

the apostle was not guilty of any crime, and might have been set at liberty by Festus but for his appeal to Caesar, ch. 26 : 31, 32. Paul having appealed to Caesar (25 : 11, 12), nothing now remained but to send him to Rome. Taking ship at Caesarea, they sailed round the north of Cyprus and arrived at Myra. Here Paul was transferred to another ship, which, failing to make the port of Cnidus, turned south to Fair Havens in the island of Crete. Paul advised remaining here all winter, but the captain thought otherwise and they sailed for a port further west. The ship, however, was caught in a very great storm and was driven for 480 miles to the island of Melita, now called Malta, where she was anchored to prevent her being thrown upon the rocky coast, ch. 27 : 32.

I. A Divine Promise, 33-37.

V. 33. *While the day was coming on*; before it was light enough to see the best thing to do. They had anchored during the night (v. 29) to avoid being driven ashore, and were now anxiously awaiting the coming of the day which should decide their fate. *Paul besought them*. For the fourth time (see vs. 10, 21, 31), Paul, the prisoner, assumes the direction of the company, wisely and carefully providing for the approaching crisis. *To take meat*; the old word for food. They must be strengthened for the hard work that lay before them. *The fourteenth day*; since the storm overtook them, v. 27. *Continued fasting*; without regular meals, snatching a little food now and then as they worked or waited.

V. 34. *This is for your safety* (Rev. Ver.). They needed all their physical strength to face the crisis and secure their safety at the breaking of the day. "Effort on their part was necessary, and yet no hair of their heads should perish; what a significant union of faith in God and self-help!" *There shall not an hair fall*; a proverbial phrase expressing complete deliverance, 1 Sam. 14 : 45; 2 Sam. 14 : 11; 1 Kgs. 1 : 52; Luke 21 : 18. The fulfilment of Paul's previous prediction (v. 10) would make his companions more ready to believe him now.

Vs. 35-37. *He took bread, and gave thanks*. Luke uses the same words (Luke 22 : 19) of

the Lord's Supper. Here they convey the idea that Paul's prayer made this common meal a thanksgiving service. *In the presence of them all*. His taking a cheerful and leisurely meal in the midst of so great danger would do much to restore the courage of his companions. *Then were they all of good cheer*. This was the second time that Paul had encouraged them by his faith and prudence, vs. 22-25. *Two hundred three score and sixteen*. It has been estimated that the ship would be of about five hundred tons burden, a large vessel for those days. Ships of considerable size were built by the Romans. (See "Light from the East", page 251.)

II. A Prudent Plan, 38-41.

V. 38. *They lightened the ship*; by casting out the wheat. The rest of the cargo and the tackling had already been cast overboard, vs. 18, 19. *The wheat*, the first cargo of the vessel from Alexandria, and doubtless the heaviest part of the freight, may have been retained as ballast during the storm, but they now lighten her to run her ashore.

V. 39. *They knew not the land*. The sailors probably knew the island, which was Malta (ch. 28 : 1), but this part of it, being remote from the great harbor, was unfamiliar to them. *A creek*; that is, an inlet, now called St. Paul's Bay, in the north-eastern part of the island. *With a beach* (Rev. Ver.); "that is, smooth and fit for a vessel's landing-place."

Vs. 40, 41. *Casting off the anchors* (Rev. Ver.). They unfastened the cables that bound the four anchors to the ship, v. 29, and *left them in the sea* (Rev. Ver.). *Loosing the bands of the rudders* (Rev. Ver.). Ancient ships were not steered by a helm like a modern vessel, but by two large paddles or oars. These had been lifted up and lashed to the ship, that they might not interfere with the anchors, v. 29. The lashings were now cut, because the paddles were needed to steer the ship to the shore. *Hoisting up the foresail* (Rev. Ver.); to give them speed in running upon the beach. It was the best sail to use in the circumstances. The sailors used all their knowledge and skill. *Where two seas met*; in a channel separating a little island,