

Paul's Journey to Rome, Part 1

Acts 27:1-26

1799

In Acts 27 we find the story of the shipwreck of the apostle Paul. We are really--as we study the 27th and the first part of the 28th chapter--are embarking on a fantastic adventure. This has to be one of the most graphic writings in all of the Bible. It's just absolutely vivid. The Holy Spirit has gone into so much detail on this passage that historians and archeologists have studied it for its value as a comment on the techniques of ancient seamanship it is so very detailed. We learn so much about how those people conducted themselves upon the seas and particularly in times of crisis and stress. It has value just from that standpoint.

In addition to that it has value because it teaches us about the providence of God. We see whose really in control. As easily as Jesus Christ could calm the wind and the waves, so easily can God stir them up for His own ends. And when it pleases God to calm them to make Himself known, He does that; when it pleases Him to stir them up to make Himself known He does that.

But beyond the technical value of the passage and beyond the providential value of the passage as it reveals God, there is the value of the passage as it reveals the man Paul. The star of this particular drama is none other than Paul and he really shines. You know the true metal of a man comes forth in the fires of testing. You can tell what a man is in a crisis because the crisis will tell you what he is. And here is a man in a crisis. And I don't suppose in all of Paul's life there was ever a more prolonged, intense, unrelieved, unrelenting crisis than this one, which he endures day after day, week after week, month after month in this particular journey from Caesarea to Rome. He is really finding that every day his life hangs in the balance. First it is sickness, then it is storm, the winds and the waves, then it is sword-bearing soldiers, then it is a poisonous snake. It is one thing after another. He is imperiled from beginning of the journey to the end of the journey. Yet in all this we see the man calm, courageous, confident. He is ever and always the leader.

And as I began looking at the passage and try to see just exactly what facets of Paul's character become obvious I was drawn to the idea of his leadership. What a leader he was. You know we said before that a leader is not somebody who has the title. The leader is somebody who leads. Paul starts out this trip as a prisoner. He is the lowest of the low on the ship. He ends up by commanding everybody including the captain, sailing master, and the Roman centurion. By the time this thing is over he absolutely runs everything. He is a leader. And you'll find as we conclude our study in the days to come that the characteristics of leadership that make for true spiritual leadership are all here exemplified in the life of Paul. It becomes then a tremendous lesson in the qualities of a leader who operates on the basis of godly leadership in the midst of a tremendous crisis.

Now Luke's narrative is a classic presentation and I only wish that I understood navigation better than I do. I only wish that I understood nautical terminology better than I do but I spent some time this week trying to study up on it. The extent of my experience is a 13 foot sailboat at Balboa and one

shipwreck. I've only had one but it taught me a little bit. In fact the boat that I was on was beached in a terrible Santa Anna wind condition at Avalon that had spent 18 years in the Bering Sea and wound up being smashed at Avalon, which is a rather strange paradox.

Nevertheless it was and some very very strange interesting things happened. A life was lost in this occasion and all kinds of tragic things happened, but I've only been that close to the shipwreck and it happened to be a ship with two engines to power it, not a sailing ship. But I had a little bit of a feeling of empathy with the apostle Paul, whom you will remember according to II Corinthians 11:25 was shipwrecked three times and a night and a day he was in the deep. So shipwreck was something he was used to but not real excited about and we'll see that as we go. And I understand that very well.

Now in order for you to have some hooks to hang your thoughts on and so you don't get lost then in just going through the detail, I want to give you five outline points and we'll follow those as we go, just dividing up the journey into five stages.

Stage one is the start. I didn't have to think to come up with that, verses 1 to 8. This is where the journey begins. Ever since the idea of going to Rome had been planted in Paul's mind by the Holy Spirit, the plan had been brewing there and he had never really ever lost confidence in the fulfillment of that plan. He had desired so much to go to Rome. He had been to Jerusalem. He had delivered the money that he had intended to give to the Jerusalem saints. He had expressed the love of the Gentile churches. He then had in the back of his mind the desire to go to Rome, but he was imprisoned instead. The angry Jewish population kept him under their thumbs for two years. At the end of that two-year period he finally appealed to Caesar and his case had to be transferred to Rome so he's on his way.

At last the journey for which he's waited so long begins. Stage one, verses 1 to 8. Let's begin with verse 1. "And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus band." Now you'll notice an interesting little footnote. "And when it was determined that we should sail." This is the return of the we that dropped out in Chapter 21 verse 18. The we indicates the inclusion of the writer Luke with the experience of Paul. Luke was with Paul up till 21:18, when the imprisonment started. Luke had probably been living in Caesarea or close by and now at the end of that time Luke joins Paul again. This means that Luke was on the way with Paul. "We should set sail to Italy." This is interesting. The indication also of verse 2 is that one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, also accompanied Paul.

So Paul's trip to Rome was in the company of two very dear friends, two Christian brothers, Luke and Aristarchus. The interesting thing about this is that it was just unheard of for a prisoner to be allowed to have companions on a prison route to be tried at Rome. It was just unheard of. And historians tell us there could have only been two possible ways in which these two could have been included: one, they would have had to take the position of slaves of Paul. They would have had to become slaves and Paul would have had to have taken them along as his slaves or Festus knowing the innocence of Paul and wanting to secure his good reputation with Rome, gave Paul the opportunity of this courteous gesture just in order to show good faith with Paul so that he would be well reported of when Paul arrived in Rome. Either one of those two reasons. But for whatever reason of the two Luke and Aristarchus accompany Paul.

And I think what is exciting about that is it is indication of true brotherly love. We've tried to say again

and again that brotherly love is not just a question of feeling. It's a question of sacrifice. I mean let's face it. It's not like taking a cruise to Honolulu to go with a bunch of prisoners to Rome on one of those great big massive clumsy awkward Roman sailing vessels with the single mast and the great big square rig and to do so at the threat of life and limb. It wasn't really a pleasure cruise, a long and tedious journey that would take weeks and months, and yet they did it because of the love of the apostle. And you know there's a great statement to be made at that point, and that is that I believe a true godly leader not only has people following him, but he has people loving him.

I think the difference between real spiritual leadership and other kind of leadership may be the element of love. These men loved the apostle and they were willing to sacrifice their own life, their own involvement, whatever it was that they were interested in doing to spend time with him as his slaves, as his companion prisoners on a terrible treacherous trip to Rome. That's the measure of their love.

Now you notice it says certain other prisoners in verse 1 accompanied Paul. A group of prisoners apparently had been quartered there for some time, at least they had been collected at Caesarea, and they were going also to Rome. Maybe some to be tried, some to be sentenced, some to be executed and Paul was one of them. Now all of these prisoners were placed in the charge of Julius, a centurion of Augustus band. Julius is a common Roman name, having nothing really to do with oranges. I don't really know where that came from. But anyway, he was a leader of the Augustus band. A centurion was a commander of a hundred men. Now the August band is interesting. I told you a couple of weeks ago that Augustus was a title for the emperor. This was a special band of men, a special cohort of men assigned to the emperor. They were special envoys, they were like special couriers. Their name, they were called *fruman terai*. *Fruman terai* means pertaining to grain, and the reason they got this name pertaining to grain was because initially when the Roman government began to send its troops and garrison them and station them all over the imperial empire, they had to get food to their troops. And there were men assigned to the accompaniment of the food. They were men who were responsible for the transportation of the food safely. These were the men who were the special food envoys and they were called *fruman terai*, that is they pertained to the grain. But as time when on the special couriers also got into really becoming very sophisticated imperial agents. They were responsible for spying, they were responsible for transporting important political prisoners and personalities back and forth between Rome and its armies and its garrisons in its various provinces. And so they were set aside from regular troop duty and assigned to this very important area.

Julius was a commander commanding a hundred such men. Now how many of the hundred accompanied Paul on the ship we do not know, but with Julius and his men, the crew of the ship, Paul and the prisoners...there was a good group. Later on when they changed ships there was a total of 276 people. We don't know how many on this first vessel, but at least 276 on the second as it's indicated later on in the passage.

So here is the group. And just to make another footnote, the centurion, at this point has to be a sort of popular term in the eyes of the Christian world because this is another illustration of a good man. The Romans were not real good at picking governors, but that was because that was a whole lot of political stuff. That was a lot of personality, political byplay that brought about the picking of governors, but in terms of picking their leaders in their army they apparently really did a good job. You can go back, for example, to Mark 15, to Luke Chapter 7, to Acts 10, Acts 22, and Acts 24, and every time you run into centurions you find them to be men of integrity, just men. And so apparently

the Romans had good methods for seeing who became a centurion, a leader of a hundred men.

So Paul and the rest of the prisoners are ready to leave Caesarea, and his great anticipation is to be fulfilled in heading for Rome. Verse 2, "And entering into a ship of Adramyttium." You'll find on your map, if you'll look at it a minute, the statement "Asia." There is Asia there and that refers to Asia Minor, which is in that area, a province of Rome. The very northern part of Asia, if you went straight up from the word Asia and made a left then went right over to the coast you would find Adramyttium. This was a port at which this particular ship was registered. It was a coastal vessel. It pretty much hugged the coastline and never really ventured out into the open sea apparently. And so this particular ship was on its way back to Adramyttium, and, of course, realizing that this would be partway only Julius, in a hurry, set about to get on the ship with all of his people and that's precisely what they did, entering into the ship they put to sea, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia. And it notes there that Aristarchus was along with them.

There was several kind of ships in those days. There were those that ventured into the open sea and there were those that were the port hoppers, that just kind of skidded along the coastline from one port to the next, not being of the sturdy stuff able to cope with the major shipping lanes across the open great sea or Mediterranean as we know it. And so they boarded this particular vessel to hop from port to port until finally they would run into a ship going to Rome. That was their intention. And their objective, of course, was ultimately to get to Rome. There were no passenger ships. They had to just grab whatever particular transport ships there were. There wasn't any first-class, second-class or deluxe or whatever. There was strictly one or another grain ship or ship transporting animals or some other kind of commodity.

Now notice verse 3. "And the next day we touched at Sidon." So they left Caesarea, sailed up the coast 70 miles to Sidon. "And Julius courteously treated Paul." Now this is interesting. You say, "Well why would he do that?" I mean in 70 miles did he get to know him? Maybe but most likely not. I mean Paul was a prisoner Julius was a commander. Prisoners and commanders don't usually have a lot of fellowship. Well what did he do here? "He courteously treated Paul, gave him liberty to go to his friends to refresh himself." Now if you know anything about the Romans and their rules regarding prisoners, if a Roman lost a prisoner he paid the prisoner's sentence himself. So Julius must have had a very good reason to allow Paul the liberty to go ashore to meet with his friends. There's really only one explanation in my mind, and that is that Festus, knowing the innocence of Paul and down deep in his heart wanting to do the best he could for Paul told Julius the man is an innocent man. The man is not going to do anything that is in any way going to jeopardize you or anyone else. Treat him courteously. And that's exactly what Julius did immediately when he had the first opportunity.

Now notice verse 3. He gave him liberty, incidentally the word courteously in the Greek is *philanthropos*, from which we get philanthropy. He gave him liberty to go to his friends to refresh himself. In Sidon apparently there was a church. The believers were called Friends. And that didn't come as any shock, I think. In reading that I thought back to John 15:15, where Jesus said, "No longer will I call you servants, but from now on I'll call you what? friends." And one of the terms that was used commonly for the designation of Christians was that of friends. And there was a church founded in Sidon, most likely founded in the repercussions of the persecution of Stephen. You remember back in the early part of the book of Acts that when the persecution broke out against Stephen the church was scattered. And the scattering of the church Judea and Samaria area was pretty well evangelized. And apparently a church was begun in the area of Sidon, even as there was in the area of Tyre. Paul had visited that church on his trip to Jerusalem. Now he visits Sidon on the

way from.

And so he went there, but an interesting thing to note is this: you say, "What did he do when he went there or why did he go?" Well I'm sure he went for the fellowship of believers because he loved that. I'm sure he did some teaching. I'm sure he did some ministering because that's the nature of the man, I mean you couldn't restrain the man. He was too committed to those things. But it says here, "To refresh himself." The interesting thing about that is the word refresh is a medical term. It has to do with medical care and it indicates that he was sick. The apostle Paul at this particular point is a sick man. And it isn't any wonder with all that he has endured in the time intervening since his liberty, having been a prisoner for two years, and so in his illness he is probably not able to gain the diet, the rest, and the care that he needed on shipboard and Julius allows him the privilege to go and be with Christians who ministered to him as he equally ministers to them.

When that was completed we come to verse 4. "And when we had put to sea from there," and again they take off from that harbor, "We sailed under Cyprus because the winds were contrary," that is they sail under the shelter of Cyprus. Now the normal route, notice your map. If they were going from Sidon to Myra, or maybe even on further from Myra, not even intending to go there, maybe to even land at Crete or any trip to Rome. Normally they would not go way up and around Cyprus. They would cross the sea to perhaps even Rhodes there and then pursue on up through the Adria Sea toward Italy. But because the wind was a problem they had to coast it. And of course as I said this was probably a coasting vessel that wouldn't dare venture into the open sea with any kind of a wind problem at all. And when there was a problem with the wind, going along the coast was to the advantage because they could take advantage of land winds and as well the current of the Mediterranean runs that very route west. And so they took advantage of land, winds, as well as the current to run them up around the island of Cyprus and to the west.

The way the wind was blowing probably would have been very helpful to ships coming the opposite direction from say Rhodes or Crete down toward Sidon and that's the way Paul came when he came. He came straight across south of Crete, but on the return because of the winds was unable to do that.

Now this is summer. It is estimated that Festus took office in early July of A.D. 59 or 60. And that means if he took office in early July, by the time he went to Jerusalem, came back, heard Paul, had Agrippa come down, had that little thing with Agrippa and figured out what to do with Paul and waited for the proper ship it is probably mid August by now. And mid August would be the time that Paul would be departing. The winds were basically westerly winds in the summer, a blowing from the west and they could easily tack against the wind and make good progress toward Rome, but mid August was pretty borderline. If you wait too long you get into a treacherous season. From November 11th to the end of March nobody crossed the Mediterranean. The winds were extremely strong and the sea was very rough and all shipping ceased from November 11th to the end of March. But from September 14 to November 11th that period between the summer sailing season and the winter closed season was known as the treacherous season. You just really didn't know. It was a gamble to sail in the open sea from September 14 till November 11th. So at this particular point as they near the end of August they are flirting with a borderline situation.

They then coasted along, it says in verse 5, they sailed the Sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia. You can see Cilicia there. Pamphylia is right next to it just to the left. They sailed right along that coastline areas that Paul knew very well. He had taken three missionary journeys to those areas and originally

was born and raised in the area of Cilicia. And so along they went until they came to Myra, a city of Lycia. Myra was a harbor. Actually the city itself was two miles inland, but nevertheless that is known as the area of Myra. It is the southern most region of Asia Minor. It was a chief port for the Egyptian vessels.

Now let me make a note of this. Egypt, of course, was like the granary of the Roman Empire. Egypt raised a tremendous amount of grain and the great imperial network of food needs was served by the Egyptians. It was the granary of Italy and of the Roman Empire. In fact the imperial government had a fleet of grain ships that carried this grain to the various places where it was needed in the Roman Empire. And when the ships would come from Alexandria, for that is the harbor, the port of Egypt, when they would come from Alexandria, one of the stops they would make is Myra to dispense the grain that was needed in Asia Minor and other areas there. And, of course, they would stop there often times to harbor in difficult times until they could proceed further west to reach the land of Italy.

And so they arrived in this place and there happened to be one of these grain ships there in the harbor and they realized the opportunity to transfer ships and catch a ship that was going to Rome.

Verse 6, "And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy and put us on board." So the transfer is made and then now we get on the ship with the total of 276 people, most of which undoubtedly was Paul and his entourage, since the thing otherwise was full of grain there would be needed to run the ship and perhaps some other passengers. Now some historians have indicated that the time to get from Sidon to Myra is about nine days, tacking back and forth and back and forth against the coast. And Myra was a suitable harbor. It was a very popular harbor and they would be very glad to get there, and they would realize there the beginning of their journey to Rome.

Verse 7, "and when we had sailed slowly many days," they had westerly winds, that is winds blowing at them from the west against which they could tack and progress, "And scarce were come off Cnidus. The wind not permitting us we sailed under the lea of Crete off Salmone." Now look at your map. They left Myra and very slowly did they sail west the inside passage between Rhodes and the mainland there of Asia Minor and they proceeded to the very last point Cnidus. They would at that point have harbored in Cnidus. Now if you feel you're really bogged down in National Geographic trivia, hang on, the Lord has a purpose in all of this. They had passed Cnidus and, of course, immediately when they did this they left the shelter of land. The gentle land winds ceased. The protection ceased and the wind became extremely strong as they ventured immediately into the open sea. And they were unable to harbor at Cnidus. They could not direct the ship into the harbor and so they had to let it go. They couldn't handle the wind. What they did was they ran smack into the prevailing wind and they plunged right into the pressing plummeting headwaters and they couldn't handle it. And you'll notice the only thing they could do is let it go and try and get the ship down around the underside of Crete in order to be able to hide from the wind, to have some kind of a break from the wind that was blowing.

Now you know perhaps a different kind of ship could have handled it. They say that schooner or a sloop or something can take a 6 degree angle into a wind and ride it in, but great big thing like this, these Roman ships, and we have much information about them archeologically were clumsy. Great big heavy, in fact they could displace a tremendous amount of water, much tonnage, and of course, as grain ships they would be loaded down. They were clumsy, they had a single mast with a great big square sail on it and they preferred usually to sail under just that one enormous sail and run

before the wind. They just really didn't handle themselves well when the wind was contrary. And so the wind wouldn't let them get into either of Cnidus two harbors, and they did have two there, and so they had to go down around the treacherous Cape Salmone and get on the back side of Crete and be sheltered from the wind. And once they got around it they would be secured from the nor'wester wind that was blowing.

Verse 8, "And passing it with difficulty," listen they didn't have an easy time getting around that Cape Salmone on the east coast tip of Crete. With difficulty means just that. It's a 140-mile long island, Crete is, and they just wanted to turn the edge and get into shelter. With great difficulty they finally made it and came to a place called *Calouse Limionos*. That's Greek for Fair Havens, near to which was the city of Lasea. Now you say, "That's a terrific place to be in a storm," Fair Havens. Well Fair Havens was really a hokey place. They weren't at all excited about being in Fair Havens, but at least they made it. And the first foreboding sign of a difficult trip had made itself known.

Now we come to stage two. Stage one is the start; stage two is the stay. Here they are in Fair Havens, taking on supplies and waiting for a change of winds and they're getting anxious to go to Rome. I mean they want to get to Rome, you see, before the season ends. They want to get to Rome before the winter comes. You see what happens is if they can't get to Rome then this fellow who is running the ship is going to have to take care of the whole crew for the winter and that means three to four months in harbor before they can get off again. In addition to that to be stuck in Fair Havens would be absolute disaster. It was open, it was exposed to the winds of the sea, it was not a commodious harbor as it says in verse 12. It wasn't a good place to spend the winter. Nothing was happening there. No fun and games in Fair Havens. Plus there was a sort of a desire to make a little money on the deal, if the ship had been owned indeed as some indicate by its captain. He would have wanted to get his supplies there as fast as possible and get his money and not have to spend the whole winter paying these people for idleness. And so they wanted to gamble and they figured we're going to try to make it. If we could get a change of wind we'll take off.

Now verse 9, "Now when much time was spent," now we don't know how much time, but plenty of time, maybe weeks went by, maybe more. Very likely at least a month. "And when sailing was now dangerous," now notice if they got there sometime at the end of August, and a month passed, the notation that Luke makes now is they're in the dangerous season. They're in the period of time when the sail is dangerous. Then he adds, "Because the fast was already passed." The fast is referenced to the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, the Jewish fast. If you know anything about Jewish history you'll remember that Yom Kippur occurs on the 10th day of the 7th month of the Jewish calendar, which is the month of Tishrei. That falls into the Roman calendar at the end of September or the beginning of October. In A.D. 59 we know historically that Yom Kippur was on October 5th. If this is the year then A.D. 59 it is already after October 5th they are well into the dangerous season for trying to cross the open sea. Any attempt now would really be a gamble. So it says in verse 9, "Paul admonished them. And he said unto them, 'Sirs I perceive that this voyage will be with violence,' literally, "And much damage, not only of the cargo and ship, but also of our lives." Paul gives a little practical advice. He's not a sailor but he's been on a lot of ships and he's been through three shipwrecks and he's not looking forward to a fourth. And he says guys this is not going to happen without some real violence and damage to the cargo, the ship, and our lives. He doesn't say they're going to die. He just says there's going to be violence and damage. This is a practical man.

And here we find another quality of a leader. Not only is a leader loved by people, but you see here another quality of a leader, a leader speaks what needs to be said. A leader is a practical man. Well,

of course, since he wasn't anybody who was supposedly in control or knew anything about sailing, it says in verse 11, "Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship." Now those two words master and owner are very difficult to translate because they are obscure words. The best translation of the word master, in my mind, is sailing master or pilot. This is the man who was responsible for steering and navigating. And the word owner is not really the word for owner but probably should be translated captain. So that the thing would say: the pilot and the captain. Now in some cases the captain was an owner, if in fact it was a private vessel. But if it was one of the imperial fleet grain ships he would be simply the captain. The word is used only here is not the common word for owner, but has to do probably with him as the captain. And if he was the owner he probably was also the captain, but it seems best to see it as a Roman ship and these two would be the sailing master or the pilot and the captain.

And the centurion agrees with them. And you really can't blame the guy. I mean they were the experts, right? You can't blame the centurion for believing the navigator and the captain. And so he does. But the thing that really pushed them over was, and because verse 12, "The haven was not commodious to winter in." They didn't want to get stuck in a dump like Fair Havens, so they were willing to really risk things. "The greater part," verse 12 says, that is the majority of the crew, "advised to depart from there also." I mean at the worst we could at least reach Phonica, or Phoenix, not Phoenicia. Phoenicia is the ancient name of the coastline of Israel. That's not the translation that's best. It should be Phonica or Phoenix, which was a port 40 miles down Crete. 40 miles further along the island was the port of Phoenix.

So he said, "Well if we can't get to Rome, maybe we can get to Phoenix and that would be good to winter there, which is a haven of Crete," and that is true. Historians tell us that anciently the only place in the winter that was a comfortable place to stay was on Crete. The south coast of Crete was this place called Phoenix and it lies toward the southwest and northwest giving us geographical exposure. It was on the end. And so they stayed, but they didn't stay long. They decided to depart and that brings us to stage three of our outline, the storm.

And this is most interesting. All of a sudden that wind that had made such a problem for them, stopped. And you know what happened? Some lovely little south winds began to blow. How nice. South winds will just carry us right on up there. Terrific. Verse 13, "When the south wind blew softly," that sounds good, "Supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing from there they sailed close by Crete." Well the south wind is nice and we'll at least stay along the edge of Crete and if we don't get all the way to Rome at least we can hang in there at Phoenix.

Then you have one of the biggest words in this whole story, verse 14, "But," got to watch those gentle south winds. "Not long after there rose against it a tempestuous wind called Euroclydon." That was the sailors' term for a nor'easter. It comes from two words, one Greek, one Latin. The Greek word is *Euros* and it means an east wind. The Latin word is *aquillo* and it means a north wind. This is a northeast wind that came blowing out of the northeast. It would come down from Asia, just blowing down and it was a severe wind. They gave it the name Euroclydon because it was so fierce and it was one of the greatest feared winds of all winds. It was a wind of hurricane or typhoon proportions. They were in a hurricane. They were in that little thing, it was like a pod floating on the ocean bobbing up and down and being pummeled and beaten by the northeast wind. This was a typhoon. This was a hurricane with all of the concurrent airflow that comes together and swirls the clouds and swirls the sea, this is what they were in the midst of.

And you all have seen on television hurricane somebody, hurricane Bertha or Edna or Agnes or something and you know what it's like. That exactly what this little wooden thing got trapped in. And the little gentle south wind wafted them on was replaced by a threatening treacherous deadly nor'easter. And you know there was a great fear among all those who sailed the Mediterranean and the fear was of Euroclydon sent ships to the graveyard known as the Greater Certies. Look at your map and you'll see the note Greater Certies. The Greater Certies archeologists have studied and dug up there many things for many years was the graveyard of ships. Whenever a great nor'easter would come of hurricane or typhoon dimensions it would blast ships into the Greater Certies and it would reef them there and shatter them and smash them and lives would be lost there on the coast of North Africa. And so they were afraid. They had two options: if the hurricane didn't dump them into the sea and capsize the ship, then the hurricane would drive them into the graveyard of ships known as the Greater Certies.

Well verse 15 tells us what happened. "When the ship was caught, and couldn't bear up into the wind, we let her drive." In other words it didn't capsize her but it began to drive her to the sea. It began to drive her south in the power of that wind blowing from the northeast. It began to drive south and west and they it go. 23 miles from Fair Havens, where they had started, was a small little island called Cauda. It's mentioned there as Clauda. Some call it Clauda; some call it Cauda. Today it's known by the Italians as Gozzo, G-o-z-z-o, in case you ever have occasion to go there you'll know what happened there. It's also called Gauvdo. But apparently on the way down they tried with great effort to get behind this little island and get some protection and they succeeded. It says in verse 16, "And running under the lee of a certain island, which is called Cauda, we had much work to secure the boat. They ran back under this island as a protection against a tremendous treachery of this wind.

Then they did three things. The first thing they did was to secure the boat. Every sailing vessel had a dingy and a dingy doesn't have to be super small, but it was a small enough boat so that when you harbored a boat you could get in it and get to shore. It was a very important thing to have. It was also a rescue boat. In any case, in case that the larger ship would break up this was a lifeboat. It was very important to hang on to that thing. In sailing normally the dingy was attached to the stern of the boat by a rope and just pulled along. But immediately upon any stormy weather they would have to get that thing inside or it would be swamped with water and it would drag and eventually it would sever the rope and it would be lost. And so with great difficulty they first thing they did was get the swamp dingy into the main ship. They probably swung the yardarm out and use it as a hoist and they all worked hard, but they got it in.

The second thing they did, and this is something you may never have heard of, they frapped the ship. You say, "What does that mean?" Well I didn't know what it meant either until I studied it and now I know what frapping the ship means and I'll tell you what it means. Verse 17 says, When they had hoisted it," hoisted the dingy in, "They used fraps under girding," or frapping, "the ship." Now you know in the days that we're talking about they build ships without the use of bolts. In other words when the planks ran along the side they couldn't run large girders and then bolt the planks to the girders because they didn't have any bolts. And the only way they could rally secure it they used pitch; they would use anything they could. I was reading recently a tremendously interesting article in National Geographic about the Phoenician sailing boats and how they used to cover them with certain kinds of things that would seal them. Well that's fine until you get into a hurricane. When you get into a hurricane and you're in a single masted vessel there is no distribution of stress. That is in a multi-sailed vessel the stress is distributed all over the entire hull. In a single masted situation the

stress is directed at one area and it begins to split the ship and it will literally splitter the entire hull unless something is done. So there were cables that were wrapped around these hulls and when stress came they would wench these cables tight. Just like wrapping the ship up with rope in order to keep it secure, and so they diligently set about to frap the ship or under gird the ship.

The third thing they did, "fearing lest they should fall into the quicksand." Now you say, "Wait a minute, quicksand in the middle of the Mediterranean?" Right, that's another one of those terrific translations. The Greek word is certies. They were afraid of winding up on the Certies. That's the point I told you about on the map. Here's it's the form certean, that ending, but the same word. And it probably means the reef, the shoal, the sandbar. It can have a reference to the sandy beach where it could be dumped and then smashed. And they had a fear of this. So what were they going to do? It says, "They struck sail," in the King James. What it literally says in the Greek is they lowered the gear. I think what it means is they dropped the mainsail. Well whatever they did it worked. And of course it really worked because God was in control. And if you want to know something amazing, do you see on the left side of your map that little deal Melita? That's also the same as Malta today. Isn't it interesting that with the sail down, with the storm swirling about them everywhere, and the inability to see the stars for the clouds, they couldn't see anything day or night, which means they couldn't what, they couldn't navigate, they sailed on a direct course to the harbor of Malta. Now you look at that little dot there and you figure out who was steering that ship. Amazing. This is all in the plan of God.

Well they're in real trouble and they're afraid and they need something, and so here comes Paul and this is his time. God says, "All right my man, it's your time. Let's establish whose who and then we've got a foundation upon which to present the gospel" Isn't it amazing when God wants to get His message across what He'll do. Verse 18, "And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest," typhoon, a hurricane, and exceedingly means just that. "And the next day they lightened the ship." I think this is really kind of a clever thing. "The next day they lightened the ship." Well that means they jettisoned the cargo. Some of it, not all of it, some of it, they would keep some of it for ballast, some of it for their own food, and hopefully some of it to get to Rome so it wouldn't lose all of it. So I like this, "They lightened the ship. The third day we cast out with our own hand the baggage of the ship." You notice a little bit of indifference in verse 18, which is gone in verse 19? They did it in verse 18, but we did it verse 19. I mean it got a little desperate so we were throwing stuff too. Well here they are three days off of Fair Havens and they've jettisoned their cargo and their baggage.

And verse 20 says, "When neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was taken away." Totally lost hope. Now God says, "That's exactly what I want. No one has any resource, no one has any hope, no one can turn to anybody or anything. You are hopeless. Now I will announce My presence." Beautiful! One of the principles that God has used over and over again in the word is that God comes in man's absolute hopelessness, right? and announces who He is. He had just the man. He had his man, Paul, who was probably just going along with it all saying, "Well Lord when is the time? It's going to be soon, I imagine."

Verse 21, "After being long without food," and incidentally they were long without food. You say why? Have you ever been seasick? Listen I went out on a ship one time. We got into a storm and the guy who owned the ship was trying to sell it. He would have given it away. He didn't ever want to go out again. It was terrible seasickness. And, of course, in addition to that you probably had pretty salty food by this time with the washing over of the sea and on top of that the fact that they had jettisoned the cargo may have limited the supply, but mostly they were too busy to eat. By the time it was over

14 days they'd gone without eating. 14 days they had fought that storm without any food. "And so without food Paul stood forth in the midst of them and said, 'Sirs,'" I love this. You know Paul is human. He can't resist the I told you so. "Sirs you should have harkened unto me and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss." I told you. Now why did he say that? He said that to established the fact that this man knew what he was talking about. You know they may have said, "Yeah, that guy did say that." And this is the beginning of the establishment of the credibility of Paul as God's man.

Now watch. "And not I exhort you, be of good cheer." All right, sure. You know while you're hanging onto the mast like this, the thing is teetering back and forth, the waves are smashing the top of the boat, and you can't see anything. Cheer up fellows, but there's a reason, "For there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, only the ship." Terrific! Right. Then we walk on the water. But that's what he said. Why would they believe him? Maybe the might believe him. See how God had set up his credibility because he was right once huh? I mean the foundation was there.

And look at this: "For there stood by me this night an angel of God." I love this. "Whose I am and," what, "whom I serve." Don't you love that? That guy knew who he belonged to. "There stood by me an angel of God whose I am and whom I serve." There's the first commercial for the Lord. God gets dragged into the situation. You see what he wants to do? God is introducing Himself to these people. He had to get them in a position to accept the introduction. And now they're looking for a God, aren't they? 'Cause only a God can help them. And angel of God whose I am and whom I serve appeared to me to me and said, "Fear not, Paul, thou must be brought before Caesar and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee." Paul you're going to make it to Caesar and everybody with you is going to make it. "Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. However, we must be cast upon a certain island."

Well you know that was like a needle in a haystack, hitting an island. I mean, as I say, look at the whole thing. There's no island there but Malta. He says, "Don't fear men, an angel came to me from God whose I am and whom I serve." See he wants them to know that they can go to him to know about God. He establishes himself as the connection to God and then he says, "God's angel said to me you're going to make it, Paul, and everybody with you is going to make it. The ship's going to go, the cargo is going to go, but everybody's going to make it."

Now do you see what that is? God is setting Himself up to establish His credibility. Now you know what happens? One of two things: that comes true or it doesn't come true. If it doesn't come true it wasn't God. If it does come true, what, it was God. Do you realize that the obscurity of landing on an island, losing the ship, losing the cargo, and everybody's life being saved, can you chart the mathematical probability of that? Staggering! In the millions that all of those things would come to pass. You see God is setting up the display of Himself. That's the promise. But what happened? Well that's for next week.

But I'll close with one thought. You know something, I don't think that the ungodly of this world know how fortunate they are to have us righteous people around. Do you know that? I think of that every time I get on an airplane. I think these fortunate people. Do they realize that the Lord is not finished with me yet and they're completely secure? I mean this plane has got to land because I'm on it. I don't think they understand that. They would treat me better if they did.

Well listen you say, "Is this a principle?" Look at it in verse 24. "God has given thee all them that sail

with thee." Did you know that God's people in the midst of an ungodly community actually protect that community? That's right. You say, "Where do you get that John?" That's very clear in many passages in Scripture, but just to point out a couple of them let me close with this and I'll close hastily. But in Genesis Chapter 18, just an illusion to that. Don't look it up. You remember that the prayer came in Chapter 18 about Sodom and Gomorrah? God said, "I'm going to wipe out Sodom and Gomorrah." And Abraham said, "Lord, if there are 50 righteous will you spare the whole city? Yes. For the sake of the righteous I'll spare everybody." And he goes on and on and on and he finds that there weren't give and there weren't any, etc., etc., etc. so He couldn't spare it. But the point was God said, "For the sake of fifty righteous; for the sake of five righteous I'll spare the whole city." Do you see the principle?

Listen to this one: later on in the book of Genesis in Chapter 30 tremendous statement, verse 27, "And Laban said, 'I pray thee if I have found favor in thine eyes tarry.'" Listen, stay with me Laban says to Jacob, "For I have learned by experience that the Lord has blessed me because of you." Do you see that? It's the same principle. And again in the book of Genesis in Chapter 39 you have this indication a couple of times in the case of Joseph in Egypt. It says in 39:5, "It came to pass from the time he had made him overseer in his house," that is Potiphar and Pharaoh as well later, "And over all that he had that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house because of Joseph. And the blessing of the Lord was on everybody in the house and everybody in the field.

Verse 23 says essentially the very same thing. "Even the keeper of the prison was blessed because of Joseph." Listen it's a principle. The world doesn't know how fortunate it is to have the presence of godly people in it. These people in this ship didn't know how fortunate they were to have that apostle there. Well what's going to happen? That's for next time. You come and find out and it's exciting. Let's pray.

Father we thank you for the care You have exhibited in the life of Paul, for the care that we see in our own lives. We thank You for the fact that because of Your sovereignty, because of Your providence, because of Your grace You meet our needs. God, we thank you for the example of this man's life. We ask that you would bless these words and these thoughts to our hearts. Teach us what the Spirit would have us learn from our sharing together this day. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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