

Chapter Twenty-Seven

Chapter 27

- As we come to the last two chapters in the book of Acts, we see the record of the travels of the Apostle Paul. Some view this material as necessary but boring. For those of us who have done some sailing, it can be viewed as exciting, perhaps even exhilarating. Either way, it is helpful to plot his travels on a good Bible map to get a sense of the various locations mentioned. From reading the text and seeing the great distances involved, it is not hard to comprehend the dangers and difficulties they encountered.
- For further background, consider Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 11:25, "Three times I suffered shipwreck. I have been a night and a day in the deep." Those experiences had occurred sometime prior to his last recorded voyages here in the book of Acts.
- The voyage begins from the coastal city of Caesarea

under the watch of a centurion named Julius, who was in charge of the prisoners, including Paul.

- In verse 3, how does Julius treat Paul?
- Is this because he knew Paul was a Roman or do you see the hand of God here granting favor to Paul?
- Luke is careful to list all the ports of call during the voyage and describes sailing conditions along the way.
 - How does this add to the authenticity of his report?
- According to verse 8, having reached a place called Fair Havens, they stayed a while.
 - In verse 9, it is recorded, “the Fast had now already gone by.” This can only refer to the traditional Yom Kippur fast. If Paul and company had rejected the Torah, including celebrating the festivals of Leviticus 23, why would this date have mattered and why note it?
 - At this time of year, the seas would be quite rough, as will be proven later. Perhaps this is the reason for Paul’s counsel against further travel by sea.

- According to verses 11-12, what was decided and what was the rationale?
- Their experience at sea changed quickly from a soft south wind to a violent storm.
 - Describe the power of this storm and how it affected their ability to maintain control of their ship.
 - What did they do with the lifeboat?
 - In verse 19, what did they do out of desperation?
 - How important was this equipment to the operation of the vessel?
 - How drastic must have been the situation to take such a measure?
 - How many days had they been enduring this frightening experience?
 - What effect do you think this had on the crew and prisoners?
 - What does verse 20 say about the duration and intensity of this experience for them?

- How disorienting would it have been to be stormed tossed on the open sea and to be without sun or stars?
- In verses 21-22, what was Paul's counsel and prophetic exhortation?
- In verse 23, what does Paul say about the source of his encouragement?
- In verse 24, Paul is reassured of the original mission given him through the vision of Yeshua. How would that have been an encouragement to him?
- In verse 25, Paul boldly declares, "Therefore, sirs, cheer up! For I believe God, that it will be just as it has been spoken to me."
 - Paul grounded his expectation of his future in what he had been told as it originated from God.
 - Can we apply the same application for ourselves as we study His Word?
- According to verse 27, how many days have they been experiencing this terror on the sea?
 - By taking "soundings", the sailors were able to mea-

sure the rise of the sea floor which would mean they were approaching land.

- They had no actual control of the ship at this point so they lowered four anchors from the stern hoping to slow the ship.
- What did the sailors attempt to do in verse 30?
- What did Paul say to the centurion in verse 31?
- What did the soldiers do in verse 32?
- According to verses 33-37, how did Paul encourage the people present?
 - What was the result in verse 36?
 - How many souls are listed in verse 37?
- In verse 39-41, what did they do when they saw a beach?
 - In their attempt to reach the shore, their ship ran aground leaving the stern to be repeatedly beaten by the waves.
- What did the soldiers want to do in verse 42?
- What did the centurion in charge do and why?

- Do you think this centurion had come to respect Paul as he personally witnessed his steadfast faith and encouraging leadership?
- How did they all survive and escape from the shipwreck and get to shore safely?
 - How was their safe arrival on land a fulfillment of what Paul had previously told them?
 - Do you think this shared experience had an impact on their opinion of Paul and his message?