

WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

Miracle of the Viper's Bite



And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.

And the barbarous people showed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on

the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him they changed their minds and said that he was a god.—*The Acts*, 28:1-6

After Paul left Traos (where he had assisted Eutychus and other aspirants), he journeyed southward to Miletus, hastening because he wished "if it were possible for him to be at Jerusalem the Day of Pentecost." Nearby was the city of Ephesus, where the Temple of Diana had become a focusing point for the forces of evil. Here Paul had spent much time and effort dispelling the destructive vibrations of idolatry, debauchery, and other vices, and establishing the Christian teachings, with the result that the city became one of the early strongholds of Christianity. Deep and sincere was the apostle's affection for the Ephesians. He sent for the church elders to come to him at Miletus, and there made them a moving farewell speech, warning them of probable future difficulties, but commending them to God "and to the word of His grace," as he indicated that they should see his face no more.

Reaching Jerusalem two days before

Pentecost, Paul began teaching in the Temple. Shortly thereafter he was seized by his enemies, who made the usual fanatical accusations against him. "As they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band," who took the apostle to the castle and kept him overnight. Being warned of a conspiracy to kill Paul, the captain sent him under guard to Felix, the highest Roman official in Caesarea. There he was kept (for two years) until he appealed to Caesar and was sent to Rome. During his journey to Rome a storm arose and lasted two weeks. The people on the ship despaired of their lives, but were comforted by the apostle, who assured them that he had been visited by an angel of the Lord and told that all would be saved.

Finally, the ship ran aground near the island of Melita, and it was here that the incident described in the first six verses of the 28th Chapter of *The Acts* occurred. It graphically describes the high spiritual attainment which the consecrated Paul had reached. Even the poison of venomous creatures was dispelled by his holy vibrations.

Love and service to others attract the two higher ethers, which compose the soul body, the vehicle attuned to the Life Spirit and thus the channel for the Christ Power. Living the consecrated life, as the blessed St. Paul had, etherializes the atoms of the body, and establishes within the aspirant radiations of such tremendous power that they dispel the vibrations of disease, fear, and vice, and establish health, harmony, and peace.

This accounts for many miracles which have been recorded of saints and initiates. Another outstanding example is the gentle St. Francis, to whom came the unfearing birds and animals.