

QUESTION:

Was there any reason the Bible specifically mentions the name "Twin Brothers" for the Alexandrian ship that Paul and other prisoners boarded in Acts 28:11?

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:

"After three months we set sail in a ship that had wintered in the island, a ship of Alexandria, with the figurehead of the Twin Gods Castor and Pollux."

Acts 28:11, ESV

ANSWER:

The Apostle Paul's journey from Caesarea to Rome as a prisoner was full of danger and divine intervention. This journey, described in Acts 27–28, includes a significant shipwreck and miraculous survival. Paul had earlier warned the ship's crew of impending danger based on divine insight:

"Men, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much

loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives."

Acts 27:10, ESV

However, the centurion and crew ignored Paul's warning, relying instead on human judgment and favorable weather conditions:

"But the centurion paid more attention to the pilot and to the owner of the ship than to what Paul said."

Acts 27:11, ESV

This decision led to disaster. A violent storm (called Euroclydon in Acts 27:14, KJV) wrecked the ship. Yet, through God's mercy and Paul's intercession, all 276 passengers survived:

"For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, and he said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.'"

Acts 27:23-24, ESV

After washing ashore on the island of Malta (Melita), they stayed for three months (Acts 28:1-10). When it was time to leave, they boarded a different ship again from Alexandria but this one is notably described as bearing the figurehead “*Twin Brothers*” (Greek: *Dioscuri*), referring to the mythological twins Castor and Pollux.

In Roman and Greek mythology, Castor and Pollux were considered protectors of sailors and voyagers. They were revered as gods who could calm storms and guide ships safely. Their presence on the ship symbolized the sailors’ trust in divine powers though in this case, pagan ones.

So why would the Holy Spirit inspire Luke (the author of Acts) to include this detail?

1. To Contrast Pagan Belief with True Divine Protection

The ship bore symbols of pagan gods, yet it was not these “twin brothers” who protected the voyage it was the one true God, working through Paul. Their previous experience had already proven that human reasoning and pagan customs couldn’t save them; only God’s mercy did.

This echoes the truth in Psalm 115:4-8 (ESV):

"Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands.
They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see...
Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust
in them."

Paul, as God's servant, carried divine favor. The real reason the journey was safe was not the ship's figurehead but Paul's presence because he was under divine commission (Acts 23:11).

2. To Highlight God's Sovereignty Over All Systems and Beliefs

Even though the ship bore pagan symbols, God still accomplished His purpose. Just as He used a pagan empire (Rome) to spread the gospel and a pagan king (Cyrus) to release the Jews from captivity (Isaiah 45:1), God here used a Roman ship with pagan images to bring Paul safely to Rome where he would preach the gospel.

Romans 8:28 (ESV) says:

"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."

3. To Symbolize the Choices in Life's Journey

This incident also carries symbolic meaning. Life itself is a journey, and every person must decide who or what they trust to guide them. The sailors trusted in idols; Paul trusted in Christ. The ship's figurehead reminds us of how easy it is to depend on cultural or religious symbols instead of the living God.

As Jesus said:

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

John 14:6, ESV

4. A Call to Examine Our Own 'Spiritual Figurehead'

This account invites us to reflect: Who or what is guiding your life? Education, wealth, superstition, or false religion? None of these can save you. Only Christ can lead you safely to your eternal destination.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (ESV):

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

Final Exhortation:

Like the sailors, many people today rely on false gods money, luck, rituals, or their own wisdom. But those without Christ are on a dangerous path, even if the sea seems calm. Without Jesus, life ends in eternal separation from God:

"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death."

Proverbs 14:12, ESV

If you are reading this and haven't put your trust in Jesus Christ, now is the time. He alone can guide you through life's storms and bring you to eternal life.

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 6:23, ESV

Turn to Him today, and let Christ be the emblem at the front of your life's ship.

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