

Acts Chapter Twenty-Seven

Acts 27:1-3

And when it was decided that we should sail for Italy, they proceeded to deliver Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan cohort named Julius. And embarking in an Adramyttian ship, which was about to sail to the regions along the coast of Asia, we put out to sea, accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica. And the next day we put in at Sidon; and Julius treated Paul with consideration and allowed him to go to his friends and receive care.

- Text indicates that Luke would also be a traveling companion to Rome.
- This chapter is considered the finest description of a sea voyage preserved from the ancient world.
- Paul is probably the only prisoner who is a Roman citizen—others are probably being sent to Rome for execution
- Ship heads up coastline of Israel—not toward the open sea.

Acts 27:4-8

And from there we put out to sea and sailed under the shelter of Cyprus because the winds were contrary. And when we had sailed through the sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia. And there the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy, and he put us aboard it. And when we had sailed slowly for a good many days, and with difficulty had arrived off Cnidus, since the wind did not permit us *to go* farther, we sailed under the shelter of Crete, off Salmone; and with difficulty sailing past it we came to a certain place called Fair Havens, near which was the city of Lasea.

- Alexandrian ship—it has come up from northern Africa—this would be a grain freighter, taking grain from Egypt to Italy. These were sturdy ships but not designed for sailing into a wind.
- Sailed under Cyprus—south of Cyprus because of encountering north winds.
- At Myra—they are sailing along coast of Asia Minor—change ships
- Headed for island of Crete—sailed on the south side—came to Lasea on south shore of Crete.

Acts 27:9-13

And when considerable time had passed and the voyage was now dangerous, since even the fast was already over, Paul *began* to admonish them, and said to them, "Men, I perceive that the voyage will certainly be *attended* with damage and great loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives." But the centurion was more persuaded by the pilot and the captain of the ship, than by what was being said by Paul. And because the harbor was not suitable for wintering, the majority reached a decision to put out to sea from there, if somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, facing southwest and northwest, and spend the winter *there*. And when a moderate south wind came up, supposing that they had gained their purpose, they weighed anchor and *began* sailing along Crete, close *inshore*.

- The fast—Day of Atonement: would have been Oct 5 in AD 59. Sailing starts to get dangerous in the Mediterranean by mid September and stopped altogether by mid November.
- It is quite late in the season—winter—storms approaching
- Hope to reach Rome before sea becomes impassable.
- Paul discerns tragic outcome—conveys his sense. Centurion pays attention to opinion of the master/owner of the vessel.
- Crete is a large island with several harbors.

Acts 27:14-17

But before very long there rushed down from the land a violent wind, called Euraquilo; and when the ship was caught *in it*, and could not face the wind, we gave way *to it*, and let ourselves be driven along. And running under the shelter of a small island called Clauda, we were scarcely able to get the *ship's* boat under control. And after they had hoisted it up, they used supporting cables in undergirding the ship; and fearing that they might run aground on *the shallows* of Syrtis, they let down the sea anchor, and so let themselves be driven along.

- Euraquilo: a storm that has come down from the north/Europe
- They are in the Mediterranean Sea—being driven westward from Crete—almost shipwreck on small island of Clauda.
- When they couldn't fight the wind—they threw all the cargo overboard to lighten the ship—stripped the ship of anything that had weight (ships tackle)

Acts 27:18-20

The next day as we were being violently storm-tossed, they began to jettison the cargo; and on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. And since neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm was assailing *us*, from then on all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned.

- Storm was so bad—feared they would never make it out alive
- 'Third day'—usually significant in scripture
- I Cor 6:4-5,9

Acts 27:21-26

And when they had gone a long time without food, then Paul stood up in their midst and said, "Men, you ought to have followed my advice and not to have set sail from Crete, and incurred this damage and loss. "And *yet* now I urge you to keep up your courage, for there shall be no loss of life among you, but *only* of the ship. "For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.' "Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God, that it will turn out exactly as I have been told. "But we must run aground on a certain island."

- Shares that all his discernment is coming from his relationship with God.
- Had they listened to the man who listens to God—they may not have lost the ship/cargo—now they will experience the damage and loss of all but their lives.
- A small island—Malta—just south of Sicily
- Paul has had previous encounter with the Lord—this time it is with an angel.
- I believe God—different than—I believe in God

Acts 27:27-31

But when the fourteenth night had come, as we were being driven about in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors *began* to surmise that they were approaching some land. And they took soundings, and found *it to be* twenty fathoms; and a little farther on they took another sounding and found *it to be* fifteen fathoms. And fearing that we might run aground somewhere on the rocks, they cast four anchors from the stern and wished for daybreak. And as the sailors were trying to escape from the ship, and had let down the *ship's* boat into the sea, on the pretense of intending to lay out anchors

from the bow, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, “Unless these men remain in the ship, you yourselves cannot be saved.”

- Adriatic Sea—like between Italy and Greece/Macedonia
- Soundings let them know that they are approaching land—and how deep the water is.
- Paul tells the centurion—the only hope for safety of all is if the crew does not abandon ship.

Acts 27:32-38

Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the *ship’s* boat, and let it fall away. And until the day was about to dawn, Paul was encouraging them all to take some food, saying, “Today is the fourteenth day that you have been constantly watching and going without eating, having taken nothing. “Therefore I encourage you to take some food, for this is for your preservation; for not a hair from the head of any of you shall perish.” And having said this, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of all; and he broke it and began to eat. And all of them were encouraged, and they themselves also took food. And all of us in the ship were two hundred and seventy-six persons. And when they had eaten enough, they *began* to lighten the ship by throwing out the wheat into the sea.

- All these men had been fasting—most likely, not for religious purposes, but from fear.
- They need their strength to get to shore
- Now they throw the rest of the provisions overboard—the last of the essential cargo is tossed.

Acts 27:39-44

And when day came, they could not recognize the land; but they did observe a certain bay with a beach, and they resolved to drive the ship onto it if they could. And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea while at the same time they were loosening the ropes of the rudders, and hoisting the foresail to the wind, they were heading for the beach. But striking a reef where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern *began* to be broken up by the force *of the waves*. And the soldiers’ plan was to kill the prisoners, that none *of them* should swim away and escape; but the centurion, wanting to bring Paul safely through, kept them from their intention, and commanded

that those who could swim should jump overboard first and get to land, and the rest *should follow*, some on planks, and others on various things from the ship. And thus it happened that they all were brought safely to land.

- Soldier's counsel—kill the prisoners—remember what happens to soldiers when their prisoners escape.
- All make it safely to land
- We know from II Cor 11—Paul has been shipwrecked three times.

Acts Chapter Twenty-seven—Workbook

Key Words:

Harmonize:

Read Matthew 8:23-27 and Psalm 107:23-32

Dig:

- 1) Who travels with Paul to Rome?
- 2) What does Adramyttian mean?
- 3) What is a cohort in this context?
- 4) How was Paul treated on this voyage?
- 5) What ship do they take to Italy? Where did it come from?
- 6) Why did sailing prove difficult on this trip?
- 7) How can we determine the time of year this voyage is taking place? What is the clue?
- 8) Was vs 27:10 a word of knowledge, natural wisdom, or a hunch? Why?
- 9) What happens in vs 13-20 that indicates the severity of the storm?
- 10) How do Paul's words and example serve to encourage the others?

11) How many visitors are the native of Malta going to be hosting?

Discuss:

- 1) How well is the church navigating the storms taking place in our culture?
- 2) What will it take for the church to navigate these days with faith instead of fear?

Point of Prayer:

Pray for someone who has suffered a shipwreck in their marriage, family or faith.

Integrate:

What other scriptures come to mind as you read this chapter?

Application:

- 1) Have you ever been warned not to do something and did it anyway? What was the result?
- 2) Who would you like to have as traveling companions on a difficult journey?
- 3) Have you ever made an extended journey on a ship or boat? What did you like about traveling that way?
- 4) Have you been a part of a situation where 'majority rules'—and they chose wrong? Explain.
- 5) Have you ever been afraid while traveling? What caused the fear?

- 6) Has fear or anxiety ever been an issue in your life? How did you deal with it?

- 7) Were you ever in a spiritual storm? How did you navigate that time period? How long did it last?

- 8) The storm in this chapter lasted for two weeks. What happens when you find yourself in a trial that never seems to let up?

- 9) How do you find a place of peace in the midst of a storm?