



THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

**“Against All Odds,
God’s Purpose Prevailed”**

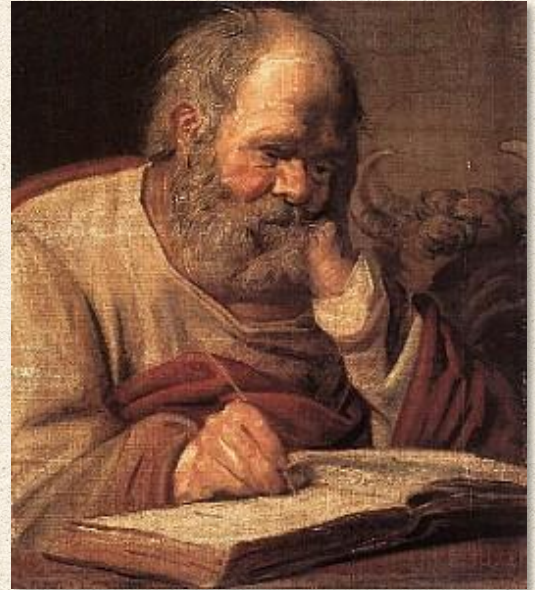
Acts 27–28

Paul Johnston

Storytellers



Garrison Keillor



Dr. Luke

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”
(1:8)



“For two whole years Paul stayed [in Rome] in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!” (28:31)

God's Purpose Prevails

“So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:11)

God's Purpose: Proclaiming Jesus to All People

“As you [Paul] have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.” (23:11)

“The Messiah would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would bring the message of light to his own people and to the Gentiles.” (26:22-23)

Against All Odds, God's Purpose Prevails

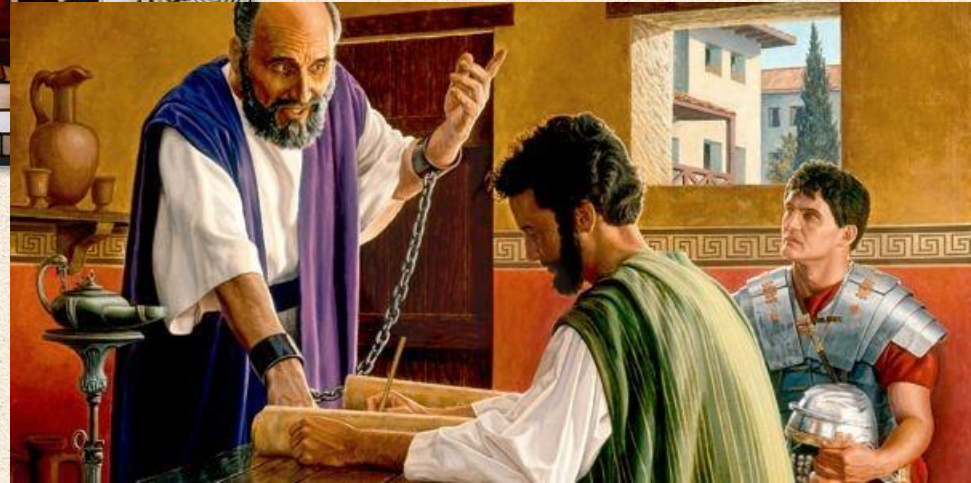
“Paul proclaimed ... without hindrance!” (28:31)

- **Without hindrance???**
- **Odds Against Paul: Roman Military, Mediterranean Sea**

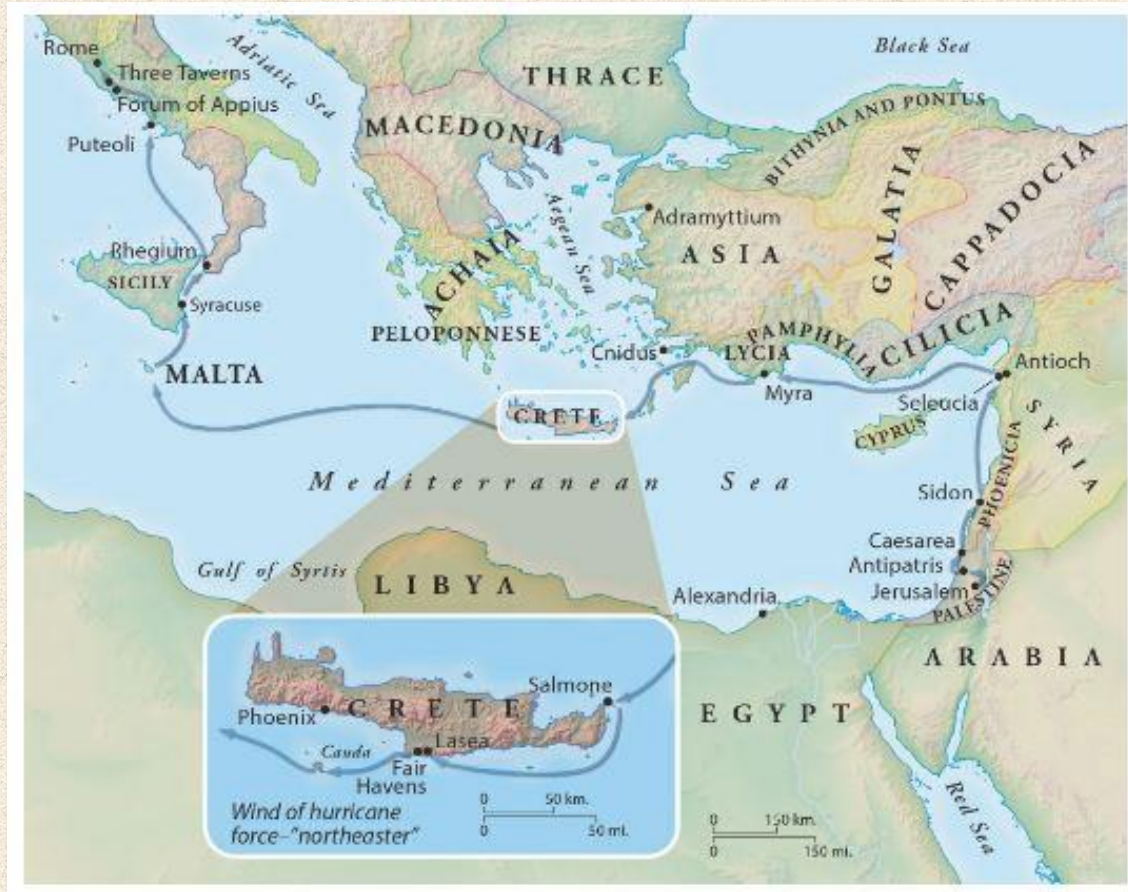
Roman Military

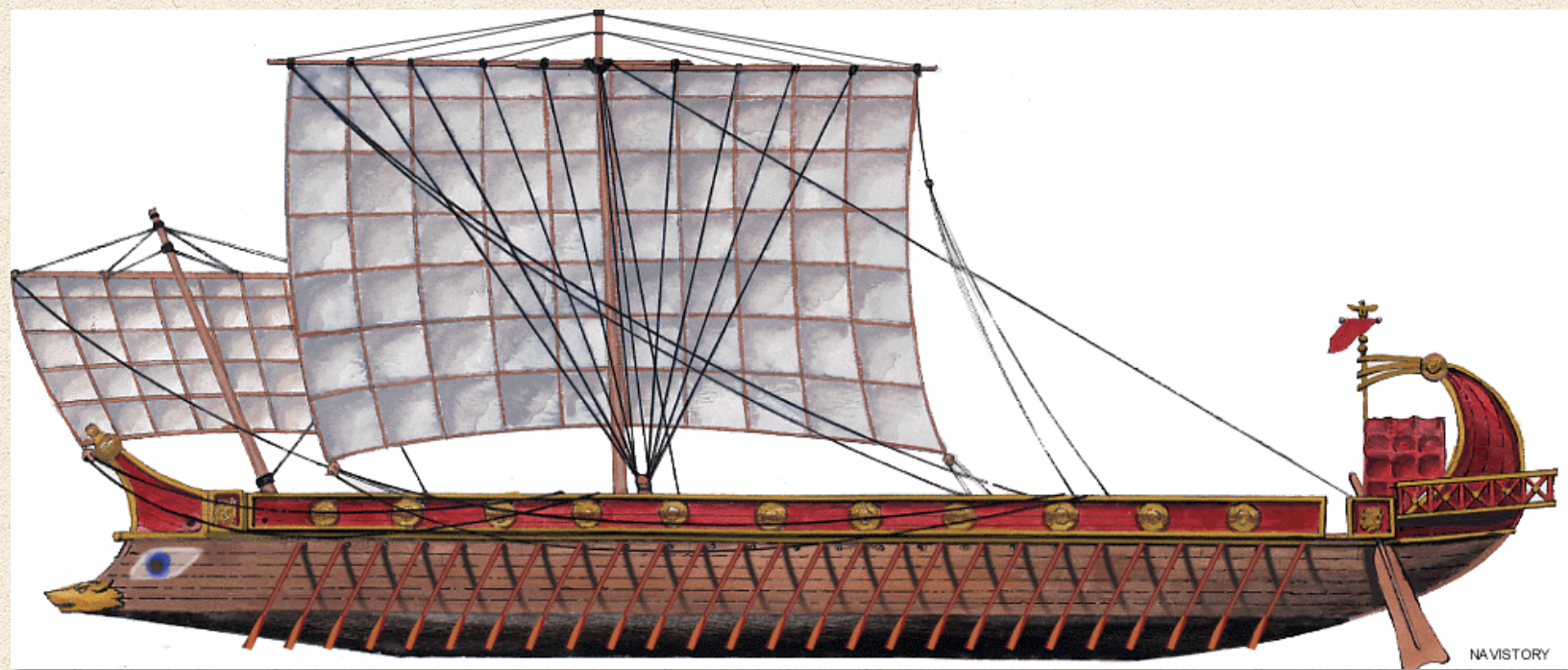
“When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment.” (27:1)

“When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.” (28:16)

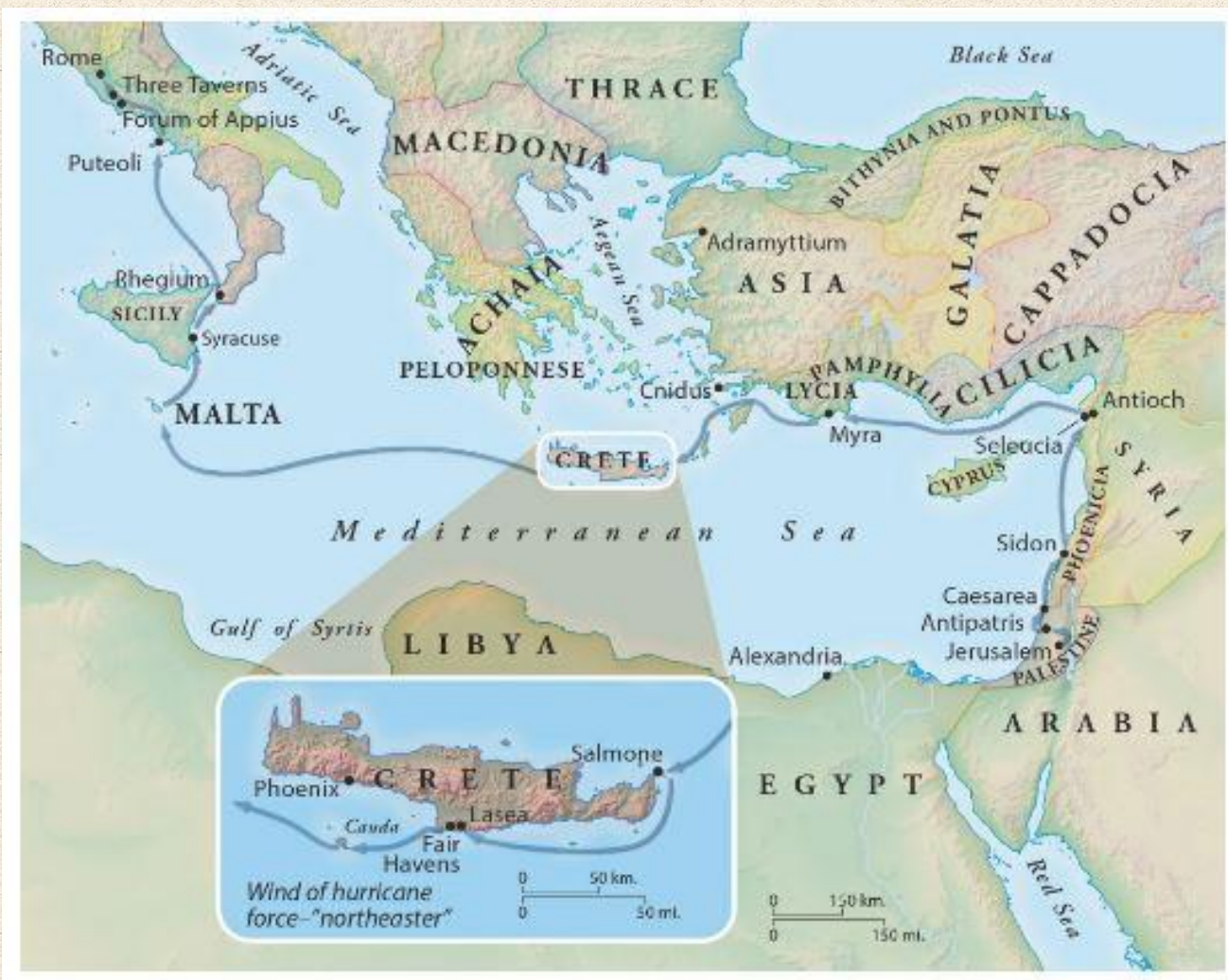


Sailing The Mediterranean Sea





NAVISTORY

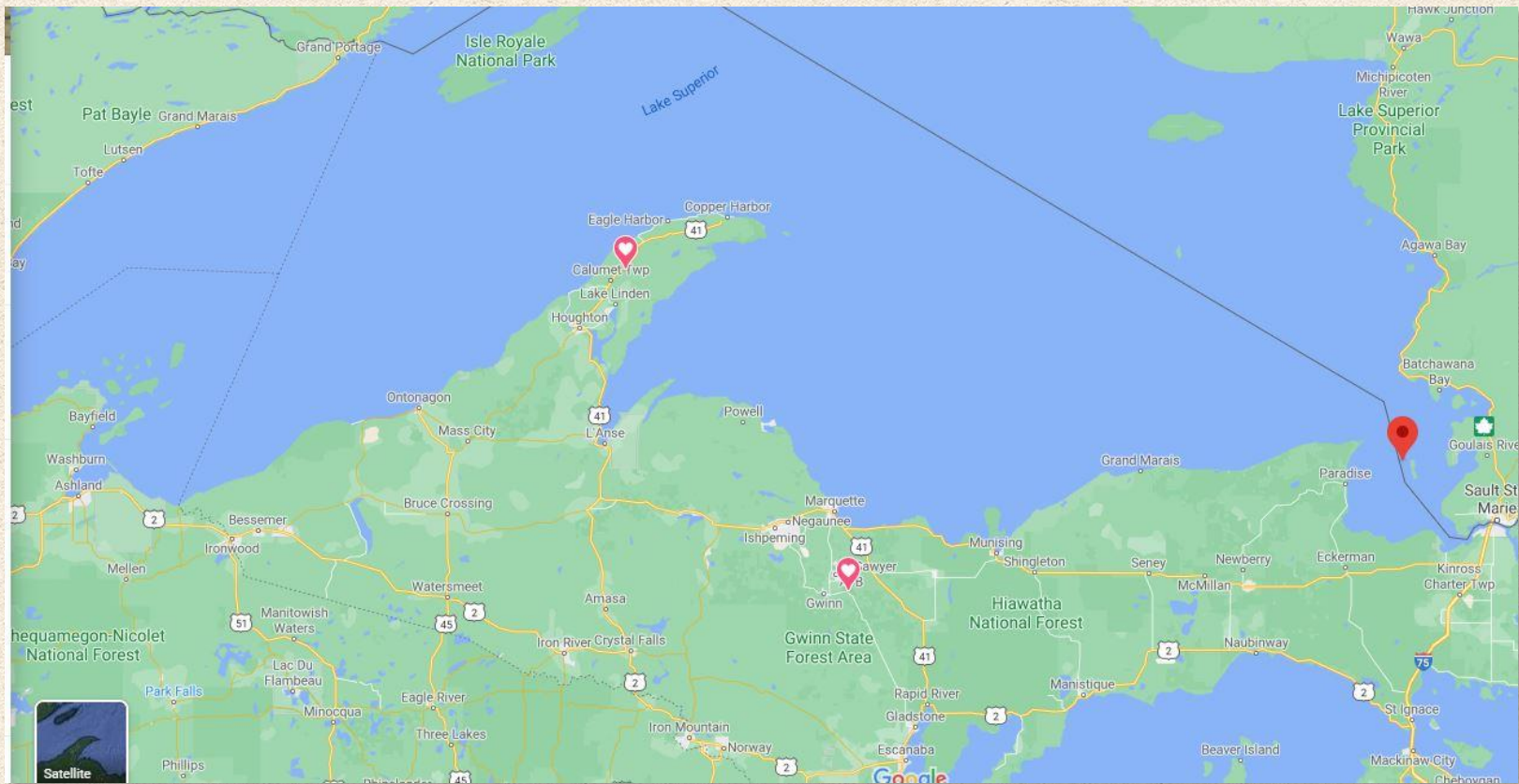


Lake Superior



The Wreck of the *Edmund Fitzgerald* (1975)





The legend lives on from the Chippewa on down
Of the big lake they called Gitche Gumee
The lake, it is said, never gives up her dead
When the skies of November turn gloomy
With a load of iron ore twenty-six thousand tons more
Than the *Edmund Fitzgerald* weighed empty
That good ship and true was a bone to be chewed
When the gales of November came early
Does anyone know where the love of God goes
When the waves turn the minutes to hours?
The searchers all say they'd have made Whitefish Bay
If they'd put fifteen more miles behind her

(Gordon Lightfoot)

Against All Odds, God's Purpose Prevails

By Physical Protection

By Encouragement

By Witness Opportunities

Physical Protection

“Last night an angel of God said, ‘You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the *lives* of all who sail with you.’” (28:23-24)

“The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners. But the *centurion* kept them from carrying out their plan.” (28:42-43)

“A *viper*, driven out by the heat [of the fire], fastened itself on [Paul’s] hand. But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects.” (28:3,5)

Encouragement

“*Julius*, in *kindness* to Paul, allowed him to go to his friends so they might provide for his needs.” (27:3)

“Last night an angel of the *God* to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me and said, ‘*Do not be afraid, Paul.*’” (28:23)

“And so we came to Rome. The *brothers and sisters* traveled to meet us. At the sight of these people Paul thanked God and was *encouraged.*” (28:14-15)

Witness Opportunities

- ***Testimony*** – “The God to whom I belong and whom I serve.... I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me.” (28:23, 25)
- ***Actions*** – “Paul, after prayer, placed his hands on [Publius’ father] and healed him.” (28:7-9)
- ***Gospel*** – “For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.” (28:30-31)

So What Is Luke Telling Us?

God Will Open a Door in a Crisis

- Look for an opportunity for a simple word of testimony

“God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me.... I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me.” (27:23ff)

- Provide practical and emotional support

“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.” (Phil. 1:3-5)

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)