

**Acts 27:1 ¶ 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.**

**Acts 27:2 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.**

**Acts 27:3 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.**

**Acts 27:4 And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.**

**Acts 27:5 And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a city* of Lycia.**

Finally, the time came for Paul to be sent to Rome. Notice that Luke is still with him—"we" should set sail. Julius, a Roman centurion of the Emperor's Regiment, was given charge of this expedition. Paul was just one of several prisoners being transported to Italy. The ship in which they traveled was from Adramyttium (a port on the NE coast of the Aegean Sea), and the itinerary included stops along the coast of Asia. Luke also notes that one of the passengers was Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, another one of the men that had traveled to Palestine with Paul.

*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."*

On the second day of the voyage they stopped at Sidon, and Julius allowed Paul to visit with his friends for refreshment. After leaving Sidon, they sailed "close to the sheltered side of Cyprus because the winds were against us" (CJB). They continued on to Cilicia and Pamphylia until reaching Myra, a city of Lycia.

**Acts 27:6 And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.**

**Acts 27:7 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;**

**Acts 27:8 And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.**

At Myra the centurion moved the whole company to a ship from Alexandria that was headed to Italy. David Guzik describes this ship as a grain freighter that could not sail into the wind because of its design.

Going was slow for several days, but they finally arrived off Cnidus. The CJB is a bit easier to understand.

*Acts 27:7-8 "For a number of days we made little headway, and we arrived off Cnidus only with difficulty. The wind would not let us continue any farther along the direct route; so we ran down along the sheltered side of Crete from Cape Salmone; and,*

*continuing to struggle on, hugging the coast, we reached a place called Pleasant Harbor, near the town of Lasea."*

The NIV Commentary makes note that "Cnidus was the last port of call before sailing west across the Aegean for the Greek mainland." It also explains, "Navigation in this part of the Mediterranean was always dangerous after Sept. 14 and was considered impossible after Nov. 11."

**Acts 27:9 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished *them*, Acts 27:10 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. Acts 27:11 Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.***

As they continued traveling quite slowly, conditions for sailing were becoming more. Since the Day of Atonement had already passed, Paul was evidently aware that they were entering the time of year that was more dangerous for sailing (as noted above).

Paul warned those in charge that if they continued, he could foresee disaster in their future resulting in loss of both cargo and lives. The captain and owner of the ship, however, convinced the centurion to keep going.

**Acts 27:12 ¶ 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.**

**Acts 27:13 And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* purpose, loosing *thence*, they sailed close by Crete.**

**Acts 27:14 But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.**

**Acts 27:15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let *her* drive.**

Since they were not in a harbor that was conducive to docking for the winter, the decision was made to head for Phenice, a harbor of Crete better situated for that purpose. When a gentle south wind began to provide a favorable breeze, they decided to set sail and maintain a course close to Crete. Shortly after departing, a stormy wind called Euroclydon (what we would call a nor'easter) set in. The ship could not sail into the wind (as noted earlier), so they had to let her drift.

**Acts 27:16 And running under a certain island which is called Claudia, we had much work to come by the boat:**

**Acts 27:17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.**

Again, the CJB is more clearly understood.

*Acts 27:16–17 “As we passed into the lee of a small island called Cauda, we managed with strenuous effort to get control of the lifeboat. They hoisted it aboard, then fastened cables tightly around the ship itself to reinforce it. Fearing they might run aground on the Syrtis sandbars, they lowered the masts and sails and thus continued drifting.”*

David Guzik provides the following information: “The Syrtis Sands were an infamous “graveyard” of ships off the coast of North Africa, feared like a ‘Bermuda Triangle.’”

**Acts 27:18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next *day* they lightened the ship;**

**Acts 27:19 And the third *day* we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.**

**Acts 27:20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on *us*, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.**

The storm became so violent that they began throwing cargo off the ship. On the third day they even resorted to throwing off the tackling (ropes, pulley blocks, etc.). Luke notes that they didn’t see the sun or stars for so many days throughout a continuously violent storm that they lost all hope of surviving.

**Acts 27:21 ¶ But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.**

**Acts 27:22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of *any man’s* life among you, but of the ship.**

**Acts 27:23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,**

**Acts 27:24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.**

**Acts 27:25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.**

**Acts 27:26 Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.**

Finally, Paul spoke up basically saying, “I told you so,” but imparting hope. He told them that they should have listened to him and stayed in Crete; if they had, they would not have suffered such loss. However, he also gave a message of hope. He declared that though the ship would be lost, all lives would be saved. He then revealed that an angel of God, the God he served, had appeared to him in the night and told him not to be afraid. The angel assured Paul that he would live to appear before Caesar and that the lives of everyone sailing with him would be spared.

Paul went on to encourage the crew that he knew that what the angel told him was from God and was true. He did reveal, however, that they would find themselves stranded on an island for a while.

**Acts 27:27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and**

**down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country;**

**Acts 27:28 And sounded, and found *it* twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found *it* fifteen fathoms.**

**Acts 27:29 Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.**

After enduring this storm in the Adriatic Sea for two weeks, the crew sensed that they were getting near land. They began taking measurements of the depth of the water. The first measurement showed twenty fathoms; the second showed fifteen.

Note: According to Webster, a fathom is "A measure of length, containing six feet; the space to which a man can extend his arms...."

Since they feared that the ship was going to run aground, they dropped four anchors from the stern (the rear or back part of the ship) while they waited for morning.

Another good note from the NIV Commentary: The Adriatic Sea is "the name used in ancient times for all parts of the Mediterranean between Greece, Italy, and Africa."

**Acts 27:30 And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship,**

**Acts 27:31 Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.**

**Acts 27:32 Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.**

**Acts 27:33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought *them* all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.**

**Acts 27:34 Wherefore I pray you to take *some* meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.**

It seems that some of the crewmen determined to escape and lowered a lifeboat into the sea while pretending to be casting anchors from the front of the ship. Paul saw what was happening and told the centurion and his soldiers that if these men left the ship, he and his men would not survive. These men had been around Paul long enough to take what he said seriously. The soldiers immediately cut the ropes to the boat and let it fall into the sea.

As they waited for the dawn, Paul encouraged them all to eat since they had basically been fasting for fourteen days. He reminded them that their bodies needed the nourishment and that they no longer needed to worry about losing even a hair on their head.

**Acts 27:35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken *it*, he began to eat.**

**Acts 27:36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took *some* meat.**

**Acts 27:37 And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.**

**Acts 27:38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.**

Paul then proceeded to set the example; he took bread and gave thanks to God publicly and began to eat. All on board took courage and joined Paul in eating. Luke notes that there were 276 people on board the ship. After everyone had eaten enough, they dumped the rest of the wheat (the Greek also allows for corn) into the sea to lighten the ship even further.

**Acts 27:39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.**

**Acts 27:40 And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed *themselves* unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoised up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.**

**Acts 27:41 And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.**

As morning dawned and they look around, they could not identify their location. They saw an inlet leading to a shoreline into which they hoped to guide the ship. The wording in the KJV is confusing; I liked the ESV translation.

*“So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea, at the same time loosening the ropes that tied the rudders. Then hoisting the foresail to the wind they made for the beach. But striking a reef, they ran the vessel aground. The bow stuck and remained immovable, and the stern was being broken up by the surf.”*

Again, Guzik provides further information: “They did not know it at first, but they came to an island called Malta. The place where the ship came aground is now called St. Paul’s Bay.”

**Acts 27:42 And the soldiers’ counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.**

**Acts 27:43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast *themselves* first into the sea, and get to land:**

**Acts 27:44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on *broken pieces* of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.**

The soldiers knew they would be accountable for the prisoners, so they planned to kill them all rather than take the chance of any escaping. The centurion was determined to save Paul and prevented this from happening. He gave the order for all who could swim to jump in and get to the land. All the rest took hold of boards and pieces of the ship, and everyone made it to the shore alive.