

Fact Sheet for **“More Than We Are Aware”**  
**Acts 28:1-10**

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Paul and the 275 others (prisoners, soldiers, sailors, others) had just been shipwrecked. All were safe.

ESV <sup>1</sup> ¶ **After we were brought safely through, we then learned that the island was called Malta.**

Malta is 18 miles long and 8 miles wide. It is located 58 miles south of Sicily.

<sup>2</sup> **The native people showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and was cold.**

ESV native people  
KJV barbarous people  
NAU natives

What do these translations bring to mind? Consider some others.

NET local inhabitants  
NIV islanders  
NLT people of the island

*βάρβαρος (bar'-ba-ros)* , As noun *a person who is not Greek, a foreigner.* To the Greeks and Romans strange languages sounded like “bar-bar-bar.” These people were not uncivilized or uncultured. Their culture was just not Greek oriented. The islanders were of Phoenician ancestry. The common language they used in Paul’s day was a Punic (Carthaginian) dialect. Malta had come under Roman rule almost 300 years earlier. Several islanders also spoke Latin and Greek. Augustus established a Roman governor on the island. He also settled a number of army veterans and their families there. It had good harbors and was ideally located for trade.

The word translated “unusual kindness” is the word from which we get the word “philanthropy.”

<sup>3</sup> **When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand.**

The cold weather would have made the snake lethargic, but the heat made it more active.

Paul was not only a heaven-directed man with a God-given message... he was also a God-protected man (see also Acts 27:23-25). Our lives, our stay upon this earth, are in God’s hands.

<sup>4</sup> When the native people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live."

This was no garter snake and the islanders knew it.

<sup>5</sup> He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. <sup>6</sup> They were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw no misfortune come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

No doubt Paul would have contradicted this (see Acts 14:8-15).

<sup>7</sup> ¶ Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius, who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days.

"lands" – fields, estate

"Publius" – the Roman governor, actually with the title "first man of the island."

<sup>8</sup> It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him healed him.

I can't imagine that Paul prayed silently.

God moves in our lives by providence, concurrence, miracles, and clarity.

<sup>9</sup> And when this had taken place, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured. <sup>10</sup> They also honored us greatly, and when we were about to sail, they put on board whatever we needed.

The way I read this is that all who came were cured. No wonder the islanders would help them as they did.

"they honored us greatly" – literally "with many honors they honored us"

Paul continued to minister to others, even as a shipwrecked prisoner.

The 275 others from the shipwreck would have been watching all of this. No wonder the gospel spread like wildfire.

They actually set sail after three months on Malta (Acts 28:11).

Why did God place this passage in the Bible? Paul was not only a heaven-directed man with a God-given message... he was also a God-protected man. **God protects us more than we are aware!** You are never out of God's hand.

This passage is also an encouragement to me to look beyond my circumstances of the moment and pay attention to ministry to others.