

Acts to Revelation
The World of the First Christians

Session 13 – Adventures at Sea – The Island of Malta

Session Summary – After two year of house arrest in Caesarea, Paul was finally sent to Rome to stand trial before the emperor. Under the supervision of a centurion named Julius, Paul and the other passengers endured a perilous journey at sea, ultimately being shipwrecked on the island of Malta. We will explore ancient Malta and investigate Luke’s account of the shipwreck, the Maltese people, and Paul’s ministry on the island. After three months, Julius arranged for another ship to finally get Paul to Italy.

“When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.” – Acts 27:20

Paul and his group were welcomed for three days at the estate of the man named Publius, the chief official of Malta. In Greek, Luke referred to Publius as *“the first man of the island.”* According to inscriptions from Malta, this phrase appears to have been a local political title used on Malta in the 1st century, which matches Luke’s description. The estate of Publius would have been a Roman type villa, belonging to a wealthy man. Near ancient Mdina in Malta is a Roman villa (*“Domus Romana”*) occupied from the 1st century BC ton the 2nd century AD.

Scripture Reading: Acts 27 – 28:10

Discussion Questions:

1. Name at least two other people that were on the ship to Rome with Paul?
2. Name the two harbors Luke mentioned on the island of Crete?
3. Do we know the actual location of Paul’s shipwreck on Malta? What type of evidence should we find that matches the Biblical account?
4. After the shipwreck on Malta, why did the locals think that Paul was a god?
5. Who was known as “the first man of the island”? Why is this important to the trustworthiness of Luke’s account?

Scripture for Next Week: Acts 28:11-31, Romans, 1st and 2nd Peter