

Acts 27 - John Karmelich

1. There is an old, popular idiom called "The Storms of Life". It refers to those really difficult times where there seems like there is no hope, and all is lost.
 - a) All people go through this, believers as well as non-believers. The difference between the two groups is that we have a God who we can have faith in *through* those times.
 - b) Acts Chapter 27 is a great chapter to read during those "storms". Not only is it a description of a literal, horrible storm and shipwreck, but it is filled with wonderful lessons about trusting God during those very difficult times of our lives.
 - c) I have found that all Christians, especially spiritually mature Christians go through periods where they don't "sense" God's presence. This does not mean God has abandoned them in any way, shape or form. It is simply a time of testing. It is like teaching a little child how to walk. They can't learn unless you let go. God "lets go" of us sometimes in order to build our faith and trust in him.
2. Acts 27 describes Paul's travels from Caesarea to Rome. All the trials in front of the Jewish officials and Roman Officials in Jerusalem and nearby Caesarea are now over. Paul being a Roman Citizen has appealed his court case to Caesar, and now is off to Rome for the trial.
 - a) It may help if I summarize the travel-aspects of Chapter 27. The journey begins peaceful enough. The weather was favorable as the journey begun. The crew changed ships after a port-stop in a small town. Boarding a larger ship, the storm grew worse and worse over a period of days. The sailors didn't eat for 14 days, probably out of seasickness of the boat being rocked for that long. The sailors tried throwing everything overboard in order to lighten the load. They tried to reinforce the ship by tying cables around it. Finally, the ship was destroyed near an island. The crew made it to land by swimming ashore or floating on the debris of the ship.
 - b) For those who are experienced sailors and seamen, Acts 27 is a great chapter to read. It describes in detail a sailing voyage where things go from calm to rough to tragedy. The chapter teaches us survival techniques during a rough storm and describes the technical ways the sailors kept the ship afloat until the end.
 - i) For you non-sailors out there, don't worry. ☺ There is a lot to learn even if you don't care about sailing. The real lessons of Chapter 27 are about having faith during the difficult times of our lives, and that is what God wants to show us.
3. Remember that "underlying theme" of the Book of Acts is Spiritual Warfare.
 - a) Remember that Satan didn't want Paul to reach Rome, and I would suspect that he was behind some of the storms. (From another perspective, God *allowed* Satan to cause the storms, as God's plan was to use the storms for his Glory!)
 - i) My scriptural support for this argument is when Jesus "rebuked" the wind when the disciples were on the boat (See Matt. 8:26). The storm calmed down.
4. The "storm" of Acts 27 is an interesting read from 3 perspectives 1) Luke, the author, 2) Paul and 3) the other members of the boat. I want to summarize all three perspectives:
 - a) First, let's talk about Luke. Luke, the author of Acts is aboard the ship. You'll notice the pronoun "we" as we read through the chapter. One of the things I noticed in this chapter is a reference to Luke's *personal* lack of faith in the middle of the storm. Luke records in Verse 20: "*we* finally gave up all hope of being saved". I assume Luke included himself as he usually does in Acts when he uses the word "we".
 - i) Remember that Luke records several chapters back that God spoke to Paul, and told Paul that he must testify of God in Rome (Acts 23:11). Luke was aware of this promise. He was with Paul on an off for several years prior to this voyage.

- a) When Luke said "we" gave up hope, because of this violent storm Luke fell into doubt about God's promise to Paul of reaching Rome. Luke and Paul were on the same ship. If God was going to get Paul to Rome, then they must survive this trip.
 - ii) This goes back to what I said in the beginning about trusting God during those "storms" of our life. There are times when all seems lost. It is during those times that we must trust in the promises of God. God is faithful to his Word. He made promises
 - a) God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (1st Corinthians 1:9 NKJV)
- b) Second, read the chapter from Paul's perspective. He is probably relieved to get away from the Roman/Jewish trials. God told him he was going to Rome, but he probably never expected to be as a Roman prisoner. (The cute joke is that God sent Paul to Rome on an all-expenses-paid-trip!) Paul is the Great Witness for Christ in this chapter. We'll read how Paul made a good impression on the Centurion in charge of his life, we'll read how he encouraged the other sailors during the roughest times of the voyage and without directly preaching Christ (at least its not recorded), he becomes a great personal witness.
 - i) Remember that Paul has already been through several shipwrecks (See 2 Corinthians 11:25), as well as other tragic moments in his life. Paul used that experience as a witness to others. One of the main reasons God allows us to go through painful periods in our life is to be witnesses to others.
 - ii) You are also going to notice Paul's lapse in faith. In Verse 27, an angel appears to Paul and says, "Do not be afraid...", which means of course, that Paul had his own doubts. The whole ship was scared and it probably affected Paul.
 - a) The angel didn't condemn Paul for his fears, but encourages him. That is an important lesson for us. The Lord knows our fears, and wants us to turn to him *through* those fears. That is how we overcome them.
- c) Finally, read the chapter from the perspective of the crew and other passengers. Early in the chapter Paul warns of the impending dangers. The crew, being experienced seamen, trust in their own experience other than the warnings from God. This is the danger of *self-reliance*. One of the mistakes we make as Christians is we turn over our weaknesses to God, but we don't surrender the areas of our life were we are strong.
 - i) Peter made this mistake in the Gospels. Peter was bold, and Peter knew it. He knew Jesus was Lord, and declared him as such (Matthew 16:16, et.al.). Yet Peter when it came to being bold for Jesus, he trusted in his self-ability as opposed to the Holy Spirit. When Peter denied Jesus three times, Peter "fell" in his strong suit, which was boldness. The point is we have to turn all aspects of our lives over to God, not just our weaknesses.
 - ii) As the storm grew worse, and the sailor's expertise was not being of any value, it was then that the crew started listening to Paul for advice. What is not recorded in the chapter is Paul witnessing to them about Jesus. I'm sure Paul did because that was his nature, and well, it was a long voyage with people's time on their hands.
 - a) Think of how non-Christians view God. God is usually the last resort when all else fails. That is usually when they turn to prayer or men of God. That is often when we can be witnesses to them. When they have lost hope in all their resources. That is what we see with these sailors.

5. Last thing and we'll get rolling. Acts Chapter 27 is one of those chapters where you need a map in front of you as you read. It describes islands and towns one passes on this sea voyage. Most good study Bibles have a map of Paul's voyage to Rome.
 - a) My primary focus on these lessons is on the personal application to our lives, as opposed to geography and history lessons. While I do give some background to help explain the text, it is not my primary focus. If I don't give adequate sailing and geography details please excuse me. There is only so much I can cover in a week, and the most important aspect is the personal application.
6. Well, over two full pages, and I haven't touched a verse yet. If we're going to finish Acts next week, I better get moving! ☺
7. Acts Chapter 27, Verse 1: When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment. ² We boarded a ship from Adramyttium about to sail for ports along the coast of the province of Asia, and we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us.
 - a) In Verse 1, Paul, and Luke (notice the "we") sail for Italy. There were other Roman prisoners as well.
 - b) Verse 2 mentions Aristarchus. He is another Christian and traveling companion of Paul. He is mentioned briefly in Colossians 4:10 and Philemon 1:24. Whether there were other members of Paul's missionary team aboard, we don't know.
 - c) We also get introduced to Julius, another Roman Centurion. The "Imperial Regiment" was an elite Roman force used for private missions for the Emperor and other critical business in Rome.
8. Verse 3: The next day we landed at Sidon; and Julius, in kindness to Paul, allowed him to go to his friends so they might provide for his needs.
 - a) The first place the ship stopped was at Sidon. This today is part of Lebanon, which is just up the Mediterranean Coast from Israel. The Roman Centurion Julius, who was responsible for Paul getting to Rome, let Paul go visit friends here while the ship was at Port.
 - i) This says a lot for Paul's witness to Julius. They have only known each other for a day at this point. Remember that it was Julius *job* to get the prisoner to Rome. Julius probably knew that Paul was a political prisoner, as opposed to someone violent, but it was still a matter of great trust to let him go.
 - ii) A bit of Bible trivia is to notice that you never read anything negative about Roman Centurions. There are a number of them in the New Testament. There was one at the Cross who said, "truly this was the Son of God" (Mat. 7:54) and it was another Centurion who was the first Gentile to accept Jesus after Peter's vision of "the great sheet" in Acts Chapter 10. There are other examples as well.
9. Verse 4: From there we put out to sea again and passed to the lee of Cyprus because the winds were against us. ⁵ When we had sailed across the open sea off the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia.
 - a) "The Lee" refers to passageway between the mainland and the Island of Cypress, where the winds and waves were not as strong.
 - b) Here we see the first steps of sailing-experience. A travel course decision was made based on how the weather was acting.
 - c) The "danger of self-reliance" began in these 2 verses. The sailors trusted their experience, and safely landed in Myra.

10. In Verse 6, Paul and the crew change ships. Verse 6: There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy and put us on board. ⁷ We made slow headway for many days and had difficulty arriving off Cnidus. When the wind did not allow us to hold our course, we sailed to the lee of Crete, opposite Salmone. ⁸ We moved along the coast with difficulty and came to a place called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea.
- a) Most commentators speculate that the ship Paul and his companions boarded here was a large grain ship. The City of Alexandria, Egypt was the "bread-basket" for Rome. Many large grain ships went back and forth between the two locations.
 - b) We read of the weather working against the crew during this part of the trip. These verses in themselves have little meaning unless you read them in context with the rest of the chapter. One can see the first signs of "the big storm brewing".
 - i) As you read of each little travel snippet, you can see each one getting worse and worse. The first one had a few problems, but the crew made it. Now we have the second one, where it was more difficult, but the crew and ship still made it. The key to reading this is to note the progression of difficulty and the people's reaction to the increasing stress with each part of this voyage.
11. Verse 9: Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was after the Fast.
- a) "The Fast" refers to Yom Kippur", the holiest day on the Jewish Calendar. All religious Jews fast on this day and confess their sins before God. It also shows that Paul, after 20-plus years of being a Christian, still thinks of himself as a Jew as well.
 - i) I take the view that God has a corporate relationship with the Jews that is different (in some aspects) from his relationship from the church. I do believe Jewish Christians should observe Passover, Yom Kippur and other holidays partially in remembrance of God's covenant (contract-relationship) with Israel and partially to remember that Jesus is the fulfillment of these holidays.
 - ii) I don't believe Gentiles have to keep these holidays. They were given specially to Jews to remember their corporate relationship with God. God told them to keep these specific holidays *forever* not "until the Messiah comes".
 - iii) There are many good Christians who disagree with me on this. It is just one view, not "the" view. So be it. ☺
 - b) The actual date of Yom Kippur is based on the Jewish calendar. It is usually in September or October, so we know the time of year of this voyage.
 - c) Paul had some experience as a sailor. During his 3 missionary journeys he spent time on ships, plus whatever prior experience he had, if any. In the Mediterranean, ships rarely traveled in the wintertime due to the storms. Paul was saying in effect, "its late in the year guys, what do you say we rest for the winter and pick this up again in a few months?"
 - i) This was not about stalling to get to Rome. It was about practical wisdom. Never fail to apply practical wisdom when we don't have any direct revelation from God overriding that experience.
12. Verse 9, continued: "So Paul warned them, ¹⁰ "Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also." ¹¹ But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship.
- a) The Centurion was responsible to get Paul and the other prisoners to Rome, so he had the decision of whether or not to stay on the ship or stay in a harbor for the winter.
 - b) The Centurion took the advice of the ship captain over Paul. On the surface, it seems like a logical decision. They were at sea, ask the captain "Hey Cap, what do you think, is it too rough, or shall we stop here?"

- c) Although Paul's message was prophetic of what actually happened, it is not described whether Paul was speaking from revelation from God or just his own experience.
 - i) We get those as well. It is those "gut-level" feelings of "this is wrong". It may be our own knowledge or it may be God planting thoughts in our heads.
13. Verse 12: Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided that we should sail on, hoping to reach Phoenix and winter there. This was a harbor in Crete, facing both southwest and northwest.
- a) So here is this cargo ship currently stopped at a town of Lasea. To paraphrase the crew: "Man, I don't want to spend the winter here. This place is hicks-ville. There isn't much to do around here. We need to go somewhere where there is more action. Let's take our chances and sail on to Crete.
 - i) The other possible reason is that the harbor in Crete faces a different direction and the boat itself will be smaller.
14. Verse 13: When a gentle south wind began to blow, they thought they had obtained what they wanted; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete.
- a) I have to admit these verses read like the opening scene of an action-movie. In the beginning, everything is all calm. There is a "gentle south wind blowing". The sailors think, "ok, the winds not bad, lets go for it. And then, the action begins! ☺
 - i) Most sermons preached on this passage will use it to argue to trust God and not your senses or feelings.
15. Here comes the big storm, Verse 14: Before very long, a wind of hurricane force, called the "northeaster," swept down from the island. ¹⁵ The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along. As we passed to the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were hardly able to make the lifeboat secure.
- a) The storm is now at its worse. Remember that we're talking about professional sailors, who have experience with tough weather. What you are reading is the tactics used to keep the boat afloat.
 - b) In Verse 15, they are working on keeping the lifeboat in tact. It was probably filling with water and they were in danger of losing it.
 - c) Notice the dependence of the sailors on the lifeboat. Things were bad. They were planning for the worse, and wanted to make sure they didn't lose the lifeboat.
16. Verse 17: When the men had hoisted it aboard, they passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. Fearing that they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along.
- a) The lifeboat is now on the deck of the ship. The next step is to tie cables around the boat to make it more secure.
 - b) The last part talked about the dangers of sandbars. There are spots in the Mediterranean with very low depth due to underwater sand drift. The boat could be stuck in the middle of nowhere. They lowered the anchor to slow down the ship.
 - c) Let's stop and take a breath for a second. Remember as your reading this, you are watching the situation get worse and worse. There is no mention of prayer (although I'm sure somebody was!). The focus was on the sailor's abilities to get through the storm. What God is doing here is getting the sailors to the point where they abandon all hope. That is the point where they will no longer be self-reliant and be willing to listen to Paul and his companions.
 - i) God will often work that way in our own "storms". We often pray are way through them. I have often seen God work his best when we fully "give up". God does not want to share his glory with anybody. He will often patiently wait for us to finish trying things via our own resources so he can take over.

17. Verse 18: We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. ¹⁹ On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. ²⁰ When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.
- a) The last sentence is the most important "we finally gave up all hope of being saved"
 - b) The sailors were finally broken to the point where *they* lost hope.
 - i) Notice the "darkness" of this storm. Neither the sun nor moon appeared. That is how they navigated. Without any celestial points of references, they didn't know where they were.
 - ii) Don't you just see the "analogy" to the lost person? Someone so deep in their own sin, that all is now dark. Another common analogy is for the Christian, when relying upon their own strengths and sufficiency, and God is slowly breaking them to the point where there is no hope but Him!
 - c) Like I mentioned in my introduction, notice the "we". I think Luke and the Christians aboard were lacking faith as well. The general pessimism affected everyone.
18. Verse 21: After the men had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss.
- a) This is the beginning of Paul's speech of encouragement. We'll discover in a few verses that Paul had a visit from an angel prior to giving this speech.
 - b) Some commentators think Paul is simply saying, "I told you so" in these verses, which is something no one wants to hear.
 - c) The more optimistic commentators believe Paul, who is just a prisoner and not a professional sailor is using this remark to get their attention.
19. Paul continues, Verse 22: But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. ²³ Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me ²⁴ and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' ²⁵ So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. ²⁶ Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island."
- a) Paul is saying to everyone that an angel of God visited him, and said everyone will be spared, but the ship will be lost.
 - i) Notice it says in Verse 24: "God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you! This means that Paul prayed for the safety of those on the ship as well as himself. Paul sees *everyone* as a "witnessing opportunity" and not just people in charge of getting him to Rome.
 - b) Remember that Romans and the Egyptians (this is an Egyptian ship) are polytheists, which believe in multiple Gods. Paul is preaching a "single" God, and is using this prediction to teach them to trust the True and Living God.
 - i) Sometimes, we have to teach people about God-the-Father before we can teach them about the redemptive plan of God-the-son. There are many people around the world who don't believe in the existence of God.
 - ii) Re-read the text from the standpoint of explaining the concept of a single-God to a people who don't believe in him. It is a good little sermon!
 - c) OK, the big theological question: Why would God do this? Why didn't God just give Paul smooth-sailing to Rome, since that is what God wanted Paul to do in the first place?
 - i) God has a number of reasons that are revealed in this text. I believe the first is God wanted Paul to preach to the sailors on board. The storm "got their attention" so they could listen to Paul.

- a) The second reason will be obvious in Chapter 28. God wanted Paul to witness to some natives on an island called Malta. The ship was blown off course and landed on Malta. Without the storm, God's purpose of having Paul preach on Malta would never have happened.
 - (1) Personally, I would have mentioned to God later, "Hey, couldn't you just *tell* me you wanted me to go to Malta first and save a whole lot of stress? ☺
 - b) One of my main themes of this lesson is that God allows the storms of life to happen to further our trust in God. That trust, despite the shipwreck encouraged Paul, Luke and the crew of the ship.
- 20. Verse 27: On the fourteenth night we were still being driven across the Adriatic Sea, when about midnight the sailors sensed they were approaching land.
 - a) Stop and let that sink in for a moment. Imagine being tossed and turned for 14 days and nights, without stopping. I can see why they gave up hope. That length of a trial would be difficult for anyone's faith.
- 21. Verse 28: They took soundings and found that the water was a hundred and twenty feet deep. A short time later they took soundings again and found it was ninety feet deep. ²⁹ Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight.
 - a) "Soundings" is dropping a line in the water with markers to know the depth. Four anchors were dropped to slow the ship down.
 - b) There is a controversial archeologist/explorer named Bob Cornuke. His most recent adventure is off the coast of Malta, where this shipwreck took place. On Malta, there is a place called Paul's landing where traditionally, they believed Paul landed. Bob Cornuke believes from information taken from this text, that the ship was actually wrecked on the opposite side of the island. He and his crew went scuba diving, and they found some anchor's that have been dated back to the first century, and maybe "the" anchors dropped here. Again, the guy is controversial, but I'll admit, very interesting to hear speak. He is currently producing a video on this recent exploration. If it turns out to be accurate, it speaks a lot for Bible accuracy and would be a great archeological find. His web site is www.baseinstitute.org
 - c) I find it interesting in Verse 29 that it mentions they "prayed" for daylight. Did Paul teach them prayer, or is just a reference to their gods?
 - i) Going back to our big analogy non-Christians "turning to God as their last resort", you can see the picture here. These guys have given up all hope in their natural ability to save themselves and *now* are praying to God!
 - ii) Christianity emphasizes the opposite, of turning to God *first*.
- 22. Verse 30: In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow. ³¹ Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved." ³² So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it fall away.
 - a) Some men were trying to sneak out and abandon the ship. Verse 30 says they snuck in the lifeboat pretending to lower the lifeboat. I read this verse and wondered how Paul *knew* that was their plan. The text doesn't say, so I'll have to ask Paul one day! ☺
 - i) The amazing thing is that these men *listened* to Paul. Apparently, Paul was enough of a witness to them to get them to change their mind. Either that, or the threat from the rest of the passengers about their plan!
 - b) Notice also how they let the lifeboat fall away. In their minds, that may have been a sign of abandoning all hope. Now, the only hope *does* come from God as they no longer have any of their own resources.

- c) Paul's words of "stay with the ship" have been the subject of a few good sermons. Jon Curson talked about wanting to "abandon ship" during the tough times of our lives (e.g., marriage struggles). There are times God wants us to "take courage" and "stay on the ship". Although we can't possibly see a solution how God is going to get us through the storm, we simply have to have faith that *God* has the knowledge and the power to get us through those situations.
23. Verse 33: Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. "For the last fourteen days," he said, "you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food--you haven't eaten anything.³⁴ Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head."
- a) Nobody ate for 14 days out of seasickness. If you've ever been on a ship that is being rocked heavily, and at the same time a storm is raging, food is the last thing you think about. Also, if you don't eat for a few days, mentally, one begins to lose their appetite as the stomach physically shuts down.
- b) Paul is *now* the encourager. The message from the Angel of God a few verses back that *everyone* will be saved is now put into practice. Notice it is after all hope is lost, and after they cut away the rowboat, Paul says "ok, time to eat some food. God is going to rescue you."
- i) For the men to take the food is a first step in faith that there is a God, and He will rescue them.
24. Now, my favorite verses in the chapter. Verse 35: After he (Paul) said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat.³⁶ They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves.³⁷ Altogether there were 276 of us on board.³⁸ When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.
- a) The men were trusting in Paul. More importantly they were trusting in Paul's God.
- b) Paul, a faithful witness to them all, gave thanks for the bread in front of everyone. That had to be a good witness to them. Here was this 276-person crew. They have just been through a 14 day & night storm. All their hope was gone. Here was this guy Paul *giving thanks to God* despite all they have been through.
- i) So what is Paul's secret? How can Paul have joy through all of this suffering? Remember that the Angel even told Paul to "no longer be afraid" in Verse 24.
- ii) What's the secret? Paul said it best: ""Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Phil 4:12b-13 NKJV)
- a) Or, lets look how James put it: ""Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance" (James 1:2-3)
- b) Or, lets look how Peter put it: Peter said "In this you greatly rejoice (talking about our salvation), though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials." (1 Pet 1:6 NIV)
- c) The key to survival and having joy *through* all sorts of trials and troubles is to have your focus on God and on our eternal salvation. Remember that we are going to live for eternity. In comparison to that, these trials seem trivial.
- d) When you read through the entire Bible, it is *amazing* to notice that most sins occurred when people get their focus *off* of God and *onto* their problems. When you are focusing on your problems, you are worried about how *you* are going to get out of the situation without God's help.

- (1) God *loves* to help you out of situations that appear impossible to us. It gives God a chance to glorify Himself and no one else.
 - (2) It reminds me of a great Christian expression: If you are going to pray, why worry? If you are going to worry, why pray?!
25. Verse 39: When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship aground if they could. ⁴⁰ Cutting loose the anchors, they left them in the sea and at the same time untied the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach. ⁴¹ But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf.
- a) Here was the plan. They saw a sandy beach and decided to make a run for it. They unhooked all the anchors to gain speed and untied the rudder to steer, and well as hoisted the sail.
 - i) Remember that Paul made a prediction in Verse 22 that the ship would be destroyed. Yet, when the crew saw the beach, they forgot about Paul's prediction and once-again, trusted in their own ability to get the ship to shore safely.
 - ii) However, as always, God's words come true. The ship struck a sandbar. The momentum of the ship and the surf broke up the ship.
 - iii) I read an interesting commentary by a Christian surfer (David Stern). He said when a wave approaches an island, it goes around the island and "comes together" on the other side. This spot is usually great for surfing, but terrible for ships and was the probably spot of the crash.
26. Verse 42: The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping.
- a) Remember in Roman law, if a prisoner escapes, the guard must pay the same penalty that the prisoner would have received. Therefore, they considering killing the other prisoners to prevent them from the receiving the same fate.
 - i) I guess they forgot about Paul's prediction in Verse 22 that says, "no life will be lost". I do suspect the prisoners remembered that prediction!
27. Verse 43: But the centurion wanted to spare Paul's life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land.
- a) Paul was a good witness to the centurion. He desired to spare Paul's life. It makes you wonder if he ever became a Christian, after all he has been through.
 - i) Even at the risk of losing his commission as a Roman officer and spending time in jail, he gave the order to let the prisoners go. That is why I suspect this guy now respected Paul's God. Paul said their lives would be spared and it would. The Roman officer remembered that and acted on that message.
 - a) The Book of Romans Chapter 1 teaches that God judges non-Christians "fairly" based on what information they *do* have. If the Roman Centurion knew nothing else about Christians, I suspect he is in heaven because he acted on faith in letting Paul and the others swim for shore.
 - (1) Hey, it's just a theory! ☺
28. Verse 44: The rest were to get there on planks or on pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land in safety.
- a) Those on the ship who couldn't swim made their way to shore hanging on to planks.
 - b) It also shows that surfing is Biblical. ☺
 - c) More importantly, it shows that God keeps his promises. He promised Paul that no lives were lost, and none where. God promised that the ship would be destroyed, and it was.

29. The one singular lesson I've been pounding through this shipwreck is the importance of trusting God through all situations *especially* in the darkest of times. God never promises that our material possessions will be saved, no matter what, just our souls. Chapter 27 is a great chapter to read during the rough times of our lives.
- a) "Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you."
(Deuteronomy 31:6 NKJV)
30. Next week, it's a wrap for Acts. I'll see you then.
31. Let's pray: Father, we thank you for being there besides us during our storms in life. During those times, keep our focus on you, and not on our situation. Help us to remember that you are aware of all things at all times. You promised us you would never forsake us. Help us to have the joy of our salvation during those moments in our lives. Further, help us to pray for others going through those situations and be a good witness to them. For we ask this in Jesus name, Amen.