



May 11, 2016
Acts 27:1-40
Acts 28:1-31
Pastor Gary Hamrick

Exegetical Study

1. **Acts 27:1-12** - *“When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment. We boarded a ship from Adramyttium about to sail for ports along the coast of the province of Asia, and we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us. The next day we landed at Sidon; and Julius, in kindness to Paul, allowed him to go to his friends so they might provide for his needs. From there we put out to sea again and passed to the lee of Cyprus because the winds were against us. When we had sailed across the open sea off the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia. There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship ¹sailing for Italy and put us on board. We made slow headway for many days and had difficulty arriving off Cnidus. When the wind did not allow us to hold our course, we sailed to the lee of Crete, opposite Salmone. We moved along the coast with difficulty and came to a place called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea. Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was after the Fast. So Paul warned them, ‘Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also.’ But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship. Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided that we should sail on, hoping to reach Phoenix and winter there. This was a harbor in Crete, facing both southwest and northwest.”*
 - a. Luke, the writer of the book of Acts and the Gospel of Luke, was with Paul.
 - i. **Acts 27:2b** - *“Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with*

¹ This was a grain ship that had the capacity to transport 1,200 tons of cargo. The usual size of a boat of this type was 140 feet long and 36 feet wide.

us.”

- b. Myra
 - i. St. Nicholas (270 A.D. to 343 A.D.) was from Myra.
 - ii. St. Nicholas was a devout Christian.
 - iii. St. Nicholas was the Bishop of Myra.
 - iv. St. Nicholas signed the Nicene Creed.²
 - v. Pastor Gary said, “[Nicholas] was well known historically for his generosity, especially [for] giving gifts to the poor and needy.”
- c. The Fast
 - i. This is a reference to Yom Kippur, which is the high, holy day on the Jewish calendar.
 - 1. Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement.
 - 2. Yom Kippur typically falls on a date at the end of September or early in October.
- d. Wisdom – God has given us common sense, so use it!
 - i. **Acts 27:10** – *“So Paul warned them, ‘Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also.’ ”*
 - 1. Paul did not receive a word of wisdom from the Lord; it was a word from common sense.
 - 2. Paul had logged more than 3,500 hundred miles on sea during the course of his three missionary travels.
 - 3. Paul had been shipwrecked three times before this voyage.
 - a. **2 Corinthians 11:25** – *“... three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea.”*
 - 4. Paul had a working knowledge of sailing, and he knew that between September and November (on our calendar) travel on the Mediterranean Sea was exceedingly dangerous due to the unpredictable nature of the storms that occur during those months.
 - ii. Pastor Gary said, “It doesn’t always have to be a prophetic word in your life. Sometimes God can speak through very natural means, and he can give us some common sense to live our lives by because he’s the author of wisdom. So, if we ask for wisdom... [some of the answers] will be [from] the common sense that he’s given us.”
 - 1. **James 1:5** – *“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.”*
- e. Wisdom – Don’t allow money or the majority to drive a decision.
 - i. **Acts 27:11-12a** – *“But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul*

² https://www.blueletterbible.org/study/ccc/nicene_creed.cfm

said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship. Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided that we should sail on, hoping to reach Phoenix and winter there.”

- ii. Pastor Gary said, “How many of you understand that money is a ‘good slave,’ but it is a ‘terrible master’? When we start making decisions based on money, [which] may be **a** factor, but it better not be **the** factor. A lot of times, unfortunately, people make a lot of decisions, sometimes life changing decisions, because of money. ... We should not be motivated by greed. ... Sometimes money is a terrible barometer for what God’s will is [for our lives]. ... How many of you understand that the majority is not always right? And in this case, we are going to see that the majority is not right. We need to get God’s heart on things. We need to stop listening to what a plurality of people [have to say]. ... There’s one single voice that we need to hear... [and] that’s the voice of the Lord. And, we need to be willing when it is necessary to stand alone and be a part of the proud minority instead of being guided just because a majority of people say [it’s true] or it must be right.” (Emphasis added)

2. **Acts 27:13-26** – *“When a gentle south wind began to blow, they thought they had obtained what they wanted; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. Before very long, a wind of hurricane force, called the ‘northeaster,’ swept down from the island. The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along. As we passed to the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were hardly able to make the lifeboat secure. When the men had hoisted it aboard, they passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. Fearing that they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along. We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. On the third day, they threw the ship’s tackle overboard with their own hands. When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved. After the men had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: ‘Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me and said, “Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.” ‘So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island.’ ”*

- a. The owner of the boat was convinced that they could make the

approximately forty-mile journey from Fair Havens to Phoenix, without any difficulty.

- i. **Acts 27:13** - *“When a gentle south wind began to blow, they thought they had obtained what they wanted; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete.”*

b. God’s Messenger

- i. We see by inference that Paul was afraid, which is why God sent an angel to give him encouragement to not be afraid.
- ii. We see by inference that Paul had been praying for the people onboard the ship, which is why the angel told him that God would graciously spare everyone’s life.

c. Wisdom - God will see us through our storms.

- i. **Acts 27:21-26** - *“After the men had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: ‘Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me and said, “Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.” ‘So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island.’ ”*
- ii. Pastor Gary said, “If we hold on to the fact that God is good and he loves [us] as God our father, then we can trust that whatever storm we go through our loving father is going to take care of us. It may not always work out as we anticipate; we can trust that because God is good and he... will take care of us.”

3. **Acts 27:27-44** - *“On the fourteenth night we were still being driven across the Adriatic Sea, when about midnight the sailors sensed they were approaching land. They took soundings and found that the water was a hundred and twenty feet deep. A short time later they took soundings again and found it was ninety feet deep. Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight. In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow. Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, ‘Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved.’ So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it fall away. Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. ‘For the last fourteen days,’ he said, ‘you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food - you haven’t eaten anything. Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his*

head.' After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. Altogether there were 276 of us on board. When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea. When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship aground if they could. Cutting loose the anchors, they left them in the sea and at the same time untied the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach. But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf. The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping. But the centurion wanted to spare Paul's life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard and get to land. The rest were to get there on planks or on pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land in safety."

- a. Wisdom - We might be tempted to escape from our storms, but God's grace is only experienced through our storms.
 - i. [Acts 27:30-32](#) - *"In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow. Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, 'Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved.' So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it fall away."*
 - ii. It's natural for us to want to escape difficult circumstances, and it is wonderful when God delivers us out of difficult situations.
 - iii. Pastor Gary said, "Sometimes the only way that we get to experience and witness the goodness and the grace of God is by the way he sustains us through [difficult things]. Otherwise, if he just delivered us from [these situations], we would never see the wonderful way that he was at work in our behalf."
- b. Wisdom - When you are in a storm, do your best and leave the rest up to God.
 - i. [Acts 27:33-38](#) - *"Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. 'For the last fourteen days,' he said, 'you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food - you haven't eaten anything. Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head.' After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. Altogether there were 276 of us on board. When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea."*
 - ii. Pastor Gary said, "There's only so much we can do and then we just

have to trust the Lord. ... When people go through difficulty and challenges through the storms [in their lives], sometimes the tendency is to be so paralyzed that [people] don't do anything. And then sometimes [people] end up getting so hyper-spiritual that [they] think God is going to do everything. ... What we see throughout Scripture is that God also desires for us to engage our own participation in his purpose and in his plan."

- iii. Pastor Gary said, "It would have been wonderful for Paul to [go] from Caesarea to Rome and have beautiful weather all along the way, and for [Paul] to soak in the beauty of the Greek islands as he [floated] by them on the Mediterranean Sea on his way to Italy. But we are going to see [that he's got to go] a very zig-zagging way to get [to Rome]."

4. **Acts 28:1-10** - *"Once safely ashore, we found out that the island was called Malta. The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, 'This must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live.' But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead, but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god. There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and for three days entertained us hospitably. His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. They honored us in many ways and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed.*

a. Malta

- i. Malta is about fifty-eight miles south of Sicily.

b. Wisdom - Sometimes storms come to align our lives with God's will.

- i. Pastor Gary said, "[God wanted to heal and to minister to Publius and other unnamed and uncounted people.] Paul was on his way from Caesarea to Rome, and God was going to divert his path because God [had] some things he [wanted] to do. ... Hear me on this, Paul [hadn't] done anything wrong to miss the will of God or to be out of the will of God. [Paul was on a God-ordained mission to Rome.] ... God sometimes causes a storm in our lives to redirect us for some other divine purpose or plan that God has for us. Don't look at every storm as being a terrible thing. I know that's our tendency and I'm not trying to downplay it, and if you're going through a storm right now, I'm not trying to be

insensitive at all. I'm just simply saying that sometimes we need to remember that even in the dark times of our lives, God is up to something. And God is moving in different ways as part of his divine purpose and part of his will that sometimes we cannot see and we do not know, and it doesn't have to do with sin in our lives or that we are out of the will of God."

5. **Acts 28:11-16** - *"After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island. It was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux. We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days. From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli. There we found some brothers who invited us to spend a week with them. And so we came to Rome. The brothers there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. At the sight of these men Paul thanked God and was encouraged. When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him."*
- a. In Greek mythology, Castor and Pollux are the twin sons of Zeus.
 - b. Paul in Rome
 - i. Paul was under house arrest in Rome from about 60 A.D. to 62 A.D.
 - ii. While Paul was in Rome, he wrote the following epistles, which are found in the New Testament: Ephesians; Colossians; Philemon; and Philippians.
 - 1. This ordering of Paul's epistles is in chronological order, which is not the order they are found in the New Testament.
6. **Acts 28:17-31** - *"Three days later he called together the leaders of the Jews. When they had assembled, Paul said to them: 'My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death. But when the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar - not that I had any charge to bring against my own people. For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain.' They replied, 'We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of the brothers who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you. But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect.' They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. They disagreed among themselves*

and began to leave after Paul had made his final statement: 'The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet: "Go to this people and say, 'You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' " 'Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!' For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ."

a. The Jews

- i. The leaders Paul met with were not believers in Jesus Christ.
- ii. The leaders Paul met with considered Christianity to be nothing more than a heretical group that had left Judaism.

b. Paul's Witness

- i. Paul used Scripture to share the message of salvation through Jesus Christ.

1. **Acts 28:23-24** - *"They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe."*

2. **Isaiah 6:9-10** - *"He said, 'Go and tell this people: "Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving." 'Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.' "*

- a. Pastor Gary said, "[This] is a prophetic statement against their stubborn and reluctant hearts to see the revelation of Messiah, to hear the revelation of Messiah, to believe the revelation of Messiah."

c. Wisdom - God will ultimately fulfill his plans and purposes for our lives.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the 1984 New International Version (NIV)