

Paul's Shipwreck

Paul is shipwrecked on his voyage to Rome as a prisoner. Though the ship is destroyed, all 276 people on board survive, just as God promised Paul.

Acts 27:1-44

CHARACTERS: Paul, Julius the centurion, Sailors, Soldiers

THEMES: God's faithfulness, Courage, Providence, Mission

PAUL WAS BEING sent to Rome as a prisoner. The voyage was difficult from the start. Paul warned them, 'Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous.' But the centurion followed the advice of the pilot instead.

Before very long, a wind of hurricane force swept down from the island. The ship was caught by the storm. They passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. They threw the cargo overboard. On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, they finally gave up all hope of being saved.

After they had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up and said, 'Men, you should have taken my advice. But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong stood beside me and said, "Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you." So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me.'

On the fourteenth night, the sailors sensed they were approaching land. Fearing they would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors and prayed for daylight.

When daylight came, they saw a bay with a sandy beach. They cut loose the anchors, hoisted the foresail, and made for the beach. But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf.

The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any from swimming away and escaping. But the centurion wanted to spare Paul's life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. The rest were to get there on planks or on pieces of the ship.

In this way everyone reached land safely—all 276 of them, just as God had promised.