

BIGGER THAN YOU

Lesson 23 Power in the Storm

Acts 27:1-44 and 28:1-10

As Paul sets sail for Rome, we will study God's sovereign protection of Paul and God's sovereign expansion of the gospel to the Gentiles. During the trip, despite being in Roman custody, Paul's presence has a saving influence on those around him. Paul survives a storm, a shipwreck, and a snake bite. Marooned on the island of Malta, Paul is alternately mistaken for a murderer and a god. However, throughout the entire ordeal, Paul remains steadfast and a witness to the power of the one true God.

Read Acts 27:1-12

- In Acts 26, Paul had an audience before King Agrippa in Caesarea. The king proclaimed Paul's innocence, but sent Paul on to Rome, because Paul had previously made an appeal to Caesar (Acts 25:11) – a right of every Roman citizen. Now in Chapter 27, Paul sets sail for Rome.
 - Using the map on page 3, trace the journey from Casarea to Sidon (verse 3) and then to Myra (verse 5).
 - Who is traveling with Paul (verses 1-2)?
 - What kindness is shown to Paul in Sidon?
 - List the verse that describes the transfer of Paul from one ship to another.
 - Write the phrases that paint the picture of the difficulty of the trip.
 - Verse 7 _____
 - Verse 8 _____
 - Verse 9 _____
- Scholars suggest that Paul is traveling in the year A.D. 59. The "Fast" referred to in verse 9 is the Jewish holiday, the Day of Atonement, which fell on October 5 that year. It was rapidly approaching the end of the sailing season due to winter storms which blew in unexpectedly and shortened daylight hours. Harbors shut down in mid-November and it was risky sailing between September and November.
 - Paraphrase Paul's warning. Whose advice is heeded?
 - What made the harbor in Phoenix preferable to the Fair Havens harbor?

Read Acts 27:13-26

- Paul and his fellow shipmates are caught in a terrible storm as they head toward the harbor of Phoenix.
 - Describe the change in weather in verses 13-14.
 - Using the map on page 3, find Fair Havens and Phoenix. Using the key, estimate how far they plan to travel. Find Cauda and note the direction the storm blew them off course.
 - What are the dangers to the ship? List the four safety measures the crew took in verses 16-19.
 - In those days, there were no compasses. Why would the absence of sun and stars be dangerous?
 - Verse 20 says the travelers gave up hope. Has there been a time in your life when you have been disoriented by the storms of life and you gave up hope? If so, describe what it felt like.
- The situation seems to be desperate. Paul stands up to address the men.
 - Why does Paul remind the men that he had been right about not leaving Fair Havens (verse 21)?

- b. Paul encourages the crew.
 - i) Upon what is Paul basing his encouragement?
 - ii) What does Paul say will happen to the men?
 - iii) What does Paul say will happen to him?
 - iv) What does Paul say will happen to the ship?
- c. How should we respond to Spirit-filled believers? Should we always follow their advice? Discuss.
- d. In verse 23 Paul says he belongs to and serves God. How can he say this if he is a prisoner of Rome?
- e. Paul is a source of hope to his fellow shipmates. How are you a source of hope to those around you?

Read Acts 27:27-44

- 5. For 14 days the storm drives the ship in the open seas. As the sailors sense the approach of land they measure the depth of the sea using soundings. They discover the water is becoming shallower.
 - a. Verse 29 says the crew dropped 4 anchors and prayed for daylight. How should we understand the word “prayed”? Are they praying to the one true God? Are they fervently wishing?
 - b. How does Paul thwart the crew’s escape attempt (verses 30-32)?
 - c. Describe how Paul prepares the men for their eventual rescue (verses 33-38)?
 - d. How was this preparation spiritual as well as practical?
 - e. When the ship hits a sandbar, describe how all aboard eventually make it safely to land.
 - f. How are you helping others to be both practically and spiritually prepared for the times to come?

Read Acts 28:1-10

- 6. Paul and all his shipmates make it safely to shore on an island called Malta.
 - a. Compare the actual outcome of the ship and the men with Paul’s prediction in Acts 27:22.
 - b. How are they treated by the islanders (verse 2)?
 - c. What does Paul do that assists the islanders in bringing some relief from the weather conditions?
 - d. Explain why the islanders mistake Paul for a murderer (verses 3-4)?
 - e. Explain why the islanders change their minds and think he is a god (verses 5-6)?
 - f. Today some people hold the world view that we get what we deserve: good things happen to good people – bad things happen to bad people. Read Acts 14:22 and discuss the validity of that world view.

- 7. For 3 days Paul is entertained at the nearby estate of an island official.
 - a. Who is this official (verse 7)?
 - b. In this passage, the pronoun “us” is used, suggesting Luke is part of the group. Why is Luke interested in the healings? (Hint: see Col. 4:14)
 - c. Who benefits from the healings?
 - d. Today as we seek to evangelize, describe the benefits of helping the whole person, body and spirit.

- 8. There are many similarities between one of Jesus’s healings and Paul’s healing. Read Luke 4:38-40, and compare it to Acts 28:7-10.
 - a. Who does Jesus heal? _____ Who does Paul heal? _____
 - b. What illness does Jesus heal? _____ What illness does Paul heal? _____
 - c. Who does Jesus heal next? _____ Who does Paul heal next? _____
 - d. What does this suggest about the connection between the ministry of Jesus and that of Paul.

- 9. Throughout this lesson, we have seen Paul balance practicality with spirituality. He prays (27:35; 28:8) and believes God (27:23-25). He also provides a meal (27:35), gathers firewood (28:3), and heals the sick (28:7-10). Christians today must navigate the same path. Discuss a situation in your own life when you had to both trust God and act practically.

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Acts 1:8



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