

^{27:1} When it was decided that we would sail for Italy^a, they proceeded to deliver Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan cohort named Julius. ² And embarking in an Adramyttian ship, which was about to sail to the regions along the coast of Asia, we put out to sea^b accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica^c. ³ 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^d. ⁴ From there we put out to sea and sailed under the shelter of Cyprus because the winds were contrary. ⁵ When we had sailed through the sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia^e. ⁶ There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy, and he put us aboard it. ⁷ 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; ⁸ and with difficulty sailing past it we came to a place called Fair Havens, near which was the city of Lasea^f.

⁹ When considerable time had passed and the voyage was now dangerous, since even the fast was already over, Paul *began* to admonish them⁹, ¹⁰ and said to them, “Men, I perceive that the voyage will certainly be with damage and great loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also

^a 27:1 **When it was decided that we would sail for Italy.** In this chapter Luke again puts himself into the story and, in addition to the fresh view we get into Paul’s character, we see Dr. Luke’s careful attention to seafaring details from a layman’s perspective. Luke was obviously a very good listener and used a number of nautical words he heard on the ships.

^b 27:2 **And embarking in an Adramyttian ship, which was about to sail to the regions along the coast of Asia, we put out to sea.** Adramyttium was in Asia on the coast of the Aegean, not on the way to Rome. Julius knew he would have to change ships along the way. Understanding that the ships (ultimately three different ships) used on this trip to Rome were commercial vessels, not Roman government ships (though they may have carried government cargo), helps the reader to understand later conflicts between the Roman soldiers and the sailors.

^c 27:2 **accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica.** Aristarchus was a faithful servant. He had accompanied Paul on his third missionary journey and served alongside the apostle through riots, imprisonment and a shipwreck (Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2; Colossians 4:10; Philemon 1:24).

^d 27:3 **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.** The word used of Julius’ kind treatment of Paul is the origin of our word “philanthropy.” By common grace even unbelievers can be hospitable, cordial and helpful. Understanding the lost condition of sinners should not keep us from acknowledging that God might sometimes use the lost to care for our needs. Knowing that even unbelievers can show kindness should challenge the believer to be sure his lifestyle is characterized by the good works God saved him to do (Ephesians 2:10).

^e 27:5 **When we had sailed through the sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia.** Luke uses the word for the *high sea* that Jesus used of the depths of the sea (Matthew 18:6). Heading into that part of the Mediterranean was much more than pleasure sailing. This is where the big ships sailed.

^f 27:6-8 **There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy, and he put us aboard it. 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 place called Fair Havens, near which was the city of Lasea.** The language here (unique to the New Testament) may indicate that the ship was tacking against the wind. Fair Havens may have been improperly named to attract business.

⁹ 27:9 **When considerable time had passed and the voyage was now dangerous, since even the fast was already over, Paul *began* to admonish them.** The Fast was the Day of Atonement, or Yom Kippur. This note by Luke places the voyage to Rome sometime in the late fall, likely October, the time when Mediterranean seas grow rough until spring.

of our lives^a.”¹¹ But the centurion was more persuaded by the pilot and the captain of the ship than by what was being said by Paul.¹² 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*^b.

¹³ When a moderate south wind came up, supposing that they had attained their purpose, they weighed anchor and *began* sailing along Crete, close *inshore*^c.

¹⁴ But before very long there rushed down from the land a violent wind, called Euraquilo; ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ Running under the shelter of a small island called Clauda, we were scarcely able to get the *ship's* boat under control. ¹⁷ 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 in this way let themselves be driven along^d. ¹⁸ The next day as we were being violently storm-tossed, they began to jettison the cargo; ¹⁹ and on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands^e. ²⁰ 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^f.

²¹ 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. ²² Yet now I urge you to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but *only* of the ship. ²³ For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me, ²⁴ saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.’ ²⁵ Therefore, keep

^a 27:10 **and said to them, “Men, I perceive that the voyage will certainly be with damage and great loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives.”** Paul was timid neither in eternal matters nor in temporal ones. He had already been shipwrecked at least three other times (2 Corinthians 11:25) and this voyage evidently had the makings of a fourth.

^b 27:12 **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.** Majority decisions are not always the best.

^c 27:13 **When a moderate south wind came up, supposing that they had attained their purpose, they weighed anchor and began sailing along Crete, close inshore.** The deception of the gentle south wind may have been a lull in the midst of a powerful low pressure system, similar in effect to a hurricane. The back side of the counterclockwise rotation would have packed a strong punch—a north or northeast wind.

^d 27:17 **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 in this way let themselves be driven along.** This slowed the vessel's approach to any rocks.

^e 27:18-19 **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.** Things that seemed so important only days before served only to get in the way in a crisis.

^f 27:20 **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.** Luke includes himself among those who had given up hope of surviving the ordeal.

up your courage, men, for I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told^a. ²⁶ But we must run aground on a certain island.”^b

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^a 27:25 **Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told.** Note once again that faith must have an object. Specifically, the word of God was the object of Paul’s faith.

^b 27:1-26 The scene in this chapter is very “secular” on one hand: the shipping industry, the military, the court system, friendly neighbors and the weather. But what stands out in the midst of this scene is the sanctifying influence of a man of God. When the natural order is turned on its ear by circumstances, God’s faithful people stand out because they are tethered to that which no circumstances can change. See the difference Paul made on the voyage, perhaps even before he shared the gospel. These are differences you can make in your sphere of influence:

1. Paul displayed common sense. The world looks on as the people of God live for God’s glory in everyday ways that make sense even to an unbeliever. Paul was within his boundaries as a minister of the gospel to point out how foolish it was to venture out into October seas.
2. Paul offered hope and encouragement. Like Paul challenged the people on the ship not to lose hope, there are people in your life who sometimes need someone to take them by the hand and show them all is not lost.
3. Paul maintained faith in something changeless. Paul had God’s word that the whole group would survive the trip to Rome. If you trust what God has said, you have stability when the world’s temporal foundations (ships, tackle and cargo) collapse.