

# Acts 28:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

## Analysis

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The Maltese **looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly** (πίμπρασθαι ἢ καταπίπτειν ἄφνω νεκρόν)—medical observation expecting typical viper bite symptoms. **But after they had looked a great while** shows patient verification, not hasty conclusions. Their theological pendulum swings dramatically: from 'murderer cursed by the gods' to **they changed their minds, and said that he was a god** (θεὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι). This recalls Lystra's similar mistake (Acts 14:11-15). The extremes—demon-cursed criminal or deity—miss the truth: Paul is neither, but rather a redeemed servant protected by the one true God. Their error reveals humanity's tendency toward false binaries while missing grace's middle ground.

## Historical Context

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Greco-Roman polytheism easily incorporated new deities and divine manifestations. Gods were believed to visit humans in disguise (cf. Ovid's account of Zeus and Hermes visiting Phrygia). The shift from criminal to god reflects Mediterranean cultures' interpretive framework for supernatural events lacking biblical revelation.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. What false binaries in your thinking obscure the truth about God's work?
2. How do you point others to God when they mistakenly credit you with his work?

## Interlinear Text

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οἱ G3588	δὲ Howbeit G1161	προσδοκόντων after they had looked G4328	αὐτὸν him G846	μέλλειν should G3195	πίμπρασθαι have swollen G4092	ἢ or G2228
καταπίπτειν fallen down G2667	ἄφνω suddenly G869	νεκρόν dead G3498	ἐπὶ a great while G1909	πολὺν G4183	δὲ Howbeit G1161	αὐτὸν him G846
προσδοκόντων after they had looked G4328	καὶ and G2532	θεωρούντων saw G2334	μηδὲν no G3367	ἄτοπον harm G824	εἰς to G1519	αὐτὸν him G846
γινόμενον come G1096	μεταβαλλόμενοι they changed their minds G3328	ἔλεγον and said G3004	θεόν a god G2316	αὐτὸν him G846	εἶναι was G1511	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Acts 12:22** (References God): And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.

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