

Acts 27a verses 1-26

1 Paul was lumped in with other prisoners on their way to Rome. We don't know how many or of what crimes they were accused. The Imperial Regiment (Sabastos Cohort) name was discovered in Syria, which in the first century included Judea. We have no information about Julius.

2 There were no passenger ships at the time. People would book their passage on cargo vessels. They were taking this smaller ship to a port where they could catch a larger grain vessel going to Rome. Aristarchus (20:4) was one of the delegates that brought the offering to the Jerusalem church. He must have stayed with Paul during the 2 years of imprisonment. He is probably ministering to Paul's needs, but we find in Colossians 4:10 that he also became a prisoner in Rome. "with us" = Paul and Luke.

3 Julius showed Paul *philanthropia*. It is the source of our word philanthropy and meant benevolence or civilized behavior. The "friends" are probably a church plant resulting from the persecution in Jerusalem. Paul had been here before (11:30, 12:25, 15:3)

4-5 Sidon to Myra was about 500 miles. The city was due north of Alexandria and therefore commonly visited by grain vessels on their way to Rome. Myra is best known for a fourth century saint named Nicholas or you know him better as Santa Claus.

6 –9 Julius located a vessel heading for Rome. Since Rome's population was over a million people, this steady stream of grain ships was a necessity. They were sailing against the wind. An easterly voyage of 10 days could take up to 70 days on the return trip, especially in Winter. Sailing from Sept 14 to Nov 11 was considered risky and from Nov 11 to March 10 was extremely dangerous. The Emperor Claudius encouraged the supply of grain through the dangerous season by insuring the ships against loss. As long as the owner could find a crew, he was guaranteed a good return. Paul will later return to this island and leave Titus to establish the churches there. After the fast means after Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). In AD 59 this would have fallen on October 5.

10 It seems that Paul is sharing out of personal experience with traveling these waters and not as a prophetic word, for no lives were lost. It was a common sense opinion.

11 Both the pilot and the owner (or his representative) decide that Paul's opinion is wrong and convince Julius that they can make it to better harbor to winter in, Phoenix.

12-14 Phoenix is about half way around the island of Crete. Shortly after they set sail, a *typhonikos* (from which we get the word typhoon) blew the ship out to sea. Luke called it a *euroaquilo* (northeast wind). Many thought he made the word up until it was discovered in North Africa on an inscription naming the winds. These winds could actually reach close to hurricane force and are still a problem in the region.

15-16 A lifeboat was hauled behind the ship. To secure it would have meant to take it on board. It was probably swamped with water making it very difficult.

17 This was a procedure known as “frapping”. The object was to keep the planks tight against the ships ribs to keep the storm from battering them loose which would sink the ship. Drifting to far south could take them to the sandbars of Syrtis, a shallow area with shoals and sandbars that was difficult to escape. Lowered the anchor? Literally the vessel. It is the same word for the lowered sheet in 10:11. It is more likely to mean lowering the sail.

18-21 Paul describes how desperate the men had become. Anxiety and seasickness probably kept them from eating.

22 Now Paul speaks from revelation, encouraging them with a word from the Lord.

23-24 An angel of God (the Lord Jesus?) brought a revelation. Paul is conveying the revelation in a way that they can relate to his words. The Greeks believed in intermediaries that brought messages. Paul is clear that it is a messenger from his God as opposed to Jupiter or Zeus. Previously God told him he would testify in Rome. Now he knows he will stand before Caesar. The ship will be lost but not one of their lives will perish.

25-26 The Greek sailors are likely to have believed the message and been encouraged. Paul outlined exactly what would happen.

Why didn't God cause the storm to cease?

Why didn't God give Paul the message earlier?

Why do you think Luke went into such detail?

Does it remind you of another storm in Scripture?

Does it remind you of storms of life?