

Acts 28:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

Analysis

After three months we departed—winter storms (November-February) prevented navigation, requiring this extended stay. **In a ship of Alexandria**—another grain vessel from Egypt's port, part of Rome's grain fleet. **Which had wintered in the isle** (παράκεχειμακότι)—the perfect participle indicating it spent the entire winter harbored safely. **Whose sign was Castor and Pollux** (παρασήμεω Διοσκούροις)—the ship's figurehead depicted these twin gods, patron deities of sailors in Greco-Roman mythology. Luke matter-of-factly records this detail without endorsing paganism, showing how Christians navigate pagan culture. Ironically, Paul travels under 'protection' of false gods while the true God orchestrates every detail to bring him safely to Rome for gospel proclamation.

Historical Context

Ancient ships displayed carved figureheads (parasēmois) representing protective deities. Castor and Pollux (Greek Dioskouroi, 'sons of Zeus') were especially popular among sailors, believed to appear as St. Elmo's fire during storms. Alexandria's grain fleet was Rome's economic lifeline, with massive vessels carrying Egyptian wheat to feed the empire's capital.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How do you maintain Christian witness while navigating secular cultural symbols?
2. Where do you see God's providence working through ordinary, even pagan, circumstances?

Interlinear Text

Μετὰ δὲ τρεῖς μῆνας ἀνήχθημεν ἐν πλοίῳ
after And three months we departed in a ship
G3326 G1161 G5140 G3376 G321 G1722 G4143

παρακεχειμακότι ἐν τῇ νήσῳ Ἀλεξανδρίνῳ παρασήμῳ
which had wintered in the isle of Alexandria whose sign was
G3914 G1722 G3588 G3520 G222 G3902

Διοσκούροις
Castor and Pollux
G1359

Additional Cross-References

Acts 27:6 (Parallel theme): And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.

