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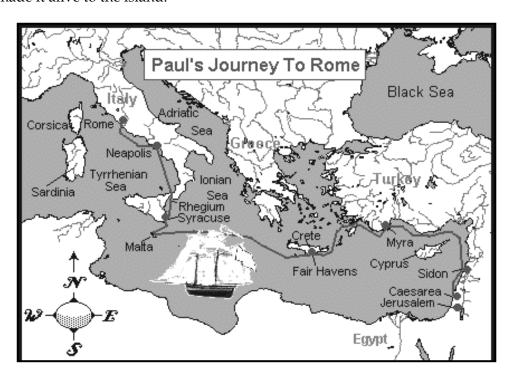
John's title for Chapter 27: "The Storms of Life"

<u>Introduction</u> - Why do I call Chapter 27 "The Storms of Life"?

- It refers to those difficult times in life when it seems "all is lost".
- Acts Chapter 27 is a great chapter to read during life's difficult times.
- All Christians go through periods when we don't "feel" God's presence.
- God is still there. It is simply a time of testing.
- A good book on the topic of understanding God's will during the difficult times: "Faith in the Night Seasons" by Nancy Missler. (Koinonia House Publishing, 1999)

A Summary of Chapter 27:

- No more court trials in Jerusalem and Caesarea.
- Chapters 27 and Chapters 28 are Paul's travel's from Caesarea (Israel) to Rome (Italy)
- Chapter 27 begins with Paul leaving Caesarea.
- <u>Verses 1-5</u>: Paul, other prisoners, Roman guards, Luke and others board a ship to Myra.
- <u>Verses 6-8</u>: The group change ships. They board an Alexandrian (Egyptian) ship headed for Rome.
- <u>Verses 9-10</u>: "Pit stop" in Fair Havens, Island of Crete. Verse 9 mentions that the Jewish people aboard honor the Jewish holiday of "Yom Kippur" and fasted (one day only).
- Verses 11-20: "Bad Storm"; everybody had lost hope; "clues" even Paul and Luke were afraid.
- Verses 21-26: During the storm, Paul encourages everyone. "God will get us through this!"
- <u>Verses 27-32</u>: The storm is getting worse. Efforts are made to safe the ship and people's lives.
- <u>Verses 33-38</u>: Nobody ate for 14 days due to seasickness. Paul encouraged all to eat and stated again how God would get them through this. They listened to Paul and ate. Paul "blessed" the food as a witness to all.
- <u>Verses 39-44</u>: They spotted land (Malta Island). The storm wrecked the ship, but everybody aboard made it alive to the island.



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Introduction Part 2: There are hints of spiritual warfare in the text.

- Satan's goal is to slow down/stop/God's redemptive plan for mankind.
- Satan knew God wanted Paul to go to Rome.
- Was Satan behind the storm? (Speculation)
- He (Jesus) replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and <u>rebuked</u> the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men (apostles) were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!" (Matthew 8:26-27 NIV)

Introduction Part 3: "The Storm from 3 perspectives (Luke, Paul, the crew of the ship)

- Luke's perspective: He lost is faith in God and focused on the storm.
- "We finally gave up all hope of being saved." (Acts 27:20b, NIV)
- God told Paul in Acts 23:11 that Paul was going to Rome. Luke knew that as well.
- Remember this verse: "God <u>is</u> faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. "(1st Corinthians 1:9 NKJV)
- <u>Paul's perspective</u>:
- Paul is probably happy to get past all the trials and on his way to Rome.
- Paul had already survived several shipwrecks in his life (see 2nd Corinthians 11:25)
- Paul used that experience as a witness to others.
- You never know <u>how</u> God is going to use you!
- Paul may also have had a "lapse of faith". In Verse 27 an angel tells Paul "Don't be afraid..."
- The angel was aware of Paul's fears/doubts and encouraged Paul to go on.
- <u>Crew's perspective</u>: They trusted in their own sailing ability/not God to get through the storm.
- This was Peter's mistake. Peter trusted God with his weaknesses, but was self-reliant in the area where he thought he was strong. (Peter *knew* he was bold, but denied Jesus 3 times.)
- As the storm got worse and worse, the crew stopped trusting their skills and listened to Paul.
- People will often turn to God as a last resort. That is when they are open to the Gospel.
- Christians make the same mistake of not praying *first*. The danger of "self-reliance".

Verses 1-5: Paul, other prisoners, Roman guards, Luke, others board a ship to Myra

- Luke, and Aristarchus (mentioned in Colossians 4:10, Philemon 1:24) are aboard as well.
- The Roman Centurion Julius after the first day allows Paul to stay with friends in Sidon.
- The fact the Centurion let Paul go on shore leave speaks well for Paul's reputation.
- A "lee" refers to a passageway between a mainland and an island, where there is less wind.

<u>Verses 6-8</u>: Paul/prisoners/Romans change ships.

- They board an Alexandrian (Egyptian) ship headed for Rome.
- The ship was probably a cargo ship. Alexandria was the "bread-basket" for Rome.
- The weather was against them in Verse 6 and 7.
- When you study Acts 27, notice the progression of the storms getting worse.

Verses 9: "After the fast": This is a reference to Yom Kippur.

- Most Jews consider it the holiest day on their calendar. It usually falls in September or October.
- On Yom Kippur, religious Jews fast all day and confess your sins before God.
- Paul, a Christian for 20+ years now, still observed Yom Kippur.
- It's a good argument in the debate: Should *Jewish* Christians still observe Jewish holidays?
- Gentile Christians are *not* expected to observe Jewish holidays, based on Acts Chapter 15.

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Verse 12: "Since the harbor (in Fair Havens) was unsuitable for winter..."

- Sailing *stops* in the wintertime in the Mediterranean due to the weather.
- It's late in the season. The crew has to decide to stop here in Fair Havens or sail further.
- Commentary view #1: "This town is hicks-ville", lets sail on despite the weather"
- Commentary view #2: The ship is in danger if docked in Fair Havens. The harbor is too small.

<u>Verses 13-20</u>: "The weather started getting rough..."; Notice the <u>progression</u> of events.

- 1. Verse 15 the lifeboat was getting filled with water and had to be tied down.
- 2. Verse 17: They tied cables around the ship to keep it from breaking up
- 3. Verse 17 "Sandbars of Syrtis"; The Mediterranean Sea has some low points due to sand drifts from the Sahara Dessert. A ship could get stuck in the middle of the sea.
- 4. Verse 18: They threw the cargo overboard to lighten the ship.
- 5. Verse 19: "No sun/stars for many days.
- 6. Verse 20: We gave up all hope. (Luke, Paul included?)
- God does his best work when we give up all other hope and self-reliance.

<u>Verses 21-26</u>: Paul begins his encouragement and witness to all aboard.

- Verse 24: An angel visits Paul and says, "God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you. That means that Paul was praying for the lives of all, not just himself.
- What was God's purpose for this storm?
- To Paul, the storm became a good witnessing opportunity.
- The ship ended up off course and crashing on Malta. Paul converts many in Chapter 28.

<u>Verses 27-32</u>: The storm is getting worse. The ship finally crashes on the island of Malta.

- "Soundings" was a rope that measured the depth of the ocean.
- Verse 27: Imagine 14 days of a storm! How would *your* faith be in that time frame?
- A controversial archeologist named Bob Cornuke claims he found the anchors of the boat that crashed on the island. For more information see www.baseinstitute.org.
- Verse 29: Everyone "prayed" for daylight. Did Paul teach them how to pray?
- Verse 30: Some of the crew attempted to escape on the lifeboat. Paul preached, "unless these men stay aboard...they can not be saved".
- Application: Sometimes God calls us to "stay on/with the ship" during the rough times.
- The crew let the lifeboat go. Many probably thought "well, that is it for us".

Verses 35: After 14 days of nobody eating (seasickness), Paul gave all bread and they ate it.

- Paul's "witness" got everyone to listen to him.
- The writers of the New Testament teach the secret of surviving difficult trials:
- 1. "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. (Paul: Phil.4:12b-13 NKJV)
- 2. "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, NIV)
- 3. "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." (1st Peter 1:6 NIV)

<u>Verse 44</u>: "The rest (of the crew and passengers) were to get there on planks or on pieces of the ship".

Biblical support for surfing!

Main application of Chapter 27: God is always there and keeping his promises during our "storms".

• "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." (Deuteronomy 31:6 NIV)