

## The Storm

Smooth sailing lasted until verse 14. ACTS 27:14 *But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.* Let me give you a different translation of this verse that perhaps better explains what was taking place here. "But before long a furious north-east wind (of the character of a typhoon) coming down from the mountains of Crete, burst upon us."

No where else in scripture is this word "Euroclydon" found. Interpreters have been much perplexed about the meaning of this word "Euroclydon." One translator thinks this word "Euroclydon" come from two Greek words, "euros" meaning wind, and "kludon" meaning a wave. The end result is the wind agitating and exciting the waves. There is a modern day word describing this wind called "levanter," which sometimes is spelled "levante." This kind of wind is common in the Mediterranean Sea in the spring, and in the fall, and has been recorded at speeds up to fifty miles per hour. These are usually unpredictable and gusty winds blowing from the north-east, east, and south-east. Such winds can double in speed if forced through a mountain valley, or canyon. If one knows how to read the clouds, such a wind could be predicted, that is if clouds are visible. Once such a storm comes up it is usually accompanied by clouds, fog, and blowing rain. Needless to say miserable conditions to be out in. And since the "Euroclydon" is often gusty, and shifty, it has been known to shred sails on ships. Don't get the idea that today's weather forecasters could predict these winds either. I remember one time when in Houston looking at the weather forecast on the 10pm news, and noting nothing unusual was predicted weather wise. The next morning I turned on the television as I was getting ready to go to work, and heard the word "hurricane" mentioned. I wondered in my mind where there was a "hurricane," since no mention was made of one nine hours before. So I watched the weather report a little closer and found that a hurricane had developed in the Gulf of Mexico overnight just a couple of hundred miles south of Houston, and was now less than twelve hours from coming on shore! The news man asked the weather guy, "how come you weather guys didn't see this coming last night?" The weather man answered that none of their weather models forecasted the low pressure system to the south developing into a hurricane as it passed over the warmer gulf water. As I remember this was just a level one hurricane, which impacted south and west of Houston, not causing any more damage than a severe line of thunderstorms would. The point of mentioning all of this is for us to remember that no matter how smart we think we are, it still is the Lord *...who hath gathered the wind in his fists...* (PROVERBS 30:4). The Lord had spoken to Paul, and warned him to tell those on the ship *...Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives...* in verse 10, and now Paul words were beginning to sink in.

Imagine the effort the sailors were now putting forth trying to get this ship pointed toward land as the erratic strong winds carried it further, and further away from shore. They hadn't yet got to the point found in verse 20 that *...all hope that we should be saved was then taken away...* but with each passing minute Phenice was getting further, and further away. In verse 15 they got to the place where they could no longer steer the ship. ACTS 27:15 *And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive.* The word "caught" here means: to seize by force and carry away, or to catch or lay hold of (one so that he is no longer his own master). The Lord was beginning to show all on board this ship that He was the Master, the Master of the winds, but more important, the Master who wanted to be in charge of their lives.

Jesus had to show His disciples the very same thing. We read this in LUKE 8:22 *Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. 23 But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy. 24 And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. 25 And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey*

him. Too bad Jesus disciples didn't yet believe PROVERBS 30:4, which we quoted part of above: *Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?*

Could the Lord have calmed the stormy sea those on Paul's ship were now faced with? Sure he could have, as we have just noted, but God had a far greater plan in mind here. He can keep you from the storm, as well as keep you in the storm. HEBREWS 13:8 *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.* Perhaps you have noticed this too, the Lord doesn't necessarily have to do the same thing twice the same way. In fact He seems to get a great deal of pleasure in performing the same miracle different ways. Jesus can not be put in a box, but He can still get the job done. Just for example let's note the different way Jesus healed eyes of the blind. MATTHEW 9:27 *And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.* 28 *And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.* 29 *Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.* 30 *And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. ...MATTHEW 20:29 And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.* 30 *And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.* 31 *And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.* 32 *And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? 33 They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.* 34 *So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.* In these two examples Jesus healed the blind eyes the same way, by touching their eyes, but He didn't have to do it the same way every time. ...MARK 8:22 *And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.* 23 *And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.* 24 *And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.* 25 *After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. ...MARK 10:46 And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.* 47 *And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.* 48 *And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.* 49 *And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.* 50 *And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.* 51 *And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.* 52 *And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way. ....JOHN 9:1 And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.* 2 *And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? 3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.* 4 *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.* 5 *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.* 6 *When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,* 7 *And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.* The point we want to grasp here is that the Lord could calm the stormy sea, but he also can keep one safe in the stormy sea. Had the Lord calmed the stormy sea in ACTS 27, how many would have gave their hearts unto the Lord? No doubt not as many as did when He saved them after all hope that they should be saved was then taken away. We read this in MARK 7:37...*He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.* And might I add here from MATTHEW 15:31 *...when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.*

ACTS 27:15 *And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive.* When the soft south wind blew back in verse 13 the sailors must have thought they had Phenice made. They reasoned in their minds “what could possible go wrong.” Yet as we noted before they made their decisions without including God in their plans. Nor did they listen to God’s man on the scene, the Apostle Paul. Now they have got “caught” with their bad decision, which seemed like a good decision at first according to man’s reasoning. And they made their choice to sail by a democratic process where “the more part advised” (verse 12) to sail. Obviously they didn’t know PHILIPPIANS 4:6 for it had not yet been written: *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.* Certainly the Apostle Paul lived by this creed, and all full overcomers do too.

Thus all on board this Alexandrian ship were “caught” by the strong wind; were “caught” with their decision. Luke is the only author in scripture to use this particular Greek word sunarpazo {soon-ar-pad'-zo} (number 4884 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance) translated “caught,” which always speaks of a negative influence. It is found four times in scripture; four being the number that points to HUMAN WEAKNESS; MAN’S WEAKNESS; CREATION; and is an EARTHLY NUMBER. As we noted above, the word “caught” here means: to seize by force and carry away, or to catch or lay hold of (one so that he is no longer his own master). What “caught” this ship was the strong Euroclydon wind.

We see the goal the sailors had set of achieving Phenice fading with each passing minute. Three phases of fading hope are expressed here in verse 15. First they realized the ship was “caught” by a greater outside force than they could deal with. Second the sea men try to get the ship to tack into the wind, but we read here that the ship *...could not bear up into the wind... .* We can imagine how hard they were trying to get this ship to do what they wanted it to do, but each minute that passed brought them to the realization that their efforts were futile. Finally having given up hope of controlling the direction of the ship, the sailors had no other choice than we read here: *...we let her drive.* One translation here reads: “so we gave up and let her drive.” The word “drive” here in verse 15, and “driven” in verse 17 are the same word in the Greek, meaning carried with the force, and speed of the wind, unable to overcome it’s power. Good-bye Phenice, good-bye Crete, hello rough seas and destinations unknown.

With each passing verse from here through verse 20 we see a little more despair. ACTS 27:16 *And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat... .* Clauda is a little island south of Phenice, Crete. Clauda is found mentioned only this one time in the Bible, and means: “lame” “a lamentable voice.” Lamentable means grievous, distressing, expressing sorrow, mournful, thus we glimpse the mood of those on board this Alexandrian ship. They went under, or on the downwind side of this island called Clauda, and for a brief time experienced less wind. Thus they could begin securing items left on the deck of the ship, and retrieve the life boat that they had used to go back and forth to Lasea in. The reason they hadn’t secured the life boat as they left The fair havens was because they only planned on a short forty mile sail in smooth seas. Now we know that never happened, and it was time to get the life boat back on the ship. They didn’t want it banging up and down along side the ship, doing untold damage to both vessels, so they needed to properly stow it on board deck. However after towing the life boat in these rough seas for this period of time we can only assume that it now was nearly full of water. Thus the statement *...we had much work to come by the boat... .* By reclaiming the life boat, the crew was giving in to the fact that they weren’t going to shore any time soon.

Accepting this distressing news that they were not going to be able to reach land any time soon, we read of their preparing the ship for rough weather in ACTS 27:17 *Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.* An expounded translation of this verse reads: “and, after hoisting it on board, they used frapping-cables round the ship to reinforce it; and fearing they would run on the great sandbank near Africa, they lowered the mainsail, and let the ship drift.”

We talked about this frapping process briefly earlier. {Review page 965 of these notes} The ships of Paul’s day were prone to leaking in rough weather. To try and

prevent this from happening, undergirders, which simply were ropes for passing around the hull of a ship, were carried aboard most sea going vessels. Frapping involves four to six turns of large cable-laid rope is passed around the hull, or frame of a ship, to help support her in times of storms. The danger was that in times of severe storms these ancient ships were prone to be destroyed. These ropes, or cables were tightened with "helps," levers in other words. Look up this word "helps" used here is only found twice in scripture, and is number 996 in The Strong's Greek Concordance. The other time we find this same Greek word for "help" is in HEBREWS 4:16, which reads: *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* Certainly these on board Paul's ship here in ACTS 27 were in a desperate time of need here, and needed more "help" that ropes or cables could give. So we get the picture here of just how needy these 276 souls on board this ship were.

We also see some new found fears being expressed by the sailors here in verse 17 *...fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands,...* . Was this fear real or imagined? History records that the ancient sailors feared The Syrtis, or quicksand's, on the African coast to the southwest of Crete. There were two famous places the quicksand's could be found on the African coasts. One was called the Syrtis Major, lying near the coast of Cyrene. The other was known as the Syrtis Minor, located not far from Tripoli. These two locations were also famous for ship wrecks as the sands were covered by the sea, and many ship were lost after being stuck in this quicksand, especially in storms. Here is something else for us to note here about fear; these quicksand's were six hundred miles away! And the time sailing since the Euroclydon winds started in verse 14 was only about three to four hours! How fast deadly fear can grip us.

The last thing the sailors did here in verse 17 was to *...strake sail...* . There are about as many opinions as to what this meant exactly, as there are commentaries on this statement. Conybeare and Howson go to great lengths to explain what this phrase most likely means. They conclude that to *...strake sail...* means to take in the main sail, or cut it away, and set a much smaller sail with the intent of turning the ship into the wind as much as possible. Probably the ship would lie to one side or the other, preferably into the wind. Such action would have made it much easier to get the life boat on board, and would have put the ship in the best position to drift in a north westerly direction, drifting at approximately a mile and a half an hour. So we find the ship leaning to one side, probably the right, pointed north against the wind as much as possible, and drifting to the north west at about a mile and a half an hour, give or take a little here and there. This is all the control of the ship they were now going to get, *...and so were driven...* our text reads. We noted above that the Greek word of "drive" in verse 15 is the same word used here in verse 17 translated "driven," meaning carried with the force, and speed of the wind, unable to overcome it's power. There is a subtle difference we note here in Luke's tone, for in verse 15 he writes *...we let her drive.* Here in verse 17 Luke states *...and so were driven...* . In verse 15 Luke writes as if it was the sailors choice to let the ship drive into the wind. Here in verse 17 Luke shows that they had no other choices, had no further control of the ship, *...and so were driven...* carried with the force, and speed of the wind, unable to overcome it's power, drifting over the globe in a north westerly direction at approximately a mile and a half an hour, with no further control of direction, or destination. Thus in a twenty-four hour day they would drift about thirty-six miles, all the time bobbing up and down like a cork, while leaning hard into the wind. The distance from Claudia to Malta where they eventually ship wreck was about 477 miles. At the rate they were drifting this would take almost fourteen days, which is noted to be the case in verse 33.

One more point before considering verses 18-20, and in each succeeding verse we see more and more hopelessness expressed by the crew in their actions on board this ship. But sticking with their current situation here in verse 17 we must note that the ship is now listing at a severe angle in the water, most likely leaning considerably to the right. So what does all their cargo do? It shifts to the right side of the ship causing it to lean even more to the right. This leads to other problems, which begin to surface in verse 18.

It is interesting to note Luke's usage of the words "we," and "they" in this chapter. "We" in this chapter always includes Paul, Luke, and Aristarchus, and sometimes references everyone on board this ship. "They" in this chapter speaks of

different groups of people that didn't include Paul, Luke, and Aristarchus. Most of the time in this chapter "they" references the sailors, which is most likely the case here in verse 18. Sometimes in this chapter "they" references all on board the ship besides Paul, Luke, and Aristarchus, in which case would also include the Roman soldiers, and the other prisoners also being sent to Rome.

With this in mind, let's now look at verse 18. ACTS 27:18 *And we (everyone on board this ship) being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they (the shipmen, and maybe some soldiers) lightened the ship;...* . A whole day is consumed with this task of lightening the ship. Several reasons are speculated upon for their doing this. Luke tells us they were *...exceedingly tossed with a tempest...* so every wave of the sea was now crashing on deck, and any on deck of this ship were now getting soaked. Perhaps water was also getting below deck. Maybe even the ship itself had sprung some leaks, even though they had *...used helps, undergirding the ship...* in verse 17. So "they" must have concluded that there was more "they" could do to keep the ship more upright, and riding higher in the sea. Their choice here was to lighten the ship by casting some of their cargo into the sea. The same thing was done on Jonah's ship in JONAH 1:5 *Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them.* And isn't that the way we all feel in times of intense trial, that is to try and do something to lighten our load? If "they" on this ship would have heeded Paul's admonishment in verse 10, "they" wouldn't have been faced with this trial in the first place. Now the strong winds, and turbulent seas are causing them to come face to face with harm and loss, even loss of life!

Verse 19 takes us to the next day, where all aboard this storm tossed ship face the third day of this intensifying storm. Not a pleasant prospect. ACTS 27:19 *And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.* First note that Luke again uses the little word "we," here meaning all on board this ship. The strains on those aboard this ship both physically, and mentally were numerous. Most were getting to the point of being wore out physically, and rapidly getting to that point mentally. Couple with that they all were being tossed about, some were sea sick, all were getting wet, some were wondering if they would ever see the sun again, were wondering if they would ever be dry again, all were wondering when the storm would end, and some were even wondering if they would even survive until tomorrow. As their hopes continued to fade we find here in verse 19 that they were still trying to lighten the ship by casting out *...the tackling of the ship.* They began to get rid of their extra sails, and ropes, and the ships furniture, tables, beds, chests, baggage, and whatever equipment they could do without that carried weight. It is noted by Luke here that all aboard the ship helped in this effort. Probably the ship was slowly sinking, either by leaking, or by taking on more water than they could get rid of. Later in verse 38 after coming near land we find that they were able to further lighten the ship, so for now they had unloaded all that they figured they could afford to get rid of. By the end of the day we find the state of affairs of the majority on this ship to be that of confusion, anxiousness, aggravation, frustration, fatigue, perplexity, lost as sea, and quickly reaching the point of hopeless. Imagine now living like this for several more days. In verse 20 they all reach the point of never being saved from drowning in the sea.

ACTS 27:20 *And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.* We indicated earlier in this study how that there was no mention of God, Jesus, The Holy Ghost, or the Lord in any fashion in verses 1-20, yet we find twenty different named places or things in these verses, which we labeled distractions that keep men's attention focused on something other than the Lord. Part of these distractions was the fury of this storm, called here in verse 20 *...no small tempest...* . Couple with that the distraction of not seeing the sun, nor the stars for "many days." We also made mention of the phrase "many days" when we covered verse 7, noting that the phrase "many days" is only found thirty-eight times in scripture, twice in ACTS 27, and the number thirty-eight is the number that has to do with MAN LOOKING AT SOMETHING OTHER THAN GOD. Here in verse 20 we find the phrase "many days" for the second time in ACTS 27. Here in verse 20 Luke writes: *...all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.* Such desperation is the end result of MAN LOOKING AT SOMETHING OTHER THAN GOD. The number thirty-eight however is also the product of two times nineteen, twice the

number of FAITH in other words. Remember this chapter of ACTS 27 really highlights the FAITH of one man, that being the Apostle Paul. By faith 276 souls were saved from certain death in this chapter because one man, the Apostle Paul, believed God rather than MAN LOOKING AT SOMETHING OTHER THAN GOD, (study verses 24 & 25). Thus we see that the Apostle Paul remained focused upon the things of God as these worldly distractions caught the attention of most on this ship.

Let's spend some time examining this phrase: "...all hope that we should be saved was then taken away." Focus now upon the little word "hope." The word "hope" is found 129 times in scripture; 60 times in the New Testament; and 46 times in Paul's epistles! In other words no author of scripture uses the word "hope" more than the Apostle Paul! And if you take the time to look up all the scriptures that use the word "hope," you will find the vast majority of them speak of "hope" in a positive context, unlike our text of ACTS 27:20. The Greek word used here in ACTS 27:20 translated "hope" is elpis {el-pece'}, number 1680 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, meaning: favorable and confident expectation. As used in our text of ACTS 27:20 we find that all favorable and confident expectation that they should be arriving safe at a destination was then taken away. Verse 20 is the last time we find the word "hope" in this chapter, but there was one on board this ship full of "hope" and expectation, that being the Apostle Paul. Remember that in this chapter Paul is highlighted as a man of faith. Furthermore the Apostle Paul believed the word of the Lord that was spoken unto him back in ACTS 23:11 where he was given these words of "hope" during a very dark midnight hour of Paul's life: *...Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.* Now here in ACTS 27:20 when "...all hope that we should be saved was then taken away..." it certainly didn't look like Paul was ever going to bear witness of Jesus Christ also at Rome, did it? Shortly in ACTS 27:25 we will read Paul saying: *...I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.* Paul believed God that he was going to Rome, that he was actually going to get there, and even though all around him had lost "hope" of ever achieving a land destination, Paul had a "hope" far above, and beyond what man could see.

As we examine some thoughts here concerning "hope," let's first note that "hope" has a focal point, a point of vision in other words. To the natural man "hope" lies with things they "hope" to achieve, or see here on earth. The town of Skagway, Alaska was built almost over night by thousands of men who "hoped" to strike it rich seeking for gold. Their point of vision was focused upon an earthly treasure they "hoped" to find. The gold rush of 1849 took thousands to California because they too had a "hope" of making a fortune in gold. Again their "hope" was on material things, and they were willing to suffer many unseen hardships in pursuit of their "hope." Many immigrants came to America in the "hope" of find a better life, and some did. Their focus, or vision for the most part was for a better life here on earth. The same was true for those who traveled the Oregon trail; they too "hoped" for a better life out west than they had left back east. Had they known that ten percent would die in route to their point of "hope," would they have chosen the same path? Probably not. The point being that all these had a focus upon earthly things, "hoping" for a better life here on earth. Their focal point, their vision, lead all of these to pursue an earthly "hope."

In our text of ACTS 27 the "hope" of these on Paul's ship was to achieve Phenice as a winter destination. That "hope" quickly changed with the Euroclydon wind. Their "hope" then changed to being able to survive this storm, but by verse 20 we find that *"...all hope that we should be saved was then taken away."* This statement (*...all hope that we should be saved was then taken away...*) equates to no "hope." Their focal point had changed. Now their focus was upon their own lives as they all faced the possibility of ship wreck, death, and ruin. This destination was one of no "hope." PROVERBS 11:7 states this: *When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth.* PROVERBS 29:18 informs us: *Where there is no vision, the people perish:...* . ISAIAH 38:18 explains: *For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.* EPHESIANS 2:12 tells of those *...without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:...* . Remember here in ACTS 27 that there is no mention of God in any fashion in this chapter before verse 22. In other words there was no God of "hope" in their world.

This too defines those of no "hope." Paul wrote in 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13 *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. As Christians we are not dwelling in the land of no "hope."*

The Holy Ghost inspired Luke to note all the worldly distractions, places, and things they faced in verses 1 through 20 of ACTS 27 with no mention of the Lord so that the emphasis in the rest of this chapter can be placed upon the impossible things God can do for those who trust Him; for those who put their faith and confidence in God; for those who "hope" the Lord is. We then move from the place that *"...all hope that we should be saved was then taken away,..."* to the place of abounding in "hope." In ROMANS 15:13 the Apostle Paul has already written: *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.* Thus we find that the overcomer too has a focal point of "hope," but rather than focusing on earthly things which fadeth away, the victorious Christian "hopes" in things far beyond what the human eye can see. The full overcomer doesn't "hope" in things below, but rather "hopes" in things way above what our natural eyes can see. The full overcomer has his, or her, "hope" in the Lord. There are dozens of scriptures which emphasize this very same point. For example JEREMIAH 17:7 reads: *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.* To fully understand what "hope" means here is to first know what the word "trusteth" used in JEREMIAH 17:7 means. "Trusteth," or "trust" is the Old Testament word meaning "faith" or "believe." HEBREWS 11:1 expresses it like this: *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* In 1 PETER 1 the Apostle Peter spoke along these very same lines of "hope," stating in 1 PETER 1:18 *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.* Thus we could read JEREMIAH 17:7 like this, from an amplified translation: "Most blessed is the man who believes in the Lord, and has his faith in the Lord..." In JEREMIAH 17:7 "hope" points us back to "trust," for "hope" means to trust, or to put trust in someone, or something; to confide in someone; to find sure and firm hope. The full overcomer finds their "hope," their faith and confidence in our lovely Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which is our "hope." Paul writes in 1 TIMOTHY 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope;...* To Titus Paul wrote: TITUS 2:11 *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* Paul prayed for the Ephesian Saints in EPHESIANS 1:18 *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,...* Unto the Saints in Colosee Paul also wrote of our "hope" of Christ Jesus, stating in COLOSSIANS 1:27 *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:...* To the Hebrews Paul wrote about the "hope" of Israel, which is Jesus, expressing this "hope" like this in HEBREWS 6:17-20: *Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: 18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: 19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

We have now noted two perspectives of “hope” that are really emphasized here in ACTS 27. Those on this Alexandrian ship for the most part focused upon earthly things, and had now come to the point where “...all hope that we should be saved was then taken away...” in verse 20. Yet we know from the scriptures we just read written by the Apostle Paul that his focus was upon the Lord, and any “hope” he had was in Christ Jesus. Paul’s only Bible was the Old Testament scripture, and the things the Lord Himself had revealed unto him, which he wrote down in letters, and epistles for us to learn from. No doubt Paul often recalled the many Old Testament scriptures that show how the Lord is our “hope.” (Remember that the word “hope” is found 129 times in scripture, and Paul wrote about “hope” 46 times, expressing what he too had learned from reading the Old Testament.) Here are just a few of the Old Testament scriptures expressing positive thoughts of “hope.” PSALMS 31:24 *Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.* PSALMS 38:15 *For in thee, O LORD, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.* PSALMS 39:7 *And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.* Note the similarities in these next three scriptures emphasizing “hope.” PSALMS 42:5 *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.* PSALMS 42:11 *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.* PSALMS 43:5 *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.* PSALMS 71:5 *For thou art my hope, O Lord GOD: thou art my trust from my youth.* PSALMS 119:81 *My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy word.* PSALMS 119:114 *Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word.* PSALMS 130:5 *I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.* PSALMS 130:7 *Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.* PSALMS 131:3 *Let Israel hope in the LORD from henceforth and for ever.* PSALMS 146:5 *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God:...* JEREMIAH 17:13 *O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters.* LAMENTATIONS 3:24 *The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.* 25 *The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him.* 26 *It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.* JOEL 3:16 *The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.*

Having then learned all of these scriptures, and many more which we passed over, and knowing the Lord as his “hope” too, it is no wonder that the Apostle Paul had already penned in his letter to the ROMANS, who he now was on his way to see, the following verse which we noted above: ROMANS 15:13 *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.* Again to the ROMANS Paul wrote of Abraham, the father of those who walk in the steps of faith, this statement found in ROMANS 4:18 *Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.* Also to the ROMANS 8:24 and 25 Paul wrote: *For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.* Though used in a different context in these verses, this was exactly the thought the Apostle Paul was going to express to those on board this Alexandrian ship here in ACTS 27 ...*For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.* It was now the job of the Holy Ghost to use Paul to bring those on board this ship to also have this same kind of “hope,” for as we know from verse 20 “...all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.”

During these dark hours when “...all hope that we should be saved was then taken away...” the God of hope was filling the Apostle Paul with all joy, and peace in believing, and he was abounding in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost, just like

he had written in ROMANS 15:13. Meanwhile all on board this storm tossed ship were spending time reflecting upon their seemingly hopeless situation, and pondering life, and considering what kind of death they were going to die on board this ship. We can only imagine the fear that gripped their thoughts as they bounced along in the sea not even having any idea where they were, or where they were headed. Nobody was saying much, or doing much, and we find in verse 21 that nobody was even eating! This is what is meant by the word "abstinence" in verse 21. "Abstinence" means: without food, whether voluntary, or involuntary. One might get the idea that they were on some kind of religious fast here, but that was not the case. No one had eaten anything because *"...all hope that we should be saved was then taken away."* With this picture of despair now clearly in our minds, with everyone left silent in their hopelessness, we find at long last, the Lord giving Paul the word of God that these desperate men needed to hear. And when they were ready to listen the Lord caused the Apostle Paul to stand up and speak.

Before we read Paul's exhortation here, let's again note that all on board this ship by now knew who the Apostle Paul was, and why he was being sent to Rome. Perhaps there were those on this ship who were afraid of him, having heard rumors of his Christian beliefs. No doubt there were others on this ship who had made acquaintance with Paul, and found him very passionate about his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Some no doubt had observed him from a slight distance, and had noted his demeanor, and the respectful way he was treated by Julius, and the soldier assigned to him, and wondered just what it was that made him tick. Perhaps they all had now recalled in their minds Paul's words from verse 10 while safely anchored back at The fair havens: *...Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.* It had taken some time, and a very rough storm, before the truth of Paul's words were realized. It took all of this to get all on board this ship to be ready to once again listen to Paul's words, which was really the word of the Lord. The Lord had prepared this storm to get their undivided attention, and now that He had it, the Apostle Paul was prompted by the Holy Ghost to speak.

Before we read the words spoken by Paul in verses 21 through 26 consider this: why didn't the Apostle Paul address the men on this ship earlier in this storm? We must realize that Paul was a very seasoned preacher, teacher, witness, and apostle by this point in time in his life. And part of being a good preacher, teacher, minister, and in Paul's case an apostle, is to know when to speak, and when to be silent. It wouldn't do Paul any good to deliver a message where he spoke his own mind. To be effective Paul's message had to first come from the Lord. All preachers should adhere to this principle, that is to get their message first from the Lord. In MATTHEW 10 Jesus instructed his disciples along these very same lines, and gave them the following instructions: MATTHEW 10:16 *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. 17 But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; 18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. 19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. 20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. ...27 What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.* In short we see here again that for preaching to be effective, the message must first come from the Lord, and be inspired by the Holy Ghost.

Paul had probably been on this particular ship the better part of a month, and though an Apostle, he didn't just get up and start preaching to these men right away. The only time previously that he spoke was in verse 10 when he warned them of leaving the Fair havens in the first place. But they didn't heed his words, and now find themselves suffering the consequences of not listening to the man of God. Even still during these early days of this storm Paul remained silent, and the reason was because the Lord hadn't yet given him the words to say unto these desperate men. After all it is the Lord who knows the innermost thoughts, and intents of all men, and it was the Lord who was now with this storm preparing 276 souls to hear a message from Him. The Lord's mouth piece was the Apostle Paul, whom all on this ship knew was an Apostle, and a man of God who spoke words of wisdom from the Lord. They didn't fully appreciate

what Paul had to say back in verse 10, but now after long abstinence, that is after days of not eating anything, and after days and nights of bobbing up and down in the sea like a cork, when all hope that they should be saved was then taken away, the Lord whispered in Paul's ear the timely message He wanted them all to hear, and receive.

ACTS 27:21 *But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. 22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. 23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, 24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. 25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. 26 Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.*

Before we examine these words in a little more detail, realize what has just happened here. A quiet stormy silence by those on this ship was broken by the prisoner the Apostle Paul. Hopeless men were given words of hope, then for a moment an eerie silence fell once again upon the 276 souls on board this ship as they pondered what Paul had just said. The storm was still the same, and nothing else had changed, but at long last Paul had got to speak unto this captive audience the words of the Lord. And they listened, and they heard Paul's words, the words of the Lord, and they heard some of how they were to be delivered from an unknown fate at sea, and *...be cast upon a certain island*. These on this ship, one at a time, then began to have some hope, and began to again communicate amongst themselves, and began to ask more questions of their famous prisoner, and his two friends. Perhaps some kind of prayer meeting broke out, we are not told, but we do see a great change among the 276 after this point in time. Realize that this change from *"...all hope that we should be saved was then taken away..."* (verse 20), to *"...lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee..."* (verse 24) didn't happen all at once. It took some time for the sailors to latch on to this ray of hope for their safe deliverance upon land. In fact there is no real indication that they all accepted Paul's words as truth until the fourteenth night of this storm.

Again this word "abstinence," which we defined above as simply meaning without food, whether voluntary, or involuntary, is an interesting word found only this one time in scripture. A quick reading of verse 21 might leave us with the impression that only Paul was going without food here, but as we also noted above, all on board this ship had really given up hope of being saved from a certain death at sea, and the thought of eating never even entered their mind. One translator put it this way: "Since hardly anybody wanted to eat... ." But the Lord knew they were now ready to listen unto words of hope, so He had Paul deliver a timely message designed just for them.

Conybeare and Howson translates Paul's words this way: "21 Sirs, ye should have hearkened to my counsel, and not have set sail from Crete: thus would you have been spared this harm and loss."

"22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but only of the ship. 23 For there stood by me this night an angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, 24 saying 'Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Caesar: and, lo! God hath given thee all who sail with thee.' 25 Wherefore, Sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that what hath been declared unto me shall come to pass. 26 Nevertheless, we must be cast upon a certain island."

Paul's words of verse 21 might seem to some as being sharp, and arrogant, however this was not the case, nor the intent here. ACTS 27:21 *...Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss*. It wouldn't have done Paul any good to further chastise these hopeless men when they were already down, and out. So let's give some consideration as the tone of Paul's opening words here. Paul had just been given words from the Lord to encourage the 276 souls on board, so Paul's heart here was over flowing, and rejoicing with the news he had just been given. Further more it is quite possible that Paul was the oldest person on board this ship. If not, he was among the oldest on this ship, and consequently should have been shown some kind of respect. He should have been shown respect any way since they all knew who he was. When he stated in verse 21 *...Sirs, ye should have*

hearkened unto me,... he was reminding these hopeless mariners that it really was necessary for them have listened unto his counsel, and to have not set sail from Crete, because he was speaking words from a higher authority than himself; words he had been given by the Lord Jesus Christ. Look up the Greek word used here translated "hearkened" (peitharcho {pi-tharkh-eh'-o}, number 3980 in The Strong's Greek Concordance), and find it meaning to obey one in authority. Of course Paul wasn't the one in authority here, but he represented the One in authority, that being God. There wasn't one person on board this ship who now doubted the fact that Paul had spoken words of wisdom back in verse 10 when he advised; "...Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives." And they all too now realized that Paul was in the same boat that they were in, so his advice, whether heeded or not, was still true, and affected Paul the same way it affected them. Paul was in this storm too, true, but he had hope. He had warned against sailing from Crete, and now that he was proven correct in his admonishment of verse 10, they all were better prepared to hearken unto his latest words, knowing that he spoke words of wisdom. Paul conveyed the thought to the sailors better than our words can portray of how he too felt their harm, and was sorry for their loss that they had subjected themselves to by not heeding the counsel of God's anointed. Paul was letting them all know that it hurt him too to see their pain, and suffering, and frustration, and anguish, and hopelessness. Paul was also indicating to them that he felt the hurt of ...this harm and loss... that they all were now facing. So Paul here was in a very passionate, and loving way expressing to all on board this ship that it now would be to their advantage to listen, to hearken unto him again. And that is why we find Paul standing in the midst of them, so they could all hear his words from the Lord of hope, and deliverance.

Now that Paul had all of their attention, he gave them the strangest exhortation in verse 22: *And now I exhort you to be of good cheer:...* . This seems strange because there was nothing visible here to be of good cheer about, was there? All on board were of the frame of mind that "...all hope that we should be saved was then taken away." Then Paul stands up in the midst of them and exhorts them to be of good cheer. The word "exhort" used here is found sixteen (LOVE) times in scripture, once with this meaning. We have looked at this Greek word before in this chapter that is here translated "exhort." It is the Greek word paraino {par-ah-eh-neh'-o} (number 3867 in The Strong's Greek Concordance), also translated "admonished" in verse 9, meaning: first to tell or speak of, then to recommend, then to advise, and finally to warn. Well we know they didn't heed his paraino (admonishment) in verse 9, were they ready to hearken unto his paraino (exhortation) in verse 22? Especially when Paul starts his message to these who have lost hope: ...to be of good cheer:... ? You can bet there were all giving Paul their undivided attention as he explained to them why they were to be of good cheer.

ACTS 27:22 *And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.* Certainly if they believed Paul's words that ...there shall be no loss of any man's life among you,... it was good news. They were minutes before without hope of being saved, and now they have just been told ...there shall be no loss of any man's life among you,... . For them to enter into Paul's good cheer, they would have to believe Paul first of all, and then to believe Paul's Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And we find by verse 36 that they did believe Paul, for they were then all of good cheer. We have mentioned in lessons past how that seven times in scripture we find the phrase "be of good cheer." {Review page 787 of these notes.} Seven is the number that speaks to us of SPIRITUAL PERFECTION or SPIRITUAL COMPLETION. Thus the phrase "be of good cheer" speaks to us some things about SPIRITUAL PERFECTION or SPIRITUAL COMPLETION. Certainly SPIRITUAL PERFECTION, and SPIRITUAL COMPLETION was being worked into the heart of the Apostle Paul here, for he was really repeating the words Jesus had told him in ACTS 23:11 ...Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome. Perhaps Paul had by now been told of these very same words of Jesus spoken to His disciples back in JOHN 16:33 *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.* Certainly Paul, and those on his ship, were faced with all kinds of tribulation on this storm tossed sea, and now they too were hearing words spoken by

Jesus: *"be of good cheer."* It will take some inward soul searching by each man on board this ship to get to the point where they were of good cheer as we find them in verse 36.

Paul gives several reasons as to why these mariners should be of good cheer in verse 22 through 24. ACTS 27:22 *And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.* 23 *For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,* 24 *Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.* The first, and greatest reason to be of good cheer for these sailors, was the statement in verse 22 *...there shall be no loss of any man's life among you,...* . These were certainly words of hope to men for whom *"...all hope that we should be saved was then taken away."* The second statement of hope that gave these 276 souls reasons to be of good cheer was these words we find in verse 24 *...God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.* The third point that gave more credibility to Paul's words found in verse 22 was something the sailors already feared, that being the loss of the ship. Though not really a point of hope, this loss of the ship emphasizes from verse 21 that *...this harm and loss...* didn't include loss of life, but loss of a corruptible ship. The fourth point of a reason for hope during this incredible storm revolves around what the 276 believed of Paul's witness of God that Paul was now telling them about. Let's examine this fourth point a little closer.

We find in verses 23 and 24 the reasons Paul was able to exhort these men to be of good cheer. It was because of God that Paul could be of good cheer in the first place. It was because the angel of God had given Paul hope, and words of hope during this terrible storm that he now could express these words of good cheer with confidence. And since all these men knew Paul to be a man of God, and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, they would intently listen to this testimony that he gave in these verses. Paul first tells them in verse 23: *For there stood by me this night the angel of God,...* . Note that it was night, a dark stormy night at that, during which Paul was given words to be of good cheer about. These were "fresh" words too; words spoken *...this night;...* words spoken by *...the angel of God,...* . "The angel of God" could have been the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, but if not, his message came directly from the Lord Himself. We are not told if Paul was awake, or asleep when given these heavenly words of hope. No doubt Paul was praying for a safe conclusion to this storm for all on board, knowing already that he was told of the Lord back in ACTS 23:11 that he was going to Italy to be a witness at Rome. We will examine the angels words when we look at verse 24 a little closer. For now here in verse 23 Paul is explaining to these hopeless mariners how it was this very night that *...there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,...* . Conybeare and Howson note how that sailors "are peculiarly open to religious impressions," thus we note that even though Paul's views may have been widely different than their own, the sailors would listen with interest to what he had to say. A lot of unbelievers in Jesus Christ believe in angels, so the Holy Ghost inspired Paul to speak of *...the angel of God,...* whose words the mariners would receive. Paul next affirms that he too was a child of God using these words: *...whose I am, and whom I serve,...* .

No doubt Paul had to raise his voice above the roar of the storm in order to be heard, and he now had everyone's attention on board this ship as he repeated the words spoken by the angel of God in verse 24; *...Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.* Three points are brought out in this verse; two pertain to Paul, and one to all on board this ship. The first thing we find here is words that calm Paul's heart: *...Fear not, Paul...* . Let's think about this fear for a moment. In this situation we all would be afraid, for fear is a God given instinct. However we can not assume here that Paul was fearing for his own life, for as we noted many times before, Paul knew he was going to Rome. In 2 CORINTHIANS 7:5 and 6 we find that Paul wrote of facing another time in his life when his flesh had no rest, and he felt no comfort. 2 CORINTHIANS 7:5 *For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears.* 6 *Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus;...* . Here on this ship Paul might have been facing similar feelings, that is having fears within, yet it seems his fears here revolved around the possibility of

the loss of the many lives of those on this ship. Paul knew where he was going when he died, but his main immediate concern now was for the rest on board this ship. Paul was alarmed for their safety, their eternal destiny. Yet Paul waited for the leading of the Lord before he spoke these words of hope, for now had the mariners hearts been prepared by the Lord to receive Paul's message. There is a second reason as to why the angel of God said *...Fear not, Paul...* which concerns the startle factor. If an angel of God suddenly appeared unto you, wouldn't you initially be afraid? Sure you would. That is why when the Lord sends an angel to appear to someone in scripture, nearly the first words out of their mouth is always "fear not." Study the many times "fear not" is found in scripture, and see this to be true for yourself.

The second point of note in verse 24 also concerns Paul: *...thou must be brought before Caesar...*. This is not a repeat of what Jesus told Paul in ACTS 23:11 (*...Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome...*), but a confirmation that Paul would appear before Caesar as Paul had requested of governor Festus back in ACTS 25:11 *...I appeal unto Caesar...*. Now Paul hears from the angel of the Lord *...thou must be brought before Caesar...*. Remember on the road to Damascus back in ACTS 9:6 Paul had asked the Lord: *...Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* And the Lord answered Paul in that very same verse: *...Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.* And we know the Lord gave Paul many further instructions along the way as to what it was Paul was to do. This statement by the angel of God here in ACTS 27:24 is just another of the many things Paul was told by the Lord that he must do: *...thou must be brought before Caesar...*. To Paul these were words of good cheer, confirming what the Lord had already told him about going to Rome.

The third point found in verse 24 takes us back to that statement we glanced at earlier: *...and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.* The focal point of this phrase is "*all them that sail with thee.*" Points one and two (covered above) Paul could have kept to himself, but this third piece of information was indeed words of "good cheer" that they all needed to here: *...God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.* No wonder Paul wanted to immediately relay this message of hope on to the rest who had lost all hope of being saved. Now look way beyond the time frame of ACTS 27, and see some two thousand years later the importance of *...and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.* Are you sailing with Paul? In other words do you follow Paul's gospel? Paul has the gospel message of grace for this church age, so we should be sailing in Paul's ship, remembering *...and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.*

We indicated earlier That the Apostle Paul didn't just start preaching to these men because he was the Apostle Paul, but rather he waited until the Lord prepared the hearts of his listeners, and until God gave him the message that was prepared just for them. In this instance God sent an angel of God telling Paul specifically what to say to these hopeless men. And Paul wasn't yet through speaking unto them, but I want to pause here for a moment and reflect on Paul's tone of speech here. We mentioned that Paul did not chide these men for not listening to him earlier in verse 10. His tone was loving, and he spoke with much concern, yet full of God's joy as he gave them these words of hope. They all could tell that Paul spoke from his heart words of truth, even though they might not fully understand all that he had to say. Paul would later write in COLOSSIANS 4:6 how our speech is to be. COLOSSIANS 4:6 *Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.* "Seasoned with salt" equates to flavored with truth. Sister Bodie noted in comments on this verse that "our words are indicative of the state of our heart." We find in MATTHEW 12:34 and LUKE 6:45 Jesus expressed the following thought: *...out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* PROVERBS 16:1 tells us: *The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.* Certainly here in ACTS 27 Paul spoke from his heart gracious words from the Lord, and the sailors listened. Then in verse 25 Paul says: *Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.*

The words "wherefore," and "therefore" are very important in scripture. In a way they are like historical markers along side a highway. A historical marker is placed at points along a highway to tell some event that happened in the past at a particular

spot. One could just pass by these markers, and never know what history they missed, yet those who stop and take the time to read the marker have their journey enhanced by the knowledge they learn. Brother Hill one time noted in a study of EPHESIANS that the words "wherefore," and "therefore" are words which gather all the things taken place in the verses prior, and put a spotlight on the things that follow in the next verse or verses. Thus we see that "wherefore," and "therefore" are points of emphasis used to focus our attention on what is said next. So in this instance Paul was saying: 'wherefore since the angel of God told me this very night not to fear this harm and loss, that I must be brought before Caesar, and God has given me assurance that all of you who are sailing with will be saved from the sea, sirs, I urge you to also be of good cheer, for I believe God, that it shall happen to us just like the angel of God said it would.' Here is how ACTS 27:25 records it: *Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.* Now whether they believed Paul at this point in time we are not told. I imagine it took some time for them to latch on to this prospect. However once again we find that by verse 36 they all were of good cheer, so Paul's gracious words did prick their hearts, and they did eventually believe Paul, that they would be saved from drowning in the sea during this storm. Paul was really more concerned that they too believed God like Paul did. He emphasized *...for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.*

Again we note that Paul is emphasized as a man of faith in ACTS 27, and this is his statement of faith: *...for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.* All full overcomers must come to this very same point in their own life: *...for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.* All of the Old Testament worthies of faith became the icons of faith we know them as because they believed in their heart these very same words: *...for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.* Not all Christians *...believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.* Recall the story of doubting Thomas in JOHN 20. Thomas was one of the twelve disciples who had himself heard from the very mouth of Jesus the words of truth. Jesus had appeared unto the other disciples after His resurrection, and we read starting in JOHN 20:24 *But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. 26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. 27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. 28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. 29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* In Thomas' case, seeing was believing. The full overcomer sees with eyes of faith, and can affirm for himself *...for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.* Ask yourself do I *...believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me?* Or do you have to see something first in order to believe? We are told in ROMANS 8:28 *...that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* This is the word of God, so when all things are headed in another direction than you envisioned, ask yourself do I *...believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me?* Are all these things really working together for my good? Can you see that it is with your eyes of faith? Or do you have to be like Thomas, and see it with your own eyes before you believe? Have any of you seen a translation yet? None of us have been translated, yet, so ask yourself, do *...I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me?* In 1 THESSALONIANS 4:14-17 we read: *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.* Ask yourself: Do I believe Jesus is coming soon in this manner? Again ask yourself, do *...I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me?* Saints, these too are words of good cheer, so like Paul encouraged

the mariners here, let's all be of good cheer. Jesus is coming soon! REVELATION 19:7 also speaks words of good cheer: *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. Do you ...believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me?*

Now let's put ourselves back on Paul's ship as he tells these 276 men the following words expressing Paul's overcoming faith: *...I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me?* Paul had already written in 2 CORINTHIANS 5:7 the following words of a worthy of faith: *For we walk by faith, not by sight.* Additionally Paul quoted in his writings HABAKKUK 2:4 three different times, (ROMANS 1:17; GALATIANS 3:11; and HEBREWS 10:38): *...The just shall live by faith.* Later in his writings Paul would define faith like this in HEBREWS 11:1 *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* Then he wrote a whole chapter on some of the Old Testament believers who dared to believe such a statement, noting in HEBREWS 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please him: (God) for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Add to this what Paul wrote in ROMANS 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* This dark stormy night that the angel of God appeared unto Paul, Paul once again heard the word of God from the mouth of the angel of God, and because of Paul's faith in God, and his confidence in God, and his trust in God, and his believing God here in verse 25, Paul was able to confidently state in a loud voice they all could hear over the storm: *Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.* In the spirit of HEBREWS 11 let me express the events of ACTS 27 this way: By faith, Paul the Apostle, while on a slowly-sinking-water-logged-listing-hard-to-the-right-drifting-out-of-control-lost-at-sea-ship, in the darkest of storms trusted God, and he, and all 276 souls on board his vessel escaped safe to land. Of course here in verse 25 this hadn't yet happened, yet, by faith it had.

Paul then continues in verse 26: *Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.* This verse should spark more than just a passing interest, for it further helps define true faith in God. If you were in Paul's shoes wouldn't you want to know what island you were going to arrive on? Perhaps. But was that kind of information really important? Not really if you think about it. What difference did it make what the name of the island was? If some would have known this information, they would have focused their attention on the place, and not on God who was bringing them to this yet unknown place. If God promises to keep you through the storm, don't you suppose He can keep you after the storm passes over, even on a certain island? God doesn't just bring us so far, and then abandoned us. In fact the Lord said in HEBREWS 13:5 *...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* Jesus said in MATTHEW 28:20 *...I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.* No wonder then that Paul added in HEBREWS 13:6 *So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.* Armed with this kind of faith and confidence in the Lord, Paul just matter of factually stated in ACTS 27:26 *Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island...* and let it go at that. Nobody doubted Paul's words, and we have no record of anyone questioning him further in this matter. We do observe from here through the rest of the chapter that they all paid close attention to Paul's instructions. Sure some had other ideas, but they did indeed eventually follow Paul's instructions.

Notice also that when Paul says: *Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island...* that he didn't tell them when they would arrive upon this island either. The Lord hadn't revealed this information to Paul, nor did He intend too. The reasons for this may be many, but let's just consider a few thoughts as to why the Lord didn't reveal His time table to Paul. First of all Paul already believed God *...that it shall be even as it was told me.* 26 *Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.* Second, it would take a little time for the sailors to digest all that Paul had told them this night. Certainly they all didn't latch on to Paul's words of hope instantly. Remember too that we don't find all the mariners of good cheer until verse 36. By verse 36 they all knew landfall was near, and they realized by then that the words Paul had spoken were perhaps indeed true. Skepticism must have prevailed amongst many of Paul's fellow travelers up until verse 36. And even though Paul had offered these words of hope in verse 22-26, there were still ahead many dark stormy days, and darker stormy nights. In other words plenty of

time for doubt and continued fear to prevail. Thirdly we must note that during the time between Paul's speech here in verse 22-26, and the fourteenth night in verse 27, that the Lord was dealing with the hearts of all 276 on board Paul's ship. The believers on Paul's ship were no doubt encouraging one another, and dealing with the unbelievers about their salvation. In other words there was a lot of very deep soul searching going on during the time that lapsed between verses 26 and 27. And the fourth point we need to consider here between verses 26 and 27 is that Paul had made all aware on board this ship of a positive outcome for all: (verse 22) *...for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship....* (verse 24) *...and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee....* (verse 26) *...Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.* This in itself should have lifted all their spirits.

A side bar to Paul's words of verse 26 was to make the sailors more aware of their present surroundings, and to be more on the watch for land fall. How would the sailors do this? They would do this by watching, and listening to the sounds of the storm, and being aware of any changes in the sound of the constant crashing of the waves, and perhaps noting the action of the birds, if any were around, or whatever clues that would make them aware that they were approaching land. We will see how this came about in the following verses.