

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