

Shake Off The Vipers

Acts 27:39-28:10 NIV

A. Paul On His Journey

1. Paul desired Rome. He felt this was where the Holy Spirit was calling him to.
2. Now, he was finally going there, - but as a prisoner.
3. Many trials awaited him in Rome.
4. Even so, he would have great success there. (see Acts 28:30-31)

B. God Protected Paul

1. The ship carrying Paul to Rome ran into severe storms.
2. The storm was so bad even the experienced sailors feared for their lives.
3. Paul was cared for & comforted by an angel in the storm (Acts 27:22-25)
4. This shows God's protection from natural storms.
5. Paul was the only one with a word from the Lord.
6. Our Lord has also promised to be with us in the storms of life.
7. Paul went from shipwreck to survival, and miraculous signs followed.
8. The ship was destroyed, but lives were saved—God's promise still held.
9. This shows that a shipwreck doesn't mean defeat.
10. Sometimes we arrive at our destiny floating on broken pieces.
11. Be encouraged. Even in chaos, God's plan is intact.
12. Have you ever made it through something you thought would break you?

C. Protection From The Soldiers (V. 42)

1. The soldiers intended to kill all the prisoners to stop them escaping.
2. Christians have suffered much persecution throughout history.
3. Starting with the early church with the Jewish leaders, and by Rome.
3. Today throughout the world, many believers' face persecution.
4. Paul was bound for Rome, but shipwrecked and stranded on an island.
5. Every person aboard was alive, saved for Paul's sake.
6. God has often spared or blessed many for the sake of a faithful few. (Gen. 18:27-33; 26:24; 39:5; 1 Kings 11:11-13; 2 Kings 8:19)
7. How important are you to your country? Or your country to you?

D. A Viper Attacks Paul

1. Arriving on Malta, they were met by kind natives, a warm fire, & trouble.
2. A viper comes out of the fire & bites Paul.
3. Vipers often appear out of the fires of life
4. Times of trouble make us vulnerable; God has given us a promise (Isa. 43:2)
5. Paul shook off the viper when attacked, and so should we.
6. This shows God's protection from supernatural storms.
 - a. The serpent is often seen as a symbol of the devil.
 - b. This one came out of the fire and attached itself to Paul.
5. First, the locals thought he would die, then they worshiped him as a god.

6. As believers, we are guaranteed God's protection from the serpents.
7. Limits on the tempter (1Cor. 10:13) The One in us is greater. (1John 4:4)
8. No place is as safe as in the perfect will of God.
9. We are protected until our work is done, then heaven awaits.

E. Shake Off the Viper of Discouragement

1. Paul was attacked while helping ... doing good, gathering sticks for fire.
2. Vipers often appear when we're doing the right thing.
3. Paul shook off the viper, remembering God's promise of safety.
4. Let God's promises deliver you; shake off any doubt or discouragement.
5. Don't fall for the trap of doubting God because your life isn't perfect.
6. It could be God is using the situation to develop something in your life.
7. The viper represents unexpected attacks—criticism, illness, betrayal.
8. People expected Paul to fall—but he didn't.
9. Your survival isn't just for you—it's also a sign to others.

F. Shake Off the Viper of Criticism (v. 4)

1. It is interesting when we look at the reaction of those around Paul.
2. The vocal ones are the critics: "No doubt this man is a murderer"
3. Many are quick to judge and falsely accuse.
4. Are you being wrongly judged, falsely accused? You are not the first!
3. Jesus was constantly criticized
 - a. He was called a blasphemer (Matt. 9:3)
 - b. He was accused of being in league with Satan (Matt. 9:34)
4. Remember how Jesus responded to His critics (1 Peter 2:23)
5. Shake off the viper of criticism by looking to Jesus (Heb. 12:1-2)

G. Shake Off the Viper of Low Expectations (v. 6)

1. The natives expected Paul to swell up and die.
2. Some have low expectations of Christians, thinking you'll stumble & fall.
3. Shake off the faithless conclusions of others.
4. Prove them wrong by being faithful to your Lord.
5. Jesus came to give us abundant life with rewards that will endure forever.
6. The Holy Spirit has equipped us to have daily victory despite the opposition.
7. Surrender then to the Lord and let him have his way with your life.

H. Shake Off Those Vipers and Experience the Joy of the Lord

1. Paul was rewarded for his faithfulness, performing many miracles.
2. When you survive the venom, you carry healing for others.
3. God uses what tried to kill you to empower you, & others.
4. Your story—shipwreck and all—is the sermon someone needs.
5. What we do with what bites us determines the outcome.
6. Shake off rejection, shake off bitterness, shake off discouragement.
7. What needs shaking off in your life today?