

Ouachita Baptist University

Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita

Vaught Sermon Notes: A Study of the Book of Acts

W.O. Vaught Archive

4-7-1984

Paul's Amazing Courage in the Shipwreck

W. O. Vaught

Ouachita Baptist University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/vn_acts



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#), and the [Liturgy and Worship Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Vaught, W. O., "Paul's Amazing Courage in the Shipwreck" (1984). *Vaught Sermon Notes: A Study of the Book of Acts*. 123.

https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/vn_acts/123

This Sermon Notes is brought to you for free and open access by the W.O. Vaught Archive at Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. It has been accepted for inclusion in Vaught Sermon Notes: A Study of the Book of Acts by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. For more information, please contact mortensona@obu.edu.

PAUL'S AMAZING COURAGE IN THE SHIPWRECK

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ACTS
NUMBER 139
ACTS 27:22-41

Dr. W. O. Vaught, Jr.
Immanuel Baptist Church
Little Rock, Arkansas

ACTS 27:22-41 "And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island. But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country; And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms. Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day. And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off. And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing. Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you. And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat. Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat. And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls. And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea. And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship. And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore. And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves."

Here we are to see Paul in the midst of a great crisis. In this study we will see the raging of the terrible storm during which time the entire crew was in grave danger. In these verses we will see Paul step forward as the one man who was able to save a bad situation.

ACTS 27:22 "And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship." This really says, "I exhort you to have courage." Then notice that Paul made a dogmatic statement "There shall be no loss of life, only the ship." For Paul to make such a dogmatic statement at such a time was indeed amazing. But Paul explained to them that his statement was based on information that had come from God, through the teaching angel.

ACTS 27:23 "For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve," This is the same teaching angel Paul had encountered down in Arabaia many years before. This also afforded Paul an opportunity to bring his witness to all the unbelievers on that ship. It was indeed a dramatic moment.

ACTS 27:24 "Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."

Here Paul quoted word for word the message which had been delivered to him by his teaching angel. "God hath given thee all them that sail with thee" is the salt of the earth principle. They were all going to be preserved because of God's one man, namely Paul. Paul had built up a fabulous edification complex in his soul and even the terrible storm didn't upset him one bit. Paul was calm and kept his stability right through the terrible ordeal.

ACTS 27:25 "Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me." The words "Be of good cheer" should be "Be courageous" and it is a command. It is a dogmatic command. The word is "euthumeo" and it is not the usual word for courage. This is courage based on the dogmatic information delivered to him by his teaching angel. "Even as it was told me" comes from "laleo" and it means the perfect permanent information which the angel had transmitted to him. Their deliverance was a reality in the plan of God.

A correct translation of this verse should read--"Therefore keep on being courageous, men, for I keep on believing God that it shall be thus according to the manner in which it has been communicated to me."

ACTS 27:26 "Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island."

This also is a dogmatic statement. So far as they knew, there was no island near them, they were in a hopeless situation, yet Paul made a dogmatic statement about them being cast on an island. Why did Paul do this? Colossians 1:9 gives the answer. COLOSSIANS 1:9 "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;"

Here is the explanation of Paul's courage. Paul and his associated prayed for the Colossians then Paul stated, "We keep on asking that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will." The words "to be filled" come from "pleroo" and it is an aorist, passive, subjunctive. The aorist tense here refers to the point of time when they were taught doctrine. The passive voice means that they received this filling from God. The subjunctive mood means that this infilling was not shoved on them, but they received it on the basis of their free will. "The knowledge of his will" is God's plan for their lives. "Pleroo" means to fill up a deficiency in the soul.

Let me state here that doctrine cannot be applied from the mind, it must be applied from the Spirit. That is why if you just have an intellectual belief, you cannot apply doctrine to experience. Doctrine in the mind is called "gnosis." But doctrine which has been cycled into the Spirit is called "epignosis" and this is the only kind of knowledge you can apply to your daily living. If you just have intellectual comprehension, then that is all you have. But when intellectual comprehension is cycled into the Spirit, then you have a form of reference upon which the proper norms and standards can be built. This is where you become able to form your thinking on divine viewpoint instead of human viewpoint. In this verse the word for "will" is "thelema" and it refers to the purpose and design of God in eternity past. "In all wisdom" comes from "sophia" and this means stored up information in your soul and spirit which you can use in a crisis. The words "spiritual understanding" come from "sunesis" and it is also information in the soul and spirit, but it is information you are breathing out to help others in a crisis.

ACTS 27:27 "But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country;" "Adria" is that part of the Mediterranean Sea which lies between Crete and Greece on the East and Malta and Sicily on the West. They had been in that storm fourteen days and traveling about thirty-five miles a day would mean that they had almost arrived at Malta. The word translated "deemed" is from "huponoeo" and means to "think under" something, and really means to suspect something. They suspected that they drew near to some land. Sailors who live on the sea learn how to read the waves and winds and sounds and determine if they are drawing near to some land.

ACTS 27:28 "And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms." "Sounded" means to drop a line in the water with a weight on the end of the line, to detect the depth of the water. A fathom is six feet, so they discovered the depth of the water to be 120 feet. Then a little later they sounded again and found the depth of the water was 90 feet. So they knew they were moving closer to land.

ACTS 27:29 "Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day." People usually think that the idea of land would mean safety, but this is not true. They knew that they might be dashed against some rocky shore and their ship and cargo and crew might all go down in the sea. The word for fearing is from "phobeo" and it means to fear the unknown. In order to prevent this rocky crash they needed to put on the brakes and this they did by casting out four anchors. Notice, they cast these four anchors out of the stern, the back part of the ship. This meant that they would in this way be able to keep the bow of the ship loose so they could guide the ship and control the direction the ship would go. They wanted to hit what is now called "St. Paul's Bay" in Malta. So they wanted to slow down the ship, be able to steer it, therefore, they cast out four anchors and prayed for daylight to come. This is another indication of very fine seamanship. In this way they kept their ship from crashing broadside against the rocky coast. The word "wish" here comes from "euchomai" and is a verb of concentration. The 273 sailors were wishing, and Paul and his companions were praying and this verb translated "wishing" includes both of these ideas. So they continued wishing and praying all through those pre-dawn hours.

ACTS 27:30 "And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship," Here we have the attempted desertion of some of the ship's crew. Some of them decided they could make it in the smaller ship, their lifeboat. They could hear the breakers on the shore, and they wanted to prevent a shipwreck, so they decided to get out of there as fast as they could. "About to flee" is from "zeteo" and means "they sought a way of escape." "Under the colour" means under the pretense of casting out anchors in the foreship, the bow of the ship.

ACTS 27:31 "Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." Paul had observed everything very closely. He knew that none could be saved if any escaped. The word for except is "if" and is a third class condition. "If these do not remain on the ship, then you cannot be delivered." This was a flat dogmatic statement and this dogmatism saved their lives a little later on.

ACTS 27:32 "Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off." This lets us know that at this juncture Paul had established his authority. They did exactly what he said for them to do. They cut away the lifeboat and let it drop into the sea. Everyone stayed on board. Now in verses 33-36 we see the shipwreck.

ACTS 27:33 "And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing." I have always been amused by those who believe that you can be spiritual by something like fasting. Here we see wicked sailors fasting but it came from fear and had nothing to do with spirituality.

ACTS 27:34 "Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you." Paul urged them to eat on the assurance of the fact that none of them were going to perish in that shipwreck. They would need physical strength to handle the ship and for the escape which they would later make. Paul had common sense and this is the thing that saved that whole crew. God expects Christians to use their good old common sense at all times.

ACTS 27:35 "And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat." The word for "take" here is "metalambano" and it means "to share." Paul was already eating and in between bites he told them that they better eat too. Please notice that he didn't forget to give thanks. "He began to eat" should be translated "he continued his eating." Please notice that they all, at this point, followed Paul's leadership.

ACTS 27:36 "Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat."
"They were all sharing his courage and they began to eat."

ACTS 27:37 "And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls." I think this verse is thrown in here to let us know that no person is insignificant. God knew how many souls were on that ship and he cared for each one. He knew each one by name.

ACTS 27:38 "And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea." The grain had shifted to one side of the ship and caused the ship to list. They were in danger of the ship being capsized. By this time they had moved under the protection of a part of the Island of Malta. They threw out the grain, grain they had brought all the way from Egypt, in order to lighten the ship.

ACTS 27:39 "And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship." No one was able to identify the land. The word for creek is not creek but "bay." Here was a sandy beach where they might dock the ship. Today this place is called "St. Paul's Bay." "When they were minded" is from "boulomai" and means they made a deliberate decision to attempt a landing.

ACTS 27:40 "And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore." Please notice that once Paul had restored their courage, and had gotten them to eat, and revive their strength, he didn't interfere with any of the technical maneuvering of docking the ship. They dropped the anchors into the sea and allowed the wind to drive them to shore. The rudder bands were the bars by which they steered the ship. They lifted up the storm sail and moved the ship toward the beach.

ACTS 27:41 "And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves." This means the ship was caught in the cross currents. The currents had formed a sandbar and the ship ran aground on the sand. The violent wind beat on the stern and broke up the back part of the ship.

A literal reading of this verse is as follows--"But having fallen into the sandbar, the ship ran aground and the bow stuck fast while on the other hand, the stern began to break up under the violent force."

In our next study we will see why they wanted to kill the prisoners, including Paul.