

# Shipwreck and Malta

On his journey to Rome as a prisoner, Paul survives a violent storm and shipwreck, demonstrating God's protection and power through his ministry on Malta.

Acts 27:1-28:10

CHARACTERS: Paul, Julius the centurion, Luke, Aristarchus, The islanders of Malta

THEMES: God's sovereignty, Protection, Leadership, Miracles, Providence

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WHEN IT WAS decided that Paul should sail to Italy, he was delivered to a centurion named Julius. They set sail, and after many days reached Crete. Paul advised them not to sail further, saying, 'I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss.' But the centurion paid more attention to the pilot than to Paul, and they set sail.

Soon a tempestuous wind called the northeaster struck. The ship was caught and could not face the wind, so they were driven along. For many days neither sun nor stars appeared, and no small tempest lay on them. All hope of being saved was abandoned.

But Paul stood up and said, 'Take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, and he said, "Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you." So take heart, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told.'

On the fourteenth night, about midnight, the sailors suspected they were nearing land. Fearing they would run aground on the rocks, they let down anchors. Some sailors tried to escape in the lifeboat, but Paul

warned the centurion, 'Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.' So they cut away the lifeboat.

As day was about to dawn, Paul urged them all to take some food, saying, 'Today is the fourteenth day you have continued in suspense without taking any food. Take some food; it will give you strength, for not a hair is to perish from the head of any of you.' He took bread, gave thanks to God, and began to eat. They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves.

When it was day, they ran the ship aground. The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners lest any swim away, but the centurion, wishing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose. All 276 people escaped safely to land, reaching the island of Malta.

The native people showed them unusual kindness, building a fire because of the rain and cold. When Paul gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper came out and fastened on his hand. The islanders expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead, but when nothing happened, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

Paul stayed on Malta three months, healing the sick and preaching the gospel. When they set sail again, the islanders put on board whatever they needed. God had turned disaster into opportunity for ministry.