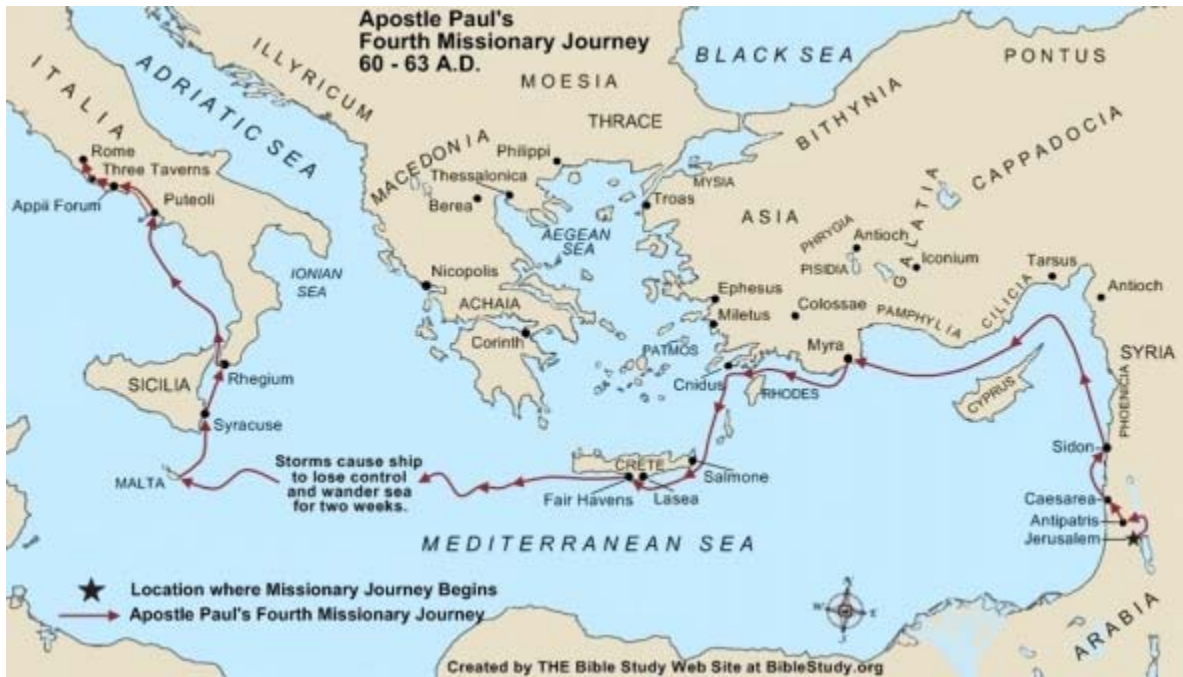


## Acts of the Apostles - Chapter 27 (NIV)



<https://www.biblestudy.org/maps/apostle-paul-fourth-missionary-journey-large-map.html>

### *Paul Sails for Rome*

*27:1 When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment. 2 We boarded a ship from Adramyttium about to sail for ports along the coast of the province of Asia, and we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us.*

In the last few chapters, we had not heard about what Paul's fellow travelers were doing. It becomes obvious that at least Luke and Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica are traveling with Paul. Notice that the pronoun, "we" is used in these verses. Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment accompanied Paul to Rome. It would be expected for soldiers to accompany prisoners on the ship. The ship was not going directly to Rome but was going to stop at a number of ports along the coast of the province of Asia.

*27:3 The next day we landed at Sidon; and Julius, in kindness to Paul, allowed him to go to his friends so they might provide for his needs. 4 From there we put out to sea again and passed to the lee of Cyprus because the winds were against us. 5 When we had sailed across the open sea off the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia. 6 There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy and put us on board. 7 We made slow headway for many days and had difficulty arriving off Cnidus. When the wind did not allow us to hold our course, we sailed to the lee of Crete, opposite Salmone. 8 We moved along the coast with difficulty and came to a place called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea.*

The first stop was Sidon and Julius allowed Paul to visit with his friends.

“The ship first sailed to Sidon, where Paul met with Christians and could receive care from them. The Roman commander gave Paul a lot of liberty because he wasn’t a condemned man (yet), but waiting for trial before Caesar. Paul’s godly character and display of Christian love were also helpful in gaining favor.” (Guzik)

They got back on the ship and verses 4 through 8 cover part of the trip to Rome. According to one theologian, the ship was a grain freighter. It was not equipped to sail into the wind which caused their problems traveling.

***27:9 Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was after the Day of Atonement. So Paul warned them, 10 “Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also.”***

The Day of Atonement is known as Yom Kippur today. In 59 AD, the Day of Atonement would have occurred on October 5<sup>th</sup>. This tells us that they are getting close to winter. Paul may have been speaking as an experienced traveler and not a prophet of God. He was said to have traveled 3500 miles by sea during his missionary journeys.

“The dangerous season for sailing began about September 14 and lasted until November 11; after the latter date all navigation on the open sea came to an end until winter was over.” (Bruce)

2 Corinthians 11:25 tells us by this time, Paul had shipwrecked at least three times. He wrote Romans and both letters to the Corinthians during his third missionary journey.

***27:11 But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship. 12 Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided that we should sail on, hoping to reach Phoenix and winter there. This was a harbor in Crete, facing both southwest and northwest.***

The centurion listened to his pilot and the owner of the ship to make his decision to continue on to the port of Phoenix and because they had the most to lose. The port of Fair Havens was a small town and it would be understandable for the crew to want to spend winter in the large city of Phoenix compared to the small town. They were only 40 miles apart.

### ***The Storm***

***27:13 When a gentle south wind began to blow, they saw their opportunity; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. 14 Before very long, a wind of hurricane force, called the Northeaster, swept down from the island. 15 The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along. 16 As we passed to the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were hardly able to make the lifeboat secure,***

They should have listened to Paul. A storm came up and they never made it into the port of Phoenix. They were blown further west than they wanted to by hurricane force winds. The NIV calls it a Northeaster and the NKJV calls it a **Euroclydon**. The skiff (NKJV) or lifeboat (NIV) was normally pulled behind the ship, since the weather was so bad, they had to bring it on board. Not only were they keeping the lifeboat on board but they passed ropes around the boat to hold it together. They even lowered the anchor and the winds still pushed the ship along to the west.

*27:17 so the men hoisted it aboard. Then they passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. Because they were afraid they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along. 18 We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. 19 On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. 20 When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.*

They were trying everything to save the ship. They threw the cargo and the ship's equipment or tackle overboard. They didn't see the Sun or stars for several days. They had lost all hope of being rescued.

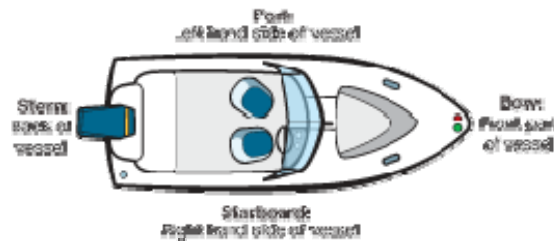
*27:21 After they had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. 22 But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. 23 Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me 24 and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' 25 So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. 26 Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island."*

So they are without hope and hungry and now Paul stands up and tells them "I told you so!" You have to think that they are ready to throw him overboard, then he says "Keep your courage" (NIV) or "Take Heart" (NKJV) or "Take courage" (NLT). They should be encouraged because no one will lose their life, only the ship will be lost. Paul's source of encouragement was an angel sent by God. This angel gave him a detailed account of what was going to happen because Paul must stand trial before Nero. God could have saved only the lives of the believers but Paul must have been praying for all of the men on the boat. They still had to run aground on an island. Even though God is in control and could have saved the ship, this was the way it had to happen. Sometimes we look at a situation and pray for the easiest way out but God wants us to grow from it.

### *The Shipwreck*

*27:27 On the fourteenth night we were still being driven across the Adriatic Sea, when about midnight the sailors sensed they were approaching land. 28 They took soundings and found that the water was a hundred and twenty feet deep. A short time later they took soundings again and found it was ninety feet deep. 29 Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight.*

Two weeks after leaving the island of Crete, it appears that the angel foretold that they will become shipwrecked. As the water became more and more shallow, the crew was afraid the ship would hit the rocks and sink. They put down four anchors and prayed for daylight.



***27:30 In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow.<sup>31</sup> Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, “Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved.” <sup>32</sup> So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it drift away.***

The sailors decided to forget about the passengers, it is every man for himself. At least Paul was aware of what the crew was planning. Verse 31b says, “You will all die unless the sailors stay aboard.”

“Paul knew two reasons why they had to stay together. First, the ship’s passengers desperately needed the crew’s expertise, and it would be fatal if the crew abandoned the passengers. Second, Paul probably sensed that God’s promise to give him the lives of the whole ship’s company assumed that they would stay together.” (Guzik)

It seems that the Roman soldiers put a lot of trust in what Paul said, so they cut the ropes.

***27:33 Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. “For the last fourteen days,” he said, “you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food—you haven’t eaten anything. <sup>34</sup> Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head.” <sup>35</sup> After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. <sup>36</sup> They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves.<sup>37</sup> Altogether there were 276 of us on board. <sup>38</sup> When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.***

Their prayers were answered. They made it to morning. Since they don’t know whether there is food or not on this island, Paul tried to get them to eat. He reminded them that the angel told him that none of them would die. As Paul starts to eat, it starts to sound like he is going to serve them the Lord’s supper. After they ate, they threw the wheat overboard. This was the final effort to survive. The empty ship would ride higher in the water and make it closer to shore.

***27:39 When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship aground if they could. <sup>40</sup> Cutting loose the anchors, they left them in the sea and at the same time untied the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach.<sup>41</sup> But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf.***

Although they didn't recognize this island, it was the island of Malta. They saw a bay with a beach. Remember what the angel told them in verse 26. They are to run the ship aground. What better place than this?

"If they missed Malta, there would have been nothing for it but to hold on for 200 miles until they struck the Tunisian coast, and no one could have expected the ship to survive that long." (Bruce)

They made preparations to get the ship as close to land as they could. Even the best laid plans don't always work out, even with God on your side.

***27:42 The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping. 43 But the centurion wanted to spare Paul's life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. 44 The rest were to get there on planks or on other pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land safely.***

The soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners but since the centurion wanted to spare Paul, no one was killed. They all made it to shore, just as the angel said.

"God gave Paul favor in the eyes of this Roman centurion, and that favor kept Paul and all the prisoners alive – in fulfillment of the word spoken to Paul, *God has granted you all those who sail with you* (Acts 27:24). God's word never fails." (Guzik)