

Power to Witness in Word and Deed – Part 2

The Book of Acts

Acts 28:1–16

Read Acts 28:1–16.

1. Given the events of the last two weeks of Paul's life, what is remarkable about verse 1? (27:17, 20, 29, 33)

2. The term Luke uses in verse 2 for islanders literally means "barbarians."
 - a. Although these people were "despised by Greeks and Romans"¹ how does Paul see them? (See Rom. 1:14–15 and Col. 3:11 where the same term is used.)

 - b. What "unusual kindness" (v. 2) do they show to the victims of the shipwreck?

3. Cold and wet, Paul throws wood on the fire and "a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand" (v. 3).
 - a. What do the islanders conclude when they see this? (v. 4)

 - b. At first reading, the people of Malta may seem primitive to us. But what similar things do people say today when bad things happen?

 - c. What changes the islanders' minds about the conclusion they had drawn? (vv. 5–6a)

4. Imagine how startling it would have been to be bitten by that viper.
 - a. What did Paul know that enabled him not to panic? (27:23–25)

 - b. What scriptures do you cling to when the unexpected comes into your life? (If none comes to mind, meditate on one of the following: Ps. 56; Is. 40:27–31; Rom. 8:37–39; 2 Cor. 1:8–11.)

¹ Bruce Milne, *The Acts of the Apostles: Witnesses to Him...to the Ends of the Earth* (London: Christian Focus, 2010), 482.

5. Paul has faced many accusations and trials, and more lie ahead. Yet God showed him exceptional kindness throughout his life.
 - a. What acts of kindness does God bless Paul with on his journey to Rome? (27:3, 23–24, 42–43; 28:2, 7, 10, 14–15, 16)
 - b. What are some ways that you have experienced God’s kindness?
 - c. How can you show kindness this week? Ask God to help you see opportunities.
 - d. What kindness does God show to the people of Malta through Paul? (vv. 8–9)
6. During their three months on Malta, Luke chooses to record only the viper incident and the healings at Publius’s estate.
 - a. How do the islanders respond to these things? (vv. 6, 9, 10)
 - b. Why has God empowered the apostles to perform signs and wonders in the book of Acts? (8:6–8; 14:3; Rom. 15:17–21)
7. At long last, the Apostle Paul arrives in Rome, about three years after writing his letter to the believers there. He has many friends in this well-established church (Rom. 16).
 - a. Why has he wanted to go to Rome? (Rom. 1:8–13; 15:32)
 - b. How do the believers show their eagerness to see Paul? (v. 15)
8. Sometimes God revealed to Paul his specific plans and directions, but this time Paul was clueless that a side trip to Malta was part of his itinerary. It was God’s kindness that brought Paul to these people and established a church among them.
 - a. When has God’s leading in your life surprised you?
 - b. How has this shown you God’s passion to extend and expand his kingdom?
 - c. What does this reveal to you about God?