

ACTS CHAPTER TWENTY SEVEN

Read vs. 1-13

1. *In verse 27:1, the decision is made to begin the trip to Italy. There were no passenger ships in those days. People had to wait until they found a ship heading their way and then try to get passage on it. It would likely be carrying cargo like grain for trading. Such a ship was found. From verses 1 & 2, list some of the people who boarded.*

Notice in verse 1 where it says “we” should sail. Luke was also traveling with him on the ship. Julius was a centurion in the Roman army who was given the responsibility to transport these prisoners to Rome. A centurion had authority over 100 soldiers.

We have met Aristarchus before in Acts 19:29 and 20:4, where he is mentioned as being one of Paul’s traveling companions. In Col 4:10 he is referred to as Paul’s fellow prisoner. According to tradition, Aristarchus was martyred in Rome along with Paul.

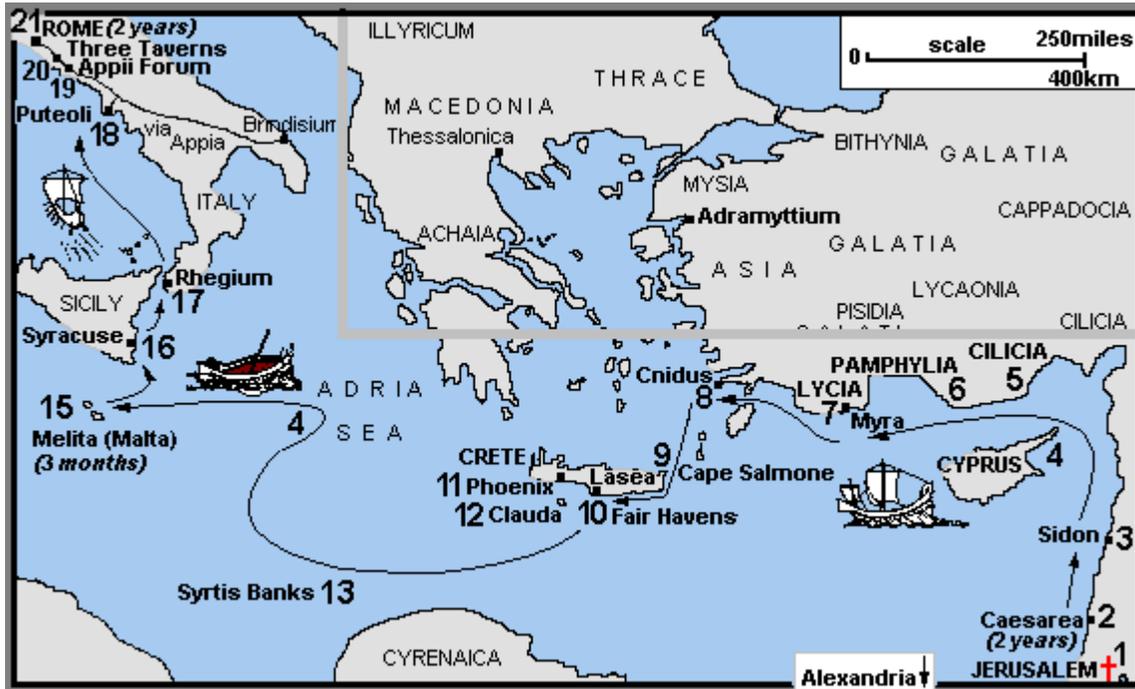
In verse 9, it mentions that the “fast” was already over. This probably refers to the fast associated with the Day of Atonement, a Jewish holiday celebrated near the end of Sept. or beginning of October. Traveling was usually curtailed from Nov. through Feb. because of the danger from bad weather. To begin this trip in October was getting very close to the end of the season.

When they landed in Sidon, probably to take on more supplies or cargo, Paul was allowed to go to see people that he knew there. This shows a high level of respect that Paul had already earned from Julius. Julius could have lost his life if this prisoner escaped. Paul had evidently proven that he was a man of integrity and could be trusted to return to the ship.

It was necessary to change ships at the port of Myra. We see trouble and danger developing in verse 7. They couldn’t keep the ship on course and moved along with difficulty.

2. *What warning did Paul give and how was it received? (vs.9-11)*

Paul gave his advice about trying to continue the trip so late in the season. He had some personal experience with shipwrecks and wasn’t anxious for another one! (2 Cor. 11:25) Paul was, however, just a preacher and a passenger. The centurion decided to follow the advice of the owner of the ship instead. If they could reach the harbor in Crete, they would have a much more enjoyable winter. When a gentle wind started to blow, they took that as confirmation that it was a good time to sail. They hoped to reach Phoenix in just a few hours. Certainly everything would be OK. See the map below.



<http://www.ccel.org/bible/phillips/JBPhillips.htm>

Read vs. 14-20

3. What efforts were made to save the ship during the storm?

It wasn't long before hurricane strength winds started to blow. They lost control of the ship. The lifeboat was being towed behind the ship. It was no doubt filled with water by this time. Since they might very well be needing it, they made a great effort to get the smaller boat lifted up on deck. Then extra cables were passed under and around the ship and were pulled up tight to add strength to the boards.

Verse 17 mentions that they lowered the sea anchor. This might slow the ship down a little and keep them from getting blown so far off course. Things were really getting desperate now and they threw the cargo overboard. This represented all of the profit for this voyage. After the third day, they threw over the tackle. The tackle would include the ropes and chains that held and controlled the sails. Obviously, this was only done as a last resort. They had basically given up hope. They hadn't seen the sun or stars and they had no way to navigate or even know where they were.

4. *How does Luke describe the moral of the crew in vs. 20?*

Read vs. 21-38

5. *What assurance did Paul offer the men in vs. 22?*

Paul now tries to encourage the men. They hadn't even eaten in several days. He had it on good authority that they would all live through this event.

6. *What might be implied from vs. 24, where the angel says "God hath given thee all them that sail with thee"?*

Certainly Paul had been praying for all of these men. God sends an angel to Paul with a special message. He reminds Paul that he hasn't finished his work yet. He still had to testify before Caesar. The angel also tells Paul that God has heard his prayers and that everyone on the ship would survive. Recall from verse 10 that Paul had warned of the loss of life if they continued on the voyage. But Paul had prayed for the lives of all of the men to be spared. Paul testifies of his faith in God and God is going to honor that faith.

7. *Look up the nautical word "sounding" in a dictionary and explain vs. 28.*

It has now been two whole weeks that they have been out of control. At last they sensed that they were approaching land. Possibly they could hear the waves crashing on the shore, or maybe seabirds nearby. They began to take measurements of the depth of the water and confirmed that they were approaching land. Since it was still dark and they didn't want to be crashing in the middle of the night, they dropped anchors to hold them in that position until morning.

8. *What is the reaction of the centurion to Paul's warning in vs.31?*

Some of the sailors decided to abandon the ship. They were planning to escape in the lifeboat. Paul saw what was happening and told the centurion that they all needed to stay together. The soldiers cut the ropes on the lifeboat and let it fall away. That ended the escape attempt, even though they probably would have found the boat very useful the next morning.

9. *How long had the sailors gone without eating? (vs. 33)*

Dawn finally arrives and Paul knows that the next few hours are going to be difficult ones. The men will need their strength if they are to make it to shore unharmed. It had been 14

days since they had eaten. Paul began to eat in front of them and encouraged them to follow his example, which they did.

10. *How did Paul encourage the men and boost their spirits? (vs. 33-36)*

Can you see them starting to rally? Sometimes one optimistic person can really turn the tide. People need hope in a crises. Paul told them not one person would lose a single hair from his head. They had learned to trust his good sense and his advice. Maybe they really did have a chance of surviving this nightmare!

11. *What final thing was thrown over-board to lighten the ship? (vs. 38)*

Knowing that this is their last day on the ship, they threw the grain into the sea to lighten the ship as much as possible. The lighter it was, the farther up onto the beach they could drive it. There was little hope of the ship surviving. There was no hope of any profit from the trip, but maybe they could escape with their lives.

Read vs. 39-44

12. *When the sun rose and they could see the shore, what plan did they devise? (vs. 39)*

They surveyed the beach and notice a sandy spot. They decided to cut the anchors loose, put up the sail and just try to ram the ship into the sand. However, there is one more disaster waiting for them. Instead of getting all the way to the beach, the ship runs into a sand bar and gets stuck.

13. *When the bow lodged in a sand bar, the stern (back of the ship) began to _____
_____ (vs. 41)*

14. *Why did the soldiers want to kill the prisoners? (vs. 42)*

What do you recall concerning Roman soldiers who let prisoners escape?

If a soldier let his prisoner escape, he would be killed. The most fool-proof way of preventing anyone from escaping was just to kill them. Paul and the centurion had become friends by now. He also felt that he could trust Paul, so he gave everyone permission to swim if they could or jump in and grab a floating piece of debris. All 276 men on board survived the hurricane and the shipwreck.

15. *Verse 44 is a fulfillment of what previous verse in this chapter?*