

Acts 28

Read Acts 28:1-16: The more unfriendly this world gets to Christ, the more progress we make. The spirit of antichrist unknowingly blesses the Kingdom. We just cannot lose. Paul and the crew on the grain barge just barely survived a very long and harsh fall storm. Strong winds can be compared to demonic resistance. On the surface, it seems like Paul's mission has been blown off course. It is an unseen added difficulty to progress in God's service. Paul faced an epic level of resistance in getting to Rome. Why? The Devil wants to kill him. Even so, God wins again as Paul would receive a forced sabbatical to write many more books of the New Testament there...as well as start a church in Rome. He would also convert many Palace employees and family members of Nero. God always uses Satan's misdirection and intimidation to accomplish yet more good works. All of the challenges along the way changed the hearts of the 276 voyagers.

I would like to offer an alternate possibility to the transliteration of landing in Malta. Let's go back a page and see where they came from and where they are going.

Sailing from Crete to a certain island.

²³ For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong, whom I also serve, came to me, ²⁴ saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has graciously granted you all those who are sailing with you.' ²⁵ Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told. ²⁶ But we must run aground on a certain island.' (Acts 27)

Acts 27:27 describes them way off course in the Adriatic Sea. Here is the traditional map:



I did a little research that brings Malta into question. Malta has never been known to have vipers or any poisonous snakes, likewise with all of the islands in the region. It is possible that the crazy storm could have blown them well into the Adriatic Sea, behind Italy, to a Croatian island called Mljet; which looks similar to Malta in the original language.

- Malta (the country/island) in Hebrew: מַלְטָה (Malta).
- Mljet (Croatian island, sometimes written Mljeta) in Hebrew: מְלִיט (transliteration: Melyet) or מְלִיטָה; more common Hebrew sources use מְלִיט or מְלִיטָה for Mljet – spellings vary because it's a foreign name transliterated.

Greek spellings:

- Malta: Μάλτα
- Mljet (island in Croatia): Μλῆτ



Mljet Island does have poisonous vipers.

There are venomous vipers on Mljet (an island in Croatia) – the European blunt-nosed viper (*Macrovipera lebetina* subspecies) is not typical there; the species present is the common European viper (*Vipera berus*) and more commonly the horned viper (*Vipera ammodytes*) found across parts of Croatia, including some Adriatic islands.

Bites are rare but can happen; basic guidance:

- Identification: *Vipera ammodytes* (nose horn, stout body, distinct zigzag or dorsal pattern, up to ~90 cm) is the medically most important viper in the region. *Vipera berus* (if present) is smaller with a pronounced dark zigzag.
- Behavior: Crepuscular/diurnal in cooler months, avoid rocky sunlit areas, stone walls, dry scrub, and tall grass; they often bask on paths.
- Prevention: Stay on paths, wear boots and long trousers, don't put hands/feet into crevices, use a torch at night, watch where you step/sit.
- If bitten: keep the patient calm and still, immobilize the bitten limb at heart level, remove jewelry/tight clothing, get to medical care urgently – do NOT cut, suck, apply tourniquet, or use unproven folk remedies. Call local emergency services immediately.

These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not harm them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” (Mark 16)

Yes. There is a long-standing tradition and scholarly case—originating in local Dalmatian (Croatian) sources and argued most notably by the 18th-century Benedictine Ignjat Đurđević and later regional scholars—that the “Melite” of Acts 27–28 is Mljet (ancient Melite) in the Adriatic rather than Malta. That view rests on the island name Melite, the mention of the Sea/Adria in Acts, and regional traditions; however, the majority scholarly and popular tradition identifies Melite with Malta, and the Malta identification remains the dominant view. hmm1.org + 2

Geographic and Nautical Discrepancies

Issue	Problem	Implication
"They did not recognize the land"	The sailors were experienced Mediterranean traders. Malta was a well-established Roman port with only one major bay suitable for large ships (Valletta). If they were anywhere near familiar routes to Rome, they would have recognized it.	Suggests an unfamiliar shoreline, making a remote or unfrequented part of Malta unlikely—or a different island entirely.
The Adriatic Sea reference	Acts 27:27 mentions the ship drifting in the "Adriatic Sea." Malta is far to the southwest of the Adriatic's modern boundaries.	In the 1st century, "Adria" referred to open sea between Crete and Sicily, but an island in the Adriatic (like Mljet/Meleda off Croatia) is literally in that sea.
"A place where two seas meet"	Acts 27:41 describes where the ship struck a reef where waves collide. Traditional St. Paul's Bay lacks significant offshore reefs creating this phenomenon.	A location with visible wave interference patterns—like Mljet or southeast Malta's projecting reefs—better fits the description.
Unknown topography	Professional sailors who regularly sailed past the northern and northwestern coasts of Malta would surely recognize them.	Yet the text emphasizes they were completely unfamiliar with where they landed.

The Alternative: Mljet (Modern Croatia)

The Mljet theory has scholarly support, particularly championed by Ignjat Đurđević in 1730:

- **Shared name:** Mljet was called "Melite" in ancient Greek, just like Malta. The name appears in writings by Scylax, Apollonius of Rhodes, and other ancient geographers.
- **Actual location in the Adriatic:** Mljet is literally in the Adriatic Sea (off Croatia), making the phrase "in the Adria" more precisely descriptive.
- **Geographic logic:** The ship was blown southwest from Crete by the Euraquilo wind. A path to Mljet (northwest) would need different wind dynamics than to Malta (southwest). [Greek Reporter +1](#)

How does this story compare to the story of Jonah? Severe storms in the lives of men drive them to reveal their core beliefs. I talk a lot about God when I am in severe trouble.

⁴ However, the Lord hurled a great wind on the sea and there was a great storm on the sea, so that the ship was about to break up. ⁵ Then the sailors became afraid and every man cried out to his god, and they hurled the cargo which was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. (Jonah 1:4)

Amidst all of this craziness Paul has a fan club come out to meet him in route. He was greeted by saints in Puteoli, Italy and points beyond. This outreach really encouraged Paul. Sometimes when a person is enduring one of life's storms it is hard to know what to do or say, without meddling or issuing platitudes. I can tell you that when I was on the underside of my circumstances (like a turtle on its

back) that genuinely-supportive saints gave me gas to go. When he reached Rome, Paul was technically a prisoner, but he was also able to do what he wanted.

Read Acts 28:17-30: Paul had a huge gathering of Jews at his rented house. The word got around about a new sect in Judaism called ‘*The Way*’. He held an area conference to describe how Christianity fits into what Moses and Abraham described. The results were mixed. Some believed and some did not. Regardless, the charges from Jerusalem never made it to Rome. I wonder if the prosecutors tried to weather the same storm? Paul ended his presentation to the regional Jews with a quote from Isaiah, stating that their spiritual senses had become dulled to the point of not detecting the real thing. That is the danger of religion and repetition instead of time dwelling with the Holy Spirit and bare faith.

⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I. Send me!” ⁹ And He said, “Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on listening, but do not understand; And keep on looking, but do not gain knowledge.’ ¹⁰ Make the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes blind, So that they will not see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed.” ¹¹ Then I said, “Lord, how long?” And He answered, “Until cities are devastated and without inhabitant, Houses are without people And the land is utterly desolate, ¹² The Lord has completely removed people, And there are many forsaken places in the midst of the land. ¹³ Yet there will still be a tenth portion in it, And it will again be subject to burning, Like a terebinth or an oak Whose stump remains when it is cut down. The holy seed is its stump.” (Isaiah 6)

The children of Israel put a premium on their practices and observances and omitted the underlying purposes: love for God and men manifested in our daily lives. They made it about their own righteousness instead of God’s.

Hear the word of the Lord, You rulers of Sodom; listen to the instruction of our God, You people of Gomorrah! ¹¹ “What are your many sacrifices to Me?” Says the Lord. “I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fattened cattle; And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs, or goats.

¹² When you come to appear before Me, Who requires of you this trampling of My

courtyards? ¹³ Do not go on bringing your worthless offerings, Incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and Sabbath, the proclamation of an assembly—I cannot endure wrongdoing and the festive assembly. ¹⁴ I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, They have become a burden to Me; I am tired of bearing them. ¹⁵ So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; Yes, even though you offer many prayers, I will not be listening. Your hands are covered with blood. ¹⁶ “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Stop doing evil, ¹⁷ Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor, Obtain justice for the orphan, Plead for the widow’s case. (Isaiah 1)

Paul, showcased the gospel and his incarceration was only serving as free advertising.