



Title: Divine Justice

Category: Serving God

Tags: Acts 28:1-6, Acts 28:7-9, Divine Justice, Paul, Serving God

Imagine being shipwrecked and bit by a poisonous snake on the same day, and that while also being a prisoner on your way to trial. Such was a day in the life of Paul. As he was being transported to Rome, the ship he was on was caught in a storm and wrecked offshore of an island. This is the story from the Book of Acts:

“Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, ‘This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live.’ But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead, but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god” (Acts 28:1-6).

Now these people were described as unusually kind. But, here, they didn’t do anything to help Paul. They assumed he was a murderer, (and in that they were right). So, they were just going to watch and see if divine justice would be done. People who look for divine justice don’t see God for who He really is. To them, God was thought of as judgmental, a “do-this-do-that-or-else” kind of God; and, they expected him to bring the hammer down on Paul. That is why God wrecked a ship and had Paul wash ashore on this island. God was about to demonstrate His divine justice.

“There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul, (the murderer now forgiven), went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. When this had happened the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured” (Acts 28:7-9).

So many people around us view God as judge—not forgiver, not healer. Those of us who have truly met the One True God know that while we deserved judgment—we deserved to swell up and die—He healed us of our sins instead. Yes, God is the Righteous Judge and sin must be accounted for, but Jesus accounted for them all on the cross. He swelled up and died in our place.

Men, that has to be our message, and God will wreck our boats if that is what it takes to get that message out. Let’s be ministers of His divine justice.