

~FAIR HAVENS (148)

[Fine Harbors]

- A harbor near the city of Lasea identified with the bay on the South coast of Crete that still bears the same name in modern Greek, Kaloi Limniones.
- Then, after sailing on slowly quite a number of days and coming to Cnidus with difficulty, because the wind did not let us get on, we sailed under the shelter of Crete at Salmone. ([Acts of Apostles 27:7](#))
- And coasting along it with difficulty we came to a certain place called **Fair** Havens, near which was the city Lasea. ([Acts of Apostles 27:8](#))
- This bay is located about 8 kilometers (5 miles) East of Cape **Matala**, **Akra Lithinon**, the southernmost point of Crete.
- In about **58 C.E.** the apostle Paul, as a prisoner, was sailing from Myra, on the southern coast of Asia Minor, via Cnidus en route to Rome. The more direct way from Cnidus to Rome would have been to the North of Crete.
- But evidently adverse winds, probably from the Northwest, forced the mariners to take a southerly course from Cnidus to Crete and then sail under the shelter of the islands South coast, finally reaching **Fair Havens** with difficulty.
- And we navigated through the open sea along Cilicia and Pamphylia and put into port at Myra in Lycia. ([Acts of Apostles 27:5](#))
- But there the army officer found a boat from Alexandria that was sailing for Italy, and he made us board it. ([Acts of Apostles 27:6](#))
- Then, after sailing on slowly quite a number of days and coming to Cnidus with difficulty, because the wind did not let us get on, we sailed under the shelter of Crete at Salmone. ([Acts of Apostles 27:7](#))
- And coasting along it with difficulty we came to a certain place

called **Fair Havens**, near which was the city Lasea. (**Acts of Apostles 27:8**)

- When consideration was given to leaving **Fair Havens** considerable time had passed, perhaps in waiting there for the wind to abate or because of the slow and difficult journey. It was already past the Atonement Day fast, late September or early October, and hence navigation was hazardous.
- As considerable time had passed and by now it was hazardous to navigate because even the fast of atonement day had already passed by, Paul made a recommendation. (**Acts of Apostles 27:9**)
- Paul, who had often been in dangers at sea and had personally experienced at least three previous shipwrecks
- Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I experienced shipwreck, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. (**2 Corinthians 11:25**)
- In journeys often, in dangers from rivers, in dangers from highwaymen, in dangers from my own race, in dangers from the nations, in dangers in the city, in dangers in the wilderness, in dangers at sea, in dangers among false brothers. (**2 Corinthians 11:26**)
- Wisely recommended that the boat winter at **Fair Havens**. Whether his advice was inspired on this occasion is not revealed in the account. However, the army officer, evidently in control of matters, heeded the advice of the pilot and the shipowner instead. **Fair Havens** was an inconvenient harbor for wintering, so the majority advised leaving there, and the mariners set sail for Phoenix farther down the coast.
- The softly blowing South wind was deceptive. Soon thereafter the ship was seized by a tempestuous wind and finally was wrecked on the coast of Malta, about 900 kilometers (560 miles) to the West.
- As considerable time had passed and by now it was hazardous to navigate because even the fast of atonement day had already passed by, Paul made a recommendation. (**Acts of Apostles 27:9**)
- Saying to them; Men, I perceive that navigation is going to be with damage and great loss not only of the cargo and the boat

but also of our souls. ([Acts of Apostles 27:10](#))

- However, the army officer went heeding the pilot and the shipowner rather than the things said by Paul. ([Acts of Apostles 27:11](#))
- Now as the harbor was inconvenient for wintering, the majority advised setting sail from there, to see if they could somehow make it to Phoenix to winter, a harbor of Crete that opens toward the northeast and toward the southeast. ([Acts of Apostles 27:12](#))
- Moreover, when the south wind blew softly, they thought they had as good as realized their purpose, and they lifted anchor and began coasting inshore along Crete. ([Acts of Apostles 27:13](#))
- After no great while, however, a tempestuous wind called Euroaquoilo rushed down upon it. ([Acts of Apostles 27:14](#))
- As the boat was violently seized and was not able to keep its head against the wind, we gave way and were borne along. ([Acts of Apostles 27:15](#))
- Finally when it became day, they could not recognize the land but they were observing a certain bay with a beach, and on this they were determined, if they could, to beach the boat. ([Acts of Apostles 27:39](#))
- So, cutting away the anchors, they let them fall into the sea, at the same time loosing the lashings of the rudder oars and, after hoisting the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. ([Acts of Apostles 27:40](#))
- When they lighted upon a shoal washed on each side by the sea, they ran the ship aground and the prow got stuck and stayed immovable, but the stern began to be violently broken to pieces. ([Acts of Apostles 27:41](#))
- And when we had made it to safety, then we learned that the island was called Malta. ([Acts of Apostles 28:1](#))
- Regarding this account in Acts, James Smith writes; It is interesting to observe how each addition to our knowledge of the scene of the narrative confirms its authenticity and accuracy.

▪ It now appears, from Mr. Browns observations and the late surveys, that Fair Havens is so well protected by islands, that though not equal to Lutro, thought to be Phoenix, it must be a very fair winter harbor, and that considering the suddenness, the frequency, and the violence with which gales of northerly wind spring up, and the certainty that, if such a gale sprang up in the passage from Fair Havens to Lutro, the ship must be driven off to sea, the prudence of the advice given by the master and owner was extremely questionable, and that the advice given by St. Paul may probably be supported even on nautical grounds. [The Voyage and Shipwreck of Saint Paul, London, 1866, p. 85]

Footnote