

THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

SESSION 81 | ACTS 28:1-11

ACTS 28:1-10 | THE EXPERIENCE ON MELITA

- Verse 1 –
 - Having **escaped** (from the ship to the land), their location was then made known. They were at **Melita**, today known as Malta.
 - Note that the KJV uses the proper name as used at that time, rather than the modern *Malta*. This is appropriate (and what they should have done in Joel 3:4).
- Verse 2 –
 - The word **barbarous** is adopted into the English from the Greek βάρβαρος [barbaros].
 - The word had not negative connotation as it does now, but was simply a word for those who did not speak Greek or Latin.
 - Some argue that the KJV is outdated in using a word that now has negative connotations. However, NASB and ESV use *natives*, which also has negative connotations today.
 - It would be much better for readers to “blame themselves” rather than blame translators for not knowing how to read with authorial intent.
- Verses 3-4 –
 - The people had a *karma* type of worldview.
 - Their view that Paul was a **murderer** was likely naturally in their suspicions/assumptions for both Paul and all the prisoners.
 - It would have surely been clear that the men were prisoners, and one would naturally assume that among so many some were murderers.
 - Their *karma* worldview along with their natural assumptions led them to the *wrong conclusion* about Paul.
 - This is a reminder that *preconceived notions are powerful influences on our thinking*.
- Verses 5-6 –
 - When your worldview is circumstantially based, you will have wild swings in conclusions. The crowd now sees Paul not a murderer, but rather they **said that he was a god** (v. 6). A solidly biblical worldview would not have made either conclusion.
 - It is unlikely that any miracle occurred here. The Greek uses προσδοκάω [prosdokeo] which is “to think ahead of time.” That is, they had a presupposition that **he should have swollen** (v. 6).
- Verses 7-9 –
 - The word **possessions** refers to the *land of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius*. This man offered lodging and hospitality.
 - Verse 8 contains a clearly supernatural miracle, followed by a series of healings summarized in verse 9.
 - While verse 8 is a miracle, there is a *possibility* that verse 9 is the physician’s ministry of Luke.

- The basis of such thinking is that verse 9 uses the word *θεραπεύω* [therapeuo] rather than *ἰάομαι* [iaomai], which is used in verse 8.
 - Whether the healing of verse 9 was *therapeutic* or miraculous is not clear, but would not change the miraculous of verse 8.
 - Seeing miracles this late in Paul’s ministry, we must make a theological conclusion:
 - Miracles were apostolic and concluded with the death of the apostles.
 - Miracles are a normative part of the Christian experience, and these verses serve as evidence.
 - Miracles were a part of *kingdom* ministry and ceased with the destruction of Jerusalem (and thus the end of the Kingdom offer until the last days).
 - If so, why are they seen here in Melita, among those who are clearly *not Jewish*?
 - Paul was arrested and being taken to Rome for *kingdom* reasons, not for issues relating to the dispensation of the grace of God. It is interesting that there is no record of any evangelistic ministry on the island. Could this be why Bullinger [incorrectly] concludes that the mystery had not yet been given?
 - It is my *speculation* (requiring further study) that miracles are kingdom related.
- Verse 10 –
 - Paul has repeatedly expressed appreciation for the humanitarian / compassionate kindness of the islanders.
 - It would serve us well to remember that Christians are not the only compassionate humans.

ACTS 28:11-16 | REACHING ROME AT LAST

- Verse 11 –
 - Having spent **three months** on the Island [thus it is now likely February) they find another Alexandrian ship (see Acts 27:6) and set sail for Rome.
 - This ship was under the sign of **Castor and Pollux**. The Greek is literally translated in Young’s Literal Translation as “with the sign Dioscuri.” *Dioscuri* is literally, “Zeus’ sons.” Since it is a reference to **Castor and Pollux**, KJV makes the interpretation.
 - Who were these two sons? Greek mythology holds them to be the *gemini* twins. They were seen as the patron deity of sailors, so it is not surprising to see them as the sign of this ship.
 - Historical note: The *Temple of Castor and Pollux* in the Roman Forum (Rome) contains three remaining pillars, which serve as the prime example of *Corinthian pillars*, thus every architect will study Castor and Pollux, at least in passing, in their educational career.
 - Astronomical note: The “heads” of the Gemini constellation are named Castor and Pollux. Pollux carries a rod and Castor a harp in one hand and a bow. This displays the a two-natured king ruling the universe in strength, harmony, and peace. It is a millennial picture that has been perverted by astrology.