

Acts 27:1-12

January 13, 1977

This record in **Acts 27** historically, from a historian's point of view, is the finest record of a travel aboard ship and a shipwreck, in all history. There is no more detailed record in any place in secular history at all. In other words; this 27th chapter, as reported by Luke, under the inspiration of the Father, is just a fantastic piece of work.

Acts 27:1

"when it was determined" - as it was decided

There was more than one group of a hundred who were the emperor's crack troops. The Pope has the Swiss Guards. Are they not his crack troops? I think so.

Acts 27:2

"entering" - embarking

"meaning" - being about

"being" was

"Aristarchus" - Luke and Aristarchus were with Paul. I think, according to Roman law, only two people, at any time, were allowed to accompany a prisoner, I forget what the detail was on it.

"Adramyttium" - this city, Adramyttium, was a city in Mysia. They are going north from Caesarea along the Asian coast. Mysia was a province of Asia. Adramyttium was right at the head of the Gulf of Mysia, on the west coast of it.

Acts 27:3

"touched" - landed "liberty" = the privilege

The Phoenicians were the great builders of ships; the first major navigational group.

Tyre and Sidon were like Minneapolis - St. Paul, where one is always in competition with the other. That is an interesting place. Even the ruins of the famous naval base there are still visible, you know, the great pillars and stuff. This area in here blessed me very much, Tyre and Sidon, I enjoyed seeing that, the excavations and so forth. Sidon was a Phoenician port.

"Julius [the centurion] courteously entreated Paul" - I assume he did this because he was given orders, and was informed by Festus as to how to handle him; what to do.

"gave *him* liberty" - he gave Paul the privilege to go to his friends to refresh himself. I imagine after two years in the "hoosegow" it would be sort of nice to have the freedom to go to your friends and refresh yourself, but he could not go except he was handcuffed to a soldier.

Sidon is about 67 -68 miles north of Caesarea.

Acts 27:4

“Cyprus” - the lee of Cyprus

They sailed north along the Asian coast on the east side of Cyprus, past the northeast part of the island. The lee of Cyprus is that tongue that sticks up toward the northeast. That’s why they made pretty good time until they turned west, because this lee was the sheltered side from the wind. The wind was from the northwest and west.

Acts 27:5

“over” - across

“the sea of Cilicia” – the sea which is off of Cilicia

“came to” landed

The winds threw them further north than their route would have gone. It kept driving them further north. That’s why they sailed across the sea, which is off of Cilicia and Pamphylia, to Myra, which was a city of Lycia. The city was about 2 1/2 miles inland from the coast and it was near the mouth of the river Andriacus, which is still in existence. The Lycia province was just west of the province of Pamphylia. According to the best reckoning here, it must have taken them about 15 days to travel from Sidon, around the lee of Cyprus, and up to Myra. Now if you look very carefully on your map you can see that this ship was protected on the north by the lands of Pamphylia, but the headwinds from the west is what sent them up further north.

Acts 27:6-8

Ships leaving Cnidus turned southwest and sailed under the lee of Crete over against Salmone, which was at the east end of the Island of Crete. Here they turned west and were protected from the north winds by the island of Crete, sailing along the south coast of Crete.

“ship of Alexandria” - This was a grain ship from Egypt going to Italy. These ships were not steered by a helm. They had two broad oars at the back of them, off the stern. They had only one large, square, massive sail. Then they carried their flags or their banners on top of that. According to the best logs we have of the early days of seafaring, they said they could go within seven points of the wind. They could not sail directly, but within seven points. Their speed was approximately seven knots an hour. A knot is a nautical mile; 6,085 feet. A land mile is 5,280 feet.

These ships, like this ship of Alexandria sailing to Italy, carried between ten and twelve hundred tons of wheat. They were not small. Josephus has a record that on one of these ships there were 500 passengers in addition to the grain they carried. They were carrying grain from Egypt to Italy.

“Cnidus” - Cnidus was at the extreme southwest corner of Asia Minor. The prevailing winds were from the northwest. That’s why you can see why they went that route, because they had only one sail. They had to do the best they could. From Myra to Cnidus is about 130 miles, and of course, moving that direction, the way they were up against the coast, it took about 2 1/2 to 3 weeks to make that little trip. The island of Crete was also called Candia. Salmone was its eastern cape.

Acts 27:7

“scarce were come” – with great difficulty - they sailed slowly because of the tremendous winds.

The time here, was toward the latter part of September, first of October; somewhere between September 22 and October 5. That’s when this occurred, or close to that period of time. I think October is the most treacherous month for traveling, even to this day, the same thing is true for this area. The reason they sailed slowly is; they had too much wind and in the wrong direction.

“over against” – on that side of

“suffering” – allowing

Acts 27:8

“hardly passing it” – that with great difficulty

“The fair havens” – Fair Havens

Fair Havens is on the south coast of Crete, a few miles east of Cape Metala. As you look at your map, you’ll see that it breaks north very quickly after Lasea. Fair havens and Lasea were only about an hour and a half or two hours apart. The interesting thing to me is; that in past years, the people said that there never was a city like Lasea. Fair Havens is still in existence today, I guess. Then some archaeologist from Germany, in 1856 found the ruins of the city of Lasea.

What has gotten me through the years is; people can always criticize the Bible. But then usually two things happen. When the real truth is found, which is already in the Word, which they won’t believe: by the time this archeologist had found that, then that critic who was so adamant against the Bible is dead. You can’t get him out of the grave and beat the hell out of him. He made his statement; he hurt people, then he died. The way this archaeologist found this was that he just read the Bible and believed what was written in here was true, so he went looking and he found it. There’s a lot of this city of Lasea in the Bresteds Institute in Chicago at the Divinity School. That’s where I saw it.

I don’t know why they always want to think these guys were so stupid that they wouldn’t even know their town was New Knoxville, and they lived there all their life. I live 1,000 years later and I’m smarter than they were who lived there. A man’s got to be crazy to believe that, right? They said, for instance, about those astronomers that came from the east to visit Jesus’ place; how they could not have been that smart at their time to know all that astronomy stuff. Well, I’m convinced that they perhaps knew more than we know today. I am convinced that maybe the forefathers, many centuries before, knew more, because the Word says God wrote this stuff in the stars. He told Adam and Adam told his kids; it went down the line.

There’s a place in India where they just did nothing but look at the stars and the ruins of that place are still there. I describe it like a chute, or like a cement runway. It was like cement, but it was some other stuff. It is still there in India. And by the way, they have iron that has stood outside for 2500 years and it has not rusted. The Buddhistic scriptures are written on those

cylinders, they just stand in the ground and they're iron. You can read their scriptures on it and they've never rusted in all those years.

When I read things like this in the Word and know some of the things that the critics have said about it, it's always interesting to me. When they do find it, then they say, "Well the Bible was right to begin with." Why didn't somebody start out with the idea like The Way Ministry; the Bible is right, then we have no problem with it. The Bible is accurate. It just takes men to get around to believing it.

They would not have gone this route, you know good and well, had the weather been better. But they were going very late in the season. It perhaps was the last boat out. I'm quite confident it was, because of the time of the year.

Acts 27:9

"now" - already

"fast was now already past" – this is the Feast of Purim, and when that thing occurred, nobody, if he was in his right mind, sailed the Mediterranean. Only under extreme conditions would you sail it.

I've often wondered why they sailed this particular ship of Alexandria. The owner was responsible to travel on his own ship. They had sort of a law; that if the owner's ship went, the owner went with it. If he was real wealthy and had two or three ships, he'd have to wait till he got back with one before he could take the other. They could have it loaded and he could ship right out again. He'd take his family along; all his kids, all his in-laws and out-laws. Why this owner, who was aboard this ship here, allowed this wheat ship to go through at this time, I just don't know. It just doesn't make any sense to me. Sailing was already dangerous, because of the time of year, so Paul spoke to them at Fair Havens.

"admonished" - spoke

Acts 27:10

"voyage" - sailing

"hurt" - injury

"damage" - loss

"lading" – cargo

"also of our lives" – of our lives also

How Paul, a prisoner, got permission to address these people and to say this to them, I can only venture to think in terms of the centurion and the instructions he had been given by Festus; and how this Paul was really not a criminal; and that he should have been set free, but in order to please the Jews, was sent to Rome. This is why I think Paul had this freedom, like in **verse 3**, where he went to refresh himself with the believers there.

This is revelation. This is what Paul knew by revelation.

"perceive" - to see - God gave it to him by seeing; by a vision. God showed him that this

sailing, if they continued, would be with hurt and much loss, not only of the cargo, but of the lives of the people. What Paul spoke is what he knew by revelation.

Acts 27:11

“nevertheless” - but

“master” – captain - some people have steersman. I don’t think that’s right, because I think “captain” is what it really is.

“owner of the ship” - I told you the owner had to ride along.

The owner and the captain influenced the centurion.

Acts 27:12

“haven” - harbor

“commodious” - ideal

“more part” – greater group of them - in other words; the captain and the owner of the ship apparently discussed it with the rest of the crew.

“depart” - launch forth

“if by any means” - so that

“attain to” – in other words; be able to get to

“*there* to winter” – winter there

The detailed descriptiveness of Luke here; every detail, is really something. I really get blessed by how accurate the Word is and how just every little detail is covered. I’ve wondered why God was so concerned about the details of this little old shipwreck. But, as you begin to see that this now is going to carry the Word by the man of God into the great city of Rome. I can see why this record here becomes so important. The Adversary does everything in his power to obstruct Paul; does everything he can to deter them, to injure them, to hurt them, to destroy them. As a matter of fact,

before we finish the chapter, you will see that when they finally get shipwrecked on the island of Melita, or Malta, that all the people thought he was going to die. Then, he lived, and they all thought he was God. It’s just beginning to build.

Why did Paul not stop the storm? Have you ever asked yourself that? Jesus said, “Peace, be still,” and it got so quiet they had to blow the sails. Paul; tremendous man of God, why didn’t he? The only answer I know; he just didn’t have any revelation. I don’t know any other answer. He had revelation that the voyage would be with a lot of hurt, much loss; the cargo, even their very lives. You’ll see this all develop because even the sailors wanted to jump ship.

Every detail in here, to me becomes increasingly important as I begin to see that what the

Adversary is really after is to destroy this man one way or the other.

We'll also see, before we finish this chapter, that when Paul does get to Rome, as a prisoner, and he spends two years there, he writes Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians in prison.

Can you imagine Ephesians coming out of a situation where he's handcuffed to a prisoner, dictates the Word, they write it, send it out? - - the greatness of the revelation coming to a man in prison?

Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and that book he wrote to Onesimus; Philemon was written out of prison, in Rome.

We'll come back and pick you up on "the south wind blowing softly" in **verse 13**.