

SHIPWRECK AND SNAKES

Summer 2022, Acts 27:1-28:10

September 11, 2022

"So keep your faith, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island."

Acts 27:25-26

Paul and his companions take to the sea

When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment. ² We boarded a ship from Adramyttium about to sail for ports along the coast of the province of Asia, and we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us.

Acts 27:1-2

1. Julius is Luke's example for what happens when I reject and accept God's word
2. Luke and Aristarchus seem to have travelled all the way to Rome (Acts 28:16; Colossians 4:10)

Paul's three "speeches" on the ship (or, WDJJ)

⁹ Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was after the Fast. So Paul warned them, ¹⁰ "Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also." ¹¹ But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship. ¹² Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided that we should sail on, hoping to reach Phoenix and winter there.

Acts 27:9-12

²¹ After the men had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. ²² But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. ²³ Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me ²⁴ and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' ²⁵ So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. ²⁶ Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island."

Acts 27:21-26

³³ Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. "For the last fourteen days," he said, "you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food—you haven't eaten anything. ³⁴ Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head." ³⁵ After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. ³⁶ They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. ³⁷ Altogether there were 276 of us on board. ³⁸ When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.

Acts 27

1. How does Julius respond to Paul? (HDJRTP would be too long on a bracelet)

Speech 1: Julius rejects Paul and destruction looms

Speech 2: No one immediately rejects Paul, but only the soldiers trust Paul (27:31-32)

Speech 3: Everyone heeds Paul (they all eat, 27:36), and Julius now trusts Paul (27:42-43)

2. Deliverance comes only after the soldiers leave the lifeboat behind
3. Doug's question: Why is it so important to trust the God Paul serves?

Shipwreck and safety

⁴² The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping. ⁴³ But the centurion wanted to spare Paul's life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. ⁴⁴ The rest were to get there on planks or on pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land in safety.

Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. ² The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. ³ Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. ⁴ When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live." ⁵ But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. ⁶ The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead, but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

⁷ There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and for three days entertained us hospitably. ⁸ His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. ⁹ When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. ¹⁰ They honored us in many ways and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed.

Acts 27:42-28:10

1. Good seamanship and good leadership will always matter
2. This rescue story illustrates the importance of common grace—and the “natural” (part of the image of God?) response to crisis
3. Paul never missed an opportunity for ministry!

Lessons from a shipwreck

1. This powerful story forces us to acknowledge Luke's theme: NOTHING will stop the gospel!

¹⁰ *When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: "I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation; so I gladly make my defense. ¹¹ You can easily verify that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship.*

Acts 24:10-16 (see Spurgeon's sermon and Acts 26:8)

2. God uses human skill for his purposes

²⁹ *Do you see a man skilled in his work?*

He will serve before kings;

he will not serve before obscure men.

Proverbs 22:29 (see also Exodus 31:1-11; Daniel 1:17-20)

3. There is a blessing to being a blessing

¹⁰ *They honored us in many ways and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed.*

Acts 28:10

4. Prayer can be an "organic" way to share the gospel

³⁵ *After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. ³⁶ They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves.*

Acts 27:35 (see 28:8-9)

5. Am I going to heed Paul's witness?

³² *"We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers ³³ he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus."*

Acts 13:32-33

²² *"But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen—²³ that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles."*

Acts 26

Resources for further studies in Acts

The Bible Project team has great stuff on Acts at <https://open.life.church/items/179224-poster-jpg>

Spurgeon has several sermons on texts in Acts which are available at

<https://www.biblebb.com/brefindex/act.htm>

Tim Keller has a wonderful article at Christianity Today (April, 2021) on hope and resurrection at <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2021/april-web-only/timothy-keller-hope-times-fear-resurrection-better-world.html> Keller also addresses the impact of the resurrection on his own diagnosis of pancreatic cancer in *The Atlantic* at

<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/03/tim-keller-growing-my-faith-face-death/618219/>

This Gospel Coalition “Why the Resurrection Changes Everything” article includes a survey of many of the key resurrection texts: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/why-the-resurrection-changes-everything/>

Peter Krol offers an interesting take on the structure of Acts 27 at

<https://www.knowableword.com/2021/09/03/what-should-we-make-of-pauls-shipwreck-narrative/>

D. A. Carson has a wonderful essay from Acts 17 on “Worldview Evangelism” at

<https://www.monergism.com/athens-revisited-exegetical-study-acts-17-da-carson>

Deffinbaugh’s Acts messages are at <https://bible.org/series/studies-book-acts> His sermon on Acts 27 is at <https://bible.org/seriespage/shipwreck-acts-27-1-44>

Allstair Begg has a sermon in this text which focuses on the how God works through the circumstances of Paul’s life at <https://www.truthforlife.org/resources/sermon/all-things-god-works/>

For those who want to dig deeper into the worldview clash at Mars Hill, I recommend Andrew Klavan’s challenging “Speaking Truth into Modern Culture” at <https://youtu.be/Cckiti7as44>

John Stott’s *The Spirit, The Church and the World: The Message of Acts* (IVP, 1990) and F. F. Bruce’s work: *New Testament History* (Doubleday, 1980) and *The Book of the Acts* (Eerdmans, 1984). For this passage, I also like Kistemaker’s commentary (Baker Book House, 1990).

Harry Boer, *That My House May Be Filled* (Eerdmans, 1957)



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EXAMPLES OF FAITHFULNESS TO KING JESUS:

- SHARING THE GOOD NEWS IN WORD & ACTION
- FORMING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES WHERE PEOPLE ARE EQUALS
- TRUSTING IN THE POWER & GUIDANCE OF THE SPIRIT

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PAUL'S LETTERS AND MISSIONARY JOURNEYS					
YEAR A.D.	MAJOR EVENTS	ACTS	PERIOD	LETTERS	
34	Conversion, Damascus, Arabia	9	3 years - Arabia		
37	Jerusalem, Tarsus, Syria, Cilicia				
46-47	Antioch, Jerusalem	11	1 year - Antioch		
48-49	First Missionary Journey and Antioch	13-14		Galatians	
50	Jerusalem Council and Antioch	15			
51-53	Second Missionary Journey	16-18	18 months - Corinth	1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians	
53-54	Antioch				
54-57	Third Missionary Journey	19-21	3 years - Ephesus	1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Romans	
57	Jerusalem Arrest	22-23			
57-59	Caesarea Prisoner	24-26	2 years		
59-60	Journey to Rome	27-28			
60-67 circa	Rome House Arrest	28	5-7 years circa	Ephesians Colossians Philemon Philippians 1 Timothy Titus 2 Timothy	