

# Acts 27:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

## Analysis

**When neither sun nor stars in many days appeared**—Without celestial navigation, ancient sailors were utterly lost. The Greek *epikeimenēs* (lay on us) pictures the tempest's oppressive weight. **All hope that we should be saved was then taken away** (περιηρεῖτο)—passive voice indicates hope was stripped from them by circumstances, not merely abandoned. This nadir of human despair sets the stage for God's intervention through Paul's angelic vision. The sailors' professional hopelessness makes Paul's subsequent prophecy more striking—divine revelation supersedes earthly expertise.

## Historical Context

Ancient navigation depended entirely on sun and stars for position-reckoning. Multiple days of storm clouds meant the ship drifted blindly, potentially hundreds of miles off course. The Adriatic Sea (v. 27) had treacherous currents and hidden shoals. This historical detail validates Luke's account as genuine eyewitness testimony.

## Related Passages

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. When has loss of 'celestial navigation'—God's apparent absence or unclear direction—led you to despair?
2. How does human hopelessness create space for God's supernatural intervention and glory?

## Interlinear Text

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μήτε δὲ ἡλίου μήτε ἀστρων ἐπιφαινόντων ἐπὶ πλείονας  
nor And sun nor stars appeared in many  
G3383 G1161 G2246 G3383 G798 G2014 G1909 G4119

ἡμέρας χειμῶνός τε οὐκ ὀλίγου ἐπικειμένου λοιπὸν  
days tempest and no small lay on then  
G2250 G5494 G5037 G3756 G3641 G1945 G3063

περιηρεῖτο πᾶσα ἐλπὶς τοῦ σώζεσθαι ἡμᾶς  
taken away us all hope G3588 should be saved that we  
G4014 G3956 G1680 G4982 G2248

## Additional Cross-References

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**Matthew 24:29** (Parallel theme): Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

**Isaiah 57:10** (Hope): Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope: thou hast found the life of thine hand; therefore thou wast not grieved.

**Jeremiah 2:25** (Hope): Withhold thy foot from being unshod, and thy throat from thirst: but thou saidst, There is no hope: no; for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.

**Ephesians 2:12** (Hope): That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

**1 Thessalonians 4:13** (Hope): But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

**Ezekiel 37:11** (Hope): Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.

**2 Corinthians 11:25** (Parallel theme): Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

**Jonah 1:4** (Parallel theme): But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.

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