



Once Paul and the 276 people who had been shipwrecked were safely onshore, they learned they were on the island of Malta.



The people of the island were very kind and as it was cold and rainy, they built a fire on the shore to welcome them. As Paul was putting an armful of sticks on the fire, a poisonous snake, driven out by the heat, bit him on the hand.



Those who saw the snake hanging from his hand said to each other, 'A murderer, no doubt! Though he escaped the sea, justice will not permit him to live.' Paul shook off the snake into the fire and was unharmed. When Paul did not swell up or suddenly drop dead, the local people decided he was a god.



Publius, the chief official of the island, welcomed and provided for the shipwrecked victims for three days. Publius's father was ill with fever and dysentery. Paul prayed, laying his hands on him, and the man was healed. Other sick people were brought to Paul and they were healed also.



Three months after the shipwreck they set sail on another ship that had wintered at the island



They stopped at Syracuse for three days then sailed across to Rhegium. A day later, a south wind began blowing so they sailed up the coast to Puteoli.



At Puteoli Paul found some Christians, who invited him to spend a week with them.



From there they made their way north to Rome. Christians in Rome had heard they were on the way and travelled to meet Paul at the Forum on the Appian Way. Others joined Paul at The Three Taverns.



When Paul saw them, he was encouraged and thanked God



When Paul arrived in Rome, he was permitted to have his own private lodging, although he was guarded by a soldier.



Three days after Paul's arrival, he called together the local Jewish leaders and said, 'Brothers, I was arrested in Jerusalem although I had done nothing wrong. The Romans tried me and wanted to release me, but the Jewish leaders protested the decision and so I appeal to Caesar. I am in chains because I believe that the Messiah has already come.'



The Jewish leaders in Rome had not heard about Paul's case. 'This movement has been denounced everywhere,' they said, 'but we want to hear what you believe.'



A large number of people came to Paul's lodging. He explained about the Kingdom of God and tried to persuade them about Jesus from the Scriptures.



Using the law of Moses and the books of the prophets, he spoke to them from morning until evening



Some were persuaded by the things he said, but others did not believe. 'I want you to know that this salvation from God has also been offered to the Gentiles, and they will accept it,' Paul told them.



For the next two years, Paul lived in Rome at his own expense. He welcomed all who visited him, boldly teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ. No one tried to stop him.



(The Bible does not say what happened next but Ignatius, around 110AD, wrote that Paul was martyred. Christian tradition holds that Paul was beheaded in Rome).



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