

EPISODE NO. 319

Acts 27:1-44

They Set Sail for Italy

1 It was decided that we would sail for Italy. A Roman army officer named Julius guarded Paul and some other prisoners. Julius served in the Emperor's regiment. 2 We went aboard a ship which was from the city of Adramyttium. It was ready to sail for ports along the coast of Asia. Then we set sail. Aristarchus went with us. He was a man from the city of Thessalonica in Macedonia. 3 The next day, we came to the city of Sidon. Julius was very kind to Paul. He gave Paul freedom to go visit Paul's friends who took care of his needs. 4 We left the city of Sidon. We sailed south of the island of Cyprus, because the wind was blowing against us. 5 We sailed across the sea next to Cilicia and Pamphylia. Then we came to the town of Myra in Lycia. 6 In Myra the Roman army officer found a ship from the city of Alexandria. This ship was going to Italy. So he put us on it.

7 We sailed slowly for many days. It was hard for us to reach the town of Cnidus, because the wind was blowing against us. We could not go any further that way. So, we sailed past the south side of the island of Crete, near the town of Salmone. 8 We sailed along the coast, but sailing was hard. Then we came to a place called Safe Harbors. The town of Lasea was near there.

9 However, we had lost much time. It was now dangerous to sail, because it was after mid-September. So, Paul warned them, 10 "Men, I can see that there will be much destruction on this trip. The ship and the things on this ship will be lost. Even our lives may be lost!" 11 But the captain of the ship and its owner didn't agree with Paul. The Roman army officer believed what they said, rather than what Paul said. 12 That harbor was not a good place for the ship to stay for the winter. Therefore, most of the men decided that the ship should leave there. The men hoped that we could go to Phoenix. The ship could stay there for the winter. (Phoenix was a city on the island of Crete. It had a harbor which faced southwest and northwest.)

The Storm

13 Then a good wind began to blow from the south. The men on the ship thought: "This is the wind we wanted, and now we have it!" So they pulled up anchor. They sailed very close to the island of Crete, 14 but then a very strong wind named "the

Northeaster” came down from the island. 15 This wind took the ship and carried it away. The ship couldn’t hold against the wind. So, we stopped trying to resist and let the wind blow us. 16 We went below a small island named Cauda. Then we were able to bring in the lifeboat. (It was very hard to do this.) 17 After the men took the lifeboat in, they tied ropes around the ship to hold the ship together. The men were afraid that the ship would hit the sandbanks of Syrtis. So, they lowered the sail and let the wind carry the ship along. 18 The next day, the storm was blowing us so hard that the men threw some things out of the ship to make the ship lighter. 19 A day later, with their own hands, they threw out the ship’s equipment. 20 For many days we couldn’t see the sun or the stars to guide us. The storm was very bad. We lost all hope of staying alive — we thought we would die.

21 For a long time the men didn’t eat. Then one day Paul stood up before them and said, “Men, I told you not to leave Crete. You should have listened to me. Then you would not have had all of this trouble and loss. 22 But now, I am telling you to cheer up. None of you will die! However, the ship will be lost. 23 Last night, an angel came to me from the one true God. This is the God I worship. I am His. 24 God’s angel said, ‘Paul, don’t be afraid! You must stand before Caesar. Listen, God has promised to give you something good — He will save the lives of all those sailing with you.’ 25 So, men, cheer up! I trust in God. Everything will happen just as His angel told me. 26 But, we will run aground on an island.”

27 On the 14th night, we were floating around in the Adriatic Sea. About midnight, the sailors sensed that we were close to land. 28 They threw a rope into the water with a weight on the end of it. They found that the water was 120 feet deep. They went a little further and threw the rope in again. It was 90 feet deep. 29 The sailors were afraid that we would hit the rocks. So, they threw four anchors into the water from the back of the ship. Then they prayed for daylight to come. 30 Some of the sailors wanted to leave the ship. They lowered the lifeboat to the water, trying to make the other men think that they were throwing out more anchors from the front of the ship. 31 But Paul told the Roman army officer and the other soldiers, “If these men don’t stay in the ship, then your lives cannot be saved!” 32 Then the soldiers cut the ropes and let the lifeboat fall into the water.

33 Just before dawn, Paul started persuading everyone to eat something. He said, “For the past two weeks you have been waiting and watching. You have not eaten anything for 14 days. 34 Now, I beg you, eat something! You need it to stay alive. Not one of you will lose even one hair of your head.” 35 After he said this, Paul took some bread and, in front of them all, thanked God for it. He broke off a piece and began to eat. 36 All of the men felt better. They all started to eat, too. 37 (There were 276 people on the ship.) 38 We ate all we wanted. Then they began to make the ship lighter by throwing the wheat into the sea.

The Shipwreck

39 When daylight came, the sailors saw land, but they did not know where we were. They noticed a bay with a beach. The sailors wanted to sail the ship to the beach, if they could. 40 So, the men cut the ropes to the anchors and left the anchors in the sea. At the same time, the men untied the ropes which were holding the rudders. Then the men raised the front sail into the wind and sailed toward the beach. 41 But the ship hit a sandbank and the front of the ship stuck there; the ship could not move. Then the big waves began to break up the back of the ship.

42 The soldiers decided to kill the prisoners, so that none of the prisoners could swim away and escape, 43 but the Roman army officer wanted to let Paul live. Therefore, he didn't allow the soldiers to kill the prisoners. Julius ordered the people who could swim to jump into the water and swim toward land. 44 Others used wooden boards or pieces from the ship. This is how all of the people got to land. No one died.