

“Foundering, but not Floundering!”

I. INTRO:

- A. This is the most valuable document we have today concerning *ancient seamanship*.
1. This is also a striking illustration of the blend of **natural & supernatural**; **Divine Providence & human struggle**; that is so characteristic of life.
 2. Here was a **great crisis**, & there was a **great man** to take full advantage of it, **to the glory of God & to the furtherance of the gospel**.
- B. **Ever desire to go to Italy?** Let's jump on board with Paul.
The last 2 chapters are an extensive travel narrative, which include: **the route followed, landmarks passed, heavy use of technical seafaring terminology, & ancient sailing techniques**; but most importantly some great **practical wisdom** during **life's crisis!**

II. FOUNDERING, BUT NOT FLOUNDERING!

- A. **BON VOYAGE!** (1-8)
- B. (2) Julius' aim was to sail on this **smaller coastal vessel** until he could arrange booking on a **trans-Mediterranean grain ship** (the Alexandrian), which regularly carried wheat to Rome from Egypt, the so called **breadbasket** of the Roman Empire.
- C. **THE GOD OF THE SEAS!** (9-12)
- D. (9) Due to **dangerous weather conditions**, no sailing occurred in the Mediterranean Sea from Nov 11 to early March.
1. **The fast** = The Day of Atonement (late Sept or early Oct)
 2. Paul's voyage was near this dangerous period. (He had years of experience as a traveler)
- E. **THE GOD OF HOPE, IN HOPELESS SITUATIONS!** (13-38)
- F. (14) **Euroclydon** - (lit.) *europaquilo*. *euro* = east wind; *aquilo* = northward. **[A northeaster]**
- G. (17) **Cables to undergird** - Ancient ships has as part of their ordinary gear, undergirders which were simply **ropes** for passing **round the hull**. This practice helped prevent **leaking** form boards bursting apart.
- H. **Syrtis Sands** - dangerous **quicksand** off the north shore of Africa.
1. Sailors were afraid wind would drive them onto it.
 2. They lowered all sails except what was needed to keep ships head into wind.

- I. (20) All hope that we would be saved was finally given up -
1. No **GPS**, no **sextant**, the **Compass** not even invented yet (Chinese in 1100). All they had to depend entirely on were the observations of the heavens.
 - a) But, **sun & stars had been hidden for days.**
 2. The last & most precious cargo heave overboard is the passenger & crew's **hope!** - And they drift in despair.
 - a) **With all hope gone, how do you remain Confident in Crisis?**
- J. **Crisis!** (Greek *krisis* “decision, decisive moment”) 2 Definitions:
1. **[1] dangerous or worrying time:** a situation or period in which things are very uncertain, difficult, or painful, especially a time when **action** must be taken to avoid complete disaster or breakdown.
 2. **[2] critical moment:** a time when something very important for the future happens or is **decided**.
- K. **Crisis** is a good thing...it helps people **change!**
1. **God knows that, & lovingly provides those times of crisis for us!!!**
 2. They can come in countless of forms: *disaster; catastrophe; emergency; calamity; predicament; job loss; spouse loss; child loss; etc.*
 3. Issac Newton said in his First Law of Motion “Everything continues in a state of **rest** unless it is **compelled to change by forces impressed upon it.**”
- L. No one is willing to do **real Change** until **real Crisis** comes!
1. “Some people will change when they **see the light**; Others change only when they **feel the heat!**” :)
- M. (21) He did say, “***I told you so***”, but followed it by a word of encouragement.
1. **At a time like this people need promises, not preaching!**¹
- N. (23) **The God to whom I belong** (possessed by God) & **whom I serve** (prepared by God) & (vs.22) **no loss of life** (protected by God).
- O. (24) His prayer was heard.
1. **As the needle of a compass is constantly feeling the pull North, so should our hearts & eyes be constantly feeling the pull Heavenward!**
- P. (25) At **La Bufadora** in **Baja**, I love just gazing at this large rock formation, that just gets pummeled by wave after wave, & yet stands so sturdy over time, never crushed by all the force the waves can muster. Wind, waves, mist, salt, storms, tides all try to destroy it...all in vain.
1. **Such an immovable rock was St. Paul. - He was a lighthouse, a means of stability, safety, & blessing to all the despairing souls.**

¹ Warren Wiersbe; With the Word; Acts 27

2. Don't be discouraged, **Why?** Because God is with them. "Nothing is more terrifying than facing danger alone."

a) So, the storm will **end** right? No, but He'll see you to the end!

Q. I believe God is the mini Apostles Creed!

1. "I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth."

2. I believe God...that it will be just as it was told me!

R. (27-32) The sailors sensed they were nearing land. Soundings proved them right.

1. They were drifting towards some unknown island. To slow down the drift they put out anchors from the stern, used as brakes (usually dropped anchors from Bow).

S. (29) **Praying/wishing for day to come** - We've all had some of those nights.

T. (29) **4 ANCHORS TO DROP IN ANY STORM:**

1. **The Anchor of GOD'S PRESENCE.**

a) 23a "For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong, and whom I serve."

2. **The Anchor of GOD'S PEACE.**

a) 24a "Do not be afraid, Paul."

3. **The Anchor of GOD'S PLAN.**

a) 24b "you must be brought before Caesar."

4. **The Anchor of GOD'S PROTECTION.**

a) 24c "and indeed, God has granted you, all those who sail with you."

U. (30) **Do you want to jump ship?** (Christianity) - Like when Jesus asked his disciples, "Do you also want to go away?" (jump ship)

V. (31) **Shipwrecked people** had all they needed in order to be **saved**, if they but **believe & obey**.

W. (32) Some of the ship's crew tried to get into the **lifeboat**, but they eventually cut the rope to the small dinghy. They were now literally "*all in the same boat!*"

X. (33-36) **Take nourishment** - Paul was **practical** as well as **perceptive**. *Malta Meal! :*

1. Paul started this voyage as a **prisoner & passenger**, now the **captain** of the ship!

2. **They were all encouraged** - **Why?** Circumstance change? **NO!** But their **attitudes** did!

Y. **SHIPWRECKED, BUT STILL IN SHIPSHAPE!** (39-44)

Z. *My title - Foundering but not Floundering!*

1. **Founder** = fill with water & sink; **Flounder** = be in a state of confusion.

AA.(39) **Land ho!** - Preparations for **beaching the ship** were made.

1. Their plans **dashed** when it **ran aground** at her bow, leaving the stern exposed to the battering of the waves.

BB.(42) Of course they would kill the prisoners, as they were responsible for them.

CC.(43) The centurion wanting to save Paul - Paul wanting to save Julius.

1. **What if God, wanting to save someone close to you, needed to run you aground 1st?**
2. Paul was **shipwrecked**, but still in **shipshape**, not destroyed!

DD.(44) They ALL escaped safely to land.

EE. The bible teaches us that there are **3 kinds of storms** in our lives:

1. **The storms that we have caused** (Jonah's storm)
2. **The storms that God has caused** (Jesus storm on the lake of Galilee)
3. **Storms that others have caused us** (Julius persuaded by helmsman & ships owner)
4. **A Jonah Storm? Repent; A God storm? Persist; An others storm? Pray.**

FF. **But why do the storms come in our lives?**

1. Sometimes **satanic opposition**; sometimes to **deepen our maturity**; sometimes we really have **no clue!**
2. But the bible's focus isn't on **who causes pain or why its allowed**, **but on our response to it.**
 - a) If your ship has been blown off course, **What will you do now?** That's the important question.
3. **Can the Lord depend on you to sail by faith when you face the storms?**
Can others depend on you?

GG. Debris from every kind of shipwreck is floating all around us: broken marriages, ruined relationships, shattered dreams, mangled morals, twisted guilt, damaged hearts.²

1. And the need is great for courageous Christians like Paul who will stand faithfully in **life's uncertainty** & proclaim the **spiritual anchors** that can hold people fast to Christ.

² Chuck Swindoll; Acts 27; pg.142