

CHAPTER 27

INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 27

Ver. 1. *And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy*, etc.] The chief city of which was Rome, the metropolis of the empire, where Caesar had his palace, to whom the apostle had appealed; and his voyage thither was determined by Festus, with the advice of Agrippa and his council, pursuant to the apostle's appeal, and which was founded on the will of God; all which concurred in this affair: it was the decree and will of God that the apostle should go to Rome, which was made known to him; and it was his resolution upon that, to go thither, wherefore he appealed to Caesar; and it was the determination of the Roman governor, not only as to his going there, but as to the time of it, which was now fixed: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read "he", instead of "we"; and the Ethiopic version reads expressly "Paul"; but the Greek copies read we: by whom are meant the apostle, and his companions; as Luke the writer of this history, and Aristarchus the Macedonian mentioned in the next verse, and Trophimus the Ephesian, who was afterwards left at Miletus sick, (~~SMO~~2 Timothy 4:20) and who else cannot be said; these were to sail with him to Italy, not as prisoners, but as companions: this resolution being taken,

they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners; who very likely had also appealed to Caesar, or at least the governor thought fit to send them to Rome, to have their cases heard and determined there; and these by the order of Festus were delivered by the centurions, or jailers, in whose custody they had been,

unto one called Julius; in the Alexandrian copy of the third verse, he is called Julianus; he was either one of the Julian family, or rather was one that had been made free by some of that family, and so took the name:

a centurion of Augustus' band; of a Roman band of soldiers, which belonged to that legion which was called "Augusta"; for it seems there was a legion that bore that name, as Lipsius observes, and it may be from Augustus Caesar.

Ver. 2. *And entering into a ship of Adramyttium*, etc.] Which was in the port of Caesarea; for from thence they set sail to the place where this ship was bound, which very likely was the place here mentioned; there was a city of this name in Africa, and which was built upon the sea shore, and is sometimes called Hadrumentum^{f1230}, as this is called Adramantos, in the Syriac version; and in the Alexandrian copy, and in another manuscript, “a ship of Adramyntum”; it is mentioned with Carthage, a city in Africa, by Pliny^{f1231} and Solinus^{f1232}; the one calls it Adrumetum, and the other Adrymeto; and the latter says, that it, as well as Carthage, was built by the people of Tyre; and so Sallust^{f1233} says, that the Phoenicians built Hippo, Adrumetum, Leptis, and other cities on the sea coast; and the name seems to be a Phoenician name, **twmrdj** “Hadarmuth”, which signifies “the court of death”; perhaps it might be so called, either from the badness of the air in which it was, or the dangerousness of its haven: Jerom calls it Hadrumetus, and says^{f1234} it is a city in Byzacium, a country in Africa; he seems to design another place, the metropolis of the Byzacian country, the most fruitful of all the parts of Africa, and which in the Phoenician language was **twamrdh** “Hadarmeoth”; which signifies “the court of a hundred”; that is, it was a place so fruitful that it brought forth an hundred fold; and agreeably to which is what Pliny says^{f1235}, they are called Libyphoenicians, who inhabit Byzacium, a country so named, in circuit two hundred and fifty miles, and of such great fruitfulness that the land returns to the husbandmen an hundred fold. The former of these is most likely to be the place here meant; and though we nowhere read of the apostle being here, nor of the Gospel being preached here in the early times of Christianity; yet in the “fourth” century there was a church in this place, and Philologus was bishop of it, who subscribed at a council held at Carthage in this century; and in the “fifth” century we read of several bishops of this place, as Aurelius, who was in the Chalcedon council, Flavianus in that at Ephesus, which was reckoned an infamous one, and Helladius, who was in the first Ephesine council, and Felix, who was banished by Gensericus^{f1236}. There was another city of the same name in Aeolia, or Mysia^{f1237}, and which was formerly called Pegasus, and since Landermiti, and was a seaport, and bids fair to be the place here intended; though since there was an island of Lycia called Adramitis^{f1238}, now Audromety, and it was at Myra, a city of Lycia, where this ship stopped, (⁴²⁷Acts 27:5) and where the passengers changed their ship, this seems most likely to be designed:

we launched; in the said ship from Caesarea:

meaning to sail by the coast of Asia; the lesser Asia, along by Ephesus and Miletus, as they did; for in this last place, as before observed, Trophimus was left sick; the Alexandrian copy reads, *μελλοντι* “that was about to sail”; that is, the ship of Adramyttium was about to sail, or just ready to sail by the coast of Asia, wherefore the company entered, and set forth in it on their voyage:

one Aristarchus a Macedonian, of Thessalonica, being with us; the same person that was with the apostle at Ephesus, and accompanied him into Asia, (^{<418B>}Acts 19:29, 20:4) the same went through with him to Rome, and became his fellowlabourer, and fellow prisoner there, (^{<502B>}Philemon 1:24) (^{<5040>}Colossians 4:10).

Ver. 3. *And the next day we touched at Sidon*, etc.] This was a famous city in Phoenicia, upon the northern border of the land of Israel; it was a maritime place, and noted for trade and navigation; Mela ^{f1239} calls it rich Sidon, and the chief of the maritime cities; Jerom ^{f1240} calls it the ancient city Sidon; and Curtius says ^{f1241} it was renowned for the antiquity and fame of its founders; it is thought to be built by Sidon, the firstborn of Canaan, (^{<0005>}Genesis 10:15) from whom it took its name; so Josephus ^{f1242} affirms, that Sidonius, as he calls him, built a city in Phoenicia after his own name, and it is called by the Greeks Sidon; some say it was built by Sidus the son of Aegyptus, and named after him: according to R. Benjamin ^{f1243} it was a day’s journey from hence to Tyre; and with others ^{f1244}, it was not more than two hundred furlongs, about twelve or thirteen miles, which was another city of Phoenicia, as this was: Jerom’s ^{f1245} account of Sidon is this,

“Sidon, a famous city of Phoenicia, formerly the border of the Canaanites, to the north, situated at the foot of Mount Libanus, and the artificer of glass:”

and so Pliny ^{f1246} calls it, it being famous for the making of glass; and Herodotus ^{f1247} speaks of it as a city of Phoenicia: Justin the historian says ^{f1248} it was built by the Tyrians, who called it by this name from the plenty of fish in it; for the Phoenicians call a fish “Sidon”: and indeed Sidon or Tzidon seems to be derived from *dwX*, “Tzud”, which signifies “to fish”; and the place is to this day called Said or Salt; and so R. Benjamin calls it Tzaida ^{f1249}: to this city they came from Caesarea, the day following that they set out on, and here they stopped awhile:

and Julius courteously treated Paul; the centurion into whose hands the apostle was delivered, used him with great humanity and civility; he found grace in his sight, as Joseph did in the sight of Potiphar, and as he himself had done before with Lysias, Felix, Festus and Agrippa:

and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself; for as there were disciples at Tyre, (^{<420B>}Acts 21:3,4) so it seems there were at Sidon, both which cities were in Phoenicia, and are often mentioned together; and the apostle was allowed to go ashore, and visit his friends, and be refreshed by them, both in body and spirit, and be provided for by them with things convenient for his voyage. It is highly probable that there was here a Gospel church, but by whom planted cannot be said; our Lord himself was at the borders of this place, (^{<415C>}Matthew 15:21) and the ministers of the word scattered at the death of Stephen, went as far as Phoenicia preaching the Gospel, (^{<441B>}Acts 11:19) and that there were brethren there, appears from note on: (see Gill on "^{<445B>}Acts 15:3"), in which country Sidon was: in the "third" century there was a church in this place, and Zenobius was presbyter of it, who suffered martyrdom under Dioclesian ^{f1250}; in the "fourth" century there was a bishop of the church here, at the synod held at Nice; in the "fifth" century the bishop of the Sidonians, in the council of Chalcedon, declared his opinion with others against Dioscorus, whose name was Damianus; in the "sixth" century, mention is made of a bishop of Sidon, in the acts of the council held at Rome and Constantinople, and in the same century a synod met at Sidon, in the 20th year of Anastasius the emperor ^{f1251}: the account of the bishops of Sidon, as given by Reland ^{f1252}, is as follows; Theodorus bishop of Sidon subscribed in the first Nicene council, in the year 325; Paulus subscribed in the first council at Constantinople, in the year 381; Damianus was in the council held at Chalcedon, in the year 451; Megas is mentioned in the acts and epistles subjoined to the Chalcedon council; Andreas, bishop of this place, is taken notice of in a letter of John of Jerusalem.

Ver. 4. *And when we had launched from thence*, etc.] From Sidon:

we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary; that is, they sailed below the island of Cyprus; of which (see ^{<408B>}Acts 4:36, 13:4) whereas if the wind had been right for them, they would have sailed above the island; leaving it on the right hand, in a straight course to Myra; but now they were obliged to go below it, leaving it on the left hand, going in

part about it, through the seas of Cilicia and Pamphylia to Lycia, as follows.

Ver. 5. *And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia,* etc.] For these two seas joined, as Pliny says ^{f1253}, “mare Pamphylium Cilicio jungitur”, the Pamphylian sea is joined to the Cilician; and in another place ^{f1254} he observes, that in the Pamphylian sea were islands of no note, and in the Cilician sea of the five chiefest was Cyprus (an island mentioned in the preceding verse), and a little after, the sea of Cilicia is distant from Anemurius fifty miles:

we came to Myra a city of Lycia; not Limyra in Lycia, though that lay by the sea side; for according both to Pliny ^{f1255} and Ptolomy ^{f1256}, Limyra and Myra were two distinct places in Lycia; which was a country, according to the latter, which had on the west and north Asia; (according to others, Caria on the west, and part of Lydia on the north;) on the east part of Pamphylia, and on the south the Lycian sea, or, as others, the Rhodian sea: much less was this the city of Smyrna, as some have said, which lay another way in Ionia, over against the Aegean sea; and still less Lystra, as the Alexandrian copy and Vulgate Latin version read, which was in Lycaonia, and in the continent many miles from the sea: Lycia was a country of the lesser Asia, and lay between Caria and Pamphylia, and so it is mentioned with Caria and Pamphylia, in:

“And to all the countries and to Sampsames, and the Lacedemonians, and to Delus, and Myndus, and Sicyon, and Caria, and Samos, and Pamphylia, and Lycia, and Halicarnassus, and Rhodus, and Aradus, and Cos, and Side, and Aradus, and Gortyna, and Cnidus, and Cyprus, and Cyrene.” (1 Maccabees 15:23)

and the Carians, Pamphylians, and Lycians, are frequently put together in history; and the Lycians are said ^{f1257} to be originally of Crete, and to have their name from Lycus the son of Pandion; though some think that Lycia took its name “a luce”, from light, and of this country Myra was the metropolis: Ptolomy calls it Myrra, as if it had the signification of “myrrhe”; and so Jerom or Origen ^{f1258} reads it here, and interprets it “bitter”; but Pliny and others call it Myra, as here, and it signifies “ointment”; and here the apostle staying some time, though it cannot be said how long, no doubt opened the box of the precious ointment of the Gospel, and diffused the savour of it in this place; for in the beginning of the “fourth” century, in Constantine’s time, we read of one Nicolaus, a

famous man, bishop of Myra in Lycia, who was present at the council of Nice, and there showed the scars and marks upon him, because of his constant confession of Christ under Maximinus; in the “fifth” century there was a bishop of this place, whose name was Romanus, and was in two synods, in the infamous one at Ephesus, where he favoured Eutyches, and in that at Chalcedon; in the “sixth” century mention is made of a bishop of this church in the acts of the synod at Rome and Constantinople; in the “seventh” century, Polyeuctus, bishop of Myra, was in the sixth synod at Constantinople, and in this century Myra was the metropolitan church of Lycia; in the “eighth” century, Theodorus, bishop of it, was in the Nicene synod; and in the ninth century this place was taken by the Saracens ^{f1259}.

Ver. 6. *And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria,* etc.]

Alexandria was the chief city in Egypt, built by Alexander the great, from whom it took its name; it was situated near the sea, and had a famous haven or port, which R. Benjamin ^{f1260} calls *hayrdnski a l ç l mnh*, “the port of Alexandria”; from hence ships were sent into several parts for trade and commerce, and one of these Julius found at Myra: the top sail was a distinguishing sign of a ship of Alexandria, for none might spread their top sails but ships of Alexandria ^{f1261}; these were not obliged to strike sail when they came into a port: the Jewish writers make frequent mention of *tyrdnski a hnyps*, “a ship of Alexandria” ^{f1262}; by which they intend a ship of a large bulk, which had a cistern in it for fresh water for a long voyage; and by this they distinguish ships of bulk from those small ones, that were used about their coasts; a ship of Alexandria with them was a ship that went from the land of Israel to Alexandria; whereas here it seems to design one that belonged to Alexandria, and went from thence to other parts: and this ship was

sailing into Italy; and it was usual for ships to go from Alexandria to Puteoli in Italy, and from thence to Alexandria upon trade and business ^{f1263}

and he put us therein; the centurion removed Paul and his companions, and the rest of the prisoners, with whatsoever soldiers were under his care, out of the ship of Adramyttium, into the ship of Alexandria; that is, he ordered them to remove out of one into the other.

Ver. 7. *And when we had sailed slowly many days,* etc.] Because of contrary winds, as in (~~427b~~ Acts 27:4) or else for want of wind, as some

think; the Syriac version renders it, “and because it sailed heavily”; that is, the ship being loaden with goods:

and scarce were come over against Cnidus; or “Gnidus”, as it is sometimes called; it was a city and promontory in Doris, in the Chersonese or peninsula of Caria, famous for the marble statue of Venus made by Praxiteles^{f1264}; it was over against the island of Crete, and is now called Capo Chio; it was the birthplace of Eudoxus, a famous philosopher, astrologer, geometrician, physician and lawgiver^{f1265}; it is made mention of in:

“And to all the countries and to Sampsames, and the Lacedemonians, and to Delus, and Myndus, and Sicyon, and Caria, and Samos, and Pamphylia, and Lycia, and Halicarnassus, and Rhodus, and Aradus, and Cos, and Side, and Aradus, and Gortyna, and Cnidus, and Cyprus, and Cyrene.” (1 Maccabees 15:23)

Jerom^{f1266} says, it was a famous island over against Asia, joining to the province of Caria; some think it has its name from the fish “Gnidus”, which is taken about this place, and which is of such an extraordinary nature, that when taken in the hand, it stings like a nettle; others^{f1267} derive it from dg[“hanad”, or “gnad”, which, in the Phoenician language signifies “to join”; because, as both Pausanias^{f1268} and Strabo^{f1269} say, it was joined by a bridge or causeway to the continent: it had two ports in it, as the last mentioned writer says, but into neither of them did the ship put, in which the apostle was; nor do we read of the Gospel being preached here, or of a church in it until the “sixth” century, when mention is made of a bishop of Gnidus in the acts of the synod at Rome and Constantinople^{f1270}:

the wind not suffering us; to go right forward, as the Syriac version adds:

we sailed under Crete; or below it, as in (<4270> Acts 27:4) This is now called Candy; (see Gill on “<4271> Acts 2:11”), over against Salmone; now called Capo Salamone: this, by Pliny^{f1271}, Ptolomy^{f1272}, and Mela^{f1273}, is called Samonium or Sammonium, and by them said to be a promontory in the island of Crete, on the east side of it, over against the island of Rhodes; Strabo calls it Salmonion, an eastern promontory of Crete; and Jerom a maritime city of the island of Crete.

Ver. 8. *And hardly passing it*, etc.] That is, Salmone, with great difficulty, because of the winds:

came unto a place which is called the Fair Havens; called by other writers Cale Acte, or the fair shore, and is placed by Ptolomy ^{f1274} in Eubaea, and by Herodotus ^{f1275} in Sicily; but by Stephanus ^{f1276} is said to be a city of the Cretians, and which agrees with this account;

nigh whereunto was the city of Lasae; there was a city in Crete called by Solinus ^{f1277} Lisson, and by Ptolomy ^{f1278} Lyssus, which he places on the south side of the island; and by Pliny ^{f1279} Lasos, which comes pretty near to this name, but then he places it in the midland part of Crete; who also makes mention of an island called Lasia over against Troezenium, and another that was one of the Cyclades; the Syriac version here read, “Lasia”: Jerom ^{f1280} says, Lasea is a city on the shore of the island of Crete, near the place which is called the Fair Havens, as Luke himself explains it; for which some corruptly read “Thalassa”; as do the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; and the Alexandrian copy “Alassa”: Beza conjectures that it is the same with Eloea, which Pliny makes mention of in the above cited place, as a city in Crete.

Ver. 9. *Now when much time was spent*, etc.] In sailing against the wind, or by staying at the Fair Havens; for so the Syriac version renders it, “where we stayed a long time”; and the Ethiopic version, “and there we remained many days”: it follows,

and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past; the Syriac version reads, “the fast of the Jews”; this was the day of atonement, which was the grand fast of the Jews, on which day they afflicted their souls, (^(R237) Leviticus 23:27) in memory of the worshipping of the golden calf; on that day they neither eat nor drink, nor do any work, neither do they wash, nor are they anointed, nor do they bind on their shoes, or make use of the marriage bed; nor do they read anything but sorrowful things, as the Lamentations of Jeremiah, until the setting of the sun, and the rising of the stars; and hence this day is called by them μwx μwy, “the day of fasting”, and l wdgh μwx, “the great fast, and the day of the fast of atonement, and the fast of the atonement” ^{f1281}: now this day was on the 10th of the month Tisri, which answers to the latter part of our September, and the former part of October; so that it was now Michaelmas time, when winter was coming on, and sailing began to be dangerous; about this time of the year the Pleiades set, which brings on tempestuous weather, and unfit for sailing:

Paul admonished them, or gave them some advice to continue where they were.

Ver. 10. *And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive*, etc.] Not only by the tempestuous weather which they had met with, and still continued, and which they must expect to have, if they continued on their voyage; but by a spirit of prophecy, which he was endued with, by which he foresaw, and so foretold, as follows;

that this voyage will be with hurt, and with much damage not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives; or of our persons, or bodies, that is, of the health of them; for certain it is that it was revealed to the apostle, that not one life should be lost; but yet through the shipwreck, what with the fright of it, and being in the water, much damage must accrue to their persons, as well as the ship and all its freight be lost.

Ver. 11. *Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship*, etc.] Who were either one and the same person, or if two persons, the one was the owner, whose the ship was, and the other, he that was at the helm, and steered and directed it; or the one might be the captain, and the other the pilot. The κυβερνητης, or “governor”, as he is here called with the ancients, was he who sat on an eminence in the stern of the ship, at the helm, and had the direction of it; he gave the orders, which others executed: what qualified him for his post chiefly lay in three things; in the knowledge of the constellations, and winds, of the former that he might direct the course of the ship according to them, and by them foresee future tempests, and of the latter, that he might be acquainted with the several points, from whence they blew; also in the knowledge of ports, and places to put into, and of rocks and sands, that they might be escaped; likewise in the knowledge of the use of the helm, and sails ^{f1282}; for one part of his business, as ^{f1283} Seneca observes, was to give orders after this manner; so and so move the helm, so and so let down the sails, etc. in every ship there was a governor, and in larger ones sometimes there were two; ^{f1284} Aelianus says, the Carthaginians had always two governors in a ship: the other word, ναυκληρος, is in the glossary rendered “navicularius”, which signifies “the owner” of the ship; and so we render it; though perhaps he is the same with the “proreta”, who governed the prow or head of the ship, and was the next in dignity to the governor, and a kind of a sub-governor; and his business was to observe tempests, to explore promontories, rocks and sands, and show them to the governor ^{f1285}; and so Isidore ^{f1286} says, the

owner of the ship is called Naucleros, because the ship is in his lot, “cleros” signifying lot: and as these best understood naval affairs, Julius gave more heed to what they said, and rather believed them,

than those things which were spoken by Paul; by a spirit of prophecy, which he had no notion of; for though he treated him civilly as a man, he had no regard to him as a Christian, or as one endued with the Spirit of God, which he knew nothing of.

Ver. 12. *And because the haven was not commodious to winter in*, etc.] Which was called the “Fair Havens”, (⁴²⁷⁸Acts 27:8) which name it might have by an antiphrasis, it being just the reverse; it might be a good summer haven, but not be fit for winter: perhaps it might be an open road or bay, and having nothing to shelter from the boisterous waves, was a place very improper for a ship to be in, in stormy weather; for in open places, as bays and roads, the sea tumbles in very violently in bad weather: this was a haven fit for fair weather only, and therefore might be so called:

the more part advised to depart thence also; the major part of the ship’s company were of the same opinion with the master and owner of it, and advised as well as they, to sail from the Fair Havens in quest of a better port; the Syriac version reads, “the most of ours”, of the apostle’s companions; so that they were against him, according to that version, which is not likely; however, the majority in the ship were for sailing:

if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter, which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west: this place is called in the Syriac version Phoenix; and Ptolomy^{f1287} makes mention both of the city and haven of Phoenix, as on the south side of the island of Crete: and whereas it is here said to lie towards the south west and north west, this may be reconciled to that, as well as to itself; for the haven considered in general lay towards the south, but having its windings and turnings, with respect to them it lay towards both the south west and the north west, and so was a very commodious haven to winter in.

Ver. 13. *And when the south wind blew softly*, etc.] Or moderately, which was a good wind for them:

supposing that they, had obtained their purpose; that things would succeed according to their wish, and favour their design:

loosing thence; from the Fair Havens; the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions render it, “loosing from Assos”; which could not be Assos of Troas, mentioned in (Acts 20:13) which was many miles from hence; rather Asum, a town in Crete, of which Pliny^{f1288} makes mention, though, according to him, it seems to be an inland town; wherefore it is best to take the word *ασσον*, to be an adverb, and render it “thence”, as we do; or join it with the next word, and render it,

they came near, or they sailed close by Crete; along the shore, the wind favouring them, that they were in no danger of being dashed upon it, it being a soft gentle wind.

Ver. 14. *But not long after*, etc.] They had not been long at sea, but

there arose against it; the ship, or the island of Crete, or both:

a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon; in the Greek text it is a “Typhonic” wind, so called, not from the name of a country from whence it blew; rather from Typho, the same with Python, an Heathen deity, who is said to be drowned in the lake Serbonis, or in the river Orontes; about which places this sort of wind is observed to be frequent, and which may take its name from him, being supposed to be raised by him. This wind may very well be thought to be the same which is called Typhon, and is by writers^{f1289} represented as a very tempestuous one, as a sort of whirlwind or hurricane, a violent storm, though without thunder and lightning; and Pliny^{f1290} calls it the chief plague of sailors, it breaking their sails, and even their vessels to pieces: and this may still have its name from Typho, since the Egyptians used to call everything that is pernicious and hurtful by this name; moreover, this wind is also called “Euroclydon”. The Alexandrian copy reads, “Euracylon”, and so the Vulgate Latin version seems to have read, rendering it “Euro-aquilo, the north east wind”. The Ethiopic version renders it, the “north wind”; but according to Aristotle^{f1291}, and Pliny^{f1292} the wind Typhon never blew in the northern parts; though some think that wind is not meant here, since the Typhon is a sudden storm of wind, and soon over; whereas this storm of wind was a settled and lasting one, it continued many days; and that it is only called Typhonic, because it bore some likeness to it, being very blustering and tempestuous: it seems by its name to be an easterly wind, which blew very violently, ploughed the sea, and lifted up its waves; hence the Arabic version renders it, “a mover” or “stirrer up of the waves”; which beat against the ship in a violent manner, and exposed it to great danger.

Ver. 15. *And when the ship was caught*, etc.] By the wind, snatched up by it, and forcibly carried away:

and could not bear up into the wind; and against it, or look it in the face, as the word signifies; could not ply to windward, the wind being so high and the sea so strong:

we let her drive; about the sea, at pleasure, it being in vain to attempt to get her forward against the wind, or to direct her course.

Ver. 16. *And running under a certain island*, etc.] Or below a certain island and hard by, it or under the sea shore of it, where the sea might be smoother, the wind not being there so strong:

which is called Clauda: by Ptolomy^{f1293} it is called Claudus, and was near the island of Crete, and now called Gozo. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, and some copies, read “Cauda”; and there was an island near to Crete, which was called Gaudos^{f1294}, and is thought to be the place here meant:

we had much work to come by the boat; which they had with them to go ashore in, or to betake themselves to in case of shipwreck; and which in this storm was in danger of being dashed to pieces against the ship, or lost; and it was with some difficulty that they came at it, and took it up into the ship.

Ver. 17. *Which when they had taken up*, etc.] When they had got the boat into the ship:

they used helps; the mariners made use of other persons, called in the assistance of the soldiers, and passengers, and prisoners; or for the help of the ship, they made use of cords, chains, and such like things:

undergirding the ship: with cords and ropes, which they drew under the keel of the ship, and so bound both sides of the ship, that it might not split and fall to pieces; which may be what is now called “frapping”, and is done by putting large ropes under the keel, and over the gunwale; and is used when a ship by labouring hard in the sea breaks the bolts in her sides, and this keeps her from parting. Horace^{f1295} refers to this use of ropes in tempests, when he says, “Nonne vides ut — sine funibus vix durare carinae possint imperiosius Aequeor?” do not you see that without ropes the keels can scarcely endure the more imperious sea? Isidorus^{f1296} makes mention

of several sorts of ropes made use of in storms; “spirae”, he says, are ropes that are used in tempests, which the mariners after their manner call “curcubae; tormentum” is a long rope in ships, according to the same writer, which reaches from head to stern, by which they are bound faster together:

and fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands: which were on the African coast, here called “Syrtes”; either from the conflux of sand and slime, and such like things, which made them very dangerous for shipping, and being covered with water, could not be seen and guarded against, and especially in a storm; or from their drawing of vessels into them, which they retain, suck in, and swallow up; and such the mariners might know were not far off: there were two very remarkable ones on the coast of Africa, the one is called the greater “Syrtes”, the other the lesser ^{f1297}; the greater was more to the south than the lesser, and also more to the east, and the lesser was to the west: of these “Syrtes”, Jerom ^{f1298} says, they are sandy places in the great sea very terrible, and to be feared, because they use to draw all into them; they are near the Egyptian sea; the Lybian sea, which washes the African shore, is by Seneca called from them the “Syrtic sea” ^{f1299}: wherefore,

they strake sail; let down their sails; so read some manuscripts in New College, Oxford; in the Greek text it is, “they let down the vessel”; not the boat they had taken in, of which we read after; nor an anchor, or anchors, which would have been improper in a storm; nor the mast, it can hardly be thought that should be the first thing they should cut down, when they did not cast out the tackling till the third day; the storm was vehement on the first, more vehement on the second, when they lightened the ship, and most vehement on the third, when they cast out the tackling; and as Scheffer ^{f1300} observes, the mast is never cut down before the loss of other things; wherefore this is to be understood of letting down the sail yard, and contracting the sails; the Syriac version renders it, “we let down the main sail”; or, “the sail”, using the Greek word “Armenon”, which signifies “a sail”:

and so were driven; about in the sea, wheresoever the winds and waves carried them; or very likely the ship was driven before the wind under her bare poles.

Ver. 18. *And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest*, etc.] Sometimes being lifted up as it were to the heavens, and then presently sinking down,

as if they were going into the bottom of the sea; such a condition at sea is described to the life by the Psalmist, in (^{49A75}Psalm 107:25-27).

the next day they lightened the ship; of its burden, its lading, the goods and merchandise that were in it; as the mariners did in the ship in which Jonah was, (Jon 1:5) the Ethiopic version renders it, “they cast the goods into the sea”; the Arabic version, the “merchandise”.

Ver. 19. *And the third day*, etc.] From the time this storm began, and this tempestuous weather held:

we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship; by which seems to be meant their naval stores and instruments, as sails, ropes, cables, anchors, etc. and yet we afterwards read of their anchors and main sail: it may be rendered, “the furniture of the ship”; and yet it cannot design the ship’s provisions, at least all were not cast away; for afterwards mention is made of casting out the wheat into the sea: many versions render it, “the armament of the ship”; and the Ethiopic version adds, “and arms”; the soldiers’ arms, and others which belonged to the ship, which were brought with them to defend themselves against an enemy: these, the historian says, “we cast out”; the Apostle Paul’s company, Luke and others; but not without the leave and order of the centurion and governor of the ship: the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version read, “they cast out”: which seems most probable.

Ver. 20. *And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared*, etc.] The Syriac version adds, “nor moon”; which is an usual description of dark, cloudy, and tempestuous seasons; and which was not only uncomfortable to them, because they could not see these luminaries, and enjoy their beneficial light and influence; but because they had them not to guide and direct them; for the sun, moon, and stars, are useful to sailors, to steer their course by; especially they were to the ancients, before the invention and use of the loadstone; besides, by these they conjectured what weather it would be, as mariners still do; they observed the rising and setting of the sun, whether it shone with equal rays or not, and whether it was red and fiery, or pale; and the like observations they made upon the moon, both as to its colour and size; and especially the constellations and stars were of singular use unto them; and above all, the two Bears, the greater and the lesser; the Greeks observed the former, and the Phoenicians the latter; and who are said by Pliny to have first found out the use of the constellations in navigation; particularly this is ascribed to the famous philosopher Thales,

who is said to be a Phoenician; and from other constellations, as Arcturus, Orion, Hyades, etc. they foresaw rains, storms, and tempests: and now what made the case of the apostle and the ship's company the more distressing was, that it was not only dark and cloudy, but very tempestuous, as follows;

and no small tempest lay on us; and all this continued many days: so Virgil ^{f1301} represents Aeneas and his company in a like condition at sea, as not able by the heavens to distinguish day from night, nor to direct their course, neither sun nor stars appearing, and so wandered about in the sea three days without the sun, and as many nights without a star; and Homer ^{f1302} describes Ulysses in a violent storm at sea, and for the space of nine days tossed about, when on the tenth day he got to land; and Sosia, in Terence ^{f1303}, is brought in saying, that he had been thirty days in a ship, expecting death every moment, so boisterous was the storm he was in; and so it was in this case, the winds blew hard upon them, and the rains fell with great violence, and everything was discouraging and distressing; insomuch that

all hope that we should be saved was then taken away; neither the master and owner of the ship, nor the mariners, nor the soldiers, nor prisoners, nor the apostle's companions, had any hope of being saved, but all expected to be lost. The apostle himself knew indeed, that though the ship would be lost, every man's life would be saved; and yet he could have no hope of this, as to the outward appearance of things, but on account of the revelation which the Lord had made to him, and he believed; otherwise, as to all human helps and means, there was no probability of an escape.

Ver. 21. *But after long abstinence*, etc.] From food, not for want of it, as appears from what follows, (⁴⁰⁷³⁶Acts 27:36-38) nor in a religious way, in order to obtain the favour of God; but either for want of appetite, and a nauseousness and loathing of food, through the tossing of the ship, fright at the storm, and fears of death; and chiefly for want of time, being employed for the security of themselves and the ship.

Paul stood forth in the midst of them; that all might hear him:

and said, sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me: it would have been better for them to have taken his advice, and stayed at the Fair Havens,

and not have loosed from Crete; or sailed from thence:

and to have gained this harm and loss; whereby they would have shunned the injuries of the weather, the storm and tempest which they had endured, to the prejudice of their health, and the terrifying of their minds, and have prevented the loss of the goods and merchandise of the ship, and its tackling, utensils, instruments, and arms; the former of these is expressed by “harm” or injury, and the latter by “loss”. The apostle addresses them in a very courteous manner, and does not use sharp reproofs, severe language, or upbraid and insult them, only reminds them of the counsel he had given, which had it been taken, would have been to their advantage; and the rather he mentions this, that since what he had foretold was in part already come to pass, they might give the more heed to what he was about to say to them.

Ver. 22. *And now I exhort you to be of good cheer*, etc.] To take heart and courage, and not be cast down, though things had been thus with them, and they were now in a very melancholy plight and condition.

For there shall be no loss of any man’s life among you, but of the ship; the ship will be lost, but not one person in it: there will be a shipwreck, and so every man’s life will be in danger, and yet not one will perish; and therefore there was reason to be of good cheer, since this was what they could not, and did not expect, all hope of being saved was gone: wherefore this, if they could but believe it, must be good news to all the company; and in order to engage them to believe it, the apostle adds,

Ver. 23. *For there stood by me this night the angel of God*, etc.] One of the ministering, spirits that stand before God, and who was sent by him to the apostle; and appeared to him, either in a vision by a dream, or rather when he was awake, and stood by him, as he was praying for deliverance from the storm; for it is most likely that the apostle should be engaged at such a time as this:

whose I am, and whom I serve: meaning not the angel, but God, whose the angel was; and his the apostle was, by electing, redeeming, and calling grace; God the Father had chosen him in his Son unto salvation; and Christ had redeemed him by his blood; and the Holy Spirit had called him by his grace; and he was not only the Lord’s in common, as all other saints are, but he was his apostle and minister, and served him in the ministration of the Gospel of Christ, as well as from a principle of grace, obeyed the law of God, and was subject to the ordinances of Christ; in all which he served with great pleasure and cheerfulness, diligence, constancy, and faithfulness;

from right principles, and with right views, being constrained by love, and influenced by the consideration of the relation he stood in to God. And all this was not peculiar to the apostle, but common to all the saints, excepting that of his being an apostle and minister of the Gospel: and the consideration of their relation to God has the same influence upon them it had upon him; they are not their own, nor are they the servants of men, nor do they belong to Satan, nor even to the ministering angels, but they are the Lord's; not merely by creation, as all men are, but in a way of special grace: they are Jehovah the Father's, to whom he bears a peculiar love and favour, and whom he has chosen in his Son for his peculiar people; and which is made manifest and known by drawing them with loving kindness to himself in the effectual calling; by his Gospel coming in power to them; by the blessings of the covenant of grace being bestowed on them; and by the spirit of adoption witnessing to them, that they are the children of God: they are Jehovah the Son's, they are his people made willing in the day of his power; they are his portion assigned him by his Father; they are his spouse and bride, whom he has betrothed to himself; they are his children, to whom he stands in the relation of the everlasting Father; and they are his sheep the Father has given him, and he has laid down his life for; all which appears by their having his Spirit, as a Spirit of regeneration and sanctification, without which none are openly and manifestatively his: and they are Jehovah the Spirit's; they are his regenerated and sanctified ones; they are his workmanship, having his good work of grace begun and carrying on in their souls; they are his temples in which he dwells; he has the possession of them, and will not leave them till he has brought them safe to glory: and under all this evidence, and especially through the testimony of the Spirit of God unto them, they call themselves the Lord's, as the apostle here does, and this engages them to serve him. The natural man has no desire, but an aversion to the service of God; converted men are willing to serve him, and delight to do it; they serve God in the best manner they can, in righteousness and true holiness, in an acceptable manner, with reverence and godly fear, and heartily and willingly; as appears by the pleasure they take in being called the servants of God, by disclaiming all other lords, by running all risks to serve the Lord, and by lamenting it, that they serve him no better.

Ver. 24. *Saying, fear not, Paul*, etc.] For though the apostle knew and believed he should go to Rome, and appear before Caesar, to whom he had appealed, and where he should bear a testimony for Christ; and though he

had previous notice of this storm, and of the loss and damage which should be sustained, and which he expected; yet the flesh was weak, and he might be under some fears and misgivings of heart, for these sometimes attend the best of men.

Thou must be brought before Caesar; as has been declared, and therefore cannot be lost in this storm; it is the will and decree of God, which cannot be frustrated, it must be:

and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee; that is, God had determined to save the whole ship's company for his sake, and in answer to his prayers, which he had been putting up for them; the Lord had heard him, and granted his request, and would save them all on his account: so sometimes God saves a nation, a city, a body of men, even of ungodly men, for the sake of a few that fear his name, who are among them.

Ver. 25. *Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer,* etc.] Which he repeats with more fervency and earnestness, there being so much reason for it:

for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me: true faith lays hold and, settles upon the word and promises of God; and the true believer, knowing his power and faithfulness, firmly persuaded that there shall be a performance of what is said by him, with respect to matter, manner, and circumstances. Whatever God has told his people of, or has promised unto them, shall be performed, whether with respect to things temporal; that they shall not want any good thing; that all their afflictions shall be for their good; that they shall be supported under them, and at last brought out of them: or whether with respect to spiritual things; whatever he has said concerning himself, that he will be their God, will continue to love them, will not leave them, nor forsake them, will guide and protect them, will supply all their need, and give them grace here, and glory hereafter; and whatever he has said concerning his Son, that he is their Saviour and Redeemer, that they are justified by his righteousness, pardoned through his blood, and shall be saved in him with an everlasting salvation; and whatever he has said concerning his Spirit, that he shall enlighten them more and more, carry on his good work in them, and finish it, shall be their comforter and their guide, shall strengthen them in their inward man, and work them up for that selfsame thing, eternal glory: and likewise, whatever he has said concerning the prosperity and happiness of the churches in the latter day; even all those glorious things spoken of the city of God; and which relate both to the spiritual and personal reign of Christ. Faith takes

all this at his word, and firmly believes it shall be as he has said: and it has good grounds and reasons for acting in this manner; from the veracity, faithfulness, and power of God, who has promised; and from the nature of the promises themselves, which are unconditional, immutable, all in Christ, and yea and amen in him, and not one of them has ever failed: and such a believing frame of soul greatly encourages cheerfulness of spirit, and produces it: a believer is cheerful himself, as he has reason to be; he is filled with joy and peace in believing, yea, with a joy unspeakable, and full of glory; and he makes all about him cheerful; he comforts others with the same comforts he has been comforted of God; and however, he exhorts, after his own example, to believe, and be of good cheer; (see ^{<400>}2 Chronicles 20:20).

Ver. 26. *Howbeit, we must be cast upon a certain island.*] This circumstance is foretold, that when the whole affair should come to pass, it might be manifest that it was not a casual thing, a fortuitous event, a business of chance, but was predetermined by God, made known to the apostle, and predicted by him. This island was Melita; and the fulfilment of this part of the prediction is related in (^{<401>}Acts 28:1).

Ver. 27. *But when the fourteenth night was come,* etc.] From their setting out from the Fair Havens in Crete, or from the beginning of the storm:

as they were driven up and down in Adria: or “in the Adriatic sea”, as the Syriac version renders it: the Adriatic sea is now called by the Turks the gulf of Venice, and the straits of Venice, and sometimes the Venetian sea ^{f1304}; but formerly the Adriatic sea included more than the Venetian gulf; it took in the Ionian and Sicilian seas, and had its name from the city Adria, a colony of the Tuscans ^{f1305}. It is called by Ptolomy ^{f1306} Hadria, and reckoned a city of the Picenes. Pliny ^{f1307} places it near the river Padus, and calls it Atria, a town of the Tuscans, which had a famous port, from whence the sea was before called Atriotic, which is now Adriatic. Adria, Justin ^{f1308} says, which is near to the Illyrian sea, and gave name to the Adriatic sea, is a Grecian city; and from this place the ancestors of Adrian, the Roman emperor, originally came; and all the sea between Illyricum and Italy is called the Adriatic; and from the beginning of it, which is at the city of Venice, unto Garganus, a mountain in Italy, and Dyrrachium, a city of Macedonia, it is 600 miles in length, and its largest breadth is 200, and the least 150, and the mouth of it 60. The other part of the sea, which washes Macedonia and Epirus, is called the Ionian sea. Moreover, this whole sea is

called the superior sea, with respect to the Tyrrhenian, which dashes the other shore of Italy, and is called the inferior^{f1309}. In this same sea, Josephus^{f1310}, the historian, was shipwrecked as he was on a voyage to Rome: his account is this;

“I came to Rome, having gone through many dangers by sea, for our ship being sunk in the middle of Adria, being in number about six hundred, we swam all night; and about break of day, by the providence of God, a ship of Cyrene appeared to us, in which I, and some others, in all eighty, getting before the rest, were received into it, and so got safe to Dicearchia, which the Italians call Puteoli;”

a place afterwards mentioned, where the apostle also arrived. And the sea itself is often, by the poets^{f1311} called Adria, as here, and is represented as a very troublesome sea; and here Paul, and the ship’s company, were driven to and fro by the storm,

when about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country: about the middle of the night the mariners thought, by some observations they made, that they were nigh land; or, as it is in the Greek text, “that some country drew near to them”; which well agrees with the language and sense of seafaring persons, to whose sight the land seems to draw near them, or depart from them, when they draw near, or depart from that: the Ethiopic version is, “they thought they should have seen a city”; they had a notion of some city near; and the Arabic version, “they thought to know in what country, or place” they were; and therefore did as follows.

Ver. 28. *And sounded,* etc.] Or let down their plummet, or sounding line; which was a line with a piece of lead at the end of it, which they let down into the water, and by that means found what depth it was, by which they could judge whether they were near land or not. The sounding line, with the ancients, was called by different names; sometimes bolis, and this is the name it has here, **βολισαντες**, “they let down the bolis”: and the bolis is, by some, described thus; it is a brazen or leaden vessel, with a chain, which mariners fill with grease, and let down into the sea, to try whether the places are rocky where a ship may stand, or sandy where the ship is in danger of being lost: it is also called “catapirates”, which is thus described by Isidore; “catapirates” is a line with a piece of lead, by which the depth of the sea is tried. Herodotus makes mention of it under this name, and observes, that when persons are within a day’s voyage of Egypt, if they let

down the “catapirates”, or sounding line, they will bring up clay, even when in eleven fathom deep^{f1312}. According to modern accounts, there are two kinds of lines, occasionally used in sounding the sea, the sounding line, and the deep sea line: the sounding line is the thickest and shortest, as not exceeding 20 fathoms in length, and is marked at two, three, and four fathoms with a piece of black leather between the strands, and at five with a piece of white leather: the sounding line may be used when the ship is under sail, which the deep sea line cannot. — The plummet is usually in form of a nine pin, and weighs 18 pounds; the end is frequently greased, to try whether the ground be sandy or rocky, etc.^{f1313}. The deep sea line is used in deep water, and both lead and line are larger than the other; at the end of it is a piece of lead, called deep sea lead, has a hole at the bottom, in which is put a piece of “tallow”, to bring up the colour of the sand at the bottom, to learn the differences of the ground, and know what coasts they are on.

And found it twenty fathoms; or “orgyas”; a fathom is a measure which contains six feet, and is the utmost extent of both arms, when stretched into a right line: the fathom, it seems, differs according to the different sorts of vessels; the fathom of a man of war is six feet, that of merchant ships five feet and a half, and that of fly boats and fishing vessels five feet: if the fathom here used was the first of these, the sounding was an hundred and twenty feet; the Ethiopic version renders it, “twenty statues of a man”.

And when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms; or ninety feet; by which they imagined that they were near the continent, or some island: in some places, as the coasts of Virginia, for instance, by the use of the deep sea line, it is known how far it is from land; for as many fathoms of water as are found, it is reckoned so many leagues from land.

Ver. 29. *Then fearing lest they should have fallen upon rocks*, etc.] Or rough places, as shelves, rocks, or sands, as they might well fear, when the water shallowed so fast, from 20 to 15 fathoms:

they cast four anchors out of the stern; or hinder part of the ship; the Ethiopic version calls it, “the head of the ship”: and adds, “where the governor sat”; that is, at the helm, to steer it. Perhaps the reason of this version is, because it is not usual in modern navigation, and so, when this version was made, to cast out anchors from the stern, but from the prow or head of the ship; but it seems this was done by the ancients. According to

Pliny, the Tyrrhenians first invented the anchor; though Pausanias ascribes the invention of it to Midas, the son of Gordius: the most ancient ones were made of stone, as was the anchor of the Argonautes; afterwards they were made of wood; and it is said, that the Japanese use wooden anchors now; and these were not pointed, but had great weights of lead, or baskets filled with stones at the head of them, to stop the ship with; last of all they were made of iron, but with a barb or tooth on one side only, not on both: the anchor with two teeth or barbs was found out by Eupalamius; or, as others say, by Anacharsis, the Scythian philosopher: it was usual to have more anchors than one in every ship, of which there was one which exceeded the rest, both in size and strength, and was called the “sacred” anchor; and which was only used in case of necessity^{f1314}; and is what is now called “the sheet anchor”. The modern anchor is a large strong piece of iron, crooked at one end, and formed into two barbs, resembling a hook, fastened at the other end by a cable. The parts of an anchor are,

- (1) the ring into which the cable is fastened;
- (2) the beam, or shank, which is the longest part of the anchor;
- (3) the arm, which is that which runs down into the ground; at the end of which is,
- (4) the flouke or fluke, by some called the palm, being that broad and picked part with its barbs like an arrowhead, which fastens into the ground;
- (5) the stock, a piece of wood, fastened to the beam near the ring, serving to guide the fluke, so that it may fall right, and fix in the ground.

There are three kinds of anchors commonly used, the kedger, the grapnel, and the stream anchor^{f1315}; yea, I find that there are four kinds of anchors, the sheet anchor, best bower, small bower, and stream anchor: it seems the grapnel is chiefly for the long boat: here were four anchors, but very likely all of a sort, or, however, not diversified in the manner the modern ones are. These they cast out to stop the ship, and keep it steady, and that it might proceed no further, till they could learn whereabout they were:

and wished for the day; that by the light of it they might see whether they were near land, or in danger of rocks and shelves, as they imagined.

Ver. 30. *And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship,* etc.] To save their lives, concluding that it was in the utmost danger, and that it would quickly, notwithstanding the anchors cast out, break away, and fall upon the rocks, and split to pieces:

when they had let down the boat into the sea; which before they had taken up into the ship, (~~4276~~ Acts 27:16,17) and now they let it down, in order to get into it, and make their escape:

under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship; the foremost part of the ship, the prow of it; their pretence in attempting to get out of the ship, and into the boat, was, that whereas there were anchors cast out of the stern, or hinder part of the ship, so they would cast out others, from the fore part of it; and “stretch” them “out”, as the word signifies, or carry them further out into the sea, for the security of the ship; and to do which, it was necessary to use the boat.

Ver. 31. *Paul said to the centurion, and to the soldiers,* etc.] He did not direct his speech to the governor and owner of the ship, who very likely, being sensible of the danger, were in the scheme with the mariners, and at the head of them; but to Julius the centurion, and the soldiers under him, who having no knowledge of maritime affairs, were not apprised of the danger, nor aware of the design of the shipmen; and besides, had now great dependence upon the assurance the apostle had given, that no life should be lost: to these he said,

except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved; pointing to the mariners who were about to let down the boat, in order to make their escape: the apostle had before declared, that there should be no loss of any man’s life, and yet now affirms, that unless the mariners continued in the ship, the rest of the company could not be saved: this does not show that the decree concerning the salvation of them was a conditional one, and that the condition was, that the mariners should stay in the ship; but that their stay in the ship, who had skill to guide and direct it, as also the company when shipwrecked, were a means absolutely fixed in the decree, and therefore was absolutely necessary: God had determined to save the whole ship’s crew, and that in the same way and manner; they were all to be shipwrecked; some were not to leave the ship before hand, and save themselves in the boat, but they were all to be exposed to equal danger, and then be saved; and till that time came, the proper and prudent means were to be made use of, who were the shipmen, who best knew how to

manage the ship in this extremity: this teaches us that the end and means, in the decrees of God, are not to be separated; nor is any end to be expected without the use of means; and means are as peremptorily fixed, and are as absolutely necessary, and must as certainly be accomplished, as the end. Thus spiritual and eternal salvation is a certain thing; it is the appointment of God, which is absolute and unconditional, immutable and unfrustrable; there is a sure connection between the decree of God and salvation; it is a scheme drawn by Jehovah in the council of peace, who is God only wise, saw everything before hand that would come to pass, and has power to execute his scheme; it is an affair secured in the covenant of grace, which is sure and immovable; God is faithful who has made it with his Son; and Christ, the surety and Mediator of it, is equal to that part which he has in it; yea, salvation is a finished work, full satisfaction is made for sin, and pardon procured, an everlasting righteousness is brought in, all enemies are conquered and destroyed, and Christ's people are saved from them: and the interest which he has in them shows the certainty of their salvation; for they are given to him, and are in his hands; they are his portion, his treasure and his jewels; they are the purchase of his blood, and the travail of his soul; they are united to him, and are built upon him; they are interested in his preparations and prayers, and are in some sense saved already; and yet there are some things which God has fixed as means, and made absolutely necessary, and without which none can be saved: as for instance, none can be saved without regeneration; without this there is no meetness for heaven; nor does it appear without it that any have a right unto it; nor can an unregenerate man have any true hope of it; wherefore such as are chosen and redeemed, are regenerated by the Spirit of God: so likewise without holiness no man shall see the Lord; this is fixed in the decree of God, and is necessary to the enjoyment of him, and to fellowship with angels and glorified saints; wherefore the Lord sanctifies all he saves: particularly none without faith in Christ will ever be saved; nor is this inconsistent with salvation being by grace, seeing it is not considered as a cause of salvation, but is itself a gift of grace; it lies in receiving things at the hand of God, it admits of no glorying in men, and gives all the glory of salvation to God and Christ, and free grace; and this is necessary because God has appointed it, and therefore he bestows it on all he means to save: to which may be added, that without perseverance in faith and holiness, there is no salvation; wherefore the Lord puts his grace into the hearts of his people to cause them to persevere; he encompasses them with his

power, upholds them with the right hand of his righteousness, and preserves them from Satan, and from a final and total falling away.

Ver. 32. *Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat*, etc.] With which it had been fastened to the sides of the ship, and by which the mariners were letting it down, in order to get into it, and go off:

and let her fall off; from the sides of the ship into the sea, and so prevented the shipmen quitting the ship; for now they gave more credit to Paul than to them.

Ver. 33. *And while the day was coming on*, etc.] Between midnight and break of day: Paul besought them all to take meat; to sit down and eat a meal together:

saying, this day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried; or have been waiting for, or expecting; that is, as the Arabic version expresses it, a shipwreck; for fourteen days past, ever since the storm begun, they had expected nothing but shipwreck and death:

and continued fasting, having taken nothing: not that they had neither ate nor drank all that while, for without a miracle they could never have lived so long without eating something; but the meaning is, they had not eaten anyone regular meal all that while, had only caught up a bit now and then, and ate it, and that but very little.

Ver. 34. *Wherefore I pray you to take some meat*, etc.] To sit down composedly, and eat meat cheerfully and freely:

for this is for your health; the Alexandrian copy reads, “for our health”; it was for the health of them all, that they might be better able to bear the shock and fatigue of the shipwreck, and be in better spirits, and in a better capacity to help themselves, and one another:

for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you; a proverbial phrase, expressing the utmost safety of their lives, and therefore might cheerfully eat their food, and rest themselves, and be satisfied. To dream of shaving the hair, portended shipwreck to sailors; nor was it lawful for any to pare his nails, or cut off his hair, but in a storm; to which custom, some think, the apostle here alludes ^{f1316}; (see ^{<0945>}1 Samuel 14:45, ^{<0041>}2 Samuel 14:11).

Ver. 35. *And when he had thus spoken he took bread*, etc.] A piece of bread, of common bread, into his hands; for this could never be the eucharist, or Lord's supper, which the apostle now celebrated, as some have suggested, but such sort of bread that seafaring men commonly eat: mention is before made of "meat" or "food", which the apostle entreated them to take, which includes every sort of sea provisions they had with them; and which, with the ancients, were usually the following: it is certain they used to carry bread corn along with them, either crude, or ground, or baked; the former when they went long voyages, the last when shorter ones; and it is plain that they had wheat in this ship, which after they had eaten they cast out, (⁴²⁷³⁸Acts 27:38) and corn ground, or meal, they had used to eat moistened with water, and sometimes with oil, and sometimes with oil and wine; and they had a sort of food they called "maza" which was made of meat and milk; likewise they used to carry onions and garlic, which the rowers usually ate, and were thought to be good against change of places and water; and they were wont to make a sort of soup of cheese, onions and eggs, which the Greeks call "muttootos", and the Latins "mosetum"; and they had also bread which was of a red colour, being hard baked and scorched in the oven, yea it was "biscoctus", twice baked ^{f1317}; as our modern sea biscuit is, and which has its name from hence, and which for long voyages is four times baked, and prepared six months before the voyage is entered on; and such sort of red bread or biscuit very probably was this, which the apostle now took into his hands, and did with it as follows:

and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all: and for them all, as Christ did at ordinary meals, (⁴¹⁴⁹Matthew 14:19, 15:36).

and when he had broken it he began to eat: which was all agreeably to the custom and manner of the Jews, who first gave thanks, and then said "Amen", at giving of thanks; when he that gave thanks brake and ate first: for he that brake the bread might not break it until the "Amen" was finished by all that answered by it, at giving of thanks; and no one might eat anything until he that brake, first tasted and ate ^{f1318}.

Ver. 36. *Then were they all of good cheer*, etc.] Encouraged by the apostle's words and example:

and they all took some meat; and made a comfortable meal, which they had not done for fourteen days past.

Ver. 37. *And we were in all in the ship*, etc.] Reckoning the master and owner of the ship, and the centurion and the soldiers, and the apostle and his company, with whatsoever passengers there might be:

two hundred and threescore and sixteen souls; the Alexandrian copy reads, “two hundred seventy and five”; and the Ethiopic version, “two hundred and six”. This account of the number is given to show, that the historian, who was one of them, had an exact knowledge of all in the ship; and this being recorded before the account of the shipwreck, may serve to make the truth of the relation the more to be believed that none of them perished, since their number was so precisely known; and makes it the more marvellous, that such a number of men should be saved, and in a shipwreck; and shows, that there must be a wonderful interposition of divine power to bring them all safe to land.

Ver. 38. *And when they had eaten enough*, etc.]] Were satisfied, having eaten a full meal:

they lightened the ship; of its burden, that it might the better carry them to the shore, and that by the following method:

and cast out the wheat into the sea; which seems to have been part of the ship’s provision; or one part of their lading, which they brought from Egypt, and were carrying to Italy: they had cast out some of the goods of the ship before, and also the tackling of the ship, and now, last of all, the wheat; for what was eatable they reserved till last, not knowing to what extremity they might be reduced.

Ver. 39. *And when it was day they knew not the land*, etc.] What place it was, or the name of it:

but they discovered a certain creek with a shore; a gulf or bay, with a shore near it; the Ethiopic version explains it,

an arm of the sea, where was a port, where they thought they could secure themselves, or get ashore:

into which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship; whither they had a mind, and consulted to run the ship, if it could be done by any means, believing it was the most likely method of saving themselves, and that; for notwithstanding the assurance they had that no

man's life should be lost, they made use of all proper means for their safety and security.

Ver. 40. *And when they had taken up the anchors*, etc.] The four anchors they cast out of the stern, (^{f1319}Acts 27:29) or “when they had cut the anchors”, as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it; that is, had cut the cables to which the anchors were fastened:

they committed themselves unto the sea; or left them, the anchors, in the sea; or committed the ship to the sea, and themselves in it, endeavouring to steer its course to the place they had in view:

and loosed the rudder bands; by which the rudder was fastened to the ship. — -The rudder, in navigation, is a piece of timber turning on hinges in the stern of a ship, and which opposing sometimes one side to the water, and sometimes another, turns or directs the vessel this way or that. The rudder of a ship is a piece of timber hung on the stern posts, by four or five iron hooks, called “pintles”, serving as it were for the bridle of a ship, to turn her about at the pleasure of the steersman. — -The rudder being perpendicular, and without side the ship, another piece of timber is fitted into it at right angles, which comes into the ship, by which the rudder is managed and directed: this latter is properly called the “helm” or “tiller”, and sometimes, though improperly, the rudder itself. — -A narrow rudder is best for a ship's sailing, provided she can feel it; that is, be guided and turned by it, for a broad rudder will hold much water when the helm is put over to any side; yet if a ship has a fat quarter, so that the water cannot come quick and strong to her rudder, she will require a broad rudder. — -The aftmost part of the rudder is called the “rake” of the rudder. This is the account of a rudder with the moderns ^{f1319}: with the ancients, the parts of the rudder were these, the “clavus” or “helm”, by which the rudder was governed; the pole of it; the wings or the two breadths of it, which were as wings, and the handle: some ships had but one rudder, most had two, and some three, and some four; those that had but one, seemed to have it in the middle of the stern; and those that had two had them on the sides, not far from the middle; and there were some ships which had them not only in the stern, but also in the prow or head of the ship ^{f1320}: that the ancients had sometimes more rudders than one in a ship, has been abundantly proved by Bochartus and Scheherus; take only an instance or two. The Carthaginians, as ^{f1321}Aelianus reports, decreed two governors to every ship saying it was absurd that it should have *δυο πηδάλια*, “two rudders”, and that he who

was most useful to the sailors, and had the government of the ship, should be alone, and without successor and companion; and so Apuleius^{f1322} says, the ship in which we were carried was shook by various storms and tempests, “*utroque regimine amisso*”, and having lost both its rudders, sunk at the precipice. Some of the Indian ships have three rudders; that of Philopator’s had four rudders: how many this ship had, in which the apostle was, cannot be said: but this is certain, that it had more than one; for the words are, “and loosed the bands of the rudders”; and since it is a clear case, that the ships of the ancients had more rudders than one to each, there is no need to suppose a figure in the text, and that the plural number is used for the singular, as Beza thinks: and “the bands” of them were those by which they were fastened; and they were “loosed”, as Schefferus conjectures, because when the anchors were cast out, they fastened the rudders higher, that they might not be broken by the dashing of the waves, especially as they were in a storm; but now having taken up the anchors, they loosed these bands: and certain it is, that not only oars but rudders were fastened with cords or ropes to the ship^{f1323}: according to the notion of modern navigation, the rudder band might be thought to be the rope which is turned round the tiller, and made fast to the ship’s side, and as the tiller is moved, “surges” round the end of the tiller; and very likely might be made fast, when the ship was at anchor, on one side, to keep the ship from breaking her sheer; but now being loosed, and the helm “a midship”, and the mainsail hoisted, the ship ran to the shore before the wind.

And hoised up the main sail to the wind: which they had before struck or let down, (^{<427>}Acts 27:17). The main sail is that which is upon the main mast. The Ethiopic version renders it, “the great sail”. The great sail was that which is called “*acatius*”, which is another word than is here used: so Isidore^{f1324} says “*acatius*” is the greatest sail, and is placed in the middle of the ship; “*epidromos*” is the next in size, and is placed at the stern; and “*dolon*” is the least sail, and is fixed at the head: and both the Syriac and Arabic versions here render it, “the little sail”; and which sailors put up when they are afraid to use large sails, which would carry too much wind; but the word here used is “*artemo*”, which the above writer says is commended rather for the sake of directing the ship, than for swiftness. And this seems to be the use that was now made of it, namely, to guide the ship into the creek or bay.

And made toward the shore; which was in the creek, or to the haven in it.

Ver. 41. *And falling into a place where two seas met*, etc.] An “isthmus”, on each side of which the sea ran; and which the inhabitants of Malta, as Beza says, show to this day, and call it, “la Cala de San Paulo”, or the Descent of Saint Paul. The meeting of these two seas might occasion a great rippling in the sea like to a large eddy, or counter tide; and here might be a sand on which

they ran the ship aground; for this place where the two seas met, as the same annotator observes, could not be the shore itself; for otherwise, to what purpose should they cast themselves into the sea, as they afterwards did, if the head of the ship struck upon the shore, and stuck fast there? but must rather mean a shelf of sand, opposite, or near the entrance into the bay, and where the shipwreck was.

And the fore part stuck fast, and remained unmovable; so that there was no getting her off:

but the hinder part was broken by the violence of the waves; that is, the stern; by which means there were boards and broken pieces for the company to get ashore upon.

Ver. 42. *And the soldiers’ counsel was to kill the prisoners*, etc.] Paul, and the rest: this they had not only an inclination to, but they declared it, and gave it as their opinion, and what they thought advisable to be done directly:

lest any of them should swim out and escape; and they should be accountable for them: but this was dreadful wickedness in them to seek to take away the lives of others, when they themselves were in so much danger; and monstrous ingratitude to the Apostle Paul, who had been so much concerned for their lives, and careful of them, and had been the means of saving them, and for whose sake they were saved: the devil must have had a great hand in this.

Ver. 43. *But the centurion, willing to save Paul*, etc.] Not only because he was a Roman citizen, but because he perceived he was some extraordinary person; and chiefly because he was moved there unto by a superior influence, that Satan might not have his end; and that the will of God might be fulfilled, that he should go to Rome, and there bear a testimony of Christ.

Kept them from their purpose; would not suffer them to execute their design, restrained them from it, and laid his commands upon them to the contrary.

And commanded that they which could swim, should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land; which some restrain to the Roman soldiers, as if the centurion's speech was only directed to them; though it seems rather to have respect to the whole company, the mariners, who generally can swim, and the soldiers, as many of them as could, and the rest of the prisoners or passengers; though it may be, he might chiefly regard the soldiers, who were usually learned to swim, that they might the more readily pass rivers, in their marches, where they could find no bridges, that so he might be the sooner rid of them, and break their purpose.

Ver. 44. *And the rest, some on boards*, etc.] Doors, tables, planks, or any such like things:

and some on broken pieces of the ship; or what came from it, as masts, beams, etc.

and so it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land; not one was lost, as Paul had foretold. And so it will be with the saints after their afflicted state in this life, who are safe by being in Christ, and by abiding in him and in the use of means; and though by reason of the many difficulties in the way, through the corruptions of their own hearts, the temptations of Satan, the hidings of God's face, various afflictions, and sometimes violent persecutions, they are scarcely saved, yet at last they are certainly saved: so it comes to pass that they get safe on the shores of eternal bliss and happiness; because they are ordained unto it, are the care of Christ, and the purchase of his blood; and are partakers of the blessings of grace, and have the Spirit, as an earnest of the heavenly inheritance; and when landed they are safe; sin will be no more; Satan will be under their feet; there will be no more afflictions of any kind; and they will be with the Lord, and for ever with him. This voyage of the apostle, and the saints with him, was an emblem of the passage of the people of God in this world to heaven: their number was but few; who besides Luke, and Aristarchus the Macedonian, were with him, is not known, (^{<447>}Acts 27:2). And so the number of the children of God, in anyone period of time, is but small in comparison of the rest of the world: the apostle and his companions had but very indifferent company, as other prisoners, a band of soldiers, and the sailors; Christ's church is as a rose in a field, a lily among thorns, vexed with the

conversation of the wicked, being in a world which lies in wickedness; and which may very fitly be compared to the sea, for the waves of afflictions in it, and the restless and uneasy spirits of the men of it. Sailing at this time was dangerous, (~~4270~~ Acts 27:9) as the saints' passage through this world always is, and especially now in these last and perilous days; partly through the aboundings of immorality on the one hand, and partly through the spread of error and heresy on the other. A great storm arose, (~~4274~~ Acts 27:14) and there are many the Christian meets with in his voyage to heaven; and well it is for him that Christ is an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, and that he is built on such a foundation, which the most violent storms cannot move him from. There was no sight of sun or stars for many days, (~~4271~~ Acts 27:20) and so it is sometimes with the people of God; the sun of righteousness is not seen by them, clouds interpose between him and them; and the stars, the ministers of the Gospel, are removed from them, and their eyes cannot behold their teachers, which make it a distressed time with them: yea, all hope of salvation was gone, (~~4271~~ Acts 27:20) and such at times is the case of truly gracious souls; their hope, and their strength, they are ready to say, are perished from the Lord, and they are cut off from before his eyes: there was also a long abstinence from food, (~~4271~~ Acts 27:21,33) which is sometimes the case in a spiritual sense, and is owing either to want of food, the word of the Lord being precious, there being a famine of hearing the word; or for want of appetite to it: and last of all, there was a design formed by the soldiers to kill Paul, and the prisoners, but were prevented by the centurion, (~~4272~~ Acts 27:42). The sincere followers of Christ are accounted as sheep for the slaughter, and are killed all the day long in the intention of wicked men; who have always a good will to it, were they not restrained through the goodness of a civil government, and especially by the power and providence of God: however, at last, they get safe to their port and haven, where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest.