

The Power of Divine Appointments

Paul's Boat is Shipwrecked on a God-Ordained Trip

The Empowered Church Series – pt. 40

Acts 27:1-28:30

Dec 16-17, 2023

Introduction

- **The last part of our Acts Series – 40 parts!** Anyone been here for all of it?
- **The Story of Suzi and I Meeting – a Divine Appointment story.** Nerdy Christians learning magic. On fire evangelism at a Mexican restaurant. Prayers of a mom for good friends. A depressed young lady. An awkward invitation to church. Salvation and turning point. Another invitation to coffee. A weird guy with long hair. A chance encounter that was messy. The result: a more fulfilling life of ministry: Suzi's heart for a Bible study (4 year home church). Suzi's prayer for Roseville Hope (26 years of pastoring).
- **The Oddities of Miracle Connections** – over and over, as a pastor, I get to see God's hand at work. I see Him maneuver me, like a tool, to bless other people. He knows their needs and moves me into the right place to be a representative to take care of them. It's new people who come to church at the exact right moment to hear information about what they had been wondering about. It's one person meeting another and connecting on a deep level. It's watching one person go to another for prayer and healing happened. **So much ministry has happened over the decades that seemed so random and accidental...but it wasn't.**

NEVER Underestimate God's Ability to Set Up a MOMENT of Power

- **Keep your eyes peeled** – God may be moving right now, all around you. Once you see it it's difficult to unsee it. When your perspective shifts it transforms random to purposeful and accidental into divine encounter.
- **Recap** – Last week, Pastor Brian shared...
 - **Paul on Trial** – Paul was arrested after **the situation in the Temple and a plot to kill him** developed. Along the way Paul, in desperation, **appealed to Caesar**, meaning that he asked to have his case sent to the highest office. Rome agreed.
 - **The Power of Testimony** – Paul shared his testimony **2x's before important Roman leaders**. He's seeing more **purpose in his situation** as God sets up divine appointment after divine appointment.

Lesson

- **Life's Never Really Easy**
 - **Paul's ship struggles to sail**
 - **Ac 27:1–8** – *“And when it was decided that we should sail for Italy, [the Roman authorities] delivered Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan Cohort named Julius.^{1 2} And embarking in a [coasting vessel from the port] of*

¹ “His *nomen gentile* suggests that he or rather his ancestor acquired the citizenship under Julius Caesar or Augustus.” NICNT, F.F. Bruce

Adramyttium, which was about to sail to the ports along the coast of Asia, we put to sea, accompanied by [Paul's ministry partner] Aristarchus, a Macedonian from [his hometown of] Thessalonica. ³ The next day we put in at [the port of the bustling city of] Sidon. And Julius [the centurion] treated Paul kindly and gave him leave to go to his friends and be cared for. ⁴ And putting out to sea from there we sailed [for the wind break area] under the lee of [the large island of] Cyprus, because the winds were against us. ⁵ And when we had sailed across the open sea along the coast of [the regions of] Cilicia and Pamphylia [on the southern Turkish coast], we came to [the port city of] Myra in [the region of] Lycia. ⁶ There the centurion found a [large grain] ship of Alexandria [Egypt] sailing for Italy and put us on board. ⁷ We sailed slowly for a number of days and arrived with difficulty off [the port of] Cnidus, and as the wind did not allow us to go farther, we sailed under the lee [or wind protected side] of [the massive island of] Crete off [the cape of] Salmone. ⁸ Coasting along [the coast there] with difficulty, we came to a place [a small bay of Crete] called Fair Havens, near which was the city of Lasea."

- **When it was decided** – Paul now, and for the rest of the Book of Acts is in custody of Roman authorities and decisions are made for him. Although he will have varying degrees of kindness and influence, he is a prisoner.
- **We should sail for Italy** – The high court was in Rome and Rome is the capital of Italy, so they headed there. It seems that Luke, the author, is with Paul during this process² (which is really dangerous).
- **Summary of the Trip** – [SEE MAP AT END OF DOC] - as we read passages like these upcoming, we get lost in all the city and island names and it's difficult to get a gist of where they were sailing, so I'm going to give a quick summary here. It was a long trip from Jerusalem/Israel to Italy by ship, especially in bad weather. So here's what they would end up doing: They start at Caesarea the port of Jerusalem. They sail north toward Syria, stopping at Sidon. They hug the coast turning left to go in between the large island of Cyprus and Asia Minor. They keep hugging the southern coast of Turkey until they run out of land and have to go to open sea. Due to bad weather, they head south to hide behind the windbreak of the large island of Crete which is in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. It's the departure from here to go a long way in open sea to Sicily that things go really bad. The ship is lost in the storm, and they shipwreck south of Sicily on the small island of Malta. After 3 months they restart their trip north and sail along the East coast of Sicily, slipping through the straits at Rhegium and hug the west coast of Italy all the way up to Rome.
- **The Power of the WE** – All throughout the book of Acts there are references to 'we'. Of course those are indicators that the author Luke was personally with Paul during that portion of the story. But it's key to note that Paul was rarely alone. He had an internal drive to BE WITH other Christians. Some of

² "The "we" narrative is now resumed, after being broken off at 21:18. We have no information about Luke's movements during the two intervening years, but it would be safe to think of him as spending much of the time in or around Caesarea (where Paul was kept in custody) and making good use of his opportunities of gathering information about the early days of the Christian movement." NICNT, FF. Bruce.

his most passionate comments are about community and wanting to see other believers. Luke comments over and over about how Paul would visit brothers and sisters in different churches. Paul was not a solo guy or a lone wolf. He deeply valued being with others. So should we.

- **Paul & some other prisoners are put in Julius' care** – It's very helpful to understand this story with a bit of a background about the relationship and situation with Paul and the centurion Julius. There are **four key things**: **1.) Protect to get to Caesar** - Paul had appealed to Caesar, which means that he was supposed to be protected until he gets there. They were serious about that. When a plot was discovered to kill Paul in chapter 23, they gathered 200 soldiers, 200 spearmen, 70 horsemen to protect him and they put him on a horse to get to Governor Felix faster and safer. **2.) Paul was a Roman citizen whom they bound** and were about to whip/beat when they found out. They knew that was a HUGE miss and they were trying to be nice moving forward. Roman citizenship is a massive deal, especially to non-Romans. **3.)** There seems to be **a favor that God put on Paul's life** so that Julius was drawn to it and very protective over him. He allowed Paul to do a lot of stuff that wasn't normally allowed, and he listened to him more than other prisoners would have his ear for. **4.) It's highly likely that Julius is a grain ship centurion.** This was a very specific part of the army that oversaw the transport of the Roman Empire's grain production that happened in Alexandria Egypt and was transported throughout the Empire. In desperate times and for financial gain, ships were hijacked, and cargo stolen. So, the Empire had a very specific army contingent that would be the security for sailing vessels. They would also be in charge of transport of prisoners since they were the ones on the sea. It helps explain why grain, certain harbors, and Alexandria play such a key part of this story.
 - Ac 25:12 – *“Then Festus, when he had conferred with his council, answered, “To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you shall go.”*
 - Ac 22:29 – *“So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him immediately, and the tribune also was afraid, for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him.”*
- **The other prisoners** – we have no information on who they were or why they were there. It's assumed that they too needed to be shipped to Rome.
- **A centurion**³ – what's a centurion? A centurion is a commander in the army (in this case of Rome) that oversees a contingent of 100 soldiers.
- **Augustan cohort** – what's an Augustan cohort? It means, similar to 'His Imperial Majesty's, a title of honor for those who served Caesar. The original Caesar Augustus was a title not a name.
- **Julius**⁴ – who's this guy? We don't know anything about him outside of this story with Paul.

³ “1543. ἑκατοντάρχης *hekatontárchēs*; gen. *hekatontárchou*, masc. noun from *hekatón* (1540), one hundred, and *árchō* (757), to command. A centurion, a Roman military officer commanding one hundred men.” WSNTDICT

⁴ “The term “Augustan,” i.e., “His Imperial Majesty’s,” was a title of honor bestowed on several cohorts of auxiliary troops.) The precise status of Julius is difficult to determine: from the authority which he assumed when once (from Myra onward) he found himself on board a ship of the

- **Embarking⁵ on a ship of Adramyttium⁶** – the ship was primarily housed at a seaport of Mysia in Asia Minor. It was a ‘coasting vessel’ which would run along the coasts. It was not a seafaring ship, like a larger grain ship.
- **Sailing along the ports of Asia** – this is modern-day Turkey (or Asia Minor)
 - **Accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica**
 - **Aristarchus⁷** – this is one of Paul’s friends that was captured and dragged into the mob at the Ephesian theater back in chapter 19.
 - **Macedonian** – Macedonia was an ancient region which mostly covered Northern Greece (and at times extended significantly north and east).
 - **Thessalonica** – his home town in modern-day northern Greece. It is still a city to this day (Thessaloniki)
- **The next day we put in at Sidon⁸** – Sidon was a major Phoenician city with a double harbor.
- **Julius was kind to Paul** – why? I think this was about the favor of God combined with the mandate to be nicer to Paul after the almost whipping a Roman citizen (but mostly the first).
 - **Gave him leave to go to his friends and be cared for⁹** – who are his friends and where were they? It seems they were Christians from Sidon who likely were the fruit of the dispersion (after Stephen’s martyrdom). Paul was allowed, likely under guard, to go spend time with them.
- **We sailed under the lee of Cyprus** – they were sailing with the physical covering of the large island of Cyprus which would block some of the wind and allow them to move forward. They would have been on the eastern, then northern coast.¹⁰ Cyprus is a decently large island¹¹ – 150 miles long by 50 miles wide.

Alexandrian grain fleet, it might be inferred that he was a *frumentarius*, an officer charged with supervising the transport of grain (*frumentum*) to Rome. At any rate, Paul was entrusted to him because he was bound for Rome, with a body of soldiers under his command.” NICNT, F.F. Bruce

⁵ “The port of embarkation is not specified; probably it was Caesarea.” NICNT

⁶ “The ship in which they embarked belonged to Adramyttium (modern Edremit), a seaport of Mysia in northwest Asia Minor, opposite the island of Lesbos. It was a coasting vessel, which was to call at various ports of the province of Asia; at one of these Julius knew he would find a ship, preferably a grain ship, bound for Italy.” NICNT

⁷ “Aristarchus is not expressly named later in this narrative; it is possible, therefore, that he was traveling home to Thessalonica and did not join the second ship which took the party in the direction of Italy. On the other hand, if Colossians and Philemon are to be dated in the course of Paul’s Roman captivity, he was in Paul’s company when those letters were written (Col. 4:10; Philem. 1:24), so he may have gone all the way with Paul on this occasion; in that case he is no doubt included in Luke’s “we” throughout the narrative. It is impossible to be sure. Ramsay argued that Luke and Aristarchus “must have gone” as Paul’s slaves, “not merely performing the duties of slaves ... but actually passing as slaves. In this way not merely had Paul faithful friends always beside him; his importance in the eyes of the centurion was much enhanced, and that was of great importance. The narrative clearly implies that Paul enjoyed much respect during this voyage, such as a penniless traveller without a servant to attend on him would never receive either in the first century or the nineteenth.” While Ramsay’s argument merits the respect due to his great knowledge of social history in the Roman Empire of the first century A.D., it is not the *prima facie* inference which one would draw from the narrative, and is really improbable. Aristarchus may have gone as a fare-paying passenger; Luke (if a reader’s imagination may be indulged) perhaps signed on as ship’s doctor.” NICNT

⁸ “The day after they set sail, they put in at Sidon, the ancient Phoenician metropolis, which was about 69 miles north of Caesarea. It had a double harbor.” NICNT

⁹ “In Sidon there was a Christian community, founded probably during the persecution and dispersion that followed the death of Stephen (11:19). Paul received permission to go ashore and visit members of this community (for so we should certainly understand “his friends”) and enjoy all the attention that their Christian love could suggest while the ship was in harbor. It may be assumed that a soldier was detailed to accompany him.” NICNT

¹⁰ “the prevailing winds in the Levant are westerly throughout the summer months.” NICNT

¹¹ “Island country located in the northeastern Mediterranean Sea, 50 miles south of Turkey (Asia Minor), 70 miles west of Syria, and 245 miles north of Egypt. This island, about 110 miles long and 50 miles wide, supports the Kyrenia and Troodas Massif mountain ranges separated by the

- **Because the winds were against us** – it meant that the winds would push against the ships sails and made traveling more difficult and slower.
- **We sailed across the open sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia** – how can you sail across open sea if you are on the coast? It means that they were in the Mediterranean Sea (open sea) but they were hugging the coast. They were not in an inlet per se, nor a harbor, nor a river.
 - **Cilicia**¹² – Cilicia was Paul’s home region. The capital is Tarsus, the city in which he was born. It’s in southeast Turkey.
 - **Pamphylia**¹³ – a Roman province in southern Turkey to the west of Cilicia. The capital is Perga.
- **We came to Myra**¹⁴ **in Lycia & put aboard a ship sailing to Italy**¹⁵
 - **Myra** – an ancient port of Lycia.
 - **Lycia** – opposite the island of Rhodes, it’s a region which has a coastal portion on the Mediterranean.
 - **The centurion found a ship of Alexandria**¹⁶ **& put us on board** – this was a larger grain ship that could sail across open water, unlike the smaller coasting vessel. Alexandria is one of the largest cities in Egypt (south from where they were) and the main granary of the Roman Empire. The Empire relied significantly on the grain produced there so there was a very special ship fleet and military detachment that would keep it running smoothly.
- **We sailed slowly for a couple of days and ended up off Cnidus**
 - **Sailing slowly for days** – when you work with sailing vessels, wind and weather conditions are everything. This was slow and boring.
 - **Arrived with difficulty** – it was not only difficult to get anywhere fast, but the winds would push the boat off course and they would have to constantly correct and fight the weather.

fertile Mesaoria plain. A narrow strip of land 40 miles long and 5 miles wide extends from the northeastern part of the island. Cyprus is rimmed with a number of natural harbors. In antiquity these harbors provided a strategic meeting place of sea routes from Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. The Cypriot copper mines, though now largely depleted, have long been a source of revenue for its inhabitants.” Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible

¹² “2791. Κιλικία *Kilikia*; gen. *Kilikias*, fem. proper noun. Cilicia, the southeastern province of Asia Minor having Cappadocia on the north, Syria on the east, the Mediterranean Sea on the south with Pamphylia and Pisidia on the west. Eastern Cilicia was a rich plain; western Cilicia was rough and mountainous, lying on the Taurus range. Its capital was Tarsus, and many of its people were Jews.” WSNTDICT

¹³ “3828. Παμφυλία *Pamphulia*; gen. *Pamphulias*, fem. proper noun. Pamphylia, meaning of every tribe. A Roman province in Asia Minor (Acts 27:5). It was bounded on the east by Cilicia, on the north by Pisidia from which it was separated by the Taurus Mountains, on the west by Lycia, and on the south by the sea. Claudius made Pamphylia an imperial province, including in it the regions of Pisidia and Lycia which are distinguished from Pamphylia proper (Acts 13:13, 14; 14:24; 27:5). Its capital, Perga, was the first place in Asia Minor visited by Paul on his first missionary journey, and there Mark left him (Acts 13:13). On his return to Pisidia he preached at Perga and from Attalia sailed to Antioch (Act. 14:24–26). Men from Pamphylia were at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10).” WSNTDICT

¹⁴ “they reached Myra, or rather its port Andriakj (about 3 1/2 miles west by southwest of Myra itself). Andriakj was one of the chief ports of the imperial grain service. The site of ancient Myra, a city of Lycia, is now known as Kocademre or Old Demre (marked by remains of a theater, aqueduct, and rock tombs); modern Demre stands a mile to the south.” NICNT

¹⁵ “At Myra the first part of the journey came to an end. When the ship of Adramyttium put in at the port of Andriakj, there was a vessel there belonging to the grain fleet that plied between Egypt and Rome; it had set out from Alexandria and was on its way to Italy. Egypt was the chief granary of Rome, and the regular trade in grain between Alexandria and Puteoli or Ostia was of the highest importance; the political stability of Rome depended on it. The service of ships devoted to this trade was organized as a department of state. The corporation of owners of these ships received special recognition from the Roman state, for they were in practice its agents and concessionaires.” NICNT

¹⁶ “In the event, the “ship of Alexandria” which he found at Myra was indeed a grain ship (see p. 479, on v. 6), and if he was a *frumentarius*, this would account for the authority which he exercised on board (cf. v. 11).” NICNT

- Ended up off Cnidus,¹⁷ the wind didn't allow us to sail further – a port off of the city of Triopium, common to merchant ships.
 - We sailed¹⁸ under the lee of Crete off Salmone, coasting along it with difficulty – again they are using the island of Crete as a wind block.
 - Island of Crete¹⁹ – this is a very large island. Titus was the first pastor of that Christian church.
 - Salmone – this is the eastern extremity, or “cape” of Crete. They would sail around it.
 - We came to Fair Havens near the city of Lasea
 - Fair Havens – a small bay on the island of Crete
 - Lasea – it's a southern coastal town on the large island of Crete.
- Welcome to a REAL Christian Life – it's passages like this that remind us that a lot of the Christian life is normal. We read the highlight reel of the Biblical accounts and assume that Paul's life was exciting all the time. It wasn't. There were so many normal, boring, and even excruciatingly lame days. And that sometimes is what it looks like to be a faithful Christian. It's one thing to be bold and dramatic when huge events take place, but it's another thing to be the consistent, faithful, constant believer who lives for the Lord when nothing exciting is on the docket. Its' during the downtimes that we get to have connection and real relationship with the Lord. If a human relationship was only defined by a period of drama, it's unstable. We need to know what it's like to do every-day together.
- It's Coming
 - Paul Prophecies Danger and a Storm Arises
 - Ac 27:9–28:31 – *“Since much time had passed, and the voyage was now dangerous because even the Fast was already over, Paul advised them, ¹⁰ saying, “Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives.” ¹¹ But the centurion paid more attention to the pilot and to the owner of the ship than to what Paul said. ¹² And because the harbor was not suitable to spend the winter in, the majority decided to put out to sea from there, on the chance that somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, facing both southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there. ¹³ Now when the south wind blew gently, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, close to the shore. ¹⁴ But soon a tempestuous wind, called the northeaster²⁰, struck down from the land. ¹⁵ And when the ship was caught and could*

¹⁷ “a port on the Carian promontory of Triopium, which was frequented by merchant ships from Egypt.” NICNT

¹⁸ Here they had a choice of two alternatives. If they could put into port at Cnidus, they could wait there for a fair wind; there was ample accommodation at Cnidus, for it had two harbors, the eastern one being particularly large. When a fair wind came, they might then sail due west for the island of Cythera. But if they preferred to continue the voyage (which would probably be the shipowner's choice), their only course was to run for the eastern extremity of Crete (Cape Salmone) and, after rounding it, sail under the lee of that island (along its south coast). This is what they did;...” NICNT

¹⁹ “2914. Κρήτη *Krētē*; gen. *Krētēs*, fem. proper noun. Crete, a large Greek island in the Mediterranean Sea, midway between Syria and Italy. It is about 140 miles long by thirty-five miles wide. The people were proverbially said to be liars (Titus 1:12). Paul was shipwrecked near the island. He left Titus there as the first pastor and superintendent who was to “ordain elders in every city” of the island (Titus 1:5; see Acts 27:7, 12, 13, 21). It was said to have one hundred cities, from which it was known as *hekatópolis*.” NICNDT

²⁰ “The Byzantine text has the variant “Euroclydon.” NICNT

not face the wind, we gave way to it and were driven along.²¹ ¹⁶ Running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we managed with difficulty to secure the ship's boat.¹⁷ After hoisting it up, they used supports to undergird the ship. Then, fearing that they would run aground on the Syrtis, they lowered the gear²², and thus they were driven along."

- **Since much time had passed** – no matter how fast they tried to go, weather dictated the speed of travel and it had been awful. Everything was super slow and left them in the dangerous time of year to sail.
- **The voyage was now dangerous²³ because even the Fast was already over²⁴** – the 'fast' is the Day of Atonement, a high holy day for the Jews. The dangerous winter time to sail (when most all sailing was halted across the board) was September 14 to November 11. In AD 59, likely this year, the Day of Atonement landed on October 5th. That's right in the middle of the worst time to sail.
- **Paul advised the centurion and the crew** – actually it's more likely that when Paul saw the centurion go to a meeting with the ship's crew, he took him aside and gave his personal opinion. Paul likely had done a lot of sailing too and according to his testimony in 2 Corinthians 11:25ff, he had already been a part of at least one shipwreck if not two (he had 3 in total).
 - **Sirs** – Paul is honoring and not trying to be a problem. He knows that they shouldn't listen to him because he's not a respected sailor (regardless of the amount of personal experience he had – and he had a lot).
 - **I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss** – At this point we have no indicator that God has told him this prophetically. It seems that Paul is speaking out of personal experience here. By the end of his life he would have been shipwrecked 3 times. That's plenty of practical knowledge.
 - **Not just the cargo and ship but also of our lives** – He is trying to appeal to both their personal security as well as their financial security. He is really trying to get their attention and tell them that this is a bad idea.

"Euraquilo is a hybrid, from Gk. Ἐὐρος ("east wind") and *Aquilo* ("north wind"). It appears (with the spelling *Euroaquilo*) in Latin on a twelve-point wind-rose incised on a pavement at Thugga in the province of Africa, where (beginning from the north and reading clockwise) we find *septentrio aquilo euroaquilo [uo] Iturnus eurus ...* (CIL VIII.26652). See C. J. Hemer, "Euraquilo and Melita," *JTS* n.s. 26 (1975), pp. 100–111 (especially p. 103). In this article Hemer answers A. Acworth, "Where was St. Paul Shipwrecked? A Re-examination of the Evidence," *JTS* n.s. 24 (1973), pp. 190–93, where the reading "Euroclydon" is preferred and taken to mean a southeast wind. But a southeast wind would not have driven the ship under the lee of Cauda." NICNT

²¹ "There is an expanded Western reading: "We gave way to the wind that was blowing and shortened sail (συστείλαντες τὰ ἱστία) and, as happens in such cases, scudded before it." NICNT

²² "Gk. χαλάσαντες τὸ σκεῦος (σκεῦος being a word of indeterminate meaning—"instrument," "object," "thing"—as in 10:11)." NICNT

²³ "The dangerous season for sailing began about September 14 and lasted until November 11; after the latter date all navigation on the open sea came to an end until winter was over. They were now well into the dangerous season;..." NICNT

²⁴ "The Fast is the day of atonement (*Yôm Kippûr*), which falls on Tishri 10. Luke's remark has point only if it fell rather late in the solar calendar that year. In A.D. 59 it fell on October 5, but in all the neighboring years from 57 to 62 it fell earlier. A late date for the day of atonement is required also by the time notes of the subsequent journey to Italy. When they set sail from Fair Havens, fifty or sixty miles brought them under the lee of Cauda (v. 16); on the fourteenth night from Cauda they drew near the coast of Malta (v. 27), and the next day (v. 39) they landed on that island, where they spent three months (28:11). The seas were closed to sailing until the beginning of February at the earliest; the three months spent in Malta must therefore have corresponded roughly to November, December, and January, so they must have left Fair Havens not much before mid-October.³⁶ The solar date of the day of atonement in A.D. 59 thus accords well with Luke's implication that the Fast took place while they waited at Fair Havens." NICNT

- **The centurion paid more attention to the pilot²⁵ and ship owner** – I sure hope so. The ship owner was someone who owned the ship but was a contractor for the state transport of grain. He would hire his pilot/helmsman. However, the centurion who directly worked for the Roman Empire had the final say. It's likely that he was a centurion that primarily dealt with shipping and why he was chosen to take Paul to Rome in the first place. Therefore, he would make the final call. He did consider all the advice of the owner/pilot. That's a wise thing to do.
- **The harbor was not suitable to spend the winter in** – The centurion, the owner and the pilot all thought that they could risk sailing a bit more south to get to a better harbor since this one wasn't what they were looking for. It was risky.
- **The majority/centurion decided to put to sea²⁶** - majority of who? Why are we voting? It wasn't really a vote, but the centurion got to make the final call but wanted the input of the owner and pilot. Those 3 agreed.
- **On the chance that we could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete to stay there** – the goal was to get to an even more protected harbor a bit more south on the island of Crete than the one they were in which was open to a lot of the open sea and may have damaged the boat in port.
 - **On the chance?** – They really don't know how its going to go. They aren't thinking that they are going to risk their lives per se, but they do realize that they could waste a lot of time and maybe ruin their cargo. They are assuming that if things go really bad they can turn back around.
 - **Phoenix²⁷** – a port on the island of Crete.
 - **Crete** – this is a very large island. Titus was the first pastor of that Christian church.
 - **Facing both southwest and northwest²⁸** - this only matters due to the wind break which creates a safer harbor for the boat.
 - **Stay the winter there** – the winter season was at least 2 more months if not 3. They needed to stay somewhere, and they thought that Phoenix would provide the most accommodations. They were more concerned about themselves and the cargo than the prisoners well-being.

²⁵ “Gk. κυβερνήτης. According to Plutarch (*Precepts of Statecraft* 807B), “the helmsman (κυβερνήτης) chooses the sailors and the shipowner (ναύκληρος) chooses the helmsman.” NICNT

²⁶ The helmsman and shipowner,⁴⁰ however, thought that there was a chance of reaching a more commodious port farther west along the south coast of Crete, and the centurion, not unnaturally, accepted their view rather than Paul's. (The narrator seems to find the centurion's preference surprising, not to say reprehensible; this is one of the touches in which A. D. Nock and others have recognized “an authentic transcript of the recollections of an eyewitness, with the confusion and coloring which so easily attach themselves to recollections.”) A merchant-shipowner normally acted as captain of his own ship. The owner of this particular ship would be a contractor for the state transport of grain. But the final decision was left to the centurion, who (especially if he belonged to the corps of *frumentarii*) represented the Roman state. He ruled that the advice of the experts should be followed.” NICNT

²⁷ “Phoenix is described as a Cretan port facing southwest and northwest. The name is preserved to this day in Phineka Bay, on the west side of Cape Mouros, 34 miles west of Cape Matala and 33 miles east of the western end of the south coast of Crete. Before a seismic upheaval of the sixth century A.D., which raised the coast level here by tilting the island from west to east, this bay had two inlets, one facing southwest and one northwest, exactly as Luke says.” NICNT

²⁸ “The only sense that the Greek words can bear is that the harbor in question faced southwest and northwest, and Phineka Bay fits the description admirably. Its two sheltered inlets (as they then were) are still marked by raised beaches and the absence of traces of ancient occupation.” NICNT

- **It went well for a while** – since weather is fickle, it can come and go. They were happy with themselves at the beginning because things looked like they were going to go in their favor.
 - **The south wind blew gently** – there was a temporary break in the storm and the wind was actually in their favor to get down to Phoenix.
 - **Supposing they obtained they had obtained their purpose** – this was what they were betting on and the reason they decided to risk going a bit further south. You can imagine them all looking back at Paul with an, ‘I told you so,’ look.
 - **They weighed anchor** – this seems to indicate an anchor that would not completely stop the ship but keep it under control and slower so they could hug the coast better.
 - **Sailed along Crete, close to the shore** – they would have sailed west a bit around cape Matala, hugging the shore for wind protection.
- **But soon a tempestuous wind, called the Northeaster, struck down from the land** – it’s common for wind to rush down from Mt. Ida in the center of the island, causing gale-force winds to hit the water with fury.²⁹
- **When the ship was caught & we were driven along**
 - **Ship caught in the storm** – the term caught suggests that they didn’t indicate that it would be this big or this soon. They thought they had it handled. They didn’t. Massive storms are far more powerful than any ship and therefore the ship (and thus the crew) were under the control of the storm.
 - **Could not face the wind** – they were trying to sail into it whether by tacking (going back and forth to use the sails) or by another method. It wasn’t working. They were going nowhere and it was only getting worse as the waves were hitting the boat really hard which jeopardized the cargo as well as the integrity of the ship.
 - **We gave way to it** – this is a matter of stopping attempts to force their way and turning their sails down and letting the storm take them where it’s going to take them. They would assume that when it calms down they would have to get back on track and make up lost time and distance.
 - **We were driven along** – they were no longer directing it. They can steer to some degree, but they were not in charge. The storm was.
- **Running along under the lee of a small island called Cauda we managed to secure the ship’s boat**
 - **Under the lee of a small island** – again we are using wind blocks to avoid the worst of the storm.
 - **A small island named Cauda/Clauda³⁰** – not much is known other than it was a small island south of Crete.

²⁹ “Gk. άνεμος τυφωνικός. It may have had the effect of a whirlwind or cyclone when it first struck them, but thereafter it blew steadily in one direction. See also p. 486 with 60.” NICNT

³⁰ “Twenty-three miles or so to leeward lies the small island of Cauda or Claudia (modern Gavdhos, Italian Gozzo), under the lee of which they soon ran.” NICNT

- **Managed (with difficulty) to secure the ship's boat³¹** – what is this? This is a small dinghy that they would use to get to shore once the larger boat couldn't go any further in. It could be used as a life raft of sorts in an emergency. It was usually tied up on the side of the boat toward the front, but when massive storms hit, it would fill up with water and drive the nose of the ship down. They had to grab it during the storm and haul it onboard so it would stop causing more problems.
- **After hoisting it up** – it means they had to bring it onboard. It used to hang off the side/front, but now they need it fully onboard. That had to be done by manual labor.
- **They used supports to undergird the ship³²** – it was common to have cables around that you could throw down into the water and it would come up the other side, so you could tether the bottom of the ship together to give it an extra brace during incredibly rough storms. The bottom of the hull took the most pounding, especially if it hit things along the way. Therefore to have cables pulling it together with strength helps a lot.
- **In fear, they lowered the gear and were driven along**
 - **Fearing they would run aground** – the last thing that a ship wants is to hit something solid. Ships are built to handle water, waves, wind, and rain, but they aren't built great to handle slamming into solid objects. They didn't want to hit the shore and since they weren't in charge of the direction due to the severity of the storm, they were worried (and rightfully so).
 - **On the Syrtis³³** – it's a sandbank that ships would drive into and get stuck.
 - **They lowered the gear³⁴** – although the language and words that Luke used are not known and very general in nature (maybe he didn't know what it was called, he's not a sailor), it's assumed that they put a floating anchor weight out that would balance them during particularly tall and sharp waves. It would hold the back down as the nose went over the crest.
 - **And were driven along** – although they took precautions, it was clear that the storm was in control, not them.

³¹ "First of all they hauled the dinghy on board. The dinghy was normally towed astern, but was taken aboard in bad weather. On this occasion there had been no time to do so, so suddenly did Euraquilo burst upon them. By this time it must have been full of water, and this made it all the more difficult to secure it. "We succeeded, with difficulty, in securing the dinghy," says Luke, using the first person plural; there were certain jobs which only trained members of the crew could carry out, but any landlubber could haul on a rope, and able-bodied passengers were pressed into service. "With difficulty," says Luke, probably remembering his blisters!" NICNT

³² "The next thing to do was to undergird the ship, passing cables around it transversely underneath in order to hold the timbers together. The word which Luke uses for these cables means literally "helps"; it appears in other Greek authors in a nautical context such as this. The typhoon is described by Pliny the elder as "the chief plague of sailors, breaking up not only the spars but the hull itself." As a safety measure, ancient vessels were provided with cables ready fitted for bracing the hulls to enable them to resist the destructive force of such winds. The undergirding operation is best illustrated by an Egyptian drawing of an expedition of Queen Hatshepsut to the land of Punt (Somalia?) in the late sixteenth century B.C., reproduced on a special series of Egyptian postage stamps issued to mark the International Congress of Navigation at Cairo in 1926." NICNT

³³ "4950. σύρτις *súrtis*; gen. *surtéōs*, fem. noun from *súro* (4951), to draw. A sandbank, shoal or quicksand, so-called because ships running into it are held fast and gradually sink into it—thus becoming a great danger to navigation (Acts 27:17)." WSNTDICT

"the Greater Syrtis, quicksands off the African coast, west of Cyrene. (The Lesser Syrtis lay still farther west.) NICNT

³⁴ "So, says Luke, they "lowered the instrument," not being more specific perhaps because he did not know, or did not remember, the technical name for whatever it was that was lowered. The most probable account is that they dropped a floating anchor or drift anchor, which was dragged astern at the end of a rope of suitable length so as to offer the maximum resistance every time the ship plunged down from the crest of a wave." NICNT

- **Why Does God Let Bad Things Happen to His People?** – every Christian has to ask the question over and over about why God is allowing bad things to happen to His people. **We wouldn't willingly let our own children go through some of the things that God lets us go through, so does that make us better parents? No.** Different rules, different reality, different experience. God is perfect and knows all things. We are dramatically limited in our perception of reality. We are the kids in this scenario. **Think back to how we viewed our parents when we were little.** They did weird stuff to us and stopped fun when we thought it should continue. They blocked us from some exciting things. They made us do boring or miserable things like chores and eating broccoli. What we didn't know is the bigger picture. **We didn't know how much we needed preparation for the next.** God knows the same thing with us.
 - **Believers have always questioned God's intentions toward them** – When Lazarus died, Martha and Mary said it wouldn't have happened if Jesus had been there. But He had intentionally waited for His friend to die. The disciples screamed, 'don't you care if we drown?' in the boat rocked by a storm but Jesus is sleeping. And remember Jesus was watching from the shore as the disciples rowed against the storm and got nowhere, in another story. But the truth is, **they questioned His motives WHILE He was on His way to the cross FOR THEM.**
- **Supernatural Encounters and Encouragements**
 - **Things Become Desperate but God Assures Paul**
 - **Ac 27:18–26** – *“Since we were violently storm-tossed, they began the next day to jettison the cargo. ¹⁹ And on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. ²⁰ When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days [11 to be exact], and no small tempest lay on us, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned.³⁵ ²¹ Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul stood up among them and said, “Men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete and incurred this injury and loss. ²² Yet now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. ²³ For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, ²⁴ and he said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.’ ²⁵ So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. ²⁶ But we must run aground on some island.”*
 - **Since we were so violently storm-tossed** – it was no longer a bad storm, it was a severe storm, and it was not something they could continue to deal with. The ship was not handling it with the added weight of the cargo so something had to be done.
 - **They began the next day to jettison the cargo³⁶** - this is a grain ship that above all needed to protect it's grain. Other paying customers would have come aboard

³⁵ “Lit., “all hope of our coming safely through was henceforth being taken away” (λοιπὸν περιηραεῖτο ἐλπίς πάσα τοῦ σώζεσθαι ἡμᾶς).” NICNT

³⁶ “The next day, as there was no abatement of the gale, they began to jettison some of the cargo. True, the narrator does not say that it was some of the cargo that was jettisoned, but it cannot well have been anything else. Since the transport of grain was the purpose of the ship's voyage, on which the shipowner's livelihood depended, the sacrifice of even part of it stressed the desperateness of the situation.” NICNT

wanting to sail somewhere with private cargo, along with the crews cargo. Those are all privately owned items. They added weight to the ship which made the ship too heavy to ride out a storm like this. They threw it overboard into the sea and it was lost.

- **On the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands**
 - **What's ship's tackle?**³⁷ – the tackle is a general way of a non-sailor (Luke the author) to describe, 'ship stuff'. They were throwing overboard any unnecessary rigging or extra sails or extra equipment. They needed everything gone.
 - **Why throw it overboard?** – to alleviate the weight on the ship so that it could ride higher in the water and not take on so much water. An empty ship will ride on top of the waves. A full ship will sink down deeper and fight THROUGH the waves. It was too dangerous for that.
 - **When God Let's Good Things Be Taken Away** – I think that most of us who have been living with the Lord for a logn time have experienced important and valuable things being taken from us despite our prayers and pleas to God. Why would He let valuable things be taken out of our lives? **Usually it is one of two reasons: 1.) it was not about us and it needed to happen for something greater; 2.) God is lightening our load for another purpose to come.**
- **It was dark for many days and we were in a severe storm**
 - **Neither the sun nor stars appeared for many days** – this has to do with both navigation issues as well as sheer desperation that you don't have light for days and it's so bleak and hopeless because you don't know how long that's going to last.
 - **No small tempest lay on us** – for Luke to comment over and over on how bad the storm was, and being close to Paul who was a weathered sailor himself, it's clear that this was not normal. It was brutal. Even the sailors were freaked out.
- **All hope of our being saved was at last abandoned** – this is a statement of desperation and giving up hope. Even the professionals knew that it wasn't going to end well for them. The ship was going to do what it was going to do and no matter of excellent sailing was going to get them out of this. Either they ran aground or capsized, but it wasn't in their control.
- **Paul talks to the crew**
 - **Since they had been without food for a long time** – they were not only too busy to eat and too worried to eat (and most of them that weren't sailors were probably seasick and couldn't eat), but they didn't know how long they were going to be stuck out there and didn't want to eat up the stored food in case they were stuck somewhere for weeks or months.

³⁷ "The following day, a more drastic measure was necessary: the spare gear had to go if the ship was to have any chance of surviving. Smith suggests that "the mainyard is meant; an immense spar, probably as long as the ship, which would require the united efforts of passengers and crews to launch overboard." The KJV uses the first person plural here—"we threw it out with our own hands"—and while this reading is not nearly so well supported as the third person, there is no doubt that, as Ramsay says, it "greatly increases the effect." NICNT

- **Paul stood up among them and said** – this seems to be a bit of a calm in the tempest if he is able to stand up and get their attention. It's a bold move to be a passenger/prisoner and stand up to say anything. Why should they listen to you?
 - **You should have listened to me and didn't sail** – this is an, 'I told you so' statement. I don't know if it was frustration or trying to gain more respect for what he's about to say next.
 - **You wouldn't have had all this loss** – many of those on board were concerned about living through it, but the professionals were mostly counting all the money they just lost and how they were going to dig out from that hole if they got through it alive.
 - **Yet, I urge you to take heart** – This is a shift to trying to encourage them.
 - **There will be no loss of life** – 'no one is going to die on this trip.' That's a crazy statement to make. How would he know? Desperate men may have clung to his words, but they had to have some doubt that this preacher guy would have any clue as to what is going to happen to them.
 - **The ship will be lost, however** – this is going to cause a groan from the owner and the crew, but there's a but involved. Maybe they were all so desperate they didn't even care about cargo or ship anymore.
 - **Here's how I know**
 - **I had an angel visit me** – one benefit of the ancient world is that people were more willing to believe in the supernatural. Some of that was misguided superstition and naïve/ignorant lore, but they were willing to believe in gods/goddesses and beings from another dimension that had more control than we do down here. Paul's reference to an angel (messenger of God) made sense to them although not all would be believing what he said. They were at least desperate enough to listen.
 - **An angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship** – I love this description. I belong to God. I worship this God. The passengers knew all about worshipping gods and devotion. Paul was highlighting that it didn't matter at that moment what gods they all believed in, the one that he believed in showed up in their moment of need. He is a personal God to Paul not a distant God.
 - **He said, 'do not be afraid Paul'** – why does God say, 'don't be afraid'? Because the person IS AFRAID. Paul was afraid. Paul is a human being with human limitations. Just because he is ready to die for Jesus Christ doesn't mean he's ready today to die by drowning. He was afraid. But God sent an angel to encourage him and tell him that the situation was different than he assumed. God was deeply involved and had a plan.

- **‘you must stand before Caesar’³⁸** – this was a repeat of a message he received from God 2 years prior, that he would get to Rome. That is a lot of assurance by God. God didn’t have to do that, but in kindness He did.
- **And behold** – this is another way of saying, ‘seriously, check this out. It’s important.’
- **God has granted you all those who sail with you** – This is a cool message. God had a plan for Paul, and it would allow God’s favor and mercy to spill out on the whole team that was with him. God could have said, you will live but all these pagans will die. But God was using Paul as salt and light to be a testimony to God’s realness and personalness.
- **So, take heart men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told** – They may not have any faith or hope, so Paul used his to help them. He was so confident that he was inspiring to them. He believed what God said 100% and that made it fact to him.
- **But, we must run aground on some island** – perhaps the most helpful part and rather funny part is that he had to add the plan and it was a bit rough. He practically said, ‘BUT...we have to shipwreck on an island...just letting you know.’ The point in telling them that was so that WHEN it happened it wasn’t a shock. It was part of the plan. It’s one thing to know what difficulty we are going to face versus being shocked by it. Usually it’s the unknown that freaks us out the most.
 - **The Importance of God Encounters** – I have mentioned this a couple times during this series, so I’ll mention it again: We desperately NEED God encounters in our lives. We cannot rely simply on mental acceptance and dry logic to carry our relationship with God during difficult times. In the most brutal times of our lives we will look back to personal encounters, times when God met us, times when God was with us in the darkness or even the great and wonderful times of miracles. Unfortunately too many of us avoid emotional times with God or avoid experiences with God since they are too unpredictable. We are only willing to go so far in the weird of God and we keep Him at arm’s length. **God is supernatural and other, that makes Him weird by default. If we never let Him be weird, we may never experience Him fully. It’s the experiences that builds relationship.**
 - **The Faith to Hang on to God Messages** – there’s something beautiful when God comes to us in the dark times and shares encouragement. But once He shares it, it is incumbent upon us to hang on to that message, because things aren’t done being bad.

³⁸ “In a vision when his life was endangered at Jerusalem two years previously he had received the assurance that he would survive to bear witness at Rome (23:11); this assurance was now repeated and amplified.” NICNT

They may even get worse. Faith is defined as hanging on to what God says when circumstances are distracting and pressing you to disbelieve Him.

- **Salt & Light**

- **Paul Leads the Crew at its Worst Time**

- **Ac 27:27–44** – *“When the fourteenth night had come, as we were being driven across the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors suspected that they were nearing land. ²⁸ So they took a sounding and found twenty fathoms. A little farther on they took a sounding again and found fifteen fathoms. ²⁹ And fearing that we might run on the rocks, they let down four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come. ³⁰ And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, and had lowered the ship’s boat into the sea under pretense of laying out anchors from the bow, ³¹ Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, “Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.” ³² Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship’s boat and let it go. ³³ As day was about to dawn, Paul urged them all to take some food, saying, “Today is the fourteenth day that you have continued in suspense and without food, having taken nothing. ³⁴ Therefore I urge you to take some food. For it will give you strength, for not a hair is to perish from the head of any of you.” ³⁵ And when he had said these things, he took bread, and giving thanks to God in the presence of all he broke it and began to eat. ³⁶ Then they all were encouraged and ate some food themselves. ³⁷ (We were in all 276 persons in the ship.) ³⁸ And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea. ³⁹ Now when it was day, they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach, on which they planned if possible to run the ship ashore. ⁴⁰ So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea, at the same time loosening the ropes that tied the rudders. Then hoisting the foresail to the wind they made for the beach. ⁴¹ But striking a reef, they ran the vessel aground. The bow stuck and remained immovable, and the stern was being broken up by the surf. ⁴² The soldiers’ plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any should swim away and escape. ⁴³ But the centurion, ³⁹ wishing to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for the land, ⁴⁴ and the rest on planks or on pieces of the ship. And so it was that all were brought safely to land.”*

- **When the 14th night had come** – this is 2 weeks into a terrible trip. Feeling scared, sick, and miserable (cold, wet) for 2 weeks must have felt like forever. They didn’t know it was going to be over any time soon. It could have, in their mind lasted another month.

- **As we were being driven across the “Adriatic Sea”⁴⁰** –it was actually the center of the Mediterranean Sea, not the proper Adriatic Sea, which

³⁹ “The Old Latin text of *gigas*, perhaps preserving the original Western reading, runs as follows: “But the centurion forbade this to be done, principally on Paul’s account, in order to save him. And he commanded those who could swim to get to land first, and some of the rest to make their way to safety on planks; and thus all the souls escaped safe to the land.” NICNT

⁴⁰ “The “sea of Adria” mentioned in verse 27 is the central Mediterranean; it is so called in several places in ancient literature.” NICNT

although nearby is a long ways off their trajectory and doesn't correspond to the directions Luke is giving. The translation is 'sea of Adria' which was used many times to describe this location.

- **About midnight the sailors suspected they were nearing land⁴¹** – they were hearing what's called 'breakers', which are waves hitting against rocks. Every sailor knows the sounds of danger and this is one of them. Usually you can sail around them, but if you are not in control of your ship, they are your worst nightmare. Although it means that land is nearby (good news), it means that you are not only going to lose your ship, but the waves might beat you to death on the rocks when the ship breaks up (bad news).
- **They took soundings** – this is an ancient way of determining depth. They would lower weights on ropes and see how long it would take to hit the ground. They would mark the depth each time to see if it was getting deeper or shallower.
 - **20 fathoms then 15⁴²** – getting closer to land as it's getting shallower.
- **Fearing that we might run on the rocks they dropped anchor**
 - **Run on the rocks** – this is worst case scenario. A ship can handle a lot on the water, but not a lot on the rocks. When the hull hits rocks it breaks apart, which allows leaks, which allows sinking, which causes death. Also if you are on the rocks in as storm you can't jump overboard or you'll be killed on the rocks.
 - **Let down 4 anchors from the stern⁴³** – the stern is the back of the boat. The bow is the front. They let down 4 anchors to try to stop advancement and wait until daylight to come so they can see what they are up against. The anchors and boat may or may not hold through the night but it was better than just driving it into the rocks.
 - **Prayed for day to come** – there was nothing they could do except hope and pray.

⁴¹ "some land was resounding in their ears"—that is, the breakers could be heard. Had it been daylight, they would have seen the breakers as well as heard them. For, as Smith tells us, no ship can enter St. Paul's Bay from the east without passing within a mile of the point of Koura; when she comes within that distance (and only then), the breakers cannot fail to be seen, for they are specially violent there in a northeast wind." NICNT

⁴² "The soundings recorded in verse 28 indicate that the ship was passing Koura, a point on the east coast of Malta, on her way into St. Paul's Bay. "But the distance from Clauda to the point of Koura ... is 476.6 miles, which, at the rate as deduced from the information ..., would take exactly thirteen days, one hour, and twenty-one minutes." Not only so: "The coincidence of the actual bearing of St. Paul's Bay from Clauda, and the direction in which a ship must have driven in order to avoid the Syrtis, is if possible still more striking than that of the time actually consumed, and the calculated time." Then, after carefully reckoning the direction of the ship's course from the direction of the wind, from the angle of the ship's head with the wind, and from the leeway, he goes on: "Hence according to these calculations, a ship starting late in the evening from Clauda would, by midnight on the 14th, be less than three miles from the entrance of St. Paul's Bay. I admit that a coincidence so very close as this, is to a certain extent accidental, but it is an accident which could not have happened had there been any inaccuracy on the part of the author of the narrative with regard to the numerous incidents upon which the calculations are founded, or had the ship been wrecked anywhere but at Malta, for there is no other place agreeing, either in name or description, within the limits to which we are tied down by calculations founded upon the narrative." NICNT

⁴³ "It was dangerous to go any farther in the dark; the breakers warned them of rocks ahead, so they dropped four anchors to serve as a brake until daylight showed them where they were. The anchors were dropped from the stern—an unusual procedure, but advantageous in certain circumstances, as naval commanders have known in ancient and modern times⁸¹ (it obviates the necessity of exposing the weak points of ships to the enemy in turning around, when the enemy fleet is drawn up along the shore). On this occasion the prow kept pointing to the shore whereas, had they anchored by the bow, the ship would have swung around from the wind. The ship was thus in readiness to be beached when day broke and the anchor cables were cut." NICNT

- **Some sailors tried to escape**
 - **As the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship** – all of them? It sounds like all of them, but although it may have been the majority, I'm not sure all of them would be able to fit in the dinghy so it was probably a portion of them who came up with this plan.
 - **Lowered the ship's boat into the sea under pretense of setting anchors** – They were trying to be sneaky and lowered the dinghy into the water saying that they needed to in order to set the floating anchors properly. This was a lie. They didn't need to do that. They were trying to escape.
- **Paul said to the centurion and soldiers, don't let them do that**
 - **How many soldiers?** – it's not clear how many soldiers were on board, but the best amount to assume is, ENOUGH. We find out later that there were 276 people on board. What percentage were crew? Soldiers? Passengers? Prisoners? We don't know.
 - **Who's in charge?** – why is Paul always coming up with the plans? Did the other ones not notice, and Paul is the eye-spy-guy? Or did the other one's not care (although taking the life boat is a big deal). Maybe God let Paul see stuff that other people couldn't. Clearly God kept putting Paul into a place to inform others as an authority.
 - **Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved⁴⁴** - it's likely that Paul knew they still needed the sailors for the shipwrecking part on the island and if they bail now, it's all over.
- **The soldiers cut away the boat and let it go** – The soldiers got the crew back in the boat under threat and shut down the secret plan. They knew that others would try again later so they cut the dinghy/life boat free and let it sail away.
 - **The Temptation to Control Our Destiny** – Notice that **the crew** wanted to desperately control their own destiny. **They blocked out all other wisdom and were only thinking about their current needs. They wanted to be free of the fear and the pain, so they were going to be selfish and defy God's will. Does that sound familiar? We do that all the time? But the truth that Paul reminded them was that freedom and hope only happens when we are aligned in God's will, not outside of it. Outside of it will only bring more pain and loss.**
 - **There's only ONE WAY to be saved** – This is a beautiful picture of **Jesus** saying the same thing to all of us. **IF you stay WITH ME, you will be saved.** If you try to do this another way, or on your own, you will be lost. Jesus is the **ONLY** Way to heaven. There is no other Savior who can get you there.
- **As day (15) was about to dawn Paul had a message for the crew**
 - **It was still dark (about to dawn)** – When everyone is miserable and there's been no light for a long time, no one is sleeping on a normal schedule.

⁴⁴ "Why the sailors' presence aboard was necessary for the safety of all is not expressly said; but plainly it would have been disastrous had the ship been left as it was with no skilled hands to work it." NICNT

Everyone is just trying to survive. So early in the morning before it was even dawn (think 3am), Paul has a meeting with everyone.

- **Paul urged them all to take some food** – we see again that no one has been eating and Paul knows that things are about to turn the corner and they will need their strength.
- **Today is the 14th day you've been scared and eaten nothing** – this is a great description of why some of them weren't eating.
- **Take some food, it will give you strength** – They were all really weak and scared. When they get food in their stomach they would be able to have some energy back. Paul knew prophetically that they would need it for the next part of their journey coming rapidly.
- **Don't worry, not a hair is to perish from the head of any of you** – this is a tender way of saying, 'you are going to be okay.' I'm sure that this was a metaphorical figure of speech that everyone understood because clearly hairs were falling out every day normally.
- **Paul took bread, and gave thanks to God** – the way that Luke writes it is like communion (Eucharist), which seems intentional. It was NOT a communion meal about Jesus. It was just a meal. But to Paul it was remembering the great things that God HAD done and WILL do, so it was spiritually meaningful. Many scholars believe that one of Luke's goals was to connect the story of Paul with the story of Jesus and we have a tie in here.
- **In the presence of all he began to eat** – instead of telling the frightened people, he demonstrated with his own provisions. He believed it enough to do something about it (faith).
- **They were all encouraged and ate some themselves** – they were finally talked and shown out of their fear and started to eat.
- **There were 276 of us on board the ship**⁴⁵ - they would have counted at this point since they needed to divvy up the food equally.
- **When they had eaten enough they threw the excess away**
 - **When they had eaten enough** – how much is enough? It's as much as your body is comfortable eating after all that time and in those conditions.
 - **They lightened the ship** – again, they want the ship as light as possible to ride on top of the water.
 - **Throwing out the wheat into the sea** – this was partly their provisions for eating but certainly the massive amount of grain cargo they were supposed to use for commerce and it was very expensive.
- **The 15th Day**
 - **They didn't recognize the land but noticed a bay with a beach** – we will find out soon that it was the island of Malta which WAS a normal sailing stop. The

⁴⁵ "The mention of the number in the context of the meal suggests that it was necessary to count them in order to divide the available bread among them fairly." NICNT

difference this time is that it was a different, unsafe portion of the island for ships, so no one recognized it in the chaotic storm.

- **They planned, if possible, to run the ship ashore there** – they knew they needed to get off the water if they had any chance. They saw a beach and beaches mean sand instead of rocks, they hoped they could steer it into the narrow inlet.
- **They cast off anchors and left them in the sea** – this was an all or nothing move because they couldn't use them later. It was a commitment to beaching the ship here.
- **They loosened the ropes that tied the rudders** – they had tied the rudders so that the ship didn't go into a spin. Now it was time to use the rudders to steer so they unhooked them.
- **They hoisted the foresail and directed toward the beach⁴⁶** – the foresail was a smaller sail that was used for extra control on direction/steering.
- **But, striking a reef they ran the vessel aground** – unfortunately instead of hitting a sand bar or getting closer to the beach sand, they hit a reef. Reef is not good. Reef is sharp and jagged and almost worse than rocks.
 - **The bow stuck and remained immovable** – This is a permanent situation. The bow is the front of the boat, the direction they were heading. Once it stops all the force of the waves hit the back.
 - **The stern was being broken up by the surf⁴⁷** - the back of the boat was being beat up and torn apart by the waves hitting it ferociously and it was unmoving.
- **The soldiers plan was to kill the prisoners⁴⁸** – The boat crew had their job and the soldiers had their job. Both had cargo they needed to get back or get rid of depending. The soldiers came up with a plan to kill the prisoners because if any escaped it would cost them their lives when they got back home to Rome.
 - **Lest any swim away and escape** – in all the chaos, once they got off the ship there was no telling who was going to go where.
 - **But the centurion stopped them**
 - **The centurion wishing to save Paul** – again we see the favor that Paul had with Julius (due to God). To Julius it may have felt like genuine

⁴⁶ “Gk. ἀρτέμων, the earliest occurrence of the word in Greek literature. Its absence earlier is accidental, for it certainly existed; it appears as a loanword in Latin in *Vitruvius*, who wrote under Augustus, meaning the main block of a tackle (*On Architecture* 10.2.9). In a nautical context it was used of “a smaller sail in the forepart of a ship, by which the speed is not increased but the course is directed” (S. A. Naber, “Nautica,” p. 269).” NICNT

⁴⁷ “St. Paul’s Bay is sheltered on the northwest by the island of Salmonetta, which is separated from the Maltese mainland by a narrow channel about a hundred yards wide. This channel is the place “between two seas.” Here the ship, in Smith’s words, “would strike a bottom of mud graduating into tenacious clay, into which the fore part would fix itself and be held fast, whilst the stern was exposed to the force of the waves.” After the long battering which the ship had endured for the past two weeks, its exposed part could not take this further punishment, and it quickly disintegrated.” NICNT

⁴⁸ “In accordance with traditional Roman discipline, the soldiers were responsible for the safekeeping of the prisoners in their charge. But now it would be easy for some of the prisoners to escape in the general confusion of abandoning ship. The soldiers, therefore, decided to forestall any such attempt by slaughtering them.” NICNT

respect for this man of God who had handled himself so brilliantly and seemed like such a great leader.

- **Kept them from carrying out their plan** – he talked them down. Although he was their boss and could order them, some of them didn't want to risk their own life and would have been tempted to defy his orders in order to save their skin.
- **He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard and make for the beach** – IF you CAN swim, go for it. We'll see ya at the beach.
- **The rest should hang on to pieces of the ship** – If you CAN'T swim, then I recommend you grab onto something that floats and hope for the best. The waves should shove you forward into the beach. Good luck.
- **All were brought safely to land** – they all made it. That's a miracle. 276 people in a dangerous situation in a dangerous part of the ocean (storm + reef) should have resulted in the loss of life. But God kept His promise to Paul. God was wooing the crew/passengers.
 - **St. Paul's Bay** – today this location is marked out as St. Paul's bay for this very historical moment. You can visit it today. How funny that one of Paul's terrible encounters is later visited as a tourist location.
 - **WHY did all that need to happen?** – there is an **absurdity** to asking God the question WHY. **We couldn't understand it if He told us.** Think about a **two year old asking why we are leaving Disneyland and stopping the fun.** They cannot comprehend levels of tiredness, the concept of tomorrow having more to do, the breakdown on their system and decreasing benefit. They can't understand limitations of finance, nor the limitations of the parents. They can't understand any of it but all they know is that what was good has now gone bad...and they cry.
- **Estimating Extremes**
 - **Paul Arrives on Malta to Varying Degrees of Welcome**
 - **Ac 28:1-6** – *“After we were brought safely through, we then learned that the island was called Malta. ² The native people showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and was cold. ³ When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand. ⁴ When the native people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, “No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live.” ⁵ He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. ⁶ They were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw no misfortune come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.”*

- **After we were brought safely through** – how do you define safely? I think it's funny that Luke used the word *safely*. A shipwreck isn't safe to me. But they lived. I guess that's what he meant.
- **We learned this island was called Malta** – I think that the sailors realized it later and certainly the passengers and prisoners were made aware. They wouldn't have intuitively known.
- **The native people showed us unusual kindness**⁴⁹ - The 'native' to the island people. They were considered by the Roman Empire barbarians since they were not part of the Roman world the same way in ethnicity.
 - **They kindled a fire** – they knew that a waterlogged group coming in from the sea must be terribly cold and would likely die of hypothermia.
 - **They welcomed us all** – this is a statement of kindness.
 - **Because it was cold and had begun to rain** – they knew it looked miserable and dangerous.
- **When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks for the fire** – Paul is a BOSS. He was helpful the whole trip. He was using his own hands to help haul stuff in on the boat and now that they were on land he was helpful again, gathering fire wood. That's incredible. He's a prisoner that just escaped death. He could have just cowered in the corner by the fire, but he didn't. He was going to lead by example.
- **A viper fastened on his hand** – this is where you have to ask yourself, if you are Paul, 'what in the world, God? C'mon, I'm bit by a snake after all that? Sheesh! Give me a break!' But what's interesting is that it wasn't random. It was purposeful. It hurt but it was useful to God. There is speculation about what type of snake it was. The local villagers thought it was venomous so it must have been. They would have known.
 - **It came out of the pile due to the heat of the fire** – some speculate that in the cold the snake would have been rather immovable and frozen in the pile (cold blooded animals need heat to move around) so either Paul thought it was as stick in the dark or it was hiding in the clump of sticks to try to keep warm. When it got near the fire either it warmed up and moved or it freaked out from being about to be thrown into the fire. Either way it reacted and came out and bit Paul.
 - **When the natives saw this they determined Paul must be a murderer**
 - **When they saw the creature hanging from his hand** – it was fastened on there really strongly, which means it's likely it had fangs. The traditional viper bites and then retracts, which cause speculation about what type of snake it was. The bottom line is that it was a venomous snake that hangs on.

⁴⁹ "The native Maltese were largely of Phoenician extraction, and their language was a Phoenician dialect. They were thus regarded by both Greeks and Romans as "barbarians"—people who spoke a foreign tongue.⁷ But on this occasion, if they were barbarians in speech, they showed themselves truly civilized in behavior; they received the 276 shipwrecked people with warm hospitality. It was a cold, rainy morning, and the men from the wrecked ship were wet and shivering as they came ashore; how good it was to see the fire which the Maltese had kindled for them to warm and dry themselves!" NICNT

- **They said to one another** – the villagers may have spoken another language, but they were chatting amongst themselves about the strange visitors that just came to their shore. They are watching it almost like a TV show.
- **‘no doubt this man is a murderer’** – this is a rough quick label to put on someone. But hey, why not? They don’t know this guy.
- **‘though he has escaped from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live.’** – their reasoning was that clearly this guy was cursed. He just got out a shipwreck and now was bit by a venomous snake. Clearly the universe wants this guy dead. He must be a bad guy.
- **Paul shook off the snake into the fire** – Again, Paul’s a boss. No worries, mate. I’ll just shake this thing off and go on about my business.
- **Paul suffered no harm** – he was fine. No effect of the venom.
- **The villagers were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead** – I think this is so funny. They are fascinated by watching to see what happens. No one steps in to help with the venom problem. Clearly they know how to handle a bite like this but they are observing like a anthropologist.
- **But after awhile they determined he was a god**
 - **But after waiting a long time** – they wanted to make sure it wasn’t simply slow-acting or that he had a strong immune system.
 - **And saw no misfortune came to him** – he didn’t die horribly.
 - **They changed their minds and said he was a god** – check out that radical shift. From murderer to a god! Well, clearly they are good at reading people, right? Goodness gracious.
 - **Don’t Let Human Beings Determine Your Worth or Identity** – Human beings only have part of the puzzle. They don’t know what God knows. They have all sorts of opinions but they are all immature. Therefore we cannot rely on the perspective of a human being to tell us what we are worth or our identity. **They don’t know and CAN’T know. We must only receive that from our Creator.**
- **Power Evangelism & Purpose in Diversion**
 - **Paul Heals the Chief’s Father**
 - **Ac 28:7-10** – *“Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man⁵⁰ of the island, named Publius, who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days. ⁸It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him, healed him. ⁹And when this had taken place, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured. ¹⁰They also honored us greatly, and when we were about to sail, they put on board whatever we needed.”*
 - **Nearby there was a chief man of the island**

⁵⁰ “The expression “the chief man of the island”—literally, “the first man of the island”—is probably an official designation: it appears on a Maltese inscription.” NICNT

- **In the neighborhood of that place** – this simply means nearby.
- **There were lands owned by the chief of the island** – the big dog of the island, the chief lived nearby and was wealthy and owned a lot of land around that area.
- **His name was Publius** – terrible name. Sounds too much like ‘pubic’ to me. But I’m a child.
- **He received us, hospitably** – he was super nice to them. He could have seen them as a threat but didn’t. This must have been the favor of God again.
- **He entertained us** – he would have brought out food and entertainment like dancers.
- **For 3 days** – they were there for 3 days being taken care of before they were able to be helpful to the natives. It’s likely that the centurion and a contingent of others went to walk to another part of the island to go get help and a replacement boat. Malta is not that remote. It was on the normal shipping lanes.
- **The chief’s father was very sick**
 - **He was sick with fever and dysentery** – It just so happens (God divine appointment) that Publius’ dad was super sick and dying due to dysentery. If not treated it leads to dehydration and death.
 - **Paul visited him** – again, Paul was willing to help in any way that he could. He didn’t have any assurance that God would heal on this island, but he may as well try.
 - **Paul prayed** – I always find this fascinating that in the Book of Acts (and gospels) they separate praying from healing. First they pray. What are they praying about? Empowerment to do it? For God to move? I don’t know.
 - **Then Paul put his hands on him** – it says, THEN Paul put his hands on him to heal him. Usually we do those things simultaneously. Should we? I don’t know. The healing with hands on seems to be a proclamation of healing AFTER the prayer part is done.
 - **Paul healed him** – and God let Paul heal him. Amazing!
- **Revival & Healing Time**
 - **When this had taken place the rest of the people who had diseases also came and were cured** – word spread and again Paul was down to help out. God moved powerfully and we have a healing revival now.
 - **They honored us greatly** – this sure turned out well for the native group. They took a risk and it paid off. They were very thankful.
 - **When it was time for us to sail, they loaded us with whatever we needed** - Where did they get a new ship? There was one on the other side of the island and Julius was important enough to get it quickly. But notice that after losing everything they were loaded up with more than enough to continue what God needed them to do. This is a powerful lesson for us.

- **A day later a south wind sprang up and by the following day we arrived at Puteoli⁵⁴** – a harbor town in the Bay of Naples Italy.
 - **There, we found brothers and were invited to stay with them for 7 days** – this was a Christian community in Puteoli. It makes sense when you know that Puteoli was actually the oldest Jewish community in Italy, after Rome.
- **We arrived at Rome (by land⁵⁵)** – they would have finished the final part of the trip by land on the Appian Way trail (common merchant traveling trail). And they got there just like God said they would.
 - **They made it just like God said** – God told Paul he would get to Rome and get to Rome he did. It was messy and crazy but he got him there. **He could have allowed Paul a direct and easy route, but that would have negated a revival on the island of Malta and 276 people experiencing God on the ship.** The point of life, in God’s perspective, is not to get from point A to point B as easy and seamlessly as possible. It’s what happens on the journey and what it does to us along the way.
 - **The brothers there, when they heard about us, came from far away**
 - **The Christian church at Rome⁵⁶** – Paul didn’t start this church in Rome. It was started a long time before, likely either from those saved at Pentecost or those who were part of the Diaspora (driving out of Jerusalem due to persecution after Stephen’s stoning). They were more settled.
 - **They came from far away⁵⁷** - they knew about Paul because he was famous at that time AND he had written them a letter 3 years prior.
 - **As far as the Forum of Appius** – 23 miles from Rome on the Appian Way.
 - **As far as the Three Taverns** – 33 miles from Rome on the Appian Way.
 - **When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage**
 - **Why they mattered so much⁵⁸** – Paul had written a letter to them 3 years prior and now he was able to see them face to face.
 - **Thanking God** – the only reason he was alive and healthy was that God protected him.

⁵⁴ “a south wind arose after one day, and the following day brought them to Puteoli (Pozzuoli) in the Bay of Naples, “having accomplished a distance of about 180 nautical miles in less than two days.” “Puteoli was then, as it is now,” Smith continues, “the most sheltered part of the Bay of Naples. It was the principal port of southern Italy, and, in particular, it was the great emporium for the Alexandrian wheat-ships.”

⁵⁵ “A few miles’ journey from Puteoli brought them on to the Appian Way, one of the great Roman roads of south Italy, named after Appius Claudius, in whose censorship it was planned (312 B.C.). Along this road they made for Rome.” NICNT

⁵⁶ “When the Christian community in Rome came into being is uncertain, but when Paul sent his letter to the Roman church early in A.D. 57 it was already a well-established church, renowned for its faith and loyalty throughout all the churches. It may well have been one of the earliest churches to be founded outside Judaea and Syria, and ten or eleven years before Paul’s arrival in Rome the introduction of the gospel into the Jewish community there, as we have seen, appears to have led to riots which brought down the imperial displeasure on the community.” NICNT

⁵⁷ “But news of their approach had reached the Christians of the capital already (conveyed, probably, by their brothers in Puteoli); and a number of them set out southward along the Appian Way to meet Paul and escort him for the remainder of his journey to Rome. Some of them got as far as Tres Tabernae (“the Three Taverns”), a halting place on the Appian Way about thirty-three miles from Rome; others walked ten miles farther and met him at Appii Forum (“the marketplace of Appius”).” NICNT

⁵⁸ “it was three years since he had sent his letter to the Christians there to prepare them for his projected visit. Now his prayer was granted and, in circumstances which he had not foreseen when he dictated his letter, he saw Roman Christians face to face.” NICNT

- **Taking courage** – it was a rough trip and a rough situation so Paul need some encouragement to get back to calm and focused.
 - **While in Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself with a guard**
 - **Allowed to stay by himself**⁵⁹ - Paul was not kept in the formal barracks, he was allowed to get his own place off grounds. He was guarded the whole time.
 - **With the soldier who guarded him** – the guards would be switched out every 4 hours. They would be chained to the prisoner (Paul) with a ‘light chain’.
- **Jew First, then Gentile**
 - **Paul Ministers to the Jewish People in Rome**
 - **Ac 28:17-31** – *“After three days he⁶⁰ called together the local leaders of the Jews, and when they had gathered, he said to them, “Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. ¹⁸ When they had examined me, they wished to set me at liberty, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. ¹⁹ But because the Jews objected⁶¹, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar— though I had no charge to bring against my nation. ²⁰ For this reason, therefore, I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is because of the hope of Israel⁶² that I am wearing this chain.” ²¹ And they said to him, “We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you. ²² But we desire to hear from you what your views are, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against.” ²³ When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. ²⁴ And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved. ²⁵ And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: “The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet: [in*

⁵⁹ “The Western text, followed in part by the Byzantine text, provides fuller information at this point: “the centurion handed his prisoners over to the stratopedarch, but Paul was allowed to stay by himself outside the camp with the soldier who guarded him.” The “stratopedarch” (“commander of the army” or “commander of the camp”) is most probably to be identified with the commandant of the camp or barracks where the emperor’s praetorian guard was housed, near the Viminal Gate. We may compare Phil. 1:13, where Paul uses the term *praetorium* either of the praetorian guard or of its headquarters. Whether the phrase “outside the camp” is part of the original text or not, it expresses the fact that Paul was not kept in the barracks but received leave to stay in lodgings of his own—the place where he received representatives of the local Jewish community in verse 23 and many other visitors according to verse 30. He thus enjoyed a measure of personal liberty while he was under restraint: he was permitted to live as a private resident, and a soldier (presumably one of the praetorian guard) was detailed to guard him. To this soldier he would be lightly chained by the wrist, with the chain to which he draws his visitors’ attention in verse 20. The soldier would be relieved every four hours or so, but for Paul there was no comparable relief. The result, however, was that he became a talking point among members of the praetorian guard.” NICNT

⁶⁰ “At last, then, they came to Rome, entering the city by the Porta Capena. Here the “we” narrative comes to an end. If the letters to Philemon and Colossians were sent from Rome during Paul’s confinement there, then they supply evidence that Luke stayed on in Rome for some time: greetings are sent from him to Philemon and to the church of Colossae.” NICNT

⁶¹ “The Western text adds “and cried out, ‘Away with our enemy!’” NICNT

⁶² “As it was, it was his devotion to Israel’s ancestral hope that had cost him his freedom and brought him under guard to Rome. In Rome, as in Judaea, he emphasizes that the resurrection message which he proclaims, far from undermining the religion of Israel, is its divinely appointed fulfilment.” NICNT

Isaiah 6:9-10] ²⁶ “Go to this people, and say, “You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive.” ²⁷ For this people’s heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.’ ²⁸ Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.” ³⁰ He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, ³¹ proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.”

- **After 3 days Paul called for the Roman Jewish leaders⁶³** - Paul ALWAYS ministered to the Jews first. It’s risky because it’s been the radical orthodox Jewish group that has tried to kill him every time. Then again, he couldn’t hide if he wanted to. Might as well face it head on and get ahead of it if you can.
- **Paul’s message**
 - **Brothers** – we must always remember that Paul is a Jew. He was proud of that and should be. He was very zealous for the Jewish people. He was never anti-Jewish. They were his family, his people, his heart.
 - **Though I had done nothing against our people** – he wanted to be clear up front that he was never anti-Jewish anything.
 - **Or the customs of our fathers** – he knew all about the traditions and he engaged with them all in a healthy way.
 - **I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans** – he is calling out that the Jews handed him over to the Gentiles. That’s normally a big deal because the Jews didn’t like the Romans and wanted to keep things in-house if they could. They couldn’t do death penalty stuff though.
 - **When the Romans examined me, they wanted to set me free** – Their legal system proved that I was innocent of the biggest charges.
 - **There was no reason for the death penalty in my case** – the only reason Rome should be involved is death penalty issues and there was nothing that was even close to that in my case.
 - **But because the Jews objected** – the Jews were really angry about that verdict and would go to cause problems if they didn’t get their way. They also would have taken matters into their own hands (and the Romans were going to hand Paul back over to the Jews to have at him).
 - **I was compelled to appeal to Caesar** – Paul is saying, ‘I was forced to appeal to Caesar, or the Jews would have killed me.’
 - **Though I had no charge to bring against my nation** – Paul wants to be clear that he was not reverse attacking the Jewish people by going to Caesar. He was innocent in all of this and wanted not part of it.
 - **That’s why I sent for you all**

⁶³ “In Acts as in the Pauline letters, while the order of preaching the gospel is “to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16), the order of its reception is “by the Gentile first.” NICNT

- **since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain** – this is Paul’s way of getting on their good side and finding the common ground of the promised Messiah. Paul is saying that it’s BECAUSE he is a Jew and the Jewish messiah called him, that all of this is happening. It’s NOT anti-Jewish, it’s ALL Jewish.
- **The Jewish Leaders Initial Reply**
 - **We have received no letters from Judea about you** – this is a shocking statement to Paul because he’s been hunted everywhere by that radical group from Jerusalem (which is in the region of Judea). The Roman Jewish community would have taken orders from the Jerusalem group. And it’s not like Paul going to Rome was a secret. They all knew it and were a part of it. So, why didn’t they send notice? It’s likely that either God hijacked their correspondence or it was delayed due to weather conditions.
 - **None of the brothers coming here have spoken evil about you** – this is the second shocking statement. There wasn’t even guys who wanted Paul dead waiting for him. That seems to always be the case.
 - **We desire to hear from you and what your views are** – this crew was open. That’s a first. They wanted to hear about all of this. They were curious. Paul is not the first time they had heard about this whole Christian movement.
 - **For with regard to this sect (Christians) we know that it’s spoken against everywhere among us** – they said, ‘we’ve heard rumors and it’s always bad. So we’d like to hear more from you and find out what’s really happening.’
 - **They set a future meeting date** – they didn’t know they would need that much time so they had to make another appointment. The first was just to feel out the situation.
- **Paul ministers to the Jewish people in Rome**
 - **They came to him at his lodging in greater numbers** – lots of Jewish leaders started coming to meet with him. It was a HUGE group.
 - **From morning to evening he expounded to them** – Paul is never short on words. He talked with them (in conversation not diatribe) all day long.
 - **Testifying to them about the kingdom of God** – he was telling them about what a difference that the Messiah ushered in and how the kingdom of God had come to earth and was spreading. New rules, new laws, new ways of doing things.
 - **Trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and the Prophets** – Paul was going to explain that Jesus IS THE POINT of Judaism.
 - **Convincing about Jesus from the Law⁶⁴** – this has to do with Moses’ lay out of all the things that God shared with him on Mt. Sinai and how it all pointed to the need for a Messiah due to sin and how that Messiah would be a prophet that would come in the future.

⁶⁴ “On his own testimony he did live as a law-abiding Jew when he was among Jews, but did not adhere to the “ancestral customs” when he found himself in Gentile company. A truly loyal Jew, they might have argued, would have been specially scrupulous about observing those customs in a Gentile environment, like some other Jewish prisoners in Rome around this time, who (according to Josephus) restricted their diet to figs and nuts, so as to avoid eating suspect food.⁶⁴ But if such matters were raised, Luke says nothing of them.” NICNT

- **Convincing about Jesus from the Prophets** – the prophets in the Old Testament talked about details on what to expect from the coming Messiah. He would use some of the hundreds of Messianic prophecies and tie them into the life of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.
- **Some were convinced by what he said**⁶⁵ – it literally says in Greek that they were on their way to believing what he said. They weren't there yet, but they were getting there and would get there if not hijacked.
- **Others disbelieved** – the phrase disbelieved puts the responsibility on the hearer not the speaker. They didn't want to believe. The evidence was there. They were resistant.
 - **And disagreeing among themselves** – it even split their ranks as some agreed with Paul's assessment and some didn't.
 - **They left after Paul said this one statement:** but then Paul said one thing that shut it all down after tons of arguing...
 - **The Holy Spirit was right** – Now Paul is quoting the Holy Spirit as he moved through prophets (no true prophet spoke on their own but only as the Holy Spirit told them to speak). He is attesting to the accuracy of a prophecy he's about to quote.
 - **In saying to your fathers** – this means it was said in the Old Testament to the ancient Jewish fathers. Although I think that its notable that Paul doesn't say OUR fathers, but YOUR fathers. He is distancing himself from them.
 - **Through Isaiah the prophet** – quoting Isaiah 6:9-10
 - **'go to this people, and say'** – God told Isaiah to go to the leaders of Israel and tell them a very specific message from Him.
 - **'you will indeed hear and never understand and you will see but never perceive'** – They would hear the prophecy and Truth but it wouldn't land with them. They would see what Isaiah was trying to say but they wouldn't agree with it. They were both unable and resistant to accepting the message. God was telling Isaiah this ahead of time so that he wasn't shocked at the resistance of his audience.
 - **For this people's heart has grown dull and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed** – notice the intentionality of their resistance. It's not passive. They allowed their hearts to grow dull. They have stopped up their ears and stopped listening to God. They have closed their eyes to seeing the Truth and plan of God. They are shutting themselves off from God.
 - **Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn** – because, IF they truly wanted to hear they would hear and understand and get saved and God would bring healing to His people.

⁶⁵ "Gk. ἐπειθόντο, "were on the way to being persuaded." NICNT

- **And I would heal them** – the healing is for their sin situation as well as their brokenness.
- **Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God** – this is where Paul’s boldness gets even more crazy. He tells them, ‘listen up y’all. Hear this. All the goodness I’m telling you about the Messiah, all the saving He is going to do, that was originally for you...’
- **Has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen**⁶⁶ – has now shifted over to Good News for the Gentiles because you rejected it. God’s salvation will come upon them because they are willing to listen and learn. You are too hardhearted to get it, so God is moving on. Ouch.
- **Paul lived there for 2 years**⁶⁷
 - **Under guard** – Paul was under guard until his trial was seen. We know he lived in Rome for 2 years but not sure he was under guard that whole time. There is a lot of speculation about why it took so long for his case to be heard. Not sure.
 - **At his own expense**⁶⁸ – the Greek suggests ‘rented lodgings’. Who or how he paid for it aren’t clear. It seems that others would have paid for him in donations, unless he was able to work with a guard chained to him, which is unlikely.
 - **And welcomed all who came to him** – the insinuation was that WHOEVER God brought to his door (since he wasn’t able to go out and do his evangelism thing) was ministered to whether Jew or Gentile. He was in the Lord’s hands.
 - **Proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance** – Paul had a great ministry in this season. He was preaching up a storm about the goodness of Jesus Christ. He was bold and was safe. Why was he safe in this location as opposed to the other locations? He had a guard with him from the Roman Empire all the time. That served as a bodyguard. Nice way for God to provide that. What looked like a weight around his neck served as a block to his enemies who wanted him dead.

⁶⁶ “so here again in Rome he announces—and this time with a note of solemn finality—that henceforth the Gentiles will have priority in hearing the word of life and that, unlike the Jews as a whole, they will accept it. “The narrative reaches a solemn climax—rejection on the one side, unchecked success and hope on the other.” NICNT

⁶⁷ “The two years’ prolongation of Paul’s stay in Rome could be accounted for adequately by congestion of court business. It took that time for his case to come up for hearing. It was always possible for such congestion to be eased by the discharge of defendants whose cases did not seem to be serious, through the exercise of imperial “clemency”; but it is a safe inference from the report of Paul’s vision aboard ship (27:24) that his case did come up for hearing, that he did “stand before Caesar,” and that Luke, when he wrote, knew this to be so. It may seem the stranger that, if Luke did know this, he said nothing about the outcome of the case. Perhaps the outcome of the case was so well known that Luke’s readers did not need to be informed about it; in any case, Luke has attained his object in writing when he depicts Paul preaching the gospel without hindrance in Rome over an extended period of time.” NICNT

⁶⁸ “He lived, says Luke, “on his own earnings” or “at his own expense”; this means that the place where he stayed would indeed have been “his own hired house” (as KJV has it) or at least his own hired apartment (possibly three floors up in a tenement building). Perhaps he was able to carry on his “tent-making,” although this would have been awkward if he was continually chained by the wrist to a soldier.” NICNT

- **That's the end of the Book of Acts. What happened next?**⁶⁹ – We end the story circa AD. 61 (2 years after the AD59 Day of Atonement during the shipwreck period). We do not have any more clear Biblical accounts, only comments made by Paul that need to be pieced together, and the testimony of the early saints. History suggests that Paul was heard by Caesar and then released. It seems that he had 3-5 years of freedom doing missionary work that seemed to include further trips to strengthen churches back near home (east), as well as a significant trip to Spain & Gaul in the West. Ultimately he was back in Rome (either forced or doing missionary work) and he was arrested, put in the Mamertine prison in the Roman Forum, and executed by Emperor Nero's decree⁷⁰, beheaded outside the city. The most commonly assumed year of execution was AD65.

Conclusion

- **God is Moving All Around Us** – when you walk out of here keep your eyes open. God is maneuvering different parts continually. Watch for Him.
- **Let's pray for open eyes to see.**

⁶⁹ <https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/topical-studies/the-fourth-missionary-journey-what-happened-to-paul-after-acts.html>; https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/lightfoot_ib/misc/post_acts.cfm; <https://biblesearchtoday.com/2019/02/27/the-death-of-the-apostle-paul/>

⁷⁰ Nero died on June 8, AD 68, so it had to be before this.

