

**neither sun nor
stars
in many
days appeared**

Acts 27:14 – 35

~ Our next report will finalize our consideration of the book of Acts in our second Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God, and we will return to the Old Testament and take up consideration of the double books of the Bible: Samuel, Kings and Chronicles. In this report, we will continue to sail with Paul towards Rome. We set sail in our last report when Paul and the prisoners changed ships. When that transfer of vessels was complete, the sailing became dangerous and difficult. Our experience in the last leg of our safari was not too bad as we sailed on a calm Mediterranean Sea. Remember, Julius, the first ship captain, had also allowed Paul much liberty to refresh himself with the fellowship and love of Christian brethren – and Paul needed that very much.

None of us are immune from needing the fellowship, encouragement and comfort we can only find with one another as believers. Personally, I think church visitation programs are the single most neglected ministry there is today; home, hospital and jail visitations, that is. I feel that many members of any one church ought to be heavily engaged in the visitation ministry effort; certainly, all officers should be out visiting others regularly. There seems to be much business acumen in the church today, but very little spiritual discernment or ability. Spiritual gifts should always be used to minister personally to the needs of others. We need more of that today.

Well, we know a storm is brewing, and Paul and these other men are heading straight into it. I think being with his friends was an encouragement for what was going to happen. If you have a good Bible with maps, you'll notice the going has become very slow now. The captain should have known there would be trouble ahead because they weren't making much progress due to the weather. Remember, they are sailing by Cyprus because the winds were contrary. Then, if you trace their journey, you'll see them struggling along the southern coast of Asia Minor....

14 But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.

~ Euroclydon is a highly technical navigational term of the day in which we are studying. It is a reference to the north wind; north by east, specifically. This is the winter season, and dangerous storms would come down from Europe; and this is one of them. The hour of darkness came fast upon Paul in Jerusalem, and it looked like he would never see Rome during those years of imprisonment. In those hours and days of desperation, God appeared to Paul to reassure him; and we saw the Lord Personally stand by Paul and speak to him. At that time, the Lord assured Paul he was going to Rome. That is Paul's only basis for knowing they would make this trip safely – and they are fully engaged in the storm right now....

15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive.

16 And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat:

17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.

18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship;

19 And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

21 But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.

23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,

24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

26 Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.

~ This storm is one in which most of these men do not think they will make it out alive. This is when they all heard the words of the Lord through the lips of Paul the apostle. After fourteen days they all felt like this was the end. If the Lord had not appeared to Paul and told him Personally that he would see Rome, I think even Paul would have been shaken in his faith. Only with Personal assurance by God is Paul able to stand out amongst the others; only by the word of the Lord through Paul do these men have any hope to hold onto! ~

27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country;

28 And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms.

29 Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.

~ "Adria" is the Adriatic Sea and is located between Italy and Macedonia – Greece. All these disoriented men knew was that they were somewhere in the deep sea between Crete and Sicily – and they know they are in a raging

storm! This certain island of Melita is what we know as Malta today. As we just read, the water was becoming shallower, so they know they are moving towards land.

Well, there have been many sermons and much speculation about those four anchors they cast at this time; and the anchors have been labeled just about everything under the sun. I don't think this is the place to spiritualize the Word of God. They threw out four anchors to hold them from being dashed on the rocks – that's all. I have no idea how many anchors it would take to hold you or me, but a spiritual application of this is a very foolish way to handle the Scripture. Even with those four anchors, these men are ready to jump ship like rats. The only place of safety was in the ship – not in the ocean.

It is a wonderful thing to be able to trust the Word of God; and I believe that's the spiritual message here. Remember, the angel of the Lord appeared to Paul and all Paul said was, "... I believe!" See, God will save everyone on the ship, but you have to stay in the ship! We have to do things God's way, so this becomes a matter of whether we believe God or not. Paul did believe so he told these men to stay put. It's very easy to go overboard, desert ship and take matters into our own hands when the seas turn rough. It's a natural reaction when we think we have to save our own lives. What we need to do is trust God in faith and turn our lives completely over to Him in these matters. That is only possible when are anchored in Holy Writ....

30 And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship,

31 Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.

32 Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.

33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

34 Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat.

~ If you have ever fasted for fourteen days you'll know you are extremely weak afterward. So, Paul tells them to eat in sanctified sanity in the Lord's service. The only reason the pagans are fasting is because they are frightened of the storm and scared about dying. Paul fasted because it was unto the Lord. I believe Christian service is the only area of modern life where common sense is abandoned wholesale. People can be so shockingly foolish while making a claim they are trusting the Lord. God expects you to use your common sense when serving Him, friends. Abandoning ship at this time would have been premature and foolish.

There is another account in the Gospel records where Jesus put the disciples in a ship and told them to row to the other side. Well, Jesus sent them right into a storm! If you think Jesus didn't know the storm was out there, then you are denying He is God. Jesus knew the storm was out there, and He deliberately sent them into it! The Lord sends us straight into the storm sometimes, too! We need to remember when we are in the will of God and in the storm that God has promised us one thing: that we will make the harbor. God NEVER promised us we would miss the storm. That should be a great comfort to you as it is to me today ~
