

Acts 27:1-28:17, Paul's Journey to Rome
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Overview

1. The trip begins and ends with Paul refreshed by his Christian friends.
2. In between, three episodes show the Lord's continued work through Paul : the conference at Fair Havens; the storm on the sea; the three months at Malta. Points of comparison among them:
 - a) Paul's actions grow more powerful: human wisdom; prophecy; miracles. (And people's response increases in proportion: disregard; obey; worship.)
 - b) Increasing dangers he faces: competent crew; natural disaster; deliberate human antagonism.
 - c) The correlation between these is not accidental. God gives "just-in-time" training; does not force us to carry along a load of material that we don't need yet.
3. Lessons:
 - a) The value of the ministry of encouragement; believers whose names we shall never know this side of heaven were used of God to strengthen Paul for the Lord's use during this time. 1 Cor. 12:21-25.
 - b) How God's work through us meets the demands of our circumstances. "Don't expect dying grace until it's time to die."
 - c) The relative roles of God's sovereign rule and our effort. If we seek to deliver ourselves, we will fail. But when we realize that we are helpless, suddenly he enables us to work very diligently and very effectively. (Cf. our church situation just now.)
 - d) How God can use us in "secular" contexts; not just in spiritual ministry. God's guidance and empowerment extends to all of our life.
4. This lesson: cover initial refreshment and first two of the three episodes with Paul. Next lesson will cover third episode, second time with friends, and moving on to Rome.

A. 1-6, Refreshment by Friends

1. Luke and Aristarchus. They probably have been with him in Caesarea. In Col. 4:10 Aristarchus is called his "fellowprisoner"; may have been arrested with him in the temple (and Luke might have been mistakenly thought to be the Gentile accused of polluting the temple). Note "it was determined that we should sail," implying that Luke and Aristarchus were included in Festus' decision. Paul does not travel alone--never in missionary outreach, and now the Lord does not leave him alone even as a prisoner.

2. Believers at Sidon. "Refresh himself" is literally, "receive care." He is passive, not active, in this effort; suggests he was ill or perhaps depressed under the turn events had taken; his last recorded word from the Lord was in 23:11, since which time he has been unjustly incarcerated for over two years. He may well despair of the Lord's work in his life. At the end of his missionary journeys everyone came to hear him on his coastal stops; now these simple saints minister to the Great Apostle.
3. *Application*: Our need to encourage one another. No one is at the top of the spiritual pile. We all need shepherding and encouraging--even those whom we tend to think of as shepherds and encouragers.

B. 7-13, Consultation at Fair Havens: Paul as Counselor

1. 6-8, they are now on a different ship. The first was a coastal trading vessel; the second was a grain ship from Alexandria headed to Rome, which got most of her grain from overseas.

7-8 show that progress was difficult and slower than expected; the winds did not favor them. Even at Fair Havens they waited "much time" for conditions to permit them to proceed. It's clear they will have to winter somewhere.

2. 9-10, Paul urges caution. "The fast" (Day of Atonement) was past, and beyond that point shipping generally ceased on the Med. until spring. Better to winter over where they were.

Note his words, "I perceive." Later he will report a message from the Lord. Perhaps this is only his personal opinion here; even if the Lord has showed him this, they are not yet ready to hear from God. Not until God's judgments are in the earth will the inhabitants of the earth listen to him, Isa. 26:9.

3. 11-13, Decision to proceed
 - a) Not a favorable place to winter; an open harbor, without good protection; only a small town (lack of entertainment?) The sailors would rather winter in Phoenix, only 40 miles further down the coast, only six hours with favorable winds.
 - b) When the winds pick up, they decide to make a run for it. The sequel shows that this is a mistake.

4. *Applications*:

- a) Human decisions are always made under uncertainty and some measure of risk, and Eccl. 11:4 urges us not to be discouraged at the sight of the winds and clouds. At the same time, we are urged to be "content with such things as we have," Heb. 13:5. In this case, the sequel shows that Paul's caution was the wiser step. Don't throw away God's blessings through greed for even more.

- b) Paul states his position, but does not keep arguing for it. Doesn't "have to be right." Cf. 21:14; believers state their case and then leave it with the Lord. Only if we distrust him do we need to keep pushing. Cf. Titus 3:10--even a heretic gets only one or two admonitions. God is not glorified by sustained argument.

In the face of fair winds and with the prospect of a better harbor, Paul can only be a counselor. When disaster comes upon the company, they are ready to receive him as a prophet.

C. 14-40, The Storm at Sea: Paul as Prophet

Overview: between descriptions of how the sailors abandoned the ship to the wind and sea (15-19) and how they regained control (39-40), Paul makes three utterances. During the time that men are helpless, God speaks. Yet they are not totally helpless, for Paul's second and third statements implement steps needed to realize the promise of the first. God's sovereignty does not make our work unnecessary, but incorporates it.

1. 14-19, Surrender to the storm.

- a) Pull the ship's boat on board (it had been trailing behind);
- b) Bind the ship around with cables specially prepared, to keep it from coming apart (common practice even in the British navy in the 19th century);
- c) Strike sail to keep from being blown into Africa;
- d) Dump most of the cargo to lighten the ship and compensate for water already shipped;
- e) Throw away whatever equipment they could, for the same reason.

Application: Note the effect of trials--to force us to get rid of excess baggage, and realize the limits of our own abilities! These actions constitute a vivid confession by the sailors that they are unable to manage their own affairs; now God can step in. So in our lives: as long as we think we can do it by ourselves, God lets us try, Isa. 50:10-51:2.

2. 20-26, Paul's first word: divine encouragement.

- a) Setting: many days without sun or stars (so no way to know where they were); no food (hard to cook on a tossing ship); despair even among Paul's party ("all hope that we should be saved").
- b) 21 "I told you so," not to mock the others, but paired (*men-de* with 26. You thought the choice was Fair Havens or Phoenix; in fact it was Fair Havens or a certain island. (Man proposes; God disposes.)
- c) Encouragement: "Be of good cheer." Paul is speaking to himself as well as the others. Reason: God has confirmed his mission to Rome.
- d) Note the overflow effect of God's blessings. Because God wants

to get Paul to Rome, the others will be preserved as well. Guard against two errors.

- 1) Notion that God cannot or will not bless unbelievers. He both can and does; causes his rain to fall on the just and unjust. Indeed, these blessings increase their liability to judgment, but can also be appealed to as a grounds for belief (cf. Paul in Lystra, 14:17).
 - 2) Assumption that if God is blessing me, I must be OK spiritually. If you have not repented of your sin and received the Lord Jesus, you are headed for hell, no matter what your circumstances of life are. Particularly dangerous if you are close to believers; you may mistake the overflow of God's blessings to them for his evaluation of your status.
- e) Compare Paul with Jonah. Both were God's messengers to the Gentiles; both were central in a stormy boat ride.
- 1) Differences
 - a> Jonah was fleeing the place to which God sent him (Nineveh); Paul was heading for his divine destination (Rome).
 - b> Jonah was traveling willingly; Paul, as a prisoner.
 - c> Jonah was the cause of the storm; Paul was the cause for deliverance.
 - 2) Similarities
 - a> Both men interpret the storm to their fellow-travelers.
 - b> Both men bring deliverance to their fellows (though in different ways; Jonah by self-sacrifice; Paul because he carries God's blessing).
 - c> Both trips end with the hero cast up on the shore, not at the destination.
 - d> Ultimately, both of them reach their destination.
 - 3) Luke's point in this (a pattern that he follows frequently in other parts, cf. the Elijah-Elisha parallels in the stories of the Seven in ch. 6ff): emphasizes the continuity of the NT with the Old, and further defends Paul's basic Jewishness against his Jewish adversaries. How can they honor Jonah as a prophet, and yet reject Paul, whose commitment to the Lord excels that of Jonah?

The first word is a divine prophecy. The second and third are practical advice, exhortations presented as necessary if they are to realize the blessing promised by God. Shows that Paul doesn't find divine power and human agency mutually exclusive.

3. 27-32, Paul's second word: warning about defectors.

- a) Setting: In the middle of the fourteenth night since leaving Fair Havens, the sailors hear breakers, and know that they are

near land. Leads to two sets of actions, one legitimate and the other not.

- 1) Legitimate: drop anchor to keep from being driven onto the rocks. Much better to beach the ship deliberately when day comes than to founder far from shore in the middle of the night.
 - 2) Illegitimate: the sailors decide to take the small boat and head for shore, leaving the passengers behind.
- b) 31, Paul's warning. The sailors will be needed to bring the boat close to land in the morning. If they are allowed to escape, the other passengers will probably drown. "You cannot be saved," even though he has earlier promised "there shall be no loss of any man's life among you."
- c) So the soldiers stop them.
4. 33-37, Paul's third word: urges them to eat. "This is for your health," lit. "salvation." They will need strength to guide the ship to land. Once again, God's promise is to be accomplished through human activity.

Note parallels with the feeding of the 5000 as in Matthew 14 and Mark 6 (cited here) (NOT Luke):

- a) People in a remote place without food (35-36);
- b) Spiritual leader takes the initiative in finding them food;
- c) Gives thanks to God;
- d) Explicit report of eating (42);
- e) Count given after the event (44; in Luke, it's before);
- f) Feeding followed by deliverance from a stormy sea (NOT in Luke, but Mark 6:45-51).

Thus as Luke has previously contrasted Paul with Jonah, the unfaithful prophet, here he presents Paul as walking in the steps of the "prophet like unto Moses," who feeds his people with heavenly bread better than manna and delivers them from a sea greater than the Red Sea.

5. 38-40, Retaking Control (cf. 15-19)
- Having suffered the discipline of the storm, and realized that God is their only source of salvation, now they are enabled to regain control of their craft, and by their skill under God to bring it within reach of shore. Actions:
- a) Further lighten the ship by discarding the rest of the cargo;
 - b) Cut the anchors free (it's the anchors, not the people, whom they commit to the sea);
 - c) Lower the rudder paddles (which had been tied up out of the way so as not to foul the anchors going out the stern);
 - d) Raise the mainsail;
 - e) Make way toward the shore.

Summary

1. God equips Paul according to the need of the moment; human wisdom when things are under control, special revelation when he needs it.
2. God can bless unbelievers through believers; Paul's divine gift here works for the physical salvation of the entire company. Thus it's key that we not confuse salvation with happiness. Be sure that you're saved. And as a believer, realize that God sometimes wants you to serve him by helping unbelievers in secular ways, in addition to ministries that we think of as more spiritual.
3. The role of human effort in accomplishing God's purposes. Avoid two errors:
 - a) Our works cannot save us, and if we try to save ourselves without recognizing our need and God's sovereignty, we shall fail. We need to come to the point where we throw everything overboard and are adrift.
 - b) As we trust in God, he may well instruct us to take deliberate action, just as Paul here requires the sailors to stay aboard and urges everyone to be strengthened through food in order to beach the ship successfully.

Hymn: Psa. 133 (the fellowship of believers); 107:23-32 (after the storm)

Analysis

Can we focus on Paul's involvement, and so identify episodes? Note bracketing with references to Paul's encouragement by his friends; three center sections show an increase in the respect accorded by others to him, from rejected counselor, to respected prophet, to one revered as a god.

A. 1-6, Paul's Resources: His Friends

1. 1, Paul committed to centurion
 27:1 (Ws de\ e)kri/qh tou^ a)poplei^n h(ma^s ei)s th\n)Itali/an, pardi/doun to/n te Pau^lon kai/ tinas e(te/rous desmw/tas e(katonta/rxh| o)no/mati)Iouli/w| spei/rhs Sebasth^s.
2. 2-6, First ship, Caesarea to Lycia
 - a) First stage: to Sidon
 - 1) 2 e)piba/ntes de\ ploi/w|)Adramutthnw^| me/llonti plei^n ei)s tou\s kata\ th\n)Asi/an to/pous a)nh/xqhmen, o)/ntos su\n h(mi^n)Arista/rxou Makedo/nos Qessalonike/ws:
 - 2) 3 th^| te e(te/ra| kath/xqhmen ei)s Sidw^na,
 - 3) filanqrw/pws te o()Iou/lios tw^| Pau/lw| xrhsa/menos e)pe/treyen pro\s tou\s fi/lous poreuqe/nti e)pimelei/as tuxei^n.
 - b) Second stage: to Lycia
 - 1) 4 ka)kei^gen a)naxqe/ntes u(pepleu/samen th\n Ku/pron dia\ to\ tou\s a)ne/mous ei)^nai e)nanti/ous,
 - 2) 5 to/ te pe/lagos to\ kata\ th\n Kiliki/an kai\ Pamfuli/an diapleu/santes kath/lqomen ei)s Mu/ra th^s Luki/as.

c) Transition: new boat
6 ka)kei^ eu(rw\n o(e(katonta/rxhs ploion)Alecandri^non
ple/on ei)s th\n)Itali/an e)nebi/basen h(ma^s ei)s au)to/.

B. 7-13, Paul's Wisdom: Don't Sail.

"I perceive"---human wisdom. That's all they will receive under these circumstances.

1. 7-8, Second Ship, Lycia to Fair Haven

a) 7 e)n i(kanai^s de\ h(me/rais braduploou^ntes kai\ mo/lis
geno/menoi kata\ th\n Kni/don, mh\ prosew^ntos h(ma^s tou^
a)ne/mou, u(pepleu/samen th\n Krh/thn kata\ Salmw/nhn,
b) 8 mo/lis te paralego/menoi au)th\n h)/lqomen ei)s to/pon
tina\ kalou/menon Kalou\s Lime/nas, w(^| e)ggus po/lis h)^n
Lasai/a.

2. 9-13, Conference in Fair Haven

a) quote p

1) time: 9 (Ikanou^ de\ xro/nou diagenome/nou kai\ o)/ntos
h)/dh e)pisfalou^s tou^ ploos dia\ to\ kai\ th\n nhstei/an
h)/dh parehluge/nai,

2) quote f: parh/|nei o(Pau^los 10 le/gwn au)toi^s,

3) quote:

a>)/Andres,

b> qewrw^ o(/ti meta\ u(/brews kai\ pollh^s zhmi/as ou)
mo/non tou^ forti/ou kai\ tou^ ploiu/ou alla\ kai\ tw^
n yuxw^
n h(mw^
n me/llein e)/sesqai to\n plou^
n.

b) 11 o(de\ e(katonta/rxhs tw^| kubernh/th| kai\ tw^|
nauklh/rw| ma^llon e)pei/qeto h)\ toi^s u(po\ Pau/lou
legome/nois.

c) 12 a)neuge/tou de\ tou^ lime/nos u(pa/rxontos pro\s
paraxeimasi/an oi(plei/ones e)/qento boulh\n a)naxqh^
nai e)kei^qen, ei)/ pws du/nainto katanth/santes ei)s Foi/nika
paraxeima/sai, lime/na th^s Krh/ths ble/ponta kata\ li/ba kai\
kata\ xw^ron.

d) 13 (Upopneu/santos de\ no/tou do/cantes th^s proqe/sews
kekrathke/nai, a)/rantes a)^sson parele/gonto th\n Krh/thn.

C. 14-40, The Storm at Sea: Paul's three statements.

Here he speaks as a prophet of the Lord. When disaster strikes, people become MUCH more attentive. His second and third statements implement steps needed to carry out the commission of the first; he now has the credibility to make it happen.

1. 14 met' ou) polu\ de\ e)/balen kat' au)th^s a)/nemos tufwniko\s
o(kalou/menos Eu)raku/lwn:

2. 15-19, ampl p: battening down the hatches and holding on.

a) Summary: 15 sunarpasqe/ntos de\ tou^ ploiu/ou kai\ mh\
duname/nou a)ntofqalmei^
n tw^| a)ne/mw| e)pidon/tes

- e)fero/meqa.
- b) Amplification: (the effects of trials: gets us to throw excess baggage overboard! forces us to make choices)
- 1) 16 nhsi/on de/ ti u(podramo/ntes kalou/menon Kau^da i)sxu/samen mo/lis perikratei^s gene/sqai th^s ska/fhs,
 - 2) 17 h(\n a)/rantes bohqei/ais e)xrw^nto u(pozwnnu/ntes to\ ploi^on:
 - 3) fobou/menoi/ te mh\ ei)s th\n Su/rtin e)kpe/swsin, xala/santes to\ skeu^os, ou(/tws e)fe/ronto.
 - 4) 18 sfodrw^s de\ xeimazome/nwn h(mw^n th^| e(ch^s e)kbolh\n e)poiou^nto,
 - 5) 19 kai\ th^| tri/th| au)to/xeires th\n skeuh\n tou^ ploi/ou e)/rriyan.
3. 20-26, Paul's encouragement in the heart of the storm
- a) setting: 20 mh/te de\ h(li/ou mh/te a)/strwn e)pifaino/ntwn e)pi\ plei/onas h(me/ras, xeimw^no/s te ou)k o)li/gou e)pikeime/nou, loipo\n perih|rei^to e)lpi\s pa^sa tou^ sw/|zesqai h(ma^s.
- b) quote p
- 1) quote f: 21 Pollh^s te a)siti/as u(parxou/shs to/te stagei\s o(Pau^los e)n me/sw| au)tw^n ei)^pen,
 - 2) quote:

a>)/Edei me/n, w)^ a)/ndres, peiqarxh/santa/s moi mh\
a)na/gesqai a)po\ th^s Krh/thhs kerdh^sai/ te th\
u(/brin tau/thn kai\ th\n zhmi/an.
men-de contrast concluded in 26 with another dew
- b> Summary p
- 1> Detail: double reason p
 - a: text: 22 kai\ ta\ nu^n parainw^ u(ma^s eu)qumei^n,
 - b: reason-1: a)pobolh\ ga\r yuxh^s ou)demi/a e)/stai e)c u(mw^n plh\n tou^ ploi/ou:
 - c: reason-2: quote p
 - 1: quote f: 23 pare/sth ga/r moi tau/th| th^| nukti\ tou^ qeou^ ou(^ ei)mi [e)gw/], w(^| kai\ latreu/w, a)/ggelos24 le/gwn,
 - 2: quote:
 - A. Mh\ fobou^, Pau^le:
 - B. Kai/sari/ se dei^ parasth^nai,
 - C. kai\ i)dou\ kexa/ristai/ soi o(qeo\s pa/ntas tou\s ple/ontas meta\ sou^.
 - 2> Summary: reason p
 - a: text: 25 dio\ eu)qumei^te, a)/ndres:
 - b: reason: pisteu/w ga\r tw^| qew^| o(/ti ou(/tws e)/stai kaq' o(\n tro/pon lela/lhtai/ moi.
- c> 26 ei)s nh^son de/ tina dei^ h(ma^s e)kpesei^n.
4. 27-32, time p: Paul's warning about defectors
Is the structure strong enough to justify taking this as the focal point of the entire episode??? Probably not, but ...

- a) time:
 1) 27 (Ws de\ tessareskaideka/th nu\c e)ge/neto
 2) diaferome/nwn h(mw^n e)n tw^|)Adri/a|,
 3) kata\ me/son th^s nukto\s
- b) text:
 1) u(peno/oun oi(nau^tai prosa/gein tina\ au)toi^s xw/ran.
 2) 28 kai\ boli/santes eu(^ron o)rguia\s ei)/kosi,
 3) braxu\ de\ diasth/santes kai\ pa/lin boli/santes eu(^ron o)rguia\s dekafe/nte:
 4) 29 fobou/menoi/ te mh/ pou kata\ traxei^s to/pous e)kpe/swmen, e)k pru/mnhs r(i/yantes a)gku/ras te/ssaras hu)/xonto h(me/ran gene/sqai. *fear--hope contrast*
 5) The fugitive Boatmen
 a> circumstance: 30 tw^n de\ nautw^n zhtou/ntwn fugei^ne)k tou^ ploi/ou kai\ xalasa/ntwn th\n ska/fhn ei)s th\n qa/lassan profa/sei w(s e)k prw/|rhs a)gku/ras mello/ntwn e)ktei/nein,
 b> quote f: 31 ei)^pen o(Pau^los tw^| e(katonta/rxh| kai\ toi^s stratiw/tais,
 c> quote: condition p
To what degree is this human wisdom? The sailors will be needed to beach the ship the next AM.
 1> protasis:)Ea\n mh\ ou(^toi mei/nwsin e)n tw^| ploi/w|,
 2> apodosis: u(mei^s swqh^nai ou) du/nasqe.
 d> 32 to/te a)pe/koyan oi(stratiw^tai ta\ sxoini/a th^s ska/fhs
 e> kai\ ei)/asan au)th\n e)kpesei^n.
5. 33-37, Paul's Picnic--cares for their immediate physical needs.
 a) time: 33)/Axri de\ ou(^ h(me/ra h)/mellen gi/nesqai
 b) quote f: pareka/lei o(Pau^los a(/pantas metalabei^n trofh^s le/gwn,
 c) quote:
 1) Tessareskaideka/thn sh/meron h(me/ran prosdokw^ntes a)/sitoi diateleite, mhqe\n proslabo/menoi:
 2) 34 dio\ parakalw^ u(ma^s metalabei^n trofh^s,
 3) tou^to ga\r pro\s th^s u(mete/ras swthri/as u(pa/rxei:
 4) ou)deno\s ga\r u(mw^n gri\c a)po\ th^s kefalh^s a)polei^tai.
 d) 35 ei)/pas de\ tau^ta kai\ labw\n a)/rton eu)xari/sthsen tw^| qew^| e)nw/pion pa/ntwn
 e) kai\ kla/sas h)/rcato e)sqi/ein.
 f) 36 eu)/qumoi de\ geno/menoi pa/ntes kai\ au)toi\ prosela/bonto trofh^s.
 g) 37 h)/meqa de\ ai(pa^sai yuxai\ e)n tw^| ploi/w| diako/siai e(bdomh/konta e(/c.
6. 38-40, retaking control (cf. 15-19)
 a) 38 koresqe/ntes de\ trofh^s e)kou/fizon to\ ploi^on e)kballo/menoi to\n si^ton ei)s th\n qa/lassan.
 b) 39 (/Ote de\ h(me/ra e)ge/neto, th\n gh^n ou)k e)pegi/nwskon,
 c) ko/lpon de/ tina katenou)ntes e)/xonta ai)gialo\n ei)s o(\n

- e) bouleu/onto ei) du/nainto e) cw^sai to\ ploi^on.
- d) 40 kai\ ta\s a)gku/ras perielo/ntes ei)/wn ei)s th\n qa/lassan,
- e) a(/ma a)ne/ntes ta\s zeukthri/as tw^n phdali/wn, kai\
e)pa/rantes to\n a)rte/mwna th^| pneou/sh| katei^xon ei)s to\n ai)gialo/n. *Taking back command after 15-19.*