PAUL’S VOYAGE TO ROME

AND THE MANY GREAT THINGS THAT HAPPENED

**DATES: 1/19/11, 1/26/11, 2/2/11**

**TEXT: Acts 27:1-44**

**INTRODUCTION**

It’s been about 2 yrs. Since Paul’s original arrest in Jerusalem back in **Acts 21**

**Chapter 27** gives the details of Paul’s journey to the world’s capital of his day, Rome

It is the one chapter in the Book of Acts that is practically all narrative

(A narrative is a story or an account of a sequence of events in the order in which they happened)

It does not contain any major doctrinal teaching, although it does provide some important principles and insights about the Christian’s life

**II Timothy 3:16 – *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:”***

**Ill.** The detail and accuracy of chapter 27 have been a defense of Luke’s penmanship for this great Book.

Early in the 19th century, a group of Scottish agnostics (somebody who says that God’s existence is not provable) set out to discredit the

Trustworthiness of the Bible’s narrative of chapter 27. One was given the task of following the journeys of Paul with the intent of finding

Discrepancies in the Bible account. Instead, the young man, after careful investigation, became a Christian and later wrote in defense of the Word of God! His name was William Ramsey. Sir William

Ramsay was a Scottish chemist who discovered the noble gases and received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1904.

The account of Luke in **Acts 27** presents the best description of ancient sea-faring (use of nautical terms is correct) we have today

The entire voyage of Paul from Caesarea to Rome can easily be charted on a map

Many “GREAT” things happen in this chapter

Let’s pray and look at -

**“PAUL’S VOYAGE TO ROME”**

**(And the many Great things that happened)**

**~~~Prayer~~~**

**I. THE GREAT “VOYAGE” BEGINS – vs. 1-8**

When did this voyage take place?

Porcius Festus became governor of Judaea in the autumn of 60 A.D. (September), and Paul appeared before Agrippa about 2 weeks later

**Acts 25:1, 6 – *“Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem”***

***“And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought”***

The ship’s departure from the Fair Havens in Crete was after ***“the fast”* – v.9**

This is referring to the Day of Atonement which is held in early October

From these chronological clues, we can see that Paul’s confinement in Caesarea ended quite soon after Festus took office

First we see -

**A. The ‘Determination’ to Travel – v.1a**

While this decision was seemingly made by the authorities

In reality, it was actually made by a Sovereign God

**Acts 23:11 – *“And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome”***

**Psalm 37:23 – *“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way”***

**Truth:** We all have to determine in our own hearts whether or not we are going to take this Great Voyage called the Christian Life!

**B. Paul’s ‘Companions’ in Travel – v.2**

Fortunately, Paul did not have to travel alone

He was accompanied by 2 godly men

This is evidenced by the pronoun ***“we”***

These men were:

→ **Dr. Luke**

We already understand that the Holy Spirit used Dr. Luke to pen the entire Book of Acts

Luke often uses the pronouns ***“we”*** and ***“us”*** in various sections of the Book

These are the time when Luke was actually present with Paul

The last time Luke included himself was in **Acts 21:18** (right after Paul’s arrival in Jerusalem)

From the very beginning Luke as been Paul’s companion and aide

But from time to time Paul needed to use him to oversee new churches, causing them to be separated

In Paul’s closing remarks of **Colossians 4:14** he tells us that Luke was with him in Rome

***“Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you”***

And from **II Timothy 4:11a** we learn that Luke was a constant, faithful companion and aide to Paul right up to the end

***“Only Luke is with me”*** (Demas had forsaken him, v.10)

**Truth:** I don’t want to be a Demas, but many will

→ **Aristarchus**

Here’s another man that has been with Paul for a long time

He was from Thessalonica

**Acts 19:29 – *“And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel …”***

**Acts 20:4 – *“And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus”***

In **Colossians 4:10** Paul calls him his ***“fellow prisoner”***

***“Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you,”***

It is probable that Luke was allowed to go as Paul's physician and Aristarchus as Paul's personal attendant

There is no evidence that either of these men had been arrested, yet Paul referred to Aristarchus as a ***“fellow prisoner”***

This most likely refer to a voluntary imprisonment on his part in order to assist Paul

**Truth:** How Paul must have thanked God for his faithful friends who gave up their liberty, and even risked their lives that he might have the help he needed

**C. The Kind Centurion – v.3**

Julius was from Augustus’ band (regiment)

In **Acts 10** we meet Cornelius who was of the Italian band

Paul as always been in the tender care of his Saviour

He has lived a rugged, often dangerous life for his Lord

**II Corinthians 6:4, 5**

**II Corinthians 11:23-28**

Paul was no doubt a very sickly man

**II Corinthians 12:7-9**

God’s special grace was shown to this worn out preacher,

As evidenced by the following:

→ His deliverance from the Jewish mob by the Romans -

**Acts 23:23-33**

→ His relative freedom while under Roman arrest -

**Acts 24:23**

→ His liberty to visit the brethren at Sidon - **Acts 27:3**

→ His deliverance from premature death - **Acts 27:43**

→ His relative freedom during his 1st imprisonment in Rome - **Acts 28:30**

**Note:** 3 Roman officers are mentioned by name in the Book of Acts (not to mention the one Jesus dealt with)

Cornelius – **Acts 10:1**

Lysias – **Acts 24:7**

Julius – **Acts 27:1**

It’s interesting, each of these officers were stationed in Caesarea

Each were of notably good character

Since they had all been stationed at Caesarea at one time, could it be they may have been influenced by Cornelius? Maybe even saved?

**Truth:** Some of the great lessons that can be taken from this chapter

**I Peter 5:7 – *“Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you”***

**Hebrews 13:5b – *“He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”***

**D. The ‘First Stage’ of the Voyage – vs. 2-5**

The typical voyage to Rome was by sailing to

Alexandria, Egypt and from thence to Rome in an ocean-going vessel

However, there evidently was no such vessel available, due to the season, it was winter time, and open sea sailing would have been dangerous **– v.9**

So the centurion finds a coastal vessel and determines to make the voyage in stages

The initial ship taken was a vessel from Adramyttium (Ad-ram-oot-tay-nos’)

This was an Aegean seaport in Mysia not far from Troas

This ship was more than likely a coastal trading vessel that had come down to Caesarea

**1. Caesarea to Sidon – v.3**

**a.** North, along the coast for about 67 miles

Sidon is in modern Lebanon

**b.** Paul visits friends in the church here

**c.** The centurion’s kindness illustrates Paul’s heart toward his captures

**Proverbs 16:7 – *“When a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him”***

**2. Sidon to Myra – vs. 4, 5**

**a.** Sailing ***“under”*** means they sailed under *the shelter of* Cyprus

They took a leeward course (toward the wind)

It meant keeping the large island on the port (left) side

This would bring them northward into the sea of Cilicia

(Where offshore breezes would aid their sailing)

**b. *“The winds were contrary”*** were strong nor’-westerlies, making the more direct course to Myra impossible

**c.** Myra was a seaport in the province of Lycia

It was a straight line almost due north of Alexandria, Egypt

Egypt was the *“Bread Basket”* for most of the Roman Empire

And Myra was a major port of trade

**E. The ‘Second Stage’ of the Voyage – vs. 6-8**

**1. A Change of Ships – v.6**

At Myra, the centurion located a grain ship that was going to Rome

He placed the prisoners and his soldiers on board

This must have been quite a large ship since the passengers and crew numbered 276 **– v.37**

It also had 4 stern anchors **– v.29**

Pictures of such ship have been found on the walls of the ruins of Pompeii

**2. Difficult Sailing – v.7a**

The predominant wind at that time of year was the nor’wester

This was virtually a headwind in open sea relative to their course

Cnidus was a free maritime city located on the extreme SW cape of Asia, between the islands of Rhodes and Coos

**3. A Change of Direction – vs. 7b, 8**

Their intended destination was more than likely Cnidus

But due to the strong head winds could not get there

Therefore they turned south and sailed toward Crete

**a. *“Salmone”*** (sal-mo’-nay) is located on the easternmost promontory of the island of Crete

**b.** The ***“fair havens”*** was a bay (not a harbor) near the city of ***“Lasea”***, located on the southern coast of Crete

**Truth:** when the winds of life blow contrary,so many people want to change directions

They want to change ships, change course

They think that change is their answer

It is a good think that Paul didn’t jump ship

**THE GREAT “VOYAGE”**

**II. THE GREAT “GAMBLE” – vs. 9-13**

When conditions were perfect, a typical grain shipment from Alexandria to Rome would take about 10 to 14 days

In this case, much time had been lost due to the unfavorable sailing conditions

 (And it wasn’t looking like it was going to get any better)

**A. The Desire to Leave Crete – v. 9a**

***“Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous”***

Money talks! The owner of the ship and its captain knew time was money,

So they made every effort to get to Rome

Doing so was a calculated risk, but the ship had wasted too much time staying in port

**B. The ‘Time’ of these Events – v.9c**

***“because the fast was now already past,”***

The ***“fast”*** most likely refers to the Jewish Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur

Referencing this does not mean that Paul was observing this Jewish Holy day (as some say he did)

But rather Luke is using it because its date was well-known

The Day of Atonement fell on the 10th day of the 7th month of the Jewish calendar called Tishri (Lev. 23:27)

It is the only Jewish feast that required a fast

This holy day corresponds to mid-October

Generally open sea navigation was considered too dangerous from Nov. 10th – Mar. 5th with a two-week margin on either side

**C. The ‘Warning’ from Paul – end of v.9, 10**

***“Paul admonished them,” “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”***

This warning came from Paul’s Spirit-filled appraisal of the situation

Not to mention his personal experience with sea faring

**II Corinthians 11:25 – *“Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;”***

**Truth:** God expects us to use wisdom when making determinations that affect our lives (and others)

Wisdom is the ability to make sensible decisions and judgments based on personal knowledge and experience

Of course, this is all according to the Word of God

There is a difference between Fatalism and Faith

Fatalism is the idea that *“Whatever is going to happen will happen”*

We understand by Faith that God is in control

**Romans 8:28 – *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose”***

There is also a difference in being Resigned to a situation

Having the attitude -*“there is nothing I can do”*

And being Reconciled to God’s will for the situation

**Philippians 4:13 – “*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”***

**D. The ‘Decision’ to make for Phenice – vs. 11-13**

This Phoenice is not the country of Phoenicia, what we know as Modern Lebanon

But a city near the SW end of Crete, also known as Phoenix

The directions given in **v.12** are the route they would take to sail from the Fair Havens to Phenice – SW then NW

The *gentile southerly breeze* found in **v.13** was ideal for this leg of the journey

**E. A Great Life Application**

There is a great lesson to be learned here!

We will find that this ship will end up ship wrecked

But the underlying reason for that shipwreck was in the decision to sail out of the Fair Havens

We must realize that life’s decisions have Consequences!

**1.** **Christians are on a Voyage**

We are sailing the sea of life between time and eternity

**2. Christians will experience Storms**

We are not exempt from trials and tribulations

**a. Some storms are caused by us**

Jonah is an example

His disobedience to the Word of God brought him into a great storm

**b. Some storms are beyond our Control**

Circumstances of life affect all

**Matthew 5:45 – *“That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust”***

We are all subject to the ravages of sin upon the human race

**c. Some storms come when we are in (and doing) the Lord’s will**

The Disciples obeyed Christ – yet went straight into a great tempest (on more than one occasion)

**Matthew 8:23 - …; 14:22 - …**

**II Corinthians 11:25 – *“Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;”***

**d. Some storms may result in a ship wreck**

We can make a *“mess”* of our lives

**I Timothy 1:19 – *“Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:”***

**I Corinthians 9:27 – *“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means,***

***when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway”***

People make a *“mess”* of their lives because they fail to use their chart and compass

Our chart is the Word of God and our faith in it

Our Compass is our conscience

There will be times that we might feel like those folks aboard that ship – **v.20**

**e. God can Deliver us from Desperate Situations**

He has the power to calm the storm and/or to bring us safely through the storm

Turn to **Psalm 107:23-30**

**3. The Ship wreck resulted from a wrong decision**

If they had not sailed, all may have been well

I want to note here 5 reasons why the wrong decision was made

This is an invaluable lesson for us if we are to avoid making a shipwreck of our lives

**a. Fleshly ‘Compulsion’ – v. 12a**

The owner, master and centurion all had “itchy feet”

They were men of action and commerce, and didn’t like sitting around

**Truth:** Many times we make snap decisions and fail to adequately pray and wait upon God

There have been many a financial shipwreck and many a marital shipwreck because of this

**Psalm 27:14 – *“Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord”***

**b. ‘Consultation’ at the expense of Revelation – v.11**

Here we see the rejection of good, godly, spiritual advice **– vs. 9end, 10 …**

In favor of secular, worldly advice

Seeking and taking advice from others is fine,

So long as that advice and counsel is in harmony with the Word of God

**c. Personal ‘Comfort’ – v. 12a**

Too often we settle for the easy way, the ***“commodious”*** path

Sometimes, the right way is not always the easiest

**d. ‘Consensus’ – v.12b**

(general or widespread agreement among all the members of a group)

These people took a vote, and Paul was out-voted

However, the majority in not always right

**Ill. Numbers 13:26-14:10**

(The unfavorable report of the 10)

**Matthew 7:13 – *“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:”***

This is why all church decisions (where the majority decides) must be preceded and accompanied by prayer

**Acts 1:24 – *“And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,”***

**e. ‘Circumstances’ –v.13**

It is dangerous to assume that good circumstances are always a sign of God’s will

Circumstances should be taken into account when making a decision

But should never be the sole basis for making a decision

**III. THE GREAT “STORM” – vs. 14-20**

**A.**

**B.**

**C.**

**D.**

**E.**

**IV. THE GREAT “MESSAGE OF HOPE” – vs. 21-26**

**A.**

**B.**

**C.**

**V. THE GREAT “SHIPWRECK” – vs. 27 -44**

**A.**

**B.**

**C.**

**D.**

**E.**

**F.**

**G.**

**H.**

**I.**

**J.**

**CONCLUSION**