

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Acts: The Continuing Earthly Ministry Of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Part VI: The Ministry Of The Universal Church In Its spread To The Ends Of The Earth, Acts 8:26-28:31

E. Christ's Use Of The Apostle Paul To Spearhead Worldwide Outreach, Acts 14:4-28:31

33. Christ's Sovereign Use Of Paul Amid Humanly Obstructing Influential Parties

(Acts 27:1-44)

I. Introduction

- A. It is a severe trial when God's revealed will for a believer is initially obstructed by other influential parties.
- B. In such a case, we must wait upon our sovereign Lord to provide the solution, a lesson illustrated in Paul's shipwreck experience in Acts 27:1-44 (as follows):

II. Christ's Sovereign Use Of Paul Amid Humanly Obstructing Influential Parties, Acts 27:1-44.

- A. Paul was set to be taken by ship to Rome under guard to appear before Caesar, Acts 25:10-12; 27:1.
- B. As the ship left Caesarea in early autumn, the prevailing northwest winds made it hard for the ship to make headway west northwest for Italy, Acts 27:2-4; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed., fn. to Acts 27:4.
- C. This hindered the ship's progress so that by early October, it was still struggling off of the Island of Crete to reach its final destination before winter, Acts 27:5-9; Ibid., fn. to Acts 27:9; Ibid., map 13.
- D. Paul thus advised the others on board not to keep sailing lest they be tragically shipwrecked, Acts 27:9-10.
- E. He was merely a prisoner, so the centurion over Paul heeded the advice of the ship's owner and captain to continue sailing, Acts 27:11. The current port of Fair Havens (27:8), Crete was not good for wintering, so most of the folk on board (at least 139) agreed with the captain and centurion to set sail, Acts 27:12, 37.
- F. When a gentle south wind started to blow, supposing it was a good sign, the captain sailed the ship out to sea only there to face Euroclydon, a "treacherous east-northeast wind." (Acts 27:13-14; Ibid., fn. to 27:14)
- G. This caused the sailors on board to struggle vainly to direct the ship until after some days and nights, all hope was lost by the captain and sailors that they would survive the storm, Acts 27:15-20.
- H. When they had gone without food for a long time, Paul finally told the group that it should have heeded his advice to stay in Crete, Acts 27:21. However, he urged them to take courage, for God's angel had appeared unto him in the night to reveal that though the ship would be lost, no one on board would die, for God wanted him to appear before Caesar, and He would save the lives of all on board, Acts 27:22-25.
- I. This news fit the revealed will of God back in Acts 23:11 where the Lord had appeared to Paul one night to announce that just as He had testified of Christ in Jerusalem, he would testify of Him in Rome. The sovereign will of God would cause events to work out that Paul might get to Rome regardless of the bad decision by the influential parties who blocked God's will for Paul, people he himself could not control!
- J. Paul added that they would be shipwrecked on an island, and to trust God in the process, Acts 27:25-26.
- K. As he had said, soundings began to indicate they were nearing land, so some sailors began to get into a small boat to row for shore when Paul warned that only if all stayed on board would they live, 27:27-31.
- L. Due to the storm and his good prediction record, everyone heeded Paul (Acts 27:32), including his advice to eat food for strength once the ship broke up and they all had to drop into the stormy sea, Acts 27:33-36.
- M. When the ship got stuck on a bar and began to break apart by the waves, the soldiers thought of killing the prisoners, including Paul, lest they escape and the soldiers be punished by execution, Acts 27:38-42. The centurion wanted Paul kept alive, so he forbade it, and eventually everyone arrived safely on shore, all 276 people, by swimming or by floating on planks or broken pieces of the ship! (Acts 27:43-44, 37 NIV)

Lesson: *Though initially obstructed by influential people whose decision Paul could not control, and this obstruction threatened Paul's life and thus his fulfilling God's ministry for him to reach Rome and testify of Christ there, God sovereignly overruled in the circumstances so that Paul might return to fulfilling God's assignment in heading him safely toward Rome!*

Application: *(1) May we trust God's sovereign oversight to cause us to fulfill His will for us even if we or our efforts to heed God are initially obstructed by actions of influential people we cannot control! (2) If thus obstructed, may we WAIT on God (Acts 27:21) to CHANGE the CIRCUMSTANCES involved that will GIVE us the OPPORTUNITY we need to PROCEED in God's original will for us!*