THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCTOBER 18TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

PAUL'S DEPARTURE (ACTS 27:1–8)

"THEY HANDED OVER PAUL"

Paul was placed under the watch of a centurion named Julius, of the Imperial regiment. It was typical for Roman soldiers to accompany prisoners and oversee grain transport from Egypt to Rome.

- The ship they initially loaded was a coastal ship, which was not built to sail the open seas, so they hugged the coast as much as possible to avoid capsizing.

THE FAVOR OF GOD AND OTHERS

Paul was extended favor by Julius, and we see that **his companions were able to travel with him.** Aristarchus (as Paul's personal attendant), Luke (as his physician), and some other prisoners all loaded the ship and set sail to Italy.

- Paul was shown favor (24:23), most likely because **he was not yet condemned** and because of **his godly character.**

VOLUNTARY PRISONER

Paul refers to Aristarchus as a **"fellow prisoner"** (Colossians 4:10), and since we don't see his arrest mentioned, he most likely volunteered to accompany Paul to assist and encourage him.

- Although I am free from all and not anyone's slave, **I have made myself a slave to everyone**, in order to win more people" (1 Corinthians 9:19).

UNKNOWN TO US BUT KNOWN BY GOD

While in Sidon, Paul was allowed to visit **"his friends"** to receive their care. Paul had never been to Sidon, so these were likely fellow Believers who founded a church after being scattered (11:19).

- These unnamed friends offered supplies and encouragement for Paul's long journey. They aren't known by us, but Paul writes that **their names are in the book of life** (Philippians 4:3).

"FOUND A SHIP...SAILING FOR ITALY"

They departed the coastal ship in Myra and boarded a grain freighter. Though this was a larger, sturdier ship, it could not withstand sailing directly into the wind because of its design.

- The strong winds made travel very difficult, which was only a precursor of things to come. After many days, they made it to a place called Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea.

PAUL'S ADVICE (ACTS 27:9–12)

"MUCH TIME HAD PASSED"

Their travels were difficult and took much longer than anticipated. It was only going to get harder since **the Day of Atonement had passed.**

- Traveling across the Mediterranean was difficult after mid-September and impossible after mid-November, so Luke uses that date in the beginning of October to show that **sailing in this season was extremely dangerous.**

WARNING IGNORED

Paul advised them by saying, **"Men, I can see that this voyage is headed toward disaster and heavy loss, not only of the cargo and the ship but also of our lives."**

- The centurion dismissed Paul's warning and instead listened to the captain and the ship's owner, figuring they had as much as anyone to lose if they didn't make it.

"I CAN SEE..."

Was Paul speaking as a prophet of God, or was he speaking from experience? The answer is that it was probably both.

- God had given Paul supernatural wisdom, and he was familiar with the dangers of traveling at sea during certain seasons. At this point, he had traveled over 3,500 miles at sea and been shipwrecked three times (2 Corinthians 11:25).

LETTING THE MAJORITY DECIDE

The harbor of Fair Haven on the southern part of Crete was vulnerable to winter winds and storms, making it a less-than-ideal location to wait out the winter season.

- The crew of 276 people (27:37) voted to set sail to Phoenix, which was only about 40 miles away, on the western side of Crete, to survive the winter there.

LOSING HOPE (ACTS 27:13–20)

"BUT BEFORE LONG..."

The plan to continue to a different location on the shore of Crete seemed like a good idea, as a gentle south wind helped push them along the way, but before long the wind became very dangerous.

- The fierce wind known as the "northeaster" was a feared and destructive storm, similar to what we call a hurricane or typhoon.

"AFTER RUNNING UNDER THE SHELTER"

Unable to navigate because of the storm, they **"gave way to it"** and ran ashore on a very small island called Cauda.

- With much difficulty, they **secured the skiff**, a small boat they were towing, so it would not be lost or slammed against the ship. They also tied up the ship with ropes and chains ("girded"), so it would not be torn apart by the storm.

"FINALLY ALL HOPE WAS FADING"

Fearing they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, "they lowered the drift-anchor." For the next two days, Luke tells us, they jettisoned the ship's cargo and equipment to lighten their load.

- For many days, all means of navigation were lost. They had **cast off all equipment,** and **the storm blotted out the sun and stars.** Now **they had given up with no hope of survival**

BEING REMINDED (ACTS 27:21–26)

"SINCE THEY HAD BEEN WITHOUT FOOD..."

The men were hopeless and weak from lack of food when Paul stood up and told them that **they should have listened to his advice.**

- It doesn't seem like Paul was taking the opportunity for an "I told you so" moment. Instead, he was using a situation when they should have listened **to gain their confidence and trust for what he was about to tell them.**

GOD NEVER SAID IT WOULD BE EASY

The previous night, an angel of God appeared to Paul so he could bring hope to the passengers and crew who had given up.

- Paul wasn't offering hope in the fact that an easy voyage awaited them; he offered hope that God was in control. They were told that **they would be shipwrecked** and **all would be lost** except for their lives.

PAUL WAS IN NEED OF REMINDING

An angel of the Lord appeared to Paul, reminding him of the promise that was made to him that he would appear before Caesar. Since God made him a promise, **he could trust that God was faithful to fulfill what He had promised.**

- We do not need an angel of the Lord to appear to us to remind us of the promises of God because **we have the Word of God.**

"IT WILL BE JUST THE WAY IT WAS TOLD TO ME"

Paul told the men to take courage because **he believed God** and everything would be just as He said it would be.

- *To believe God* is different than to *believe in God.* Even the demons agree with the existence of God, but they don't agree with God (Js. 2:19). Paul was declaring his **confidence in God's awareness** and **total trust in His faithfulness.**

WHO DO WE SERVE?

- Aristarchus chose imprisonment to serve others for the sake of the gospel. Do we seek to serve others or ourselves?
- Paul's friends in Sidon did not have their names in the Bible, but they were written in the book of life. What if our service is unknown to others but seen by God? Is it enough that God sees?

THE STORMS WE FACE

- Have we abandoned all hope in the midst of the storms of life?
- In the storms, we trust in the one the waves and winds obey (Matthew 8:23–27).
- In the storms, we remember that they are temporary (2 Corinthians 4:17–18).
- The storms in life make us look forward to eternal life (Psalm 30:5; Revelation 21:4).