

***Study Hints for Thinking Further***  
***International Bible Lessons***

***Acts 28:1-10***

**Sunday, November 18, 2012**

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Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all of the **Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** below. Others may want to send the bulletin size *International Bible Lesson* home with their students for further study in the coming week to encourage continuing Bible study. The *Study Hints for Thinking Further* below are not actually intended to be answers to the discussion questions, but hints a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class.

**Five Questions for Discussion  
and Thinking Further**

**1. Why do you think God allowed the snake to bite the Apostle Paul?**

Perhaps God wanted to attract everyone's attention to Paul (whose prayers and advice had recently saved the lives of all onboard the wrecked ship), so everyone could see that God protected him and he was special to God; then, Paul could eventually tell them the truth about God and the Good News about Jesus Christ. God worked the snakebite out for good, the good of Paul and those on the island.

## ***2. Why do some people suffer troubles?***

Some, because evil people do evil to them. Some, because of accidents. Some, because of the policies of others or the ideas they have chosen to believe and live by. Some, because they or others made poor, uninformed, or wrong decisions. Some, because we live in a fallen world, unlike the world God originally created. Some, because an experiment failed or an unnecessary risk was taken. Some, because they or others needed to learn lessons about choices and consequences. Some, because God wants to help them and others through them and their experiences. Some, to demonstrate the importance of prayer, of believing the Bible, of the power of faith, of the grace, mercy, and power of God.

## **3. How did the islanders demonstrate the fact that they understood justice, right, and wrong, but did not know the true God? How might someone demonstrate this fact about himself or herself today, while not knowing the true God?**

They knew that murder was wrong, and murderers need to be brought to justice by the government and/or by their god or gods. They showed they did not know the true God when they thought Paul had not died because he was a god. Sometimes people condemn or judge others on the basis (almost subconsciously) that there is an absolute and objective standard of right and wrong; while at the same time they deny the existence of God and think there is no God who will hold them accountable for their own wrongs.

#### **4. How did Paul demonstrate the pure grace of God when he prayed and healed Publius' father? How did this make a difference?**

Neither Publius nor his father appeared to believe in the true God or in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior; yet, God through Paul healed Publius' father. Paul's demonstration of the unmerited favor of God toward them may have opened the doors of their hearts and minds to learn more about Jesus and place their faith in Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

#### **5. How can Christians look upon every difficulty, hardship, suffering, and trouble as an opportunity to serve God and share the Good News about Jesus?**

If Christians study their Bibles and learn how God works in the lives of sincere believers to bring blessings and good out of or through every "bad situation," this can encourage them to keep trusting in Jesus and look for ways God is helping them and also look for ways to use (or for God to use) their situation and its consequences to teach others about the true God and faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Others can come to saving faith in Jesus Christ because of (or in spite of) the suffering of true believers.

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