

“KEEP UP YOUR COURAGE, I BELIEVE GOD”

[Subtitle: “By the time Paul gets to Phoenix”]

Acts 27:9-26

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INTRODUCTION

What possible authority and influence can a prisoner have over the soldiers in command of him, and over the expert pilot, Captain, and sailors, on the ship that transports him? Generally none! But this is an unusual situation. God is at work in a very special way. Although this is a story of an actual historical event, we can glean numerous spiritual truths from the details of this account.

Life presents us with many powerful dilemmas. We face many traumatic situations but when we know God, serve God, and trust God, we can take courage.

KEEP UP YOUR COURAGE—BELIEVE IN GOD.

- I. FOLLOWING THE WORLD’S ADVICE—NOT THE MAN OF GOD (9-12)
 - A. Delay at Fair Havens
 - Time—After October 5 in 59 AD, time of Day of Atonement—Sailing risky after Sept. 15; prohibited after Nov. 11.
 - What was the time spent in?—maybe waiting for more favorable winds.
 - B. Warning by Paul—Stay put; damage and loss will occur (10)
 - Cargo
 - Ship
 - Our lives (this he said by inference, not by revelation)
 - C. Experts weighed in—pilot (steersman) and captain (ship owner) (11)
 - D. Centurion had the final choice—follow the experts, not Paul (11)
 - E. Choice to go to Phoenix (12)
 - Not the choicest accommodations at Fair Havens
 - The harbor too open to winter winds
- II. DECEPTIVE SIGNS OF THIS WORLD OFTEN LEAD TO RUIN (13-17)
 - A. A moderate south wind—alluring them to leave their shelter and sail along S. Crete (13)
 - B. Broadsided by Euroquilo (Nor’easter—14)
 - C. Driven along by the wind (15—cf. II Pet. 1:21)
 - D. Rescuing the small boat (16)
 - E. Undergirding the ship’s hull and lowering the mast and main sail (17)
- III. NO GUIDANCE IN THE SEA OF LIFE (18-21a)
 - A. Jettisoning some of the cargo(18)
 - B. Throwing over the tackle (19)
 - C. No navigation system—sun or stars (20)

- D. Loss of all hope of salvation (20)
- E. Not able to eat for a long time (21)

IV. CLEAR DIRECTION BY THE MAN OF GOD (21b-26)

- A. Penalty for ignoring the direction of the man of God (21b)
- B. Take courage—no loss of life, only a destroyed ship (22)
- C. Divine message through an angel (23-24)
 - 1. From the God to whom Paul belongs
 - 2. From the God whom Paul serves
 - 3. Driving away fear—not mainly for himself, but esp. for them
 - 4. Paul will stand before Caesar (cf. 23:11)—like the angel had stood before him.
 - 5. God had graciously given to Paul the lives of all those on board (24b).
- D. Keep up your Courage (25-26)
 - 1. **I believe God**
 - 2. **It will happen exactly as God has said**
 - 3. We will go through grounding and shipwreck (26).

CONCLUSION

We can find ourselves in some very messy and violent storms in life. The answers are not found in the wisdom of men; human wisdom will lead us astray and will only make matters worse. Soon we will find ourselves at our wit's end and will become shipwrecked.

The God whom we serve has a plan for our lives and will guide us through his servants who use the divine revelation of Scripture. We will not necessarily hear from an angel! The Lord **carried along** his apostles and prophets through inspiration (II Pet. 1:21) so that we would not need to be carried along through dramatic storms of life.

Do you belong to God? Do you serve God? Then **do not be afraid!**

God will even grant us the lives – the saving of souls – of those to whom we minister.

Keep Courage, brethren. For we believe that “it will turn out exactly as” God has told us in His word.

KEEP UP YOUR COURAGE—BELIEVE IN GOD.

[Sub-proposition: Don't try to get to Phoenix—you'll be in trouble! ☺]