

But a little later they measured again and found it was only 90 feet deep.²⁹ At this rate they were afraid we would soon be driven against the rocks along the shore, so they threw out four anchors from the back of the ship and prayed for daylight.

³⁰ Then the sailors tried to abandon the ship; they lowered the lifeboat as though they were going to put out anchors from the front of the ship.³¹ But Paul said to the commanding officer and the soldiers, "You will all die unless the sailors stay aboard."³² So the soldiers cut the ropes to the lifeboat and let it drift away.

³³ Just as day was dawning, Paul urged everyone to eat. "You have been so worried that you haven't touched food for two weeks," he said.³⁴ "Please eat something now for your own good. For not a hair of your heads will perish."³⁵ Then he took some bread, gave thanks to God before them all, and broke off a piece and ate it.³⁶ Then everyone was encouraged and began to eat—³⁷ all 276 of us who were on board.³⁸ After eating, the crew lightened the ship further by throwing the cargo of wheat overboard.

7. Discussion: (a) Why do you think the commanding officers, soldiers and sailors were so ready to listen and obey Paul, when he warned them and gave them guidance? (b) What is the best way to gain trust so that we can have a good influence over people?

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An Interactive Life Application Bible Study of the Acts of the Apostles for Small Groups

Key: Blue = New Testament Red = Words of Jesus

Green = Old Testament Quotes

Lesson 32

1. Introduction: Previously Roman Governor Festus gave Paul a choice to be tried in Jerusalem. But knowing the Jewish Council was determined to kill him, Paul appealed to Caesar. So Festus arranged for Paul to go to Rome.

2. Paul Sails for Rome

Acts 27:1=12 When the time came, we* set sail for Italy. Paul and several other prisoners were placed in the custody of a Roman officer named Julius, a captain of the Imperial Regiment.² Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was also with us. We left on a ship whose home port was Adramyttium on the northwest coast of the province of Asia [now Turkey]; it was scheduled to make several stops at ports along the coast of the province.

* ["We" includes Luke, the author, who travelled with Paul.]

³ The next day when we docked at Sidon [now a Port in Lebanon], Julius was very kind to Paul and let him go ashore to visit with friends so they could provide for his needs.⁴ Putting out to sea from there, we encountered strong headwinds that made it difficult to keep the ship on course, so we sailed north of Cyprus between the island and the mainland.⁵ Keeping to the open sea, we passed along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, [now southern Turkey] landing at Myra, in the province of Lycia [also in Turkey].⁶ There the commanding officer found an Egyptian ship from Alexandria that was bound for Italy, and he put us on board.

⁷ We had several days of slow sailing, and after great difficulty we finally neared Cnidus [Port - S.W. corner of Turkey]. But the wind was against us, so we sailed across to Crete

and along the sheltered coast of the island, past the cape of Salmone [Eastern tip of the Island of Crete].⁸ We struggled along the coast with great difficulty and finally arrived at Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea [Port on South Central Crete].⁹ We had lost a lot of time. The weather was becoming dangerous for sea travel because it was so late in the fall, and Paul spoke to the ship's officers about it.

¹⁰ "Men," he said, "I believe there is trouble ahead if we go on—shipwreck, loss of cargo, and danger to our lives as well."¹¹ But the officer in charge of the prisoners listened more to the ship's captain and the owner than to Paul.¹² And since Fair Havens was an exposed harbor—a poor place to spend the winter—most of the crew wanted to go on to Phoenix, farther up the coast [on the western end] of Crete, and spend the winter there. Phoenix was a good harbor with only a southwest and northwest exposure.

3. Discussion: (a) Later in his life, Paul wrote this to the Church in Rome: "We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called to his purpose for them." (Rom. 8:28 NLT) What evidence do you see that God was fulfilling this promise in all that was happening to Paul on his journey? (b) Tell about any evidence you've seen that God is also working for good in your life. (c) How do you think Paul was able to make the predictions given in verses 10-12 above?

4. The Storm at Sea

Acts 27:13=26 When a light wind began blowing from the south, the sailors thought they could make it [to Port Phoenix]. So they pulled up anchor and sailed close to the shore of Crete.¹⁴ But the weather changed abruptly, and a wind of typhoon strength (called a "northeaster") burst across the island and blew us out to sea.¹⁵ The sailors couldn't turn the ship into the wind, so they gave up and let it run before the gale.

¹⁶ We sailed along the sheltered side of a small island

named Cauda, where with great difficulty we hoisted aboard the lifeboat being towed behind us.¹⁷ Then the sailors bound ropes around the hull of the ship to strengthen it. They were afraid of being driven across to the sandbars of Syrtis off the African coast [far to the South], so they lowered the sea anchor to slow the ship and were driven before the wind.

¹⁸ The next day, as gale-force winds continued to batter the ship, the crew began throwing the cargo overboard.¹⁹ The following day they even took some of the ship's gear and threw it overboard.²⁰ The terrible storm raged for many days, blotting out the sun and the stars, until at last all hope was gone.

²¹ No one had eaten for a long time. Finally, Paul called the crew together and said, "Men, you should have listened to me in the first place and not left Crete. You would have avoided all this damage and loss."²² But take courage! None of you will lose your lives, even though the ship will go down.²³ For last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me,²⁴ and he said, '*Don't be afraid, Paul, for you will surely stand trial before Caesar! What's more, God in his goodness has granted safety to everyone sailing with you.*'²⁵ So take courage! For I believe God. It will be just as he said.²⁶ But we will be shipwrecked on an island."

5. Discussion: (a) How did God use the storm to show the sailors that God was giving special wisdom to Paul? (b) How did the angel's message reveal God's mercy (c) Can you tell about a time when you needed God to guide or encourage you when faced with one of life's storms?

6. The Shipwreck

Acts 27:27=38 About midnight on the fourteenth night of the storm, as we were being driven across the Sea of Adria,^[do] the sailors sensed land was near.²⁸ They dropped a weighted line and found that the water was 120 feet deep.