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a ***Grace Notes*** course

## **The Acts of the Apostles**

an expositional study  
by Warren Doud

Lesson 409: **Acts 28:1-15**

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# ACTS

## ACTS409 - Acts 28:1-15

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**ACTS 28:1-15**

**ACTS 28:1. *And when they were escaped,*** From the danger they were exposed to by shipwreck, and were got safe to land; this is omitted in the Syriac version:

***then they knew that the island was called Melita;*** an island toward the African shore, where it is placed both by Pliny, and Ptolemy; in which, the latter says, was the city Melita: it lies between Sicily and Tripoli of Barbary, and is now called Malta: it was famous for the knights of Rhodes, which are now called the knights of Malta: it has its name from, "to escape", it being formerly a refuge to the Phoenicians, especially in stormy weather, in their long voyage from Tyre to Gades; and was indeed a place of escape to the Apostle Paul, and those that were with him

And perhaps it might be so called from its being a refuge for pirates; for Cicero says, here pirates used to winter almost every year, and yet did not spoil the temple of Juno, as Verres did: though some say it was so called from the great abundance of honey found in it; for it was a very pleasant and fruitful island, bringing forth great plenty of wheat, rye, flax, cumin, cotton, figs, wine, roses, thyme, lavender, and many other sweet and delightful herbs, from whence bees did gather great plenty of honey

It was, according to Pliny, distant from Camerina eighty four miles, and from Lilybaeum a hundred and thirteen; and it is said to be distant from the promontory of Sicily an hundred miles, though others say sixty; and that it was so far from Syracuse, which is the next place the apostle came to in this voyage, was from Africa an hundred and ninety miles

On the east side, a little from the chief city of it, now called Malta, was a famous temple of Juno, spoiled by Verres, as before observed; and on the south side another of Hercules, the ruins of both which are yet to be seen

The compass of the island is about sixty miles, the length twenty, and the breadth twelve, and has in it five ports, and about sixty villages.

**ACTS 28:2. *And the barbarous people showed us no little kindness,*** The inhabitants of this island are called barbarians, not from the country of Barbary, near to which they were; nor so much on account of their manners, for, though Heathens, they were a civil and cultivated people, being, as appears from the name of the chief man of the island, under the Roman government; but because of their language, (see 1 Corinthians 14:11), it being neither Hebrew, Greek, nor Latin.

As the inhabitants were originally a colony of the Phoenicians, they spoke their language; and now though it is inhabited by such as are called Christians, they speak the Saracen or Arabic language, and little different from the old Punic or Phoenician language: however, though the inhabitants could not understand their language, they understood their case, and were very civil and humane to them, and showed them extraordinary kindness:

***for they kindled a fire;*** or set fire to a large pile of wood; for a large fire it must be to be of service to such a number of people, in such a condition as they were:

***and received us everyone:*** though their number were two hundred threescore and sixteen;

***because of the present rain, and because of the cold;*** for a violent rain fell on them, as is usual upon a storm, and much wetted them, so that a fire was very necessary; and it being winter or near it, it was cold weather; and especially they having been so long in a storm, and now shipwrecked; and some having thrown themselves into the sea, and swam to the island; and others having been obliged to put themselves on boards and planks, and get ashore, and were no doubt both wet and cold; so that nothing was more needful and more agreeable to them than a large fire.

**ACTS 28:3. *And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks,*** Had picked up some sticks, and put them in a bundle fit for the fire, as everyone was busy to assist in this extremity; nor did the apostle think such an action below

him, who in all things was a man of great humility and condescension:

**and laid them on the fire**; to increase it:

**there came a viper out of the heat**: a viper is a kind of serpent, which brings forth its young living, to the number of twenty, only one in a day, which come forth wrapped up in thin skins, which break on the third day, and set them at liberty; and so is reckoned among viviparous animals, from whence it seems to have its name, whereas other serpents lay eggs and hatch them

It is said, that this remarkable reptile has the biggest and flattest head of all the serpent kind; its usual length is about half an ell, and its thickness an inch; its snout is not unlike that of a hog; it has sixteen small immovable teeth in each jaw, besides two other large, sharp, hooked, hollow, transparent, canine teeth, situate at each side of the upper jaw, which are those that do the mischief: these are flexible in their articulation, and are ordinarily laid flat along the jaw, the animal never raising them but when it would bite. The roots or bases of these teeth, or fangs, are encompassed with a vesicle or bladder, containing the quantity of a large drop of a yellow insipid juice

— It has only one row of teeth, whereas all other serpents have two; its body is not at all fetid, whereas the inner parts of the bodies of other serpents are intolerable

— It creeps very slowly, and never leaps like other serpents, though it is nimble enough to bite when provoked

— Its body is of two colors, ash colored or yellow, and the ground speckled with longish brown spots; the scales under its belly are of the color of well polished steel

Its bite is exceeding venomous, and its poison the most dangerous

Now when this viper here is said to come out of the heat, the meaning is, that it came out from the sticks, which were laid upon the fire, being forced from thence by the heat of it: and so the Syriac version renders it, “there came out of them” (the sticks) “a viper, because of the heat

of the fire”; it lay quiet among the sticks, among which, and such like things, this creature often lies; but when the fire began to heat it, it sprung out:

**and fastened on his hand**; or wrapped itself about his hand: the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, “bit his hand”; but that does not seem so likely, since he felt no harm by it; the Ethiopic version, “hung upon his hand”; which agrees with what follows; nor is it inconsistent with its wrapping itself about his hand, which is the more proper signification of the word used.

**ACTS 28:4. And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast**, The viper is called “Therion”, a beast, it being of the viviparous kind; and hence comes “Theriaca”, or “Venice treacle”, the foundation of which composition is vipers’ flesh; and it is called venomous, because it is of all serpents the most venomous: this when the country people saw

**hang on his hand**, having wrapped itself about it,

**they said among themselves, no doubt this man is a murderer**: they might see he was a prisoner by his chain, or might learn it from some of the company, and therefore took it for granted he had been guilty of some crime; and by the viper’s fastening on him, they concluded it was murder he was guilty of; for the same notion might obtain among them, as among the Jews, that a murderer that could not be legally convicted, was sometimes punished this way “Says R. Simeon ben Shetach, may I never see the consolation, if I did not see one run after his friend into a desert place; and I ran after him, and I saw the sword in his hand, and the blood dropping, and he that was slain panting; and I said to him, O wicked man, who has slain this? either I or thou; but what shall I do? for thy blood is not delivered into my hand; “for the law says, by the mouth of two or three witnesses he shall surely die” ((Deuteronomy 17:6)): may he that knows the thoughts take vengeance on that man that slew his friend; they say, they did not remove from thence, “till a serpent came”, and bit him, and he died.”

So the Jews observe, that when the execution of capital punishments was taken away from them, yet such who deserved them were punished by God in a way equivalent to them: so for instance, if a man committed a crime, for which he deserved to be burnt, either he fell into the fire, or, "a serpent bit him"; or if he deserved to be strangled, either he was drowned in a river, or died of a quinsy.

There is a kind of an asp which the Egyptians call "Thermuthis", which they reckon sacred, and worship: this they say will not hurt good men, but destroys the wicked; and if so, says the historian, then, "vengeance", or justice has honored this creature, to be so sharp sighted as to discern the good from the bad; and they say, Isis sends it to the most wicked

Agreeably to which these men reason,

***whom though he hath escaped the sea:*** has not been drowned there, when shipwrecked, ***yet vengeance suffered not to live***

The Greek word "Dice" rendered "vengeance", is the name of a goddess among the Heathens, said to be the daughter of Jupiter and Themis

She is represented as sitting by her father Jupiter; and when anyone does injury to another, informs him of it. She is painted sorrowful, and with a contracted forehead, a grave countenance, and a rough aspect, to strike terror in unrighteous persons, and give confidence to righteous ones, agreeably to her name, which signifies "justice". This deity the barbarians supposed pursued Paul; and though she let him escape the sea, she will not suffer him to live any longer; for they looked upon the viper's fastening on him, as to be sent by her, so to be immediate death to him.

**ACTS 28:5. *And he shook off the beast into the fire,*** Having held it a while, and as being master of it, and as not being afraid of it, though it was the ready way to provoke it to fasten on him again:

***and felt no harm;*** it having not bit him, nor infected him with its poison; and hereby was fulfilled what our Lord promised to his disciples, (Mark 16:18);

**ACTS 28:6. *Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen,*** With the venomous bite of the viper; swelling is one of the symptoms following the bite of this creature; and if the bite does not issue in death, yet the swelling continues inflamed for some time.

The symptoms following the bite of a viper are said to be an acute pain in the place wounded; swelling, first red, afterwards livid, spreading by degrees; great faintness; a quick, low, and sometimes interrupted pulse; sickness at the stomach; bilious convulsions: vomiting; cold sweats; sometimes pains about the navel; and death itself, if the strength of the patient, or the slightness of the bite, do not overcome it: if he does overcome it, the swelling continues inflamed for some time; and the symptoms abating, from the wound runs a liquor, little pustules are raised about it, and the color of the skin is as if the patient were jaundice; or had the jaundice: the Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it, "that he should burn", or "burnt"; that is, inflamed, for the bite of the viper causes an inflammation, a hot swelling, which rises up in pustules or blisters:

***or fallen down dead suddenly;*** for immediate death is sometimes the effect of such poison

Pliny relates, that the Scythians dip their arrows in the corrupt matter of vipers, and in human blood, which by the least touch causes immediate death; and Pausanias reports from a certain Phoenician, that a man fleeing from a viper got up into a tree, where the viper could not reach him, but it blew, or breathed out its poison on the tree, and the man immediately died: though the force of this creature's poison does not always, and in all places, and in all persons operate alike; some die within a few hours, and others live some days, some to the third day, and some to the seventh:

***but after they had looked a great while;*** upon the apostle, to observe whether any inflammation or swelling arose, or death ensued, as they expected: when they had waited some time, perhaps an hour or two,

***and saw no harm come to him;*** that he was neither inflamed, nor swelled, nor dead; that it

had no manner of effect upon him, and no evil of punishment was inflicted on him hereby, from whence they could conclude that he was guilty of any notorious crime:

**they changed their minds, and said that he was a god:** before they took him to be a murderer, and now they even ascribe deity to him, as was usual with the Gentiles, when anything extraordinary was performed by men: so the Lystrians took Paul for Mercury, and Barnabas for Jupiter, upon the apostle's curing the cripple, (Acts 14:11,12); but what god the inhabitants of Melita thought him to be, is not certain; some think Hercules, who was worshipped in this island

The inhabitants of this island now believe that the apostle expelled all poison and venom out of it when he was there; and it is reported, that the children born in this place fear not any snakes, neither are hurt by anything that is venomous, insomuch that they will take scorpions, and eat them without danger; although, in all other parts of the world, those kind of creatures are most pernicious, and yet do no manner of hurt to men in this island; yea, it is affirmed, that there is a sort of earth found here, which kills serpents.

As for the eating of them, the viper itself may be eaten; most authors agree, that there is no part, humor, or excrement, not even the gall itself, of a viper, but may be swallowed without much harm; accordingly the ancients, and, as several authors assure us, the Indians at this day, both of the east and west, eat them as we do eels — viper's flesh either roasted or boiled, physicians unanimously prescribe as an excellent restorative, particularly in the elephantiasis, incurable consumptions, leprosy, etc.

**ACTS 28:7. In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island,** Or "the first man of the island"; so the governor of Melita used to be called, as appears by an inscription mentioned by Bochart, wherein a Roman knight is called, "the first of the Melitians"; for this island was under the Roman government, and the very name of this chief man shows it: it was first in the hands of the

Africans, when Dido built Carthage, which was eight or nine hundred years before the time of Christ.

Battus was king of this island, from whom it was taken by Hiarbas king of Lybia, or of the Getulians, and who also conquered Carthage; and it continued under the power of the Carthaginians, until they were conquered by the Romans; and then it was taken by Titus Sempronius, above two hundred years before Christ, in whose hands it was when the apostle was here; since then it has been taken by the Saracenes, though they held it not, being taken from them by Roger earl of Sicily, in the year 1090.

So it remained in the hands of the Sicilians, until the knights of Rhodes were driven out of that island by the Turks, in 1522; and then this was given them by the Emperor Charles the Fifth seven years after, on condition they would oppose the Turks, and defend that part of Christendom, which they bravely did: in the year 1565, it was besieged by Pialis Bassa, but without success; and it is said to be so well fortified, as that it is impossible it should be taken, unless through treachery or famine; it is now in the hands of the said knights: but whether this man was governor of the island or not, it may be reasonably thought that he was the richest man in the island, and in the greatest honor and dignity; and had near the shore, where the ship's company landed, many houses and much land, and farms and vineyards, and the like:

**whose name was Publius;** or Poplius, as some copies, and the Syriac version read

Publius was a name common with the Romans; it was with them a forename, by which such were called, who were "pupilli", or fatherless, for it is a contraction of "Popilius"

There was one of this name who was bishop of Athens, said to succeed Dionysius the Areopagite there; who is thought by some to be the same here mentioned; who they say was first bishop in his own country, which through mistake they make to be Miletus, instead of Melita; and afterwards bishop of Athens, where

he suffered martyrdom: but this is not likely, for even though he might be converted by the apostle, of which we have no account; and also became a preacher of the Gospel, of which there is no proof; it is not probable that he should leave his own country, and go to Athens, and take upon him the care of that church there: but whether he was afterwards converted or not, he was very kind to the apostle and the ship's company, as follows:

**who received us, and lodged us three days courteously;** this was a very considerable instance of humanity and hospitality, to receive so many strangers at once into his houses, as two hundred three score and sixteen; and give them food and lodging, for three days together, and that in such a kind, friendly, and cheerful manner: and thus, as Abraham and Lot, by receiving strangers, entertained angels at unawares, so Publius, though ignorant of it, entertained an apostle of Christ among those strangers; the benefit of which he afterwards enjoyed, and which was a compensation for his liberality and beneficence.

**ACTS 28:8. And it came to pass that the father of Publius,** So that Publius was not an old man, though of so much dignity and wealth: the Arabic version, contrary to all copies, and other versions, reads, "the son of Publius":

**lay sick of a fever;** or fevers, of different sorts, a complication of them, which sometimes is the case; unless this was an intermitting fever, and the several fits of it are intended; or rather the plural number is put for the singular, to denote the vehemence of it, and which was attended with another disorder, and might be brought on by it:

**and of a bloody flux;** or dysentery, a pain of the bowels, as the Syriac version renders it; or an ulceration of the bowels, as the Arabic version; which occasioned a discharge of blood, so that his case was very threatening

This disease, according to modern writers, is attended with a fever. The word "dysentery" here used properly signifies that kind of flux of the belly, characterized by the frequency of stools, or dejections, mixed with blood, and

accompanied with gripes: the fever, ulcer, etc. which attend it, are not essential to the disease; though many both of the ancients and moderns think the ulcer is

— There are three kinds of "dysenteries"; the "first" when a laudable blood is evacuated from a mere plethora, or plenitude, without any disorder of the intestines, as in the hemorrhoidal flux; the "second" when a thin watery blood is evacuated, called the "hepatic" flux, though really arising from hemorrhoidal vessels; the "third" kind, which is that that is properly called the dysentery, is when blood is cast out, mixed with a purulent matter in the excrements: this is either "benign", i.e. without a fever, and not contagious; or "malignant", which is attended with a pestilential fever, and frequently ravages whole cities and provinces, happening most commonly in armies; in the last stage, a sort of caruncles are frequently ejected along with the purulent matter, which are difficult to be accounted for, unless from an excoriation and ulceration of the intestines: sometimes the intestines are even gangrened: this seems to have been the case of the father of Publius, which makes the following cure the more remarkable:

**to whom Paul entered in;** into the room where he was, no doubt with the consent and leave, if not at the request of Publius; the Ethiopic version adds, "and he entreated him to put his hand upon him"; that is, either Publius asked this favour of the apostle for his father, having heard of the affair of the viper, from whence he concluded there was something divine and extraordinary in him; or the father of Publius asked this for himself:

**and prayed and laid his hands on him, and healed him;** when Paul had entered the room, and found in what a bad condition the sick man was, he either kneeled down and prayed by him, or stood and prayed over him, and for him, that God would restore him to his health; and this he did, to let them know that he himself was not a god; and that the cure that would now be wrought would be from God, and not from himself, and therefore all the glory should

be given to God; and he laid his hands on him, as a sign or symbol, or rite that was used in extraordinary cases, and agreeably to the direction and promise of Christ, (Mark 16:18); and upon this a cure followed; both the diseases left him at once, and he was restored to health.

**ACTS 28:9. *So when this was done,*** This miracle was wrought, and the fame of it spread over the island:

***others also which had diseases in the island came:*** from all parts of it, to the apostle:

***and were healed;*** of whatsoever diseases they were afflicted with.

**ACTS 28:10. *Who also honored us with many honors,*** Not with divine honors, with religious adorations, as if they had been so many deities; for these they would not have received, nor have recorded them, to the commendation of the inhabitants; but civil honors, expressions of respect and gratitude; and particularly gifts and presents, large and valuable, in which sense the phrase is used by Jewish writers; so upon those words in (Judges 13:17)

“What is thy name, that when the sayings come to pass, we may do thee honor?” they make this paraphrase, “Manoah said to him (the angel), tell me thy name, that I may inquire where to find thee, when thy prophecy is fulfilled, and give thee, “a gift”, “for there is no honor but a present”, or “offering”; or wherever this phrase is used, it signifies nothing else but a gift, as it is said, (Numbers 22:17)

“For honoring I will honor thee:” that is, with money and gifts, as Balaam’s answer in the next verse shows, and so the Jewish commentators interpret it; (see Gill on “1 Timothy 5:17”);

***And when we departed;*** from the island, which was not till three months from their first coming ashore:

***they laded [us] with such things as were necessary;*** that is, for the voyage: they provided a proper supply of food for them, which they put into the ship, for their use in their voyage; by which they expressed their gratitude for the favors they received from

Paul; for whose sake not only his company, but the whole ship’s company fared the better.

Very likely many of them were converted under the apostle’s ministry; for it can hardly be thought that the apostle should be on this island three months, as he was, and not preach the Gospel to the inhabitants of it, in which he always met with success, more or less; and the great respect shown him at his departure seems to confirm this; though we meet with no account of any church, or churches, or preachers of the word in this place, in ecclesiastical history, until the “sixth” century, when mention is made of a bishop of the island of Melita.

Indeed in the “fourth” century, Optatus Milevitanus is said by some, through mistake; to be bishop of Melita, when he was bishop of Milevis, a city in Africa upon the continent; and, through a like mistake, this island is said to be famous for a council held in it under Pope Innocent, against Pelagius, in the beginning of the “fifth” century; when the council was held at the above place Milevis, and not at Melita, from whence it was called the Milevitan council.

**ACTS 28:11. *And after three months we departed,*** From Melita; here they stayed the three winter months, which were unseasonable for navigation; but now the spring coming on, and the weather agreeable, they left the island, and sailed

***in a ship of Alexandria;*** (see Gill on “Acts 27:6”);

***which had wintered in the isle;*** perhaps all the said three months, for the same reason:

***whose sign was Castor and Pollux;*** or Dioscuri, that is, the sons of Jupiter; for Castor and Pollux were his sons, by Leda: these are placed among the constellations in the Zodiac, and go by the name of Gemini, or the twins; and these were supposed to have a power of saving men in danger at sea: wherefore such as were about to go to sea, first paid their devours, and made vows to them; which they performed when they returned, and were delivered from

shipwreck; and when they were in danger at sea, they used to pray unto them.

The fiery exhalations that sometimes appear at sea, they took for them; and when only one appeared, it was looked on as a bad omen; but when both, it was reckoned to portend a prosperous voyage; hence they were considered as sea deities; and the Ethiopic version accordingly renders it here "Dioscoura", and adds, "who is the god of the mariners".

Now the images of these two brothers were sometimes set at the head, or forepart of the ship, as they were in this, from whence the ship took its name; as it is very common for the names of ships to be the same with the pictures or images that are placed at the head of them: whether the centurion chose this ship because of its sign, imagining there might be more safety in it, he having suffered shipwreck already; or whether this was the only one in the island, that was going for Italy, is not certain, nor very material: the Arabic version takes the word rendered Castor and Pollux, to be the name of a man, who was the owner of the ship; for it reads the words thus, "in a ship of Alexandria", that belonged "to a man of Alexandria, called Dioscorides".

**ACTS 28:12. *And landing at Syracuse,*** A famous city in the isle of Sicily: it is placed by Ptolemy on the east side of the island, in the Adriatic sea; it was 180 furlongs, or two and twenty miles and a half in circuit, and formerly had a marble haven and triple wall, and as many towers; the founder of it was Archias, a Corinthian; Pliny says, that it is never so cloudy weather, but the sun is seen in it, at one time or another of the day: Cicero calls it the greatest and most beautiful of all the cities of Greece; it is such a city, he says, that it may be said to consist of four large cities; "one" part of it is called "the island", which has two ports to it; "another" was called Acradina, in which were a large market, beautiful porticos.

The third, Tiche, in which was the ancient temple of Fortune; and the "fourth", which because it was last built, was called Neapolis: it

is a very ancient city, being built more than seven hundred years before the birth of Christ; it was a colony of the Corinthians; here reigned two tyrants, whose names were Dionysius; it was attacked by the Carthaginians, but without success, being delivered from the siege by Pyrrhus king of Epirus.

It was again assaulted by the Athenians, who were repulsed, and entirely conquered, about the year before Christ 413: after that it was taken by Marcellus, the Roman consul, about the year of the city of Rome 542, after a three years' siege; during which time it was defended, and preserved by the means of the famous mathematician Archimedes; who by his invention of warlike machines, baffled all the attempts of the Romans; but was killed by a soldier, as he was intent upon his studies, not knowing that the city was taken; and it continued in the hands of the Romans, until it was taken and plundered by the Saracens, in the year of Christ 675; and was retaken by Roger king of Apulia, about the year 1090, and is now under the government of Don Carlos, king of the two Sicily;

***we tarried there three days;*** on what account it is not said, whether on account of merchandise, or for the sake of the conversation of Christians here: it is certain there were churches in Sicily very early; we read of them in the "second" and "third" centuries; in the time of Constantine, at the beginning of the "fourth" century, there was a church at Syracuse, of which Chrestus was bishop, to whom the emperor wrote a letter himself, which is still extant in Eusebius: in the "fifth" century, Hilarius, a teacher at Syracuse, wrote from thence to Augustine, concerning the Pelagian heresy, to whom he gave an answer: in the "sixth" century, Maximinianus, bishop of this church, had the inspection of all the churches in Sicily committed to him, by Gregory; who was wonderfully preserved in a shipwreck, as he was returning from Rome; in this same age lived John, bishop of Syracuse, and Trajanus a presbyter, and Felix a deacon of the same church: in the seventh century there

was one George bishop of this place, to whom Pope Vitalian wrote a letter; and in the same century a bishop of this church was in the sixth council at Constantinople .

**ACTS 28:13. *And from thence we fetched a compass,*** About the isle of Sicily, from Syracuse to Pachinus, the promontory of the island:

***and came to Rhegium;*** a city in Calabria, called by Ptolemy Rhegium Julium; it was built, as Solinus says, by the Chalcidians, and was formerly a city of the Brutians ; it is now called Reggio: it is said to have its name from its being broken off from the main continent, for it lies in the straits of Sicily; and formerly Sicily was joined to Italy, but was separated from it by the violence of the sea at this place:

***and after one day the south wind blew;*** they stayed one day at Rhegium, and when they departed from thence, they had a south wind, which was favorable to them: whether the apostle preached here, or no, is not certain, since his stay was so short; some Popish writers tell some idle stories about the apostle's preaching; how that the fishes came to the shore to hear him; that the grasshoppers were commanded by him to be silent, and have never been seen in that place since; that a stone pillar was set on fire by the flame of a candle, by which miracle the inhabitants present were converted and baptized; and one Stephen, that was in company, was made by him their first bishop: but in ecclesiastical history we meet with no account of any church in this place, until the fifth century; when the bishop of it, with others, subscribed a letter of Leo the First, sent into the east; and about the year 440, there was a synod of thirteen bishops convened in this place, on account of a certain ordination; and in the "seventh" century, a bishop of the church at Rhegium was present in the sixth council at Constantinople; in the "eighth", Constantine, bishop of Rhegium, was in the Nicene synod :

***and we came the next day to Puteoli;*** the Syriac version adds, "a city of Italy"; it was formerly called Dicearchia , from the strict

justice used in the government of it: it had its name of Puteoli, either "a putore", from the rankness and ill smell of the waters of it, through the "sulphur" and "alum" in them; or "a puteis", from the wells about it, the waters of which, by Pausanias, are said to be so hot, as in time to melt the leaden pipes through which they flow, who calls it a town of the Tyrrhenians; by Pliny it is placed in Campania, and so Jerome says, Puteoli a city, a colony of Campania, the same that is called Dicearchia Josephus also speaks of it as in the same country; for he says, that Herod and Herodias both came to Dicearchia, (or Puteoli), and found Caius (the emperor) at Baii, which is a little town in Campania, about five furlongs from Dicearchia; and he also in another place says, the Italians call Dicearchia, , "Potioli"; which is the same word the apostle here uses, and which is the Latin "Puteoli" corrupted; it is said to be first built by the Samians: frequent mention is made by writers , of "pulvis Puteolanus", the dust of Puteoli; which being touched by the sea water, hardens into a stone; and was therefore used to bank the sea, break the waves, and repel the force of them.

That it was a place by the sea side, may be learned from the sea being called after its name, "mare Puteolanum" , the sea of Puteoli; so Apollonius Tyaneus is said to sail from this place to Rome, whither he came in three days; to this port the ships of Alexandria particularly used to come, and hither persons were wont to go to take shipping for Alexandria ; it is now called by the Italians Pozzuoli, and lies about eight miles from Naples; and according to the following story of the Jews', must be an hundred and twenty miles from Rome; who tell us , that "Rabban Gamaliel, and R. Eleazar ben Azariah, and R. Joshua, and R. Akiba, went to Rome, and they heard the noise of the multitude at Rome, from Puteoli, an hundred and twenty miles:" the story is a fable designed to signify the vast number of people at Rome, and the noise, hurry, and tumult there; but perhaps the distance between the two places may not be far from truth: and as fabulous is

the account which R. Benjamin gives of this place Puteoli, when he says it was called Surrentum, a great city which Tzintzan Hadarezer built, when he fled for fear of David.

**ACTS 28:14. *Where we found brethren,*** Christians; which is not to be wondered at, since it was a port much frequented, and where many came and went, of different countries and nations; particularly there were many Jews here, to whom the Gospel was first preached, and to some of them it was the power of God unto salvation in many places, and doubtless was so here: Josephus speaks of Jews in this place, who were deceived by a false Alexander, who pretended to be the son of Herod, a prince of their nation

Patrobulus, the same with Patrobas in (Romans 16:14); who is reckoned one of the seventy disciples, is said to be bishop of this place; (see Gill on "Luke 10:1"); though we have no account of its church state until the "fifth" century, when a bishop of the church at Puteoli is said to be in the council held at Ephesus against Eutyches, and sustained the place of Leo, pope of Rome: in the "sixth" century, a bishop of this church was in a council held at Rome, under Symmachus: in the seventh century, the bishop of Puteoli was in the sixth council at Constantinople :

***and were desired to tarry with them seven days;*** that is, the Christians at Puteoli desired the apostle, and those that were with him, to stay a week with them, that they might have the advantage of a day of public worship together, and might enjoy much of their Christian conversation; and accordingly they did stay that time, no doubt by the leave, and with the consent of Julius the centurion; and which shows, that he used the apostle with great civility and courteousness, and was very ready to grant him favors; if he was not in this voyage converted by him, which is not unlikely, considering the whole of his conduct:

***and so we went toward Rome;*** after they had stayed seven days at Puteoli, they set forward on their journey to Rome; for from hence they went thither on foot, though they might have

gone from hence to Rome by sea, as Apollonius Tyaneus did; (see Gill on "Acts 28:13"); and so likewise Titus the son of Vespasian, who went from Rhegium to Puteoli in a merchant ship, and from thence to Rome ; but it may be the ship unloaded here, and there was no other going for Rome at that time.

Rome was the metropolis of Italy, the seat of the empire, and mistress of the whole world; it is so well known, as not to need describing: it was built on seven hills, and had its name either from Romulus the founder of it; or from the Greek word , which signifies "strength", from whence Romulus is supposed to have his name; with the Hebrews it has its name from its sublimity, height, and glory, from the word , which signifies to be high and exalted: some say it had its name from Roma, a daughter of Italus, who first laid the foundation of it, though Romulus and Remus brought it into the form of a city; it was built seven hundred and fifty years, and upwards, before the birth of Christ The Jews make it to be of an earlier date; they say , that at the time Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter, Gabriel descended and fixed a reed in the sea, and brought up clay, and with it was built the great city, which is Rome; and in another place it is said, in the day in which Jeroboam set up the two calves, one at Dan, and the other at Bethel, was built a certain cottage, which is Italy of Greece, that is, Rome; for it is elsewhere observed , Italy of Greece, this is the great city of Rome; and again , on the day in which Jeroboam set up the two calves, Remus and Romulus came and built two cottages in Rome.

**ACTS 28:15. *And from thence,*** That is, from Rome, whither they were going:

***when the brethren heard of us;*** when the Christians at Rome heard that the apostle and his friends were landed at Puteoli, and were on their journey to Rome: these were the members of the church at Rome; for there was a church state here before this time

The apostle had before this written a letter to them, called the Epistle to the Romans, in which he treats them as a church.

The Papists say that the Apostle Peter was the first bishop of it, and pretend an uninterrupted succession from him; though it is questionable whether he ever was at Rome; and if he was, it is not probable that he should take upon him the care of a single church, which was not consistent with his office as an apostle.

In the “first” century, the bishops or pastors of this church were as follow; after the martyrdom of Paul and Peter, Eusebius says, Linus was the first bishop of it, the same that is mentioned in (2 Timothy 4:21) and according to the same writer , Anencletus succeeded him, and then Clement, a fellow laborer of the Apostle Paul’s, (Philippians 4:3); who wrote two epistles to the Corinthians, which are still extant; though Eusebius , not consistent with himself, makes Clement in another place to succeed Linus; and some make Clement even to be before him; and some place one Cletus before Anencletus and him.

Such an uncertainty is there, and such a puzzle attends the first account of this uninterrupted succession; and which seems designed in Providence to bring it into contempt: in the “second” century, Euarestus succeeded Clement; and then followed him Alexander, Sixtus, or Xystus, Telesphorus, Hyginus, Pius, Anicetus, Soter, Eleutherius, and Victor: in the “third” century, Victor was succeeded by Zephyrinus; and after him were Calixtus, Urbanus, Pontianus, Anterus, Fabianus, Cornelius, Lucius, Stephanus, Sixtus, or Xystus II, Dionysius, Felix, Eutychianus, and Gaius.

In the “fourth” century, Marcellinus succeeded Gaius; who was followed by Marcellus, Eusebius, Miltiades, Sylvester, Julius, Liberius, Felix II, Damasus, and Siricius ; and further than this age, it is not worth while to follow them; the man of sin began to grow apace, and in a century or two afterwards, proclaimed himself universal bishop:

***they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and the Three Taverns;*** these were both of them towns that lay in the Appian way to Rome; the former of these Horace makes mention of, in the account of his journey from Rome to

Brundisium; first he says, he came to Aricia, or Rizza, which is about 160 furlongs, or 21 miles from Rome, and from thence to Appii Forum: that Appii Forum was further from Rome than the Three Taverns, appears from what Cicero says , who dates his letter to Atticus from Appii Forum, at four o’clock, and tells him, that he had sent him another a little before from “Tres Tabernae”, or the Three Taverns; and indeed, Appii Forum was one and fifty miles from Rome, and the Three Taverns but three and thirty.

So that the sense must be, that some of the brethren from Rome came as far as the Three Taverns, and others as far as Appii Forum; which, as before observed, were two towns upon the road: hence the former of these was not a statue of Appius, near the city of Rome, as some have said; nor a market in the city itself, as says Jerome , or a writer under his name; whose words are, Appii Forum is the name of a market at Rome, from Appius, formerly a consul, and from whom the Appian way had its name: but this was a town at some distance.

There were several towns in Italy of a like appellation; as Julii Forum, Cornelia Forum, now Imola, Livii Forum, now Forli: Pliny makes mention of an Appii Forum; and there was a town in Calabria, called Taberna: and as the one was not a mere market place, so the other does not design three houses for public entertainment; for the words should not be translated “three taverns”, nor indeed translated at all; nor are they by Luke, who retains the Latin name, as the name of a place; and here it was that Severus, the Roman emperor, was killed by Herculus Maximianus ; and this, in Constantine’s time, was the seat of a bishop; for among the bishops assembled on account of Donatus, mention is made of one “Felix a Tribus Tabernis” , or Felix bishop of Tres Tabernae, the same place we call “the Three Taverns”:

***whom when Paul saw, he thanked God and took courage;*** that is, when he saw the brethren that came to meet him, he gave thanks to God for the sight of them, which he had so

much desired; and he took heart and courage, and went on cheerfully, and in high spirits, towards Rome; in hope of seeing the rest, and believing that God had some work for him to do there.

### Appian Way

Go to Wikipedia for a good article on the Appian Way:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appian\\_way](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appian_way)

### Puteoli

**PUTEOLI** pōōtē'ō-lē [Gk. *Potioloi*—'sulfur springs'] (Acts 28:13). A maritime city of Campania in Italy where Paul landed on his voyage to Rome; the modern name is Pozzuoli. It is on the northern shore of a recess in the Gulf of Naples, protected on the west by the peninsula of Baiae and Cape Misenum. The region was volcanically formed, and Puteoli owed its name to the odor of the sulphurous springs in the vicinity. The volcanic dust, called (Ital.) *pozzolana* today, was mixed with lime to form a durable cement that resisted seawater.

Puteoli was originally a colony, founded probably in the 6th cent. B.C., of the neighboring Greek city Cumae (Strabo Geog v.4.5f); it was called *Dicearchia*. The earliest event in its history that can be dated definitely is a Roman garrison's repulse of Hannibal before its walls in 214 B.C. Carthage's effort to secure a seaport as a base of supplies and communication was thus thwarted (Livy xxiv.7.10-12; 12.1-13.7). Puteoli became the first Roman port on the Gulf of Naples when a Roman colony was established there in 194 B.C. (Livy xxxiv.45.1-3; Strabo Geog v.4.6; Velleius i.15.1-3).

The city's consequent commercial prosperity as the chief seaport of the capital was due to the harbor's safety and the inhospitable character of the coast nearer Rome. The harbor was doubly protected by a mole, known to have been at least 382 m (418 yds.) long, consisting of massive piers connected by solid masonry arches (Strabo Geog v.4.6). Extensive remains of this mole are still visible. The shoreline devoted to commerce (*emporium*) extended about 2 km (1 1/4 mi) west from the mole; the

imports handled there consisted chiefly of Egyptian grain and oriental wares from Alexandria and other cities of the Levant (Suetonius *Augustus* 98.1-10; Strabo Geog. xvii. 1.7; Seneca *Epistulae morales* 77.1f.). At the height of Puteoli's prosperity under Claudius and Nero its population, estimated at nearly 100,000, included many people from the Eastern part of the empire.

Puteoli declined in importance when Claudius built an artificial harbor at Portus Augusti and when Trajan made the mouth of the Tiber the principal converging point for the Mediterranean Sea trade, but Puteoli and Baiae remained the favorite resort area of the Roman nobility. The foundations of many ancient villas are still visible, although partly covered by the sea. Cicero had a villa in this region (Cicero *Ad Atticum* xiv.16.1; 20.1). In the bay between Puteoli and Baiae NERO tried to have his mother Agrippina drowned by means of a boat that came apart while carrying her toward her villa near the Lucrine Lake (Tacitus *Annals* xiv.5).

The Apostle Paul found Christians living in Puteoli and stayed with them seven days on his way to Rome (Acts 28:13f.). At that time the ordinary route to Rome, along the Via Appia from Capua, was 155 Roman miles (about 229 km, 142 mi). Later Domitian reduced the distance by laying out the Via Domitia along the coast.

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### Rhegium

**RHEGIUM** rē'jē-əm [Gk. *Rhēgion*] (Acts 28:13). A city on the east side of the Sicilian Straits, the modern Reggio di Calabria, where Paul's ship stopped on the way to Rome. Ancient authorities were divided as to whether Rhegium meant "royal [town]" (Lat *regium*) or "rent [town]" (Gk. *rhégnymi*, i.e., where Sicily was rent apart from Italy). Rhegium was about 10 km (6 mi) S of a point opposite Messina (ancient Messana), near the rock Scylla and the whirlpool Charybdis, long known as hazards to ships.

Originally a colony of Chalcidian Greeks (Strabo Geog vi.1.6), Rhegium enjoyed great prosperity under tyrants in the 5th cent. B.C. (Herodotus vii.165) but was captured and destroyed by Dionysius tyrant of Syracuse in 387 B.C. All the surviving inhabitants were sold into slavery (Diodorus xiv.106–108, 111f.). The city never entirely recovered from this blow, although it was partially restored by the younger Dionysius. When the Greek general Pyrrhus invaded Italy, the people of Rhegium made an alliance with Rome (280 B.C.) and received four thousand Campanian troops within their walls. The Campanians turned out to be very unruly guests, for, in imitation of a band of mercenaries across the strait in Messina, they expelled or massacred the men and enslaved the women and children (Polybius i.7; cf. Orosius iv.3). The mercenaries were not punished by the Romans until 270 B.C., when the town was restored to the former inhabitants who had survived. The people of Rhegium were faithful to their alliance with Rome during the Second Punic War (Livy xxiii.30.5–9; xxiv.1; xxvi.12.1–14; xxix.6.3–10). During the Social War (91–87) Rhegium became a Roman municipality (Cicero *In Verrem* v.61 [158–160]; *Pro Archia poeta* iii.5). Some of Augustus's veterans were settled there. The ship on which Paul sailed from Melita to Puteoli encountered unfavorable winds after leaving Syracuse, and it reached Rhegium by means of tacking. It waited at Rhegium a day for a south wind, which bore it to Puteoli (Acts 28:13), about 290 km (180 mi) away, probably in about twenty-six hours.

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### Syracuse

**SYRACUSE** sērə-kūs [Gk. *Syrakousai*; Lat. *Syracusae*; Italian *Siracusa*]. A city on the east coast of Sicily, about midway between Catania and the southeastern extremity of the island; Paul stopped there three days on his voyage from Malta to Rome (Acts 28:12).

Syracuse was the most brilliant Greek colony in the western Mediterranean area. The original Corinthian colony founded in 734 B.C. (Thucydides vi.3) was confined to the small island Ortygia, which separates the great harbor from the sea. Later the city spread over the promontory lying N of Ortygia and the harbor.

Syracuse assumed a preeminent position in the affairs of Sicily under the rule of the tyrants Gelon (485–478 B.C.; cf. Herodotus vii.154f) and Hieron (478–467). It flourished greatly after the establishment of popular government in 466 (Diodorus xi.668–672). The Syracusans successfully withstood the famous siege by the Athenians in 414, the narrative of which is the most thrilling part of Thucydides's history (vi–vii).

Dionysus the Elder took advantage of the fear inspired by the Carthaginians to elevate himself to despotic power in 405; he reigned for thirty-eight years and was succeeded by his son of the same name. Although democratic government was restored by Timoleon after civil dissensions in 344 (Plutarch *Timoleon*), it was not of long duration.

The most famous later ruler was the wise Hieron II (275–216), a steady ally of the Romans. But his grandson and successor Hieronymos switched allegiance to Carthage, an act that led to the celebrated siege of the city by the Romans under Marcellus and its fall in 212 (Livy xxiv.21–33). Henceforth Syracuse was the capital of the Roman province of Sicily. Cicero called it "the greatest of Greek cities and the most beautiful of all cities" (Cicero *In Verrem* iv.52).

The extant Greek ruins of Syracuse include the temple of Apollo (ca 500 B.C.), the temple of Athena (ca 470 B.C.) in which a Christian cathedral was built ca A.D. 640, a theater, the foundation of Hieron II's great altar, and parts of a large fortress of Dionysus. There are also extensive Roman remains: private houses, an amphitheater built probably by Augustus, and Christian catacombs.

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