

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

February 14, 2024

Series - The Life and Writings of the Apostle Paul

On His Way to Rome

Text – Acts 27

Introduction

As we enter the concluding two chapters of the Book of Acts, we find the prisoner Paul finally on his way by ship to Rome to appeal his case before Nero. The Romans had taken him into custody after being accused by the religious leaders in Jerusalem of bringing a Gentile into the temple. He had plead his case to Governor Felix, then later Governor Festus and King Agrippa to no avail, and so now after two years in Caesarea, he is finally going to Rome, hopeful to get the justice he seeks.

Paul's Trip to Rome



I. Paul's Companions (vs. 1 – 3)

You will note from v. 1 that there were other prisoners along with Paul. However, the word “other” means another of a different kind or classification, so these men were not men

associated with Paul. They may have been men that were sentenced to be put to death at Rome. How fortunate for them that they travelled with one who could tell them how to go to Heaven.

A. Luke – You will notice that in this passage we see the word “we” again. Perhaps the Roman officials permitted Luke to go along with Paul as his personal physician.

B. Julius – A centurion that was responsible for protecting Nero. He treated Paul well, gave him Liberty, and when others wanted to kill all the prisoners, he protected Paul.

C. Aristarchus – we first meet him in Acts 19, where the citizens of Ephesus are roughing him up during a riot. (Acts 19:29) He travels back to Jerusalem with Paul at the conclusion of the third journey and had apparently stayed close to him as Paul was incarcerated in Caesarea. Paul refers to him in *Colossians* as his “fellow prisoner”; and in *Philemon* as his “fellow-labourer”.

There were also many others with Paul on the two ships that he would travel on. We do not know how many sailors and passengers were with Paul on the first ship (from Adramyttium [near Troas in Asia Minor]), which would take him as far as Myra where Paul would then change ships. There were, however, 276 men on the second ship (from Alexandria).

Practical Thoughts – It appears that Luke and Aristarchus were both voluntarily giving their lives in service to the Lord by serving with the Apostle Paul. These are the only two that are mentioned travelling with him, which could mean that Paul was forsaken by some of his “fair weather” friends. It may be that many of Paul’s companions were just not permitted to travel with him.

1. These two men were willing to serve as “second men” under the Apostle Paul, and they sacrificed greatly in their service.
2. There must have been something special in the Apostle Paul to inspire this level of loyalty, dedication, and service from these two men.
3. Even the centurion eventually becomes a good friend to the Apostle Paul.

Good friends are hard to come by:

"A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." (Proverbs 18:24)

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13)

Paul had some good friends that hazarded their lives for him; but Paul must also have been a good friend to them.

II. Paul's Course (vs. 4 – 19)

A. Ship of Adramyttium (vs. 4 – 5)

This ship was likely a smaller ship that stayed close to the coast.

B. Ship of Alexandria (vs. 6 – 19)

This ship from Egypt was a larger vessel carrying grain, and many more sailors and passengers.

Note – “the fast” in v. 9 refers to the yearly fast at the Day of Atonement, which occurred on the tenth day of the month Tisri, which comprises part of September, and part of October. The seas become dangerous in the late fall and winter months.

Note – “tempestuous wind” - τυφωνικός (*typhōnikos*) – where we get the word “typhoon”; “Euroclydon” – a southeast wind causing mighty waves.

Practical Thought

Just when you think the seas will be calm, and the winds will be soft, a violent storm can come upon you suddenly. Don't be caught by surprise.

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:" (1 Peter 5:8)

Notice also, however, that this ship would not have been caught in this storm had they listened to God's messenger who warned them against leaving the port in The Fair Havens. Notice also that Paul had no concrete message from God about the impending storm. He just had a bad feeling about it, but instead of trusting God's man, they went with the advice of the experts.

God oversees the weather. God allowed them to go out into the stormy seas. If God brings you to it, He can bring you through it.

Note – v. 19 “tackling” – any apparatus, equipment, or furniture.

III. Paul's Counsel (vs. 10 – 11; 20 – 37)

Notice v. 24 – God was not only going to save Paul, but he was also going to save all of those that travelled with him. Why? – notice “given thee” – this must have been a prayer request of Paul. He prayed for his fellow passengers, and God answered his prayer.

Notice – v. 27 “Adria” – possibly a reference to the Adriatic Sea. Paul was technically in the Mediterranean Sea, near what is known now as the Ionian Sea; but the waters in-between Greece and Italy were known as Adria.

Notice v. 28 – “fathom” – six feet (20 fathoms – 120 feet; 15 fathoms 90 feet)

Notice – v. 29 – “wished for the day” – hoped for the best

Notice – v. 30 – “under colour” – for the purpose of; for the reason of

Notice vs. 33 – 36 – Paul encourages them to eat so they could have the physical strength that they needed.

IV. Paul as a Castaway (vs. 38 – 44)

Notice vs. 42 – 43 – Here we see both God’s hand of protection on the Apostle Paul, and the help of a new friend – the centurion.

God’s hand of protection:

God had told Paul that he was going to go to Rome, and nothing was going to change that. Paul was confident that God was going to protect him. In v. 25, Paul stated that he believed God.

"And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD." (1 Chronicles 28:20)

Practical Thought

Notice v. 44 – “some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship”

God uses broken boards and broken pieces to save lives, and he uses broken people to save souls.

You may be broken – you may have blown it in the past – you may have failed in the past – you may not be in God’s plan A for your life anymore; but God can still use you to rescue other people from shipwreck.