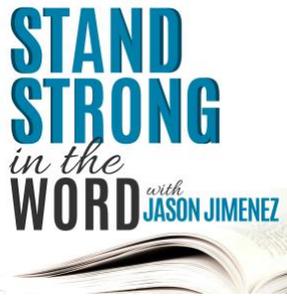


## “PAUL FACES SHIPWRECK” ACTS 27:1-44

In the remaining two chapters (27 & 28), Luke records in great detail Paul’s treacherous journey to Rome. He will face shipwreck, a poisonous snake, and large crowds of Jews disputing his claims that Jesus is the Messiah.

### I. The First Stop to Rome is Fair Haven (27:1-8)

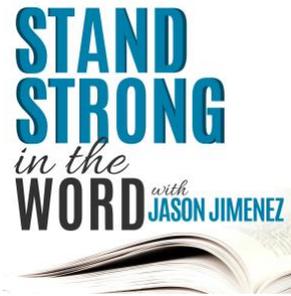
1. ***And when it was decided that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan Cohort named Julius.*** Luke travels with Paul to Rome (other “we” passages: 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18). ***Should sail for Italy***—Paul is escorted to Rome by the *speculatores*, a specialized group of imperial guards who acted as couriers between Rome and its provinces.
2. ***<sup>2</sup>And embarking in a ship (coastal) of Adramyttium (in Mysia), which was about to sail to the ports along the coast of Asia, we put to sea, accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica.*** Luke was allowed to travel with Paul as his personal physician and Aristarchus his personal helper (Col. 4:10; Phm 24).
3. ***<sup>3</sup>The next day we put in at Sidon (70 nautical miles N of Caesarea). And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave him leave to go to his friends and be cared for.*** Paul, being a respectable man and beloved leader, was given leniency by Festus to visit his friends along the way.
4. ***<sup>4</sup>And putting out to sea from there we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were against us. <sup>5</sup>And when we had sailed across the open sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia (southern part of Asia Minor), we came to Myra in Lycia. <sup>6</sup>There the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy and put us on board. <sup>7</sup>We sailed slowly for a number of days and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, and as the wind did not allow us to go farther, we sailed under the lee of Crete off Salmone. <sup>8</sup>Coasting along it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near which was the city of Lasea.*** Paul had traveled through Patara to Tyre with his companions over two years ago (21:3). ***Myra***—A well-known city where Julius arranges the transfer of his soldiers and prisoners on a larger ship.
  - A. *NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*, “Rome imported as much as a third of its grain from Egypt — probably more than 100,000 tons



(90,000 metric tons) per year. It doled out grain free to Rome's residents to ensure peace in the capital, while many children in Egypt died of malnutrition and its effects. Many cargo ships, sometimes 180 feet (55 meters) long, plied the waters from Alexandria in Egypt's northern delta to Rome. Persons of means privately owned the ships, but Rome ensured that their investment was economically rewarding. Although the return voyage from Rome was often less than two weeks, because of Mediterranean wind patterns the voyage to Rome ranged from about six weeks to more than two months."

## II. Paul Warns of Coming Danger (27:9-26)

1. ***<sup>9</sup> Since much time had passed, and the voyage was now dangerous because even the Fast was already over, Paul advised them, <sup>10</sup> saying, "Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives."*** Paul and his companions had fasted during Yom Kippur or Day of Atonement (between late-September to early October). Paul warns the crew because the winds during this time were extremely dangerous (see 2 Cor. 11:25-26).
2. ***<sup>11</sup> But the centurion paid more attention to the pilot and to the owner of the ship than to what Paul said. <sup>12</sup> And because the harbor was not suitable to spend the winter in, the majority decided to put out to sea from there, on the chance that somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, facing both southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there.*** Julius (the centurion) decides to risk another fifty-mile voyage through the rough winds and currents to the larger port, Phoenix. It appears the captain wanted a larger port to sell his goods and Julius wanted better lounging for his men.
3. ***<sup>13</sup> Now when the south wind blew gently, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, close to the shore. <sup>14</sup> But soon a tempestuous wind, called the northeaster (Euroquilo; a typhoon-like wind), struck down from the land. <sup>15</sup> And when the ship was caught and could not face the wind, we gave way to it and were driven along. <sup>16</sup> Running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we managed with difficulty to secure the ship's boat. <sup>17</sup> After hoisting it up, they used supports to undergird the ship. Then, fearing that they would run aground (sandbars) on the Syrtis, they lowered the gear, and thus they were driven along. <sup>18</sup> Since we were violently storm-***



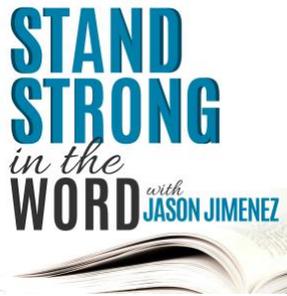
*tossed, they began the next day to jettison the cargo. <sup>19</sup> And on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. <sup>20</sup> When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned.* After starting out with low winds as they crossed the Gulf of Messara (southern coast of Crete), the boat gets caught in the violent winds coming off Mount Ida and pushing right on through the central and western Mediterranean. The entire crew would remain stuck in the northeaster for fourteen days (v. 27).

4. *<sup>21</sup> Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul stood up among them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete and incurred this injury and loss. <sup>22</sup> Yet now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship.* Luke records Paul's frustration over the crew disregarding his concerns at Fair Havens. Nonetheless, he delivers them good news that God will deliver them safely to Italy.

- A. *<sup>23</sup> For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, <sup>24</sup> and he said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.' <sup>25</sup> So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. <sup>26</sup> But we must run aground on some island."* Paul speaks from divine revelation to comfort the crew that they will survive the treacherous voyage. His confidence would have been well received from the Gentiles who respected sages who stood against storms at sea.

### III. Paul Faces Shipwreck (27:27-44)

1. *<sup>27</sup> When the fourteenth night had come, as we were being driven across the Adriatic Sea (or the Adrian Sea), about midnight the sailors suspected that they were nearing land. <sup>28</sup> So they took a sounding and found twenty fathoms. A little farther on they took a sounding again and found fifteen fathoms. <sup>29</sup> And fearing that we might run on the rocks, they let down four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come.* The crew continued to take measures to see how close they were to land and avoid any rocks that could rupture the ship's hull.
2. *<sup>30</sup> And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, and had lowered the ship's boat (dinghy) into the sea under pretense of laying out anchors from the bow, <sup>31</sup> Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." <sup>32</sup> Then the*



*soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship's boat and let it go.* Paul uncovers the sailor's scheme to abandon the ship and warns Julius to prevent this from happening or it would seal the fate of everyone on board. Thankfully, Julius listens to Paul this time and the sailors cut the dinghy to the lifeboat so they couldn't escape.

3. *<sup>33</sup> As day was about to dawn, Paul urged them all to take some food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day that you have continued in suspense and without food, having taken nothing. <sup>34</sup> Therefore I urge you to take some food. For it will give you strength, for not a hair is to perish from the head of any of you." <sup>35</sup> And when he had said these things, he took bread, and giving thanks to God in the presence of all he broke it and began to eat. <sup>36</sup> Then they all were encouraged and ate some food themselves. <sup>37</sup> (We were in all 276 persons in the ship.) <sup>38</sup> And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea.* At this point of the voyage, everyone on board complied to the orders of Paul and ate food to gain the strength needed to beach the ship if they were to survive. **For not a hair is to perish**—A Semitic phrase meaning "no harm will come upon you." **Broke it and began to eat**—It seems Luke is also alluding to them partaking in the Lord's Supper after their meal (Lk. 22:19). **We were in all 276**—Luke records the number of men on board for rations and to ensure everyone is accounted for when they reach the shore.
4. *<sup>39</sup> Now when it was day, they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay (possibly St. Paul's Bay) with a beach, on which they planned if possible to run the ship ashore. <sup>40</sup> So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea, at the same time loosening the ropes that tied the rudders. Then hoisting the foresail to the wind they made for the beach. <sup>41</sup> But striking a reef, they ran the vessel aground. The bow stuck and remained immovable, and the stern was being broken up by the surf.* The crew managed to beach the ship amid a sandbar but they were still a distance away from the shoreline, so they untie the rudders in attempt to steer the ship closer to land.
5. *<sup>42</sup> The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any should swim away and escape. <sup>43</sup> But the centurion, wishing to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for the land, <sup>44</sup> and the rest on planks or on pieces of the ship. And so it was that all were brought safely to land.* Perhaps Julius spared Paul's life because he was grateful for his ability to keep them out of harm and didn't want to lose him so soon. **All were brought safely to land**—All 276 people reached land just as Paul said they would.

