

## The Three Eternal Destinies #164 *The Barbarians of Malta*

Acts 28:4 is an example of the standard of justice for murderers (Pr 28:17), part of the instinctive natural law, being in the hearts of men in the nations who have never learned the written Law of Moshe (Rom 2:14; Gen 9:6). Num 35:29-34 — Murder pollutes the land and must be atoned for (Num 35:33) or the land will be defiled (verse 34). To live where murderers are not executed is perilous. 2 Tim 3:1-5 is the result of allowing murderers to live, even in prison. Thousands are cut loose after a few years, only to murder again and again. 2 Tim 3 describes a polluted land. A lack of restraint for murders gives licenses to all sorts of evil.

Even on the remote island of Malta, a small island 58 miles south of Sicily, Italy, in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, we have documented evidence of the natural law of God residing in the hearts of “barbarians” who had probably never set foot in another land. In the Christian western world it’s a thousand times worse than the society of those pagans on the island of Malta.

They showed Paul extraordinary kindness (Acts 28:2). The word *kindness* here denotes a love for other human beings, according to the natural law that is in the heart of a man, the knowledge of good and evil. It was *phileo* love, brotherly love (#5363), love for mankind. They showed hospitality, did acts of kindness in their readiness to help. They extended human friendship, benevolence. Taking thought of others is the love God shows to man through man — *man to man* — representing His likeness, as a man in the second covenant (Gen 3:16-18).

Titus 3:4 — God’s special love for mankind is described in a Greek word from which we get the word *philanthropy*. The gift of God’s son is the greatest expression of this love for man. But this love still resides in man to a certain degree according to the conscience, according to whether he is defiled to the degrading state by ignoring the second covenant (Gen 3:16; 9:1-7).

*Kindness* in Acts 28:2 is #5363g, the love and kindness shown from an unregenerated man who is still abiding in the second covenant (Rom 2:14).

*Kindness* in Gal 5:22 is #5544g, the kindness of a regenerated man filled with the Holy Spirit. This word describes an ability to act for the welfare of others who may be taxing your patience, since the Holy Spirit and His grace upgrades human nature, removing those abrasive qualities from the character of the redeemed who are under His control, filled with His spirit, with grace upon them. Gal 5:22 kindness is goodness in action, sweetness of disposition, gentleness in dealing with others, affability. This difference between the two kinds of kindness — one from natural men, the other from spiritual men — is the light of the world (Mt 5:14).

Acts 28:1 — On the Island of Malta, the natives are actually called *barbarians* in the Greek. To Paul it was very unusual kindness compared to the kindness he was shown in other places he traveled. They seemed to still be led by the knowledge of good and evil, since Gen 9:6 was still in their heart, as Rom 2:14-15 says. Acts 28:4 proves that they were still worthy of the nations.

Acts 28:10; Gen 12:3 — “*They also honored us in many ways and when we departed they provided such things as were necessary.*” They fulfilled 3 Jn 1:5-6. What church today, or even we can say that we are a light to those worthy of the nations? In Acts 28 the “barbarians” had been secluded substantially from the rest of the world, although they were still under Roman control, as evidenced by Publius (verse 7) being their chief official. Even he was a man who seemed to be worthy of the nations.

Acts 28:4 — The critical point in this story is that the “barbarians” understood that “Justice” *vindictive justice* — would not permit a murderer to keep on living. The Greek word used there for *justice* means *vindictive justice* or *vengeance* (#1349g). It was self-evident that Justice called for the execution of the penalty or punishment due — the *vindictive justice* of God, or *the gods*, or whomever rendered justice or revenge for murder, in order to cleanse the land of pollution, corruption. Num 35:33 — Bloodshed pollutes the land and atonement cannot be made for the land on which blood has been shed by murder, except by the blood of the one who shed it.

In the case of Kenny Daniels, Yahweh saved us — and possibly him if he carries through with his repentance — though his crime did not happen in the community (he moved in after the crime, without our knowledge of it). Pr

28:17; Ex 21:12-14,29; Gen 9:6 — A murderer shows contempt for God as well as His image-bearer. If “Justice” in Acts 28:4 was a god or goddess, it certainly represented what a god should be to those struggling to know the true God (Acts 17:27-28). I wish we could be so sensitive to our God, having the Holy Spirit in our hearts (unless He is not in our hearts as Rev 3:19-20). I think if He were we would produce the fruit of the spirit, which is love (as Jms 2:5,1,9 — we are responsible). If the Holy Spirit is in our hearts the result would be joy, peace, patience, kindness (regardless of the response), goodness, faithfulness, self-control.

Those on the island of Malta — how close they were, how worthy they were to inherit the nations (Mt 25:34; Gen 12:3). Mt 10:42 — These people did more than give Paul a cup of cold water. They were most of these qualities — because they had the natural instinctive law of God on their hearts and they practiced what they knew — walking humbly and just before God, loving mercy (Mic 6:8; Amos 5:24). These people did not make gods for themselves as Israel did (Amos 5:26). They knew that if there was a God, He would be Justice and Mercy, showing kindness and hospitality, honoring God’s chosen and special people *who exceed* all other people on earth in hospitality kindness, love, joy, patience, and self-control.