

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

UNDER THE EXALTED CHRIST, THE GOSPEL BEGINS TO SPREAD

THE ACTS

† THE BOOK OF ACTS

OF THE APOSTLES

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, Associated

An overview of the Book of Acts, by Given O. Blakely

ACTS 5:31-32

"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him."

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

Lesson # 102

COMMENTARY ON: 27:1-11

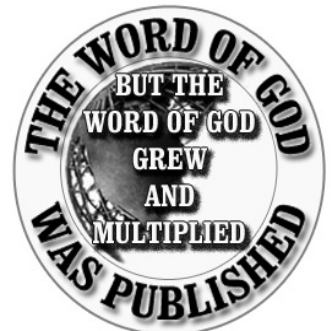
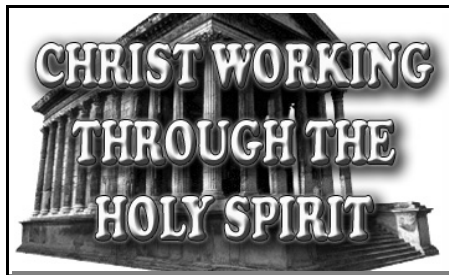
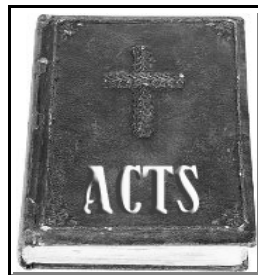
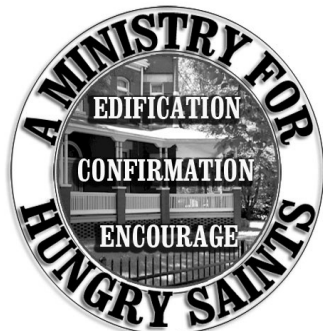
PAUL WARNS OF IMPENDING DANGER

Paul having appealed to Caesar, arrangements are now made to transport him, together with some other prisoners, to Italy. Considerable authority will be given to a certain military man who is in charge of the trip. He will arrange for different ships as needed, and will manifest, by Divine providence, a certain special care for Paul. A brother in the Lord from Thessalonica joins Paul in the journey, thereby confirming his love for this man of God. Along the way, contrary winds were encountered, which called for further unplanned decisions. Confirming that godliness does not rob an individual of practical discretionary powers, Paul warns those in charge that he perceives this voyage will be with much hurt and damage, not only to the ship, but also endangering the lives of its occupants. However, the centurion in charge believed the master and owner of the ship more than the words of Paul. As the trip proceeds, it will be confirmed that Paul had given a proper assessment.

ACTS 17:26-27

"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us."

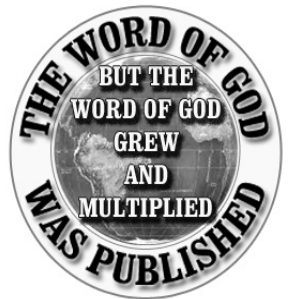
" . . . and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)



Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ

The Book of Acts

Lesson Number 102



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED =Amplified Bible (1965), ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV =English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GNB=Good News (1966), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE= International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT =Young's Literal Translation (1862).

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF HOW THE ENTHRONED CHRIST, BY MEANS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WORKED THROUGH HIS HOLY APOSTLES AND GODLY MEN, TO SPREAD THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE WORLD, AND TO BRING EDIFICATION AND STABILITY TO MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S BODY.

----- GREEK LEXICON LEGEND -----

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = UBS Lexicon, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT = Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER = Thayer's Greek Lexicon, LEH = LEH Lexicon, GINGRICH = Gingrich Lexicon

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

PAUL WARNS OF IMPENDING DANGER

“ 21:1 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. 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. 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. 4 And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. 5 And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia. 6 And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein. 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; 8 And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea. 9 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them, 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. 11 Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.” (Acts 27:1-11)

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT
Paul having appealed to Caesar, arrangements are now made to transport him, together with some other prisoners, to Italy. Considerable authority will be given to a certain military man who is in charge of the trip. He will arrange for different ships as needed, and will manifest, by Divine providence, a certain special care for Paul. A brother in the Lord from Thessalonica joins

Paul in the journey, thereby confirming his love for this man of God. Along the way, contrary winds were encountered, which called for further unplanned decisions. Confirming that godliness does not rob an individual of practical discretionary powers, Paul warns those in charge that he perceives this voyage will be with much hurt and damage, not only to the ship, but also endangering the lives of its occupants.

However, the centurion in charge believed the master and owner of the ship more than the words of Paul. As the trip proceeds, it will be confirmed that Paul had given a proper assessment.

DIVINE DIRECTION

Throughout this entire episode, the providence and direction of the mighty God of heaven has been evident. Satan has been

Paul's journey to Italy, to appear before Caesar, begins. Along the way he warns of impending danger, but his warning is not heeded – by Given O. Blakely

CONTENTS

- DETERMINED WE SHOULD SAIL TO ITALY (27:1)
- ARISTARCHUS WAS WITH US (27:2)
- COURTEOUSLY ENTREATED (27:3)
- THE WINDS WERE CONTRARY (27:4)
- THE CENTURION FOUND A SHIP (27:5-6)
- THE WIND NOT SUFFERING US (27:7-8)
- SAILING WAS NOW DANGEROUS (27:9-10)
- THE CENTURION BELIEVED THE MASTER AND OWNER OF THE SHIP (27:11)
- CONCLUSION

aggressive against Paul, working through those enslaved to him, seeking to hinder the work of the Lord. However, Jesus, being Lord over Satan, and in charge of His appointed demise, has called Paul out of darkness into light, and turned him from the power of Satan unto God. He has charged Paul with a most aggressive mission, and done so in such a manner as to challenge the adversary and all of his cohorts to stop it. The devil has been totally powerless to turn Paul away from the strait and narrow way, or to abort his mission. All of that is involved in Divine providence and direction. The Lord could not successfully direct or protect His people if He was not *“over all”* (Rom 9:5). Men may philosophize about whether or not God intervenes in the affairs of men, or the role of free will in men, but when all is said and done, *“all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?”* (Dan 4:35). Even among the hosts of darkness, there is not a single word that depicts them as saying to God, *“What do you think you are doing?”* Men have waxed bold and said such things, but they have been nothing more than puffs of harmless smoke. All of this is being lived out in this extended episode, the record of which commences in Acts 21:27, and will continue to the close of this book (Acts 28:31). Here is some of the potentially hindering influences.

- ⇨ The Jews of Asia were not able stop Paul.
- ⇨ The Jews who joined them could not abort the purpose of God for Paul.
- ⇨ Those forty men who conspired to kill Paul could not do what they had willed.
- ⇨ Ananias the high priest was powerless to abort Paul’s mission.
- ⇨ The elders could not stop the work.
- ⇨ The Sanhedrin with all of their pretended power could not cut Paul’s work short.
- ⇨ The Pharisees proved powerless to interfere with the work of God.
- ⇨ The Sadducees were totally frustrated in their attempts.
- ⇨ Tertullus could not move the governor against Paul.
- ⇨ Felix could not cause Paul to move out on his own, purchasing freedom for himself.
- ⇨ The indecision of Festus, and his shouts of Paul being a madman had no effect on the work.
- ⇨ Two years in prison had no deterring effect upon Paul.

While all of this involved Paul’s determination and resolve, the greater cause was the working of the Lord. His **providence** was a key factor, as it is in all of His dealings with those of whom He approves. The word “providence” is not used in Scripture, but evidence of this kind of work is everywhere. It is a theological word that began to be employed in the fourteenth century. In the English language, it is defined as follows: *“Divine guidance or care capitalized : God conceived as the power sustaining and guiding human destiny.”* MERRIAM-WEBSTER **It involves the idea of Divine purpose, and the carrying out of the same through the working of God. It assumes the superiority of God, the invincibility of His purpose, and, as regards that purpose, His immediate involvement in the affairs of men.** The presence of God is integral to His will. Some Scriptural expressions of this are as follows.

- ⇨ **THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM.** *“That in*

blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies” (Gen 22:17).

- ⇨ **THE BLESSING OF ISAAC.** *“And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed”* (Gen 26:4).

- ⇨ **PRESERVING ISRAEL THROUGH JOSEPH.** *“Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life”* (Gen 45:5). *“But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive”* (Gen 50:20).

- ⇨ **JACOB’S BLESSING OF JOSEPH.** *“Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb”* (Gen 49:25).

- ⇨ **SUSTAINING ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS.** *“For the LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the LORD thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing”* (Deut 2:7).

- ⇨ **GENERAL BLESSINGS FOR MEN.** *“Nevertheless he left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and*



What God has determined will be carried out. This is written in every line of this record, and accounts for the steady progress of Paul in the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness” (Acts 14:17).

⇒ **WORKING ALL THINGS TOGETHER FOR THE GOOD OF HIS PEOPLE.** *“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” (Rom 8:28).*

⇒ **THE BLESSING OF THOSE IN CHRIST WITH ADEQUACY.** *“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” (2 Cor 9:8).*

⇒ **THE FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL.** *“But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which*

happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel” (Phil 1:12).

⇒ **THINGS TURNING OUT FOR OUR SALVATION.** *“For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ” (Phil 1:19).*

When the Lord Jesus apprehended Paul He said, *“But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they*

may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Acts 26:16-18). That purpose was not simply left in the hands of Paul. He was responsible for devoting himself to it, and being faithful to his calling. However, the actual carrying out of that purpose was governed by, what we call, the providence of God. There is an overriding fact that pervades every facet of God’s will: *“He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil 1:6).* If necessary, He will **turn** the hearts of kings (Prov 21:1), **frustrate** the devices of the ungodly (Isa 44:25), and **make** a way even in the wilderness of impossibility (Isa 43:19). It there are temptations, He will **“make a way to escape”** (1 Cor 10:13). If His people need *“strength and power,”* He will give it (Psa 68:35). He is fully able to effectively *“rebuke the devourer”* (Mal 3:11), and *“command deliverances”* (Psa 44:4).

What God has determined will be carried out. This is written in every line of this record, and accounts for the steady progress of Paul in the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. What is contained in doctrine is lived out in this history.

DETERMINED WE SHOULD SAIL TO ITALY

“^{21:1} 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.”

Now the trip to Italy begins. Paul is one of many being transported, along with special cargo. The trip will take a while, and various decisions will have to be made: whether the weather is acceptable for sailing, where to stop over for the winter, and selecting a change of vessels when required.

As the crow flies, this trip would be well over 1,300 miles. By boat it would, at the very least, be 1,750 miles, and could possibly be near 2,000 miles – by sea! This would be a challenging trip in one of the large vessels of our day. A boat today can travel 112 miles in four hours. Against the wind, it requires six hours to travel 48 miles. By today’s standards, therefore, this trip would require from 2-2.5 months, 62.5-71.4 days. To that can be added at least 82 days, not counting two periods (listed below)

referred to as “many days.” That would make the trip somewhere between 4.7 and 5.1 months, or between 141 and 153 days – nearly half a year!

“A day” in Sidon Acts 27:3
 “Many days” Acts 27:7
 “Many days” Acts 27:20
 “Fourteen nights” Acts 27:35
 “Three days” Acts 28:7
 “Three months” Acts 28:11
 “Three days” Acts 28:12
 “One day” Acts 28:13
 “Seven days” Acts 28:14

Think About It

Does that not define more fully what Paul meant when he said he faced *“perils in the sea”* (2 Cor 11:26). During that time the devil must have sought for any kind of opportunity to destroy Paul. **He could not do it when Paul was on the land. He could not do it while Paul was in prison. And, he could not do it when Paul was on the sea!** God was protecting this man, and not a hair of his head would

perish (Lk 21:18). Of course, had Paul plotted his own path, and taken matters into his own hand, as some are prone to do, all of this would have been forfeited.

The glory of this whole matter is that Paul knew what Jesus was doing. He may not have known all of the details, but he did know he was going to bear witness to Christ in Rome – even though over 1,300 miles of water separated him from that destination. Further, he did not own anything that could enable him to get to Rome, and did not have the finances either. Yet, he will land safely in Italy, and do precisely what Jesus said he would do.

IT WAS DETERMINED

“And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy. . . .” Other versions read, *“it was decided,”*^{NKJV} *“the decision had been made,”*^{BBE} *“it was concluded,”*^{GENEVA} *“arrangements were finally made,”*^{LIVING} *“Now when it was determined that we [including Luke] should sail for Italy,”*^{AMPLIFIED} *“when it was time for us to sail to*

Rome, ^{CEV} “decided for us,” ^{LITV} and “As soon as arrangements were complete.” ^{MESSAGE}

It is not stated who made the determination that Paul would be transported to Italy, but I suspect that the original decision was made by Festus. It was to him that Paul made his request known: “I appeal to Caesar,” and it was Festus who said, “Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? Unto Caesar shalt thou go” (Acts 25:11-12).

Luke, who is writing this account, said it was determined that “**WE** should sail, to Italy.” Luke was, then, with them as they commenced this trip. It is apparent that the political and military officials condoned Luke going along, being favorably inclined to him. Here is another example of someone obtaining favor with men due to Divine influence (Ex 3:21; 11:3; ; 12:36; Dan 1:4,9; Acts 7:10).

The presence of Luke is referenced frequency in the travels of Paul by the use of the pronouns “we” and “us.” If we are not alert to this, we will miss the fact that Luke was with Paul.

- ⇒ When Paul went to Macedonia (Acts 16:10-11).
- ⇒ In Philippi, and when Paul preached to the Lydia and those who were with her (Acts 16:12-13).
- ⇒ When Paul confronted the woman with a spirit of divination (Acts 16:16).
- ⇒ When Paul sailed from Philippi to Troas, and when he preached in Troas, also raising Eutychus from the dead (Acts 16:6-11).
- ⇒ When Paul left Troas, Luke and others met him at Assos, where they continued to sail with him (Acts 20:13-15).
- ⇒ Sailing to Coos, Rhodes, Patara, Phenicia, Syria, Tyre, Ptolemais, and Caesarea (Acts 21:1-7).
- ⇒ When they remained in the house of Philip the evangelist (Acts 21:8-9).
- ⇒ Luke was present when Agabus prophesied of Paul being bound in Jerusalem (Acts 21:14).
- ⇒ He was with Paul when he went to Jerusalem (Acts 21:15-19).
- ⇒ In our text, he sets out with Paul for

Italy (Acts 27:1-7).

- ⇒ He went through the storm Euroclydon with Paul (Acts 27:8-26).
- ⇒ He was in the ship that wrecked, and made it safely with the others to the Isle of Melita (Acts 27:27-44).
- ⇒ He was there when the Barbarous people treated shipwrecked victims kindly, and when Paul was bitten by a poisonous snake (Acts 28:1-6).
- ⇒ He was there when Publius and healed, and many islanders came to Paul and were healed as well (Acts 28:7-10).
- ⇒ He continued the trip with Paul, landing at Syracuse. Going to Rhegium, and Puteoli where they found brethren and continued for seven days (Acts 28:14).
- ⇒ He was with Paul when brethren came from Rome, meeting them in Appii Forum. At that time Paul thanked God and took courage. (Acts 28:15).
- ⇒ He arrived in Rome with Paul (Acts 28:16).

Considering that Luke was a physician (Col 4:14), this must have involved considerable inconvenience to the flesh. Yet, it appears from what is said of him that he devoted his medical skills to the care of Paul during this time. There were also times when “only Luke” remained with Paul (2 Tim 4:11). He was also a worker together with Paul, who referred to him as among “my fellowlaborers” (Phile 1:24).

A Word Concerning Serving the Lord

In Luke, we find an excellent example of a professional man who fully gave himself to the Lord. The fact that there is only a single reference to him being a “physician” served to underscore this fact.

As used in Scripture, the word “physician” has the following lexical meaning: “a physician,” ^{THAYER} “healer,” ^{FRIBERG} “doctor,” ^{UBS} “one who causes someone to be healed - physician, doctor, healer,” ^{LOUW-NIDA} and “one who heals, a mediciner, physician or surgeon (for there seems to have been no professional distinction).” ^{LIDDELL-SCOTT}

Perhaps you are not aware of the history of medicine. This includes surgical procedures, ophthalmology, skeletal procedures, and the use of medical drugs. I only show this to confirm that this was a

respected profession, well developed, and of great value. While there may have been some superstitious practices among some barbaric people, this science had been well developed with extensive textbooks being written around 3000 B.C.

HISTORY OF MEDICINE	
Egyptian medicine	3290 B.C.
Babylonian medicine	1069 B.C.
Medicine in India	2000-1000 B.C.
Chinese Medicine	2698 B.C.
Greek medicine	700 B.C.
Roman medicine	500 B.C.
Surgical procedures	3300 B.C.
Medical drugs	3200 B.C.

I do not doubt that, under normal circumstances, Luke could well have been in great demand, and that his skills were sought. **Yet, he apparently devoted himself entirely to Paul for a significant period of time, possibly as long as ten years** (from the original trip to Macedonia (Acts 16:9-11) until their arrival in Rome (Acts 28:16). His commitment to the Lord led him to devote his skills related to being a physician to the Lord.

Throughout modern history, there have been men with unusual professional skills devote them to the Lord. Men with **astute minds** have done so: Luther, Calvin, Clarke, Henry, Campbell, etc. **Poets** have done so: Fortunates, John Milton, and George Herbert, John Greenleaf Whittier. Men with **persuasive and oratorical skills**: Spurgeon, Whitefield, Campbell. Those with **song-writing skills**: Isaac Watts, Fanny Crosby, John and Charles Wesley. Great **musicians**: Bach, Handel, Mozart, and Mendelssohn. The point is that throughout history there have been unusually gifted men who gave their talents to the Lord.

A Man Named Sterling Theobald

I well remember a eminent heart surgeon and specialist from the Chicago area. I came into contact with him when he was treating one of our brethren in Indiana. He was in high demand, and was noted for his special knowledge and treatment of the heart. At the time, we had just started meeting as “The Church at 26th and Colfax, in Gary, Indiana. There were about thirty of us meeting at the time. This physician, Sterling Theobald, was drawn to us by the testimony of brother Harold Lohse, whom he was treating. He began meeting with us in a

Paul's journey to Italy, to appear before Caesar, begins. Along the way he warns of impending danger, but his warning is not heeded - by Given O. Blakely

small structure, about 40' X 20'. His family came with him – a wife and two children in their early teens. Although people of means, they did not hesitate to be identified with us. I was about twenty-five years of age at the time. In the process of time, brother Theobald felt that he should give his medical abilities to the Lord. He took his family and became identified with New Tribes Mission – a community that focuses on people groups that have not heard the Gospel during recent times. He took their training, which consisted of survival techniques in remote regions of the earth, as well as of extensive exposure to the text of Scripture. When he finally went to some of these remote areas, he treated all of the missionaries free of charge, while joining in the preaching and teaching of the Word. Brother Theobald is in his eighties now, and I have neither seen nor heard from him for at least four decades. However, I have never forgotten the testimony that he left of the impact of the love of Christ upon those who discern it.

I have known precious few men of this caliber, and I should suppose such souls have always been relatively rare. My beloved father was one such person, gifted with an astute and disciplined mind, which he gave to the Lord for the Lord's work.

other prisoners,"^{NRSV} "they gave Paul and certain other prisoners into the care of,"^{BBE} and "Paul and several other prisoners were placed in the custody of."^{LIVING}

A Centurion of Augustus' Band

Other versions read, "the Augustan Regiment,"^{NKJV} "the Augustan cohort,"^{NASB} "the Imperial Regiment,"^{NIV} "the Emperor's Regiment,"^{CJB} "Augustus' company,"^{DARBY} "the band of Augustus,"^{GENEVA} "Caesars' soldiers,"^{TNT} "the band of Sebastus,"^{YLT} "a member of the imperial guard,"^{LIVING} and "the Augustan battalian."^{IE}

The word "Augustus" is a title of honor, translated from the Greek word Σεβαστή (transliterated Sebastas), which term is used in Young's Literal Translation). It is said that it was applied to certain military "legions, or cohorts, or battalions "for valour."^{STRONG'S/THAYER} In this text the word "band" means "the group of soldiers who protected the Emperor' or ... who were under the direct command of the Emperor."^{LOUW-NIDA}

There is no mention of notable political prisoners being in the group with Paul. **However, this unusual arrangement is to be considered the hand of God being upon Paul.** As the trip proceeds, it will become apparent that he is, in fact, the most notable prisoner of all. The

His Kingdom. There were four of these global kingdoms that are mentioned in particular. The first three are mentioned by name, and the last one is left unnamed. It would supplant the Grecian Empire, and would be a kingdom of uniqueness. That was the kingdom during which the prophecy of Daniel was fulfilled. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan 2:44).

The Roman Empire had some characteristics that were particularly significant. Among other things, there was a division of authority, so that various men were made leaders of certain segments of the Empire. Although this was not totally unique to Rome, it seems to have been accentuated by them. Julius is a case in point – a man with significant authority, whose judgment was apparently trusted by the Emperor himself.

A similar situation exists in the Kingdom of God. Jesus affirmed this in one of His parables. "For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch" (Mark 13:34). Again, in the parable of the talents He said, "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey" (Mat 25:14-15).

The Roman Empire had some characteristics that were particularly significant. Among other things, there was a division of authority, so that various men were made leaders of certain segments of the Empire. Although this was not totally unique to Rome, it seems to have been accentuated by them.

Luke was such a man, setting forth a most vivid example of the possibilities that are placed before believers. The conduct of many professing believers confirms that the allurements of this world are stronger than some have been led to believe. It is a noble person, indeed, who takes the gifts God has given to him, and devotes them directly to the Lord for the advancement of His Kingdom.

THEY DELIVERED PAUL AND CERTAIN OTHER PRISONERS

"... they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band." Other versions read, "Paul and some other prisoners were handed over,"^{NIV} "transferred Paul and some

ship will even be delivered into his hands, and he will announce the means of divinely appointed safety.

Julius, A Centurion: A Type of Servants in the Kingdom of God

The responsibilities assigned to Julius are interesting to consider. They are rather significant. He will make all of the decisions, including the choice of vessels, the route, and the manner in which the prisoners are handled.

The significant thing about this is its relation to the prophecy of Daniel concerning global governments that would arise, and during which God would set up

While I am aware this is not a point to be stressed overly much, it seems to me that it contains an aspect of the Kingdom that must not be overlooked. **There are at least two approaches to authority that exist in the professed Christian community.** The first revolves around authorities that are over every aspect of religious responsibility. At the most obvious level, this would be seen in the Roman Pope, and the vicars that are in charge of the various Orthodox branches of certain churches. At the local level, this is seen in the various views of ministers, elders, and church boards. In spiritual Babylon, everyone, small and great, are subordinate to these entities. **However, this is not the manner of the Kingdom of God.** It is rather the manner of this world.

In the body of Christ, various gifts are given to the members that denote responsibility more than authority – although there is a degree of authority associated with them. The concept is that of a “steward,” as compared to a mere slave. A steward is responsible for the area assigned to him, whether it be that of a prophet, an evangelist, a pastor/teacher, an exhorter, one showing mercy, one speaking a word of wisdom, a deacon, etc. Such individuals are like those who received a talent of money for which they were responsible. It was given to them in strict accord with their God-given ability and appointment, and they are expected to be faithful in their handling of it.

If they are a poet and a songster like David, then they are expected to be faithful in the stewardship of that ability, just as he was. If it is unusual wisdom, then they are to be faithful over it as Solomon was in his wisdom, speaking and writing it for

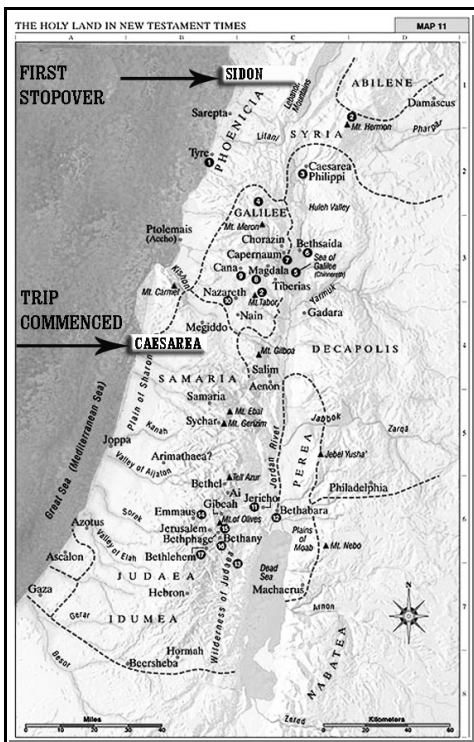
others. If it involves the distribution of unusual insights, as with Paul, they are expected to be faithful and productive in the handling of such things, as Paul was. If it is putting things together and arriving at a valid conclusion concerning Kingdom matters, they are to respond faithfully as James did during the controversy about circumcision.

Stewards are required to trade and increase what they have been given (Lk 19:15,23). The degree of success of the steward will be measured by the impact of their gift upon the body of Christ, for that is the reason for all of the spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:7). Strict accountability is demanded, for “it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor 4:2). No attempt must be made to prostitute a God-given ability by giving it to the world, or using it only for self.

I do not believe this is generally

understood among professed believers. Too often those with God-given aptitudes are giving them to the world. I do realize that we cannot make laws in this area. However, it is the responsibility of the church to apprise the people of what is expected of them. They are to be faithful to God, as Julius was to Rome. I further recognize that God has various ways of honing the ability he gives that, at the first, appear relatively unrelated to the work of the Lord. However, such training bears resemblance to a college education in preparation for a certain role. To be more specific, Joseph’s skills were honed to a fine edge in Potiphar’s house and in Pharaoh’s prison. Moses’ skills were developed in a desert, watching over flocks, as well as were the skills of David. However, when those aptitudes were duly developed, they no longer remained in those training places, but began working more directly with the Lord in fulfilling His purposes.

ARISTARCHUS WAS WITH US



“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.”

Notice the manner in which this trip is recorded. If one was exposed to this text alone, it would appear as though they were merely going on a trip together, even though Paul was a “prisoner” (Acts 23:18; 25:27; 27:1,42; 28:16-17). However, the report does not accentuate the fact of Paul being a prisoner, but rather highlights that he is going to Rome to bear witness of Jesus. Although he was very much a prisoner, he preferred to think of himself as “the prisoner of Jesus Christ” (Eph 3:1; Phile 1:1,9), “the prisoner of the Lord” (Eph 4:1), and “His prisoner” (2 Tim 1:6). He does not mean that Jesus had captured and incarcerated him, but that his prisonership was the result of serving the Lord Jesus Christ, and that the Savior was with him in the experience. That means he will be productive for the Lord in the status of “prisoner.”

For many professing Christians, it is very difficult to associate the experience of hardship with the Lord Jesus Christ. However, suffering “for righteousness’ sake” (Matt 5:10; 1 Pet 3:14) is a very real circumstance, and the blessing of God is upon those who suffer because of their faith. When the suffering is induced by those that are particularly close to us, perhaps even in our own families, it will be helpful to consider it suffering “for righteousness’ sake,” or “for Jesus’ sake” (2 Cor 4:11). That

is, after all, a very appropriate description of such suffering, regardless of those who cause it.

WE LAUNCHED

“And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia . . .” Other versions read, *“And embarking in an Adramyttian ship, which was about to sail to the regions along the coast of Asia,”* NASB *“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,”* NIV and *“going aboard a ship from Adramyttium which was about to sail for the ports along the coast of [the province of] Asia, we put out to sea.”* AMPLIFIED

The actual place of boarding was Caesarea. The vessel into which they entered was “from Adramyttium,” a sea-port city in the region of Mysia, which was in the northern part of Asia. This would be a trip that would carry them as far as 2,000 miles away. They would travel close to the coast of Asia until they come to Cnidus. Then they would head toward the island of Crete, from which they would launch into the open sea (Acts 27:7). All of this required some understanding of sailing schedules and destinations that would bring them eventually to Rome. According to appearance, this would all be handled by

Paul’s journey to Italy; to appear before Caesar, begins. Along the way he warns of impending danger, but his warning is not heeded – by Given O. Blakely

Sidon, most likely unloading or taking on some cargo at that point. Sidon was located about 65 miles from Caesarea, their starting point. The length of time required to sail for that distance would be somewhere around twelve hours, or one half of a day. A little more than 3% of the total distance had been traveled.

Sidon was an ancient city, being first mentioned in Genesis 10:19 as one being one of the border-points of Canaan. Tyre (a little south of Sidon) and Sidon are mentioned nine times in the Gospels (Matt 11:21,22; 15:21; Mk 3:8; 7:24,31; Lk 9:17; 10:13,14). Jesus went to that territory during His ministry. In fact, the woman who came to Him for her demon-possessed daughter besought Jesus in her behalf while He was there (Matt 15:21-22). A great multitude also came from that area to hear Jesus (Mk 3:8). Once Jesus healed a great multitude from that area (Lk 6:17-19).

As you must know, that part of the world is rich with Divine history, being the part of the world in which the Garden of Eden was located. Abraham was called from that area, and the rich history of Israel, including the Babylonian captivity, was in that part of the world.

JULIUS COURTEOUSLY ENTREATED PAUL

Other versions read, *“treated Paul kindly,”* ^{NKJV} *“treated Paul with consideration,”* ^{NASB} and *“treated Paul in a loving way, with much consideration (kindness and care).”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

I fear that many of this generation would not have noted the kindness of Julius. They would rather have expected such kindness was deserved, since Paul had done nothing wrong. However, Luke took note of this, doubtless seeing the hand of God in the matter. Why did he give special favor to Paul? This was the Lord providing mercy for His servant, working through the heart of a heathen.

We do not know if this was the same Centurion whom Felix commanded to let Paul *“have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come to him”* (Acts 24:23).

Other examples of this kind of kindness and consideration are as follows.

⇒ Potiphar was inclined to young Joseph, making him overseer over all of his house (Gen 39:1-6).

⇒ Pharaoh sanctioning Joseph giving Jacob and his family the choice land of Goshen. He consented to this because the land was conducive to shepherding, yet the Egyptians considered shepherds an abomination (Gen 46:34-47:6).

⇒ The prisoner keeper where Joseph was incarcerated showed him mercy, and gave him favor – this coming from the Lord (Gen 39:21).

⇒ God gave Joseph favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, who *“made him governor over Egypt and all of his house”* (Acts 7:10).

⇒ When Israel left Egypt the people favored them, giving them everything they needed (Ex 3:21; 11:3; 12:36).

⇒ King Artaxerxes showed Nehemish favor when he asked leave from being his cupbearer, to go and rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem (Neh 2:5-8).

⇒ The prince of the eunuchs which was over the young Israelite captives in Babylon, especially favored Daniel (Dan 1:9-14).

⇒ Nebuchadnezzar made Daniel ruler over all the province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon (Dan 2:48).

⇒ King Darius preferred Daniel above all of the other political figures in Babylon (Dan 6:3).

⇒ Belshazzar made Daniel the third ruler in the kingdom of Babylon (Dan 5:29).

⇒ Daniel prospered in the reign of Cyrus the Persian, as well as during the reign of Darius (Dan 6:28).

It is still true, *“Man’s goings are of the Lord”* (Prov 20:24), and *“the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord”* (Psa 37:23). *“It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps,”* and no one should proceed in life as though that was not the truth (Jer 10:23). When the Lord sends a person on a mission, he clears the way for the fulfillment of that mission. **This clearing of the way includes deliverance, provisions, and even causing potential adversaries to be inclined to help the servant of the Lord. This is why it is wrong to be consumed with concern about potential dangers.** It is not that we are indifferent to

such things. Rather, it is that we choose to trust the one who governs circumstances. He will direct those who walk in the light, and maintain their fellowship with Christ, to know when it is time to flee, have the brethren aid you in an escape, or stay and stand for the Lord. All of this is lived out in the events recorded in this book.

HE GAVE HIM LIBERTY

“... gave him liberty to go unto his friends” Other versions read, *“allowed him to go to his friends,”* ^{NIV} *“gave him leave to go to his friends,”* ^{RSV} *“to go visit his friends,”* ^{CSB} *“let him go ashore to visit with friends,”* ^{NLT} and *“did permit him, having gone on unto friends.”* ^{YLT}



Remember, Paul is a prisoner. I cannot see any logical reason according to the flesh why a military official would allow such freedom for a prisoner. Yet, he is allowed to go to shore, visit his friends, and receive what he needed, being refreshed.

There is a certain spiritual logic to be seen when those who do not know the Lord favor the servants of God. **First, the faithful are surrounded by Divine favor and preference. This supercedes all circumstance and all enemies.** There is also angelic protection, for *“The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them”* (Psa 34:7). These holy personalities are vastly superior to humanity, whether we are speaking of a single powerful individual, or thousands of inimical hosts. If these angels are commissioned to stop the enemy, that is precisely what will happen. Further, the closer a person is to the Lord, the more pleasing he is to the Lord, and the more involved he is in the work of the Lord, the more active these angels become.

Nothing can touch those who are pleasing to the Lord that is not first approved by Him. If it is approved, there is a purpose for it. It may be a matter of testing. It may also be the development of an example that can be seen by others. There is also the matter of confirming the superiority of faith, as well as displaying the manifold wisdom of God to heavenly principalities and powers. Sometimes there are opportunities developed that lead to inquiry by those who are otherwise contrary.

Those who are surrounded by Divine favor, and protected by angelic hosts, move otherwise hostile persons to show mercy, and be inclined to be lenient. They favor such people – not merely because they like them, but because the favor of the Lord can impact upon how a person appears to others. There is no inviolable rule involved here. The enemies may stone Stephen, beat Paul, and kill James. The favor of which I speak is an explanation for the mercy that is shown the servants of the Lord. It is not intended to guarantee our enemies will always treat us in such a manner.

To Go To His Friends

So far as the Scriptural record goes, this was Paul’s first visit to Sidon – and yet there were believers there with whom he could easily connect. With the exception of the literal Interlinear, all of the versions read “*friends*.” The Interlinear reads “*fond ones*.”

As used here, the lexical meaning of the Greek word translated “*friends*” is,

It is obvious that these were not casual acquaintances – like fellow church-members, or coming from the same region, or fellow-citizens. These “friends” were not business associates, national acquaintances, or family members. These were saints of God who not only could minister to Paul, but wanted to do so.

“associate . . . near friend . . . he who associates familiarly with one, a companion,” THAYER “beloved, dear, loving, friendly, devoted . . . congenial associate, close companion,” FRIBERG “person with whom one associates and for whom there is affection or personal regard,” LOUW-NIDA and “kindly disposed, devoted.” GINGRICH

It is obvious that these were not casual acquaintances – like fellow church-members, or coming from the same region,

or fellow-citizens. These “*friends*” were not business associates, national acquaintances, or family members. **These were saints of God who not only could minister to Paul, but wanted to do so.**

As previously noted, this appears to be the first time that Paul visited Sidon – and even now, it was as a Roman prisoner. Yet, he was able to connect with brethren of “*like precious faith*” (2 Pet 1:1), the “*common faith*” (Tit 1:4) – those who had tasted of a “*common salvation*” (Jude 1:3).

- ⇨ In Antioch, Paul and Barnabas “*abode long time with the disciples*” (Acts 14:26-27).
- ⇨ Paul determined to visit the “*brethren in every city where*” they had “*preached the word of the Lord*” (Acts 15:36).
- ⇨ Paul and Silas “*entered the house of Lydia*,” who had obeyed the Gospel earlier, saw the brethren, and “*comforted them*” (Acts 16:40).
- ⇨ Paul went “*over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia . . . strengthening all the disciples*” (Acts 18:23).
- ⇨ The brethren wrote certain brethren in Achaia, “*exhorting the disciples to receive*” Apollos (Acts 18:27).
- ⇨ Paul found “*certain disciples*” in Ephesus who needed to be instructed more perfectly in the way of the Lord

- (Acts 19:1-5).
- ⇨ Certain chief men of Asia, brethren in Christ, “*sent into him, desiring him that he would not enter into the theater*,” where a tumult was taking pace (Acts 19:31).
- ⇨ In Troas, Paul sought out the disciples, and preached to them on the first day of

- the week (Acts 20:7).
- ⇨ From Miletus, Paul called for the elders of the church in Ephesus, and delivered a stirring exhortation to them (Acts 20:17-38).
- ⇨ In Tyre, Paul found “*disciples*,” and tarried with them for seven days (Acts 21:3-4).
- ⇨ In Ptolemais, Paul saluted the brethren, and stayed with them for one day (Acts 21:7).
- ⇨ Certain disciples from Caesarea joined Paul when he “*went up to Jerusalem*” (Acts 21:15-16).
- ⇨ In our text, Paul went to “*his friends*” in Sidon, who refreshed him (Acts 27:3).
- ⇨ In Puteoli Paul and company “*found brethren, and were desirous to tarry with them seven days*” (Acts 28:13-14).
- ⇨ Brethren from Rome came to meet with Paul on the last leg of his journey to Rome (Acts 28:15).

The point to be seen in all of this is that Paul, like the brethren chronicled earlier in the book of Acts (chapters one through twelve), cultured their association with the people of God.

Sadly, I have known a number of professing believers who did not do this. They confined themselves to their own relatives, or perhaps to the particular fellowship with whom they were identified. Consequently, they have not been helped like others who have preferred God’s people above all others. That, of course, is the very way the entire Godhead views humanity. Their preference is the saints, to whom they minister, and with whom they dwell.

That He Might Refresh Himself
 “. . . to refresh himself.” Other versions read, “*and receive care*,” NASB “*so they might provide for his needs*,” NIV “*and be cared for*,” RSV “*and receive what he needed*,” CSB “*so they could provide for his needs*,” NLT and “*to receive their care*.” YLT

The language strongly suggests that Paul was suffering from some infirmity. Perhaps some of it was associated with being in prison in Caesarea for two years. The prison accommodations during those times were certainly not conducive to comfort.

Besides that he had been in chains the whole time. Now, Julius is moved by the Lord to see to it that Paul receives the care that he required – something that probably was not the portion of most prisoners. **Had Paul not cultured holy associations, such provision would have been less likely.** However, since he had preferred Jesus and

the company of His people, now he realized the benefit of receiving *“an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands,”* as well as the persecutions that accompanied such preferences (Mark 10:30).

This manner of life is not one

that can be forced by law upon people. It is the result of spiritual understanding and a total commitment to the Lord. However, for those who are willing to make the sacrifices required for closeness with Christ and His people, there will be times when a harvest of care, comfort, and refreshment will be realized. This is, what we might call, *“body life.”*

THE WINDS WERE CONTRARY

“⁴ And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.”

Paul having been refreshed, and the ship have been loaded/unloaded, the trip now continues to Rome Italy.

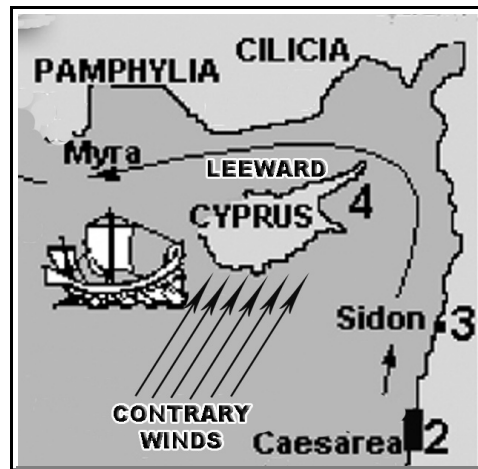
WE LAUNCHED FROM THENCE

“And when we had launched from thence . . .” Other versions read, *“put out to sea from there,”*^{NKJV} *“put out to sea again,”*^{NIV} *“putting out to sea from there.”*^{NRSV}

Apparently, those who had joined Paul on the initiation of this journey remained with him. We do not know how many brethren were with him. However, as indicated earlier, it could have been more than just Luke. We know Luke was there, recording the events. Luke’s frequent use of *“we”* and *“us”* suggests there could have been other brethren with them. Of course, it also could have been intended to denote the other prisoners and military men. However, I would think it would be a bit unusual to

speak of Paul and Luke as being part of the general group.

WE SAILED UNDER CYPRUS BECAUSE THE WINDS WERE CONTRARY



“. . . we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.” Other

versions read, *“under the shelter of Cyprus, because the winds were contrary”*^{NKJV} *“passed to the lee of Cyprus because the winds were against us,”*^{NIV} *“we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were against us,”*^{NRSV} *“we went on under cover of Cyprus,”*^{BBE} *“we sailed close to the sheltered side of Cyprus,”*^{CJB} *“sailed hard by Cyprus,”*^{GENEVA} *“we sailed on the northern side of the island of Cyprus,”*^{GWN} and *“so we sailed north of Cyprus between the island and the mainland”*^{NLT} The words *“lee”*^{NIV/NRSV} and *“leeward,”*^{AMPLIFIED} used by several versions, means *“protecting shelter . . . the side of the ship that is sheltered from the wind.”*^{MERRIAM-WEBSTER}

The contrary winds, as depicted in the chart above, were on the open sea, pushing toward the land. We still have hurricanes and the likes that head toward shore from the open sea. The island of Cyprus was a natural barrier that diminished the force of the winds. Therefore, the captain of the ship sailed between the mainland and Cyprus, taking advantage of the shelter of the island.

THE CENTURION FOUND A SHIP

“⁵ And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia. ⁶ And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.”

WE SAILED OVER THE SEA OF CILICIA

“And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia we came to Myra, a city of Lycia . . .” Other versions read, *“over the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia,”*^{NKJV} and *“through the sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia,”*^{NASB} *“over [the whole length] of sea which lies off*

Cilicia and Pamphylia.”^{AMPLIFIED}



Sailing around Cyprus, the port of Myra was around 300 miles from Sidon.

Considering that they were battling contrary winds, this could have required, at the very least, from 6-7 days.

Myra was one of the chief cities of Lycia, and was a port in which ships docked, loaded, and unloaded.

THE CENTURION FOUND A SHIP

“. . . And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.”

Alexandria was in Egypt, and was located about 300 miles due south of Myra. Here the group disembarked from a ship

based in Adramytium and boarded one that was based in Alexandria. This particular ship was sailing for Italy, the destination of Julius and his band of prisoners.

It must be remembered that the fine-tuned schedules of vessels were probably not published regularly during those ancient times, there being too many variables to allow for such a thing. Yet, Julius had set out for Italy in an orderly manner, no doubt hoping to find a vessel that would take them to their ultimate destination.

That some effort was required on the part of Julius is evidenced by the language, *“the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy.”* Another version reads, *“came across a ship.”*^{BBE}

As used here, the word *“found”* means, *“to come upon, hit upon, to meet with; after searching, to find a thing sought,”*^{THAYER} and *“to find after searching discover, come on.”*^{FRIBERG}

Notice not only the responsibility given to Julius, but his faithfulness to fulfill it. Festus did not provide Julius with a fine tuned schedule and reservations on known vessels headed for Italy. That was something the Centurion would discover along the way. He knew the original port of departure, and the final destination. Along the way He would have to develop the various means required to fulfill that mission.

A Parallel to Spiritual Life

I cannot ignore the remarkable parallel to spiritual life. We are apprised of where our journey begins – in this world, and at the point when we *“first trusted in Christ”* (Eph 1:12), and were *“baptized into Christ”* (Gal 3:27). We are also told of the appointed destination. We are being brought to *“to glory”* (Heb 2:10). We are being prepared for the revelation of Jesus Christ, and the grace that He will bring to us (1 Pet 1:13). We are being cultured for marriage to Jesus Christ (Rev 19:7; 21:9), when we will be with Him where He is (John 14:3; 17:24). We will all land at the port of judgment, which will be the point from which we will enter our eternal destiny (2 Cor 5:10; Heb 9:27).

Along the way we must make judgments that precisely relate to our appointed destination. To become involved in things that lead away from Christ and glory would be like Julius taking his group and boarding a ship headed for Nineveh. **Our choices must have something to do with where we are going – where we will spend eternity.** As simplistic as that may

appear, many professing Christians are, so to speak, boarding ships that are not headed for glory.

A Vain Imagination

There is also the vain imagination that supposes the **beginning** of the voyage to glory is the primary thing. A theology has been developed that leads people to think in this manner, as though once you are on the ship, you are always on it. But this is not at all the case. **There are points along the way when major decisions are made that impact where we will finally land.** Tests of faith are like ports of entry where a proper vessel must be chosen. Temptations are points at which something must take place that will ensure we remain on the right course.

The main thing is really not to enter the original ship, although that is essential. It is rather to arrive at the proper destination. **This places the emphasis on the trip itself, and not on its commencement.** However, there is a theological posture that makes too much of starting the trip, and not enough of properly concluding it.

Another Danger

There is also the danger of making

found, a proper ship. Part of salvation is the responsibility to make proper choices. According to Scripture, this is working out our own salvation *“with fear and trembling”* (Phil 2:12).

Those who have been called by God to do something have always been directed while the journey was in progress. The details of Abraham’s trip to the promised land were divulged while he was on the way. The specifics concerning the commanded sacrifice of Isaac were made known on the way. This was true of Israel being delivered from Egypt to go to Canaan. Joseph was sent by God into Egypt (Psa 105:17), but the details were revealed during his tenure in Egypt. **This pattern is revealed throughout Scripture.**

The person who does not engage in *“the good fight of faith”* (1 Tim 6:12), *“run with patience the race”* set before him (Heb 12:1-2), and *“perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord”* (2 Cor 7:1), will always be confused about what he is to do. Those who do not *“add to their faith”* (2 Pet 1:5-8), work out their *“own salvation with fear and trembling”* (Phil 2:12), putting *“on the new man,”* and putting *“off the old man”* (Eph 4:22-24) will never experience the satisfying direction of the Lord. **Such are living**

Those who have been called by God to do something have always been directed while the journey was in progress. The details of Abraham’s trip to the promised land were divulged while he was on the way. The specifics concerning the commanded sacrifice of Isaac were made known on the way. This was true of Israel being delivered from Egypt to go to Canaan. Joseph was sent by God into Egypt, but the details were revealed during his tenure in Egypt.

too much of the details of the trip, so that men become bogged down with the appearance of the vessel, or the storms through which it must sail. Decisions involved in the life of faith are not always a once-for-all thing. Sometimes plans have to be adjusted when unforeseen difficulties arise. Sometimes enemies confront us that must be fought. There are trials of our faith that we never imagined we would face. Sometimes there are successes that tend to distract us, and move us to glory in the wrong thing.

When all is said and done, the person en route to glory must look for a proper vessel, like Lucius searched for, and

their lives in contradiction of the Kingdom manner. They are like Abraham leaving Ur of the Chaldees and settling down in the next town. They are like Abraham attempting to offer up Isaac a short distance from his home, or like Joseph seeking to make a career out of being the steward of Potiphar’s house, or the permanent manager of the prisoners in the prison. They are like Israel leaving Egypt, and building a city just on the other side of Red Sea. They are like Lucius landing in Mrya and waiting for a ship master to come to him, informing him of the next ship that was going to Egypt.

Does all of that sound absurd? Know that the parallels are remarkably precise.

THE WIND NOT SUFFERING US

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

Luke now provides some more details about the voyage, and the difficulties that were faced.

WE SAILED SLOWLY MANY DAYS

“And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus . . .” Other versions read, *“sailed slowly for a good many days,”* ^{NASB} *“made slow headway for many days,”* ^{NIV} *“sailed slowly for a number of days,”* ^{NRSV} and *“For a number of days we made slow progress and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}



By sea, the trip from Myra to Cnidus was about 150 miles. Sailing against contrary winds, that would require about three days. However, the storm was apparently growing worse, and thus it took them a significant number of days to complete this leg of their journey – possibly five to ten days.

Of course, these ancient vessels did not have automatic pilots, and were not driven by engines. The amount of time keeping the sails hoisted, and placing them properly must have been staggering. Yet, the sailors of those times were prepared for such adversity, and knew how to handle it. **Not only was the progress slow, but the work required was much more.** The sailors had to throw themselves more fully into the work, and do so for greater lengths of time. Sailing in a storm is not at all like sailing on a calm and tranquil sea! That also is like our journey to glory.

THE WIND NOT SUFFERING US

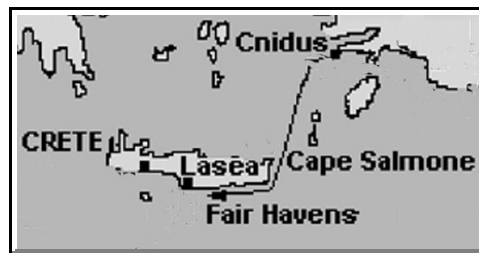
“ . . . the wind not suffering us . . .” Other versions read, *“the wind not permitting us to proceed,”* ^{NKJV} *“the wind did*

not permit us to go farther,” ^{NASB} *“the wind did not allow us to hold our course,”* ^{NIV} *“the wind was against us,”* ^{BBE} and *“But since the wind did not allow us to approach it”* [Cnidus]. ^{CSB}

The wind did not allow the vessel to dock at Cnidus, so they had to pass it by. **They had to adapt to the storm, and do so without getting off course.**

WE SAILED UNDER CRETE

“ . . . we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone; ⁸ And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.” Other versions read, *“passing it with difficulty,”* ^{NKJV} *“we moved along the coast with difficulty,”* ^{NIV} and *“coasting along it with difficulty.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}



The trip from Cnidus to Fair Havens was about 250 miles – a trip that would have required over five days with some contrary winds. In the fierce gales they were facing, a significant number of days were required – possibly even measured in terms of weeks. They sailed “under” Crete, or close to the southern portion of the island, in order to arrive at the port at Fair Havens.

Several versions use the term *“coasting”* for *“hardly passing it”* (Salome). I am not sure of the appropriateness of such a word, unless it is intended to denote that they were at the mercy of the wind, being carried along wherever it led them. However, this does not make sense, because very real progress was made with difficulty. To me, that does not describe a situation where the wind is simply carrying the boat along without any direction. **Making slow progress presumes they were making progress in reaching their goal, and were not hopelessly adrift.**

Thus, having made very slow progress, they finally arrived at Fair Havens, which required considerable effort.

The Parallel to Spiritual Life

Again, this trip bears a remarkable resemblance to the nature of spiritual life. Some trials are unusually fierce, and the desired progress is not made throughout their duration. They are, in a manner of speaking, tests, to determine the moral strength, spiritual stamina and commitment of the individual. This is not for the purpose of informing God, but to assist the believer in the examination of self. It also serves to demonstrate to principalities and powers in heavenly places the outcome of Divine choice and the effectiveness of faith.

⇨ **Developing Toughness.** Spiritual life requires a kind of toughness, stamina, or staying power. If believers were being led to glory on flowery beds of ease, their lives would not accrue to God’s glory as they do when placed under oppression, restriction, and difficulty. The Scriptures do not speak commendably of those who faint in *“the day of adversity,”* declaring that those who faint during such times have *“small”* strength (Prov 24:10). Solomon also affirmed that the thing to do in the day of adversity is *“consider”* (Eccl 7:14). **It is essential that those in Christ learn to contend with horses as well as with footmen.** Jeremiah said, *“If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?”* (Jer 12:5).

⇨ **Maturing Wisdom.** Wisdom is hammered out on the anvil of affliction, and blessed is the person who knows it. In trouble we can learn more about God, life, trouble, faith, and ourselves as well. **It is good to know how to handle the ship of life in a storm, as well as upon a placid sea.** During especially trying moral and spiritual storms, we learn not only what is really needed, but what can be expended as well.

⇨ **Honing up determination.** One of the liabilities of a life of ease is that godly determination often wanes. Outward tranquility can lead us to feel more at home in this present evil world. Trouble, on the other hand, awakens

Paul’s journey to Italy, to appear before Caesar, begins. Along the way he warns of impending danger, but his warning is not heeded – by Given O. Blakely

determination, moving those who believe to apply more effort to reaching the goal, fastening on the future rather than present experience.

⇒ **Developing spiritual stamina.** Trouble can wear people out, sap their strength, and move them to view godliness as pointless. Faith will

overcome these inclinations – but without faith the person will be crushed. When the individual maintains a godly course when the storms are blowing, a certain godly stamina is perfected. Endurance is one thing, enduring during storms is quite another. **Those whose faith has been tried in the furnace of**

affliction are more apt to endure to the end. This is the meaning of the expression, *“tribulation worketh patience”* (Rom 5:3). Other versions read, *“tribulation produces perseverance,”*^{NKJV} *“suffering produces endurance,”*^{NRSV} and *“pressure and affliction and hardship produce patient and unswerving endurance.”*^{AMPLIFIED}

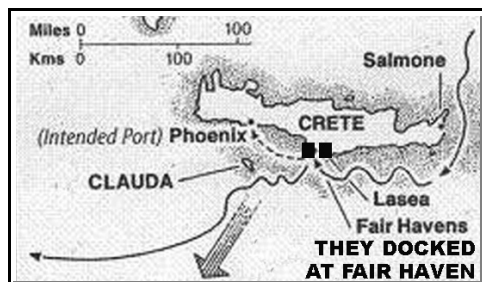
SAILING WAS NOW DANGEROUS

“⁹ Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them,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.”

The storm through which the vessel was sailing had slowed the journey considerably. Much wisdom and stamina had to be employed to maintain any degree of progress. Now, a point arrives when a decision must be made.

WHEN MUCH TIME HAD BEEN SPENT

“Now when much time was spent . . .” Other versions read, *“considerable time had passed,”*^{NASB} *“much time had been lost,”*^{NIV} *“a long time had gone by,”*^{BBE} *“had lost so much time,”*^{GWN} *“we were there a long time,”*^{MRD} *“much time being spent,”*^{YLT} *“There we stayed or several days,”*^{LIVING} *“Our voyage thus far had occupied a considerable time,”*^{WEYMOUTH} and *“By this time the season was far advanced.”*^{MONTGOMERY}



This text refers to the time they spent in Fair Havens, a harbor in the island of Crete, where the boat was apparently docked. It is quite possible that Paul was given liberty to preach the Gospel in Lasea, the nearby city. However,

no details of their stay in this place are provided. It is only said that they spent “much time” there, apparently waiting for the storm to subside.

SAILING WAS NOW DANGEROUS

“ . . . and when sailing was now dangerous . . .” Other versions read, *“the voyage was now dangerous,”*^{NASB} *“sailing had already become dangerous,”*^{NIV} *“the journey was now full of danger,”*^{BBE} *“navigation being already dangerous,”*^{DARBY} *“sailing was now jeopardous,”*^{GENEVA} *“it was hazardous [then] for any one to go by sea,”*^{MRD} *“The weather was becoming dangerous for sea travel,”*^{NLT} *“The weather was becoming dangerous for long voyages by then,”*^{LIVING} and *“the navigation being now unsafe,”*^{WEYMOUTH}

The storm did not let up, but appears to have gotten even worse. Now sailing involved more than making slow and tedious progress. It was now dangerous to set out to sea. As used here, the word “dangerous” means “to cause to fall,” or “prone to fall,”^{THAYER} “insecure, unsafe,”^{FRIEBERG} and “unstable, precarious,”^{LIDDELL-SCOTT}

Crete was an island in the midst of the sea, about 70 miles from Asia, 50 miles from Greece, and several hundred miles from Sicily and Italy. This compounded the whole situation, as the open sea would be much more dangerous than in the immediate vicinity of Crete. Yet, as will see, a decision will have to be made concerning staying in Fair Havens, or finding a more suitable place to dock for the winter.

THE FAST WAS ALREADY PAST

“ . . . because the fast was now already past . . .” Other versions read, *“the Fast was already over,”*^{NKJV} *“by now it was after the Fast,”*^{NIV} *“even the Fast had already gone by,”*^{NRSV} *“because it was late in the year,”*^{BBE/LIVING} *“because it was already*

past Yom-Kippur,”^{CJB} *“the day of fasting had already past,”*^{GWN} *“after the day of the Jewish fast,”*^{MRD} *“it was after the Fast. {That is, the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)}.”*^{NIB} *“because it was so late in the fall,”*^{NLT} *“they had overlong fasted,”*^{PNT/TNT} *“for the Autumn Fast was past,”*^{MONTGOMERY} *“for the time for the Fast [the Day of Atonement, about the beginning of October] had already gone by,”*^{AMPLIFIED} *“In fact, even the Great Day of Forgiveness was past,”*^{CEV} *“for by now the Day of Atonement was already past,”*^{GNB} and *“We had passed the autumn equinox.”*^{MESSAGE}

Here the various versions present quite a distorted picture concerning what is intend by the words “the fast.”

- ⇒ Some present is as merely referring the latter part of the year.^{BBE/LIVING}
- ⇒ One says it was “late in the fall.”^{NLT}
- ⇒ Others present it as being the time of an Autumn Fast.^{MONTGOMERY}
- ⇒ Still others say it was Yom-Kippur – the Day of Atonement.^{CJB/NIB}
- ⇒ One versions says it was the equinox, probably the one in the Fall, when the sun crosses the equator, and day and night everywhere on earth are approximately equal.^{MESSAGE}
- ⇒ Other versions present it as a period of time in which they had simply been fasting,^{PNT/TNT} with no formal cause being identified. In such a case, it may very well have been a time given to prayer, such as took place later in the trip (Acts 27:33).

I am rather inclined to the latter view – that “the fast” refers to the abstinence from food that was stimulated by

a certain fear of the storm – such as occurred later. You may recall that when the Lord sent a storm upon the boat in which fleeing Jonah was found, *“the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god”* (Jonah 1:5). However, in the absence of any solid statement on this matter, I will simply state my preference and proceed.

PAUL ADMONISHED THEM

“Paul admonished them, 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.” Other versions read, *“I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives,”* ^{NKJV} *“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,”* ^{NIV} *“I can see that our voyage is going to be a catastrophe, not only with huge losses to the cargo and the ship but with loss of our lives as well,”* ^{CJB} *“Men, we’re going to face a disaster and heavy losses on this voyage. This disaster will cause damage to the cargo and the ship, and it will affect our lives,”* ^{GWN} and *“I perceive [after careful observation] that this voyage will be attended with disaster and much heavy loss, not only of the cargo and the ship but of our lives also.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

As they were waiting in Fair Havens, Paul had been assessing the situation. I do not doubt that he prayed about the matter. Even though a specific answer may not have been given to him from heaven, as would be the case later (Acts 27:23-25), his great mind had been bathed in the glory of the Lord. **If any man was capable of rendering an wise assessment of the situation, it would be one that had been in the presence of the Lord, and had shaped his life around His will.**

Paul stated that what he was about

Spiritual understanding is superior understanding. Because of that, it can enable a person to perceive more in certain areas than those who have been trained to be experts in them.

to say was something he had *“perceived.”* Other versions read, *“I can see,”* ^{NIV} and *“I believe.”* ^{NLT} As used here, the word *“perceived”* means “to perceive with the eyes . . . to ascertain, find out, by seeing,” ^{THAYER} and “through mental perception understand, perceive,” ^{FRIBERG} **This was a perception that came by seeing something, then assessing it, and comprehending the implications involved.** Other places where the Greek word used here (θεωρῶ) is found include the following.

- ⇒ The women who **beheld** Jesus on the cross (Matt 27:55).
- ⇒ Mary Magdalene coming to **see** the sepulcher where Jesus was buried (Matt 28:1).
- ⇒ Unclean spirits **seeing** Jesus, and falling down before him (Mk 3:11).
- ⇒ Those who came to **see** the restored maniac from Gadara (Mk 5:15).
- ⇒ Jesus **beholding** how men cast their money into the Temple treasury (Mk 12:41).
- ⇒ **Considering** how great Jesus is (Heb 7:4).
- ⇒ **Seeing** that a brother has need (1 John

3:17).

That will suffice to confirm that this is speaking of something that was really seen, or perceived. This word is not used to describe a vain imagination or a mere human opinion.

Of course, Paul was not an official mariner, and he was not speaking as though he was. Nor, indeed, has he been licensed to diagnose storms. However, his prodigious mind had been honed to a fine point in courts of the Lord, and he could see more in things and events than others.

Here is a case where a man of God knew more than the experts on storms and sailing. He could say with David, *“I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation”* (Psa 119:99).

Spiritual understanding is superior understanding. Because of that, it can enable a person to perceive more in certain areas than those who have been trained to be experts in them. I have personally experienced this kind of wisdom, as well as many others with whom I am acquainted. When a person lives by faith and walks in the Spirit, a harvest is reaped in every legitimate aspect of life. Throughout the ages, there have been those who can attest to this fact.

THE CENTURION BELIEVED THE MASTER OF THE SHIP

“¹¹ Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.”

Paul has given a wise word concerning sailing in this storm. Notwithstanding, he was not the only one that had given some advice. The centurion, Julius, must now decide who he will listen to, for the ship is apparently being driven by an

agenda he sets. Of itself, and on the surface, that is a most peculiar situation. However, when you take into account that the ultimate agenda has been set by the Lord, all of this makes perfect sense.

So far as heaven was concerned, the fundamental passenger on this ship was Paul. If heaven gives a word concerning the propriety of sailing at this time, it will come through Paul, not those who appear to

be in charge of the voyage.

There are bodies of people among whom representatives from the Lord are found. It is not unusual for the entire group to be forced to adapt to the heavenly agenda – like Egypt preparing for a seven-year famine, in order that the children of Israel might be preserved, multiplied, and delivered. As Joseph told his brothers concerning his stint in Egypt, *“But as for*

you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" (Gen 50:20). Heaven does not shape its agenda around the ungodly who are really "not a people" (1 Pet 2:10).

THE DANGER OF SECULARIZATION

By "secularization," I mean precisely what the dictionary says of this term: "1. To make secular. 2. To transfer from ecclesiastical to civil or lay use, possession, or control. 3. To convert to or imbue with secularism." MERRIAM-WEBSTER
The word "secular" means, "1 a. Of or relating to the worldly or temporal [secular concerns] b. Not overtly or specifically religious." MERRIAM-WEBSTER

When life, and the objectives of life, are defined without God being at the center of things, it has been secularized. When careers, earning money, and rising to the top of the economic and business heap becomes the fundamental thing, secularization has taken place. The undue vaunting of pleasure, and even the maintenance of a sectarian religious structure necessitates the abandonment of God-centeredness. As a result, preparing to please and stand before God is no longer important enough to abandon any pursuit of emphasis that does not allow for such preparation.

Now, all of this is pictured in the text before us. I suppose the ship on which these souls were traveling was carrying some precious cargo: goods that were to be sold and meet the needs of the people. However, before the voyage is over, they will be thrown overboard in the interest of preserving life.

Over and above those more practical matters, there was a man on board this ship who had been called and commissioned by the glorified Christ. **He was given a message that would change the lives of individuals, stabilize the church, and significantly impact the entire world.** The exalted Lord will manage this entire voyage with this man in mind, together with those helpers who were with him. The world would be able to do without the goods this ship was carrying. It could manage well without Julius the centurion, or the pilot and owner of the ship. But it could not do without Paul. The vast majority of the knowledge of the purpose of God would be expounded by this man.

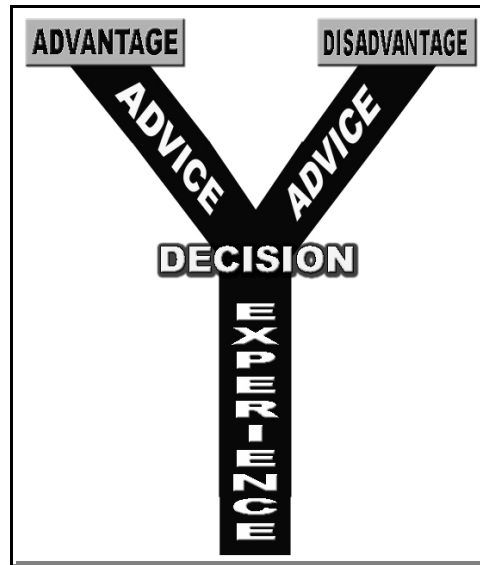
Of course, little of this was known by the passengers aboard this vessel – certainly it was not known by Julius and, the pilot and owner of the ship. Nevertheless, it

was the truth, and ultimately the will of the Lord will be done, and Paul will bear witness to Jesus in Rome.

A Practical Observation

In our society diversion to the inferior is aggressively promoted. It is in the educational and religious structures, and the entertainment and business worlds as well. Those in Christ are to heed the words of Jesus: "*In your patience possess ye your souls*" (Luke 21:19). **We are not to allow worldly priorities to be found in us. Our lives are not to be driven by inferior and decaying agendas.**

This is not something that can be accomplished by following a routine, or developing new habits. It is part and parcel of working out your own salvation with fear and trembling. It is a posture you are responsible for developing, and no man can force you to do so.



NEVERTHELESS

"Nevertheless . . ." Other versions read, "But," NASB and "However." CJB

Life is structured in such a manner as requires choices. This cannot be avoided, for it is integral to life itself. For the believer, these times are tests. For the unbelievers, they are times that reveal the inadequacy of worldly wisdom.

It is my persuasion that every major decision made by men is preceded by advice or suggestions that are opposed to each other. One leads to advantage, and one to disadvantage. In our text, in the crucible of physical danger, two pieces of advice were given to the centurion.

One came from Paul who said that if this voyage continued, it would be at the peril of the vessel, what was in it, and the lives of those on board. The other piece of advice came from the pilot and the owner of the ship. It appears these were two different men, the pilot, or helmsman, working for the owner. They advised that they move ahead to the next port, which, we will find, was thought to be more commodious.

MORE THAN THE THINGS WHICH WERE SPOKEN BY PAUL

" . . . the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul." Other versions read, "was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship," NKJV "by the pilot and captain of the ship," NASB "followed the advice of the pilot and the owner," NIV "paid more attention to the pilot and the owner," NRSV and "to the captain and the owner." RSV

The centurion, Julius, chose to believe the pilot and the owner. After all, the sea was their domain, and they surely would know the best course to take. You may recall when Jesus, a carpenter by trade (Mk 6:3), twice advised professional fisherman where to cast their nets (Lk 5:4-5; John 21:5-6). Those with legitimate worldly wisdom sometimes have to told what is best for them to do in the very field in which they are experts. Examples of this are Joseph, Moses, and Daniel.

God still works in this way, choosing to work through what the world considers to be foolishness. As it is written, "*But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence*" (1 Cor 1:27-29). This is simply the way the Lord works.

In this case, Julius was overly confident in the wisdom of the pilot and owner. He did not recognize Paul as possessing wisdom in this matter. However, he was wrong – seriously wrong. Unknown to him was the fact that the highest form of worldly wisdom has a boundary beyond which it cannot go. Men are hesitant, to say the least, to acknowledge this. However, experience will prove it to be true. This was one such occasion.

CONCLUSION

The witness of Jesus to Paul was straightforward. He had been dragged from the Temple, rescued by Lysias and his army, testified to the Jews, rescued from them again, for they sought to kill him, and spent the night in the military barracks. The following night Jesus said to him, *“Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome”* (Acts 23:11). Surely that would bring an end to the trouble he had endured, being beaten, and endured aggression that would have torn him in pieces if he had not been rescued. However, the fulfilling of that word was not simplistic. Ponder what Paul has experienced since that words was spoken to him.

- ⇒ When Paul arrived and Felix the governor had read the letter, he informed Paul that he would hear his case when his accusers arrived from Jerusalem. He then commanded that Paul be incarcerated in the judgment hall (Acts 23:33-35).
- ⇒ Five days later Ananias the high priest arrived with his entourage, and an orator by the name of Tertullus presented the Jews’ case against Paul (Acts 24:1-9).
- ⇒ After the presentation of the charges, the governor gave Paul an opportunity to defend himself before his accusers

- ⇒ Felix often called for Paul to appear before him, hoping he would offer him some money to obtain freedom (Acts 24:26).
- ⇒ Paul was left bound in prison for two years (Acts 24:27).
- ⇒ Festus, who replaced Felix went up to Jerusalem, where he heard charges once again leveled against Paul. The Jews asked him to bring Paul to Jerusalem for trial, fully intending to kill Paul along the way (Acts 25:1-3).
- ⇒ Festus replied that Paul would be kept in Caesarea where he ought to be, and that they would have to journey to Caesarea to present their charges. (Acts 25:4-6).
- ⇒ Festus remained in Jerusalem for more than ten days, at which time he departed for Caesarea (Acts 25:6-7).
- ⇒ Upon arrival, he commanded Paul to be brought before him, where the Jews would present their case. Paul was given an opportunity to defend himself against the charges (Acts 25:8).

Surely that would bring an end to the trouble he had endured, being beaten, and endured aggression that would have torn him in pieces if he had not been rescued. However, the fulfilling of that word was not simplistic.

- ⇒ The day following that word from Jesus, forty Jews bound themselves with an oath that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul (Acts 23:12).
- ⇒ Those forty men came to the chief priests and elders, requesting that they speak to the chief captain, and ask him to bring Paul to them as though they were going to inquire about something. When he brought Paul, they would kill him on the way (Acts 23:15).
- ⇒ Paul’s sister’s son overheard the plot and told Paul, who in turn told one of the centurions to take the boy to the chief captain, telling him he had something to say that he ought to hear (Acts 23:15-22).
- ⇒ The chief captain then arranged for Paul to be transported to Caesarea, escorted by four hundred and seventy soldiers (Acts 23:23-24).
- ⇒ Lysias wrote an accompanying letter detailing the case about Paul (Acts 23:25-32).

- (Acts 24:10).
- ⇒ Paul presented his case, pointing out that no charges against him had been verified (Acts 24:10-21).
- ⇒ Felix then told Paul he would wait until Lysias the captain came, and see what he had to say about the whole matter (Acts 24:22).
- ⇒ Felix then remanded Paul to be temporarily incarcerated, commanded that he be given liberty to move about, and that his friends should be permitted to minister to him (Acts 24:23).
- ⇒ After some days had passed, Felix brought his wife Drusilla, sent for Paul, and heard him speak concerning faith in Christ (Acts 24:24).
- ⇒ Paul reasoned with Felix concerning righteousness, temperance, and judgement to come, moving Felix to tremble. He said he would call for Paul at a more convenient season (Acts 24:25).

- ⇒ Attempting to do the Jews a favor, Festus asked Paul if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem and be tried there. Paul said he was not willing, and could not be compelled to do so. He then appealed to Caesar. Festus agreed, saying *“Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? Unto Caesar shalt thou go”* (Acts 25:9-12).
- ⇒ After many days, king Agrippa and Bernice showed up, and Festus spoke to him about the case of Paul. Agrippa said he wanted to hear Paul for himself (Acts 25:13-22).
- ⇒ The next day Paul was summoned before Agrippa, Bernice, Festus, the chief men of the city, and the military leaders. He delivered his most lengthy defense at that time, eliciting responses from both Festus and Agrippa. In conference the audience agreed that Paul had done nothing worthy of imprisonment or death. If he had not appealed to Caesar he could have been set free (Acts 25:23-26:29).

⇒ At this point, the lengthy trip to Italy commenced. At the time of our text, it had been in progress for some time, and would continue for a few more months.

I have taken the time to provide these general details to confirm the nature of the manner and works of the Lord. **He does not fulfill His will in the context of convenience and ease, and men are not**

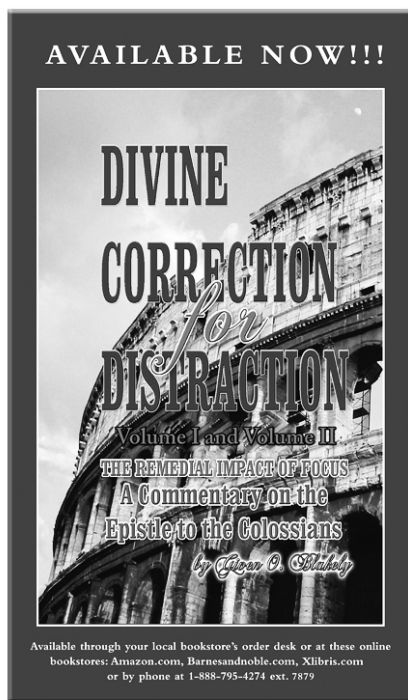
wise to imagine that He does. For a person who is hasty in his judgments, this would have proved very distracting. However, this has not been the case with Paul. He has seized every opportunity put before him, and entered into every opened door. He has been able to speak insightfully and effectively, and has not been caught up in the controversies presented by the Jews, or the insults thrown at him by Festus, or

the casual interest of Agrippa.

May you be able to correlate these events with your own life, enabling you to detect how and when the Lord is working with you. Be imitators of Paul in the matter of maintaining your composure, keeping the faith, and clinging to the promises of God. These things are all within the grasp of those who are living by faith.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 9/10/10. We will continue our current series of lessons on the book of Acts. The one hundredth and third lesson will cover verses 12 through 26 of the twenty-seventh chapter: "A COMFORTING WORD IN THE STORM." En route to Italy, a fierce storm arose, endangering the occupants of the ship. After an extended silence, Paul tells them they should have listened to his advice. Notwithstanding, he said an angel from God had appeared to him, revealing what would happen during the storm. The ship would be lost, but the people would all survive. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

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COMMENTARY on **Acts**: <http://wotruth.com/Acts.htm>

COMMENTARY on **Malachi**: <http://wotruth.com/Malachi.htm>

COMMENTARY on **Galatians**: <http://wotruth.com/Galatiansindex-new.htm>
