

155 GOING DOWN INTO THE DEEP

INTRODUCTION: It might come as quite a surprise to us to find that Luke gives so much space to Paul's sea voyage and shipwreck on the way to Rome. But we completely fail to understand Luke if we suppose that the vividness of the picture is simply due to the traveller's impulse to tell his adventures to the public.

There is an inner spiritual meaning which can prove quite a blessing to our hearts.

I. LET US NOTICE A SCENE IN THE OT WHICH IS A MOST COUNTERPART TO THIS --

THE SHIPWRECK OF JONAH.

A. Although there is a contrast in character, there is a striking parallel between Paul and Johah.

1. Both Paul and Johah could be called "Apostles to the Gentiles."

2. Notice the way they received their mission.

a. Johah fled from the presence of the Lord and took ship for Tarshish.

b. Paul accepted his commission obediently.

3. Both suffered shipwreck; and each case the prophet won the salvation of his company-- Jonah by the sacrifice of himself.

4. Both experienced deliverance,

Johah from the deep, and Paul from the peril of death.

5. After this they fulfill their missions to the great (cities of Nineveh and Rome).

II. NOTICE THE PARALLEL BETWEEN THIS CHAPTER ABOUT PAUL'S GOING DOWN INTO THE DEEP AND THE LORD'S GOING INTO THE DEPTH OF SUFFERING UPON THE CROSS.

- A. The Lord's sacrifice was the supreme example of the law that suffering goes before victory.
- B. Going down into the deep goes before deliverance or resurrection; this was also illustrated in the experience of Jonah.
- C. In some ways this chapter forms the parallel with the story of the crucifixion in Lk. 22-23.
- D. The instance of the breaking of bread (v. 35) reminds us of the picture of the Lord breaking bread before his apostles on his last evening (Lk. 22:19).
- E. The storm and darkness correspond to the spiritual storm and darkness on Calvary, as the actual wreck and plunging into the deep correspond to the death upon the cross. (Lk. 23:26-49; Acts 27:14-44).
- F. The rest and peace of the three winter months at Malta, when the apostle was entirely cut off from the outside world and his old life, is like the rest of the three days in the grave (Lk. 23:50-56; Acts 28:1-10).
- G. The voyage to Rome in the spring, which was to the apostle the entrance into a new life, will correspond to the Joyful period after the resurrection (Lk. 24:1-49, Acts 28:11-28).
- H. The picture of quiet and expectant work at Rome is like that of the praying and waiting church at Jerusalem, (Lk. 24:52-53; Acts 28:30-31)
- I. The history of Paul's shipwreck could be seen as a parable of the great salvation, by which man is brought through death to life.
- 1. The keynote to this interpretation is given in vs. 34, where the word "safety" could be translated "salvation."

2. This word "salvation" and its cognate words occur altogether 7 times: v. 31, hope to be saved, ye cannot be saved, / to be completely-saved (v. 43&44, inc. "escape", 28:1,4)

3. The contrary fate is also mentioned several times: injury, loss, throwing away, perish, kill, and "to be cast away".

III. ADDITIONAL LESSONS AND APPLICATIONS

- A. Note the hopelessness of the situation and the positive hopefulness of Paul.
- B. Note the repeated perils resulting from the excitement and the folly of men, and the persistent sanity and strength of Paul.
- C. Paul's confidence and strength came from the fact that he knew his Lord's purpose.
 - 1. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him."
 - 2. He had told him, "So must thou bear witness also at Rome."
 - 3. When peril came he measured it against the power of the Lord.
He said, "I must also see Rome."
 - 4. The Living Lord was in his heart.
"No water can swallow the ship where lies The Master of ocean and earth and skies."

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(5-214, acts 28, 30-31)