

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 forth 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.

The Outcome of the Storm

ACTS 27:27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country; 28 And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms.

The first thing to note in this portion of scripture revolves around the number fourteen. Back when we did the meaning of Bible numbers study we learned that the number fourteen points to DELIVERANCE or SALVATION. In verses 21 through 26 Paul had told the 276 souls on board this ship how they were to be delivered from the sea, and now we find on the fourteenth night they began to realize their DELIVERANCE was nigh. Interestingly the word "midnight" is only found fourteen times in scripture also, emphasizing to us that following Paul as he followed Christ leads to DELIVERANCE or SALVATION, and beyond. We noted when we studied ACTS 16:25 that all full overcomers will face many "midnight's" in spiritual terms throughout his or her life time. {Review the chapter on "midnight" starting on page 338 of these notes.} And if you take the time to research the word "midnight" in scripture, you too will see this to be true.

When we think of DELIVERANCE and SALVATION the first thought that should come to our mind is DELIVERANCE or SALVATION from what? And our first answer should be DELIVERANCE or SALVATION from sin. We also noted earlier in this study a correlation between SIN and the word "Adria" found here in verse 27. {Review page 975 of these notes.} "Adria" is the twenty first place or thing named in this chapter, and the number twenty one is the number that points to SIN. There is only One who provides DELIVERANCE or SALVATION from SIN, and that is our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who bought our DELIVERANCE or SALVATION from SIN on the cross of Calvary; purchased us with His own precious blood. {Study ACTS 20:28} 1 PETER 1:18 & 19 expresses this thought like this: *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:...*

Interestingly there are exactly fourteen scriptures in the Bible that have the phrase "believe on" in them, which again points to the DELIVERANCE or SALVATION from SIN that is provided by believing on Christ Jesus. The Philippian jailor asked Paul and Silas in ACTS 16:30 & 31 *...Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* In 1 JOHN 5:13 we find the phrase "believe on" used twice: *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

The word "Adria" also points us to Christ in that "Adria" means "without wood." "Wood" in scripture, in the broadest sense, speaks of Jesus, and there are many types and

shadows of Jesus being portrayed by wood all through the Bible, which we also made mention of earlier in this study, noting for example, that the cross, made of wood, symbolizes the crucifixion of Jesus. Noah's ark, by which eight souls were saved from the judgment that destroyed the rest of the men in the world, was made of wood, picturing in many ways the salvation one obtains by believing on Christ. *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,... ACTS 16:31.* In the Old Testament the material for the construction of the ark of the tabernacle was shittim wood overlaid with gold, within and without, picturing how that Christ, as a man, was covered, or hidden by His divine nature. {Study EXODUS 25:10-22}. But we said "Adria" means "without wood," which then speaks to us of life without Jesus. We are not told in ACTS 27 how many of the 276 souls on board Paul's ship were Christians when they boarded this vessel, yet we find in verse 44 *...that they escaped all safe to land....* thus they were saved from drowning in the sea. How did they obtain this DELIVERANCE or SALVATION? By reaching out and attaching themselves to boards, and broken pieces of the wooden ship. In other words those that couldn't swim *...escaped all safe to land....* by accepting "wood" as their means of DELIVERANCE or SALVATION. Of course all of this pictures our DELIVERANCE or SALVATION from SIN comes only one way, and that by reaching out to Jesus and accepting Christ as your own personal Saviour. ROMANS 10:9 *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

Again we need to make note of the little word "midnight" found for the fourteenth, and final time in scripture here in verse 27. And we have already studied much about many "midnight" times in scripture earlier in this study. {Again study the chapter on "midnight" starting on page 338 of these notes.} What we need to review in our thinking here is the incredible, and awesome work that the Lord continues to perform during the darkest hours of our lives. We are talking about cold dank darkness than can be felt; dark distressing times; "midnight" hours. And as we consider these "midnight" times, keep in mind our perspective of "midnight" darkness is far different than the Lord's perspective.

First of all recall in your thinking that there is no darkness in the Lord. 1 JOHN 1:5 tells us: *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.* Jesus Christ is the dayspring from on high who hath visited us, whom we read of in LUKE 1:78 & 79 *Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, 79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.* Again in JOHN 1 we read this concerning Jesus: 4 *In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. ...7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* Again in JOHN 8:12 we read: *Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* Many other scriptures expound similar thoughts, but what we need to realize in our thinking concerning "midnight" kind of darkness is that, from the Lord's perspective, "midnight" darkness to Him is a light as the noon day sun is to us. Stated another way, since Jesus is the Light of the world, He then is the Light that shines just as bright during the darkest times, as well as during the brightest times.

So as Christians then we must realize the truth of 1 THESSALONIANS 5:5 *Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.* That doesn't mean that we won't face dark distressing "midnight" times in our lives, because all race course runner will, but we face such dark "midnight" times with the Light of Christ shining bright in our hearts. 2 CORINTHIANS 4:6 states it this way: *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* MICAH 7:8 expresses a similar thought: *Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me.* And PSALMS 119:105 states: *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.* Thus with the Light of the world (Jesus) clearly in focus, we see that we have Light even during the darkest

"midnight" times of our lives. We see this point emphasized time and time again throughout all scripture.

By now the Apostle Paul had much experience with "midnight" times in his own life. The very first city he visited after being saved was Damascus, and we read in ACTS 9:24 that the Jews of Damascus *...watched the gates day and night to kill him*. The very next verse tells how during this dark "midnight" time of his life that *...the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket*. 2 CORINTHIANS 11:32 & 33 adds Paul's take this to the story: *32 In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: 33 And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands*. In short the Lord DELIVERED Paul from the hands of his would be killers at a "midnight" hour.

Another "midnight" time in Paul's life was when Paul and Silas were arrested and put in jail in Philippi back in ACTS 16. Paul and Silas focus was upon the Lord even during this dark "midnight" hour, and under the worst of circumstance we find this account recorded in ACTS 16:25 *And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them*. Did you catch it? Paul and Silas were focused upon the Light of Christ during this dark "midnight" hour. Let's read the next verse: ACTS 16:26 *And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed*. Ray Quintana once noted in a sermon of his that God so enjoyed Paul and Silas' singing that He joined in and sang base (the earthquake). That "midnight" experience lead to thousands getting saved down through this church age!

ACTS 20:7-12 records another "midnight" experience that the Apostle Paul previously went through. ACTS 20:7 *And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight*. 8 *And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together*. 9 *And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead*. 10 *And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him*. 11 *When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed*. 12 *And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted*.

Where did we find Paul during this "midnight" hour? Preaching a sermon to those at Troas. Paul's focus during this dark hour was still upon the Lord. Young Eutychus fell asleep during Paul's long winded sermon, and was taken up dead! However as Paul embraced young Eutychus, and prayed for him, God raised Eutychus from the dead. Thus Eutychus was DELIVERED from death, and those of Troas were greatly comforted by Paul's gospel message!

Often during this study we have mentioned following Paul's arrest at Jerusalem, the night after he was brought before the Jewish Sanhedrin council, as being a very trying dark "midnight" hour in the life of the Apostle Paul, possibly one of the darkest times he ever faced. And the Lord knew this to be a "midnight" time in the life of Paul. No doubt Paul couldn't sleep much during this very trying time in his life, and as Paul focused upon the Light of Christ, the very Light that had first shone unto him on the road to Damascus, giving him the direction his life was to follow, we find once again the Lord making a personal appearance unto Paul, as recorded in ACTS 23:11. ACTS 23:11 *And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome*. We noted what a shot of spiritual adrenaline these words were to Paul's life, and how this one sentence spoken by Jesus carried Paul forward for about the next five years of his life! If Paul was in a slump before Jesus spoke these words to him at this "midnight" hour, he certainly wasn't afterward. Stated another way Paul was DELIVERED from any doubts and fears he faced during this "midnight" hour by these words of good cheer spoken by Jesus Christ Himself!

By the time frame of our lessons here in ACTS 27 Paul still hasn't arrived at Rome, yet, and he faces another "midnight" hour. Of course this "midnight" hour is different than all of the other "midnight" hours he has previously faced, yet his DELIVERANCE and SALVATION remained the same, for Jesus Christ our Deliverer, and our Saviour, our

Light in this old dark world, remains the same yesterday, today, and for ever, according to HEBREWS 13:8.

As we went through these many different “midnight” hours did you notice the activity? The Lord doesn’t sleep nor slumber, even at the darkest of times. PSALMS 121:2-4 states it like this: *My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. 3 He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. 4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.*

In a subtle way we find that Paul’s “be of good cheer” speech put those on board this storm tossed ship to be more aware of their surroundings. Thus *...when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country;...* (verse 27) and they were prepared to go into action. ACTS 27:28 *And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms.* The question comes up, “how much is a fathom?” A fathom is the length of a sailors out stretched arms, which, of course depends upon the size of the sailor. It has become accepted over the centuries that a fathom is approximately six feet. Twenty fathoms then is about a hundred and twenty feet. Fifteen fathoms would be about ninety feet. This depth was measured by throwing overboard a rope with a heavy lead weight attached, and repeating the process to find the depth of the sea. By doing this after perceiving that they were coming near some land the sailors determined what they perceived was indeed true, the sea was getting shallower, meaning they were getting close to land.

We find the numbers “twenty,” and “fifteen” in verse 28. Recall that the number “twenty” points to REDEMPTION. REDEMPTION is defined as a release from sin, or the releasing from sin by the paying of a ransom. We know Jesus Christ paid the ransom for all our sin on the cross of Calvary. In our story of ACTS 27 we find the number twenty also pointing to the 276 souls on Paul’s ship about to be released from the captivity of the stormy sea, which has held their ship captive for over two weeks! The number “fifteen” is the number of REST. REST as we need to consider it in our context means to stop, to become quiet, or be still for a period of time. In our story the sailors will come to REST, though still at sea, by the use of anchors. To arrive safely upon land the mariners will also have to put their mind at ease, at REST, if you will, by heeding Paul’s instructions, and in so doing they will all arrive safe upon land. We will see as we study the next few verses that those on Paul’s ship didn’t really reach this point of REST in their mind, and become of good cheer until the darkest hours of the night were past, and day light was coming on. When they come to the point that they all could be of good cheer in verse 36 was really the time that they found REST in their spirit. However, as we cover the next few verses we will find that there were many tense, and anxious moments before morning light, before they entered into the REST hinted at here in verse 28.

ACTS 27:29 *Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.* We have visited the thought of fear twice before in this chapter. In verse 17 the sailors were “fearing” falling into quicksand. This, and the fierceness of the storm, led to even a greater fear in verse 20, that any hope of being saved was then taken away. In verse 24 the angel of the Lord told Paul to “fear not,” then gave him words of “good cheer.” Here in verse 29 their fear was being cast upon the rocks in the darkness of night, even though Paul had told them back in verse 24 *...God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.* This fear of running upon rocks shows that they hadn’t yet come to the point of finding REST in their spirit that we just talked about.

Interestingly we find the word “fearing” eight times in scripture. Eight again is the number that has five different meanings: NEW CREATION; NEW BIRTH; NEW BEGINNING; RESURRECTION; and is the number that subtly points to the BRIDE. The number five we all know is the number of GRACE, and TITUS 2:11 tells us: *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,...* . This certainly is one point emphasized here in ACTS 27, for all the men on Paul’s ship were shown the GRACE of God; told of His salvation; were given a NEW BEGINNING in this chapter; were told the story of NEW BIRTH, and a NEW CREATION in Christ Jesus; and some even latched on to Paul’s gospel message concerning the BRIDE. If you don’t how this was possible with these 276 souls on Paul’s ship, just read a head a little bit and realize that they all spent the winter

with him on the island of Melita, where for at least three months they had the opportunity to enjoy Paul's gospel message, and fellowship, and witness many miracles that were wrought by the hands of the Apostle Paul. So we glimpse a little how this "fearing" was a good thing in that it led these mariners to better things of the GRACE of God.

Here in verse 29 we find the number "four" used in connection with the number of anchors they used. Why four anchors? Why not only one anchor? As Christians we all have only One sure Anchor of the soul, that being Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour. HEBREWS 6:19 in part expresses this thought of Christ, stating: *Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast...* . Back here in ACTS 27:29 we find four anchors used pointing to the weakness of man, especially to those not anchored fast and sure in Christ. We noted earlier in this study that in our meaning of the Bible numbers study we found that the number four also had four meanings associated with it: HUMAN WEAKNESS; MAN'S WEAKNESS; CREATION; and it is an EARTHLY NUMBER. God created the heaven, and the earth, and every living thing that moveth, {study GENESIS 1:1; 1:21; and 1:27}. GENESIS 2:7 tells us: *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.* It would be hard to find something weaker than dust, so we begin to see a little of why the number four speaks of HUMAN WEAKNESS, and MAN'S WEAKNESS, and how it is an EARTHLY NUMBER. As far as CREATION is considered, note the following points. God also created four different kinds of flesh, as noted in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:39 *All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.* REVELATION 7:1 indicates that there are four corners on the earth, and four directions on the earth which God created: North, South East and West. REVELATION 5:9 speaks of four divisions of the human race: (1) kindred, (2) tongue, (3) people, and (4) nation. {Review pages 715 and 962 of this study.} So we see in our text of ACTS 27 that four anchors were used to emphasize to us the extremely weak position these on Paul's ship were in on this dark midnight hour. They were indeed in need of REDEMPTION, and DELIVERANCE, and SALVATION from this storm tossed sea. They needed a sure and steadfast Anchor of their soul. They needed Jesus. Rather than fearing lest they should have fallen upon some rocks, they needed to fall upon the Solid Rock, Christ Jesus, and learn to highly esteem *...the Rock of his salvation...* DEUTERONOMY 32:15.

Here is an interesting tidbit bit of information about an anchor. An anchor consists of five parts, five being the number of GRACE. The five parts of an anchor are: (1) the ring, into which the rope or cable from the ship is fastened; (2) the beam, or shank, which is the longest part of the anchor; (3) the arm, which is the part that runs down into the ground; at the end of the arm is (4) the broad and picked pointed part, called a fluke, which has barbs like an arrowhead that fastens into the ground; and (5) the final part of the anchor is the stock, which is a piece of wood that is fastened to the beam near the ring, serving to guide the fluke so that it may fall correctly, and fix into the ground. Are you anchored in GRACE? JOHN 1:17 tells us that *...grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*

ACTS 27:29 *Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.* Anchoring from the stern, or rear of the ship was not the normal method of anchoring. Normally anchoring a ship was done from the bow, or the front of the ship. But our text here explains that the sailors were fearing crashing into the rocks. And remember it was a dark stormy midnight, so they couldn't see the shore, or the rocks, and the quickest way to arrest the ships progress, and keep it from drifting closer to shore was to cast the anchors nearest the shore overboard. The rear stern anchors were the ones nearest the shore. Had they cast the anchors from the bow, the front of the ship, the rear, or stern of the ship would have swung around down wind, and their odds of crashing upon the rocks, if there were any rocks, would have been greater. Having said all of this, it still would have taken some time to get four anchors out, maybe ten minutes or more. Meanwhile the ship would continue to drift towards shore. Once all four of the stern anchors were out, and holding fast, we would find the bow of the ship swinging toward land, thus putting them in the best position to make for shore once it was morning. If you think about it for a minute, it would be better to drive toward shore, than back into it, and that is why they anchored by the stern.

Once the progress of the ship was halted by the four anchors, one can only imagine the thought process of all on board as they listened to the waves breaking upon the rocks, and an unseen shore. The sound of the sea waves crashing upon an unseen shore was intense, and the darkness seemed to magnify their intensity. In the minds of the 276 souls on board Paul's ship they were thinking: is the shore line sandy, or rocky; jagged or straight; is the shore line shallow or deep? The sailors concluded: it must be rocky, as the sound of the waves were loud, and erratic. With such reasoning we can only imagine the fear that gripped their minds as the stormy night went on, and on. No wonder Luke writes that they *...wished for the day*. The word "wished" here includes the thought of praying to God. Stated another way, they prayed to God that they would still be around to see the day, for they obviously knew daylight would come in a few long rain soaked hours. Again this shows the tenseness of their current situation as they wished, and prayed for the morning when more light would shine on the subject at hand.

Before we move on let's consider another thought about their current midnight situation. Have you ever wondered why the Lord have them arrive at the island of Melita, which we now call Malta, during the darkness of midnight? Why couldn't they have arrived here during the hours of day light? Wouldn't that be the way we would have done it? Probably. PROVERBS 16:25 affirms this by noting: *There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*. MARK 7:37 tells us that the Lord does all things well. PSALMS 18:30 tells us, in part: *As for God, his way is perfect:...*. Paul's ship didn't arrive at the island of Melita during the midnight hour by accident, but rather this majestic Alexandrian vessel was precisely guided to arrive at the exact spot, and the exact time where they were now anchored by the hand of God. PROVERBS 20:24 informs that *...Man's goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?* Here is something else we should realize. About ninety percent of the coast of Melita is steep and rocky, with only a couple of places that has a shore suitable for a landing of a ship the size of Paul's. God had carefully positioned Paul's ship at such a location just off the shores of Melita. PSALMS 77:19 tells us: *Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known*. Recall also that we noted earlier how there is no darkness of midnight from God's perspective. It was ordained from the eternity's past that Paul's ship would arrive at the island of Melita during the darkness of a very stormy midnight. Had they arrived during the day light hours they probably wouldn't have anchored the ship, but rather would have ran aground unprepared, without a plan, in a panic, and at a weird angle that could have meant great loss of life as the ship was destroyed by the violence of the waves.

One thing we haven't talked about yet is that after anchoring from the stern, the position of the ship in the water will have changed. For the last fourteen days they had drifted with the bow of the ship pointing an angle into the wind, and because of the wind, and rough sea, the ship it's self was laying hard to the right. When the anchors finally arrested the ships progress, the wind would have pushed the bow further to the left, thus pointing the ship more towards the land. At the same time the position of the ship would change relative to the sea, in that it became a little more upright, thus offering access to parts of the ship below deck that had become inaccessible during the storm. For example in verse 18 they had lightened the ship as much as possible, but in verse 38 they lightened the ship once again. Probably the wheat that they now were going to throw into the sea had become inaccessible back in verse 18, and with the changed angle of the ship this wheat was once again reachable. Another thing to realize here is that the sound of the waves had changed since anchoring, because these waves were hitting the ship at a different angle too. All of these things just added to the tension, anxiety and fear being felt by all on board Paul's ship.

As we cover the next few verses let's pay particular attention as to how the Lord mightily used the prisoner, the Apostle Paul, to PREPARE all his shipmates to escape the tempestuous sea for a safe arrival upon land. This is a key point to understanding the depths of this chapter, that is, Paul was used of the Lord to PREPARE all on board this ship for a safe arrival upon land. As we go through the last part of this chapter we also will see the different factions of personnel on this ship, and their various selfish motives highlighted. Specifically we will see that the shipmen, or sailors, had one idea,

and the soldiers another idea, or two. The prisoners may have had differing ideas also, but there was little they could do as a group since they were in the charge of the soldiers. Any other passengers on this ship may have had other ideas themselves as how to escape safe to shore. Obviously what was needed here is strong leadership in this time of darkest midnight trial, not a bunch of loose cannons ready to go off at a moments notice. The ship owner, and the ship master showed no leadership here. The centurion Julius, the leader of the soldiers, does show his authority over the soldiers, but only after being directed by the lowly prisoner, the Apostle Paul. So we find Paul, the Apostle unto the Gentiles during this yet present church age, highlighted in these remaining verses, not only as the man of faith that he was, but also as the real pilot in charge of this doomed ship. His instructions were to be followed if all were to arrive safe to land. And, of course, we find Paul getting his leading, and guidance, and knowledge as to what to do during this storm from the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Add to that the fact that the Apostle Paul had previous experience with shipwrecks. He had already written in 2 CORINTHIANS 11:25 *...thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep...*. This then would be his fourth shipwreck, and this time indeed too was unique, for Paul this time had been given information by the Lord, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, as to how to deal with all the differing factions on board this ship, and properly PREPARE them for a safe arrival upon Melita. This PREPARATION we are talking about includes being PREPARED mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually for the task at hand. Certainly all on Paul's ship wanted off of it as soon as possible, and no doubt each one on board had his own ideas as to what do to escape the confines of the ship. Paul didn't know the motives of the shipmen, or the soldiers ideas this stormy night, but God did, and this information also was revealed to Paul by the prompting of the Holy Ghost. With a few kind words of wisdom inspired by the Holy Ghost, Paul was able to put all of these different people on his ship in a frame of mind to the point where they all were of good cheer by verse 36.

Another thing we haven't even thought about too much yet, is the fact that these different factions may have even spoken different languages. The sailors were probably Egyptian, and the Roman soldiers probably spoke Latin, and Greek, so there may have been some communication issues that complicated their current situation. However Paul would have been the perfect one to bridge the communication gaps, for Paul could speak Hebrew, his native tongue, and Greek, the language of Tarsus where he grew up, and Latin, the language of the Roman Empire. Also as we move on in ACTS 27 we continue to see, as we have noted before, that the Apostle Paul here is highlighted as the man of faith that he was. And, as we also previously made mention, the importance of following Paul as he followed Christ is the under lying message that is pictured in this story for us living in this church age.

ACTS 27:30 *And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship, 31 Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.*

In verse 30 we find the shipmen, the Egyptian sailors, not willing to follow the instructions of the Apostle Paul. They had a better idea on how to be saved. Their idea was to go on shore by way of the life boat, and let all the others fend for themselves. So under the false pretense of casting out the anchors from the bow of the ship, they let down the life boat into the sea. The sailors obviously didn't believe Paul's earlier message from verse 24 that *...God hath given thee all them that sail with thee*. Nor did they believe Paul's words of verse 25: *...I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me*. And they only partially believed Paul's words of verse 26: *...Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island*. Their version of "we" only included the shipmen themselves, not all on board this ship. They were only thinking of themselves, and their own safety, leaving everyone else to their own fate. Obviously they had little love for those beyond their own.

This plan of the shipmen did not escape the perception of Paul. We know from studying GALATIANS 4:13-15, and 6:11, and ACTS 23:3 that Paul had poor eyesight by this time in his life. Poor eyesight doesn't improve at midnight either. When the scales fell off of Paul's blinded eyes as Ananias of Damascus prayed for him to receive the Holy

Ghost back in ACTS 9:18, Paul's vision was restored, but more importantly his spiritual vision was made better than twenty-twenty. Paul then with the guidance of the Holy Ghost could see the things he had been taught all of his life in scripture from a perspective that made the picture of Christ found throughout all scripture, crystal clear to him. Additionally Paul was given the word of wisdom by the Holy Spirit, the word of knowledge by the Holy Spirit, the gift of healing by the Holy Spirit, and the discerning of spirits by the Holy Ghost, just to mention a few of the many gifts of the Spirit that Paul wrote about back in 1 CORINTHIANS 12. Yes, Paul had better vision after being filling with the Holy Ghost; better spiritual vision. Back here on this anchored ship in the dark stormy night the Holy Ghost showed Paul the sailors true plan, which was to escape by themselves in the life boat. Paul then *...said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved...* verse 31.

Doctrinally there is a message here concerning salvation. God's plan revealed unto Paul concerning being saved from off of this ship, was one plan that included everyone on Paul's ship. There wasn't a plan of deliverance for the sailors, and a different plan for the soldiers, and a still different plan for the prisoners, and so forth. There was only one fore ordained plan of salvation here, just as there is only one way to obtain the eternal salvation of God, which is to *...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...* as stated in ACTS 16:31. Peter, when before the Sanhedrin council, a group like the sailors here on Paul's ship that had a different plan for salvation; Peter told them about Jesus Christ, and in ACTS 4:12 said unto them: *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* Again God has only one plan of salvation for all mankind, which is phrased like this in ROMANS 10:9 *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* Jonah prayed out of the fishes belly in JONAH 2:9 *Salvation is of the LORD...* and the very next verse tells: *And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.* LAMENTATIONS 3:26 states: *It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.* Some on Paul's ship had been quietly waiting for the salvation, or deliverance from this ship since his "be of good cheer" speech of verses 21-26. God's plan that was given Paul for the 276 souls on this ship was stated in verse 24 like this: *...God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.* Going off in another boat on your own is not sailing with Paul, is it? This is what the sailors were trying to do, obtain salvation by another means than following Paul's message, which was given to him by God in the first place. In ROMANS 1:16 Paul had already written: *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.* The sailors on Paul's ship may not have believed his message as we noted above, but Julius the centurion, and the soldiers did, and they heeded Paul's words: *Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved...* verse 31. In verse 32 we find the soldiers instantly cutting the ropes attached to the life boat, and letting it fall off into the sea.

Let me quote here from Brother Copley: "There was no physical salvation from drowning that day except by obeying Paul's word; neither is there any salvation for any man save by believing Paul's gospel. The curse rests upon those who preach any other gospel -- GALATIANS 1:8, 9. Hence "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel" (ROMANS 2:16), said Paul. The place and power of his message is tremendous; it is incalculable, invaluable." {End of quoting from Brother Copley.}

Note that Paul made it known to Julius the centurion, and his soldiers, no doubt by a loud voice: *Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved...* verse 31. Paul's message of good cheer had not resonated in the hearts of the sailors, yet, but apparently it had somewhat pricked the hearts of the soldiers, for we find them immediately springing into action. ACTS 27:32 *Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.* For the time being the soldiers, in their own best interests, believed these words of the Apostle Paul: *Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved...* verse 31. Every Roman soldier had as a part of his uniform a short sword, which was instantly available unto them, and here their short swords were swiftly used to cut the ropes of the life boat, thus letting it fall off into the sea, never to be used again as a tool of escape by those on Paul's ship. Obviously the life boat wasn't going to be the means to salvation for those on Paul's ship.

Imagine now the additional anxious tension that was on board Paul's ship. The sailors were put at an odd place with everyone else on board. Certainly the soldiers didn't trust the shipmen's next move either. The soldiers also knew that their best chance for surviving, and escaping to shore was by having the experienced sailors on board their ship, for their seamanship experience was critical as they were the one's who knew how to beach a ship. Later in verse 42 we will see that the soldier's mind set was to kill the prisoners lest they should escape. Obviously too this was not a well thought out plan, for where would the prisoners escape to? The sea? Or the very same land that the soldiers were hoping to escape to? And back in verse 26 Paul had already told them that they would be cast upon a certain island. How would the prisoners escape the island? They wouldn't, but that thought process wasn't with the soldiers at this time. So what we find here on Paul's ship at this time is an extremely elevated level of tension, and high emotions amongst the 276 souls on board, and some very faulty reasoning. Contributing to this kind of irrational thinking was stress, fatigue, and hunger. They need strong leadership. They need a voice of reason. They need direction from on high. They need some one they can trust. They need help. They need a miracle. God will give them all of the above, wrapped up in one old worn out package, the Apostle Paul.

Keep in mind that at this point in time, while it was still night, none of the 276 souls on Paul's ship were really yet PREPARED for the day that lay before them. ACTS 27:33 *And while the day was coming on,...* . Let's don't read this too quick, but realize that it was still a dark stormy night in this verse. One translation reads: "Then while everyone waited for the day to break... ." It was "about midnight" when they first perceived they were approaching land, (verse 27) and all of the events we have read about till now, and even up through verse 38, take place before day. We have noted the uneasiness, and strong emotions, and high tensions, and unrest, and anticipation that was now present upon this ship. Yet there has been only one voice of reason, and truth, and leadership found upon this ship, which was the Apostle Paul. The Lord would now use Paul to calm down the anxious souls on board this ship, and properly PREPARE them for the task at hand. God had only one plan of salvation for them ALL, and His man on the scene would reveal what they were to do next. For them all to arrive safe on land they would have to follow Paul's instructions. Stated another way they would have to believe Paul's message in order to be saved from certain drowning. Of course we are to also see the typical teaching presented here.

ACTS 27:33 *And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.*

Finally a calming voice of reason, and instruction, and wisdom; a voice that spoke words of truth and soberness; pure words, wholesome words; words spoken by a man *...nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine...* 1 TIMOTHY 4:6. These inspired words of Paul, which are now scripture, diffused the tension present on board this ship, and diverted everyone's attention back to where they could focus upon just what it was Paul was urging them to do, which was for them *...all to take meat...* and eat.

Now picture the condition of all on board this ship. Paul reveals here in verse 33: *...This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.* The nay sayers find this to be almost impossible, that is to go without food fourteen days *...having taken nothing.* Such action would leave them all exhausted, and extremely fatigued, and near death it seems. They hadn't planned to do this continued fasting thing, but their lives had been in so much constant danger that eating a meal hadn't even entered into their thought process. They had really lost track of time. It seems that for the past two weeks all the human effort of those on Paul's ship was expended full time trying to keep this fragile Alexandrian ship from sinking. Bailing water, most likely, had become the duty of all 276 on board this ship; a twenty-four hour a day job without end, and no time for eating food. Remember in verse 20 that Luke wrote how that *...all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.* Such words does not stir up one's appetite, but rather encourages one's system to shut down. How can a bunch of lethargic starving men be expected to swim to shore if necessary, or even hang on to a broken piece of wood from the ship? We again see that they really weren't PREPARED to vacate the ship yet. Once again we note God's wisdom in having them arrive in the middle of a dark stormy night just out of reach of land where they

were forced to anchor, and wait for God's deliverance from this stormy situation. Had they arrived at this very same spot during daylight hours,... we already have seen the varied differing actions they all were planning on taking. They each had fourteen days, and nights to go over in their own mind what they would do to get off this ship, and 276 souls had 276 different ideas how this was to be done. God had another plan, and he had revealed His plan to the Apostle Paul as to how to save these men from this storm. With the guidance of the Holy Ghost, Paul was now PREPARING his ship mates for a safe arrival upon this island.

Paul now has everyone's attention brought back into the ship, instead of worrying about the unseen breakers, and shore outside the ship. And Paul urgently, and kindly, yet firmly continues to encourage of these starving men, ACTS 27:34 *Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.*

There are two key words in this verse that really enrich our doctrinal understanding of the deeper teaching typified in this verse. The first word we will examine is the word "health," which comes from the Greek word *soteria* {so-tay-ree'-ah}, (number 4991 in The Strong's Greek Concordance), that is usually translated to our English word "salvation," but is found this one time translated as "health," meaning: deliverance, preservation, safety, or salvation. We have already discussed that the number fourteen is the number that points to DELIVERANCE or SALVATION, so we once again find the thought of SALVATION underlined by the Holy Spirit in this word "health." (More on this shortly.) The second word emphasized here in verse 34 is the word "meat," which comes from the Greek word *trophe* {trof-ay'}, (number 5160 in The Strong's Greek Concordance), that is usually translated "meat" in the New Testament, meaning: food or nourishment. *Trophe* {trof-ay'} is found sixteen times in the New Testament, four times in this 27th chapter of ACTS: first in verse 33, next here in verse 34, then in verse 36, and in verse 38 where *trophe* {trof-ay'} is translated "had eaten." How do these two Greek words enhance our doctrinal understanding? These two words show the spiritual importance of feeding upon Paul's gospel: *...take some meat: for this is for your health...* . The meat speaks of the richness of God's word, and *...the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ...* spoken of in ROMANS 15:29. Paul's gospel magnifies the SALVATION and DELIVERANCE we have in Christ Jesus, in whom begins our spiritual health. Paul wrote in ROMANS 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.* Paul's gospel also leads the believer into the depths of *...the unsearchable riches of Christ...* (EPHESIANS 3:8).

Let's dig into this thought of feeding upon the word of God in a little more depth. The children of Israel wandering in the wilderness for forty years was allowed of God to teach us many practical lessons in trusting God. Had the children of Israel really believed God like they should, their time wandering in the wilderness could have been reduced to just a few days. Yet for forty years God sustained them in the wilderness. He gave them food to eat, and specific instructions on when, and how to gather it. This food was called "manna." Interestingly we find the word "manna" exactly nineteen times in scripture, and nineteen is the number pointing to FAITH. "Manna" is also a type to us of The Word of God, which is also another name for Jesus the true giver and sustainer of life. The word of God is our spiritual food. Of course the Apostle Paul knew the importance of feeding upon the word of God, for he wrote much about it, and noted this connection to FAITH in ROMANS 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

We first read of "manna" in EXODUS 16. EXODUS 16:2 *And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: 3 And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger. 4 Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no. 5 And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day*

they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. ...15 And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat. 16 This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents. 17 And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. 18 And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating. 19 And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. 20 Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them. 21 And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted. 22 And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. ...30 So the people rested on the seventh day. 31 And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. {PSALMS 34:8 Taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.} 32 And Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. 33 And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations. 34 As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. {And we read of this in HEBREWS 9:4 where we find ...the golden pot that had manna,... which was preserved incorruptible as a testimony, and a standing miracle for the children of Israel for their future generations to point them, and us, to the incorruptible life that we have in Christ Jesus by being born again.} 35 And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.

After forty years of wandering in the wilderness, upon reaching the east side of the Jordan River, the border of the land of Canaan, Moses gave a speech unto the children of Israel, and this speech is known to us as the book of DEUTERONOMY. And Moses spoke to them of the "manna" they had eaten these past forty years in the 8th chapter of DEUTERONOMY. DEUTERONOMY 8:1 All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers. 2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. 3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live. 4 Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years. 5 Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee. 6 Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him. ...11 Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: 12 Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; 13 And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; 14 Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; 15 Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; 16 Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; 17 And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. 18 But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God:

for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

In JOHN 6 we find three different references to the "manna" given the children of Israel in the wilderness to sustain them. Those that were questioning Jesus about "manna" here were only looking to Him for a meal ticket while here on earth. However Jesus shows, and teaches in JOHN 6 that the "manna" given the children of Israel in the wilderness only pointed to the true bread from heaven, which was Jesus Christ Himself, and that He is the true sustainer of the eternal life which He gives the believer. Jesus noted that the "manna" was bread from heaven for the children of Israel to eat. And that Christ Himself is the bread of life given from heaven itself; upon whom we too find eternal sustenance; by whom we can grow up into Him in all things, if we only will feed upon His word. Let's read this discourse concerning "manna" in JOHN 6. And as we get into the following verses, note in the early part of JOHN 6 that Jesus had fed a great multitude of about five thousand. Afterwards Jesus fled this multitude and crossed the Sea of Tiberias. The day following the multitude whom he had fed found him, and began questioning Jesus, which brings us to verse 26.

JOHN 6:26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. 27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. 28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? 29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. 30 They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? 31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. 32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. 34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. 35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. 36 But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. 37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. 41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. 42 And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? 43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. 44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. 46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. 47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. 48 I am that bread of life. 49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. 52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? 53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead:

he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. 59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

Having now examined in a little more detail the importance of feeding upon God's word, and especially Paul's gospel, let's return to our text, and then apply what we have just studied to this portion of scripture. ACTS 27:34 *Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.* 35 *And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat.* As we noted earlier, the word "meat" in verse 34 speaks of "nourishment, or food," and now in verse 35 we see the word "bread," which speaks of food in general, the necessities for the sustenance of life; the spiritual application which we just also briefly looked into. In order for the 276 souls on Paul's ship to be properly PREPARED for the day that now lay in front of them, they would have to follow Paul's instructions, and Paul's leading. And as we look into some more thoughts found in these verses, may we learn how to be properly PREPARED for each day that is before us too. Are you out on the storm tossed sea of life, hopeless, bailing water, slowly sinking in a sea of despair, and spiritually starving to death? Or are you of good cheer on this very same storm tossed sea of life, feeding upon the word of God, and eating of the bread of life? *Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health:...* (verse 34). If we are to be spiritually healthy, we must feed upon spiritual meat. The Corinthian Saints were not ready to feed upon spiritual meat when Paul wrote to them in 1 CORINTHIANS 3:1 & 2 *And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.* Again in HEBREWS 5 Paul wrote: 11 *Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. 12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.* Let's read again ACTS 27:34 *Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health:...* . The application for us is this, spiritual meat is for our spiritual health. Unto Timothy in his final epistle Paul wrote to this seasoned Saint, and fellow Apostle in 2 TIMOTHY 2:15 *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* Stated another way Paul was telling Timothy: *Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health:...* .

Some other interesting detail is given in verse 34 *Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.* Focus upon that last statement: *....for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.* This is a statement full of faith and assurance. This statement points to the protection promised those under God's watchful care. Before we examine these doctrinal points, let's spend a moment considering the subject matter here, which is hair. We all have some hair on our heads, and most of us want our hair to look nice, so we take care of it, wash and shampoo it, and brush, or comb it until we think it looks good. Some of us spend more time doing this than others, and some make a living cutting, coloring, and styling our hair. And our hair constantly grows, and needs trimmed periodically to make us feel a little better about how we look, or how we think we look. Yet our hair never aches, or hurts, nor do we feel it if we lose one here or there, nor do we really miss a hair if it falls by the wayside, and hair doesn't bleed if it gets cut. Some like to draw attention to themselves by doing radical things to their hair, as we all know. Now back to this statement in ACTS 27:34 *....for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.* Do any of us really think that these 276 sea sick nearly starved to death men on Paul's ship were really considering what their hair looked like, or even what was going to happen to their hair at this point in time? No, absolutely not. Their hair, and the care and condition of their hair wasn't even a thought that entered their mind. So why did Paul even mention their hair here? There are a couple of reasons. First, this was a proverb which the Hebrews used to express the thought that they will be safe, and that none would perish. This same kind of expression is found in 1

SAMUEL 14:45; 2 SAMUEL 14:11; and 1 KINGS 1:52. Jesus also used similar words in LUKE 21:18 *But there shall not an hair of your head perish.* Secondly, Paul made note that *...there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you...* to get these men to realize the protection, and keeping power of God, whom Paul was trying to get them to trust in for themselves. Paul was letting these men know that his confidence was in God, and that he was certain that no harm would come upon any of them, nor would any of them even loose one hair as God provided the means for them to safely arrive upon land. An individual hair speaks to what is least valuable to man, and yet each individual hair of each man are numbered, by God, and does not fall out without His knowledge. We read of this fact in MATTHEW 10:29-31, which reads: *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.* (Without the knowledge of God.) *30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.* You talk about paying attention to detail, ...none of us can truly grasp how much God pays attention to every detail in our lives. And He has from the ages past ordained the very steps we must take, for again we note: *The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way...* PSALMS 37:23. Furthermore God knows just exactly when, and where we lost each individual hair that we loose over the course of our life. Certainly we don't even know when this happens most of the time. So if God pays that close of attention to us that He knows the very number of hairs on our head, don't you think that He can take perfect care of the far more important details in our lives? Even in your life? This was the concept that Paul was trying to convey to his fellow shipmates when he said: *...for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.* And they listened as Paul PREPARED them for land fall.

Paul continued PREPARING these men for their arrival upon land in ACTS 27:35 *And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat.* We noted above that the word "bread" used here speaks of food in general, meaning the necessities for the sustenance of life. Here in the presence of them all Paul put into action what he had been talking about, and was PREPARING them for. With this phrase *"...in presence of them all..."* we see 550 eyes fixed upon the Apostle Paul, most, no doubt, wondering what he would do next. Paul had his priorities in the proper order that all full overcomers do, that is Paul put God first in everything. Paul didn't eat first and then give thanks unto God, but rather Paul took the bread, and before eating of it, he, with a loud voice in the presence of all on board this ship gave thanks unto God. Paul's life was a living testimony unto these men, and though he may have been a curiosity to some on this ship, they all were now seeing with their own eyes a man who practiced what he preached. Let's let Paul own words describe the overcoming Christian attitude, which is a thankful attitude we read of in COLOSSIANS 3.

COLOSSIANS 3:12 *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. 14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

Certainly there were those on Paul's ship wondering just what it was he was so thankful about. Their attitude may have been: "get me out of this situation, and then I will be thankful." But Paul wrote in his very first epistle *...In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you...* 1 THESSALONIANS 5:18. Being thankful, as Paul was, has no boundaries, no limits, and looks forward too, as well as backwards; looks up, as well as looking down. In other words true heart felt thankfulness is really a statement of faith. By manifesting in the presence of them all, thanks to God, Paul was acknowledging the following: (1) that he was truly thankful for the food God had preserved, and provided here on this ship, that he, and the others were

about to eat, (2) that he was thankful for the nourishment, and strength this food would provide, (3) that he was thankful for the safe journey that had brought them to this place, (4) that he was thankful for the safe arrival upon land that he was now trusting God for them all, and (5) that he was thankful they could, and would be of good cheer realizing also the DELIVERANCE and SALVATION that was now theirs. So we see that this man of faith was quick to give God thanks in everything, and for everything that the Lord had brought his way. All full overcomers will achieve this level of thankfulness, for after all where is the focus of the full overcoming Saint? Upon themselves, and their circumstance, or upon Christ our Lord and Saviour, and soon coming Bridegroom? With such an upward focus, how then can we not be thankful?

Note that it was the Apostle Paul who was the action figure here. He put his faith into action. He first spoke after long abstinence the words that were upon his heart; words inspired by the Holy Ghost. He also spoke instructions, which thankfully were heeded. He then spoke words of health and healing, which were now being acted upon. Paul then gave thanks unto God in the presence of them all. And then in the last part of verse 35 we see that Paul took the bread *...and when he had broken it, he began to eat.* Note it was Paul, our action figure, who began to eat. Perhaps all on board were too stunned, too out of it, too wore out to eat. They were in no mood for food. However only a brief period of time elapsed before they truly came to their senses, and realized that this strange old man, the Apostle Paul, was indeed telling them the truth *....Then were they all of good cheer,...* (verse 36). What an amazing statement that they all were of good cheer. How could this be? Certainly they were still in the same boat, in the same storm, facing the same fate as before, or were they? Paul had gotten them to take their eyes off of their circumstances, and was pointing them to observe what God could do in their own lives. Paul had already told them that he believed God, that God had given all of these that sailed with him a safe journey off of this ship, and that they too should be of good cheer having been given this news. Paul had been giving them this kind of encouragement since verse 21. Now here in verse 36 the message Paul has been preaching has begun to sink in, and it says: *....Then were they all of good cheer,...* . It's kind of hard to eat when you don't feel like it, isn't it? But now that they are believing Paul, and of good cheer, we find in verse 36 *...and they also took some meat.* They were now finally getting PREPARED to land upon shore. This food, this meat, gave them the strength they would need to swim ashore if need be. They had now moved away from that dangerous precipice they were facing in verse 20 where all hope that they should be saved was taken away.

ACTS 27:37 *And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.* This is an interesting place to give an accounting as to how many people were on this ship. This statement also helps answer just how big this ship was. It was big enough to carry 276 people; 276 souls. PROVERBS 14:25 in part reads: *A true witness delivereth souls:...* . Certainly the ministry, and testimony, and witness of the Apostle Paul to all these 276 souls again answered the calling Jesus gave to him on the road to Damascus, which we studied much about in ACTS 26:16-18, where we read: *But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.* In noting the number of people on Paul's ship we see underlined, and emphasized the mighty keeping power of God. Apart from the power of God there would have been certain death for some as they arrived near land here. We already have seen where the sailors were ready to abandon ship, and they would have had not it been for the wisdom of the Apostle Paul allowing them to be foiled in their plan. The sailors, and the soldiers, and the prisoners, and the rest of the passengers, and people in authority on this ship became a captive audience of Paul's during this dark stormy last night aboard his ship. And they all got to hear his testimony, and his witness of how God was going to deliver them; yes, all 276 of them, without even losing one hair amongst 276 heads of hair! Now I ask, which is more important, noting that they would all escape safe to land without

loosing one hair, or the saving of their souls? The correct answer is of course the saving of their souls. Don't you suppose this very point was brought out here by the Apostle Paul as he encouraged each of these 276 men to eat food, and to be of good cheer? We again are not told here in this chapter how many had accepted Jesus as their own personal Saviour on this ship. However all 276 had the opportunity for over six weeks, or more, to listen unto the Apostle Paul tell the story of redemption, and this last night on the ship they all heard Paul encouraged each of them before the Lord. One wonders how they all could have been of good cheer had they not believed in Jesus as their Saviour, and that He would indeed DELIVER them all safe to land this up coming day.

ACTS 27:37 *And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.* It seems there was an inventory done this very night as to how many souls were on this ship. That way they would know upon reaching land if any were lost. And Luke further notes in verse 44 *...And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.* How did Luke know this? Because they had an accurate count of the fact that there were *...two hundred threescore and sixteen souls...* on the ship before they made land fall, and there were *...two hundred threescore and sixteen souls...* that escaped safe to land, with their hair intact. But as we noted above, it wasn't their hair that God was interested in, it was their souls. One of the many lessons we as believers can learn here is just how much attention God pays to us. He knows the number of hairs on our head; He knows our hearts intent; He knows our down sitting, and our uprising, and our thoughts afar (PSALMS 139:2). God loved us so much, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life... (JOHN 3:16); whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins... (ACTS 10:43). Bridal Saints also know His desire is towards us (SONG OF SOLOMON 7:10); that we are the joy that was set before Him, (HEBREWS 12:2); that He will never leave us nor forsake us (HEBREWS 13:5); that nothing can ever separate us from the love of Christ (ROMANS 8:35); and that He hath made us kings and priest unto God (REVELATION 1:6). Certainly God knew that there were *...two hundred threescore and sixteen souls...* on Paul's ship, and he had the Holy Spirit leave us a permanent record of this fact here in ACTS 27:37. Each of these souls were important to Him.

So what does the number 276 mean? When we did our study on the different meanings of Bible numbers we noted that each number has a meaning with God, and some numbers have more than one meaning. We also noted that in order for us to determine what a number means that we would have to have two or more examples left us in scripture as SUFFICIENT TESTIMONY, or SUFFICIENT WITNESS as to the meaning of a certain number. In fact SUFFICIENT TESTIMONY, or SUFFICIENT WITNESS were two of the meanings of the number two. For example in 2 CORINTHIANS 13:1 we read: *...In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.* That then would be a SUFFICIENT TESTIMONY, or SUFFICIENT WITNESS. In the book of NUMBERS chapters 13 and 14 we read that two of the spies (Joshua and Caleb) gave a good report, which should have been a SUFFICIENT TESTIMONY, or SUFFICIENT WITNESS to the children of Israel that they could go in and conquer the land that God had promised to give them. But back to the number 276, what does it mean? Up until this point in time I have only found this one example in scripture where the number 276 is noted. In other words there is not sufficient witness as to the meaning of the number 276. However I have been given a little insight as how to reckon some meaning from the number 276, which is by examining the numbers 2, 7, and 6 individually. Well, as we just noted, the number two is the number of SUFFICIENT TESTIMONY, or SUFFICIENT WITNESS, and two is also the number that points to JESUS the second personality in the Godhead. The number seven is a number we have also often referenced in this study, and seven is the number of SPIRITUAL PERFECTION or SPIRITUAL COMPLETION. The number six has three different meanings: it is the number of MAN; it also is the number of SATAN; and it is the number referencing SATAN'S INFLUENCE OVER WORLDLY MAN. Now standing the numbers 2, and 7, and 6 side by side we glimpse SUFFICIENT TESTIMONY, or SUFFICIENT WITNESS of the SPIRITUAL PERFECTION or SPIRITUAL COMPLETION found in the MAN who puts his faith and confidence in the Lord. Of course there are several scriptures that also bear this very same point out. PSALMS 34:8 *O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.* PSALMS 84:12 *C LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.* JEREMIAH 17:7 *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the*

LORD is.

ACTS 27:37 *And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.* Now let's do another accounting using the numbers found here in verse 37. First two hundred. We noted in our meaning of the Bible numbers study that two hundred was usually used in scripture to PROVE SOMETHING. In JOHN 6:5-7 we find the following inventory given before Jesus fed the five thousand. JOHN 6:5 *When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? 6 And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. 7 Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.* So we see a little of how the number two hundred is used to PROVE SOMETHING. In ACTS 27 do we find the Lord trying to PROVE SOMETHING? Certainly we do. 200 is also the product of 40 (PERFECT TESTING) times 5 (GRACE).

Next let's look at threescore, which is another way of saying sixty. The number sixty has to do with SECOND TIME or SECOND PLACE. One example of this is found in Sarah, whose name is found sixty times in scripture with three different spellings (Sarah, Sarai, and Sara). Sarah was given a SECOND TIME at youth, and bare Isaac when she was ninety. In ACTS 27 the men on Paul's ship were given a SECOND TIME at life, saved from certain death at sea by the grace of God.

Sixteen is the number of LOVE. Sixteen things are said of LOVE in 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-8. God is LOVE. 1 JOHN 4:8 *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 1 JOHN 4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.* The men on Paul's ship here in ACTS 27 were certainly witnesses to the fact that God is LOVE, and they all had opportunity to accept God's gift of LOVE, Jesus Christ, as their own personal Saviour.

Then one more thought concerning the number 276, and that is to note the sum of $2+7+6=15$, and fifteen is the number of REST. Paul's ship was now at REST here in ACTS 27, at REST in fifteen fathoms of water. What we then glean from all of this is that the number 276 points us to the story of that great worthy of faith found here in ACTS 27, the Apostle Paul, whose example we too are to follow in believing God, that it shall be even as it was told him, who told us in his epistles how we too could have God's best, and obtain that SPIRITUAL PERFECTION, and SPIRITUAL COMPLETION by following Paul as he followed Christ; by sailing in Paul's ship through the remaining few days of this church age. Stated another way, the number 276 points us to this wonderful story we have here in ACTS 27, and though faced with many impossible midnight trials, we too can be found among those of good cheer feasting upon God's word as we wait for the Lord's soon coming.

ACTS 27:37 *And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.* It is interesting finding the wording here *...And we were in all in the ship...* To me it seems it would be a lot easier to say *...and we were in the ship 276 souls*, but that is not the way the Holy Ghost has it recorded. For a moment let's focus on the phrase "all in." Eliminate these two words and ACTS 27:37 reads a lot easier: *And we were in... ..the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.* However this is not how this verse reads, because the Holy Ghost wants to draw our attention to these words: "all in." There are probably several reasons for this, so let's consider some of them.

We then should do an accounting here, and ask ourselves, are we "all in" Paul's ship? Make it personal. In other words whose ship are you in if not in Paul's ship? Who are you sailing with? Whose gospel are you following? There are many assemblies in the world today, but few that dive into the depths of Paul's gospel, and preach the whole council of the world of God expounded upon in Paul's gospel, which was given to us of this yet present church age. These are not my thoughts concerning the Apostle Paul, but rather a stating of a fact that the Apostle Paul himself noted in COLOSSIANS. COLOSSIANS 1:25 *Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;...* That word "fulfil" is number 4137 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, and it means: to make full, to fill up, i.e. to fill to the full, to complete, to fill to the full, to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally, to fill to the top: so that nothing shall be wanting to full measure, to fill to the brim. Paul's gospel was given to him, in other words, to fill up, or to complete scripture, so that there would

be nothing lacking us as we sail life's stormy sea! This is just one reason why we should learn and know the gospel of Paul, to be "all in" Paul's ship. We should also realize, especially as a race course runner, the great responsibility that is ours in following the Apostle Paul, especially if we ever expect to have God's best in our lives. Paul's gospel was given unto us specifically for that purpose, that is so that we could have God's best in our lives. Paul faced all kinds of adversity to bring us his gospel message. We too may face various kinds of adversity in learning the truth of Paul's gospel, though this is not a popular message, thus it is seldom preached, especially in the Laodicean churches which prevail in the world today. The church of Laodicea is not "all in" Paul's ship, however those of the church of Philadelphia are "all in" Paul's ship. What distinguishes the church of Philadelphia from the other churches found in REVELATION 2 and 3? Answer: their apprehending the full council of the word of God, which includes all of Paul's gospel. (Those of Smyrna did too, however the Saints of Smyrna figure all of the full overcomers from this church age who died during this church age. Only to the churches of Smyrna, and Philadelphia is the giving of crowns found. But what distinguishes the church of Philadelphia from the other churches is the mention of their knowledge, and keeping of the word of God in REVELATION 3.) REVELATION 3:8 *I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. ...10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.* Certainly we find that the Philadelphian Saints are "all in" Paul's ship.

To be found "all in" Paul's ship then, one needs to know Paul's gospel. And this particular point has been a theme underlined all throughout this study on the life of Paul. We can not do a study of the life of Paul without covering Paul's gospel. Paul himself lived Paul's gospel, as do all the full overcomers from this church age. Stated another way, Paul's gospel is found etched deeply in the hearts, and in the homes of all New Testament full overcomers! In this present church age it is our enlightened privilege to learn and to know Paul's gospel, and furthermore we need to know Paul's gospel for the following reasons: ROMANS 2:16 *In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.* ROMANS 16:25 *Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,....*

To know Paul's gospel, one must first learn the doctrines taught by the Apostle Paul. Here is a partial list of the many doctrines afore mentioned in this study that are taught by the Apostle Paul, some of which we have written chapters about.

The doctrine of grace is emphasized in Paul's gospel. The word "grace" is found 170 times in scripture, and is used 99 times by the Apostle Paul in his writings! What this means is that no other inspired writer of scripture wrote about, nor probably appreciated the grace of God more than the Apostle Paul did. He learned on the road to Damascus: *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.* {EPHESIANS 2:8 & 9}.

The doctrine of eternal security is further expounded upon in Paul's gospel. ROMANS 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* TITUS 3:7 *That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

Next we note that the Apostle Paul emphasized the importance of the doctrine of the Holy Ghost in his teaching. In ACTS 19:2 Paul returns to Ephesus and after finding certain disciples of the Lord there, he asks them: *"Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?"* They didn't know what Paul was talking about, so he expounded unto them the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, and then in verse 6 of ACTS 19 we read: *And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.* Their speaking in other tongues was evidence of their getting filled with the Holy Ghost. Furthermore Paul's gospel is where we learn more of the importance of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, (study 1 CORINTHIANS 12-14).

Paul's gospel also teaches more about the doctrine of water baptism, (study also ACTS 19:1-5). In 1 CORINTHIANS 1:22 Paul writes: *For the Jews require a sign,....* Water baptism was a definite sign unto the Jews that one had accepted Jesus Christ as their own

personal Saviour. {See pages 59 & 168 of these notes.} Later Paul wrote in ROMANS 6:3 & 4 -- *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.* Again in COLOSSIANS 2:12 Paul penned more teaching concerning the doctrine of water baptism, stating: *Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*

We noted when we studied ACTS 19 that Paul taught much concerning the doctrine of the laying on of hands. ACTS 19:11 *And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: 12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.* Prior to this we found in ACTS 14:3 that *...Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.* In 2 TIMOTHY 1:6 we read these words of Paul: *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.* And then in HEBREWS 6:2 Paul make further mention of some of the doctrines he taught: *...the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.* Are you "all in" Paul's ship yet?

Concerning Paul's gospel of the resurrection of the dead study 1 CORINTHIANS 15. Along with this doctrine is Paul's gospel teaching of the doctrine of ranks in the resurrection. Study these verses: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:20 *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.* The word "order" here in verse 23 comes from the Greek word "tagma" {tag'-mah} (number 5001 in The Strong's Greek Concordance) found only this one time in scripture, and it means: (1) that which has been arranged in order, or a thing placed in order; (2) a body of soldiers, a corps; (3) a band, a troop, a class, a rank. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words tells us that "tagma" {tag'-mah} signifies that which has been arranged in order, which is a military term denoting a company, and speaks of the various classes of those who have part in the first resurrection. In the military there are different ranks, and each rank, or band, or troop, marches in different orders at different times. The Apostle Paul likens the resurrection to this. Simply put there are different ranks in the resurrection, and Paul expounds this doctrine in 1 CORINTHIANS 15.

Also noted by Paul in HEBREWS 6:2 was Paul's doctrine concerning eternal judgment, which is expounded further in the following scriptures written by Paul: ROMANS 1:32; ROMANS 2:2-5; 2 THESSALONIANS 1:5; 1 TIMOTHY 5:24; HEBREWS 9:27 and 10:24.

Paul's gospel teaches on the doctrine of prophecy in 1 CORINTHIANS 14. We wrote a chapter in these notes on Paul's gospel teaching about the doctrine of separation, (see pages 504-513 of these notes). Another chapter is found in this study about Paul's gospel record on the doctrine of deliverance, (review pages 513-530). ACTS 19:12 summarizes the doctrine of deliverance: *So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.*

We indicated above that to be found "all in" Paul's ship, one needs to know Paul's gospel, and the doctrines he taught, and the doctrine of separation leads to the following additional doctrines, and mysteries taught by Paul, which are not taught by those assemblies who are not sailing in Paul's ship. Paul's gospel teaches the doctrine of joint-heirship, the doctrine of being a full overcomer, and a New Testament worthy of faith, the doctrine of a race course runner, the doctrine of having God's best, the doctrine of the hope of His high calling, the doctrine of the glory of His inheritance, the doctrine of suffering with Christ Jesus, the doctrine of the mystical body of Christ, plainly stating in EPHESIANS 5:23 *...Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.* This is a very simple statement *...Christ is the head of the church*, not a Pope, not some other man, but *...Christ is the head of the church*. The doctrine of the Bride of Christ is also emphasized in Paul's gospel. This just scratches the surface of

the many things that one can learn by being “all in” Paul’s ship, and leads to many other hidden mysteries that are also revealed through Paul’s gospel.

Paul’s gospel teaches of seven mysteries not found in other scriptural records, that were hidden in ages past, which are: (1) the mystery of Israel’s blindness, (ROMANS 11:25); (2) the hidden mystery, (ROMANS 16:25; 1 CORINTHIANS 2:7; COLOSSIANS 1:26, and EPHESIANS 1:9); (3) the mystery of translation, (1 CORINTHIANS 15:51-53 and 1 THESSALONIANS 4:15-17); (4) the great mystery of the bride, which unfortunately remains a great mystery in most churches today simply because they do not have the Holy Ghost to teach them the truth, and if they do they fail to see Paul’s doctrine of ranks in the resurrection, (EPHESIANS 5:32); (5) the mystery of Godliness, (COLOSSIANS 2:2 and 1 TIMOTHY 3:16); (6) the mystery of iniquity, (2 THESSALONIANS 2:7); and (7) the mystery of faith, (1 TIMOTHY 3:9). Paul’s doctrine was given him specifically for this church age, and was primarily given him to reach the Gentiles as noted in ACTS 26:16-18. ACTS 26:16 *But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.* Paul’s doctrine teaches about the two natures, and the two heads, (the first man Adam, and the second man Adam, which is Christ Jesus). Paul’s gospel teaches about the natural man, the spiritual man, and the carnal man. Paul’s gospel reveals how to put off the old man, and how to put on the new man. Further Paul’s gospel teaches how to put on the whole armour of God; and how to, as the elect of God, to put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, and charity, and how we may grow up into Him in all things. Paul’s gospel makes known the whole counsel of God, and how to put on the armour of light. Paul’s gospel teaches us that we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. Those sailing in Paul’s ship are taught to be established in Paul’s gospel, to the end that Christ Jesus may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his Saints. Paul’s gospel teaches us how we are to rule and reign with Christ, as the full overcomers in the Bride of Christ taken from this church age! Paul’s gospel teaches to love His appearing, and to be constantly looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, as we patiently run the race that is set before those “all in” Paul’s ship. Are you “all in” Paul’s ship?

ACTS 27:38 *And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.* Let’s consider the thought of having eaten enough next. We actually talked about this earlier in this chapter when we examined the Greek word for “meat” in verse 34, which is trophe {trof-ay’}, (number 5160 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance), that is translated “had eaten” here in verse 38. {Review these notes starting on page 1006 for some more thoughts on this subject.} Trophe {trof-ay’} is found sixteen times in the New Testament, four times in this 27th chapter of ACTS: review verse 33, 34, 36 and 38. We also see this word trophe in ACTS 14:17 where it is translated “food.” The context of ACTS 14:17 enhances the meaning of having eaten enough here in verse 38, so let’s again consider what was said back there in ACTS 14.

Recall in this portion from ACTS 14 that Paul was on his first missionary journey with Barnabas, and a crippled man at Lystra had just been healed by the Lord by the proclamation of Paul. The heathen people of Lystra then began to worship Paul, and Barnabas, and brought sacrifices before the gates of the city, where we pick up our reading in verse 14. ACTS 14:14 *Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, 15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: 16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. 17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.* Here we find the word trophe (food) used to show not a filling of the stomach, but rather ...filling our hearts with food and gladness. Back in

ACTS 27:38 this is exactly what has happened unto the 276 shipmates on Paul's ship. Not only had they eaten enough to fill their stomachs, but with the encouragement of the words of the Lord spoken by the Apostle Paul, they too found their hearts full with spiritual food, and gladness.

Now you might think this to be a bit of a stretch here, but consider what has taken place on this ship since midnight. We first noted a ship load of hungry, sea sick mariners who had given up hope of ever being saved (verse 20). Then when approaching land they feared crashing upon the rocks (verse 29). Next the sailors sought to abandon ship (verse 30) until Paul, our action figure, and man of faith on this ship began to take charge at the leading of the Holy Ghost. There were no hearts full with food, nor were their any stomachs full of food either, until the Apostle Paul gave thanks unto God in the presence of them all, and began to eat, and encourage each of the other 276 to do likewise; to look for help from God above to give them the strength they needed to get through the very trying day that now lay before them. The encouraging words of Paul inspired these starving men to have the proper attitude before God, and then eat. ACTS 27:36 notes that after Paul gave thanks to God in the presence of them all, and began to eat that: *Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat.* What did they do first, eat, or be of good cheer? They had filled their ...hearts with food and gladness... and then ...they also took some meat... filling their stomachs to the full.

So we read again in ACTS 27:38 *And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.* The words ...when they had eaten enough... equates to another phrase found exactly seven times in scripture: "to the full." PSALMS 78:25 *Man did eat angels' food; he sent them meat to the full.* The men on Paul's ship had eaten a satisfying abundance, to the point of achieving a fulness in their stomach. Now they were better PREPARED to face the tasks of the day that lay before them, and they now expected to arrive safely upon land.

Let's consider the spiritual application found here for ourselves. Have you ever eaten enough of the Word of God? How much is enough? There comes a point in all studying of the Bible, whether in church, or at home alone, when you really can't take any more in without first letting what you have just received settle a little. I remember when I was about fourteen sitting in church one time, and really taking it in, when I felt like jumping up and saying "time out, too much too fast." Some have equated this to trying to take a drink from a fast flowing fire-hose. At that point in time, for me, I had eaten enough. I was satisfied, and overflowing all at once. This is a wonderful place to come too. As time went on I could take in more and more, a concept I hope all of us appreciate. It is wonderful to be full of the Word of God. Unfortunately too many Christians are like the men on Paul's ship, starved for the Word of God, not even realizing that they hadn't eaten for fourteen days and nights.

Consider Enoch for a minute. Recall that GENESIS 5:24 tells us that *...Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him.* HEBREWS 11:5 explains that Enoch was translated: *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.* Here is the deal with Enoch. Enoch didn't have a Bible to study the Word of God like you and I do, so Enoch communicated with God, and had close fellowship with God, and fed upon God's word as he walked hand in hand with God. And God told Enoch some things. Enoch even prophesied things yet future according to JUDE 1:14 & 15, things revealed unto him in his close fellowship with God: -- *And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, 15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.* Enoch learned these things from the Lord Himself, and obviously Enoch told them to others who remembered his words until the time that Jude could pen them down. Enoch kept walking with God, and feeding upon God's Word until one day God reached down His Mighty Hand and took Enoch home without him seeing death; this, in part, to leave behind a testimony unto us of what it means to be translated. Enoch believed God, believed God's Word, pleased God, and diligently sought God. HEBREWS 11:6 goes on to say this after first mentioning Enoch in verse 5: *But without faith it is impossible to please*

him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Enoch became an Old Testament full overcomer because he diligently sought God, fed upon His Word, until one day God determined Enoch had eaten enough here on earth, and was ready to continue this close fellowship in heaven above. Certainly Enoch was constantly loving the Lord's appearing; enjoying walking with God; being satisfied to the full with his close fellowship with God, and feeding upon His Word. All of the first rank full overcomers will be full of the Word of God. Think about it, have you eaten enough?

ACTS 27:38 *And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.* We need to take notice of some other changes aboard Paul's ship indicated in this verse. Before their meal only one man had a true plan of action, and that was the Apostle Paul. He was the action figure we noted above in verse 35 who had first taken meat, and began to eat, after giving thanks to God. Paul had received his guidance from the Lord all through this journey, and had now been given the wisdom of how to PREPARE these 276 to become active action figures themselves. Paul's gospel PREPARES all who receive it to become action figures of faith also. Note here also that there was no lack of sustenance found here. They all had enough to eat, and they all, everyone of them, had eaten enough. This gave each soul on board a different focus. Full stomachs changed everyone's attitude. There were now 276 readied action figures on this ship. After eating they all were useful, and could be used to help one another get ashore. This was to be done in an orderly fashion, and so we note the next task at hand was to PREPARE the ship for land fall. Verse 38 explains what was done to make ready for an arrival upon land: *...they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.*

The question here comes to mind, why didn't they cast the wheat out into the sea back in verse 18 when they initially lightened the ship? A couple of answers present themselves here. First, back in verse 18 they had not yet all lost hope of ever being saved. Secondly, at that time access to the wheat may not have been achieved due to the angle of the ship in the water. Some speculate that it was not likely, while drifting and tilted sideways into the wind, that the hatchways of the ship could have been opened for the purpose of tossing the wheat overboard. However after anchoring by the stern the ship had now changed angles in relation to the sea, thus making the wheat accessible. Thus they now could lighten the ship even further by tossing overboard all the excess cargo, which consisted mainly of wheat. The purpose of all of this action was to further lighten the ship, as noted in verse 38, causing it to ride higher in the water, giving the sailors their best chance of running this large vessel as far as possible upon the shore. By the time this task of removing the wheat was completed, the day had dawned, and the land was visible, and they were physically, and mentally PREPARED to move on.

ACTS 27:39 *And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.*

Recall in this chapter that we have noted how, among other things, the Apostle Paul is highlighted as a man of faith. As a man of faith, and an Apostle, and an example of who we are to follow as he followed Christ, we have noted several examples in this chapter of how Paul expressed his faith. Paul's first words recorded in ACTS 27 are found in verse 10 when he says: *...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.* Though it may not appear on the surface like this is a statement of faith, in reality it was. The Lord had showed Paul something here, and he believed the Lord, *...that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.* So Paul in his gentle and kind manner expressed what he believed with these words. Paul didn't condemn these men if they too didn't believe him. Paul only expressed what he believed by faith to be true. Yet Paul himself didn't want to experience any of this hurt or damage for himself either, but, by faith, he knew that if they didn't hearken unto his words that the fact still remained *...that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.* We noted in verse 11 how that *...Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.* The point being here that these men were not yet to the point where they would heed the warnings of our man of faith in this chapter, who was Paul. So because of their unbelief they got to experience a trial like none of them had ever

faced before, a severe storm caused by a very persistent, and tempestuous wind called Euroclydon, that had caused them to be lost a sea fourteen days and nights. This was quite a storm. In verse 20 we read these distressing mournful words: *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.* By this point in time all on Paul's ship too realized *...that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.* No wonder then that they had lost all hope of escaping this storm alive.

Now let's back up for a second here, and review a few verses that the Apostle Paul has some years before already written, statements found in his very first epistle. And as we read these words, realize that the Apostle Paul was now here in ACTS 27 once again experiencing these very same things in his own life. 1 THESSALONIANS 5:14 *Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.* 15 *See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.* 16 *Rejoice evermore.* 17 *Pray without ceasing.* 18 *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.* 19 *Quench not the Spirit.* 20 *Despise not prophesyings.* 21 *Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.* 22 *Abstain from all appearance of evil.*

Do you see back here in ACTS 27 these very same words being tested in Paul's life? *Rejoice evermore...*? How could one *Rejoice evermore* in such a storm? This is only possible with a clear focus upon the Lord, and not the storm. *Pray without ceasing.* No problem in the storm, but how about when things are going good? *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.* So when all on Paul's ship got to the point that *...all hope that we should be saved was then taken away...* in verse 20, what do you suppose our man of faith, Paul, was doing? Rejoicing evermore. Praying without ceasing. And in everything giving thanks, knowing that this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning Paul himself! No wonder then that Paul, our highlighted man of faith in ACTS 27, could offer the words of exhortation he gave in verses 21 through 26. ACTS 27:21 *...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.* It was the Lord who gave Paul these words. Our action hero of faith, Paul, believed that all of this was going to happen just as it was told him.

After these words we have also pointed out how these men on Paul's ship then begin to really pay closer attention to the instructions of the Apostle Paul. And even more so as each one of these things began to come to pass this stormy dark night. Paul believed God, by faith of course, that it was going to happen even as the angel of God had told him! By verse 36 Paul had convinced all 276 souls on his ship that they too could be of good cheer, for there was going to be no loss of any man's life among them, and not even a hair would fall from the head of any of them (verse 34). And all of this was done before the light of day.

Which brings us back to further highlight Paul as the man of faith in this chapter. Recall that HEBREWS 11:1 defines faith by stating: *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* Stated another way, faith is not sight, a concept also expressed in ROMANS 8:24 & 25 *--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.* By faith Paul anticipated a safe arrival upon land. By faith Paul was persuaded that no circumstance, no darkness of a cloudy rainy night, no stormy sea, no persistent gale force wind, nothing was going to keep God from performing those things that was told Paul by the angel of the Lord

concerning those on this ship. By faith Paul had PREPARED 276 souls to be action figures themselves, anticipating for all a safe arrival upon land when it was day.

ACTS 27:39 *And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.* It is interesting to note that our man of faith, and action figure Paul is no longer leaned on for guidance or direction in this chapter after verse 35. Paul's words of good cheer had found their mark in the hearts of the 276 souls on board this ship, to the point that each man knew that his individual destined arrival upon land would be safe. No doubt Paul's words of encouragement still echoed in each of their hearts as the darkness of night gave way to the gray rainy light of day. We glimpse a little of how this was by taking notice of how the little word "they" is used from verse 36 on in this chapter. Each time "they" is mentioned from verse 36 on, "they" were PREPARED action figures, knowing the tasks that lay before them, and acting on them. Review on your own verses 36 through 44 and see how "they" ate, "they" lightened the ship, "they" made a plan for moving the ship, "they" took up anchors, "they" committed themselves unto the sea, "they" ran the ship aground, and "they" all escaped safe to land. It certainly is amazing what a little "true Light" can do: *...the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth....* 1 JOHN 2:8. It was Paul who had expounded unto these men about the "true Light," who is Jesus, and it was Jesus who said in JOHN 8:12 *...I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*

ACTS 27:39 *And when it was day,...* . The word "day" is mentioned eight times in this chapter, and this is the last time we find it here. One of the meanings of the number eight is NEW BEGINNING, and certainly that is one of the things we find here for the 276 souls aboard Paul's ship, that is they had a NEW BEGINNING at life starting this day. Obviously they all were saved from the confines of the ship lost at sea this very day, but more importantly many of them were saved eternally by putting their faith in Christ Jesus. For those who did ask Jesus into their heart this day truly was one of NEW BEGINNING.

ACTS 27:39 *And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.* The anticipation that now was prominent amongst the 276 souls on Paul's ship was now reaching a climax. 276 eyes were trying hard to recognize the land whose coasts they were now anchored off of, however *...they knew not the land...* . Had they been paying close attention unto Paul back in verse 26 they would know that they were on the shores of a certain island. Perhaps if one of them had recognized the landscape they could have anticipated what to expect for a landing; things such as a rocky coast, or a sandy beach. But *...they knew not the land...* thus anything they would notice about the shore would be a discovery to them. This brought the excitement level up a notch or two. After a period of time *...they discovered a certain creek with a shore...* meaning they detected an inlet with a sandy looking beach, which attracted their attention. This discovery then becomes useful in their making a decision as what to do next. This becomes a point of reference for which they could aim the ship in a last ditch effort to beach the ship if at all possible. Thus the last statement we find here in verse 39, *...into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.*

From what we read here this seems like a workable plan, so why were there any doubts if this was possible? Several factors enter into their thinking here. One obstacle was the weather, which consisted of rain, and the still persistent wind blowing hard from their right, or from the north-north east. They could use the wind to their advantage considering their relative position to the land, however several other factors will make taking advantage of the wind a most difficult endeavor. For one, the waves, being exceedingly violent, and would keep them from maintaining a direct course. Then factor in the degraded condition of the ship, which no doubt was still constantly leaking, and thus slowly sinking. Add to that the fact that in verse 19, on the third day of the storm, they had cast out the tackling of the ship, thus not leaving themselves a whole lot of sail, or sailing tools to work with. And now while anchored the rudders are of no use, and may have been raised out of the water, and stowed in order for the anchors to be lowered and secured. Thus we find that there were many obstacles to

overcome in order for them ...if it were possible, to thrust in the ship... upon this sandy looking beach.

Our ship load of actions figures "were minded," were determined in other words; had taken counsel amongst themselves, and had now come up with a plan of action as to how to get the ship on shore. This plan is implemented in verse 40. *ACTS 27:40 And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoised up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.* This plan required a great deal of coordination as they simultaneously dealt with the anchors, the rudders, and what was left of the mainsail. Obviously a bunch of work is noted here. First in order was to deal with the anchors. Our King James translation notes that they had taken up the anchors, however the Greek word translated "taken" here is *periaireo* {per-ee-ahee-reh'-o} (number 4014 in The Strong's Greek Concordance), which literally means here casting off anchors, and giving them to the sea. No doubt they cut the anchor ropes, for certainly they didn't need the extra weight of these four anchors upon their sinking ship, which they had just lightened as much as they could. Simultaneously they loosened the rudder lashings, as the ship began to move with the wind, and waves towards land. While all of this was taking place, other of the sailors were hoisting up what was left of the tattered foresail into the wind.

Now imagine trying to do all of this without the sailors on board this ship. Perhaps it could be done, but it is highly unlikely, thus we see the wisdom of the Holy Ghost prompting Paul back in verse 31 to say concerning the sailors: *...Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.*

As they gather momentum towards land think of the excitement that must have been felt by all 276 on board this ship. They all are now at the mercy of the wind to blow this ship where it was destined to go. 276 pairs of eyes were wide open as they all experienced a ride more thrilling than any thing Disney Land, or Disney World could offer. Additionally consider also as they race towards shore, that this ship they were in was one of the largest, and finest sailing vessels in the world of Paul's day. It was an Egyptian vessel large enough to carry 276 passengers, their goods, and a load of grain. Even though this particular ships' sailing integrity had been greatly compromised by the storm, and by lightening the ship of it's tackling, it still remained a very heavy vessel. Further more it had taken on a lot of water, and was probably leaking, which means it would still ride very low in the water. Thus as they "made toward shore" we find that they were strictly at the mercy of the wind and waves as they tried to steer a course for their intended target. The heavier the vessel, the harder it is to steer.

One thing that probably crossed their mind while now sailing in this low rider was the depth of the sea. We now know that there are places off the coast of Melita that are now about eight feet deep. Perhaps that was the case in Paul's day too. Verse 41 indicates this to be true. *ACTS 27:41 And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.*

Quite a bit of information is conveyed in this verse. We first and foremost note here that they didn't hit their intended target, which was shore. They didn't plan on running the ship aground so far from land. We must remember that it was God who really was guiding this ship, and He had controlled the spot to which they had now arrived. They were indeed stuck, no doubt upon a sand bar, or a reef. This reef was formed over time by opposing currents, thus during a storm as the waves intensified, these opposing currents would come together, and on the waters surface it would appear like two seas meeting. As they approached this point, the waves would reach their greatest height, and may have even appeared to them like rapids on a great stream. To the passenger, and to the sailor, this would be the roughest ride they had experienced since leaving The Fair Havens back in verse 13. No one would have anticipated getting stuck right here, yet that is exactly what has happened. The thrill level, and the magnitude of fear here was off the chart. Yet Paul had already PREPARED them for this possibility when he told them in verse 26 *Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.* The phrase "be cast" in verse 26 means: to fall upon; to fall upon the ground. This is exactly what has happened here to the ship in verse 41 -- *And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.* The ship

had fallen upon the ground, but the men upon Paul's ship had a little ways to go to reach land. This fear they were experiencing in verse 41 was not exactly the same kind of terror they had faced in verse 17, where they feared falling upon the quicksand's, though they were now in a similar situation. These men had been PREPARED by Paul to expect to arrive safely upon shore, where back in verse 17 they feared death at sea. We will find later in verse 44 *...that they escaped all safe to land...* as Paul had told them they would, but before we get to that point, there are some more adventures for all currently on Paul's ship.

Before we dive in to the verses that follow, let's finish looking into what else is found here in verse 41. There are a couple of "two's" found in this verse, which also have spiritual significance.

In our meaning of different numbers of the Bible, we learned that the number two showed SUFFICIENT WITNESS or SUFFICIENT TESTIMONY. Additionally we noted that the number two also pointed to JESUS, the second personality in the Trinity, and in everything He did on earth He pointed to number one, God the Father. For example Jesus said in JOHN 6:38 *For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.* Again JESUS speaks in JOHN 8:29 *And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.* So we see in everything that JESUS did He always pointed to number one, God the Father. Stated another way, JESUS was SUFFICIENT WITNESS or SUFFICIENT TESTIMONY to God the Father. There is another meaning for the number two, which we did not discuss in our original numbers study, that comes into play here in ACTS 27:41, and that meaning is DIVISION. So the number two is also the number of DIVISION, however two's usage with this meaning often points back to the real number two, JESUS. Let's learn how this is.

The word DIVISION is only found six times in scripture, however the thought of DIVISION is found several times in scripture. The first time we find the word DIVISION is in EXODUS 8:23 *And I will put a division <06304> between my people and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be.* Here we see a DIVISION between two peoples, a common theme found all through out scripture, and a deeper look into the Hebrew word used here that is translated DIVISION really highlights JESUS Christ Himself. The Hebrew word translated DIVISION in EXODUS 8:23 is number 06304 in the Strong's {ped-ooth'}, and usually speaks of redemption, or ransom. Who is our Redeemer? JESUS. Who paid our ransom on the cross. JESUS.

Again in the New Testament we find JESUS Himself, The Word of God, telling how it was that He was sent to be a divider of men, as noted in the following scriptures: LUKE 12:51 *Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: 52 For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. 53 The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.* A similar statement is found in MATTHEW 10:34 *Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.* Again in MATTHEW 12:30 we read: *He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.* And in JOHN 7:43 we find this statement: *So there was a division among the people because of him.* Similar statements are also made in JOHN 9:16, and in JOHN 10:19, where we see people taking two opposing sides. JOHN 9:16 *Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. JOHN 10:19 There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. In all of these instances the DIVISION was because of JESUS.*

Having now reviewed a few points concerning the number two, let's get back to our text of ACTS 27:41 and note the "two's" of this verse, and see their spiritual

significance. ACTS 27:41 *And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.* Here we first find “two seas.” These “two seas” are representative of the DIVISION among men during this church age from two religious seas --Catholicism and Protestantism, (more on this in a minute). Secondly in verse 41 we find Paul’s ship in DIVISION. The “forepart” is one DIVISION, and the “hinder part” is another DIVISION. Brother Copley noted that the “forepart” of this ship is likened unto the Catholic Church, who has “stuck fast, and remained unmoveable,” and undivided to this day. Protestantism on the other hand has been “broken with the violence of the waves” of religious heresies, and unscriptural doctrines, being DIVIDED into many sects, all claiming to be right systems. Brother Hawkins wrote a little more about this in the August 2011 Grace and Glory Magazine, noting that “the whole of Paul’s ship never reached land in one piece, and neither will the Church.” He then noted some more DIVISIONS among the Church, writing: “many have decried the teaching of a “split rapture” over the years, but scripture plainly teaches that all Christians will not arrive in heaven at the same time.” Brother Hawkins further noted how some Christians arrive in heaven, translated before the tribulation, (study REVELATION 3:10), and how a great multitude, which no man could number of Christians arrive in heaven coming out of great tribulation, (study REVELATION 7:9 & 14). {End of quoting Brother Copley, and Brother Hawkins.} So we glimpse a little concerning the spiritual significance of the different “two’s” in this verse, and how they point to DIVISION. And this DIVISION between “two” doesn’t end in verse 41 either. In verse 42 we will find “the soldiers” divided against the “prisoners.” Verse 43 goes on to note a DIVISION between Julius the centurion, and the soldiers. Also in verses 43 and 44 we see yet another DIVISION between those who could swim, and those who could not.

Having now noted a little of how the number two sometimes points to DIVISION, let’s quickly note how the Apostle Paul taught on this subject. And as we review a few scriptures from Paul’s gospel concerning DIVISION, realize that the Holy Ghost inspired Paul to write what he did as SUFFICIENT WITNESS or SUFFICIENT TESTIMONY highlighting JESUS and the one who brings unity out of DIVISION. We will first go to ROMANS 16, a portion of scripture that more properly belongs with the letter to the EPHESIANS, as pointed out in Brother Copley’s study book on Ephesians. ROMANS 16:17 *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. 18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.* On the very next page of our Bible’s Paul’s continues this subject in his first epistle to the CORINTHIANS. 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10 *Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. 13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?* Of course the obvious answer to all of these questions is no. 1 CORINTHIANS 3:1 *And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? 5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. 8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. 9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building. ...21 Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; 22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or*

life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; 23 And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

These three portions of scripture are indeed SUFFICIENT WITNESS, or SUFFICIENT TESTIMONY as to how Paul expounded upon the theme of DIVISION, and pointed out such DIVISIONS have no place with the unity that is found in Christ JESUS. (Remember that JESUS name also is associated with the number two.) Again we see in everything that JESUS did He always pointed to number one, God the Father, and the unity we can have with Him through Christ. {Review page 1022 of these notes.} And that is exactly the same point Paul emphasized in his epistles, that *...ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's,... one in unity.* Note what Paul wrote in this next portion of scripture. EPHESIANS 4:1 *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. 7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

Let's return in our thinking to our study in ACTS 27. Before we move on into verse 42, let's make an evaluation here, and examine the choices that brought this ship load of men to this point. If we could take a snap shot of where we have arrived here in verse 41, we get a picture of 276 souls having no other choice but to abandon ship, and swim for shore. The ship was no longer in one piece, and it would carry them no further. Thus each person on the ship now had two choices to make: sink, or swim. What brought these men to this collective point? The Lord, of course, but it was the choices they had made previously in this chapter, that brought them to this precipice of two seas.

Recall a few years back Brother Hawkins gave some lessons at the youth camp entitled "Choices, Choices, Choices." Brother Hawkins intention was to point the youth in the proper direction in their decision making processes, so that when they got a few years down the road, if the Lord tarried, that they could look back and not regret the choices they were making in life. Brother Hawkins even stated in these lessons: "Know assuredly that we will be held accountable for those choices, regardless of how frivolous, or how unthinking we may have been in making the choice."

Back in ACTS 27:11 & 12 we read how the majority on this ship had voted against the admonishment of Paul to stay put, safely anchored off the coast of Crete. Thus they chose to sail the sea that lay before them, ignoring the counsel of the man of God. At first their choice seemed like it was the right one to make. After all *"...the more part advised to depart..."* (verse 12) rather than heed an old man's admonishment, who appeared to know nothing about sailing. Besides the winds were now favorable in verse 13, thus they supposed *"...that they had obtained their purpose..."* So confident were they in their choice of sailing, that they didn't even bother to take in the life boat, but rather let it ride behind the ship. After all they were only going a short distance to a better port in the "palm land" of Phenice, where they thought life would be good for the

winter. *"But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon...."* (verse 14). Perhaps a few sailors thought they could escape this violent wind, however with each passing minute came the realization that maybe the old Apostle knew what he was talking about. A choice not to heed the man of God, whom the Lord placed on their ship for spiritual guidance, had consequences that none of them could even imagine. Each passing hour brought more fear, and less hope, until they collectively reached the point in verse 20 where all hope that they should be saved was then taken away. By now all aboard had learned a lesson, which was, if we had listened unto the man of God, and heeded his warnings, none of this would have happened unto us. Choices, choices, choices.

God had a plan for these men, but in order for them to know God's plan, they would have to heed the words of His Apostle, whose admonishment back in verse 10 they had ignored. Paul then was given, by the angel of God, the right words for these men to receive. Again they had a choice to make, heed Paul's words, or choose to ignore him once again. Obviously by verse 36 they all had heeded the words of Paul. Never the less Paul's message unto them included what is said in verse 26 -- *Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island...* which in this instance literally means: to fall out of, or fall down from the ship, and be washed upon land. Recall in verse 40 that *...they committed themselves unto the sea...*. This means that they had really committed the ship unto the sea, themselves being in it, but now with the ship being ripped apart by the violence of the waves, they now were committing themselves unto the sea also. In short, they were all going for a swim. That was how they were too *...be cast upon a certain island*. Now think about this: when did they commit themselves unto the sea? When did they decide they wanted to go for a swim? Their swimming choice was really made back in verses 11 & 12 when they chose not to heed the words of the Apostle Paul! Choices, choices, choices. They had been warned what the consequences could be if they made the choice to sail against the admonishment of God's Apostle, yet they collectively made the choice in verses 11 & 12 to commit themselves unto the sea. Remember what we noted above from Brother Hawkins camp study on Choices, Choices, Choices? It can be summed up like this: there is a price to pay for the choices we make, and we will be held accountable for those choices, regardless of how frivolous, or how unthinking we may have been in making a particular choice. Wise choices then start by considering what God wants, and not what we demand. Back here in ACTS 27 we find that 276 souls realize that they collectively had made a very poor decision to sail, and that they really should have hearkened unto Paul. However God gave them another couple of opportunities to heed Paul's words before this time of ship wreck. And they all had now received Paul's words of good cheer, and had, in fact, become of good cheer themselves. They still had to live with their earlier choice of sailing after being warned not to, but now, after following Paul's instruction, they collectively have made another choice: *...they committed themselves unto the sea...*. Back in verse 13 they sailed in unbelief of Paul's words. In verse 40 they sailed in belief of Paul's words, believing that *...God hath given thee all them that sail with thee...* (verse 24), and *...there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you...* (verse 34). Now when *...they committed themselves unto the sea...* in verse 40, they really committed themselves into the hand of God who created the sea, and they fully expected Him to deliver them all safe upon shore just as Paul had told them! Of course they didn't really have to go through all of this in the first place, if they had only believed earlier, however God is still faithful, and in the end, they did wind-up learning God's plan for their life.

One lesson we can all take away from studying ACTS 27 is that our better choices are made by following God's word rather than complicating things for us by doing things our own way. PSALMS 37:3 *Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. 4 Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. 5 Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.* PROVERBS 16:3 records a similar thought: *Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.* Do you want to be firmly established? Do you want to be strengthened in you own decision making process? Do you want to make the best choices in your own life? Here is how to do that. ROMANS 16:25 *Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept*

secret since the world began, 26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: 27 To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen. In short, if you want to make the best choices in your own life, yield unto the power and guidance of the Holy Ghost, for it is Him that is of power to establish you according to Paul's gospel.

ACTS 27:42 *And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape. 43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land: 44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.*

Look at this statement from verse 42: *...the soldiers' counsel...* . The word "counsel" here is the Greek word *boule* {boo-lay'} (number 1012 in The Strong's Greek Concordance), which means: a piece of advice; a determination; and speaks of the counsel of men. The same Greek word is used earlier in this 27th chapter of ACTS, in verse 12 where *boule* {boo-lay'} is translated "advised." ACTS 27:12 *And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west.* We already have seen how that counsel worked out, ...not so good, for that is how they originally got into this stormy situation, which could have been avoided had they at first heeded the admonishment of the Apostle Paul. They were determined to sail in verse 12, and now here in verse 42 the soldiers advice was to kill the prisoners. Obviously these were not good thoughts that they were having here. We read in PSALMS 94:11 *The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity....* meaning a puff of air. Again in PROVERBS 12:5 we find this statement: *The thoughts of the righteous are right: but the counsels of the wicked are deceit.* ACTS 27:42 *And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.* We previously noted the faulty reasoning here, for if the soldiers had just thought about it for a minute or two they should have realized that it would be impossible in the situation that they now found themselves in for anyone to swim out and escape in such a storm. And if someone could be found to accomplish such a feat, where would he swim out to? The sea, against the wind, and crashing waves, and the current of the sea. And where would such a person escape to? The very same sea from which they all were now trying to escape from. Simply put, there was no place to escape to by swimming out into the sea. And should they escape once upon land where would they escape to? A "certain island" that Paul had told them of in verse 26. Once on the island there was no escape except out to sea again, which we already have seen wasn't a place of escape either. So there was no escape even reasonably possible for these prisoners.

Now let's put ourselves in the mind set of the Roman soldier in charge of a prisoner here. This Roman soldier was under orders to deliver such and such a prisoner to the place he was being sent. Should the prisoner escape, the soldiers fate was death, for failing his duty. Not to pleasant of a prospect was it? No wonder then that their first thought *...was to kill the prisoners...* . Recall it was the Roman soldiers who crucified Jesus, so they wouldn't have any problem killing a lowly prisoner. So we find little here to prevent the soldiers from killing the prisoners, ...but God, who had already dealt with the heart of the centurion Julius to have a higher perspective.

By this point in time of the journey toward Rome, Julius, (the Roman centurion in charge of the Roman soldiers, and the one ultimately in charge of all the prisoners, including Paul), {ACTS 27:1}, was more than willing to save the life of the Apostle Paul, for he had courteously entreated Paul ever since verse 3. Thus we read in verse 42 *But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose;... of killing the prisoners.* Additionally Julius gave new orders, which the Roman soldiers were now bound to follow. Julius' orders are found in the rest of verse 43, where he *...commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land:...* . Julius commands were given to the soldiers, and these orders directly affected the prisoners. On commentator notes that one part of the Roman military discipline was to teach the soldiers to swim. If that were true then who else was Julius speaking to when he *...commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea,*

and get to land:... ? He was addressing the soldiers care of the prisoners, *...that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land:... .* In order for the prisoners to swim to land, they first would have been released from their prison chains.

The American Standard Version of this verse reads: ACTS 27:43 *But the centurion, desiring to save Paul, stayed them from their purpose; and commanded that they who could swim should cast themselves overboard, and get first to the land;...* . This translation indicates that the swimmers get to land first, which, no doubt, they did. Again Brother Hawkins wrote of this event in the August 2011 issue of Grace and Glory, stating: "They all escaped to land but the "swimmers" undoubtedly reached it first. They represent those who step out by faith, even today, and just believe God, apart from any connection to "The Church" except absolute trust in the promises of His Word. These are those of the Church at Philadelphia who will arrive first in heaven claiming the promise: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." REVELATION 3:10. This verse means that these will arrive in glory before the tribulation even begins." {End of quoting Brother Hawkins, for now.} Brother Copley here also notes that Paul was a good swimmer having already written of surviving three other ship wrecks, (study 2 CORINTHIANS 11:25). Brother Copley further writes: "Those who can swim," or who trust God absolutely, depending only upon His grace, "first get to land." ...Reader do you choose to be in his rank?" {End of quoting Brother Copley.}

So we see that the Philadelphia rank of full overcomers are likened unto the "swimmers" here, who *"...cast themselves first into the sea..."* of the gospel of Paul, which fully expounds the gospel of Christ, and the whole counsel of God, without reservation, without hesitation, and without limitation. Such "swimmers" have *...a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name...* according to REVELATION 3:8.

ACTS 27:44 *And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.* Those who couldn't swim used helps, which consisted of boards, and broken pieces of the ship. Brother Hawkins went on to write: "The rest" who came "on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship" represent those who did claim at least parts of God's Word that were taught in various Churches, and thus have reaped the benefit of it. They become part of *"...a great multitude, which no man could number,"* (REVELATION 7:9) and they do not stand before the throne until well after the first group, for "These are they which came out of great tribulation,..." (REVELATION 7:14)." {End of quoting Brother Hawkins.}

One final thought here concerning the centurion Julius. He had shown favour to Paul since verse 3, but he really didn't begin to believe Paul's message until after being in the storm several days. Recall back in verse 11 we read: *"Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul."* In verse 31 we found that *"Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved."* Here we found that immediate action took place, no doubt after Julius here heeded Paul's words, and had the soldiers cut the ropes to the life boat. When did Julius start believing Paul's word? Probably before the time of verse 24. In verse 24 we read these words of the angel of the Lord spoken to Paul: *...Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.* Certainly then Julius believed Paul's words of verse 26 -- *Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.* Also Julius must have latched on to Paul's message found in verse 34 *...there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.* Certainly too Julius was among those who were of "good cheer" in verse 36. And now when it came time to make a choice between the soldiers, and Paul of whose path to follow in verse 42 & 43, Julius chose to believe the God of Paul. Thus we find him in verse 43 *...willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land.* As a result of Paul believing God, and Julius believing Paul we find in verse 44 *...And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.*