

**this voyage will
be with hurt and
much damage**

Acts 26:29 – 27:13

~ Paul presented a masterful discourse to Festus and Agrippa in the last leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God. We saw how Paul ALMOST persuaded Agrippa. I believe Agrippa was the only person Paul intended to reach with this message, so it would seem as if Paul failed miserably here. Paul had already witnessed to Festus – and Festus rejected Christ, too. So, Paul’s mission here was now complete. All I can say is “almost” won’t do with God – it’s all or nothing with Him, friends. You either accept Christ or you reject Him. As we have seen numerous times on safari, salvation is something no theologian can probe the depths of. Likewise, it’s simple enough for anyone to understand – anyone that is ready to give up the sin in their life, that is. See, we either have Christ or we don’t; we either trust Christ or we don’t. You can’t almost trust God. You can try to believe. You can ALMOST be a Christian! Christ is either your Savior or He is not your Savior. Well, Paul wanted everyone who heard him to have the peace and security that can only come from trusting Christ as our Savior.

Remember, Paul had been an arrogant and narcissist Pharisee. Just a few short years before this time in which we are studying, Saul of Tarsus would have bound Christians in chains – as he was now bound in – and he would have killed them all by torturing them to death. Paul’s attitude now is for all to have a vital and real relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ; just as he had experienced on the road to Damascus. We’re going to have to come to grips with Christ, my beloved; because He is the only thing of importance in our life. A mighty transformation has taken place in Saul – Paul. The only explanation was Jesus is alive. He was back from the dead. There’s nothing unreasonable about the fact God can raise the dead. Man’s two thousand years of science and education make the resurrection all the more plausible. I think it is easier to believe in the resurrection today than it was in the day in which we are studying, but I digress, so, let’s move on.

See, the point is, if the resurrection is true, then there is another judgment at another throne. The Lord Jesus will be sitting on that throne. You will either bow to the Lord your God, or you're going to be judged by Him someday. See, the resurrection is critical to the unsaved man as well as the saved. The atheist senses God to be true because God is true. The atheist continues to deny God for only one reason: there is sin in their life that they refuse to give up! No other reason whatsoever. To say there is no God reveals one is either insincere or insane. No other option. Agrippa, like Felix, Festus, Bernice and Drusilla – and so many men since them, have formed a philosophy of “almost” – they have a theory against something they don't even believe exists in the first place. That renders them, by de facto, literal madmen....

XXVI

29 And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

30 And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them:

31 And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.

32 Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.

~ So, Paul is going to Rome now; that's obvious. The question is: did Paul do the right thing by appealing to Caesar? Perhaps Agrippa was going to set him free since there was no evidence against him. As we have seen before, many feel Paul made a mistake here – but I don't think so. Remember, Paul had prayed about going to Rome and he had urged others to pray for him to go. Maybe the lesson is that we should watch what we pray for and make sure we include specifics. That's one good reason not to pray in tongues – and I'm sure Paul did NOT pray in tongues about this – or about anything – at any time.

Romans 1:10 Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. 11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established ~

I suppose it is questionable whether the trip to Rome was a prosperous journey for Paul. I believe it was a prosperous journey for the cause of Christ and I am sure Paul is in the will of God at this time, too. We could call this the fourth missionary journey of Paul the apostle. He exercised the same latitude, and he made as many contacts as before. These are very high officials he is preaching to in chains. Candidly, Paul's best writing was done in prison. He witnessed just as faithfully as he ever had. Paul was in chains, but the Gospel was not bound. Paul said all these things had happened for the furtherance of the Gospel! Naturally, God is in all of this – as He is in everything that involves His saints....

XXVII

1 And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.

2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.

3 And the next day we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.

4 And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.

5 And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia.

6 And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.

7 And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone;

8 And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.

9 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them,

10 And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.

11 Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

12 And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west.

13 And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete.

~ This section of Scripture is the beginning of the finest historical account of a sea voyage man has ever recorded. Sir William Ramsey considers this account by Dr. Luke one of the most accurate ever written. If you have studied Caesar in Latin, you will recall the record of the building of a bridge. That is still the bane of all who study Latin today. The problem is so many new Latin words that you've never seen before. This chapter is the corresponding Greek conundrum because there are so many technical terms in it. Also, if you have a good Bible with maps, it will be very helpful to you now. You'll notice they went up the coast on an indirect route.

We have acquired quite a travel log in Acts. I hope you have enjoyed this leg of our so-called safari. Here, we set out for Italy, and Paul is likely the only Roman citizen in the hold. Most were criminals being sent to their executions. Many of them would become Gladiators and be fed to wild beasts. In this day that we are studying, there came a constant stream of discarded human life to Rome from all corners of the empire. That human trafficking continually fed the vice called the Coliseum. Of course, Paul saw this as yet another opportunity to speak of the resurrection of Christ! Even at this time, Paul is trying to bring hope to desperately hopeless men. Remember, Jesus said He came to set prisoners free. Only Christ can deliver us from our sins and free us from our guilt.

Julius seems to be courteous enough for a prison ship captain. He grants Paul a lot of liberty for a Roman official. I think Paul reached this man with the Gospel. His treatment of Paul and the fact that Julius looked to Paul quite a bit on this trip tells me that the Holy Spirit spoke to Julius through Paul at this time. So, with the ship under way on its sea voyage to Rome, we leave off in this leg of our safari. Sailing along the southern coast of Asia Minor was nothing new for Paul. He had been this way before.

The prisoners obviously changed ships at Myra in Lycia; that's when the going slowed to a crawl. This is where the sailing gets difficult, too. This is now late in the season and winter is coming fast. They are hoping they can make it to Rome before the storms really get ferocious. This is where Paul takes a moral ascendancy. Paul knew this ship wasn't going to make it to Rome! Of course, the captain of this new ship didn't quite think Paul knew what he was talking about. We see Paul under some very real testing now. They'll find out later they should have listened to Paul.

Most importantly, this reveals the spiritual superiority of the apostle Paul. There was no uncertainty and no confusion in Paul's life. Paul wasn't frustrated and he didn't disintegrate when faced with extreme difficulty. Paul was the poised personality who knew the way. Paul is a man in touch with God Himself! The Puritans had an old saying: Prudence before Providence! I wish more super-duper saints would remember that phrase. Human common sense precedes divine revelation, friends – because they are inextricably intertwined. They should have had both. The captain and

the soldiers are dependant on human speculation – but Paul isn't. This voyage is a guesswork to the captain and crew. Danger was already a supposition as the south wind blew softly. The captain was looking to himself; Paul was looking to God. Paul didn't believe "in" God – Paul believed God; and God had specifically said Paul was going to Rome.

Life is a great sea, and we are just little boats. When we sail by our own strength the storm will always be bigger than us. In the world today there is confusion and chaos because men are still guessing at life. We have a thousand human plans to build a utopian world in which we can go straight to hell. As a result, we are witnessing the total collapse of the greatest dream man has ever had: America. What we need now are more men who know God and believe Him! The mark of a great statesman is a man who knows the way God will be going for the next fifty years! We don't seem to have many great statesman around today ~
