SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Acts 27

I Believe God — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-10 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God sends Paul to Rome by way of a shipwreck, and the prisoner in chains becomes the one steady man on a sinking ship. When every human means has failed, Paul believes God's bare word, keeps the crew doing their part, and watches God bring every one of the 276 safely to land.

00 The Text

ACTS 27 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, they proceeded to deliver Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan cohort named Julius.

2 And embarking in an Adramyttian ship, which was about to sail to the regions along the coast of Asia, we put out to sea accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica.

3 The next day we put in at Sidon; and Julius treated Paul with consideration and allowed him to go to his friends and receive care.

4 From there we put out to sea and sailed under the shelter of Cyprus because the winds were contrary.

5 When we had sailed through the sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia.

6 There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy, and he put us aboard it.

7 When we had sailed slowly for a good many days, and with difficulty had arrived off Cnidus, since the wind did not permit us to go farther, we sailed under the shelter of Crete, off Salmone;

8 and with difficulty sailing past it we came to a place called Fair Havens, near which was the city of Lasea.

9 When considerable time had passed and the voyage was now dangerous, since even the fast was already over, Paul began to admonish them,

10 and said to them, "Men, I perceive that the voyage will certainly be with damage and great loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives."

11 But the centurion was more persuaded by the pilot and the captain of the ship than by what was being said by Paul.

12 Because the harbor was not suitable for wintering, the majority reached a decision to put out to sea from there, if somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, facing southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there.

13 When a moderate south wind came up, supposing that they had attained their purpose, they weighed anchor and began sailing along Crete, close inshore.

14 But before very long there rushed down from the land a violent wind, called Euraquilo;

15 and when the ship was caught in it and could not face the wind, we gave way to it and let ourselves be driven along.

16 Running under the shelter of a small island called Clauda, we were scarcely able to get the ship's boat under control.

17 After they had hoisted it up, they used supporting cables in undergirding the ship; and fearing that they might run aground on the shallows of Syrtis, they let down the sea anchor and in this way let themselves be driven along.

18 The next day as we were being violently storm-tossed, they began to jettison the cargo;

19 and on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands.

20 Since neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm was assailing us, from then on ⚠ all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned.

21 When they had gone a long time without food, then Paul stood up in their midst and said, "Men, you ought to have followed my advice and not to have set sail from Crete and incurred this damage and loss.

22 "Yet now I urge you to keep up your courage, for ☆ there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship.

23 "For this very night an angel of △ the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me,

24 saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, △ God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.'

25 "Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for ☆ I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told.

26 "But we must run aground on a certain island."

27 But when the fourteenth night came, as we were being driven about in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors began to surmise that they were approaching some land.

28 They took soundings and found it to be twenty fathoms; and a little farther on they took another sounding and found it to be fifteen fathoms.

29 Fearing that we might run aground somewhere on the rocks, they cast four anchors from the stern and wished for daybreak.

30 But as the sailors were trying to escape from the ship and had let down the ship's boat into the sea, on the pretense of intending to lay out anchors from the bow,

31 Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, "Unless these men remain in the ship, you yourselves cannot be saved."

32 Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship's boat and let it fall away.

33 Until the day was about to dawn, Paul was encouraging them all to take some food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day that you have been constantly watching and going without eating, having taken nothing.

34 "Therefore I encourage you to take some food, for this is for your preservation, for ☆ not a hair from the head of any of you will perish."

35 Having said this, △ he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of all, and he broke it and began to eat.

36 All of them were encouraged and they themselves also took food.

37 All of us in the ship were two hundred and seventy-six persons.

38 When they had eaten enough, they began to lighten the ship by throwing out the wheat into the sea.

39 When day came, they could not recognize the land; but they did observe a bay with a beach, and they resolved to drive the ship onto it if they could.

40 And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea while at the same time they were loosening the ropes of the rudders; and hoisting the foresail to the wind, they were heading for the beach.

41 But striking a reef where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern began to be broken up by the force of the waves.

42 ⚠ The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, so that none of them would swim away and escape;

43 but the centurion, ☆ wanting to bring Paul safely through, kept them from their intention, and

commanded that those who could swim should jump overboard first and get to land,

44 and the rest should follow, some on planks, and others on various things from the ship. And so it happened that ☆ they all were brought safely to land.

Marked in the text

- **v1** “we would sail for Italy” — Time / place / contrast
- **v3** “Julius treated Paul with consideration” — Promise / blessing
- **v9** “since even the fast was already over” — Time / place / contrast
- **v10** “the voyage will certainly be with damage and great loss” — Sin / warning
- **v11** “the centurion was more persuaded by the pilot and the captain of the ship than by what was being said by Paul” — Sin / warning
- **v13** “When a moderate south wind came up” — Time / place / contrast
- **v14** “a violent wind, called Euraquilo” — Time / place / contrast
- **v20** “all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned” — Sin / warning
- **v22** “keep up your courage” — Command / instruction
- **v22** “there will be no loss of life among you” — Promise / blessing
- **v23** “the God to whom I belong and whom I serve” — God — His character & actions
- **v24** “Do not be afraid, Paul” — Command / instruction
- **v24** “you must stand before Caesar” — Time / place / contrast
- **v24** “God has granted you all those who are sailing with you” — God — His character & actions
- **v25** “keep up your courage” — Command / instruction
- **v25** “I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told” — Promise / blessing
- **v29** “they cast four anchors from the stern and wished for daybreak” — Time / place / contrast
- **v31** “Unless these men remain in the ship, you yourselves cannot be saved” — Command / instruction
- **v34** “not a hair from the head of any of you will perish” — Promise / blessing
- **v35** “he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of all” — God — His character & actions
- **v37** “two hundred and seventy-six persons” — Time / place / contrast
- **v42** “The soldiers’ plan was to kill the prisoners” — Sin / warning
- **v43** “wanting to bring Paul safely through” — Promise / blessing
- **v44** “they all were brought safely to land” — Promise / blessing
- **v20** “saved” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v34** “preservation” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v43** “safely” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v33** “encouraging” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v34** “encourage” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v36** “encouraged” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · ACTS 27:20

"Since neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm was assailing us, from then on ⚠all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned."

FIGURE · THE VOYAGE TO ROME



Follow the gold line from Caesarea to Fair Havens, the red line of the storm's fourteen-day drift to Malta, and the maroon line on to Puteoli and up the Appian Way to Rome.

Setting. Late in the sailing season ("even the fast was already over," v9), Paul and other prisoners are handed to Julius, a centurion of the Augustan cohort, and sail from Caesarea (v1). Luke ("we") and Aristarchus go with him (v2). The route runs Sidon — the lee of Cyprus — Myra in Lycia, where they board an Alexandrian grain ship (vv3–6) — Cnidus — the lee of Crete — Fair Havens (vv7–8). Against Paul's warning they try for Phoenix (vv9–13), are

caught by Euraquilo (v14), and drift fourteen days across the Sea of Adria (v27) to a beach on an unknown island (v39).

Structure:

- vv1–12 — **the voyage and the warning:** Julius and the prisoners (v1); Sidon, friends and care (v3); Myra and the Alexandrian ship (vv5–6); slow sailing to Fair Havens (vv7–8); "the voyage was now dangerous" — Paul's warning (vv9–10); the centurion trusts the pilot and captain; the majority decides for Phoenix (vv11–12).
- vv13–26 — **the storm and the angel:** a moderate south wind (v13); Euraquilo (vv14–15); Clauda, the boat, the cables, the sea anchor (vv16–17); cargo, then tackle, overboard (vv18–19); no sun or stars — "all hope ... abandoned" (v20); Paul stands up: "keep up your courage" (vv21–22); the angel: "Do not be afraid, Paul ... God has granted you all" (vv23–24); "I believe God" (v25); "we must run aground on a certain island" (v26).
- vv27–38 — **the fourteenth night:** soundings, twenty and fifteen fathoms (vv27–28); four anchors from the stern (v29); the sailors' escape attempt (v30); "Unless these men remain in the ship" — the ropes cut (vv31–32); "take some food ... not a hair ... will perish" (vv33–34); bread and thanks before all (v35); all encouraged; 276 persons (vv36–37); the wheat thrown out (v38).
- vv39–44 — **the wreck and the rescue:** a bay with a beach (v39); anchors cast off, rudders loosed, foresail up (v40); a reef where two seas met; the stern breaks up (v41); the soldiers' plan to kill the prisoners (v42); the centurion stops it — swimmers first, then planks (vv43–44); "they all were brought safely to land" (v44).

Repeated words, with counts:

- "ship / ship's" ×17 — vv2, 6, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 19, 22, 30 (×2), 31, 32, 37, 38, 39, 44.
- "sail / sailed / sailing" ×11 — vv1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 (×2), 8, 13, 21, 24.
- "day / days / daybreak" ×9 — vv3, 7, 18, 19, 20, 29, 33 (×2), 39; "night / midnight" ×3 — vv23, 27 (×2); "fourteenth" ×2 — vv27, 33.
- "Paul" ×9 — vv1, 3, 9, 11, 21, 24, 31, 33, 43; "sea" ×9 — vv2, 4, 5, 12, 17, 27, 30, 38, 40.
- "food / eat / eating / eaten / bread" ×8 — vv21, 33 (×2), 34, 35 (×2), 36, 38.
- "all" ×7 — vv20, 24, 33, 35, 36, 37, 44.
- "wind(s)" ×6 — vv4, 7, 13, 14, 15, 40.
- "saved / preservation / safely" ×5 — vv20, 31, 34, 43, 44; "escape" ×2 — vv30, 42.
- "courage / encourage(d/ing)" ×5 — vv22, 25, 33, 34, 36.
- "anchor(s)" ×5 — vv13, 17, 29, 30, 40; "centurion" ×5 — vv1, 6, 11, 31, 43; "land" ×5 — vv14, 27, 39, 43, 44.
- "damage / loss" ×5 — vv10 (×2), 21 (×2), 22.
- "God" ×4 — vv23, 24, 25, 35; "Crete" ×4 — vv7, 12, 13, 21; "soldiers" ×3 — vv31, 32, 42.

Contrasts: Paul's warning ⟷ the pilot, the captain and the majority (vv10–12). A moderate south wind ⟷ a violent wind (vv13–14). All hope abandoned ⟷ "keep up your courage" (vv20, 22). Loss of the ship ⟷ no loss of life (v22). Sailors escaping ⟷ "Unless these men remain" (vv30–31). Fourteen days without food ⟷ bread and thanksgiving (vv33–35). The prow stuck fast ⟷ the stern broken up (v41). Soldiers who would kill ⟷ a centurion who would save (vv42–43).

Shape of the chapter: a slow start (1–12), a long fall (13–20), a word from heaven at the bottom (21–26), and then everything climbs back toward land (27–44). The turning point is a prisoner standing up in the middle of the ship.

Chapter theme (my words): God's promise to bring Paul to Rome does not keep him out of the storm; it carries him through it. When every human means is gone, Paul believes God's word, keeps the men doing their part, gives thanks in the dark, and every soul on board is brought safely to land.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · ACTS 27:31

"Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, "Unless these men remain in the ship, you yourselves cannot be saved.""

FIGURE · THE PROMISE AND THE MEANS

THE PROMISE AND THE MEANS · ACTS 27:22–44

WHAT GOD PROMISED		WHAT THEY STILL HAD TO DO	
v22	"no loss of life among you, but only of the ship"	v31	keep the sailors in the ship: "Unless these men remain …"
v24	"God has granted you all those who are sailing with you"	v34	eat: "take some food, for this is for your preservation"
v26	"we must run aground on a certain island"	v38	lighten the ship: the wheat into the sea
v34	"not a hair from the head of any of you will perish"	vv43–44	swim, or ride planks and pieces of the ship to land

"And so it happened that they all were brought safely to land" (v44) — the promise kept, through the means

God's promise on the left was certain; the duties on the right were still required. Paul never treats one as a reason to skip the other.

Was Paul's warning prophecy or seamanship (v10)? Guzik: Paul "did not necessarily speak here as a prophet of God, but perhaps as an experienced traveler on the Mediterranean" — he had been shipwrecked three times already (2 Cor 11:25). Henry hears more: the centurion was "governed more by human prudence than by divine revelation." Note that Paul's first word predicted loss of life (v10); the angel's later word promised none (v22). God gave more than Paul had expected — which fits Guzik's reading of v10 as judgment and vv23–24 as revelation.

Why did God let His obedient servant sail into a storm? Jonah's storm came because he ran; Paul's came while he was going where God sent him (23:11). The angel's "must" covered both Caesar and the reef (vv24, 26). Sproul's sermon centers on Paul's "confidence in God's sovereign hand to bring him through the tempest at sea." Obedience is not insurance against storms; it is the assurance of God's presence in them.

"God has granted you all" (v24). The phrase suggests Paul had been praying for the people on board. Henry: "As God had saved all in the ship for Paul's sake, so here the centurion saves all the prisoners for his sake." One man's faithfulness became the reason for 275 rescues.

If the promise was certain, why must the sailors stay (v31)? Because God ordained the means along with the end. The promise of v24 did not make the sailors, the food or the cut ropes unnecessary; it made them effective. Spurgeon: "When we have done our best and can make no headway, we had better commit our vessel to the care of God." Guzik: "Paul knew two reasons why they had to stay together."

Was the meal of v35 the Lord's Supper? Luke uses the words of the upper room — took bread, gave thanks, broke, ate (Luke 22:19). Guzik sees "hints that Paul regarded this meal as communion at the Lord's Table for the Christians present." Most of the company were pagans and the meal was for "preservation" (v34), so it is at least a grace said before everyone; I hold Guzik's suggestion loosely.

Believing God (v25). Spurgeon: "It is a grand thing to believe God when the winds are out." Guzik: "Paul believed God when there was nothing else to believe." Henry: "for I believe God, and depend upon his word." Faith here is not a feeling about the storm; it is trust in what God said about the outcome.

Word study (Greek):

- **admonish / urge — *paraineō* (G3867):** only Acts 27:9, 22 in the NT.
- **the fast — *nēsteia* (G3521):** the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:29–30; 23:27).
- **Euraquilo — *Eurakylōn* (G2148):** a northeaster; KJV "Euroclydon" from later manuscripts.
- **keep up your courage — *euthymeō* (G2114):** to be in good heart; vv22, 25.
- **serve — *latreuō* (G3000):** worship-service; "whom I serve" (v23).
- **must — *dei* (G1163):** vv24, 26; *edei* "ought" in v21.
- **saved — *sōzō* (G4982); preservation — *sōtēria* (G4991):** vv20, 31, 34.
- **encouraging — *parakaleō* (G3870):** vv33–34.
- **gave thanks — *eucharisteō* (G2168):** v35; 28:15.
- **anchors — *ankyra* (G45):** vv29, 30, 40; Heb 6:19.
- **bring safely through — *diasōzō* (G1295):** 27:43, 44; 28:1, 4.

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **The prisoner is the freest man on board** (Spurgeon: "the observed of all").
2. **Experts and majorities can both be wrong** (vv11–12; Henry).
3. **A soft south wind is not a sign from God** (v13).
4. **God's "must" included a shipwreck** (vv24, 26).
5. **Belonging comes before serving** (v23; Guzik).
6. **Believe God, not merely in God** (v25; Spurgeon).
7. **Promise and means are not rivals** (vv24, 31).
8. **Thanksgiving in the dark** (v35).
9. **Saved for another's sake** (Henry).
10. **Anchors hold you till daylight** (vv29, 40; Heb 6:19).

Cross-references: Lev 16:29–30; 23:27; Ps 107:23–30; Isa 43:2; Jonah 1:4–15; Luke 8:22–25; 21:18; 22:19; Acts 1:8; 19:21; 23:11; 25:11–12; 26:32; Rom 1:15; 2 Cor 1:4; 11:25; Heb 6:19; 1 Pet 3:20.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · ACTS 27:23–24

"For this very night an angel of △ the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me, saying, '▯ Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar; and behold, ☆ God has granted you all those who are sailing with you.'"

FIGURE · FOURTEEN DAYS IN THE STORM



Read down the line: each day takes something more away — cargo, tackle, sun and stars, hope — until a word from God stands in the middle and everything after it moves toward land.

Example to follow — the man who stood up (v21). Paul was the prisoner, the one nobody listened to at Fair Havens. When everyone else had given up, he stood up in the middle of them and spoke a word from God. Some of the men I serve are written off the same way — the inmate, the guy with the record. God can make that man the steadiest person on the ship. I want to be that man for my group this week, and I want to stop writing other men off.

Sin to confess — trusting the pilot over the Word. I have done what the centurion did: listened to the expert, the majority, the convenient breeze, when God had already said "don't" (vv11–13). I confess choosing comfort and consensus over obedience, and calling an easy start a green light.

Truth to face — I belong to Him. "The God to whom I belong and whom I serve" (v23). Before I am a servant I am His. My service has failed plenty of times; my belonging has not. That is why Paul could stand in a storm without fear.

Command to obey — keep up your courage, and stay in the ship. God told Paul, "Do not be afraid" (v24), and Paul passed it on: "keep up your courage" (vv22, 25). But he also said, "Unless these men remain in the ship, you yourselves cannot be saved" (v31). For me that means I don't jump into the lifeboat when it gets hard — I stay in the Word, stay with my brothers, stay in the group, eat what God puts in front of me.

Promise to trust — not a hair will perish. God "granted" Paul every life on board (v24), and "they all were brought safely to land" (v44). The ship was lost; the people were not. I may lose cargo and tackle this year, but God has not lost me. "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul" (Heb 6:19).

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Paul's warning was set aside because the experts and the majority wanted to go (vv10–12). Where am I tempted to follow the crowd or the "pilot" over what God has plainly said? (27:9–12) *Many will show respect to good ministers that will not take their advice (Henry).*
2. A moderate south wind made them think they had their way (v13). When has an easy start convinced me that God approved a decision I had already made? (27:13–15) *The gentle breeze led straight into Euraquilo.*
3. "The God to whom I belong and whom I serve" (v23). Which comes first for me — belonging to God or serving Him — and why does the order matter? (27:23–24) *God never forgets those who belong to Him and serve Him (Guzik).*
4. Paul said, "I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told" before anything changed (v25). What promise of God do I need to say out loud while my storm is still blowing? (27:22–25; Heb 6:19) *It is a grand thing to believe God when the winds are out (Spurgeon).*
5. God promised every life, yet Paul said, "Unless these men remain in the ship, you yourselves cannot be saved" (v31). Where am I using God's promises as an excuse to skip the means He gave me — His Word, His people, the group? (27:24, 31–34) *The certainty of the end does not cancel the duty of the hour.*
6. Paul gave thanks for bread in front of 275 frightened people (v35). Who is watching how I act in my storm, and what do they see? (27:33–36; 2 Cor 1:4) *He had been comforted of the Lord and with this consolation he could cheer others (Spurgeon).*

Worship. The Lord who stood by Paul in the barracks stood by him again in the storm. He rules the wind He did not stop, keeps His word to the last hair, saves through the sea and not around it, and brings His servants exactly where He said they must go.

Prayer. Lord, I belong to You, and I want to serve You. When the sun and stars are gone and hope is slipping, help me say with Paul, "I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told." Forgive me for trusting the pilot and the majority over Your Word. Keep me in the ship with my brothers, teach me to give thanks in the dark, and make me a steady man for the people sailing with me. Bring us all safely to land. Amen.

Scripture: New American Standard Bible® (NASB), © 1960–1995 The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. · Teacher material summarized from David Guzik (Enduring Word), R.C. Sproul (Ligonier), C.H. Spurgeon and Matthew Henry — see Acts-27-Deep-Dive-Four-Voices.pdf for sources. · Importable: the companion .md carries the berean-study block.