

A team of fellow believers who had been preaching the gospel in the regions of Asia¹ wanted to travel to Jerusalem to offer our support in a time of need². We found a brother who captained a sea-worthy vessel and who offered to provide transportation to Rome for us. He had made this trip many times previously during his career.

Some of our number were aligned with a Judaizing faction³ and not long after we set sail, a dispute arose between the others of us and they took over command of the boat. They were very forceful in this and short of physical violence, there was nothing that we could do to prevent it.

It became painfully clear that though these usurpers had some knowledge of the sea, not one of them actually had any experience in piloting a ship. Even as they struggled, however, they would not listen to the advice of the experienced crew and its captain. They had no navigational skills, and spent their time thinking about their agenda rather than the direction that the ship was going. We made slow progress for days, as they had difficulty plotting the course. They would not let the real sailors help, and paid no attention to their suggestions. I and my fellow “captives” were completely ignored, and completely isolated. We could only pray to God for deliverance!

Much time was lost because of our wandering, and I tried to warn those in control of the ship that a tremendous storm was approaching. The original captain would have known the best way to approach the forceful winds, but he was not listened to, and it wasn’t long before we were being badly battered by the bad weather. Our lives were at risk, but our faith in God no matter what happened was very strong!

As the strength of the storm increased, the Judaizer crew began throwing out equipment, including the cargo, tackle, compass and other essential navigational equipment. There was not enough food for us due to the extended voyage. The lifeboats were also cut away. They refused our suggestion to pass ropes under the ship so that it would hold together longer. Eventually the ship ran into a sandbar and stuck fast. Even at this point, the leaders of the mutiny never gave any recognition that they were in the wrong.

As the ship broke apart as the culmination of this complete sailing disaster, some of us were able to make it safely to land using broken timbers. By the grace of God we were able to continue in the pursuit of our mission – the higher call of showing the world God’s glory, no matter what our adversaries put in our way.

1. In writing this story, I have used Paul’s shipwreck adventure from Acts 27 – adding items appropriate to situations I have encountered in my professional life.
2. Acts 11:27-30.
3. See Acts 15, Galatians 2:4 and 14, and Galatians 6:12-13.