

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

Turn your bibles with me to Acts 27

Next week, Lord willing, we will finish our study through the book of Acts

And these last two chapters in the book of Acts focus on Paul's journey to Rome.

Now, before we begin our study I want you to think about his???

Jesus appeared to Paul back in Jerusalem in Acts 23 – when he was imprisoned and afraid (his brethren had rejected his testimony).

And Jesus told Paul, “Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.”

That was four chapters ago –

That was over two years ago – and Paul is still sitting in a jail cell in Judea.

From a human perspective, we might even say that this has been a total waste of time.

Jesus could have spoken a word and Paul would have been transported immediately to Rome – and Paul would have been in the presence of Caesar

just like we saw a few weeks ago when Jesus transported the disciples to the shore as soon as He got in the boat (John 6)

You see, church – if Jesus would've done that, we wouldn't have ch 24-28

But what we are going to start to see this evening is that chapter 27 and chapter 28 not only give us insight to Paul's journey to Rome – but in it we also see this voyage as an analogy of the Christian life.

Let's pray...

**[Act 27:1-44 NKJV] 1 And when it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to [one] named Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment.**

“When it was decided.” Decided by who?

Not by Paul, but by the Roman officials.

The governor – decides to finally book Paul a ticket to Rome.

However, Paul is not going to be traveling first class or even coach.

He is going to be traveling as a prisoner.

I had you make a note of the word – “we”

Because this means that Luke has rejoined Paul – and we will find out in the next verse that Aristarchus is accompanying them as well.

They are not prisoners – they are volunteering.

And it is possible that they would have been allowed to tag along if they declared themselves to be Paul's slaves.

So Paul has company for this portion of the trip.

I also had you make a note of this centurion – Julius. He is a commander of 100 soldiers.

And the reason I want you to take notice is that throughout the scriptures, the centurions are viewed in a positive way.

Luke 7

The centurion at the cross

Cornelius

Julius

**2 So, entering a ship of Adramyttium, we put to sea, meaning to sail along the coasts of Asia. Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, was with us. 3 And the next [day] we landed at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave [him] liberty to go to his friends and receive care.**

(Show map)

So they get on a boat – and they come to the first stop – Sidon, 67 miles from where they took off – and notice that Julius allows Paul to get off the boat and visit friends.

It's pretty remarkable that he gave Paul this amount of liberty.

Remember: If a Roman lost a prisoner, he'd forfeit his own life.

But in this short time that Julius and Paul had with each other, we can see that they had an understanding, respectable relationship.

**4 When we had put to sea from there, we sailed under [the shelter of] Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. 5 And when we had sailed over the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, [a city] of Lycia. 6 There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing to Italy, and he put us on board.**

So one of the things I want you to notice is that even though God had ordained that Paul go to Rome – this doesn't mean that Paul was going to have smooth sailing the entire way.

The Christian life is full of headwinds and tailwinds, discoveries and losses, battles and rests.

We can't predict what tomorrow holds, but we can rest assured that the Lord knows and He is with us and that we can trust Him.

Julius finds an Alexandrian boat –

We will find out that this was a big boat carrying grain to Rome and 276 passengers on it.

**7 When we had sailed slowly many days, and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, the wind not permitting us to proceed, we sailed under [the shelter of] Crete off Salmone. 8 Passing it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city [of] Lasea.**

So we continue to see delays and difficulties on the trip

For the merchants bringing grain to Italy and for the soldiers – time is money.

However, the slow sailing also gave Paul and his friends more time to minister to the hundreds of lost people around them

Church, for the Christian, time isn't money. We can be content and abound in all situations.

Our mood and our choices aren't supposed to be determined by the circumstances of life.

We're meant to live on a higher level, fulfilling a higher purpose.

**9 Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast (Luke is referring here to the Day of Atonement) was already over,**

Now, the reason that Luke refers to the Day of Atonement is because he wants to provide a time stamp – this was taking place around September – when the weather

began to change and the seas started to get rough and the chance of being shipwrecked were higher.

Remember, Paul was a seasoned traveler. He had already been part of three shipwrecks by this time (2 Cor 11:25)

**Paul advised them, 10 saying, "Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives."**

The scriptures do not tell us that Paul received a prophetic word here –

He is using common sense.

He sees the weather condition, he sees the sea, he sees the size of the boat and the payload – this is a recipe for disaster.

**11 Nevertheless the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship than by the things spoken by Paul. 12 And because the harbor was not suitable to winter in, the majority advised to set sail from there also, if by any means they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete opening toward the southwest and northwest, [and] winter [there].**

The guy steering the boat and the owner of the boat – they ignore Paul's warning.

Even though it was obvious that they were not going to be going anywhere for a while, they take a vote on the ship and the majority voted to go to Phoenix – if they were

going to be stuck on Crete for the winter, Phoenix was the bigger, more exciting city. Fair Havens was a dump compared to Phoenix.

And it was only a 3 hour boat ride from where they were – like Gilligan’s Island.

**13 When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained [their] desire, putting out to sea, they sailed close by Crete. 14 But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon. 15 So when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let [her] drive.**

So they begin their 3 hour trip –

Notice that they wait until the conditions were perfect – they had a nice soft wind, they took the precaution by sailing close to land –

But then,

The weather started getting rough,

The tiny ship was tossed,

If not for the courage of the fearless crew

- they sailed right into a typhoon. Euroclydon –

They lost control of the ship –

**16 And running under [the shelter of] an island called Clauda, we secured the skiff with difficulty.**

Since we live in Arizona – a skiff is like a small boat that would be used to transport people from the big boat to land – like a lifeboat

**17 When they had taken it on board, they used cables to undergird the ship; and fearing lest they should run aground on the Syrtis [Sands], they struck sail and so were driven.**

So after bringing in the lifeboat – they used cables to undergird the ship –

They are wrapping the cables around the ship so it doesn't break apart – remember that boats were made out of wood back then.

I had you make a note of the phrase they used cables

The Greek word that is used here is the word for help – boētheia

This word is only used one other time in scripture

Turn to Hebrews 4

**[Heb 4:16 NKJV] 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**

So get this church –

Just as the sailors were trying to wrap the boat with cables to hold it together, when we come to God's throne we can find mercy and grace being "wrapped" under us to hold us together.

**18 And because we were exceedingly tempest-tossed, the next [day] they lightened the ship. 19 On the third [day] we threw the ship's tackle overboard with our own hands.**

Luke here describes a situation that is becoming increasingly desperate.

They start throwing the furniture overboard first – and after three days, they begin to toss the ship's tackle – these were things that were essential to make repairs on the ship. (rope, extra sails)

Notice that Luke is helping as well.

Notice what they are not throwing overboard yet – the grain.

**20 Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on [us], all hope that we would be saved was finally given up.**

It is getting so bad that they don't even know where they are?

The sun and the stars – the thing that they depended for navigation, they haven't seen either for many days.

**21 But after long abstinence from food, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss.**

First of all, I don't want you to think that Paul is rubbing it in – here.

He is being truthful.

You see, it is one thing to say, "I told you so - You should have listened to me" and walk away.

Paul is not going to do that.

**22 "And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. 23 "For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, 24 "saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.' 25 "Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. 26 "However, we must run aground on a certain island."**

Paul spoke truth to them, but here, he brings hope.

Even though the ship and the grain is going to be lost, Paul tells them to be hopeful and full of cheer.

Because it is their lives as well as our lives that are valuable in the sight of God.

Understanding that helps us to put our lives in perspective.

It doesn't matter if we are a sailor, soldier or a merchant, the purpose of your life is to be held by God, to serve Him and enjoy His presence.

And Paul tells them that it is because of God's grace (has granted) – that He is going to save them.

The same grace that is going to take him to Rome – that same grace is being extended to the sailors, the merchants, the soldiers – who for the most part, other than Luke and Aristarchus – they were non-believers at this point.

God has promised that He is going to save you – and I believe Him.

He is also honest with them – it's not going to be easy –

Paul didn't know which island, but was simply promised by the angel that they would reach an island.

**27 Now when the fourteenth night had come, as we were driven up and down in the Adriatic [Sea], about midnight the sailors sensed that they were drawing near some land. 28 And they took soundings and found [it] to be twenty fathoms; and when they had gone a little farther, they took soundings again and found [it] to be fifteen fathoms.**

So some of the sailors – they could sense that they were closer to shore – maybe they could hear the waves crash in the background.

So they start lowering a rope to see how deep that water is –

The first time, they were at 120 feet

The second, they were at 90 feet – so they are getting closer to the shore.

**29 Then, fearing lest we should run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern, and prayed for day to come. 30 And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, when they had let down the skiff into the sea, under pretense of putting out anchors from the prow,**

The sailors are worried that the ship is going to crash, they drop anchors to slow it down and in the process, they lower lifeboat – they are planning to escape on their own.

**31 Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." 32 Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the skiff and let it fall off.**

God had given Paul parameters - "If these guys leave, you all die."

You see, the sailors didn't believe Paul

However, the soldiers did –

And they cut the rope to the lifeboat – to the skiff

You see, here is reason.

The skiff was their lifeboat.

The last, manmade hope.

God wanted them to let it all go.

Would they trust Him or would they not?

Paul was content to ride that ship until it broke apart. He'd rather do that than trust to skiff.

Why?

Because he believed the Lord's plan. He knew his Savior could be trusted.

**33 And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored [them] all to take food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food, and eaten nothing. 34 "Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you." 35 And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken [it] he began to eat. 36 Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves. 37 And in all we were two hundred**

**and seventy-six persons on the ship. 38 So when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship and threw out the wheat into the sea.**

For 14 days – the people on the ship had not eaten.

They were too busy being sea sick.

However, Paul encourages them to eat.

Because he knows that when the ship crashes close to the shore, they are going to need energy to swim to shore.

So, notice that he is giving thanks – even though the ship is getting closer to the shore and everyone knows that they are about to be shipwrecked.

But by Paul giving thanks – it encouraged the people on the ship.

And after eating – they begin dumping the wheat overboard – they want to lighten the load of the ship so it gets closer to the shore before it shipwrecks.

**39 When it was day, they did not recognize the land; but they observed a bay with a beach, onto which they planned to run the ship if possible. 40 And they let go the anchors and left [them] in the sea, meanwhile loosing the rudder ropes; and they hoisted the mainsail to the wind and made for shore. 41 But striking a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the prow (front of the boat) stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern (back of the ship) was**

being broken up by the violence of the waves. 42 And the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape. 43 But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from [their] purpose, and commanded that those who could swim should jump [overboard] first and get to land, 44 and the rest, some on boards and some on [parts] of the ship. And so it was that they **all** escaped safely to land.

Just as God promised – every single one of the people on the ship were saved.

It wasn't easy – some of them floated their way on to the island

But God delivered them out of the storm.

Now, in the beginning of the study I had asked if this was time wasted???

Not for the 273 people that were on the boat – who were nonbelievers – if it wasn't for God putting Paul on that boat – they would have all perished in the sea.

We are Paul – God is using us, people are watching us – just like the sailors and the soldiers and everyone else was watching Paul.

Looking to see if he really believed what he said, "Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me."

And as we are going to find out next week, God is going to do a great work in the lives of the people in the tiny island where they landed.

The island of Malta –

God is going to use Paul to do Both physical healing as well as spiritual healing

And you will have out show up next week to find out what happens.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I

accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

