

Acts 28:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

Analysis

He shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm (οὐδὲν ἔπαθεν κακόν)—Paul's action fulfilled Christ's promise that believers 'shall take up serpents' (Mark 16:18) without injury. The Greek 'apotinasso' (shook off) suggests decisive, casual action without panic. The Maltese islanders expected death (v. 6), making Paul's survival a powerful apologetic sign. This divine protection echoed God's promise in Isaiah 43:2: 'when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned.' The viper incident demonstrates providence protecting God's servant until his appointed work—reaching Rome to testify before Caesar—was accomplished.

Historical Context

This occurred on Malta (AD 60) after Paul's shipwreck en route to Rome as a prisoner. The island natives witnessed this miracle, which led to Paul's healing ministry among them. Ancient medical writers described Mediterranean viper bites as frequently fatal.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's calm response to the serpent demonstrate faith's proper reaction to sudden danger?
2. In what ways has God protected you from harm to preserve you for kingdom purposes?

Interlinear Text

ό	μὲν	οὖν	ἀποτινάξας	τὸ	θηρίον	εἰς	τὸ	πῦρ
G3588	And	G3767	he shook off	G3588	the beast	into	G3588	the fire
	G3303		G660		G2342	G1519		G4442
ἐπαθεν	οὐδὲν	κακόν						
and felt	no	harm						
G3958	G3762	G2556						

Additional Cross-References

Luke 10:19 (Parallel theme): Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Mark 16:18 (Parallel theme): They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Psalms 91:13 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.