

EPISODE NO. 320

Acts 28:1-6,10-31

Safe on Malta

1 When we were safe on land, we realized that the island was called Malta. 2 It was very cold and raining. The people who lived there were very kind to us. They made a fire for us and welcomed us all. 3 Paul picked up a pile of sticks for the fire. He was putting the sticks on the fire. Then, because of the heat, a poisonous snake came out and bit him on the hand. 4 The people living on the island saw the snake hanging from Paul's hand. They said to each other, "Surely this man is a murderer! He didn't die in the ocean, but Justice will not permit him to live." 5 However, Paul shook off the snake into the fire. He was not hurt. 6 The people expected him to swell up or to fall down dead suddenly. For a long time, the people waited and watched him, but nothing bad happened to him. So the people changed their minds and they began to say, "He is a god!"

Heading for Rome

10-11 We stayed on Malta for three months. When we were ready to leave, the people gave us the things we needed. We got on a ship from the city of Alexandria. The ship had stayed on the island of Malta during the winter. On the front of the ship was the sign for the twin gods. 12 We stopped at the town of Syracuse and stayed there for three days. 13 Then we came to the town of Rhegium. The next day, a wind began to blow from the southwest, so we were able to leave. A day later, we came to the town of Puteoli. 14 We found some Christian brothers there. They asked us to stay with them for seven days. Finally, we came near to Rome. 15 The brothers in Rome heard that we were there. They came out to meet us at the Market of Appius and at the Three Inns. When Paul saw these believers, he felt much better. He thanked God.

Paul Finally Arrived in Rome

16 Then we went to Rome. In Rome, though Paul was allowed to live alone, a soldier stayed with Paul to guard him.

17 Three days later, Paul sent for some of the most important Jewish leaders. When they came together, Paul said to them, "My Jewish brothers, I have done nothing against

our people or against the customs of our ancestors, yet I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. 18 The Romans asked me many questions, but they couldn't find any reason why I should be put to death. They wanted to let me go free. 19 However, the Jewish leaders there didn't want me to go free. So, I was forced to ask to have my trial before Caesar in Rome. I am not accusing my people of anything wrong. 20 This is the reason I wanted to see you and talk with you. I am bound with this chain, because I believe in the hope of Israel.”

21 These Jews answered Paul, “WE have received no letters from Judea about you. None of our Jewish brothers who have traveled from Judea brought any news about you or told us anything bad about you. 22 We do want to hear your ideas. We know that people everywhere are speaking against this sect.”

23 Paul and the Jewish leaders set a day for a meeting. On that day, many more of these Jews met with Paul at his house. Paul spoke to them all day long. He explained to them the truth about the kingdom of God. Using the law of Moses and the writings of the prophets, Paul tried to persuade them about Jesus. 24 Some of the Jews believed the things that Paul said, but others did not believe. 25 They disagreed among themselves. The Jewish leaders were ready to leave, but Paul said one more thing to them: “The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah. 26 He said:

‘Go to this people and tell them:

You will certainly hear,
but you'll never understand!

You will certainly see,
but you'll never perceive!

27 The heart of this people has become hard.
They have ears, but they don't listen.
They have shut their eyes.

Otherwise, they would see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their minds,
and then turn.

I would heal them.’ (*Isaiah 6:9-10*)

28 “I want you Jewish leaders to know that God has sent His salvation to non-Jewish people. THEY will listen!” 29 *

30 Paul stayed two full years in his own rented house. He welcomed everyone who came to visit him.

31 Paul was proclaiming about the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ. He was very bold. No one tried to stop him from speaking.