

## Malta

On Sunday, 23 October, we went south from the seaport west of Rome. Eventually we passed on the west side of the large island of Sicily but did not see its shores. Our tour group had two lectures in the afternoon. One of our leaders, Geno Geraci, reviewed a portion (15: 14-21) of the letter that Paul wrote to followers of Jesus living in Rome. A few years later Paul was able to visit that city. In that portion of his letter Paul explains his purpose in proclaiming the good news of what Jesus had done for us. In particular, Paul wanted to share his message with people who were not Jewish, which means everyone else in the world.

Then another leader, Woodrow Kroll, reviewed the story in Acts 27 and 28 of the journey of Paul from Judea to Rome. It involved a terrible storm at sea that lasted for two weeks. At the end the boat carrying more than 200 people crashed on a reef on the coast of the small island of Malta. Everyone survived. They were treated kindly by the inhabitants of the island and a few months later continued their journey to Rome. The review was good for us because we were going to visit that part of Malta.

As the second lecture ended we saw a small island off the coast of Sicily. It had a cloud above it. The cloud was created by air rising over the island. That cooled the rising air to saturation and water was condensed out of the air and formed the cloud. When the air descended on the other side of the island, the air warmed and the cloud evaporated. We weathermen call that a cap cloud formed by orographic uplift. The island had steep cliffs, partly caused by erosion from major water waves during storm conditions.



We arrived at the port city and capital of Valletta. It was Monday morning, 24 October, and still dark as we entered the harbor. After sunrise we got a better view. Low clouds were moving rapidly from the east and there was light wind near the ground. 3 harbor views:



We were taken to an overlook to see the traditional site of the shipwreck, shown here at the left. The boat was destroyed on the shallow rocks on the right side of the view or on the reef farther out. The people floated on debris coming into the bay in the foreground. The foreground buildings are modern and did not exist nearly two thousand years ago.

We spent some time walking along the narrow streets in the old part of the city. Some of the streets were more narrow than

shown here, having a width allowing one small car and a pedestrian to pass together.





Our final visit was to the main cathedral (largest church building). The first two views are outside, then inside.



We left the port after 5 PM. The final view is of the harbor entrance.

Geno reviewed some of the history of the conflict between the Muslims and the Europeans. The Muslim conquest through Spain was eventually stopped in a battle with Charles Martel of France in 732. A few centuries later the Muslims were partly expelled from Spain in 1609. The possible advance through Italy was stopped here on Malta in a battle on September 11, 1565. That is why that particular day was chosen for the attack in America in 2001. Later the advance through the Balkan countries was stopped at Vienna on September 12, 1683. The Muslim goal of submitting the entire world to Islam continues today using the wars and refugees and immigration.

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