

## Acts Chapter 28

**Acts 28:1 "And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita."**

“Melita”: An island 17 miles long and 9 miles wide, about 60 miles south of Sicily. None of the sailors had previously been to the bay (known today as St. Paul’s Bay), where they were shipwrecked.

**Acts 28:2 "And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold."**

Most anyone, regardless of their culture, would help someone who was shipwrecked. It was very cold and still pouring down rain. This was in the fall when the rain is very cold. These people building a fire on the bank was a great help to these soaking wet people.

**Acts 28:3 "And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid [them] on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand."**

“A viper”: A venomous snake (Mark 16:18).

Paul always worked wherever he was and whatever he was doing. This is no exception. Paul gathered dry wood for the fire. This viper (snake), which fastened on Paul's hand was a physical snake. The old devil (serpent), had been trying to destroy Paul this entire trip, but God has other plans.

**Acts 28:4 "And when the barbarians saw the [venomous] beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live."**

Barbarians were not believers in God. They were superstitious people. They decided because the snake bit Paul, he was a murderer. This is the attitude of some church people today. Because Satan attacks a person (from the outside), they say quickly that he or she is not of God.

That just isn't true. The closer you walk with God (like Paul), the more the enemy attacks you. Satan only fights those who have taken a firm stand for God. I would be more worried if Satan were leaving me alone. It might mean that I was not fulfilling God's will.

**Acts 28:5 "And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm."**

Paul was protected by God. This snake could do no harm to Paul. Just as we are protected from Satan by the blood of Jesus, if we are true believers. He can attack us, but he cannot win. God can use this bad thing and turn it into a blessing.

**Acts 28:6 "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."**

“Said that he was a god” (see 14:11-12).

They suddenly realize that Paul is not evil after all. These barbarians, as we said before, are superstitious and now they have decided Paul is a god. They know that they would be dead if the snake had bitten them, so they know Paul is different and they pronounce him a god. They will do anything for Paul at this point.

**Acts 28:7 "In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously."**

“Chief man”: The Greek phrase indicates that Publius was the Roman governor of Malta (which 28:1 calls Melita).

Paul would be treated with great respect. He would be housed and fed the best on the island, as we see in the verse above. He is in Publius' quarters, the chief man of the island.

Verses 8-9: According to verse 8 God miraculously “healed” (Greek *iasato*), Publius’s father through the laying on of Paul’s hands. (Verse 9), states that many came and were healed, but a different word is used (Greek *etherapeuonto*), and any mention of laying on of hands is missing. Consequently, the healings of verse 9 could have been by medical means, through the hands of Luke the Physician.

**Acts 28:8 "And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him."**

“Lay sick ... bloody flux”: The gastric fever (caused by a microbe found in goat’s milk), that was common on Malta. Dysentery, often the result of poor sanitation, was wide-spread in the ancient world.

God is with Paul. If Paul was in good favor with these people before, now he is in great favor with them. God, through him, has healed the father of the leader of the land. Now Paul and those with him will have need for nothing. These people will take care of their needs.

**Acts 28:9 "So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:"**

God is using this to provide for Paul and his companions while they are on this island. Healing their sick was one of the things the Lord had told His disciples to do. Preach the word, heal the

sick, and cast out demons was what the Lord would have those do who represent him. Paul is doing what the Lord would have him do.

**Acts 28:10 "Who also honored us with many honors; and when we departed, they laded [us] with such things as were necessary."**

We see here, that Paul and his companions were well cared for while they were on the island, and were sent away with enough to take care of their needs, until they made it to Rome. They were highly respected and honored, because of Paul.

**Acts 28:11 "And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux."**

“After three months”: Since sea travel was dangerous during this period (see note on 27:9).

“Ship of Alexandria”: Probably another in the imperial grain fleet (see notes on 27:5-6).

“Castor and Pollux”: According to Greek mythology, these were the sons of Zeus who was believed to protect sailors.

These superstitious people had the signs of the twin sons of Jupiter on their ship. They would be setting sail about February or March.

**Acts 28:12 "And landing at Syracuse, we tarried [there] three days."**

“Syracuse”: An important city on the island of Sicily. Tradition holds that Paul established a church during the ship’s 3 day stopover there.

**Acts 28:13 "And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:"**

“Rhegium”: A harbor on the southern tip of the Italian mainland. There the ship waited one day for a favorable wind to permit it to sail through the Straits of Messina (separating Sicily from the Italian mainland).

“Puteoli”: Modern Pozzuoli, located on the Bay of Naples near Pompeii. Rome’s main port and the most important one in Italy, Puteoli was also the main port for the Egyptian grain fleet (see note on 27:5).

This Puteoli was a place where the ships carrying wheat landed. It was so wonderful for Paul and his companions to find believers like themselves here at Puteoli. Christianity had already made its way to Italy.

**Acts 28:14 "Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome."**

“Rome”: Almost as a footnote, Luke mentions the party’s arrival in the Imperial capital, Paul’s longtime goal (see note on 19:21).

What a wonderful surprise. Followers of Jesus here were called brethren still. They perhaps, wanted Paul to preach (like a revival). At any rate, they wanted him there these seven days. He stayed and then headed for Rome.

**Acts 28:15 "And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage."**

“Appii”: A market town 43 miles south of Rome on the Appian Way.

“Three taverns”: A rest stop on the Appian Way, about 30 miles south of Rome.

Paul was highly thought of among the brethren. Many of them had just heard of him and wanted to hear from his own lips the gospel. It seems word spread fast that he was on his way to Rome, and at every stop there were brethren who had gathered to meet him. Paul was greatly encouraged by this and praised God for it.

### **Acts Chapter 28 Questions**

1. What was the name of the island where they were shipwrecked?
2. What kind of people lived here?
3. How did they show kindness to the shipwrecked?
4. When Paul was gathering branches for the fire, what happened to him?
5. What did these natives believe about Paul, when this happened?
6. They did not believe in God, but said what suffereth him not to live?
7. What did Paul do in verse 5?
8. These barbarians expected what to happen to Paul?
9. When it didn't, who did they think Paul to be?
10. Who was the chief man of the island?
11. What relative of his was sick?
12. When Paul entered, what did Paul do as an agent of God?

13. So when this was done, who else came to Paul for help?
14. They honored Paul and his company, and when they left they gave them what?
15. Where was the ship from that Paul left in?
16. What sign was on the ship?
17. How long did they stay at Syracuse?
18. What did they purchase at Rhegium?
19. Who did they find at Puteoli?
20. How long did Paul stay with them?
21. Where did Paul and his group leave for then?
22. The word spread that Paul was on his way to Rome. At every stop who met them?
23. What effect did this have on Paul?
24. Who did Paul thank?