

ACTS: ALIGNING WITH GOD'S SOVEREIGN WORK OF DISCIPLING

LXII. Resting In God When Others Fail Us

(Acts 27:1-44)

I. Introduction

- A. The book of Acts explains "the orderly and sovereignly directed progress of the kingdom message from Jews to Gentiles, and from Jerusalem to Rome," Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 351. We can thus learn much about aligning our ministry efforts with God's sovereign work from studying the book of Acts.
- B. Acts 27:1-44 records Paul's voyage and shipwreck on his way to Rome, a journey marked by the failure of others around Paul that risked great harm to them all. Nevertheless, Paul rested in the Lord, and God showed Himself to be faithful. We thus view this passage for our insight, application, and edification (as follows):

II. Resting In God When Others Fail Us, Acts 27:1-44.

- A. Paul knew from the Lord's revelation to him in Acts 23:11 that God wanted him to testify of Christ in Rome.
- B. Yet, others around Paul, contrary to his wise counsel, foolishly risked his not reaching Rome, Acts 27:1-20:
 - 1. The Roman authorities directed that Paul and some other prisoners be sent by ship to Italy, Acts 27:1.
 - 2. Since the winds were contrary to sailing directly west to Italy, the ship sailed north up along the coast of Israel from Caesarea, then went west along the southern coast of what is now modern Turkey until it came to Myra along that coast and there they boarded another ship that was sailing to Italy, Acts 27:2-6a.
 - 3. However, sailing west was hard due to the winds, so they travelled south of Crete, taking much time and stopping at Fair Havens on southern Crete near Lasea since the winds were contrary, Acts 27:6b-9a.
 - 4. The Day of Atonement fast, which is held by scholars to be October 5th of A. D. 59 that year, was already past, so sailing the on the Mediterranean was dangerous, Acts 27:9b; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Acts 27:9. Accordingly, Paul warned the captain and centurion that he perceived that continuing to sail would be harmful not only to the ship's cargo and to the ship, but also to their lives, Acts 27:9c-10.
 - 5. The centurion was more influenced by the captain and the pilot of the ship than by Paul's warning, and since Fair Havens was not suitable for wintering, the majority on board decided to continue sailing to try to reach Phoenix, a port on western Crete that had a harbor that faced southwest and northwest that they might spend the winter there, Acts 27:11-12; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 425.
 - 6. When a moderate south wind then arose, they raised the ship's anchor and began sailing westward close to shore along Crete's southern coast headed for Phoenix in western Crete, Acts 27:13 KJV, NASB.
 - 7. However, a huge wind called Euroclydon, a "treacherous east-northeast wind" soon arose, and since the sailing ship was caught in the wind and could not face it to sail against it, they gave way to it and let themselves be driven out to sea, Acts 27:14-15; Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to Acts 27:14.
 - 8. The sailors took extensive measures to keep the ship from breaking up and sinking in the storm, and after many days amid the powerful tempest, the crew gave up all hope of their ever surviving, Acts 27:16-20.
- C. Nevertheless, God overrode the bad decision of others around Paul to fulfill His plan for him, Acts 27:21-44:
 - 1. When those on board had gone many days without eating food, Paul stood in their midst and told them that they should have taken his advice not to have sailed away from Fair Havens in Crete, Acts 27:21.
 - 2. However, he added that there would be no loss of life, but only of the ship, for God's angel had stood by him that night encouraging him not to fear, that he must stand trial before Caesar, and that God would preserve all on board with him in a coming shipwreck that would occur at an island, Acts 27:22-26.
 - 3. In facing shipwreck, the Roman soldiers wanted to kill all the prisoners lest they escape and the soldiers be executed, but the centurion told them not to kill them since he wanted to keep Paul alive, Acts 27:27-43a.
 - 4. In the end, some of the 276 people on board (cf. Acts 27:37) were able to swim to shore, and the rest used boards or broken pieces of the wooden ship so that everyone eventually made it to land, Acts 27:43b-44.
 - 5. Significantly, the island where they were shipwrecked was Malta (Acts 28:1 NIV), an island directly south of Rome (Ibid., B. K. C., N. T.), so regardless of the hazardous journey made by the bad decision of others around him, God had used that bad storm to move Paul much closer to Rome to fulfill His plan for him!

Lesson: *Though others around Paul risked great harm to him and themselves by foolishly deciding to sail on the Mediterranean Sea at a dangerous time of the year, God kept His promise that Paul would reach Rome and saved him and all on board at Malta, an Island much closer to Rome in accord with God's will that Paul get to that city.*

Application: *May we rest in God's sovereign purposes for us when others around us fail us.*