

his return to establish the Kingdom, we need to consider how the disciples would have viewed the timing. As we have seen from Acts 1:6, the disciples were expecting Jesus to set up the Kingdom there and then. Even after Jesus's answer, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power" (v. 7), they probably never imagined that the Kingdom would not

be established for another 2,000 years. So what did they expect? It is clear from the epistles of the New Testament that the return of Jesus was expected at any time in the first century. Consider, for example, Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians; at the end of every chapter there is a reference to the return of Jesus.

Therefore, working backwards to consider what might have been in the minds of the disciples on the Mount of Olives as they listened to Jesus, it is probable that the disciples expected the destruction of Jerusalem to occur soon after Jesus's ascension into heaven, but that this would be a prerequisite to his early return and the establishment of the Kingdom. Brother John Thomas uses the analogy of two fence posts, one representing A.D. 70 and the other the return.

The disciples' questions matched to A.D. 70 and the return of Jesus	
Question	Event
When shall these things be?	A.D. 70
And what shall be the sign of thy coming?	Return of Jesus
And of the end of the age?	A.D. 70

When two posts are in perfect alignment, one post is obscured behind the other. It is only when we move past the first post that we see the second post beyond.

There are indications within the three accounts that suggest a change of scene within the narrative. For example, in Luke 21:12 Jesus says: "But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues". This suggests that verses 8-11 refer to a time beyond A.D. 70, that is, the time of Jesus's return to the earth. However, the reference to synagogues in verse 12 clearly indicates the first century A.D. The table above matches the disciples' questions to A.D. 70 and the second coming.

(To be continued)

### Two-part article

## "Unto Caesar shalt thou go"

### Paul's voyage to Rome

#### 1. The voyage that went wrong

Malcolm Edwards

**P**AUL'S JOURNEY to Rome is a favourite story with Bible readers of all ages. It is an account that rings true in every detail; the historical and geographical details easily check out, and it is clear that Luke, the narrator and Paul's personal physician, was a man with much nautical experience, suggesting that he had been at one time a ship's doctor.

They left from Caesarea, with Julius, a Roman centurion, in charge of the prisoners. He was a soldier of the elite Augustus cohort, a section of

the Roman army that bore Caesar's name (Acts 27:1). It is suggested that, with a small detachment of his troop, he had accompanied Herod Agrippa from Rome, and that he was actually present when Paul appeared before Agrippa.

Besides Luke himself, Paul's other companion in travel was Aristarchus of Thessalonica. They remained with him throughout the journey and were with him in prison at Rome, where the latter, if not both, eventually shared Paul's imprisonment (Col. 4:10).

The ship was from Adramittium, the modern town of Edremit in northwestern Turkey, which today seems no longer to be a port. This meant that the vessel was not sailing all the way to Rome, and that Julius and his company would have to change ships at some juncture.

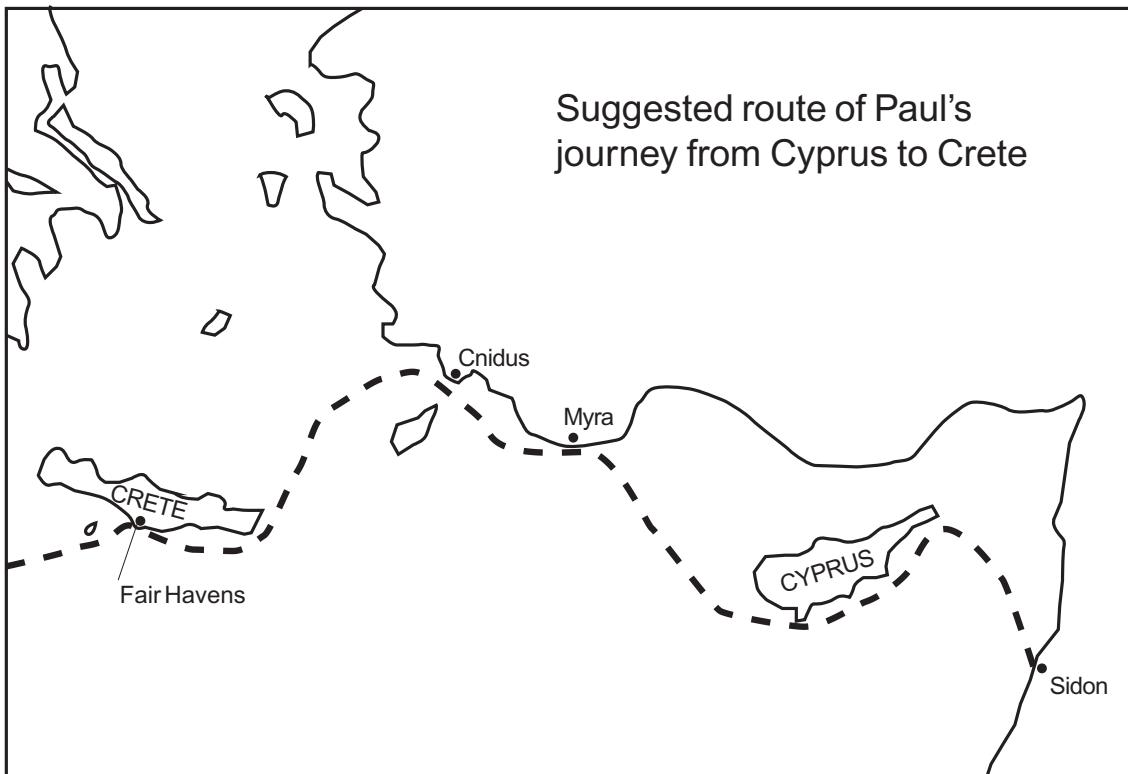
**Sidon to Myra**

The voyage to Sidon was rapid, suggesting that they enjoyed a favourable wind. Julius was kindly disposed towards Paul and allowed him to visit friends during their short stay there (Acts 27:3). After leaving Sidon, however, things became much more difficult, suggesting a substantial wind change. Mediterranean ships of those times usually had only one very large sail, supported on a strong mainmast, and, being square-rigged, they were unable to sail close to the wind.

To reach Myra direct would have meant sailing northwest in almost a straight line, and well south of Cyprus, but with the commonly assumed southwest wind against them this was out of the question. Hence the route was thought to have been northerly to the eastern tip of Cyprus and then west, beating and tacking along the mainland coast to the Lycian port of Myra.

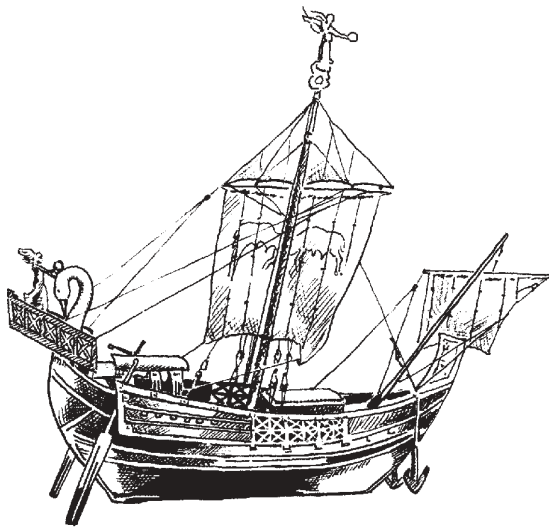
The problem with assuming that they took this route is that the record says they went “under Cyprus” not around it (v. 4), and, although it really depends upon the direction assumed, twice more in the record the word ‘under’ means ‘under the lee of’ the southern coast of an island when travelling in a westerly direction (vv. 7,16). The two most likely wind directions in that region at that time of year are said to be either southwest or northwest, but whichever it was, the record tells us that the captain had difficulty in sailing against it (v. 4).

Although Dean Farrar, in *The Life and Work of St Paul*, agrees with the idea of a route north of Cyprus, he believes the wind was not from the southwest, but the commonly encountered wind from the northwest. This being so, it seems more likely that, after first struggling against the wind in a northerly direction, the captain finally gave up and turned west to edge slowly down the more sheltered southern shore of Cyprus, then, once having rounded its western cape, would beat and tack northward “across” the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia (v. 5, RV), to take him to Myra. It is a possible alternative route to contemplate (see map).



### A ship of Alexandria

At Myra Julius and his party switched to “a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy” (v. 6). Alexandrian grain ships were common in the Mediterranean at that time, since Egyptian grain was exported to most of its major ports. The ship Julius now chose would normally have taken them direct to Syracuse in Sicily, from whence the cargo would be shipped by coastal vessel to the chosen Italian port. It was almost certainly a larger vessel than the other, and probably had two sails, a mainsail (v. 40) and a smaller one on the prow (see drawing).



Roman grainship

The Alexandrian vessel left Myra with 276 crew and passengers and a full cargo of wheat. The captain left port and proceeded slowly westward against the same northwesterly wind with every intention of calling at Cnidus, a city on Cape Krio at the very southwest tip of Asia Minor in the Aegean sea, but, having all but reached it, the baffling northwesterly forced him to turn southwest towards Crete, thus abandoning any chance of taking the direct route almost due west to Syracuse, passing below the peninsula of Greece.

With the wind direction now to his advantage, the captain made good progress towards Crete, aiming to find shelter along its southern shores. Once he had manoeuvred his way past Cape Salome he was apparently able to proceed slowly westward to the twin port of [Fair Havens](#) without much difficulty (vv. 7,8).

Luke’s mention of Lasea in verse 8 is somewhat puzzling, in that the town was not on Crete

itself but on a small island offshore from Fair Havens. No visit to the town is mentioned, and one assumes it simply came to Luke’s notice as the ship tacked by it in gaining entry into the mainland harbour. On the other hand, it may have been one of the towns in which, by the time Luke wrote his narrative, there existed a small ecclesia, being one of those where Titus was later instructed by Paul to appoint elders (Tit. 1:5).

It is at this point in the narrative that we learn of the particular time of year, for Luke comments that much time had been lost in sailing and it was already after “the fast” (Acts 27:9). It is generally agreed that this was the Yom Kippur fast (the Day of Atonement), which fell in early autumn. Thus, with the threat of approaching winter weather, Paul felt it necessary to issue a cautionary warning to those in charge: “Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives” (v. 10).

The centurion may have respected Paul’s opinion, but he now had a new captain to contend with, whose decision was to continue westward a short distance to Phenice (Phoenix), where it was more commodious to winter. Luke positions this port as lying “toward the south west and north west” (v. 12). It was almost certainly the modern port of Lutro, which is a headland having opposing bays which would give shelter to winds from both these directions, but as it turned out the ship never went there.

### Euroclydon

When the northwesterly wind gave place to a soft southerly breeze, the captain made up his mind to leave port. It would mean towing the vessel well out of harbour by row-boat until they could hoist the sail and then use the southerly wind to push them the sixty or seventy miles to Phenice.

But after a short time, and with little warning, the friendly southerly wind was rudely displaced by a howling northeasterly gale that spun the ship around, and the astonished captain could do nothing but run before it to the southwest. Being now unable to pass to the north of the island of Clauda as intended, they found themselves rushing with little control towards the south of it (vv. 13-16).

This wind was notorious and greatly feared, and the mariners had a word for it: Euroclydon. Its name was a combination of two other north-



The harbour at Fair Havens

easterly winds, Eurus and Aquilo, and it was well capable of reaching hurricane force.

The Alexandrian vessel towed a lifeboat, which against such a strong tailwind was a dangerous appendage and soon likely to capsize. It took much effort to haul it aboard, but the captain soon had a worse problem on his hands that would cause him to reflect that the lifeboat might soon be needed. They were now close to sandbanks associated with Clauda, and the severity of the storm was already springing some of the planking along ship's hull. The captain knew that a leaky vessel near sandy shallows spelt disaster and so he ordered the undergirding of the ship. As the crew went about this task he might have reflected ruefully on Paul's warning before they left Fair Havens.

The use of undergirding ropes was a common practice with wooden vessels. Several ropes spaced along the hull were passed under the ship, with the ends securely fastened at the top. The other ends were each in turn winched up tight and likewise secured, thus holding the planks firmly in place. The word "helps" used by Luke for this kind of bracing is from an inter-

esting Greek word. The passage reads: "And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat: which when they had taken up, they used *helps*, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven" (vv. 16,17).

The original word for "helps" is *boētheia*, and related words are translated "succour" in Hebrews 2:18 and "helper" in Hebrews 13:6, both referring to Divine assistance. Its cognate word *boētheian* is similarly used in Hebrews 4:15,16: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to *help* in time of need". All three passages teach that grace is not only Divine forgiveness, but also Divine support, and with a firmness of an undergirded ship if we care to think of it as such. With such a concept of Divine support in Christ Jesus, why indeed should we fear what man can do (13:6)?

[\(To be concluded\)](#)