

Church of God Sunday School

PAUL EXPERIENCES SHIPWRECK

Acts 27-28:1-10

Have you ever heard stories of people being shipwrecked while out at sea? Do you think those people were afraid? The Apostle Paul experienced shipwreck, not once but three times (2 Corinthians 11:25). He might have been afraid, but he trusted in God. God took good care of Paul.

Paul was a prisoner who had "appealed unto Caesar" (Acts 26:32). So he was sent to Italy with "certain other prisoners." These prisoners and Paul were being guarded by a centurion named Julius. This centurion treated Paul kindly.

Paul had been traveling by ship for some time when they arrived at a port called the Fair Havens. Sailing was dangerous at this time of the year. Paul warned that it would be better to spend the winter there than to travel on and encounter shipwreck.

The port was not an ideal place to spend the winter. So the centurion, who was in charge, took the advice of "the master and the owner of the ship," instead of "those things which were spoken by Paul." When the "south wind blew softly," they set sail.

Not long after they sailed, a hurricane-like storm came up at sea. The ship could not be controlled in such terrible winds, and it was driven by the winds and the waves. "Helps" (chains, ropes, and cables) were used, trying to keep the ship from breaking apart and sinking.

After many days in this storm, without being able to see the sun or the stars, and after throwing everything that could be spared overboard, it seemed that all hope was gone.

However, Paul told the men to "be of good cheer." He said that God had sent an angel to tell him that the ship would be destroyed, but no lives would be lost. Paul said, "I believe God, that it shall be



even as it was told me." Paul then told them that they would "be cast upon a certain island."

Finally, after two weeks of bad weather, the ship neared land. Fearing that the ship might crash on the rocks, the sailors cast out the anchors. The sailors "were about to flee out of the ship" and had "let down the boat into the sea," pretending to carry the anchors ahead of the ship. But Paul told the centurion and the soldiers, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be

saved."

Paul then encouraged everyone to eat. He reminded them of God's promised protection: ". . . there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you." Paul "took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all." The men on the ship were "all of good cheer."

Soon after, "the ship hit a sandbank. The front of the ship stuck there and could not move. Then the big waves began to break the back of the ship to pieces" (*International Children's Bible*). The soldiers wanted to kill all the prisoners, "lest any of them should swim out, and escape." But the centurion did not let this happen, because he did not want Paul to be killed. There were 276 men on that ship, but not one of them drowned. All were saved—just as God had promised!

They got to the island of Melita (*muh-LEE-tuh*) by swimming and using boards and broken pieces of the ship.

The people of Melita built a fire to help the men get warm. Paul "gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire." A viper (a poisonous snake) crawled out of those sticks and "fastened on [Paul's] hand." The people thought Paul would die immediately, but he just shook the snake off into the fire, feeling no harm.



The "chief man of the island" was Publius (PUHB-lee-uhs). He gave the men a place to stay. Publius' father was very sick, and Paul "prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him." Other people "which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed." When Paul and his companions left, the people gave them "such things as were necessary."

Can you see how God used Paul throughout this entire trial? Paul gave good advice; he encouraged the men on the ship; and he was used of God to heal the sick people on the island. When you are discouraged by hard places in your life, remember Paul. Just as God used Paul in his trials and troubles to help others, God can use you to witness of Jesus and be a help to people in need.

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me."*

*Acts 27:25*  
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Fill in the Missing Letters on Each Picture From the Story



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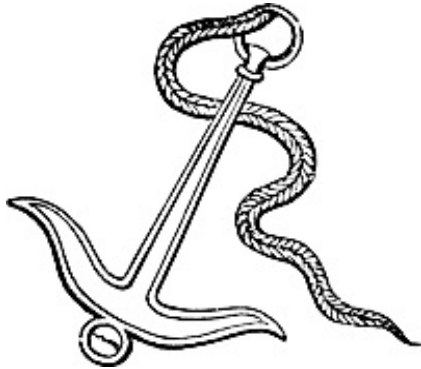
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Paul Is Shipwrecked