

Abounding Grace Christian Church

The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Church – Part 76

I. Exposition of Chapter Twenty Seven. (Continued).

A. Verses 9-12 – Paul’s warning is ignored.

1. Verse 9 – “Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them.” – The mention of the “Fast” is probably a reference to the Jewish Day of Atonement. It seems that it’s mentioned here in order to reveal what time of year this was taking place. Dr. Bob Utley writes:

“the fast’ - This refers to the Day of Atonement (cf. Lev. 16). It is the only fast day mentioned in the writings of Moses. This would make the voyage sometime between September and October. October was the marginal period for sea travel.”¹

2. Verse 10 – “Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives.” – The word “perceive” means; “to discern, descry; to ascertain, find out by seeing.”² This must have been just a natural perception on the part of Paul due to the fact that later lives were spared. It doesn’t change the fact that he was right to warn them because the ship was destroyed. Dr. Thomas Constable in referencing another author, states:

“Luke recorded 11 or 12 sea journeys that Paul took in Acts, beginning at 9:30 and ending with 28:10. He calculated that the apostle traveled at least 3,000 miles by sea. Thus Paul was a seasoned sea traveler whose word those in authority should have heeded.”³

3. Verses 11-12 – The centurion, Julius, who had the final say, decided to go with the majority. Grant Osborne states:

“Paul is thinking practically and prophetically, but the owner of the ship and the captain are thinking profit margin and the greater safety of the harbor at Phoenix. Their advice prevails, and the centurion, who appears to have the final say because the ship has been requisitioned for grain for Rome, goes along with their decision. Phoenix was a much better harbor and only forty miles away, so they were convinced they could make it. It was on the very tip of the island, so its harbor faced both north and south. It would have been a very good place to winter.”⁴

B. Verses 13-26 – Into the Storm, but Paul receives and gives Encouragement.

1. Verses 13-15 – The journey starts off smooth but soon the winds pick up. In verse 14, the word “tempestuous” means; “a hurricane, typhoon”⁵ The word “Euroclydon” means; “a strong storm wind blowing from the northeast—‘a Northeaster.”⁶

2. Verses 16-20 – They had a brief reprieve from the winds when they came across a small island called “Clauda”. This was enough to “...secure the skiff” (verse 16). Dr. Stanley Horton writes:

“...a small island, Cauda or Clauda, gave them only temporary relief. Even then it was with difficulty that they were able to secure the lifeboat, a small boat that normally was towed. After they hoisted it onto the deck, they used ropes (Gk. *boēthiais*, ‘helps’) to undergird the ship. That is, they fastened cables vertically around the ship to try to keep the timbers from straining too much or giving way. Then, afraid they would be driven off their course into Syrtis, a quicksand off the coast of North Africa west of Cyrene that was a well-known graveyard of ships, ‘they lowered the sea anchor’ to act as a brake...and so were carried along by the wind.”⁷

3. Verse 18 – “...they lightened the ship.” – Other translations render this, “...the next day to jettison the cargo.” (See ESV, NASB). This shows that these men were very afraid for their lives.

4. Verse 19 – “On the third day we threw the ship’s tackle overboard with our own hands.” – The

¹Robert James Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts*, vol. Volume 3B, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2003), 280.

²Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977)

³Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Acts* (<http://www.soniclight.com>: Sonic Light Publication, 2019), 476.

⁴Grant R. Osborne, *Acts: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 462.

⁵W.E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishing), 1127.

⁶Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 167.

⁷Stanley M. Horton, *Acts: A Logion Press Commentary* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2001), 396.

“tackle” of the ship refers to “the equipment” and “furniture”.⁸ In other words, in order to lighten the load on the ship they got rid of anything possible.

5. Verse 20 – “...all hope that we would be saved was finally given up.” – Luke seems to include himself in this feeling of hopelessness. Grant Osborne states:

“Despair overwhelmed them. They didn’t know where they were, for they could not navigate by either sun or stars, nor could they see any hazards that might suddenly come on them. The ship could only take so much battering, and there was no sign the storm would let up any time soon.”⁹

6. Verse 21 – “...after long abstinence from food...” – This could be attributed to a couple of things, a shortage of food on board, or more likely, they were all suffering from seasickness.

7. “Men, you should have listened to me...” – Paul couldn’t resist giving them an “I told you so.”

8. Verses 22-26 – Paul encourages them after being encouraged by an angel of God.

a. Verse 22 – “And now I urge you to take heart...” – The phrase “take heart” means; “to be joyful, be of good cheer, of good courage”¹⁰ (cf. James 1:2; I Peter 4:12-14).

b. Verse 23 – “For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve.” – This is the first time that we know of, that an angel appeared to Paul. He had other supernatural events where Jesus appeared to him (cf. 18:9–10; 22:17–19; 23:11). Angels are mentioned several times in the book of Acts – cf. 5:19; 8:26; 10:3-7; 12:7-10; 12:23. Notice what Hebrews 1:14 says from the Amplified Bible:

“Are not all the angels ministering spirits sent out [by God] to serve (accompany, protect) those who will inherit salvation? [Of course they are!]”

“The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them.” – Psalm 34:7

c. Verse 24 – “...Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.” – It must be Paul was experiencing fear before the angel appeared to him. He was going through a life-threatening event. He needed to be reminded that God had a plan for his life and this storm was not going to thwart the plan of God. We need to remember this when we go through difficulties. First, God has not given us a “spirit of fear” (I Timothy 1:7) and He is the One who delivers us from our fears (Psalm 34:4). Also, God has a plan for each of our lives and, as we place our faith in Him, that plan cannot be thwarted either. The adversary, the devil, is the one who wants to “...steal, kill and destroy” but Jesus came to bring us an “abundant life.” (John 10:10).

d. Verse 25 – “Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me.” – Paul recognized that the angel was a spokesman for God. If God said it, Paul was going to believe it. No matter what the circumstances looked like. The storm was still raging but God said they were not going to die. Faith is believing what God has said despite what we see or feel. God’s Word is true and any circumstances that are contrary to what God has said have to change when we stand in faith on His Word. (cf. Romans 4:13-21; II Corinthians 4:16-18).

e. Verse 26 – “However, we must run aground on a certain island.” – From this we know that the angel didn’t tell Paul everything but just enough to bring encouragement and to build faith. Paul didn’t know what island but the fact they were going to get to dry land had to encourage these fearful, drenched, hungry and seasick men.

⁸Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.

⁹Grant R. Osborne, *Acts: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 463.

¹⁰Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.