




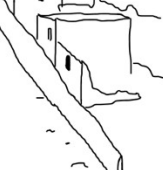
1. Who are Paul's traveling companions on this sea voyage? (1-2) What can we learn about Aristarchus? (19:29; 20:4; 27:2; Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24). If Paul had not been delayed for so long by his trials at Caesarea, he would have been able to leave earlier for Rome, and the time of year would have been more favorable for travel. How is God using these situations to His glory?
2. Julius likely had been stationed at Caesarea for a while before receiving his travel orders (1), so he may have been familiar with Paul already. Why do you think Julius allowed Paul the prisoner to see his friends in Sidon? (3) If Paul made this stop at your house, how would you treat him? How do you practice hospitality?
3. How do you think Paul felt as he sailed past his home country of Cilicia, where Tarsus is located? (5) Remember, he left there as a respected Pharisee, and now he had been reduced to the status of a lowly prisoner. How might Paul have been encouraged by where he found himself at this point in his life?
4. Paul's goal was to reach Rome, and he had the Lord's personal promise that he would indeed do so (23:11). Why do you think he sought to persuade Julius and the captain not to proceed with the journey from Fair Havens? (8-10) Why do you think Julius listened to the ship's captain and owner rather than Paul when deciding whether to leave Fair Havens or not? (11-12) What were the results? (13-15, 20).
5. Fair Havens was not the best harbor on Crete for spending the winter, with only a small town there, and open to the winds from the east and south. Phoenix was a larger city with a more protected harbor and more "amenities". Because the sailors had the responsibility for and authority over the ship and cargo (and likely more sea experience), Paul's warning went ignored. (8-12). Why do you think the sailors chose to ignore Paul's warning? How do you think Paul felt in this situation? How would you have reacted? How did Paul react?
6. Can you share a time when you were misled by some seemingly favorable circumstance, which, because you wanted to do something badly enough, you took to be a good omen and plunged ahead without checking other sources of leading? (11-15) When a Christian is faced with a major life decision, what wisdom do the following verses offer regarding: (1) Diligent Bible study - Psalm 119:9-11; (2) Prayer - Colossians 4:12; (3) Wise counsel - Proverbs 11:14; (4) Our attitude - John 7:17; Ephesians 6:6; and (5) Our circumstances - 1 Corinthians 16:8-9? Why are our circumstances often not solid indicators of God's will for us?
7. In verse 21, in the middle of the storm, Paul reminds everyone that he had warned them not to leave the relative safety of Fair Havens. We might say "I told you so!" Why would Paul feel the need to say that at this time?
8. One purpose why this detailed incident was given to us was to show us the tremendous power that faith and prayer can exercise. Although not specifically stated, verses 9-10 and 23-25 seem to indicate that Paul was praying for his situation. Yet so many of the circumstances described would cast doubt that God was answering Paul's prayers. What caused Paul to be so confident in the middle of the storm? (22-25, 34-36). According to James 4:2b, James 5:16, and 1 Thessalonians 2:18, why might we not be seeing answers to our prayers? What promise does Jesus offer regarding answered prayer? (Matthew 7:7-8).
9. List the obstacles that rose up in this chapter to prevent Paul from reaching Rome. Why would the apostle experience such grave difficulty from both man and nature when he is obviously seeking to do the will of God? How does it bring glory to God to note all of these problems for Paul? Why is it that, even when we are doing what we take to be God's will for us, we oftentimes still have such great difficulty in accomplishing it?
10. Paul started out chapter 27 as a prisoner of Rome, under the direct supervision of a centurion and his soldiers. How would you describe Paul's standing amongst the ship's company by the end of the chapter? (21-22, 30-36, 42-43). What character traits did Paul display in this passage? How does God use difficult circumstances to develop godly character in us? (James 1:2-4; Romans 5:3-5).



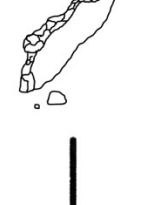
Cruisin' the Med with Paul Leader Notes for Acts 27:1-44



Paul had spent the last two years in Caesarea, tied up in bureaucracy and hearings. Finally, the decision was made to send him to Rome to testify before Caesar. This would involve a 1600-mile sea voyage, much of which Luke described in chapter 27. Paul was allowed to travel with his friends Aristarchus and Luke. They started out in a smaller coastal ship which stopped at Sidon, where Paul was allowed to see a number of his friends and receive care. They continued north up the Mediterranean coast and then west along the southern coast of what is now modern Turkey, including Paul's homeland of Cilicia, until they reached the port of Myra.



In Myra, they transferred to a larger ocean-going cargo ship from Alexandria in Egypt, where Rome got much of its grain supply. Contrary winds made for slow progress, and the captain decided to sail off the southern coast of the island of Crete, using the island to block the northwesterly winds and make better progress. However, the winds continued to hamper their travels, and they only made it about halfway along the southern coast of Crete, arriving at the small harbor called Fair Havens. Here they waited several days, hoping for a more favorable wind direction.



By then the safe sailing season (April to mid-September) was over, and even the fast for the Day of Atonement (early to mid-October) had passed. Paul warned the centurion and captain that if they tried to push ahead with the voyage, they would lose the cargo, ship, and their lives. Fair Havens may not have been the best harbor, but it would do the job. Julius the centurion listened to the ship's captain and owner, rather than Paul. A vote was taken, and the majority decided to try and reach Phoenix, another port on the southern coast of Crete, which was better protected and a larger city for the sailors and soldiers to enjoy.

Everything seemed fine as they started out, but the hurricane-force wind called Euraquilo started blowing from the northeast, down from modern Russia. They could not control the ship and were barely able to bring its small boat on board to secure it. They tried to strengthen the ship's hull with cables and then threw out a sea anchor to keep the ship in line with the direction of the waves. They tried to lighten the ship by throwing out the cargo and even the ship's tackle.

They had no idea where they were, only that they seemed to be heading toward the shallows located in the Gulf of Sidra, where shoals formed hundreds of miles out to sea, which had trapped and marooned many ships.

They had been in the storm for many days when Paul stood up and reminded them of his earlier warning. The decision makers needed to be reminded that they had ignored his wisdom and had recklessly followed their own fleshly desires. Then Paul shared how God's angel had promised him they would all survive. After all of the relentless pounding and starvation, they finally listened to Paul, who sought to encourage them with God's promise.

After 2 weeks it became apparent that they were approaching land and needed to avoid being blown onto the rocks. They cast out anchors to hold them in place until daybreak. Paul noticed the sailors trying to escape using the ship's boat and warned Julius, whose soldiers cut the boat away and thus lost its use as a tool to get people to shore.

At dawn, Paul encouraged everyone to eat and recover their strength for the ordeal ahead of reaching the shore. He reminded them of God's promise that not a hair of their heads would perish. Luke then told his readers what a large job was ahead by stating that there were 276 souls on board.

The first plan was to cast off the anchors and allow the wind to drive them onto the shore in the one area that had a soft, sandy beach. This plan was scrapped once the ship struck a reef and wouldn't move. They knew they couldn't stay on the ship because it was being torn apart by the waves. The second plan was for the soldiers to kill the prisoners and save their own lives, but Julius stopped them, because he cared for and respected Paul. Instead, he ordered those who could swim to jump into the water and head for shore, while everyone else found something to float upon and made their way to the beach. The Lord's promise to Paul came true, that not one life was lost.