

THE BOOK OF ACTS

ACTS 28:1-20 | LESSON SUMMARY

Malta

ACTS 28:2, "The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold." (NIV)

- Crash landed on Malta
- The islanders = barbarians
 - Non-Greek speakers referred to as barbarians
 - The people of Malta would have been thoroughly Roman
- They would have been aware that the boat was carrying prisoners, but still showed kindness and hospitality

ACTS 28:3, "When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand." (ESV)

- Debate about the viper
 - Malta in present day has no venomous snakes
 - Scholars believe there were in 1st century, but that they are now extinct
 - Other scholars believe the locals were mistaken
- The native people initially believe that the snake biting Paul is a result of karma
 - "Justice won't let him live" is actually a reference to the Greek goddess "dikee"



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- Paul shakes off snake and is not harmed, leading the natives to view Paul as a god
 - "He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm." (28:5)

ACTS 28:7-8, "Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius, who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days. It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him, healed him." (ESV)

- Paul performs more miraculous healings
- The natives reciprocate and host them for 3 months
 - They then stock their ship with any provisions the passengers need
 - Syracuse (3 days), Rhegium (1 day), Puteoli (7 days)
 - Verses 14, 15, and 21 "Four brothers" = can also be translated brothers and sisters

ACTS 28:16, "And when we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who guarded him." (ESV)



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- Paul isn't treated like a typical prisoner
 - A single soldier guards him
- He is still very much being marched toward death

ACTS 28:20, "For this reason, therefore, I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain." (ESV)

- Paul is still pleading with the Jews
 - He is innocent and maintains Jewish customs
 - He knows that if they continue to insist, he would not be the first to be executed for his faith in Christ

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Edward D. Andrews, *Archeology and the New Testament*, Kelly Leslie, *Philosophers, Jews and Christians in the Roman Empire: authority, text and tradition*, F.F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*

