

Daily Bible Readings

Our Read-Ahead for: 20 November 2022

Paul Ministers in Malta

MONDAY: The Failure to Minister (**Ezekiel 34:1–6**)

TUESDAY: God’s Ministry to the Flock (**Ezekiel 34:11–16**)

WEDNESDAY: God’s Judgment of the Privileged (**Ezekiel 34:17–22**)

THURSDAY: Extend Hospitality to Strangers (**Romans 12:9–13**)

FRIDAY: Ready for Every Good Work (**2nd Timothy 2:20–26**)

SATURDAY: Do Good to All (**1st Thessalonians 5:12–22**)

SUNDAY: Ministering to the Sick (**Acts 28:1–10**)

Paul Ministers in Malta

Bible Background • Acts 28:1–10

Printed Text • Acts 28:1–10

Devotional Reading • Ezekiel 34:11–16

Keep in Mind: *“And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.” (Acts 28:8, KJV)*

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: **KNOW** how Paul helped people on the island of Malta; **APPRECIATE** the ways others minister to us; and **MINISTER** to those in need.

In Focus

We sometimes forgo help from others who do not look like us or because of the situation in which we find ourselves. Helping one another becomes easier as we realize God will often send unlikely strangers to help us in our times of need. Paul was such a helper to the sick islanders.

Focal Verses

Acts 28:1-10

1 When they had escaped, they then learned that the island was called Malta.

2 And the barbarous people showed us no little kindness, for they kindled a fire and received us every one, because of the present rain and because of the cold.

3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

4 And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hanging from his hand, they said among themselves, “No doubt this man is a murderer whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.”

5 And he shook off the beast into the fire and felt no harm.

6 Now they were expecting that he should have swollen or suddenly fallen down dead; but after watching a great while and seeing no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

7 In the same quarters were the possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and lodged us three days courteously.

8 And it came to pass that the father of Publius lay sick with a fever and a bloody flux. Paul entered in and prayed and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

9 So when this was done, others also on the island who had diseases, came and were healed.

10 These also honored us with many honors; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary.

The Lesson

I. The People, Places and Times

Background: After surviving a brutal northeast storm, Paul and the other passengers made it to the island of Malta (Acts 27:44). The inhabitants warmly welcomed the strangers out of the rain and cold. Rather than resting with the others, Paul gathered firewood. While placing wood on the fire, a snake rose from the fire and bit him. When the islanders witnessed the biting, they believed it was divine payback for some perceived crime and waited for Paul to die. Paul, however, simply shook the snake off. The fact that he was not harmed changed the islanders' opinion: They now thought he was a god.

Barbarous people. The people of Malta were not barbarians as they are defined today. Rather, in biblical times, Greeks used the term for anyone who didn't speak Greek and was seen as an uncultured individual.

Malta. Also called Melita, it was an island located near both Sicily (60 miles away) and Syracuse (90 miles) and was in a strategic location for trade. The island had an established government system and that its chief, Publius, was wealthy. He was able to lodge the 276 ship passengers at his estate (Acts 28:7).

II. In Depth

1. Receiving Help from Strangers (Acts 28:1–2)
2. Divine Protection (Acts 28: 3–6)
3. Ministering to Others (Acts 28:7–10)

III. Take Aways

IV. Closing Prayer