive plan, arranging circumstances to accomplish redemptive purposes.

Historical Context

Alexandria, Egypt's greatest city (founded 331 BC by Alexander), was the empire's second city after Rome. Its port shipped grain via massive vessels—some 180 feet long, capable of carrying 1,000 tons. These ships navigated by coastline and stars, vulnerable to weather. The grain fleet's annual schedule was crucial—delayed

shipments meant Roman hunger and political instability. Autumn voyages risked disaster but economic pressure drove captains to attempt late-season crossings.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do seemingly ordinary decisions (boarding one ship versus another) operate within God's sovereign purposes?
2. What does the grain ship's vital role feeding Rome teach about God using secular economic systems for His purposes?

Interlinear Text

κάκεϊ	εὐρών	ὁ	ἐκατόνταρχος	πλοῖον	Ἀλεξανδρῖνον		
And there	found	G3588	the centurion	a ship	of Alexandria		
G2546	G2147		G1543	G4143	G222		
πλέον	εἰς	τὴν	Ἰταλίαν	ἐνεβίβασεν	ἡμᾶς	εἰς	αὐτό
sailing	into	G3588	Italy	and he put	us	into	G846
G4126	G1519		G2482	G1688	G2248	G1519	

Additional Cross-References

Acts 28:11 (Parallel theme): And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.