

Acts 27:37

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.

Analysis

Two hundred threescore and sixteen souls (276 total)—Luke's precise enumeration serves multiple purposes. The specific number validates eyewitness testimony; ancient writers rarely provided exact counts unless personally present. **Souls** (Greek *psuchai*) emphasizes each person's value to God—not a faceless mass but 276 individuals whose lives mattered. The angel's promise (v. 24) 'God hath given thee all them that sail with thee' meant Paul's prayer had secured every single life.

The number's specificity underscores God's meticulous providence—He knows exactly whom He saves. This census also magnifies the miracle; 276 people reaching shore safely from a wrecked ship without loss exceeded natural explanation. Luke's historical precision throughout Acts establishes reliability of his theological claims.

Historical Context

Large grain ships (like this Alexandrian vessel bound for Rome, v. 6) regularly carried 200-600 passengers and crew. The 276 included soldiers, sailors, prisoners, and passengers. Roman grain ships supplied Rome's million inhabitants; their size and capacity were impressive by ancient standards. That all survived a shipwreck in rough seas was extraordinary, though Alexandrian ships were renowned for quality construction.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does God's knowledge of specific numbers demonstrate His personal care for individuals within crowds?
2. What does the preservation of all 276 teach about intercessory prayer's scope and effectiveness?

Interlinear Text

ἵμεν	δὲ	ἐν	τῷ	πλοίῳ	αἱ	πᾶσαι	ψυχαὶ	διακόσιαι
G1510	And	in	G3588	the ship	G3588	in all	souls	two hundred
G1161		G1722		G4143		G3956	G5590	G1250

ἐβδομήκοντα ἔξι.

threescore and sixteen

G1440 G1803

Additional Cross-References

Acts 2:41 (Parallel theme): Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

Acts 7:14 (Parallel theme): Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls.

Romans 13:1 (Parallel theme): Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

1 Peter 3:20 (Parallel theme): Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

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