

ACTS CHAPTER 27 – THE VOYAGE TO ROME BEGINS

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: <http://www.missioncalvary.com/> Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

THE VOYAGE TO ROME BEGINS!– VS. 1-8 **Paul the Counselor (Act 27:1-20)**

Act 27:1 And when it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to *one* named Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment.

Act 27:2 So, entering a ship of Adramyttium, we put to sea, meaning to sail along the coasts of Asia. Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, was with us.

Act 27:3 And the next *day* we landed at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave *him* liberty to go to his friends and receive care.

Act 27:4 When we had put to sea from there, we sailed under *the shelter* of Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.

Act 27:5 And when we had sailed over the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a city* of Lycia.

Act 27:6 There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing to Italy, and he put us on board.

Act 27:7 When we had sailed slowly many days, and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, the wind not permitting us to proceed, we sailed under *the shelter* of Crete off Salmone.

Act 27:8 Passing it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea.

PAUL’S WARNINGS IGNORED – VS. 9-12

Act 27:9 Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them,

Act 27:10 saying, " Men, I perceive (discern) that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives."

Act 27:11 Nevertheless the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman (pilot) and the owner (captain) of the ship than by the things spoken by Paul.

v. 1 As soon as it was determined to sail - As being a shorter and less expensive passage to Rome. "other prisoners" of a different king – perhaps no appeal to Caesar – maybe sentenced to death?!

v. 2 Adramyttium - was a sea port of Mysia. Aristarchus and Luke went with Paul by choice, not being ashamed of his bonds. Aristarchus – cf - *Acts 19:29; 20:4; Colossians 4:10*

v. 3 Julius treating Paul courteously - Perhaps he had heard him make his defense. Notice the attitude of the Centurion, Julius, to Paul- "*treated Paul kindly and gave him liberty*". Unusual treatment.

v. 4 We sailed under Cyprus - Leaving it on the left hand or south side of the island, exposed to more of the open Sea..

v. 5 We've been with Paul over this water before. They are sailing along the southern coast of Asia Minor, hovering close to the shore along there.

v. 6 From Sidon to Myra, the voyage became difficult because of the westerly winds. At Myra, Julius, a Roman officer, found a ship going to Italy; so he abandoned the slower coastal ship and put Paul and the others on board this large grain ship from Egypt that carried 276 passengers. This ship had come up from northern Africa and was sailing to Italy. Josephus makes mention that he was wrecked on a voyage to Italy with 600 aboard.

vs. 7-8 They were headed for the island of Crete. The strong winds again hindered their progress so that "many days" were required to cover the 130 miles from Myra to Cnidus. They passed on the south side of the island and came to Lasea, which is on the south shore of Crete. The "Fast" was the Day of Atonement – Yom Kippur

v. 9 This means that it was late in the season and that winter was coming on. They had been hoping to get to Rome before the stormy season. It is interesting to note that Paul takes a moral ascendancy at this point. When the sailing became dangerous, Paul admonished them.

vs. 10-11 One can certainly understand the centurion. After all, you would expect the captain of the ship to know more about sailing than Paul. We see Paul under a real testing here. He certainly stands out. He makes a suggestion which, they will find later, should have been followed. The spiritual superiority of Paul is evident at this point. There is **no confusion in the life of Paul, no uncertainty, no frustration**. He is what would be called a poised personality. Paul knew the way he was going. "This one thing I do" was his declaration when he got to Rome. We can observe these qualities in his behavior throughout the voyage. **Paul lived his life as a man in touch with God.**

Paul On His Way to Rome Acts 27 Note the precision, accuracy and vividness of this account!

"I must also see Rome!" Those were Paul's words during his ministry in Ephesus (Act 19:21), and little did he realize all that would happen to him before he would arrive in the Imperial city: **illegal arrest, Roman and Jewish trials, confinement, and even shipwreck**. Through it all, Paul trusted God's promise that he would witness in Rome (Act 23:11 **But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome."**); and the Lord saw him through.

Why would Luke devote such a long section of this book to a description of a voyage and shipwreck? Surely he could have summarized the account for us! But how much we can learn from this account. Perhaps the major purpose Luke had in mind was the **presenting of Paul as the courageous leader who could take command of a difficult situation in a time of great crisis**. Future generations would love and appreciate Paul all the more for what he did en route to Rome.

Luke certainly did use **this exciting event to show how one man's faith can make a big difference for him and others "in the storms of life."** What an encouragement to our own faith!

v. 10 Paul had already experienced three shipwrecks (2Co 11:25)

Paul the Counselor (Act 27:1-20)

The centurion now had to decide whether to winter at Fair Havens or set sail and try to reach the port of Phoenix on the southern coast of Crete, about forty miles away. His approach to making this decision is a classic illustration of how *not* to determine the will of God.

Paul admonished them to stay in Fair Havens. They had already encountered adverse winds, and it was now the start of the stormy season. "The fast" refers to the Day of Atonement, which fell in September/October; and every sailor knew that sailing was difficult from mid-September to mid-November, and impossible from mid-November to February.

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Act 27:12 And because the harbor was not suitable to winter in, the majority advised to set sail from there also, if by any means they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete opening toward the southwest and northwest, *and winter there.*

IN THE TEMPEST – VS. 13-38

Act 27:13 When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* desire, putting out to sea, they sailed close by Crete.

Act 27:14 But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon.

Act 27:15 So when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let *her* drive.

Act 27:16 And running under *the shelter* of an island called Clauda, we secured the skiff with difficulty.

Act 27:17 When they had taken it on board, they used cables to undergird (frapping) the ship; and fearing lest they should run aground on the Syrtis Sands, they struck sail and so were driven.

Act 27:18 And because we were exceedingly tempest-tossed, the next *day* they lightened the ship.

Act 27:19 On the third *day* we threw the ship's tackle overboard with our own hands.

Act 27:20 Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on *us*, all hope that we would be saved was finally given up.

Paul the Encourager (Act 27:21-44)

Act 27:21 But after long abstinence from food, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss.

Act 27:22 And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship.

Act 27:23 For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve,

INTERPRETATION

v. 12 Which is a haven - Having a double opening, one to the southwest, the other to the northwest. Phoenix – **about 40 miles.**

v. 13 To them the voyage was guesswork. The south wind blew softly, so they "supposed." The captain was a man who looked to self and to the wisdom of men. Paul was looking to God. Later on Paul would tell these men, "I believe God" (v. [Act 27:25](#)). Notice he would not say that he believed *in* God, but "I believe God."

v. 14 There arose against it - The south wind; a tempestuous wind, called in those parts Euroclydon (*typhonikos*- east and north or east plus waves; "northeastener"). This was a kind of hurricane, not carrying them any one way, but tossing them backward and forward. These furious winds are now called levanters, and blow in all directions from the northeast to the southeast.

v. 15-18 They were out there in the Mediterranean Sea being driven westward from the island of Crete. It looked very much as if they would be wrecked on the little island of Clauda (25 miles south of Phoenix), which, by the way, is a very small island south of Crete. They had to let the wind take the ship. They threw all the cargo (all but the wheat/grain) overboard to lighten the ship. Note the concern of the passengers! "*the Syrtis*" – sandbars (quicksand) off the coast of North Africa – extremely dangerous and deadly to any ship!

v. 19 They completely stripped the ship of everything that had any weight. " – ship's furniture – beds, etc.

v. 20 After fourteen days of wave and wind, the folk on the ship felt that they would not come through alive. They felt like this was it. However, the Lord had appeared to Paul and assured him that he was going to see Rome. With this assurance Paul was able to stand out above the others.

v. 21-23 You can understand that this was a very encouraging word to all those who were on board the ship. In fact, it was the only thing they had to hold onto. Notice the wonderful testimony of the apostle Paul: "Whose I am, and whom I serve." His confidence was in God: "Be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me." Paul relieved them of their fears! Paul reported what the angel had told him. *Act 18:9-10 Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; [10] for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city." Act 23:11 But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome."*

APPLICATION

[Act 27:10](#) sounds so much like a prophecy that we are prone to believe God gave Paul a premonition of danger. Paul had already experienced three shipwrecks ([2Co 11:25](#)), so he was certainly speaking from experience. (The Greek word translated "perceive" in [Act 27:10](#) means "to perceive from past experience.") However, the men in charge gave little value to Paul's warning, an attitude they lived to regret. What were the factors that governed Julius' decision? To begin with, Fair Havens was not a comfortable place to settle down because it was too open to the winter storms. What were the factors that governed Julius' decision? To begin with, **Fair Havens was not a comfortable place to settle down because it was too open to the winter storms.** Phoenix had a more sheltered harbor. **Julius also listened to the "expert advice" of the pilot and captain ("master and owner") of the ship. They advised that the ship head for Phoenix as fast as possible.** Surely they could cover forty miles safely, and already they had lost too much time ([Act 27:9](#)). When Julius added up the votes, it was three to one that the ship set sail. After all, **the majority cannot be wrong, especially when it includes the experts!**

But the clinching argument came with an encouraging change in the weather, for the south wind began to blow gently, and that was just what they needed. It was not long before Paul was proved right, for the "soft wind" became a stormy wind. The word translated "tempestuous" gives us the English word "typhoon." Sailors called this special wind *Euroclydon*, a hybrid Greek and Latin word that means "a northeasterner." The crew had to let the ship drift because it was impossible to steer it, and the wind drove it twenty-three miles to the south, to the island of Clauda. Here the sailors pulled in the small boat that was towed behind larger ships, lest they lose it or it be driven against the ship and cause damage.

As the storm grew worse, the crew did all it could to keep the ship afloat. They wrapped ropes (or chains) around the hull so the boat would not come apart, and they took down some of the sails. The second day, they started throwing some of the wheat overboard, and the third day they jettisoned the furnishings. Because of the storm, they could not see the sun or the stars, so it was impossible to determine their position. The situation seemed hopeless, and it all happened because one man would not listen to God's messenger.

Paul the Encourager (Act 27:21-44)

Paul began as a prisoner,--he ended as the captain. Paul "took over" the situation when it was obvious that nobody else knew what to do. A crisis does not make a person; **a crisis shows what a person is made of**, and it **tends to bring true leadership to the fore.** Paul gently rebuked the centurion, pilot, and captain for ignoring his warning. Soon they would discover that God had spared all of them only because of Paul.

Consider Paul's four ministries of encouragement to the passengers and crew. -

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Act 27:24 saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.'

Act 27:25 Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me.

Act 27:26 However, we must run aground on a certain island."

Act 27:27 Now when the fourteenth night had come, as we were driven up and down in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors sensed that they were drawing near some land.

Act 27:28 And they took soundings and found *it* to be twenty fathoms (120 feet); and when they had gone a little farther, they took soundings again and found *it* to be fifteen fathoms (90 feet).

Act 27:29 Then, fearing lest we should run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern, and prayed for day to come.

Act 27:30 And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, when they had let down the skiff into the sea, under pretense of putting out anchors from the prow,

Act 27:31 Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved."

Act 27:32 Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the skiff and let it fall off.

Act 27:33 And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored *them* all to take food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food, and eaten nothing.

Act 27:34 Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you."

INTERPRETATION

v. 24 God hath given - Paul had prayed for them. And God gave him their lives; perhaps their souls also. And the centurion, subserving the providence of God, gave to Paul the lives of the prisoners. How wonderfully does his providence reign in the most contingent things! And rather will many bad men be preserved with a few good, (so it frequently happens,) than one good man perish with many bad. So it was in this ship: so it is in the world. So that Paul, in the sight of God, was the master and pilot of the ship.

vs. 25-26 It was revealed to Paul that they would be cast upon an island. We will learn later that the island was Malta, which is just south of Sicily. So they had traveled quite a distance across the Mediterranean from the island of Crete. Malta is the island we still know today as Malta. Paul reassured them about God's promises.

v. 27 The fourteenth night - Since they left Crete, Act 27:18-19. In the Adriatic sea - So the ancients called all that part of the Mediterranean, which lay south of Italy.

vs. 28-29 Their sounding showed that they were moving in closer to the land. Each sounding showed that the water was becoming more shallow. These men were in a ship and they were approaching land. Since they didn't want to be cast upon the rocks, they threw out four anchors. It required all four to hold the ship. If you started to guess how many anchors it would take to hold you or to hold me, you would be trying to spiritualize this passage. In my judgment, that is a very foolish way to handle the Word of God

vs. 30-31. The crew was trying to abandon the ship, you see. They acted as if they were dropping anchor, but actually they were going overboard. They were leaving a sinking ship as the rats leave it. They were doing something which they should never have done. They now listen to Paul!

v. 32 Paul has given the information to the centurion. The centurion is beginning to listen to Paul now. He gives the command and the soldiers cut the ropes to the life boats. Now everyone must stay on board.

vs. 33-34 You know very well, fourteen days of fasting would weaken even the hardest men. Now Paul urges them all to eat. Apparently they had all fasted. The pagans had fasted because they were scared to death. Paul and the Christians may have fasted because they were doing it unto the Lord. Now they are near land and they all need their strength to make it to shore. So Paul uses sanctified sanity in the Lord's service. He uses good sense.

APPLICATION

He shared God's Word with them (Act 27:22-26).

A messenger from the Lord had visited Paul and told him that the ship and cargo would be lost, but that all the passengers would be spared and cast on an island. Once again, the Lord gave him a special word of encouragement at the right time (Act 18:9-10; Act 23:11). It was for Paul's sake that God did this, and it was Paul's faith that God honored. What a testimony he was to the people on that storm-tossed ship!

He warned them (Act 27:27-32). During the two weeks they had been at sea, the ship had been driven over 500 miles off course and was now adrift in the Adrian Sea. As the crew took soundings, they discovered that the water was getting shallower (from 120 feet to 90 feet), indicating that land was near. From the roar of the waves, it appeared that the ship was headed for the rocks. In order to keep the prow headed toward shore, some of the crew dropped four anchors from the stern. But others of the crew **tried to escape** from the ship in the dinghy that had been brought on board (Act 27:16). This was not only an act of selfishness and revolt on their part, but it was **also an act of unbelief**. Paul **had told everybody God's promise that He would keep all those safe who sailed with him on the voyage** (Act 27:24). For the men to abandon ship was to take their lives in their own hands and threaten the lives of others.

He set a good example before them (Act 27:33-38).

What a difference it makes when a person has faith in God! Instead of vainly wishing for a change (Act 27:29) or selfishly trying to escape (Act 27:30), Paul got ready for the demands that would come at daybreak. It is not difficult to understand why everyone had fasted those two weeks, but now it was time to eat. Caring for one's health is an important part of the Christian life, and even an apostle must not abuse his body. Paul took the bread and openly prayed and gave thanks to God. (This is a good example for us to follow when we are eating in public places.) His example encouraged the others to join him, and before long, everybody felt better. There are times when one dedicated believer can change the whole atmosphere of a situation simply by trusting God and making that faith visible.

He rescued them (Act 27:39-44).

When it was day, the pilot saw where they were and made every effort to get the ship to shore. But it was all futile; the ship was grounded and the waves began to beat the stern to pieces. The **only thing the passengers could do was jump into the water** and make for land. The soldiers, of course, were concerned about their prisoners; for if a prisoner escaped, the soldier was held accountable and could be killed. **Once again, it was Paul whose presence saved their lives.** Just as the Lord promised, all of them made it safely to shore, and not one was lost. I have a feeling that Paul had been sharing the Gospel with his fellow passengers and that some of them had trusted in the Lord as a result of this experience. Luke does not give us the details, but would you expect Paul to do otherwise?

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Act 27:35 And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken *it* he began to eat.

Act 27:36 Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves.

Act 27:37 And in all we were two hundred and seventy-six persons on the ship.

Act 27:38 So when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship and threw out the wheat into the sea.

SHIPWRECKED ON MALTA – VS. 39-44

Act 27:39 When it was day, they did not recognize the land; but they observed a bay with a beach, onto which they planned to run the ship if possible.

Act 27:40 And they let go the anchors and left *them* in the sea, meanwhile loosing the rudder ropes; and they hoisted the mainsail to the wind and made for shore.

Act 27:41 But striking a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves.

Act 27:42 And the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape.

Act 27:43 But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose, and commanded that those who could swim should jump *overboard* first and get to land,

Act 27:44 and the rest, some on boards and some on *parts* of the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to land.

"Jesus Savior Pilot Me" – Dallas Christian Adult Choir

*Jesus, Savior, pilot me, Over life's tempestuous sea;
Unknown waves before me roll, Hiding rock and treach'rous shoal;
Chart and compass came from Thee: Jesus, Savior, pilot me.*

*As a mother stills her child, Thou canst hush the ocean wild;
Boist'rous waves obey Thy will When Thou say'st to them, "Be still!"
Wondrous Sov'reign of the sea, Jesus, Savior, pilot me.*

*When at last I near the shore, And the fearful breakers roar 'Twixt me and the peaceful rest, Then, while leaning on Thy breast, May I hear Thee say to me,
"Fear not, I will pilot thee."*

INTERPRETATION

v. 35 Paul gave thanks to God in the presence of them all. This again is a wonderful testimony. This is Paul's prosperous journey to Rome. The journey may seem like a tragedy to us and that Paul is out of the will of God!" But no, he is not out of the will of God.

v. 36 Then they were all encouraged – good cheer! - By his example, as well as words.

v. 37 There were 276 people on board—so it was a sizable ship.

v. 38 They had previously thrown all the cargo overboard. Now they throw all their food overboard.

v. 39 They did not know the land - Which they saw near them: having a level shore.

v. 40 Loosing the rudder ropes - Their ships had frequently two rudders, one on each side, which were fastened while they let the ship drive; but were now loosened, when they had need of them to steer her into the creek.

v. 41 A place where two seas met - Probably by reason of a sand bank running parallel with the shore.

v. 42 Fearing the loss of their own lives, should the prisoners escape, the counsel was cruel, unjust and ungrateful.

vs. 43-44 Their landing could be considered miraculous, although I am not going to insist that it was a miracle. However, God certainly fulfilled His promise that Paul and all the 276 people on the ship would get to land safely. Notice the protection of the centurion!

The situation seemed hopeless, and it all happened because one man would not listen to God's messenger.

Sometimes we get ourselves into storms for the same reasons: **impatience** (Act 27:9), "*He that believes shall not make haste*" (Isa 28:16).

accepting expert advice that is contrary to God's will, **following the majority**, and **trusting "ideal" conditions** – soft, south wind (Act 27:13).

It pays to listen to God's Word.

Isa 30:1 "Woe to the rebellious children," says the LORD, "Who take counsel, but not of Me, And who devise plans, but not of My Spirit, That they may add sin to sin;

APPLICATION

Questions:

1. Paul had been promised by the Lord that he would witness in Rome. Would the events of chapter 27 cause you to doubt that you're in God's will?
2. What are some way God uses "tragedies" for His purposes? Looking back on your greatest trials or "tragedies" did they result in harming or helping your walk and closeness to the Lord?
3. Do you think Luke was present with Paul on his entire journey from Jerusalem to Rome (Acts 27:1-28:16)? How can you be sure?
4. v. 10 Describe what you think was meant when Paul said, "Men, I perceive...."
5. v.11 How did the decision made by Julius to sail from Crete demonstrate the wrong way to determine God's will?
6. On what three things was Julius' decision based upon?
7. Can you relate to making such a decision?
8. What ways did Paul minister to the crew and passengers during the 14 days at sea?
9. vs. 30-32 What was one of the main reasons Paul might have had in saying, "*Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.*"
10. v.32 Do you have the courage and conviction to cut away the lifeboat?
11. What practical lesson did you learn from this chapter?

We should note some practical lessons that Chapters 27 teaches us.

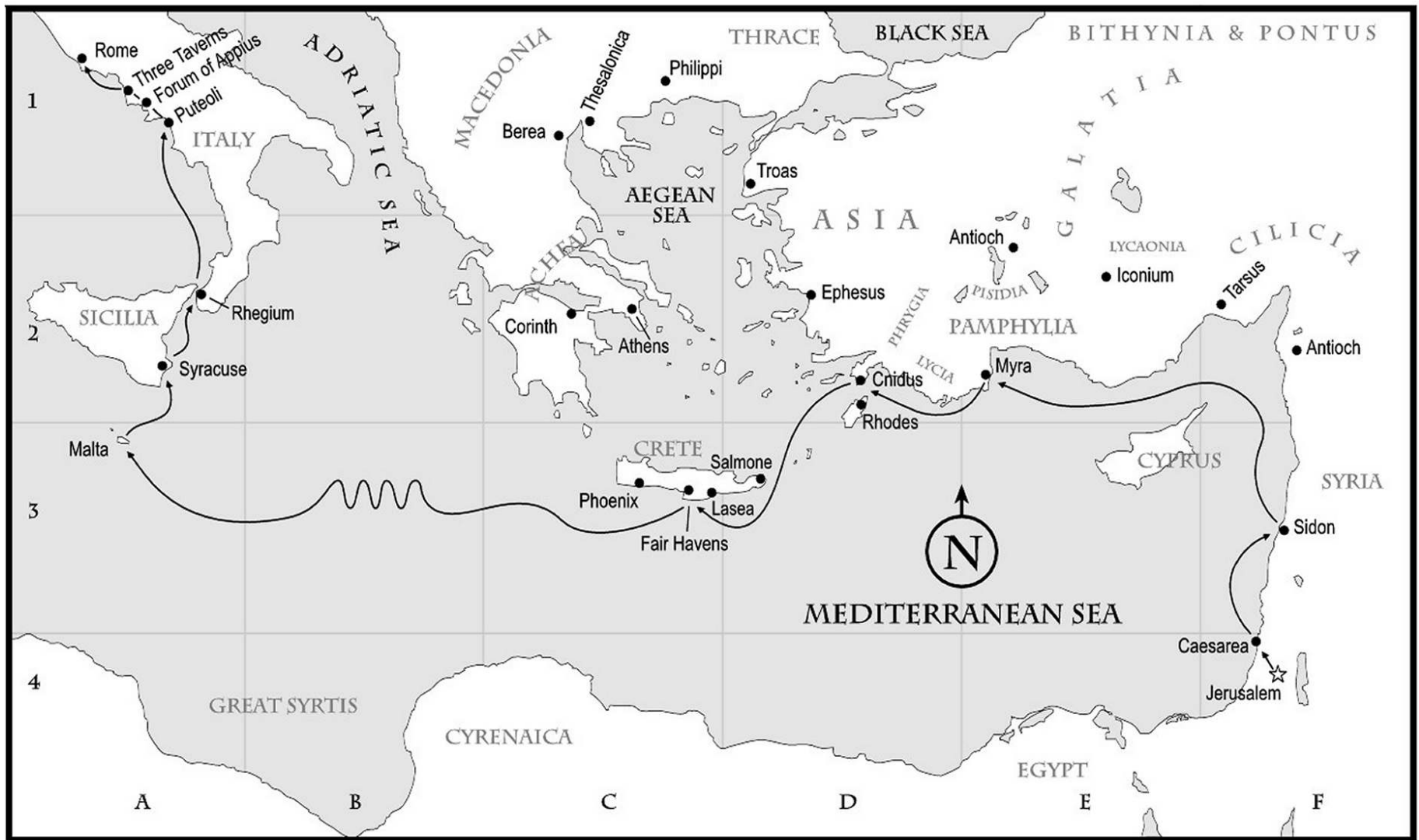
- **Storms often come when we disobey the will of God.** (Jonah is a good example of this truth.) However, it was not Paul who was at fault, but the centurion in charge of the ship. **We sometimes suffer because of the unbelief of others.** (Caleb & Joshua)
- **Storms have a way of revealing character.** Some of the sailors selfishly tried to escape, others could only hope for the best; **but Paul trusted God and obeyed His will.**
- **Even the worst storms cannot hide the face of God or hinder the purposes of God.** Paul received the word of assurance that they needed, and God overruled **so that His servant arrived safely** in Rome.
- **Storms can give us opportunities to serve others and bear witness to Jesus Christ.** Paul was the most valuable man on that ship! He knew how to pray, he had faith in God, and he was in touch with the Almighty.

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PAUL'S SHIPWRECKED ROUTE FROM CAESAREA (JERUSALEM) TO ROME

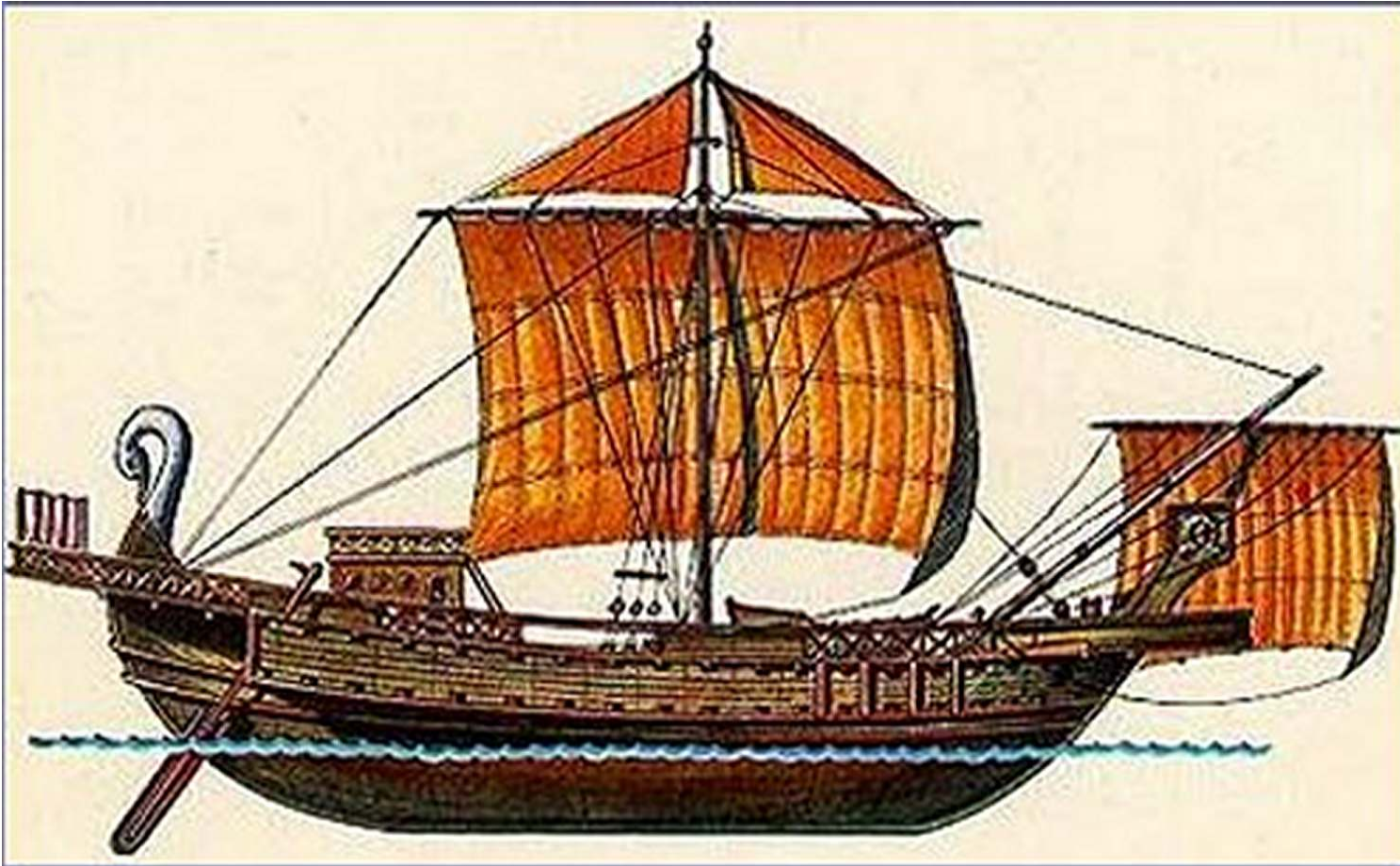
Act 9:15-16 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. [16] For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."

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ANCIENT EGYPTIAN GRAIN SHIP – LIKE THE ONE PAUL WAS IN ACTS CHAPTER 27

Paul's ship was actually a grain ship like the image above. It was of enormous size. The ship that Paul traveled on carried 276 men. Ships of this size had a tonnage of 2,600 tons. The hull ran up to a bird's-head carving above the bows and a bird's-tail at the stern. In the midst as a high mast, usually of cedar wood and near the prow was a small one for hoisting a small sail. Two large oars were used to steer. On the deck was a wooden hut for the helmsman which was also used as a temple of worship containing an idol. With only one main sail, this design was difficult to maneuver and had poor performance when sailing in contrary winds