

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Acts Chapter 27 — Paul's Voyage and Shipwreck

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Acts Chapter 27 is one of the most dramatic chapters in the book of Acts.

Paul is finally traveling toward:

Rome.

Jesus had already promised him:

“You must also testify in Rome.”

Paul appealed to Caesar.

Now the journey begins.

But the road to God's promise is not easy.

Paul travels:

As a prisoner.

Under Roman guard.

Across dangerous seas.

Into violent winds.

Through a storm so severe that everyone eventually gives up hope of survival.

The chapter contains:

Professional sailors.

Roman soldiers.

Prisoners.

A centurion.

A violent storm.

A damaged ship.

A desperate crew.

A failed escape attempt.

And:

One man whose confidence rests upon the Word of God.

Paul begins the chapter as:

A prisoner under authority.

But during the crisis:

He increasingly becomes the spiritual leader of the entire ship.

The experienced sailors initially ignore Paul's warning.

They listen instead to:

The ship's pilot.

The owner.

The majority.

Then a gentle south wind begins to blow.

It appears that their decision was correct.

But suddenly:

A violent wind called **Euroclydon** strikes.

The ship loses control.

Cargo is thrown overboard.

Equipment is discarded.

Neither sun nor stars appear for many days.

Eventually Luke writes:

“We finally gave up all hope of being saved.”

Human hope disappears.

Then Paul stands.

He does not merely say:

I told you so.

Instead:

He gives hope.

He says:

“Keep up your courage.”

Why?

Because an angel of God had stood beside him.

The message was:

“Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar.”

Then comes an extraordinary promise:

God has graciously given Paul:

The lives of everyone sailing with him.

Paul therefore says:

“I have faith in God that it will happen just as He told me.”

That statement is one of the great declarations of faith in Acts.

The storm is still raging.

The ship is still endangered.

Land has not yet appeared.

Nothing visible has changed.

But Paul has:

God’s Word.

That is enough for confidence.

Yet Acts 27 also teaches something important about how faith works.

God promises:

Everyone will survive.

But Paul later tells the soldiers:

“Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved.”

God’s promise does not eliminate:

Wise action.

Human responsibility.

Practical obedience.

The sailors must remain.

The people must eat.

The ship must be handled properly.

When the ship finally runs aground:

The vessel breaks apart.

The soldiers plan to kill the prisoners.

But the centurion wants to spare Paul.

He prevents the killings.

Some swim.

Others float on pieces of wreckage.

And:

Every person reaches land safely.

God did exactly what He promised.

The ship was lost.

The cargo was lost.

The equipment was lost.

But:

Not one life was lost.

Acts 27 teaches that sometimes:

God does not save the ship.

He saves:

You through the shipwreck.

The central truth of Acts 27 is:

God's promise remains trustworthy in the darkest storm, and faithful believers can bring courage, wisdom, hope, and leadership to others by trusting God's Word while taking the practical steps He provides.

I. PAUL SETS SAIL FOR ROME

Acts 27:1

“When it was decided that we should sail to Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, of the Imperial Regiment.”

The journey toward Rome begins.

Paul is still:

A prisoner.

But he is moving toward the destination Christ promised.

Cross References

Acts 25:12

Festus had declared that because Paul appealed to Caesar, he would go to Caesar.

Acts 25:25

Festus had concluded that Paul had done nothing deserving death but sent him onward because of his appeal.

Acts 23:23

Roman military authority had already been used to protect and transport Paul.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God's promise can be advancing even when circumstances make you feel restricted.

Paul is chained.

Yet:

He is moving toward Rome.

II. ARISTARCHUS TRAVELS WITH PAUL

Acts 27:2

“We boarded a ship from Adramyttium that was about to sail to ports along the coast of Asia, and we set out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us.”

Paul is not completely alone.

Luke is present.

Aristarchus is present.

Cross References

Acts 19:29

Aristarchus had previously shared danger with Paul during the riot in Ephesus.

Acts 20:4

He had continued traveling with Paul as a faithful coworker.

Colossians 4:10

Paul later referred to Aristarchus as his fellow prisoner.

Spiritual Principle

Faithful friends become especially precious during difficult journeys.

III. JULIUS TREATS PAUL KINDLY

Acts 27:3

“The next day we landed at Sidon. Julius kindly allowed Paul to go to his friends so they could provide for his needs.”

The centurion shows Paul favor.

Cross References

Acts 24:23

Felix had previously allowed Paul’s friends to care for his needs while he remained under guard.

Acts 28:16

Paul would later receive guarded freedom after reaching Rome.

Genesis 39:21

Joseph likewise experienced providential favor while under confinement.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God can give His servants favor even within circumstances they would never have chosen.

IV. THE WINDS ARE AGAINST THEM

Acts 27:4

“From there we put out to sea again and sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were against us.”

The journey immediately becomes difficult.

Cross References

Acts 21:3

Cyprus had been part of Paul’s earlier sea travels.

Acts 11:19

The region surrounding Cyprus had played an important role in the spread of the gospel.

Acts 13:4

Paul's first missionary journey had also involved sailing near Cyprus.

Spiritual Principle

Opposing winds do not necessarily mean you are traveling in the wrong direction.

Paul is going exactly where God said he would go.

Yet:

The winds oppose him.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“Difficulty Is Not Always Evidence That You Missed God’s Will.”

V. THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

Acts 27:5

“We sailed across the open sea off Cilicia and Pamphylia and landed at Myra in Lycia.”

The journey continues slowly.

Cross References

Acts 21:1

Luke repeatedly preserves detailed information regarding Paul's sea journeys.

Acts 6:9

Cilicia had connections with Jewish communities familiar with Paul's background.

Acts 15:41

Paul had previously strengthened churches through Cilicia.

Spiritual Principle

Progress may be slow while still being progress.

VI. THEY TRANSFER TO AN ALEXANDRIAN SHIP

Acts 27:6

“There the centurion found a ship from Alexandria sailing for Italy and put us on board.”

Transportation changes.

The destination remains:

Italy.

Cross References

Acts 28:11

Paul would later board another Alexandrian ship after surviving the shipwreck.

Acts 6:9

The Roman world was connected by extensive travel and commercial routes.

Acts 27:1

The original decision had been made to sail toward Italy.

Spiritual Principle

God’s destination can remain unchanged even when the method of getting there changes.

VII. PROGRESS BECOMES DIFFICULT

Acts 27:7

“We made slow headway for many days and had difficulty arriving off Cnidus. When the wind did not allow us to hold our course, we sailed to the lee of Crete, opposite Salmone.”

The ship cannot follow its preferred route.

Cross References

Titus 1:5

Crete later became an important location for Christian churches.

Acts 2:11

Cretans had been represented among those who heard the Pentecost proclamation.

Acts 27:12

Crete will soon become central to the decision about whether to continue sailing.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Sometimes faithfulness requires adjusting the route without abandoning the destination.

VIII. THEY REACH FAIR HAVENS

Acts 27:8

“We moved along the coast with difficulty and came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea.”

They finally reach a temporary harbor.

Cross References

Psalms 107:23

Scripture describes those who go down to the sea in ships and experience God’s works upon the waters.

Psalms 107:30

God can bring storm-tossed sailors to the haven they desire.

Acts 27:12

The crew will soon decide that Fair Havens is not desirable for wintering.

Spiritual Principle

A place that is safe may not always feel comfortable, but comfort should not be confused with wisdom.

IX. SAILING HAS BECOME DANGEROUS

Acts 27:9

“Much time had been lost, and sailing had become dangerous because it was after the Day of Atonement fast. Paul warned them.”

Paul recognizes the danger.

Cross References

Leviticus 23:27

Israel observed the Day of Atonement as a solemn day of fasting and humility.

2 Corinthians 11:25

Paul himself had already experienced shipwreck and severe dangers at sea.

Acts 27:21

Paul later reminds them that his warning should have been taken seriously.

Spiritual Principle

Wisdom pays attention to changing conditions rather than blindly continuing because a plan has already been made.

X. PAUL WARNS OF DISASTER

Acts 27:10

“Men, I can see that our voyage will end in disaster, with great loss to the ship, cargo, and even our lives.”

Paul warns them.

At this stage:

His assessment is grave.

Cross References

Proverbs 27:12

A wise person recognizes danger and takes precautions, while the inexperienced continue forward and suffer.

Acts 27:21

Paul later reminds them that they ignored his warning.

Acts 27:31

Paul later gives another warning that must be obeyed for survival.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“Wisdom Recognizes Danger Before Disaster Makes the Danger Obvious.”

XI. THE CENTURION LISTENS TO THE EXPERTS

Acts 27:11

“But the centurion listened instead to the pilot and the owner of the ship rather than to Paul.”

Humanly:

This makes sense.

The pilot:

Knows ships.

The owner:

Knows commercial sailing.

Paul:

Is a prisoner.

Yet:

The experts are wrong.

Cross References

Proverbs 12:15

A foolish person trusts only his own judgment, while wisdom listens carefully to sound counsel.

1 Kings 22:13

King Ahab once preferred messages that agreed with what he wanted rather than the truthful warning of God’s prophet.

Acts 27:10

Paul had clearly warned about the danger ahead.

Spiritual Principle

Expertise is valuable, but experts remain human and can be wrong.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Never confuse professional expertise with infallibility.

XII. THE MAJORITY VOTES TO SAIL

Acts 27:12

“Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided that we should sail on, hoping to reach Phoenix, a harbor in Crete, and spend the winter there.”

Now another voice enters:

The majority.

The pilot favors sailing.

The owner favors sailing.

The majority favors sailing.

Paul says:

Do not sail.

Cross References

Exodus 23:2

God warned His people not to follow a crowd into wrongdoing.

Proverbs 14:12

A way can appear right to a person while its end leads to destruction.

Acts 27:9

Paul’s warning had come because sailing conditions had become dangerous.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“The Majority Can Agree and Still Be Wrong.”

Truth is not determined by:

Votes.

Popularity.

Consensus.

XIII. A GENTLE SOUTH WIND BLOWS

Acts 27:13

“When a gentle south wind began to blow, they thought they had obtained what they wanted, so they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete.”

Everything appears to confirm their decision.

A gentle wind.

Favorable conditions.

Their plan seems successful.

Cross References

Psalm 107:29

God is able to calm storm winds and quiet waves.

Acts 27:7

Earlier wind conditions had already made navigation difficult.

Acts 27:8

The crew had reached Fair Havens before deciding to continue.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“Favorable Circumstances Do Not Always Mean a Decision Was Wise.”

The gentle wind was temporary.

XIV. EUROCLYDON STRIKES

Acts 27:14

“But before long, a violent wind called Euroclydon swept down from the island.”

The calm ends suddenly.

Cross References

Jonah 1:4

A violent storm also struck the ship carrying Jonah.

Mark 4:37

Jesus' disciples once experienced a sudden violent storm on the sea.

Luke 8:23

A severe storm descended upon the disciples while they crossed the lake.

Spiritual Principle

Circumstances can change faster than human confidence.

XV. THE SHIP LOSES CONTROL

Acts 27:15

“The ship was caught by the storm and could not face the wind, so we gave way to it and were driven along.”

Control disappears.

Cross References

Jonah 1:4

Jonah's ship was also threatened by a violent storm.

Psalms 107:25

God can raise stormy winds that lift the waves.

Mark 4:37

Storms can overwhelm even experienced sailors.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

There are seasons when human control disappears completely, but God's sovereignty does not.

XVI. THEY SECURE THE LIFEBOAT

Acts 27:16

“As we passed to the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were hardly able to secure the lifeboat.”

The crew begins emergency procedures.

Cross References

Psalms 107:26

Sailors in violent storms rise and fall with the waves until courage melts.

Psalm 107:27

Severe storms can make even skilled sailors lose their normal confidence.

Acts 27:30

The lifeboat later becomes part of a failed escape attempt.

Spiritual Principle

Faith does not prohibit practical emergency measures.

XVII. THEY STRENGTHEN THE SHIP

Acts 27:17

“The men hoisted it aboard, then passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. Fearing they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along.”

They do everything they can.

Cross References

Hebrews 6:19

Christian hope is described as a secure anchor for the soul.

Psalm 107:26

Storms expose human weakness upon the sea.

2 Corinthians 11:25

Paul understood personally the danger of shipwreck.

Spiritual Principle

Trusting God does not mean refusing to strengthen what is breaking.

XVIII. CARGO IS THROWN OVERBOARD

Acts 27:18

“We were violently battered by the storm, so the next day they began to throw cargo overboard.”

What once seemed valuable now becomes disposable.

Cross References

Jonah 1:5

Sailors on Jonah's ship threw cargo overboard in an attempt to survive.

Psalm 107:27

Severe storms can reduce human confidence to desperation.

Matthew 8:24

A violent storm once threatened to overwhelm the disciples' boat.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A crisis often reveals what is truly essential and what can be released.

XIX. THE SHIP'S EQUIPMENT IS THROWN OVERBOARD

Acts 27:19

"On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands."

The crisis intensifies.

Now they discard:

Equipment needed for normal operation.

Cross References

Jonah 1:5

Desperate sailors previously threw valuable cargo into the sea.

Matthew 8:24

Violent storms can place even experienced people beyond normal control.

Mark 4:37

Waves can threaten the survival of a vessel itself.

Spiritual Principle

When survival becomes the priority, possessions lose their former importance.

XX. ALL HUMAN HOPE DISAPPEARS

Acts 27:20

“When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.”

This is one of the darkest moments in Acts.

Navigation depended heavily upon:

Sun.

Stars.

Both disappear.

Cross References

Jonah 2:4

Jonah remembered a moment when he believed himself cast away.

Psalms 107:27

Storm-tossed sailors can reach the end of their own wisdom.

2 Corinthians 1:8

Paul once described suffering so severe that he despaired even of life.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“Human Hope May Reach Zero While God’s Promise Remains at Full Strength.”

XXI. PAUL STANDS UP

Acts 27:21

“After they had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said, ‘Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete. Then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss.’”

Paul reminds them:

The disaster was avoidable.

Cross References

Proverbs 19:20

Listening to instruction can produce wisdom for the future.

Acts 27:10

Paul had warned them before they sailed.

Proverbs 12:15

Wisdom listens to sound counsel instead of trusting only personal judgment.

Important Truth

Paul does not mention the warning merely to humiliate them.

He is establishing credibility for:

The encouragement that follows.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Learn from the warning you ignored instead of wasting the disaster by refusing the lesson.

XXII. “KEEP UP YOUR COURAGE”

Acts 27:22

“But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed.”

The message changes.

Earlier:

Paul warned of possible loss of life.

Now:

God has revealed that every life will be spared.

Cross References

Matthew 14:27

Jesus told frightened disciples to take courage and not be afraid.

Acts 27:34

Paul later assures them that not even a hair from their heads will be lost.

Acts 23:11

Jesus had already told Paul to take courage because he must testify in Rome.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“God Can Give Courage Before He Gives Calm.”

The storm continues.

But:

Hope returns.

XXIII. “THE GOD TO WHOM I BELONG”

Acts 27:23

“Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me and said.”

Paul makes two declarations.

“To Whom I Belong”

Identity.

“Whom I Serve”

Purpose.

Cross References

Acts 12:7

God had previously sent an angel to assist Peter during imprisonment.

Acts 5:19

An angel had opened prison doors for the apostles.

Daniel 6:22

Daniel testified that God sent His angel during danger.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“In the Storm, Remember Whose You Are and Whom You Serve.”

XXIV. “YOU MUST STAND BEFORE CAESAR”

Acts 27:24

“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.”

God repeats His promise.

Cross References

Acts 23:11

Jesus had already told Paul that he must testify in Rome.

Acts 18:9

The Lord had previously encouraged Paul not to fear.

Luke 21:18

Jesus taught that God remains sovereign even when His people face severe persecution.

Two Great Promises

Paul will:

Stand before Caesar.

Everyone aboard will:

Survive.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The storm cannot kill the person whom God has appointed to the next assignment before that assignment is finished.

XXV. “I HAVE FAITH IN GOD”

Acts 27:25

“So take courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as He told me.”

One of the greatest statements of faith in Acts.

Cross References

Hebrews 11:1

Faith gives confidence concerning what is hoped for and conviction concerning what cannot yet be seen.

Romans 4:20

Abraham grew strong in faith because he trusted God's promise.

Mark 11:22

Jesus taught His disciples to have faith in God.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“Faith Is Trusting That God Will Do What He Said Even Before Circumstances Agree.”

Nothing visible has improved.

Yet Paul believes.

XXVI. THEY MUST RUN AGROUND

Acts 27:26

“Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island.”

God promises survival.

But:

Not comfort.

Not preservation of the ship.

Not an easy landing.

Cross References

Acts 28:1

The island will later be identified as Malta.

Acts 27:41

The ship eventually runs aground on a sandbar.

Acts 27:44

Everyone reaches land safely after the wreck.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“God’s Promise of Deliverance Does Not Mean There Will Be No Shipwreck.”

XXVII. FOURTEEN NIGHTS IN THE STORM

Acts 27:27

“On the fourteenth night, as we were being driven across the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors sensed that they were approaching land.”

Fourteen nights.

The trial is prolonged.

Cross References

Psalm 107:30

God eventually brings storm-tossed sailors toward their desired haven.

Job 38:11

God sets limits even for the raging sea.

Acts 27:33

Paul soon reminds them that they have endured fourteen days of constant suspense.

Spiritual Principle

A long storm is still a limited storm when God has established its boundary.

XXVIII. THE WATER BECOMES SHALLOWER

Acts 27:28

“They took soundings and found the water was 120 feet deep. A short time later they measured again and found it was 90 feet deep.”

Signs of land appear.

Cross References

Psalm 107:24

Those at sea witness the works of God in the depths.

Jonah 2:3

The depths of the sea are repeatedly used in Scripture as places of human helplessness.

Ezekiel 27:34

Scripture portrays the sea as capable of destroying great ships and cargo.

Spiritual Principle

Sometimes hope returns gradually before deliverance becomes visible.

XXIX. THEY DROP FOUR ANCHORS

Acts 27:29

“Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight.”

They use anchors.

And:

Wait for light.

Cross References

Hebrews 6:19

Hope in God is like an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.

Psalms 130:6

The psalmist waits for the Lord more eagerly than watchmen wait for morning.

Acts 27:17

The crew had previously taken emergency measures to stabilize the ship.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“There Are Nights When Faith Means Dropping the Anchor and Waiting for Morning.”

XXX. THE SAILORS TRY TO ESCAPE

Acts 27:30

“In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower anchors from the bow.”

Fear produces selfishness.

The sailors try to save themselves.

Cross References

Proverbs 11:3

Integrity guides the upright, while crookedness destroys the unfaithful.

Jonah 1:5

Fear during a storm can drive sailors toward desperate actions.

Acts 27:16

The lifeboat had earlier been secured.

Spiritual Principle

Crisis reveals character as well as skill.

XXXI. “UNLESS THESE MEN STAY”

Acts 27:31

“But Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, ‘Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved.’”

This verse teaches an important relationship between:

Divine sovereignty.

Human responsibility.

God had promised:

Everyone survives.

Paul says:

The sailors must stay.

Cross References

Acts 27:24

God had promised that everyone aboard would be preserved.

John 15:5

Jesus taught the necessity of abiding in Him for spiritual fruitfulness.

Acts 27:22

Paul had already assured everyone that no life would be lost.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“God’s Promise Does Not Cancel the Means God Appoints to Fulfill the Promise.”

XXXII. THE LIFEBOAT IS CUT AWAY

Acts 27:32

“So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it drift away.”

The escape plan is removed.

Now:

Everyone remains together.

Cross References

Proverbs 3:5

God’s people are called to trust Him rather than rely solely upon their own understanding.

Acts 27:31

Paul had warned that the sailors must remain aboard.

Acts 27:30

The sailors had been attempting a secret escape.

Spiritual Principle

Sometimes faith requires cutting away the false escape route we were tempted to trust.

XXXIII. PAUL URGES EVERYONE TO EAT

Acts 27:33

“Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. ‘For the last fourteen days,’ he said, ‘you have been in constant suspense and gone without food—you haven’t eaten anything.’”

Paul now addresses:

Physical needs.

Cross References

1 Kings 19:7

God once provided food to strengthen Elijah during emotional and physical exhaustion.

Matthew 6:11

Jesus taught His disciples to pray for daily bread.

Acts 27:9

The prolonged voyage had already been dangerous and exhausting.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Spiritual leadership does not ignore physical needs.

People need:

Faith.

But they also need:

Food.

Rest.

Strength.

XXXIV. “NOT ONE HAIR WILL BE LOST”

Acts 27:34

“Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head.”

Paul combines:

Promise.

And:

Practical instruction.

Cross References

Luke 21:18

Jesus used similar language to express God's ultimate preservation of His people.

1 Samuel 14:45

Scripture uses the expression of not losing even a hair as a picture of complete preservation.

Matthew 10:30

Jesus taught that even the hairs of our heads are numbered by God.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Faith in God's protection is compatible with eating the food needed for strength.

XXXV. PAUL GIVES THANKS IN THE STORM

Acts 27:35

“After he said this, he took bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat.”

Paul publicly gives thanks.

Where?

Not:

In a peaceful house.

But:

On a storm-battered ship.

Cross References

Luke 22:19

Jesus gave thanks before breaking bread with His disciples.

Matthew 14:19

Jesus gave thanks before distributing food to the multitude.

Acts 2:46

Early believers shared food with thankful hearts.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“Thanksgiving Is Most Powerful When Circumstances Give You Every Reason to Complain.”

XXXVI. EVERYONE IS ENCOURAGED

Acts 27:36

“They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves.”

Paul’s faith affects others.

Cross References

Acts 27:22

Paul had already called the people to take courage.

Hebrews 10:25

Believers are instructed to encourage one another.

Acts 27:25

Paul’s confidence rested upon believing God’s promise.

Spiritual Principle

Courage can become contagious.

One person who trusts God can strengthen:

Many.

XXXVII. THERE WERE 276 PEOPLE

Acts 27:37

“Altogether there were 276 of us on board.”

Luke gives the exact number.

Cross References

Acts 27:22

Paul had promised that no one aboard would die.

Acts 2:41

Luke frequently records specific numbers within the historical narrative.

Genesis 46:27

Scripture often preserves numerical detail in historical accounts.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God’s promise covered every person aboard—not merely Paul.

XXXVIII. THEY THROW THE GRAIN INTO THE SEA

Acts 27:38

“When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.”

Now even the remaining grain is sacrificed.

Cross References

Jonah 1:5

Sailors had previously thrown cargo into the sea during a severe storm.

Acts 27:18

The crew had already discarded cargo.

Acts 27:19

They had also thrown ship equipment overboard.

Spiritual Principle

Wisdom knows when something valuable must be released in order to preserve something more valuable.

XXXIX. DAYLIGHT REVEALS A BAY

Acts 27:39

“When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship aground if they could.”

Morning finally comes.

Cross References

Acts 27:26

Paul had already said they would run aground on an island.

Acts 27:41

The ship soon becomes stuck on a sandbar.

Psalm 107:30

God brings sailors toward safe haven after storms.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The daylight you prayed for may reveal a path you could not see in the darkness.

XL. THEY MAKE FOR THE BEACH

Acts 27:40

“Cutting loose the anchors, they left them in the sea and untied the ropes holding the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach.”

Now:

The anchors that helped them survive the night must be released.

Cross References

Psalm 107:30

God can bring storm-tossed travelers toward safety.

Acts 27:29

The anchors had stabilized the ship through the darkness.

Acts 27:17

The crew had repeatedly adjusted strategy in response to changing danger.

Spiritual Principle

What you need for one season may need to be released when God moves you into the next.

XLI. THE SHIP BREAKS APART

Acts 27:41

“But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf.”

The ship is lost.

God had promised exactly that.

Cross References

Jonah 1:4

Violent seas can threaten to break a ship apart.

Acts 27:26

Paul had predicted that they would run aground.

Ezekiel 27:34

Scripture vividly portrays ships and cargo being destroyed by the sea.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“The Breaking of the Ship Does Not Mean the Breaking of God’s Promise.”

XLII. THE SOLDIERS PLAN TO KILL THE PRISONERS

Acts 27:42

“The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping.”

Another danger appears:

After the storm.

Cross References

Acts 16:27

The Philippian jailer had expected severe consequences if prisoners escaped.

Acts 12:19

Guards could face serious punishment when prisoners disappeared.

Acts 27:43

Julius immediately prevents the plan from being carried out.

Spiritual Principle

Surviving one danger does not mean another challenge cannot immediately appear.

XLIII. JULIUS SPARES PAUL

Acts 27:43

“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.”

Once again:

God uses Julius.

Cross References

Acts 27:3

Julius had previously treated Paul kindly.

Genesis 39:21

God can give His servants favor in the eyes of those responsible for them.

Acts 24:23

Paul had experienced similar favor during earlier imprisonment.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God can place compassion in the heart of the person positioned to stop the final threat.

XLIV. EVERYONE REACHES LAND SAFELY

Acts 27:44

“The rest were to get there on planks or other pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land safely.”

The promise is fulfilled.

Some arrive:

Swimming.

Others:

Holding wreckage.

But:

Everyone arrives.

Cross References

Acts 27:22

Paul had promised that no person would be lost.

Acts 27:24

God had specifically promised the lives of everyone sailing with Paul.

1 Peter 3:20

Scripture elsewhere remembers God's ability to preserve people safely through waters of judgment and danger.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“God Does Not Promise Everyone the Same Method of Deliverance, but He Is Faithful to Every Promise He Makes.”

Some swam.

Some floated.

All survived.

XLV. GOD'S PROMISE AND THE STORM

Acts 27 demonstrates a crucial truth.

God promised:

Paul would reach Rome.

But:

The promise did not prevent the storm.

Spiritual Principle

The presence of a storm does not mean the absence of a promise.

XLVI. OBEDIENCE COULD HAVE PREVENTED SOME LOSS

Paul warned them not to sail.

They sailed anyway.

The storm came.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God can rescue us from consequences, but that does not mean wise warnings should be ignored.

Some storms are:

Unavoidable.

Others become worse because:

Wisdom was rejected.

XLVII. EXPERTS CAN BE WRONG

The pilot.

The owner.

The majority.

All agreed.

Paul disagreed.

Spiritual Principle

Human expertise should be respected, but it must never become an idol.

XLVIII. THE MAJORITY CAN BE WRONG

The majority voted to sail.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“Truth Does Not Become Truth by Majority Vote.”

Biblical discernment sometimes requires:

Standing against consensus.

XLIX. A GENTLE WIND CAN BE DECEPTIVE

The gentle south wind appeared to confirm:

Their decision.

Then:

Euroclydon.

Spiritual Principle

Temporary success does not automatically prove a decision was right.

L. THE STORM REMOVED FALSE CONFIDENCE

At first:

They trusted experience.

Then:

Cargo.

Then:

Equipment.

Then:

The lifeboat.

Eventually:

All hope disappeared.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God can use storms to reveal how fragile human sources of security really are.

LI. WHEN HUMAN HOPE DIES

Acts 27:20 says:

“We finally gave up all hope.”

Yet:

God had not given up.

Spiritual Principle

The end of human resources is not the end of divine resources.

LII. PAUL BECOMES THE LEADER

At the beginning:

Paul is a prisoner.

By the middle:

Everyone listens to Paul.

Why?

Because:

He has a word from God.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Spiritual authority can become most visible when ordinary authority no longer knows what to do.

LIII. “THE GOD TO WHOM I BELONG”

Paul’s identity is settled.

He belongs to:

God.

Spiritual Principle

The storm can take possessions, comfort, and control—but it cannot change who belongs to God.

LIV. “THE GOD WHOM I SERVE”

Paul also knows:

His purpose.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Knowing whose you are should shape what you do.

Paul belongs to God.

Therefore:

He serves God.

LV. COURAGE IS ROOTED IN REVELATION

Paul does not say:

Everything will work out somehow.

He says:

God told me.

Spiritual Principle

Biblical hope is not wishful thinking; it rests upon the character and Word of God.

LVI. GOD GAVE PAUL THE LIVES OF OTHERS

This is remarkable.

Paul's presence becomes a blessing to:

276 people.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

One faithful believer can become a channel of blessing to many people who do not yet share his faith.

LVII. “JUST AS HE TOLD ME”

Paul's confidence rests on:

God's Word.

Spiritual Principle

Faith does not demand that we understand every detail; it trusts the One who spoke.

LVIII. THE SHIP WILL STILL BREAK

The promise includes:

Shipwreck.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“Sometimes God Saves You by Bringing You Through the Wreck, Not by Preventing the Wreck.”

LIX. FAITH AND HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

God promises survival.

Paul requires the sailors to remain.

Spiritual Principle

Divine sovereignty and responsible action are not enemies in Scripture.

God ordains:

The outcome.

And:

The means.

LX. THEY CUT AWAY THE LIFEBOAT

This action removes:

A selfish escape plan.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Sometimes obedience requires letting go of the backup plan that would undermine the path God has appointed.

LXI. PAUL CARES ABOUT FOOD

After spiritual encouragement:

Paul says:

Eat.

Spiritual Principle

God created human beings with spiritual and physical needs, and wise leadership respects both.

LXII. PAUL GIVES THANKS PUBLICLY

In front of:

Pagans.

Soldiers.

Prisoners.

Sailors.

Paul gives thanks to God.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not hide your gratitude to God when unbelievers are watching.

LXIII. PAUL'S COURAGE SPREADS

The others:

Become encouraged.

They eat.

They regain strength.

Spiritual Principle

Faithful calm in one believer can stabilize an entire group in crisis.

LXIV. THE SHIP IS LOST BUT THE PEOPLE ARE SAVED

This is one of the greatest contrasts in Acts 27.

Lost

Ship.

Cargo.

Equipment.

Saved

276 lives.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“Do Not Confuse the Loss of Something Important With the Loss of Everything.”

LXV. GOD USED BROKEN PIECES

Some reached shore on:

Pieces of the wrecked ship.

Spiritual Principle

God can use the broken remains of what failed to carry you the rest of the way.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

“Sometimes the Thing That Breaks Beneath You Still Becomes the Piece God Uses to Bring You to Shore.”

LXVI. THE PROMISE WAS FULFILLED EXACTLY

God said:

No lives lost.

Luke says:

Everyone reached shore.

Spiritual Principle

God’s faithfulness is revealed not merely in what He promises but in the fact that He does what He promises.

LXVII. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM ACTS 27

1. God's Will Can Include Storms

Principle:

Opposing winds do not necessarily mean you are outside God's purpose.

2. Wise Warnings Should Be Heard

Principle:

Ignoring sound warning can create unnecessary loss.

3. Human Wisdom Has Limits

Principle:

Experts and majorities can still be wrong.

4. God's Word Gives Courage in Crisis

Principle:

Paul believed God before circumstances changed.

5. Faith Uses Practical Means

Principle:

God promised survival, yet the sailors still had to remain and everyone still had to act wisely.

6. One Believer Can Encourage Many

Principle:

Paul's faith strengthened 276 people.

7. God Keeps His Promises

Principle:

The ship was destroyed, but every person reached land safely.

LXVIII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why was Paul sailing to Italy?

Paul had appealed his case to Caesar, and Roman authorities were transporting him to Italy for the next stage of his legal proceedings.

Question 2

Who was Julius?

Julius was the Roman centurion responsible for Paul and the other prisoners during the journey. He repeatedly showed Paul kindness and later protected his life.

Question 3

What warning did Paul give at Fair Havens?

Paul warned that continuing the voyage would result in serious disaster and loss.

Question 4

Whose advice did the centurion follow instead?

He followed the advice of the ship's pilot and owner rather than Paul's warning. The majority also decided to continue sailing.

Question 5

What happened after the gentle south wind began blowing?

The crew believed conditions had become favorable and sailed onward.

Soon afterward:

The violent Euroclydon storm struck.

Question 6

How severe did the storm become?

The ship was driven uncontrollably.

Cargo and equipment were thrown overboard.

Sun and stars disappeared for days.

Eventually everyone gave up hope of survival.

Question 7

What message did the angel give Paul?

The angel told Paul not to be afraid because he must stand before Caesar and because God had graciously given him the lives of everyone traveling with him.

Question 8

What did Paul say in response to God's message?

Paul said:

“I have faith in God that it will happen just as He told me.”

Question 9

Why did Paul say the sailors had to remain aboard?

Although God had promised everyone's survival, the sailors were still necessary for the appointed means of bringing everyone safely through the crisis.

Question 10

How many people were on the ship?

There were:

276 people.

Question 11

What happened to the ship?

It struck a sandbar.

The bow became stuck.

The stern was broken apart by the waves.

Question 12

How many people survived?

Every person aboard reached land safely.

God fulfilled His promise exactly.

LXIX. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Acts 27 asks us several searching questions.

Do I assume every difficult wind means I am outside God's will?

Paul was moving toward God's promise.

Do I listen to wise warnings?

The sailors initially did not.

Do I assume the majority must be right?

They were not.

Do I mistake temporary favorable circumstances for God's approval?

The gentle south wind misled them.

What do I trust when my normal sources of control disappear?

Paul trusted God.

Can I say:

"The God to whom I belong and whom I serve"?

Do I believe God before circumstances improve?

Paul did.

Am I willing to follow practical wisdom while trusting God?

Acts 27 requires both.

Can others find courage because of my faith?

Paul encouraged 276 people.

Can I thank God while the storm is still raging?

Paul did.

Am I willing to release valuable things when necessary?

The crew did.

Can I trust God even if the ship breaks?

Paul had to.

LXX. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Do Not Judge God’s Promise by the Weather”

The storm said:

You are going to die.

God said:

You are going to Rome.

Principle

Circumstances can shout loudly, but they do not have authority to rewrite what God has spoken.

LXXI. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“The Majority Is Not the Final Authority”

The majority said:

Sail.

Paul said:

Stay.

The majority won the vote.

Then:

The storm came.

Principle

Truth is determined by reality and ultimately by God—not by popularity.

LXXII. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Faith Does Not Mean Doing Nothing”

Paul trusted God completely.

Yet he told the sailors:

Stay aboard.

He told the people:

Eat.

The crew:

Dropped anchors.

Handled sails.

Swam.

Used pieces of wreckage.

Principle

Faith trusts God while responsibly using the means God provides.

LXXIII. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“A Believer Can Become the Calmest Person in the Storm”

Paul does not control:

The wind.

The sea.

The ship.

But:

He knows God.

Principle

Peace does not come from controlling the storm; it comes from trusting the One who remains Lord over it.

LXXIV. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“The Ship Can Break While the Promise Remains Whole”

The ship is destroyed.

The promise is not.

Principle

Never measure God’s faithfulness by whether He preserves every temporary thing around you.

LXXV. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“God Can Use Broken Pieces”

Some people reached land on:

Pieces of wreckage.

Principle

What looks like the remains of disaster may become part of the means of deliverance.

LXXVI. FINAL APPLICATION

Acts Chapter 27 is one of Scripture’s great chapters about faith in crisis.

Paul is heading toward Rome.

Jesus said:

He must get there.

But between:

The promise.

And:

The destination.

There is:

A storm.

That matters.

Sometimes we imagine God's promise should produce:

Straight roads.

Calm seas.

Open doors.

Immediate progress.

But Acts 27 says:

Not always.

Paul is exactly where God's mission is taking him.

Yet:

The winds oppose him.

Travel slows.

Warnings are ignored.

The majority makes a poor decision.

A gentle wind gives false confidence.

Then:

Euroclydon strikes.

The ship loses control.

Cargo disappears.

Equipment disappears.

Sunlight disappears.

Stars disappear.

Finally:

Hope disappears.

But:

God does not disappear.

That is the great truth.

When everyone gives up hope:

Paul stands.

Why?

Not because:

The weather improved.

Not because:

Land appeared.

Not because:

The sailors found a solution.

Paul stands because:

God spoke.

He says:

“I have faith in God that it will happen just as He told me.”

That is faith.

Faith is not pretending the storm is small.

The storm was enormous.

Faith is believing:

God is greater.

Paul also teaches us:

Trust is not passivity.

God said:

Everyone lives.

Paul said:

The sailors must stay.

God said:

Everyone lives.

Paul said:

Eat.

God said:

Everyone lives.

They still:

Dropped anchors.

Cut ropes.

Hoisted sails.

Swam.

Held onto boards.

God's sovereignty and human responsibility work together.

Then:

The ship breaks.

That might look like failure.

But:

The promise never said the ship would survive.

God promised:

The people would.

Sometimes:

We ask God to save the ship.

God decides:

To save us through the wreck.

The ship may represent:

A plan.

A job.

A ministry strategy.

A possession.

A relationship to a certain circumstance.

A structure we thought had to survive.

Acts 27 reminds us:

God's promise is greater than the vessel carrying us.

Then:

Every person reaches shore.

Some swim.

Some float.

Some arrive holding broken pieces.

But:

All arrive.

Not because:

The sailors were perfect.

Not because:

The majority chose wisely.

Not because:

The ship was strong enough.

But because:

God kept His Word.

Acts 27 therefore calls us to:

Listen to wisdom.

Do not blindly follow the crowd.

Do not mistake a gentle wind for guaranteed approval.

Do not panic when the storm comes.

Remember whose you are.

Remember whom you serve.

Believe God.

Encourage others.

Take practical action.

Eat when you need strength.

Give thanks before the storm is over.

Release what must be released.

Stay aboard when obedience requires staying.

Cut away false escape plans.

And if the ship breaks:

Hold onto whatever God provides.

Because:

The God who promised the destination remains Lord over the storm.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Acts Chapter 27.

Thank You that You remain God:

In calm seas.

In opposing winds.

In violent storms.

In darkness.

In shipwreck.

Help us recognize wise warnings.

Give us humility to listen before disaster teaches us what wisdom tried to teach us earlier.

Protect us from blindly following:

Experts.

Majorities.

Circumstances.

Feelings.

Help us test everything with wisdom and truth.

When gentle winds blow:

Keep us discerning.

When storms come:

Keep us courageous.

When we lose control:

Remind us that You have not lost control.

When our normal sources of direction disappear:

Be our guide.

When human hope reaches its end:

Strengthen our faith.

Help us say with Paul:

“I have faith in God that it will happen just as He told me.”

Thank You that we belong to You.

Help us remember:

Whose we are.

And:

Whom we serve.

Give us faith that acts wisely.

Keep us from confusing trust with passivity.

Help us use:

The anchors.

The food.

The wisdom.

The people.

The practical means You provide.

Make us sources of courage to others.

When everyone around us is frightened:

Give us calm confidence in You.

Teach us to give thanks before the storm has ended.

And when something important breaks:

Keep us from believing Your promise has broken with it.

If necessary:

Use even the broken pieces to carry us to shore.

Thank You that Your Word is dependable.

Thank You that no storm can cancel Your purpose.

Thank You that You carried all 276 people safely through the wreck.

Carry us faithfully through every storm You allow.

And may our confidence always rest:

Not in the strength of the ship.

But:

In the faithfulness of our God.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“So take courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as He told me.” — Acts 27:25

Central Truth

God remains faithful in the darkest storm, and His promises give courage when human hope disappears; believers therefore trust His Word while wisely using the means He provides, knowing that even shipwreck cannot prevent God from accomplishing His appointed purpose.

Acts 27 in One Sentence

As Paul sails toward Rome, ignored warnings lead the ship into a devastating storm and shipwreck, but Paul courageously trusts God's promise, strengthens 276 frightened people, combines faith with practical obedience, and sees every person reach land safely exactly as God had said.