

English

Sports & Rec Plus

THE BOOK OF ACTS

Lesson 82: Ashore on Malta

Acts 28:1-10

Rev. Rick Mitchell and Rev. Rod Morris

Welcome to the teaching ministry of Sports & Rec Plus (S&RP). Sports & Rec Plus is a worldwide church planting ministry serving the Lord in ninety countries with an emphasis of taking the Gospel to unreached people groups. We do this by using sports, recreation, leisure time activities, and life skills training to open doors so that the Word of God can be shared. As God's Word is shared, relationships are begun, Bible studies are started, people get saved, then as the Lord leads churches are established, and then we train church leaders.

This message today is part of a series from the book of Acts entitled, The Book of Acts. You can listen to all of our messages by going to our website: **sportsrecplus.org**, clicking on the media tab, and then clicking on "The Book of Acts." There you will find the remainder of this series plus many other messages from the Bible.

Doctrinal Minute: The Importance of the Bible

(Each week we spend a few minutes highlighting a doctrinal truth from Scripture.)

We believe the Bible, that being the Scriptures of the thirty-nine Old Testament books and the twenty-seven New Testament books, to be the inerrant, infallible, and authoritative message of God. The Word of God was inspired supernaturally by the Holy Spirit as God's only written revelation to mankind (I Corinthians 2:9-10; 2 Peter 1:20-21). We also believe that the Bible is the standard against which we should measure all teaching, preaching, and human interaction and is the supreme and final authority from God to mankind. Furthermore, the Bible is totally sufficient for mankind's instruction on all matters of faith, doctrine, and practice (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

We here at S&RP believe and practice that the Bible first of all is to be interpreted literally in its grammatical and historical context (2 Peter 1:20) and secondly that it is perfect and complete in every subject it addresses (Hebrews 4:12).

For the purpose of continuity, we here at Sports & Rec Plus use the New International Version (NIV) in our teaching ministry. Since we reach many people in countries where English is their second, third or maybe their fourth subsequent language spoken, this version is used because it is easier to read and understand than other translations. However, there are many other translations which also faithfully translate the meaning of the original writings and can and should also be called the Word of God (Nehemiah 8:2,8).

For additional information about the beliefs of S&RP concerning the Bible, you can watch two of our messages on our website under the “Media” tab in the “Theology and Doctrine” section.

- ***The Authority and Sufficiency of Scripture***, 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:16-21, recorded on January 3, 2024
- ***The Bible***, 2 Timothy 3:15-16, recorded on January 14, 2022

Today's Verses Acts 28:1-10

Paul Ashore on Malta

28:1 Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. 28:2 The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. 28:3 Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. 28:4 When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, “This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live.” 28:5 But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. 28:6 The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead; but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

28:7 There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and showed us generous hospitality for three days. 28:8 His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. 28:9 When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. 28:10 They honored us in many ways; and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed.

INTRODUCTION

In our last message, Paul and everyone on board the ship bound for Rome were facing death as it was about to sink in the violent storm which had raged on for many days. But God was true to His word when the angel told Paul that no one would die or even have a hair on their head harmed and that they would make it safely to shore. We can be assured that any promises made by God will happen just as it is written in the Bible. This truth alone should give us the motivation to read and study the Bible.

Message

Acts 28:1-10

28:1 Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta.

Malta is a small island in the Mediterranean Sea and is about 425 miles south of Rome. With an area of only 125 square miles, today this island nation is the tenth smallest country by size in the world, yet it is the ninth most densely populated country. This was the island Paul found himself on with the other 275 survivors. They would all be wet, cold, and tired; but they were all alive just as Paul had said.

28:2 The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold.

Even though they survived dying in the sea, everyone still was at risk because of the conditions. The storm was still raging, and we read here **it was raining and cold**. Luke tells us that the inhabitants of Malta **showed us unusual kindness**. They built a fire and welcomed everyone. While Luke doesn't describe what acts of kindness the people of Malta showed, it must have been beyond what would normally be expected. I picture that they were well taken care of given food and shelter.

28:3 Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand.

Paul was bitten by a viper right in front of a group of awestruck natives as he was putting wood on the fire. Being cold and rainy, the cold-blooded animal would have been lethargic until it felt the heat of the fire. Once it warmed up, the snake's nature was to protect itself and it bit Paul on the hand. But it didn't just bite Paul, we read here that it fastened itself on his hand. This would have allowed the snake to inject more of its venom.

28:4 When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, “This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live.”

This verse describes the snake bite even further by letting us know that it was hanging on to Paul with a death-like grip. While it was only for a few moments, the people would have known that a snake bite like Paul received would mean a painful death and so expected the victim to “swell up and fall down dead”. Their immediate thought was that **“This man must be a murderer”** because the goddess Justice has pronounced her judgment upon Paul. **Justice** is actually a reference to the Greek goddess of justice, *Dikee*, sister to *Nikee* (the goddess of victory; we know this name as Nike today). The statues we see today of Lady Justice often in front of court houses around the world is the allegorical personification of *Dikee*. The statues are typically seen blindfolded holding a scale and a sword to represent that justice has the authority to try individuals for their crimes but will be fair to everyone with the facts of the case being carefully weighed.

28:5 But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects.

Paul nonchalantly shakes the snake off his hand into the fire and carries on like nothing happened. He isn't crying out in pain, nor is he showing any signs of anxiety over the ordeal with the serpent.

28:6 The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead; but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

The islanders all fully expected Paul to fall over dead anytime. They all knew and fully understood what happens as a result of the viper's venom; you die. They had probably seen firsthand or at least heard of other people suffering and dying as a result of being bitten. But Paul wasn't exhibiting any symptoms that he was even bitten by a deadly snake.

We read that **after waiting a long time**, we don't know how much time that was, maybe an hour or two; Paul was still alive. I'm sure that people were not only watching but also talking amongst themselves about what they had witnessed. Their final conclusion, once they realized that Paul wasn't going to die, was, **they changed their minds and said he was a god.**

We have to remember that these people's spiritual lives were founded in mythology. They knew nothing about the One and True Living God, only their pagan gods. Their response was simply out of ignorance.

28:7 There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and showed us generous hospitality for three days.

Quite possibly because the people thinking that a god was in their midst, they went to stay with the chief official in his home. We read that Publius showed them generous hospitality. No doubt he didn't want to offend someone who was perceived as a god. The last thing anyone would want would be to have a god even just slighted irritated at them.

28:8 His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him.

Now Luke tells us that Paul is going to work. We only read here how Paul heals Publius' father from a fever and dysentery; but I have to think that he also began preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to everyone on the island.

28:9 When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured.

As word spread how that Paul had healed the sick man, everyone on the island heard about the miracles and came to be cured as he had been. Remember, this is a small island only about seventeen miles long. This is only about a half a day's journey. Word would have travelled quickly over the entire island in just a few days.

28:10 They honored us in many ways; and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed.

The time had come for the survivors to continue on to Rome. In our next lesson we will see that they spent about three months on Malta. Luke records here that the people of Malta **honored us in many ways**...even **furnished us with the supplies we needed**.

CONCLUSION

Paul and his companions left a lasting impact on the people of Malta far more important than healing their sick. Today, Malta is considered a Christian nation. This is a direct result of Paul sharing the life and work of Jesus Christ.

While Paul did meet their physical needs of healing, more importantly he met their spiritual needs of sharing the Gospel with lost people. This is something we must emulate today. Sure, it is important to meet the physical needs of people. If someone is hungry and we have the ability to give them food, then we need to feed them. If

someone needs clothing or shelter and we have the ability to help them, then we must help them. However, we must never neglect the most important thing, and that is to consider their spiritual needs. Too often we become focused on the physical and emotional needs and do little or nothing for the spiritual needs. It is much easier to help someone's physical needs as it is generally safe. Meeting their spiritual needs requires that you put yourself out there. In doing so you might face reticule, mocking, slurs against you, and maybe even physical danger to your life and well-being. But we must always remember our charge from our Lord and Savior given in Matthew 28:19-20:

- Go and make disciples of all nations
- Baptizing new believers in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit
- Teaching them to obey everything Christ has commanded us
- Knowing that He is always with us, to the very end of the age.

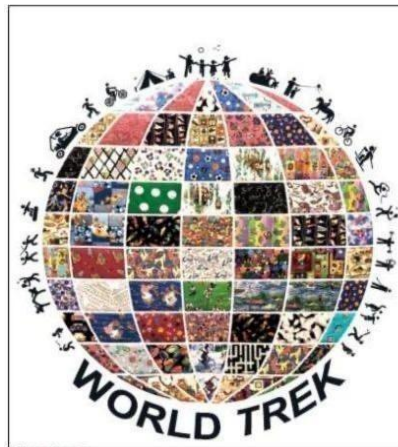
Let's close in prayer.

Website: sportsrecplus.org Phone: 571-278-5987

Rick's email: sportsrecplus@cs.com Rod's email: coloradoredbird@gmail.com

Mail: 2288 Gunbarrel Road, #154-235 Chattanooga, TN 37421 United States

WORLD TREK



World Trek is going back to the many places where together with God we have seen people saved, churches planted, pastors trained, and new believers discipled.