

The VIPER that bit Paul

in Acts 28:3-6 **was** / is ...

“But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, **a viper** came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand. So when the natives saw **the creature** hanging from his hand, they said to one another, “No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live.” But he shook off **the creature** into the fire and suffered no harm. However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.” (Acts 28:3-6)

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allowed to

strike God’s representative

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* *

calmly

cast into the fire (28:5)

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* *

closely linked to

the storm in chapter 27

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

described in

considerable detail (28:6)

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

evidence that

Paul was God’s apostle

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

feared

by the locals on Malta

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* *

good for

Paul’s skeptics (28:6)

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

Descriptive



Meditation

perhaps a European horned viper

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in line with

Acts 27:24 & Mark 16:18

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

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instinctively

striking when disturbed

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* *

large enough

to be seen by all (28:4)

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

more about

Paul than the viper

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* *

near the end

of the Book of Acts

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

not deliberately

handled by Paul

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

perhaps the most

hated animal in Europe

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* *

somewhat like the

the lions Daniel faced

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

* * *

unable to

to harm God’s apostle

(Agree? yes, no, partly)

Directions: after reading through **Acts 28:1-10** and some articles on snakes on Malta and in Europe, consider and discuss how the viper that bit Paul is described above. **Do you agree with the various points made? Would you change some of them or add new points? At the end, discuss the most important descriptive phrases and make personal applications.** In doing so, think about your attitude and the attitude of others, especially Jewish people then and now, toward the Apostle Paul. Also, think about the way spectacular miracles are less common in the latter portions of the end of Acts. — © 2022 by Jon F. Mahar, Hakusan City, Japan and Alexander, Maine, U.S.A.