

**"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan****ACTS 28****Acts 28**

Acts 28 finishes the amazing voyage of the Apostle Paul and those with him. They spent considerable time on the Island of Malta. The island would have been steeped in Greek and Roman mythology. The islanders were amazed when a viper came out from among the sticks Paul was gathering and bit him. They said, surely this man, having escaped the shipwreck, will die by snake bite; he must be an evil man. Then, when they saw with their own eyes that a viper bit Paul, but he did not swell, get sick, or die, they went to the other extreme and said the gods have come down among us! This opened the door for Paul to share the life-changing message of Jesus with the people of Malta. As word spread that the true and living God had sent people to the island, the "leading citizen" of Malta, named Publius, had a father who was very sick, and God miraculously healed him and proved that Paul and the men with him were sent from God and worthy to listen to, and they did. When the time was up, and the crew was ready to sail on to Rome, the people of the island loaded the people with gifts and food to take on their way. God used their time in Malta to bring the gospel to the island.

The scripture says that after three months, they set sail for Rome, and they did it on a ship that had as its figurehead on the front of the ship "the twins." This is a case in point of knowing the language, culture, and customs of the passage you are reading. The "brothers/twins" were well known in Greek and Roman mythology. They were the two sons of Zeus in Greek

mythology, Castor and Pollux, who were the ones who were believed to watch over mariners and those sailing around the Mediterranean. Fascinating local and historical note. As the group made their way to Rome, they found others of the "Way," other followers of Jesus who lived in the area. They took Paul and his cohort in for a week to fellowship and encourage them with hospitality. Hospitality was a major consideration during the early decades of the Church. Paul seemed surprised that the word had not come from the Jews in Jerusalem that He was a heretic among the Jewish people as he had been falsely accused. Paul used his time there to preach to the Jews, and when the Jews refused to hear him, he once again turned to the Gentiles, who heard him gladly. Paul quoted once again the Isaiah 6 passage about the rejection of the Jewish people of the message of the Messiah. ***"Go to this people and say: "Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; And seeing you will see, and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them."*** (Acts 28:26-27)

The hardness of the heart of the Jewish people in Rome allowed the Apostle Paul to share the gospel message for two years in a rented home that was made available to Paul and those with him.

**Prayer and Action Steps**

*Lord, help us to remember that You make all things beautiful in their time. You hold the world and its inhabitants in Your hand. Remind us that You are sovereign and can take anything that comes into our lives and use those things for Your glory and our good.*