

Having been away from the book of Acts for a few weeks, let me briefly remind you what's happening. Paul was falsely accused by the Jews and thus arrested by the Romans. Because he knew he would not receive a fair trial in Caesarea, Paul stands upon his right as a Roman citizen and appeals to Ceasar. Thus, the entirety of chapter 27 describes his voyage to Italy, a voyage that will be completed in chapter 28:16. But the voyage to Rome was anything but uneventful (as we shall see this morning from chapter 27).

- I. A Reminder of the Nature of Scripture
- II. A Depiction of Life in a Turbulent World
- III. A Lesson on the Perseverance of the Saints

I. A Reminder on the Nature of Scripture

1. Here I want to briefly summarize this chapter, and then suggest a few things as it relates to the nature of Scripture.
2. Keep in mind, a trip from Caesarea to Rome ordinarily took about 30 days (though it took Paul over 6 months).
3. The entire narrative can be loosely divided into three sections, which will eventually leave us on the island of Malta.
4. (1) Their journey to Crete (vv1-8), v1—"And when it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to one named Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment."
5. From v37 we learn there were 276 persons on the ship, which includes the prisoners, soldiers, crewman, and some of Paul's companions.
6. For if you notice, Luke, the author of the book, and Aristarchus (a Macedonian) (v2), also accompanied him.
7. As boats tended to stay close to shores, they traveled north under the southern coast of Assia Minor (Turkey), to the island of Crete (a 7-day trip).
8. Let me just say at the outset, the fact that Paul received special treatment by Julius has led some to believe the other prisoners were of a different sort (possibly convicted criminals sent to Rome to fight in the Colosseum).
9. Verses 3-8 describe their journey to Sidon, Cyprus, Lycia, and eventually to a place called Fair Havens (on the island of Crete) (v8).
10. In v6, we learn they switched to an Alexandrian ship (which was carrying grain from Egypt to Italy) (v38) (thus their first part of their journey was largely uneventful).
11. (2) Their departure from Crete (vv9-38)—this is the longest section of the trip (and thus the largest part of the chapter).
12. V9—"Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them."
13. By "fast" is meant the Jewish fast which was associated with the Day of Atonement (which took place in the seventh month).
14. Geneva Bible—"This refers to the Jews fast which they kept in the feast of expiation, as we read in (Lev.23:17), which fell in the seventh month which we call October, and is not good for navigating or sailing (from October-November traveling was dangerous and from December-March impossible)."

15. It's for this reason Paul advised them, v10—"Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives."
16. Paul isn't saying this because he had a word from God, but because he had become a rather seasoned sailor.
17. If you remember, in 2Cor.11:25 he said he had already been shipwrecked three times (this would be his fourth).
18. V11—"Nevertheless the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman (pilot) and the owner of the ship than by the things spoken by Paul."
19. V12—"And because the harbor was not suitable to winter in, the majority advised to set sail from there also, if by any means they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete opening toward the southwest and northwest, and winter there."
20. Phoenix was a city about 40 miles to the west of Fair Havens and should have taken them a half day to travel.
21. V13—"When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their desire, putting out to sea, they sailed close by Crete."
22. That is, they sailed up the coast of Crete thinking they would reach the city and port of Phoenix easily.
23. V14—"But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon (like today they gave names to storms) (this was no regular storm but a severe hurricane).
24. And so, this storm drove the ship off course southwest, where they ran under the shelter of an island called Claudia.
25. It was here that they "secured the skiff with difficulty" which was a small boat used to take passengers to shore if there was no deep port (it was usually tied behind the ship).
26. According to v17, they carried the skiff on board (to secure it) and used cables to undergird the ship.
27. They then "struck the sail" (which means they lowered it) and "so were driven" (that is, by the winds).
28. The next day they "lightened the ship" which means they threw overboard all that was unnecessary, and eventually that which was necessary (the ship's tackle).
29. V20—"Now when neither sun nor stars appeared from many days, and no small tempest beat on us, all hope that we would be saved was finally given up."
30. Because the skies were dark for many days, they were unable to get their bearings from the sun and stars.
31. In addition to this, "no small tempest (storm)" beat on them—they were left to the mercy of the winds and waves.
32. This left them with "no hope" as they feared the ship would sink and everyone on board would perish.
33. In the midst of this darkness and despair, Paul stood before the passengers and recounted a vision he received.
34. Verses 21-24—"Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss. And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.'"

35. An angel had told Paul three things: they would all live; the ship would be lost; and Paul would arrive at Rome.
36. Verses 25-26—"Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. However, we must run aground on a certain island."
37. Yes, it's true there was good news (nobody would die), but there was also bad news (the ship would be lost and they would be stranded on a certain island) (v26).
38. Verses 27-29 record how the ship come closer to land, and "fearing lest we should run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern (back), and prayed for day to come (v29)."
39. According to v30, seemingly as the ship was anchored, the sailors sought to let down the skiff and leave (under pretense of lowing more anchors from the bow or front of the ship).
40. V31—"Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, 'Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.'"
41. As the soldiers were unqualified to sail the ship, the presence of the seaman was absolutely necessary.
42. This led the soldiers to cut away the ropes of the skiff letting it fall into the water (before the sailors could leave).
43. From v33-38 Paul exhorts the people to take food or nourishment as they would soon need the strength.
44. V34—"Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you."
45. After they all ate and were encouraged, "they lightened the ship and threw out the wheat into the sea (cargo)" (v38).
46. (3) Their arrival at Malta (vv39-44)—here Luke recounts their turbulent arrival at an unknown island called Malta (we actually don't learn of the Island's name until 28:1).
47. Verses 39-41—"When it was day, they did not recognize the land; but they observed a bay with a beach, onto which they planned to run the ship if possible. And they let go the anchors and left them in the sea, meanwhile loosing the rudder ropes; and they hoisted the mainsail to the wind and made for shore. But striking a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the prow (bow) struck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves."
48. As the ship was breaking and sinking, the 267 passengers started to fend for themselves and swim for safety.
49. V42—"And the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape."
50. According to Roman law, if any prisoner escapes, the soldiers in charge of the them, would be put to death.
51. Verses 43-44—"But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from their purpose, and commanded that those who could swim should jump overboard first and get to land., and the rest, some on boards and some on parts of the ship.; And so it was that they all escaped safely to land."
52. Now, having gone rather quickly through this account, I trust you were struck with the detail of the narrative.
53. Luke spares no detail in describing their voyage which includes specific geographical and naval details (in fact, after reading this chapter one is left with the notion they could actually sail a ship).

54. Thus, the question becomes, why? Why did Luke take a full chapter and describe this event in such detail?
55. Well, in the time remaining I want to suggest two basic reasons which will be divided into three observations.
56. First, to underscore the absolute reliability of Scripture, and second, to provide us with various practical lessons.
57. Thus, we come to the first of three propositions, namely, we have a reminder on the nature of Scripture.
58. Scripture as you know, is comprised of various genres—there's historical, poetic, and didactic (teaching).
59. Historical is narrative (Genesis and Exodus, poetic is poetry (Psalms and Proverbs), didactic is instructive (NT letters).
60. Acts 27 is obviously historical and narrative—it recounts actual and literal history—it really happened.
61. And here's my point, if the historical portions of Scripture are true, then so are the didactic portions of Scripture.
62. Why is Scripture so filled with detailed accounts, where times and places are over and again specified.
63. Dear brethren, all throughout the book of Acts we have detailed mention of dates, names, and places.
64. Why? Well for a number of reasons, one of which being to underscore the trustworthy nature of Scripture (everything it says is true and reliable) (the truth is an anchor for our soul that never changes – the world is anchorless – tossed here and there by the changing opinions of men).

II. A Depiction of Life in a Turbulent World

1. Not only does this narrative provide literal historical narrative, but it also provides us with practical instruction.
2. Remember, while Paul as an apostle had unique experiences, as a Christian man he was similar to us.
3. It was the purpose of God to bring Paul to Rome, and yet, he brought him there through wind and wave.
4. And it's the same for every Christian—it's God purpose and promise that every Christian arrive at heaven.
5. But it's not His purpose ordinarily to bring them there directly, but through many turns and difficulties.
6. Remember, the journey from Caesarea to Rome was less than a month, and yet it took almost a year.
7. This is similar to God's dealing with all His people who all have been promised not to arrive at Rome but heaven.
8. And yet, as we all know, it's usually God's will, to bring His people to heaven, through many tribulations.
9. Acts 14:22—"We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of heaven"—the kingdom of glory.
10. Every Christian enters heaven through the storms of life, albeit the intensity and duration of them varies.

11. It's for this reason, if we read this chapter carefully you will find a variety of circumstance and detail.
12. There are weeks of calm seas, days of calm wind, and weeks of darkness and severe storms and danger (**2Cor.11:22-28**).
13. (1) To allow us to glorify God on the earth—He leaves in this storm that we might trust and praise Him throughout it.
14. This is the foremost reason Christ are left in this world (regardless how calm or turbulent our life is).
15. But it's the endurance of storms, in a special sense, that allows us to glorify God by trusting, loving, and praising Him.
16. It's the presence of storms that reveal our true nature as it's relatively easy to bless God when the waters are calm (**Ps.107:23-32**).
17. (2) To arouse us from a sinful or carnal ease—otherwise it's rather easy to become overly content with this world.
18. Brethren, without winds and waves it's very easy for us to grow complacent with the ways of this world.
19. This world has a numbing effect upon us—it lures us asleep which results in lazy and indifferent life.
20. (3) To strengthen our hope of a new earth—that is, it begets within us a longing for a storm-free world.
21. A stormy life not only keeps us from fixating on this world, but it creates within us a desire for another.
22. Now the sea over which Paul and his fellow passengers sailed was the Mediterranean Sea (called the Great Sea).
23. And as you can imagine because that sea known for strong winds shipwrecks were a rather common thing.
24. And thus, both the Romans and Jews had a rather healthy respect and even fear and dread for the sea.
25. It's for this reason, Scripture describes the new heavens and new earth as having no sea within it (Rev.21:1).
26. Rev.21:1—"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea."
27. Now whether or not there's actually no sea in heaven isn't the point; the point is there will no more be any storms (literally and figuratively).

III. A Lesson on the Perseverance of the Saints

1. Here I am thinking about the message revealed to Paul through the angel, v23—"For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.'"
2. The angel revealed to Paul that every person on board the ship (all 267 people) would survive the storm.
3. V22—"And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship."
4. God promised not one person would perish, and as we have seen from v44, "they all escaped safely to land."

5. And yet, the certainty of God's promise doesn't negate or deny five things: prayer, afflictions, opposition, nourishment, and hard work.
6. (1) Prayer, v24—"Do not be afraid Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you."
7. The phrase "God has granted you" implies that Paul was praying for the safety of all the passengers on board.
8. (2) Affliction, v26—"However, we must run aground on a certain island"—we shall all be shipwrecked.
9. Yes, we shall be ultimately or finally saved, but this shall be through affliction, tribulation, and hard ship.
10. (3) Opposition, v42—"And the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape. But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from their purpose."
11. The soldiers would have killed all the prisoners including Paul, had it not been for the intervention of the centurion (and so, the promise that every Christian will endure doesn't deny there are those that wish our eternal destruction).
12. (4) Nourishment, v34—"Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you."
13. Yes it's true not a hair will fall from their heads (they shall all survive), and yet, they must eat and be strengthened (for this is your survival).
14. And so it's true, while God has promised we will endure, we must be nourished with the word in order to endure.
15. (5) Obedience (hard work), v31—"Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, 'Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.'"
16. Wait a minute Paul, the angel already told you "there will be no loss of life among you"—God promised (and yet, brethren while it's true, God has promised that every Christian will endure to the end, we must remain in the ship (we must abide in Christ).