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By Dan Maines

Acts 28

Acts 28:1-2

When they had been brought safely through, then we found out that the island was called Malta. The natives showed us extraordinary kindness, for they kindled a fire and took us all in because of the rain that had started and because of the cold.

† God's promise was fulfilled: all survived the shipwreck. The people of Malta, often called "barbarians" by Romans because of their non-Greek tongue, showed unusual hospitality.

Acts 28:3-6

But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand. When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they began saying to one another, "Undoubtedly this man is a murderer, and though he has been saved from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live." However, Paul shook the creature off into the fire and suffered no harm. Now they were expecting that he was going to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had waited a long time and had seen nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and began to say that he was a god.

† The Maltese assumed divine judgment, but Paul's preservation demonstrated God's protection. Their shift from condemnation to deification mirrored earlier reactions at Lystra (Acts 14).

† Mark 16:18 predicted such signs for the apostles, showing God's promise fulfilled.

Acts 28:7-9

Now in the neighboring parts of that place were lands belonging to the leading man of the island, named Publius, who welcomed us and entertained us warmly for three days. And it happened that the father of Publius was lying in bed, afflicted with a recurrent fever and dysentery; and Paul went in to see him, and after he had prayed, he laid his hands on him and healed him. After this happened, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases were coming to him and being cured.

† Paul's miracles brought healing to Malta, testifying of Christ's power. Publius later became honored in Christian tradition as the first bishop of Malta.

† Early church tradition, recorded by the writings of Chrysostom, affirms the impact of Paul's ministry in Malta.

Acts 28:10

They also showed us many honors, and when we were setting sail, they supplied us with everything we needed.

† God provided for Paul and the travelers through the generosity of the Maltese, preparing them for the journey to Rome.

Acts 28:11-13

After three months we set sail on an Alexandrian ship which had wintered at the island, and which had the Twin Brothers for its figurehead. After we put in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days, and from there we sailed around and arrived at Rhegium, and a day later a south wind came up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli.

† The figurehead of the Twin Brothers, Castor and Pollux, reflected pagan reliance on mythological protectors of sailors. In contrast, Paul's safety came from the living God.

Acts 28:14-15

There we found some brothers and sisters, and were invited to stay with them for seven days; and that is how we came to Rome. And from there, the brothers and sisters, when they heard about us, came as far as the Market of Appius and Three Inns to meet us; when Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.

† The presence of Christians in Italy showed the gospel had already reached Rome before Paul. Their journey to greet him testified of their love.

† Suetonius and Tacitus both attest to the spread of Christianity in Rome by the mid-first century.

Acts 28:16

When we entered Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself

with the soldier who was guarding him.

† Paul's semi-freedom allowed continued ministry under Roman watch.

Acts 28:17-20

After three days Paul called together those who were the leading men of the Jews, and when they came together, he began saying to them, "Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was handed over to the Romans as a prisoner from Jerusalem. And when they had examined me, they were willing to release me because there were no grounds for putting me to death. But when the Jews objected, I was forced to appeal to Caesar, not that I had any accusation against my nation. For this reason, therefore, I requested to see you and to speak with you, since I am wearing this chain for the sake of the hope of Israel."

† Paul explained his innocence and the reason for his imprisonment: the hope of Israel, fulfilled in Christ.

Acts 28:21-22

They said to him, "We have neither received letters about you from Judea, nor have any of the brothers come here and reported or spoken anything bad about you. But we desire to hear from you what your views are; for regarding this sect, it is known to us that it is spoken against everywhere."

† Christianity's reputation as controversial was already established in Rome. This provided Paul an open door to preach.

Acts 28:23-24

When they had set a day for Paul, people came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses

and from the Prophets, from morning until evening. Some were being persuaded by the things said by Paul, but others would not believe.

† Paul's teaching remained rooted in Scripture, showing Jesus as fulfillment of Moses and the Prophets. As always, some believed, others rejected.

Acts 28:25-27

And when they disagreed with one another, they began leaving after Paul had said one statement: "The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers, saying, 'Go to this people and say, You will keep on hearing, and will not understand; And you will keep on seeing, and will not perceive; For the hearts of this people have become insensitive, And with their ears they hardly hear, And they have closed their eyes; Otherwise they might see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their hearts and return, And I would heal them.'"

† Paul applied Isaiah 6:9-10 to Israel's hardness of heart. Their rejection fulfilled prophecy.

Acts 28:28

"Therefore, let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen as well."

† Israel's rejection led to the gospel going to the nations, fulfilling God's plan of worldwide salvation.

Acts 28:30-31

Now Paul stayed two full years in his own rented lodging and welcomed all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching things about the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.

† Acts ends with Paul boldly proclaiming the gospel in Rome. Though in chains, the word of God was not bound.

† Eusebius (Ecclesiastical History 2.22) notes Paul's ministry in Rome and his eventual martyrdom under Nero.

How it applies to us today

† God fulfills His promises despite storms, trials, and opposition.

† The gospel is unstoppable, spreading to the ends of the earth.

† Some will believe, others will harden their hearts, but God's word never fails.

† Like Paul, we must proclaim Christ with boldness, unhindered by circumstances.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

Source Index

† Josephus, Antiquities 20.8.9 – Jewish opposition and plots

† Chrysostom, Homilies on Acts – Paul's preservation and ministry in Malta

† Suetonius, Life of Claudius 25.4; Tacitus, Annals 15.44 – Spread of Christianity in Rome

† Isaiah 6:9-10 – Prophecy of Israel's hardness

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 2.22 – Paul's ministry and martyrdom in Rome

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