

FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS

A LOOK AT THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Acts 27:1 – 28:10

After several years of house arrest, at the mercy of various governors and kings in Judea, moved between Jerusalem and Caesarea, Paul finally has his request granted, and is allowed to take his appeal to Rome, where, as a Roman citizen, he has the right to appeal to Caesar. He embarks upon an eventful journey!

Acts 27 begins by saying, “When it was decided that WE would sail for Italy”, suggesting that Luke is once again with Paul. The details recorded along the way, especially when, after leaving Crete they endure a great storm, certainly seem to show that this is an eye witness account.

Somewhere, after the storm had been raging for many days, Paul spoke to his shipmates to reassure them:

God Stood by Me “An angel of the God whose I am and whom I have served stood beside me and said, ‘Do not be afraid’.” This is the third recorded vision that Paul has had – each time he has been urged to stand firm and complete the task that God has entrusted to him. So the angel reaffirmed God’s love and God’s plan for Paul to testify in Rome. He could be certain that they would survive the storm.

So why is this story recorded in such detail?

STORMS CANNOT HIDE GOD’S FACE God never loses track of us. Things are never so bad that God cannot find us. In the midst of our storms we must remember that God is near. We may not sense Him. We may not see evidence of His nearness. However, God is not far away. He never loses sight of one of His children.

STORMS GIVE US OPPORTUNITY TO WITNESS TO AND SERVE OTHERS Trials are often used by God to refine our character. These times of trial also give us unique opportunities to testify to the Lord’s great faithfulness. It is easy to dismiss the pious words of one who has never been tested. It is much more difficult to dismiss the one who remains faithful even in great affliction.

In the storms of life God often provides a platform for us to share the faith with those who would not listen under any other circumstance.

When we go through the problems of life, we must remember that God is always with us. We are called to persevere in prayer, trust God’s word, and keep our eyes fixed firmly on Jesus. We cannot avoid the storms of life, but we can make sure we survive them by keeping ourselves firmly rooted and grounded in God’s love.

In verse 27, we learn that the storm lasts for fourteen days. They finally come to ground on Malta, where the local residents show 'unusual kindness' to their visitors. There's a strange story in which Paul survives an encounter with a viper and he then heals the chief official's father. These events serve to cement his relationship with the local people, and many sick people are brought to him for prayer. Even whilst travelling in captivity, Paul exercises a considerable ministry.

What we see in this story is the guiding hand of God controlling events. Paul could have been killed the storm. He could easily have been killed by the snake, or indeed by the Roman guards who were fearful that the prisoners would take this chance to escape. But God is in control. It is His will that Paul should get to Rome, and nothing can prevent that from happening.