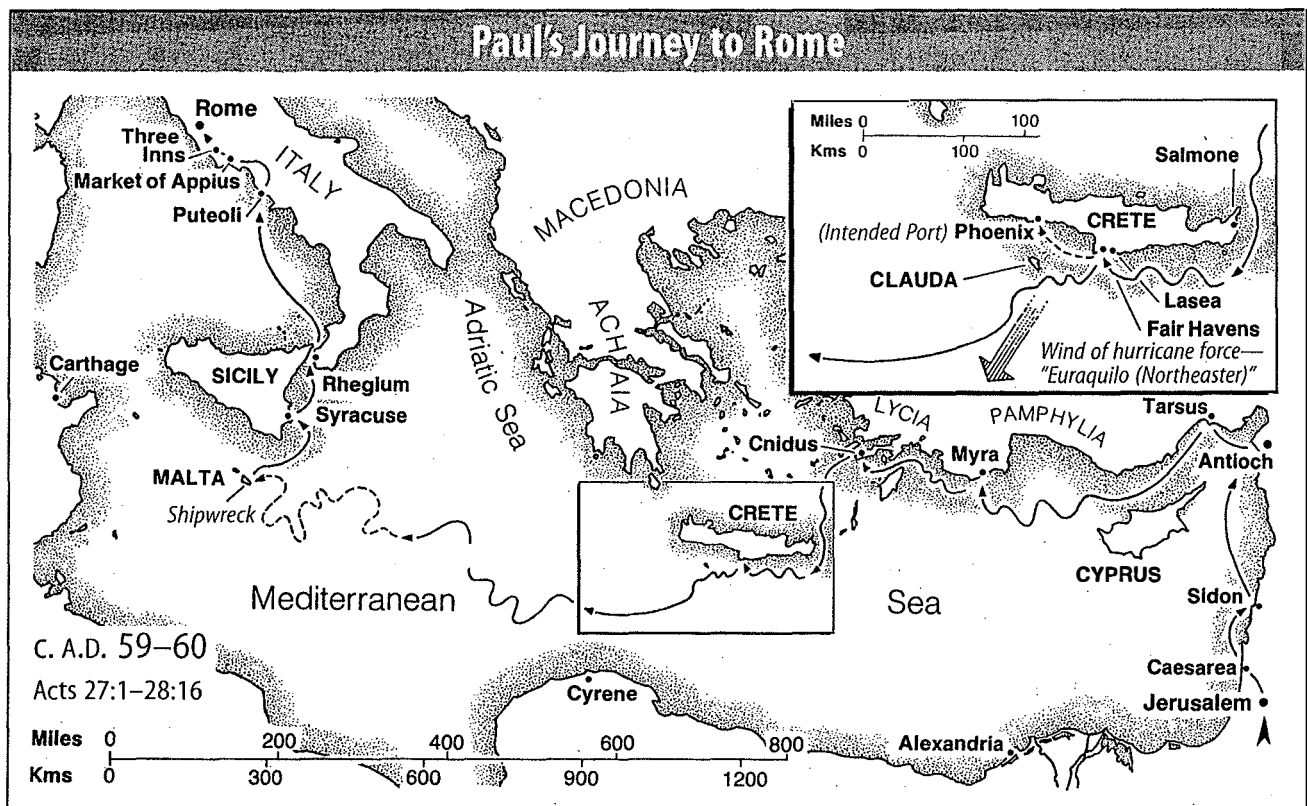


CHAPTER 12

The Storm And The Shipwreck (Acts 27-28)

The last chapter discussed Paul's capture, first by the Jews and then by the Romans. It was God's plan for Paul to go to the city of Rome (see Acts 23:11). This chapter will examine the amazing journey which brought Paul, the prisoner, to Rome.

Paul had been a prisoner in the city of Caesarea for about two years. Finally it was decided that Paul should be brought to Rome. The journey was made by sea, not by land. The following map will help you to see where the ship went which carried Paul:



[This map is taken from the Zondervan KJV Study Bible, p. 2287. The large rectangle is an enlargement of the area around the island of Crete.]

The Dangerous Journey

Paul's voyage to Rome is carefully described in Acts chapter 27. Paul knew what it was like to experience dangers or perils in the sea (see 2 Corinthians 11:26). How many times had Paul already been shipwrecked (2 Corinthians 11:25)? _____ How long did he spend in the waters of the Mediterranean Sea (2 Corinthians 11:25)? _____

As Paul faced another difficult sea journey, he remembered something that the Lord had told him in Acts 23:11. What had God told him?

- a. **You probably will not bear witness at Rome.**
- b. **You might bear witness at Rome.**
- c. **You probably will bear witness at Rome.**
- d. **You must bear witness at Rome.**

Does God always keep His Word? _____ Could a dead Paul bear witness at Rome? Paul knew that he must arrive in Rome because God could not lie. The voyage to Rome might be dangerous and difficult, but the destination was known! Paul knew he would get to Rome!

If you are a believer in Christ, is your destination known? According to Matthew 7:14, every believer is on a journey which "leadeth unto _____." Peter tells us that we have an inheritance that is reserved in H _____ (1 Peter 1:4). Has Jesus promised us that someday we will be with Him in heaven (John 17:24; 14:2-3)? _____ Will God keep His Word? _____ Therefore every believer can say, "I know that someday I will arrive safely in heaven because _____ said so!" Our journey through life may sometimes be difficult, but our destination is known!

Paul's journey can be followed on the map at the beginning of this chapter. Remember, Paul was a prisoner, and there were also other P _____ on board the ship (Acts 27:1). The first ship sailed to the city of Myra where Paul entered a large grain ship from Alexandria which was headed for Rome (see Acts 27:5-6). The passengers on this large ship included Paul, the other prisoners, soldiers, and the sailors. What was the total number of people on board (Acts 27:37; a "score" equals 20, and three score equals 60)? _____

Even at the beginning of the trip the sailing was difficult. When they arrived at the island of Crete, Paul warned them not to go on but to spend the winter right where they were (Acts 27:9-10). It was already October, and the dangerous season for sailing was from September 14 to November 11. Did they listen to the good advice which Paul gave them? (Acts 27:11)? _____

Instead of heeding Paul's warning, they decided to try to reach the city of Phenice (also called Phoenix) and spend the winter there. They sailed for Phoenix, but they never made it (see the enlarged portion of the map).

The Furious Storm

Suddenly there arose a violent wind from the northeast (called Euroclydon--verse 14). There was nothing the crew could do except to let this fierce wind carry the ship into the center of the Mediterranean Sea. They were now caught in the middle of a furious storm! For many days the _____ could not be seen during the day and the _____ could not be seen during the night (Acts 27:20). Those who were on the ship lost all H _____ (Acts 27:20) and they were sure that they would perish in the storm and lose their lives.

Paul Brings Good News

When God spoke to Paul in the middle of this storm, what did the Lord say (Acts 27:24)?

- a. **Paul, you probably will not be brought before Caesar in Rome.**
- b. **Paul, you might be brought before Caesar in Rome.**
- c. **Paul, you probably will be brought before Caesar in Rome.**
- d. **Paul, you must be brought before Caesar in Rome.**

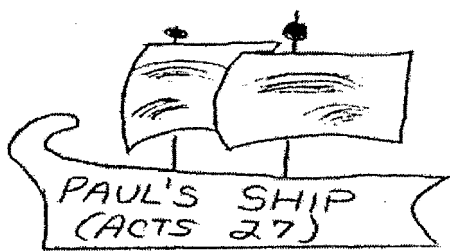
Paul would be brought safely to his destination; who else would also arrive safely (Acts 27:24)? _____ Because of Paul, God was gracious to 275 other people! Sometimes the unsaved have a great deal to owe to believers. God would have spared the whole city of Sodom and not destroyed the people if there had been only ten righteous people living there (Genesis 18:32).

Did Paul believe what God said (Acts 27:25)? _____ Paul could have said, "I know we will all survive this storm. **I know so because God said so!**"

Paul also encouraged the crew to eat some food and regain some of their strength. How many days had these men gone without eating (Acts 27:33)? _____ If you went without food for this long, do you think that you would be weak? _____ Paul led the way (see verse 35). He took bread and "gave _____ to _____ in presence of them all" (verse 35) and then he ate. Was Paul ashamed to pray before eating, even when unsaved people were around him? _____ Believers should always thank God for the food which He provides for us each day. Suppose a person thanks God before eating, and then begins to complain about how bad the food tastes. Was he really thankful when he prayed? When the crew saw Paul eating, they cheered up and began eating too (Acts 27:36)!

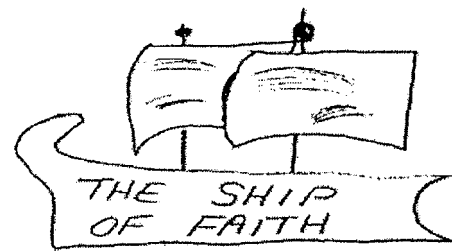
Safe and Secure on the Ship of Faith

Paul was on a ship headed for Rome. Every believer is headed for heaven. We can imagine the believer on a journey, traveling on the ship of faith. Every believer is on the "ship of faith" headed for heaven. God told Paul that he would arrive safely in Rome. God has told His believers that they will arrive safely in heaven:



According to God's Word, how many on this ship would be lost (Acts 27:22)? _____

How many would be saved (Acts 27:24)? _____ Who said so (Acts 27:25)? _____



According to God's Word, how many believers (those who are on the ship of faith) will be lost (John 10:27-30)? _____

How many believers will be saved and have everlasting life (John 6:37-40)? _____ Who said so? _____

God will bring all believers safely to their heavenly destination! Does this mean that because we are saved and safe, we can act foolishly and live any way that we please? Did Paul say to the crew, "Because God has promised you safety, you can act foolishly and jump out of the ship and do whatever you want to do"?

In Acts 27:30 we learn that some of the sailors tried to save their lives by getting out of the ship. They were acting foolishly and not with concern for the others on the ship. Notice Paul's strong warning in verse 31: "Except these abide (stay) in the ship, ye cannot be _____." Because of this warning they did stay in the ship. How many of the people on this ship arrived safely on land (Acts 27:44)? _____

Some people might say, "Because I am saved and going to heaven, I can live any way I want to. I can do as I please and live as I please and God will still bring me to heaven." People who live this way are living FOOLISHLY and DANGEROUSLY! Imagine a person who is rescued from shark infested waters getting into the rescue boat and saying, "I am now saved and safe. I think I will jump back in with the sharks!" HOW FOOLISH COULD A PERSON BE?

What if a person were pulled out of quicksand. Should he jump right back in? What if a person were saved out of a burning building? Should he run back in? **Suppose God saves a person from sin. Should that person start living in sin because he is saved?** "Shall we continue in sin?" (Romans 6:1) What is the answer to this question (Romans 6:2)? _____

Paul told the people on his ship that they would be saved and that they would survive the storm, but he did not tell them that they could act foolishly. In the same way, God tells the believer that he is saved and that he will arrive safely in heaven. However, God does not tell the believer that he can live and act foolishly and sinfully! When God picks a person out of the muck and mire of sin, He does not want that person to jump right back into the mud! Instead He wants the saved person to stand on the ROCK (Psalm 40:1-3)!

From a Murderer to a God

Paul and the others with him were shipwrecked on the island of Melita or Malta (Acts 28:1). The barbarians (foreigners) on the island were (see Acts 28:2):

- a. Very fierce and cruel
- b. Very warlike
- c. Very kind
- d. Very cannibalistic (they loved to eat shipwrecked people).

They prepared a warm fire for the weary and wet survivors.

Did Paul just sit around or did he make himself useful (Acts 28:3)?

_____ Paul knew how to lend a helping hand, and we can learn from his good example. As Paul was putting the wood on the fire, a V _____ fastened on his hand and bit him (Acts 28:3). This was a very poisonous snake, and the poison would usually begin to take effect in seconds. Did Jesus promise to protect the apostles from this kind of thing (see Mark 16:17-18)? _____

When the barbarians saw that the snake had bitten Paul, they thought he must be a M _____ (Acts 28:4). Even though these people had probably never seen a

Bible, they knew that **MURDERERS DESERVE TO DIE!** These barbarians knew that sin must be punished! They knew that the wages of _____ is D_____ (Romans 6:23). They thought that Paul was being punished by means of the snake, and so they believed he must have been guilty of a great crime. They thought he must be a MURDERER!

Have you ever done anything worthy of death? Most of us have never murdered anyone. We have never robbed a bank. But have we done anything worthy of death (see Romans 1:29-32 and remember that "disobedient to parents" is included in this list)? _____ All of us have _____ (Romans 3:23) and all sinners deserve D_____ (Romans 6:23)! The good news is that Christ _____ for us (Romans 5:8). He died as our sinless Substitute! He died so that we could live and have God's gift of E_____ L_____ (Romans 6:23).

When the barbarians saw that Paul did not die (Acts 28:5-6), they quickly changed their minds and said that Paul must be a G_____ (Acts 28:6). In just a few moments Paul went from being called a murderer to being called a god! Paul probably tried to straighten these people out, even as he did earlier when the people of Lystra thought he was a god (Acts 14:8-15). Paul was only a sinner saved by grace, and a man that God was able to use in a wonderful way!

God knows what He is doing! He makes no mistakes! We are not governed by "bad luck" or "good luck," but we are governed by a GOOD LORD! Problems and difficulties do not stop God from working out His good plan. Not even a fierce storm could keep Paul from his God-intended destination.

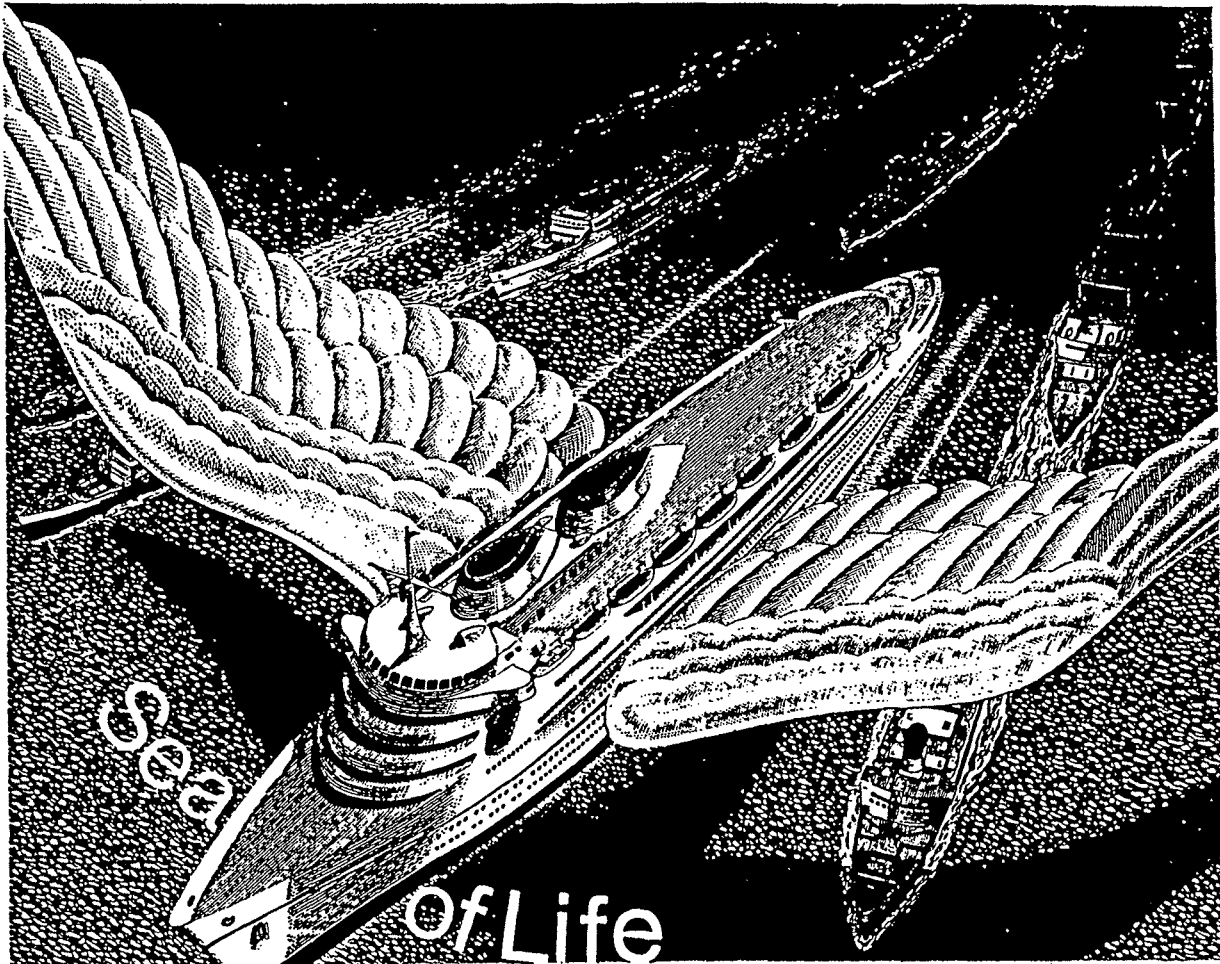
God will let things happen (problems, difficulties, dangers), but we should always remember that God works all things together for our good (Romans 8:28). The believer's responsibility is to trust Him and believe His Word.

In Philippians 1:6 we see that the believer should be confident (convinced) that God will finish that which He has begun. What kind of work has God begun? _____ Where has He begun this work? _____ Will He perform (finish) this great work? _____

In the next chapter we will see how God used Paul in the city of Rome, even though he was a prisoner!

“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25)

PROTECTED VOYAGE



*"BE MERCIFUL
UNTO ME, O GOD, BE MER-
CIFUL UNTO ME: FOR MY SOUL TRUSTETH IN
THEE: YEA, IN THE SHADOW OF THY WINGS
WILL I MAKE MY REFUGE."*

— PSA. 57:1

JACK HAMM