

## Acts 27

### The Beginning of the Fourth Missionary Journey (also known as the Journey to Rome)

#### Acts 27.1-8

**V1** – Note: The last "we" passage begins here, so Luke was with Paul in Caesarea during the two years

-**Who was Julius?** A centurion

-The references to Roman centurions are almost all favorable and honorable in the New Testament:

1. *Matt. 8.5-13, Luke 7.2-10* – The centurion with a sick slave

2. *Matt. 27.54* – Recognized Jesus as "the son of God"

3. *Acts 10.1* – Cornelius

4. *Acts 27.43* – The centurion who saved the lives of Paul and the other prisoners

**V2** – Aristarchus – **What do we know about him?**

-*Acts 19.29* – Attacked (along with Paul) by the mob at Ephesus

-*Acts 20.4-7* – In Troas

-*Acts 27.2* – Here on Fourth Missionary Journey

-*Col. 4.10* – Fellow prisoner

-*Philemon 24* – Fellow prisoner

**V3** – **Which friends?** Probably a church there (*Acts 11.19* –Phoenicia)

**V4** – Sailed north of Cyprus; they had sailed south of Cyprus on Third Missionary Journey on way to Jerusalem

**V5** – A "coasting ship" – Stayed near the shore (or coast)

**V6** – A second ship carried wheat (see v 38)

-Made about 7 knots an hour (about 8.5 mph); 10-11 hundred tons

**V7** – The wind was beginning to pick up

**V8** – Fair Havens – still goes by that name today

#### Acts 27.9-13

**V9** – Great Day of Atonement – fell on Oct. 5 in 59 A.D.

-Dangerous sailing season (Sept. 14-Nov. 11) – no sailing in winter

**V10** – **What advice did Paul give them?** Remain there through the winter

-**Was he qualified to give such advice?** Yes – three missionary journeys involving much travel by ship

**V 11** – **Who persuaded the centurion to continue?** The pilot and the owner  
-We fail to appreciate the quality of travel today!

**V 12** – **How did they decide where to go next with the ship?** They took a vote (instead of relying on Paul)  
-**How long would they spend at the harbor of Crete?** Over the winter

**V 13** – They began sailing along the coast of Crete  
-**Why did they sail close to the coast of Crete?** Because of the fragile boats of the First Century

## **Acts 27.14-17**

**V 14** – Two winds meet there (from around Mt. Ida)  
-**What name was given to this type of wind?** Euraquilo (wind from the northeast)

**V 15-16** – The ship was allowed to drift 23 miles to the next island named Clauda  
-Modern name: Gozo  
-A battle was fought there on March 28, 1941 – The British vs. Italian navies

**V 16** – **The ship's boat?** A lifeboat being towed

**V 17** – **Purpose of cables?** Put under the ship to hold the ship together  
-**Shallows of Syrtis?** Quicksands of North Africa (Cyrene and Carthage)  
-They dropped anchor to slow the drift

## **Acts 27.18-26**

**V 18** – They started to jettison the cargo – **An Old Testament parallel?** *Jonah 1.5*

**V 19** – **The ship's tackle?** Extra masts, ropes, equipment, etc.

**V 20** – All hope was abandoned – a remarkable verse!

**V 21** – **Why hadn't they eaten?** Seasick and spoiled food  
-2 *Cor. 11.25* – A day and a night spent in the deep; three shipwrecks in the life of Paul

**V 22** – **What did Paul prophecy about the outcome of this furious wind and its effect on the ship?**  
No life would be lost

**V 23** – **Even without this vision, how did he know he would reach Rome?** *Acts 23.11* – another vision  
-*Phil. 1.21* – *To me to live is Christ and to die is gain* – His philosophy of life

**V 24** – **How many times have wicked people been saved because of righteous people? Examples?**  
-Abraham talked to God about Sodom – 50? 40? 30? 20? 10?  
-*Gen. 18.26-33* – same situation today  
-Note: "The God to whom I belong"

**V 25 – What had God told Paul?** That he would stand before Caesar (meaning that they would not be lost at sea)

**V 26 – But what did Paul prophecy?** That they would aground on a certain island

## **Acts 27.27-372**

**V 27 –** James Smith, *The Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul* (published in 1880)

-He was a sailor and a Bible scholar and gave many details that confirmed what Luke wrote here  
-Mr. Smith calculated the average rate of northwest drift in the Mediterranean at 36 miles per 24 hours

-Crete (Malta) – 476.6 miles – so the voyage would take 13 days 1 hour 21 minute – incredibly close to 14 days

-2 *Peter 1.16* – Peter said that the New Testament writers had no cleverly devised tales, but spoke the truth

**-How would they know at night that land was close?** The sound of the breakers (particularly violent on the east coast of Malta)

-St. Paul's Bay in Malta – a depth of 20 fathoms – the sound of the breakers can be heard very distinctly

-See any standard article on the Internet for photos of St. Paul's Bay, as it appears today

-Example:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St.\\_Paul%27s\\_Bay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Paul%27s_Bay)

**V 28 –** 20 fathoms (1 fathom = 6 feet) – 20 fathoms = 120 feet

-Soundings were made in the U.S. along the Mississippi River in the 1800's

-See the writings of Mark Twain in his book *Life on the Mississippi* (1883) – the term "mark twain" meant that the water was 2 fathoms deep (deep enough for a steamboat on the Mississippi)

**V 29 – What did they do to try to stabilize the ship?** They cast 4 anchors into the water

**-What was their fondest wish at this time?** To survive until sunrise

**V 30-31 –** Self-preservation again (just like Claudius Lysias)

**-Why did the sailors let the dinghy down?** To escape

**-What did the centurion order?** Cut the dinghy away

**-What did Paul say?** According to God, they must all get to shore together, so they were not to leave the prisoners to die as the ship began to break up

**V 32 –** The soldiers cut the ropes and let the dinghy fall away from the ship

## **Acts 27.33-38**

**V 33 – Why did Paul urge them to take some food at this time?** Probably because most of them had been seasick for 14 days, and they would need all their strength to get ashore

**V 34 – Paul's promise?** Not a hair on their heads would perish as they would go ashore

**V 35** – Precedent for giving thanks before a meal

-*Luke 24.30* – Jesus after his resurrection

-*1 Tim. 4.4-5* – Receive food with gratitude

-Notice that Paul broke the bread, but this was not the Lord's Supper

-At some congregations, it is mandatory that the person presiding over the bread must literally "break" it, before it can be distributed to the congregation

-However, with Paul, as with Christ, the breaking of the bread was done because the bread was not sliced as we have it prepared today

-It was like French baguettes today

-In some passages the "breaking of bread" refers to the Lord's Supper, but not here (see *Acts 2.46*)

**V 36** – The food had to be distributed evenly

**V 37** – **How many people were on the ship?** 276 (a lot)

## **Acts 27.38-44**

**V 38** – **Why did they want the ship to be as light as possible?** To get closer to the beach

**V 39-41** – The exact beach can be found today! (Again, see the Internet)

**V 42** – The Roman soldiers planned to kill the prisoners (to keep them from escaping)

-They were personally responsible for the prisoners

-**Where else have we seen this?** Peter's escape from prison in *Acts 12.19*

-Paul's escape from the jail at Philippi – *Acts 16.27*

**V 43** – Another good example of the centurions

-**What did the centurion order?** That they jump overboard and get the shore the best way they could (swimming, holding onto pieces of the ship, etc.)

**V 44** – A wonderful verse after 14 days on the stormy sea

-What an exciting passage!

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