

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Acts 27:14-38 | Session 72 | Caught in a Hurricane | A.D. 62

The possibility of sinking or being shipwrecked is a terrifying thought for any sailor. For Paul and the others on the Alexandrian ship headed for Rome it was the time when **sailing was now dangerous** (vs.9) and **the winds were contrary** (vss. 4,7). Having arrived with much difficulty (vs. 8) yet safely **under Crete** to a **place which is called The fair havens** (vs. 8), Paul warned the ship's owner and the centurion of the danger that was ahead if they should continue on their journey. But because **the haven** was not suitable to winter over and wait for better weather (vs. 12), Paul was outvoted and the journey pressed on. In verse 13, **And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete**, headed for **Phenice** (or, Phoenix).

Verse 14—

There arose against it, that is, the island, **a tempestuous** (Greek: typhonikos, we get **typhoon**) **wind, called Euroclydon** (*euros*= east wind, *kludon*=a surging wave), the word *hurricane* is derived from euroclydon.

Verses 15, 16, 17—

Could not bear up into the wind, Luke uses the Greek word *antopthalmeo*, *anti* is against, *ophthalmeo* is eye, like in Ophthalmology. Literally, *they could not go against the eye of the storm*. **We let her drive**, that is *we let the wind carry the ship*. They struggled to secure the life boat and used ropes of some kind to run under the ship to hold it together. Their fear was hitting a sand bar and running aground so they let down their sails and were at the mercy of the wind.

Verses 18, 19, 20—

The ship was **exceedingly tossed**, that is it was rolling from side to side. Under sail they would typically drive into the waves, here they were caught in the trough of the waves, the worst place to be. **They lightened the ship to prevent capsizing**, and by the third day of the hurricane they threw out the ships **tackle** (the equipment or gear). For **many days** they saw neither **sun nor stars**, and **no small tempest** (tempest, Greek: *cheimon*, as in water pouring through a channel) **lay on us** (Greek: *epikeimai- epi* = on; *keimai* = to lie upon or over), and they lost **all hope that we should be saved**.

Verse 21,22,23,24,25—

After long Abstinence (Greek: *asitia*; lack of appetite), KJV typically translates, it doesn't interpret. **Paul stood forth in the midst of them**, we will find out later there are 276 souls on board (vs 37). Whether or not the **them** is the entire ship's company including prisoners, or just the ship's crew it does not say; it appears to everyone. But how many of the 276 onboard could hear him in a storm? We also can't determine Paul's tone of voice; was he sympathetic, angry, or just matter-of-fact? But he's saying, "It's your fault." Paul was likely afraid as the rest of the ship's company. He was presumably afraid at times (See 1 Cor. 2:3, fear=*phobos*). But in any case, he showed great courage to stand up and gave a message of hope, **be of good cheer**. We all need a message of hope. Undoubtedly his courage came

from the fact that **There stood before me this night the angel of God**. Our courage comes from the fact that we have God's word before us to encourage us and to strengthen us in our time of fear and weakness. That an angel appeared and spoke to Paul indicates he was still in an apostolic dispensation. Some think there is an allusion to Jonah, whereas Jonah sailed west and was running from God and endangered all on board, here Paul sails west in obedience to God and saves the lives of those with him. Paul continues, **For I believe God**. The angel of God must have revealed they would **be cast upon a certain island**. He doesn't say which island, but to their ears, any island would be better than breaking apart at sea.

Verses 27,28,29—

Fourteenth night...Shipmen deemed that they drew near...A good sailor knows when they are approaching land. And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms. They would have used a lead line marked by fathoms. A **fathom** is about six feet. We get our phrase "deep six" from this. Many smaller boats still use lead lines today. The **shipmen** determined the water was getting shallow, so they **cast four anchors out of the stern** (that is, the rear of the ship). **And wished for the day**. The word **wished** carries the idea of pray. Yet, it is used more often for making a statement of prayer, for example *I wish you the best in your new job, or I wish above everything that you recover*. It might actually be more correct to respond to someone this way, rather than flippantly saying, I will pray for you. How often do we say that, and yet we don't formally pray for that person? In agapé love, or Christian charity (agape), I would say all believers who wish someone well are in effect asking God to be with that person. In truth, who hasn't **wished for** night to end and **the day** to come?

Verses 30,31,32—

Under colour (a pretext) they were faking that they **would cast anchors out of the foreship** (or the bow/front). Paul notices and brings it to the attention of the **centurion**. **Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved**. This must have also been a part of the angel of God's message. Showing their complete trust in Paul, **the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off**.

Verses 33,34,35,36,37,38—

Paul encouraged them to eat since it had been **fourteen days** since they had eaten anything. **Meat** is food or nourishment. Paul seems to give a Jewish blessing (1 Cor. 11:23,24): 1) took bread. 2) gave thanks for it. 3) after breaking bread began to eat. This encouraged **all** of them and **they also took some meat**. Verse 37 tells us the count of those on board, **two hundred threescore and sixteen** (a score is 20, threescore is 60), $200 + 60 + 16 = 276$ **souls**. Note the word **souls**. In Genesis 2:7 God breathed into the nostrils of man **the breath of life; and man became a living soul**. These 276 onboard the ship were souls made in the image of God. If there was a cat onboard, it was not a soul, if there was a rat, it was not a soul. Only man is a living soul because of the breath of life given to him by God. The KJV translation of soul is literal and much deeper than the word *persons* (*as the ESV translates*). We should always lift up man as cherished and special in God's eyes. Our world demeans God's image by considering all living creatures to be equal; worshipping the creation rather than the Creator (Romans 1:23,25).