



A TRIUMPHAL ARRIVAL

We find the apostle Paul who has traveled thousands of kilometers to announce the Gospel. He went to Syria, Turkey, Greece, and now wicked men had him jailed. They want to sentence him to death. Paul, who is a Jew but also a roman citizen asks to be tried by the Emperor of Rome. Do you know who this Emperor is? It is Nero! You've certainly heard of Nero. Roman soldiers will lead the prisoner Paul to Rome. We will discover some stages of this long and very perilous journey from Palestine to Italy. You will find this story in the Book of Acts of the Apostles in chapter 27. And the question of the day: How could this shipwreck have been avoided?



Paul and the other prisoners are entrusted to Julius, an officer of the Imperial Guard.

- We're heading for Italy! He tells them.



They set off on a big sailing ship, loaded with all kinds of goods. With the crew there are two hundred and seventy-six people on board. The navigation is very slow because the winds are contrary. The sailors climb with agility up the tall masts. They fold and unfold its immense sails. They pull on the ropes and regularly probe the water depth. Finally, after much difficulty, they approach the island of Crete

and land in a place called Beaux-Ports.

- We must go further and find a place to shelter, the pilot says, because these strong winds prevent us from moving forward.

The trip has been longer than expected, winter will be here soon. Paul warns them of a danger that threatens them.

- Listen to me, my friends. I see that navigation will not be done without danger, for the

cargo and the ship but also for our lives. You must stay here.

The warning is given but will they listen? Discussions are lively.

- We don't want to stay here for the winter. The port of Phoenix is more pleasant, let's go!

- Yes, let's go, it's not far and we are used to sailing in any weather. We risk nothing, it's not this prisoner who's going to tell us what to do!

Finally, the decision is made.

- Everyone at his post! The pilot says .Let's weigh anchor! We will sail along the coast to Phoenix.

Julius decides to listen to him rather than Paul.

A light wind has just picked up. It's pushing the ship in the right direction. Everything is fine.

They can already imagine themselves in Phoenix.

But suddenly, the weather changes. A violent whirlwinds are blowing hard. A kind of



typhoon coming down from the mountains to the sea. The ship is out of control. It is drifting away further and further from the shore. All night long it is violently beaten by powerful waves.

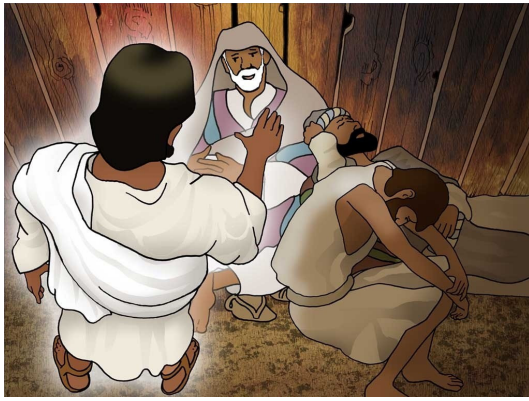
The next morning, the storm is still raging.

- Throw the cargo into the sea! Orders the pilot. We have to lighten the ship.

They throw all the goods overboard. On the third day, they throw in the lifting gear the, sails, the masts, the ropes. The big ship is like a nutshell lost in the middle of this raging sea. They no longer know if it is day or night. Neither the light of day nor the stars can be seen. They have lost all landmarks .Men are desperate. How long do they have left to live? Every moment the boat is going to capsize and they will all perish. Paul is very upset about this dramatic situation. He prays God to help them.

One morning, he addresses the whole crew:

- My friends! You would have done better to listen to me and not to leave Beaux-Ports. You would have avoided all these difficulties and losses. But take heart, I tell you no one of you will perish. Only the boat will be lost.



The Men hear what Paul says but can they believe it? They know well that they are lost. Paul continues:

- That night, an angel of God appeared to me. He said to me, "Paul! Do not be scared! You won't die because you must appear before the Emperor and all the men, who are with you, will be saved". So listen to me! Take heart, my friends! Everything will happen as I was told. We will be stranded on an

island.

In the middle of the fourteenth night, the sailors throw the sounding line:

- The sea is shallower! We are definitely approaching an island!
- The boat is in danger of crashing into a reef. Drop the anchors! Orders the pilot.

Some sailors put the lifeboat into the sea, they want to leave the ship in secret.

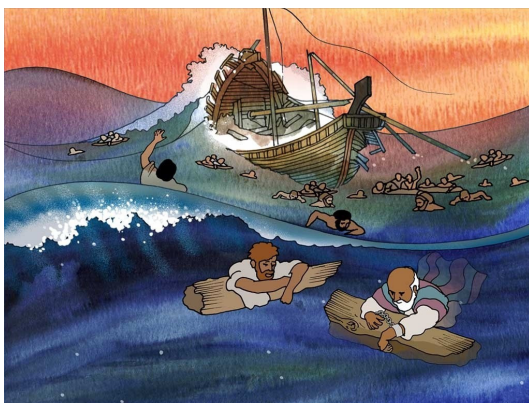
Paul warns Julius:

- If these men do not stay in the ship, you are lost!

Without hesitation, the soldiers cut the ropes of the canoe which falls into the sea. Then, Paul encourages everyone:

- My friends, it's been fourteen days since you ate something. Now you have to take strength, you are going to need it. We have to eat.

He takes bread, thanks God and begins to eat. So these exhausted men emaciated, regain courage and begin to eat. Their strength is returning.



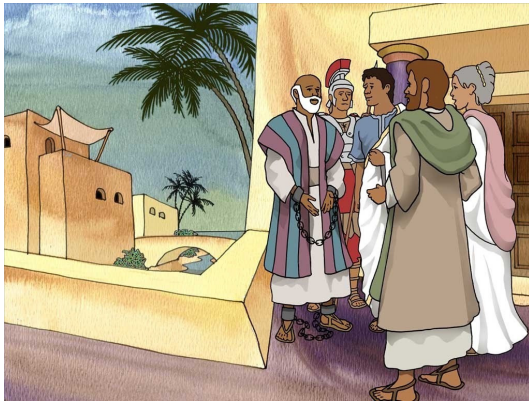
When day breaks, they see a bay with a beach.

- We don't recognize the place, the pilot says, but let's try to approach it.

But the ship violently collided into a tongue of land and comes to a complete stop. Under the force of the waves it breaks.

- Let all those who can swim jump into the water

first to reach dry land, Julius says. As for the rest of you, clutch to some planks or some piece of ship wreckage.



And what God said comes true. They all make it to the shore unharmed. They are on the island of Malta. The inhabitants welcome them with a lot of kindness and Paul announces the love of God and of Jesus.

Much later, he will appear before the Emperor.

1, 2 3, 4 AND YOU AND ME!



We're going to answer our question. He asked us how this shipwreck could have been avoided. Did you find? Listening to Paul's warnings and staying in Beaux Ports. Believe and heed what God tells us is the best thing we can do, you and me. If we do the opposite of what He tells us, what happens? We suffer the consequences. Fortunately the Lord is good and patient with us. Often He comes to our aid, He helps us and we learn to to know Him better and to trust Him more.

4, 3, 2, 1 AND WE PARENTS!



Faced with the decision to be made, these men relied on their knowledge, their experience, their abilities while seeking the satisfaction of their desires, their personal interests. They preferred to take their destiny into their own hands rather than trust God who knows all things. This story challenges us and teaches us about the behaviors of human beings but also on the Love of God who always seeks the good of men.