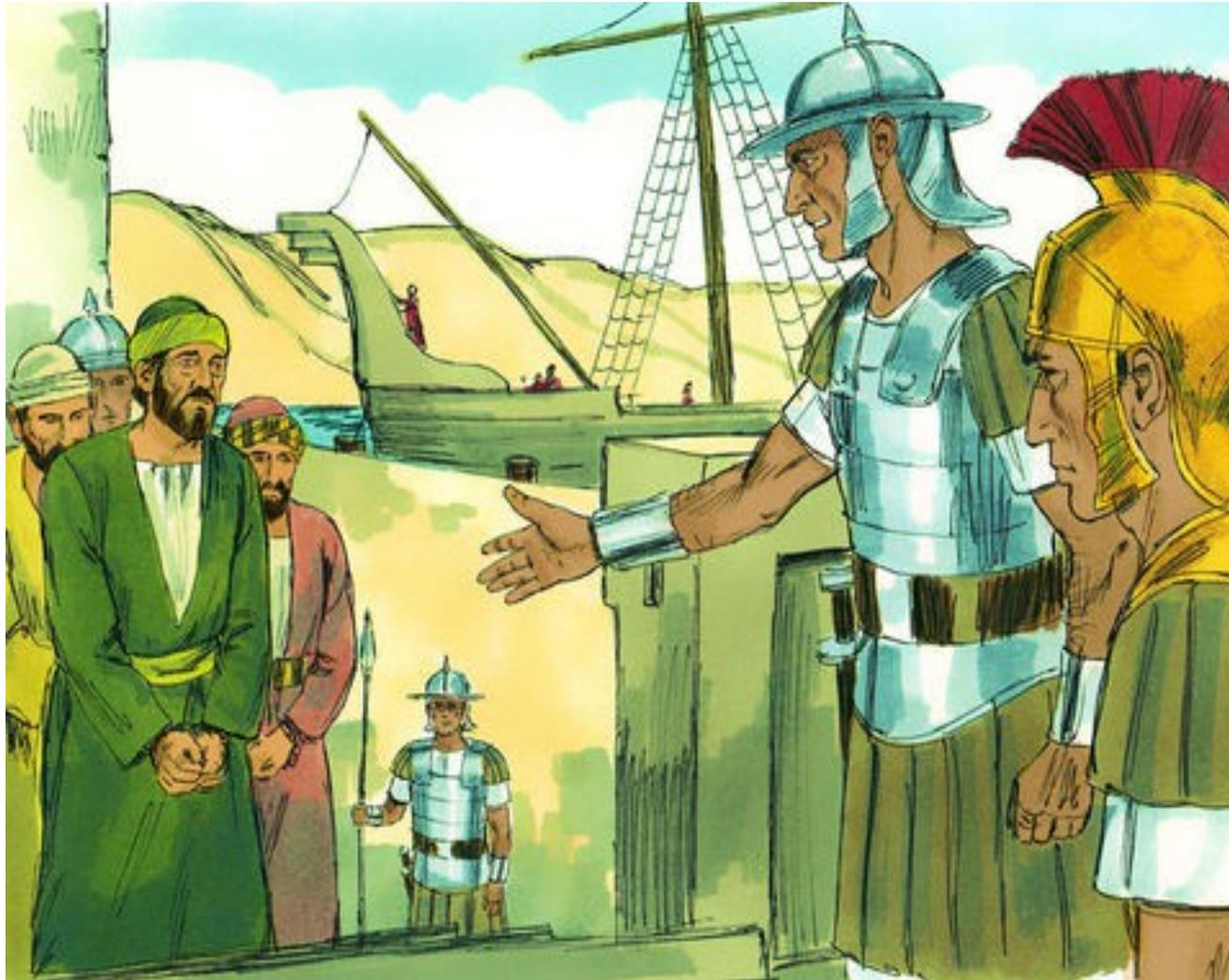


Quarter 3 Lesson 13
Sixth Grade

Preaching the Gospel from Prison

Acts 27-28

When the time came for Paul to face trial in Rome, Italy, he and some other prisoners were placed in the custody of a centurion (Roman officer) named Julius, a captain of the Imperial Regiment.



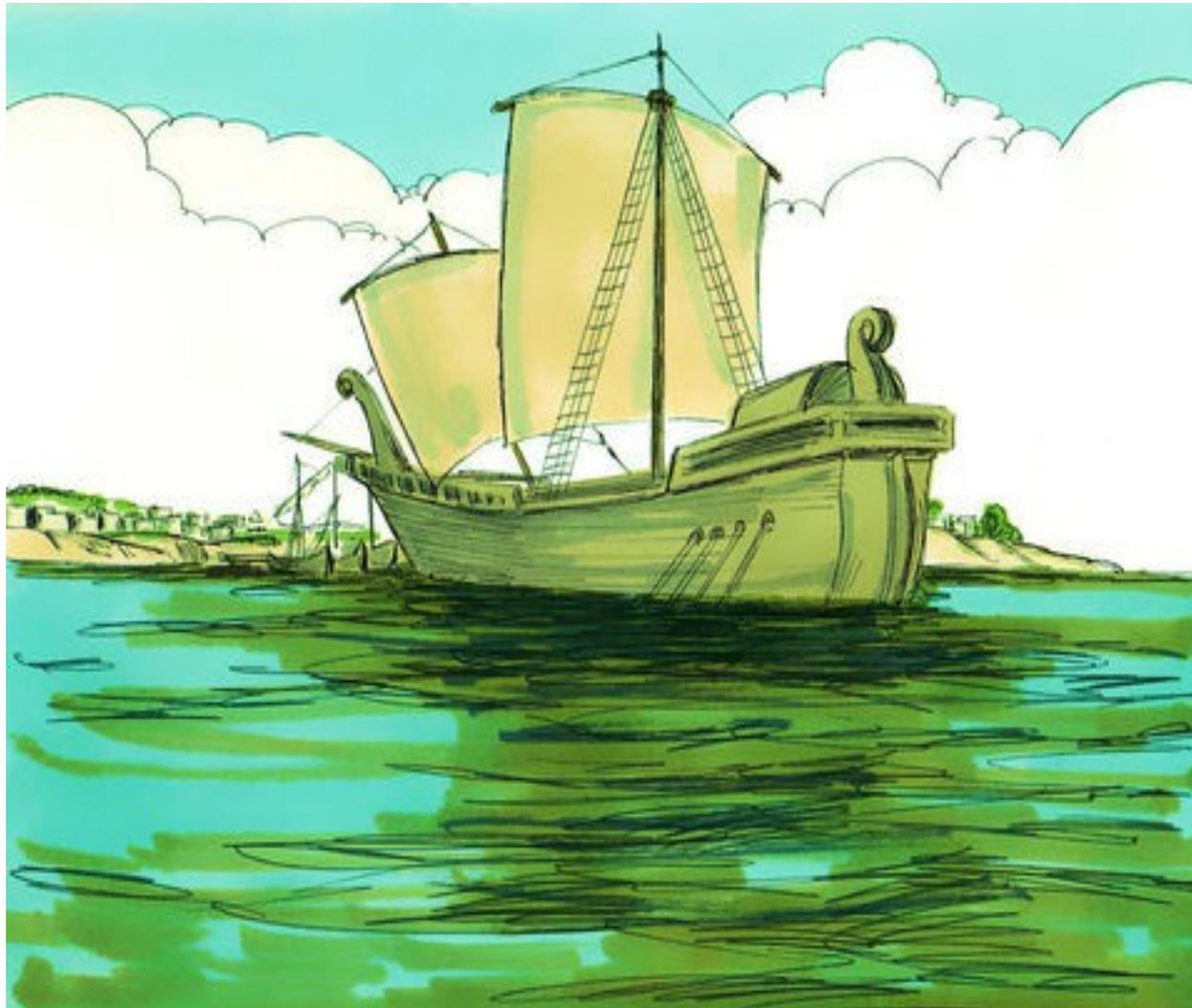
They set sail and the next day docked in Sidon. Julius treated Paul kindly and allowed him to go ashore to visit friends who provided for his needs.



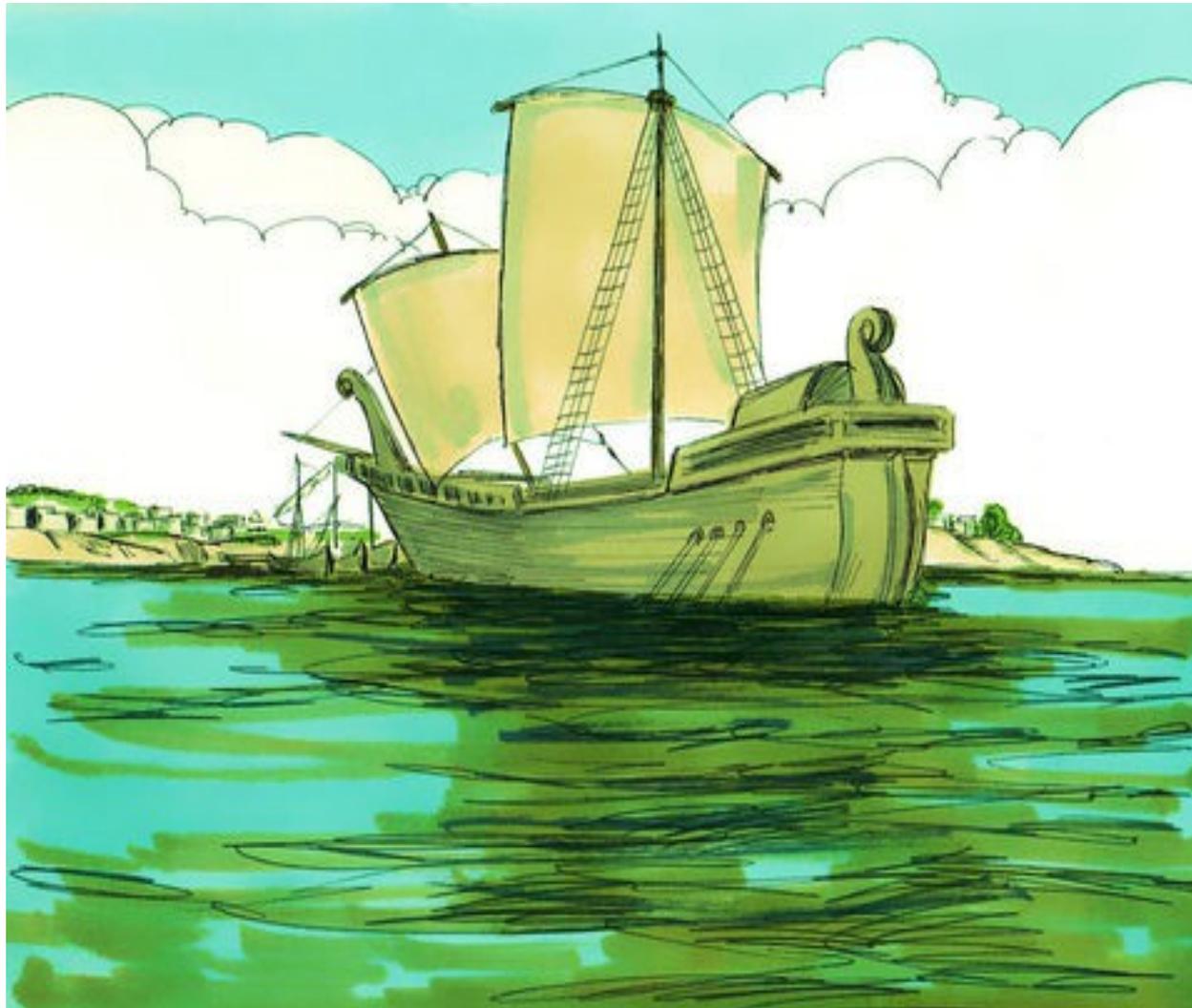
Putting out to sea again, the ship encountered strong headwinds that made it difficult to keep the vessel on course. Passing by Cyprus, they sailed along the coast of Cilicia {*sih LISH ih uh*} and Pamphylia {*pam FIL ih uh*}, landing at Myra.



There, the centurion found an Egyptian ship from Alexandria that was sailing for Italy and put Paul and the other prisoners on board.



There, the centurion found an Egyptian ship from Alexandria that was sailing for Italy and put Paul and the other prisoners on board.



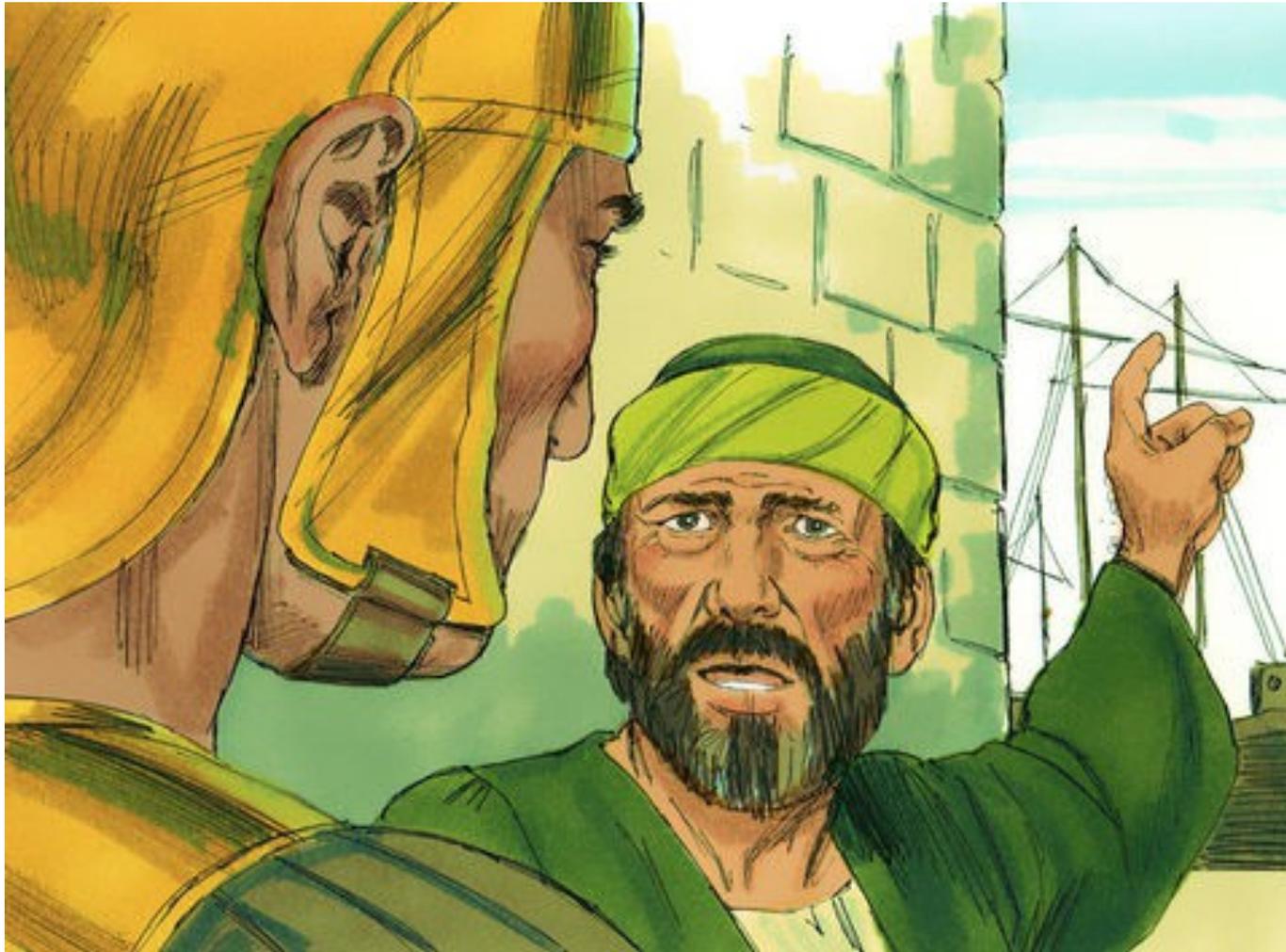
After several days of slow and difficult sailing, the crew and passengers finally neared Cnidus {*NYE dus*}.



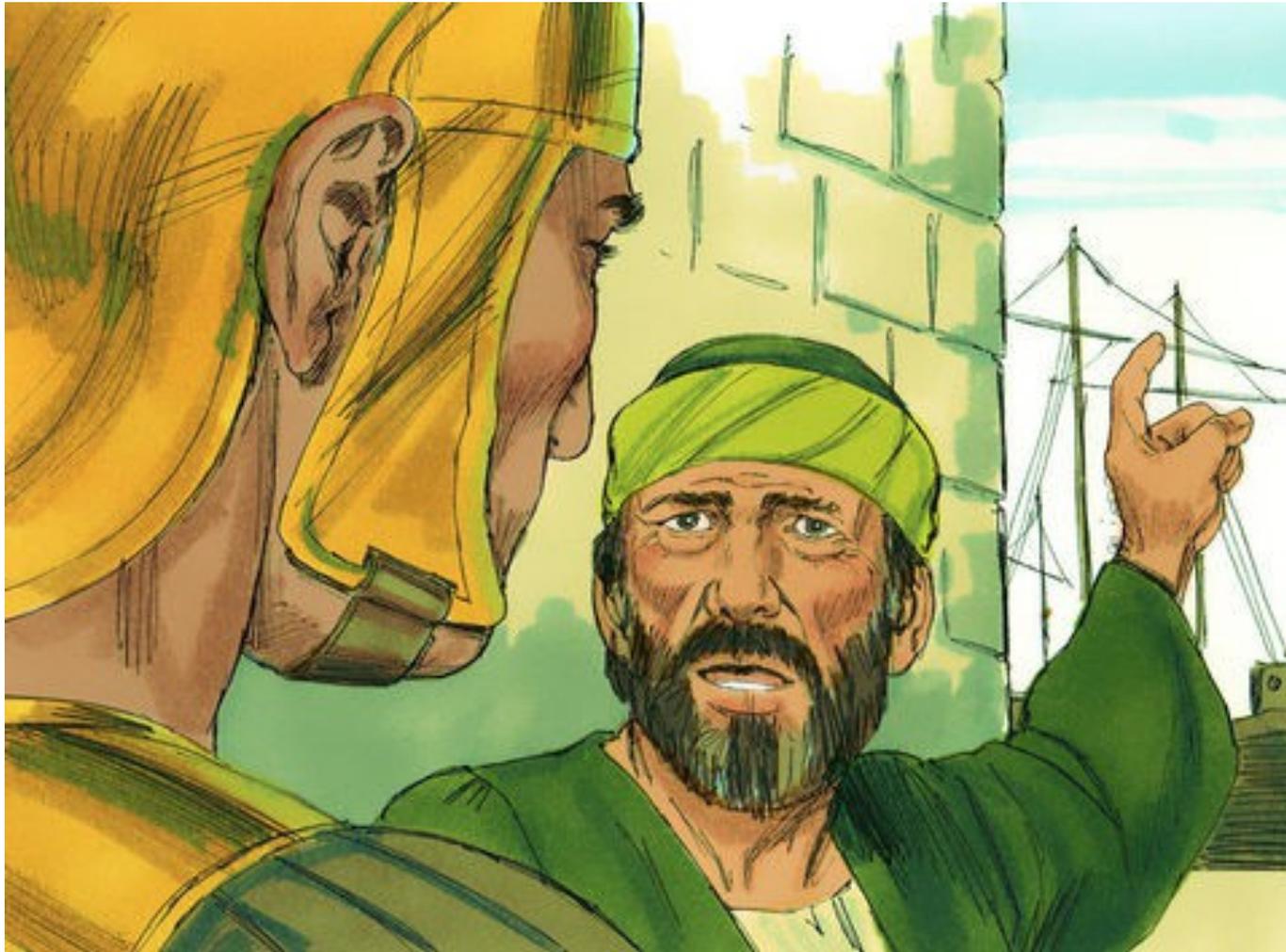
However, the wind was against them, so they sailed south to Crete and finally arrived at Fair Havens.



Since much time had passed, and sea travel was now dangerous, Paul advised those in authority saying, “Sirs, 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.” But the centurion paid more attention to the pilot and to the owner of the ship than to Paul.



Because the harbor was not suitable for spending the winter, the majority of those to whom Paul appealed decided to put out to sea from there, on the chance that somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, and spend the winter there.



So they pulled up anchor and sailed close to the shore of Crete. However, the weather changed abruptly, and a northeaster, a wind of typhoon strength, swept across the island and blew them out to sea.



Because the sailors couldn't turn the ship into the wind, they gave way to it and were driven along. They bound ropes around the hull of the ship to strengthen it. They also lowered the anchor in an effort to slow the ship.



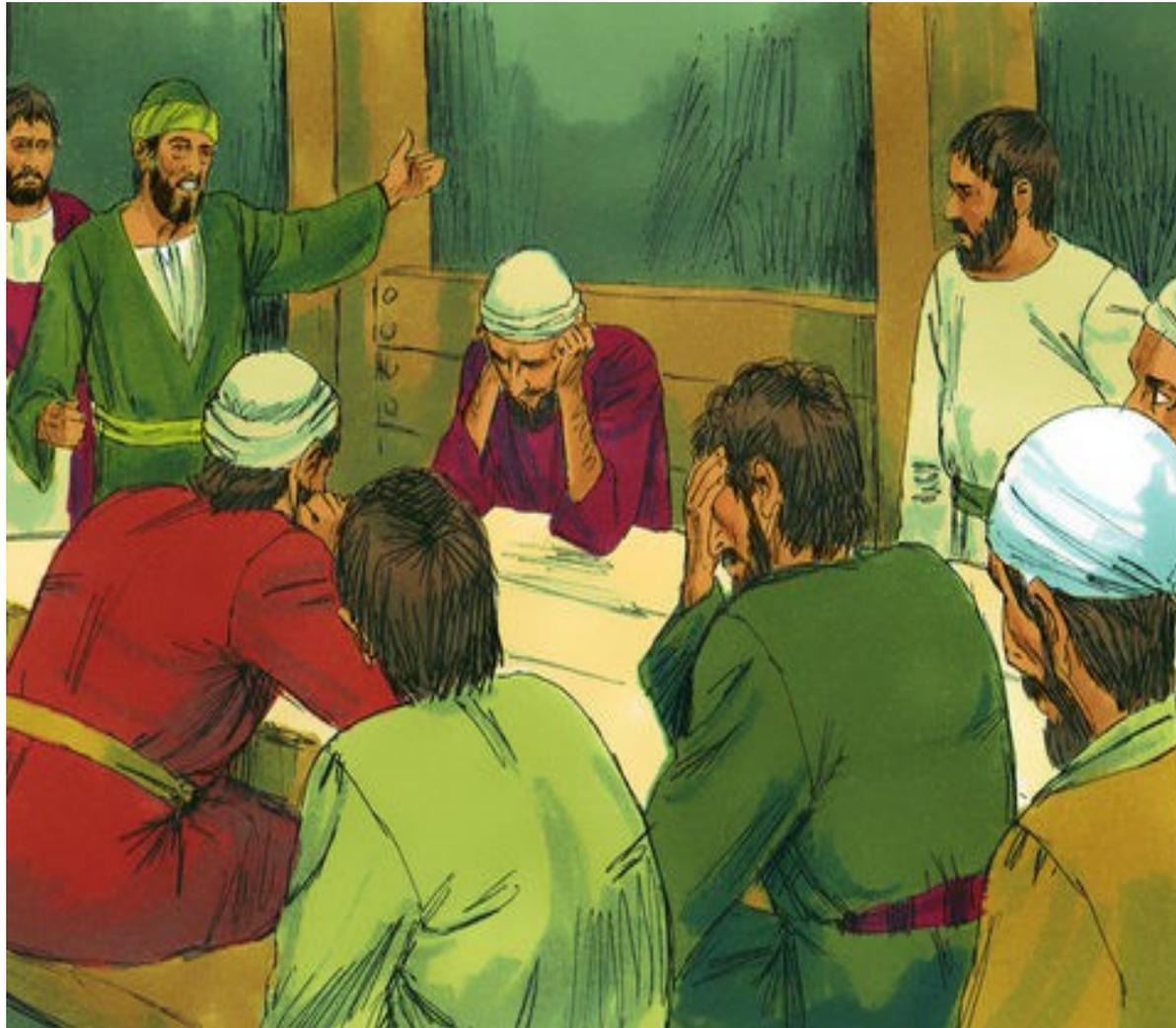
Since the ship was violently storm-tossed, on the next day the crew began throwing the cargo overboard.



On the third day the crew threw the ship's tackle overboard.



The terrible storm raged for many days, blotting out the sun and the stars, until at last, all hope of being saved was gone. No one had been able to eat for a long time.



Paul called the crew together and said, “Men, you should have listened to me and not left Crete. But take courage! None of you will lose your lives, even though the ship will go down.”



“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. God has granted safety to all those who sail with you.' So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. But we must run aground on some island.”



On the fourteenth night as the ship was being driven across the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors suspected that they were nearing land. They dropped a weighted line and found that the water was 120 feet deep. A little farther on, they measured again and found it was only 90 feet deep.



Fearing that the ship might run on the rocks, the sailors let down four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come.



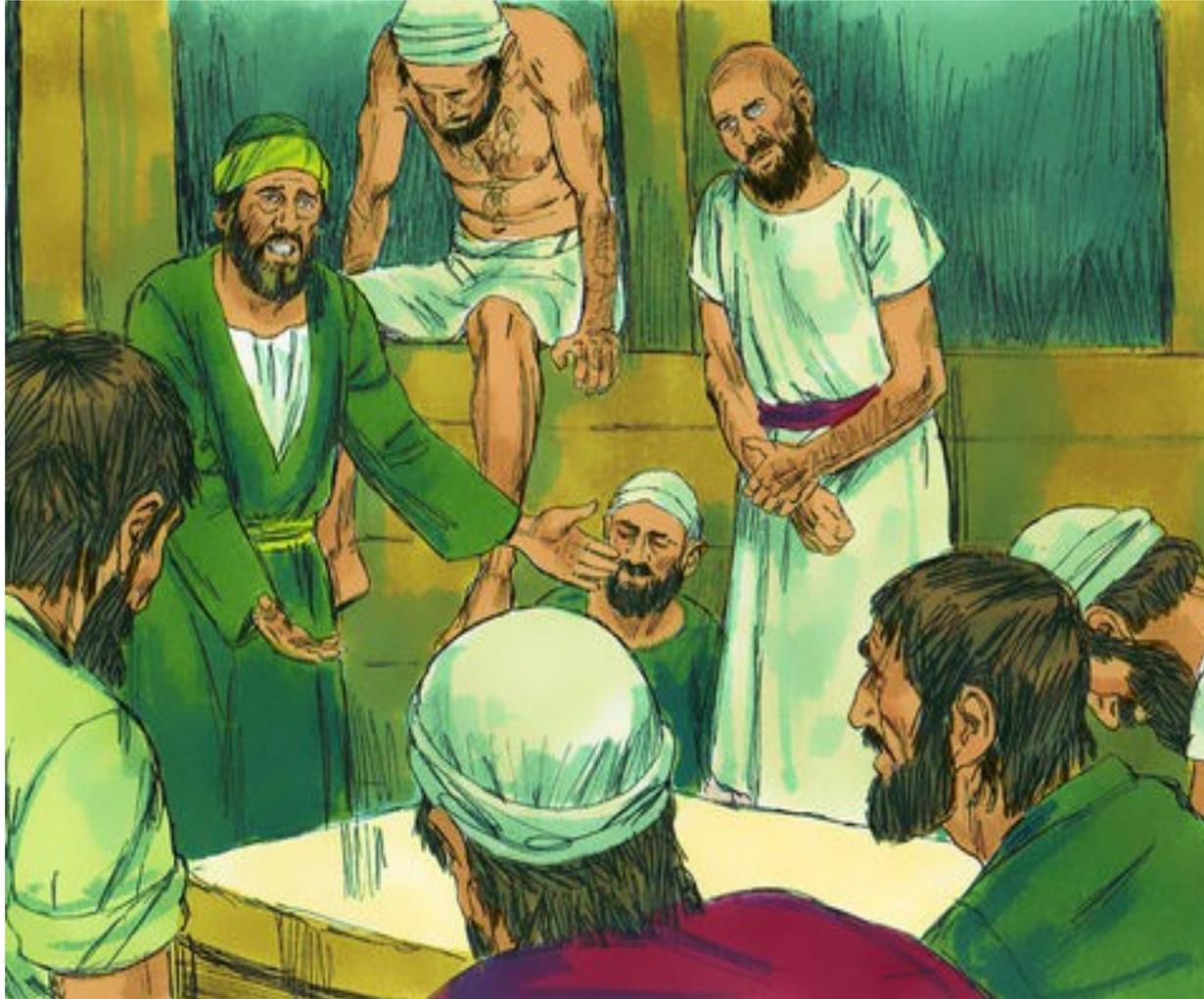
The sailors sought to abandon ship by lowering the lifeboat under the pretense of laying out anchors from the bow.



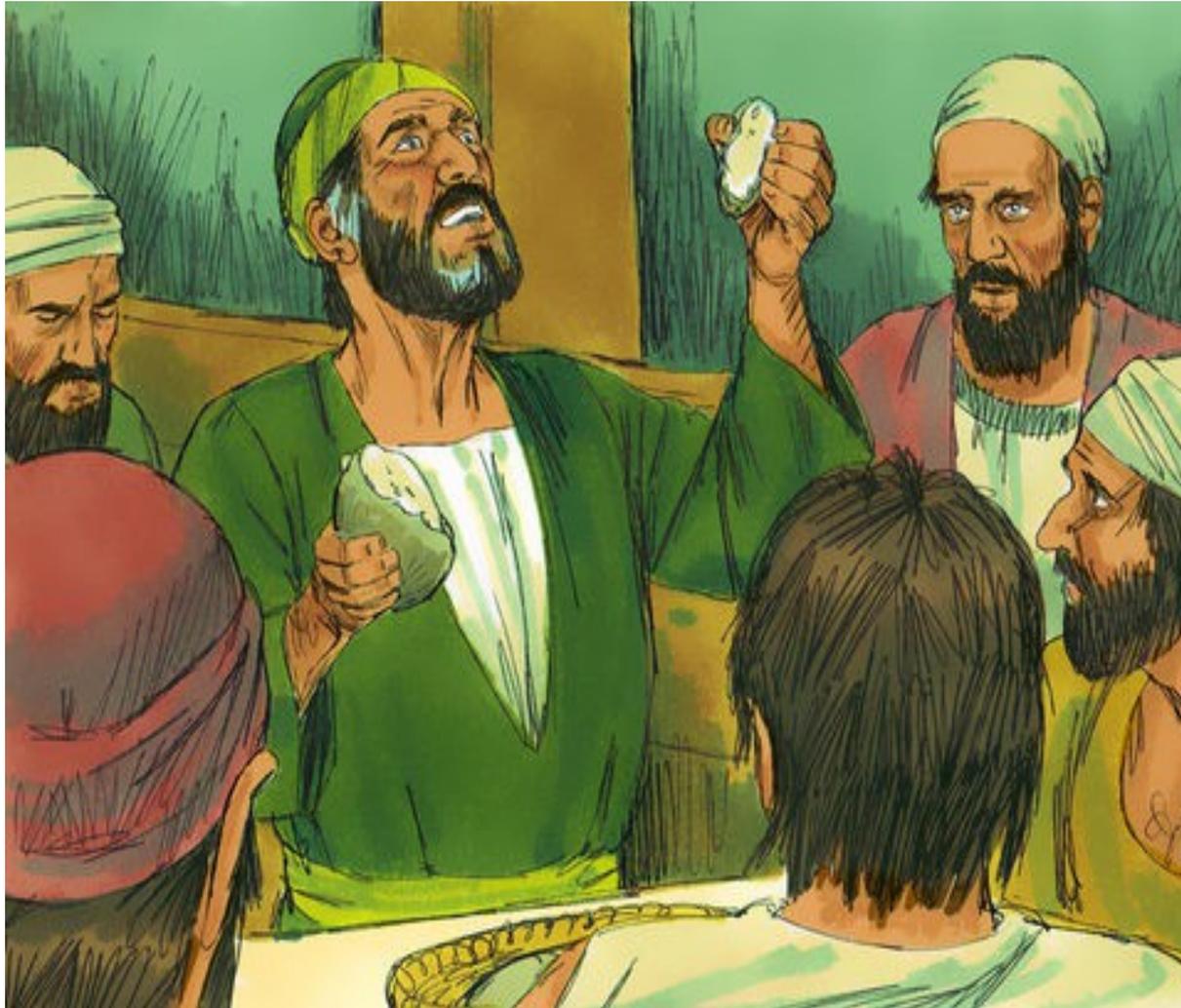
Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, “Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.” Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship's lifeboat and let it go.



As day was about to dawn, Paul urged them all to take some food, saying, “Today is the fourteenth day that you have continued in suspense and without food, having taken nothing. Therefore, I urge you to take some food. For it will give you strength, for not a hair is to perish from the head of any of you.”



And when he had said these things, Paul took bread, and giving thanks to God in the presence of all, he broke it and began to eat. Then all 276 persons on board were encouraged and ate some food themselves. When they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship further by throwing the wheat into the sea.



When morning dawned, they did not recognize the coastline of Malta.



When they saw a bay with a beach, the crew wondered if they could get to shore by running the ship aground.



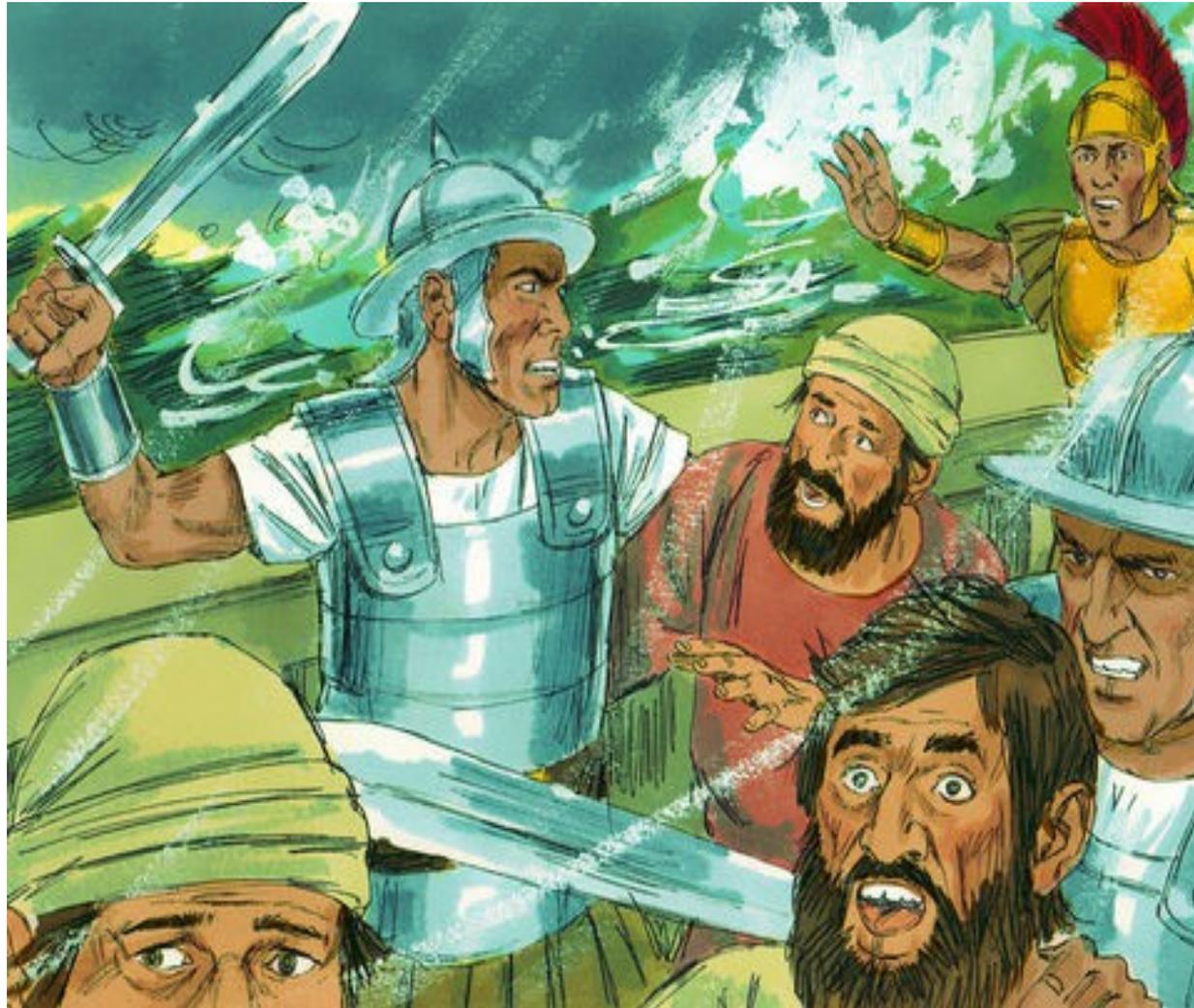
They cut off the anchors and left them in the sea while loosening the ropes that tied the rudders. Next, they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach.



But striking a reef, the ship ran aground too soon. The bow stuck and remained immovable, while the stern was broken apart by the force of the surf.



The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners to prevent any from swimming ashore and escaping. However, the centurion, wishing to save Paul, stopped them.



He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for the land. The others held on to planks or on pieces of the broken ship.



Just as the angel had said, everyone was brought safely to land. After all 276 people were ashore, they learned that the island was called Malta.



The native people showed the shipwrecked group unusual kindness. Because it was rainy and cold, the islanders built a fire to welcome their visitors. As Paul was putting a bundle of sticks on the fire, a poisonous snake, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on Paul's hand.



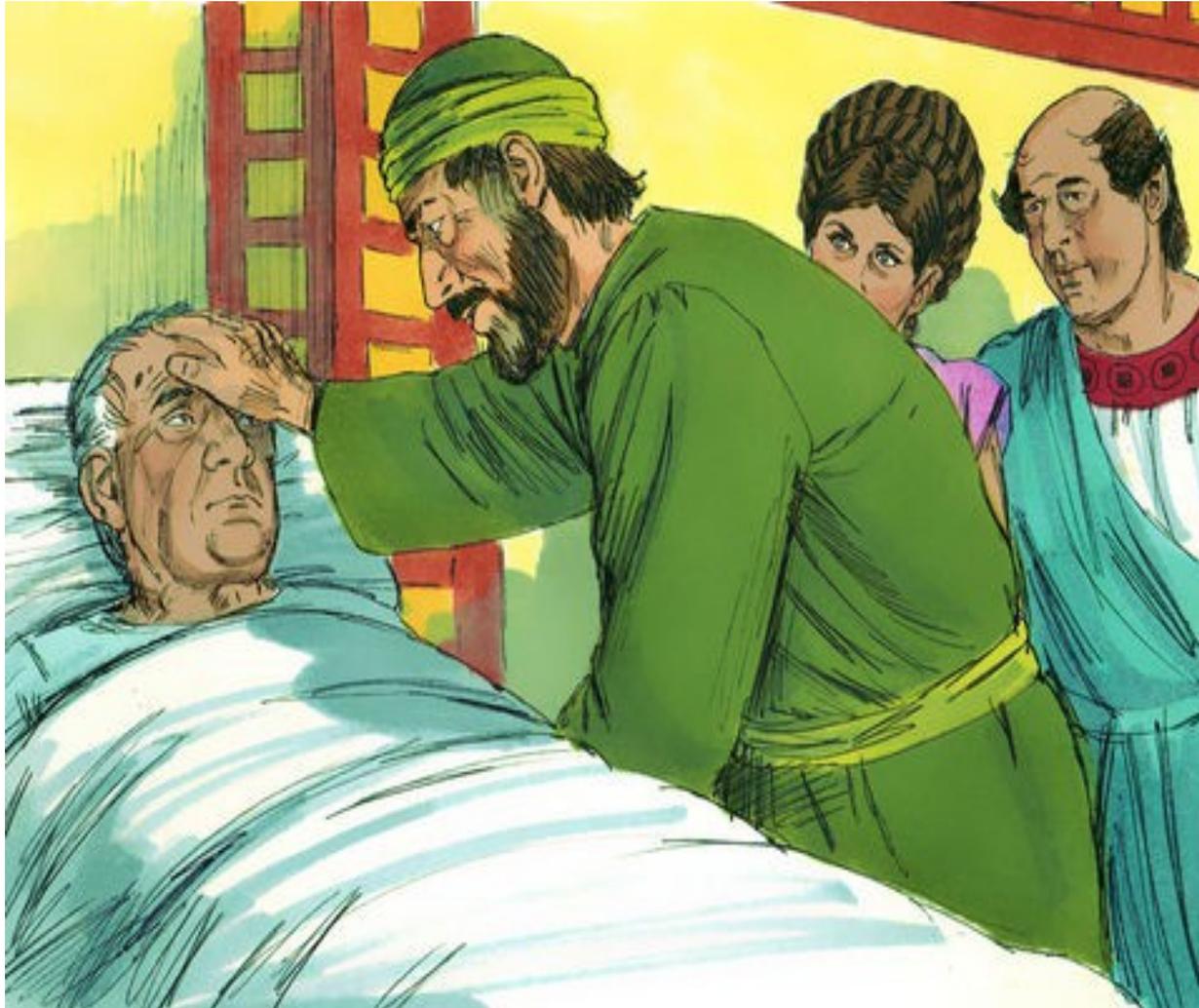
When the native people saw the viper hanging from Paul's hand, they said to one another, "No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live." However, Paul shook off the snake into the fire and suffered no harm.



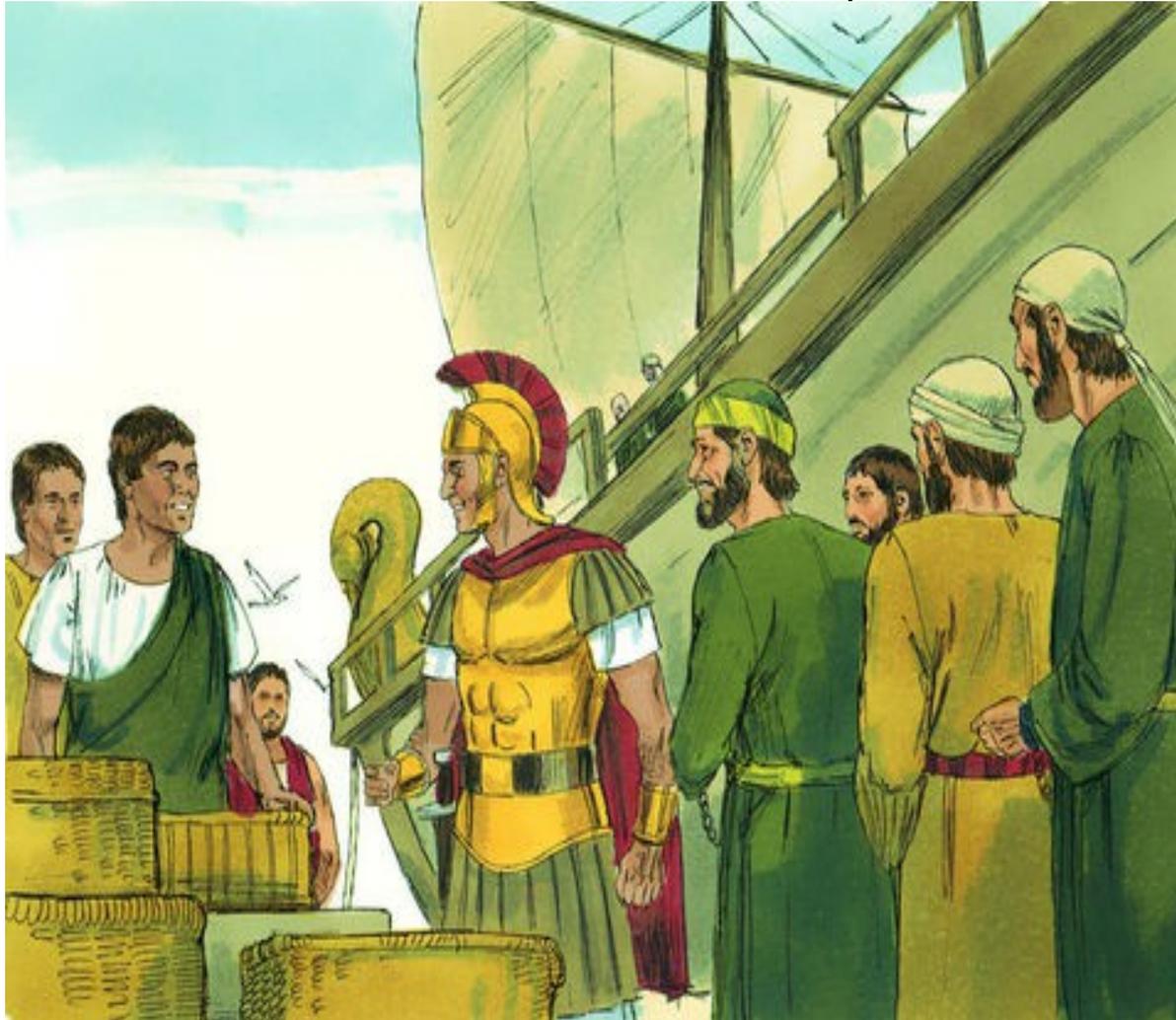
The people were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.



Publius {*PUHB lih uhs*}, the chief official of the island, welcomed and provided for the shipwrecked victims for three days. It happened that Publius' father lay sick with fever and dysentery. Paul visited with him, prayed, and healed him. Afterwards, the rest of the islanders who had diseases also came and were cured.



After three months, Paul and those with him set sail in a ship that had wintered in the island. The native people, who greatly honored Paul and his friends who were accompanying him, gave them needed supplies before they left. (The pronoun us, which is used all through the book of Acts, indicates its author, Luke, was with Paul.)



The ship docked at Syracuse {*SEAR ih coos*} for three days and then sailed to Rhegium {*REE jee ehm*}. After one day, a south wind sprang up, and they sailed on to Puteoli {*poo Tee uh lih*}.



There, Paul found some Christians who invited him to stay with them for seven days. (Because the ship had now reached her final port, with the centurion's permission, Paul was allowed to stay this week with these brethren. The remainder of the journey to Rome would be on foot.)



From Puteoli the group made their way north to Rome. When some Roman Christians heard about Paul coming, they traveled to meet him at the Forum on the Appian Way (about 40 miles from Rome) and others went as far as Three Taverns (about 30 miles from Rome).



Upon seeing these brethren, Paul thanked God and was encouraged.



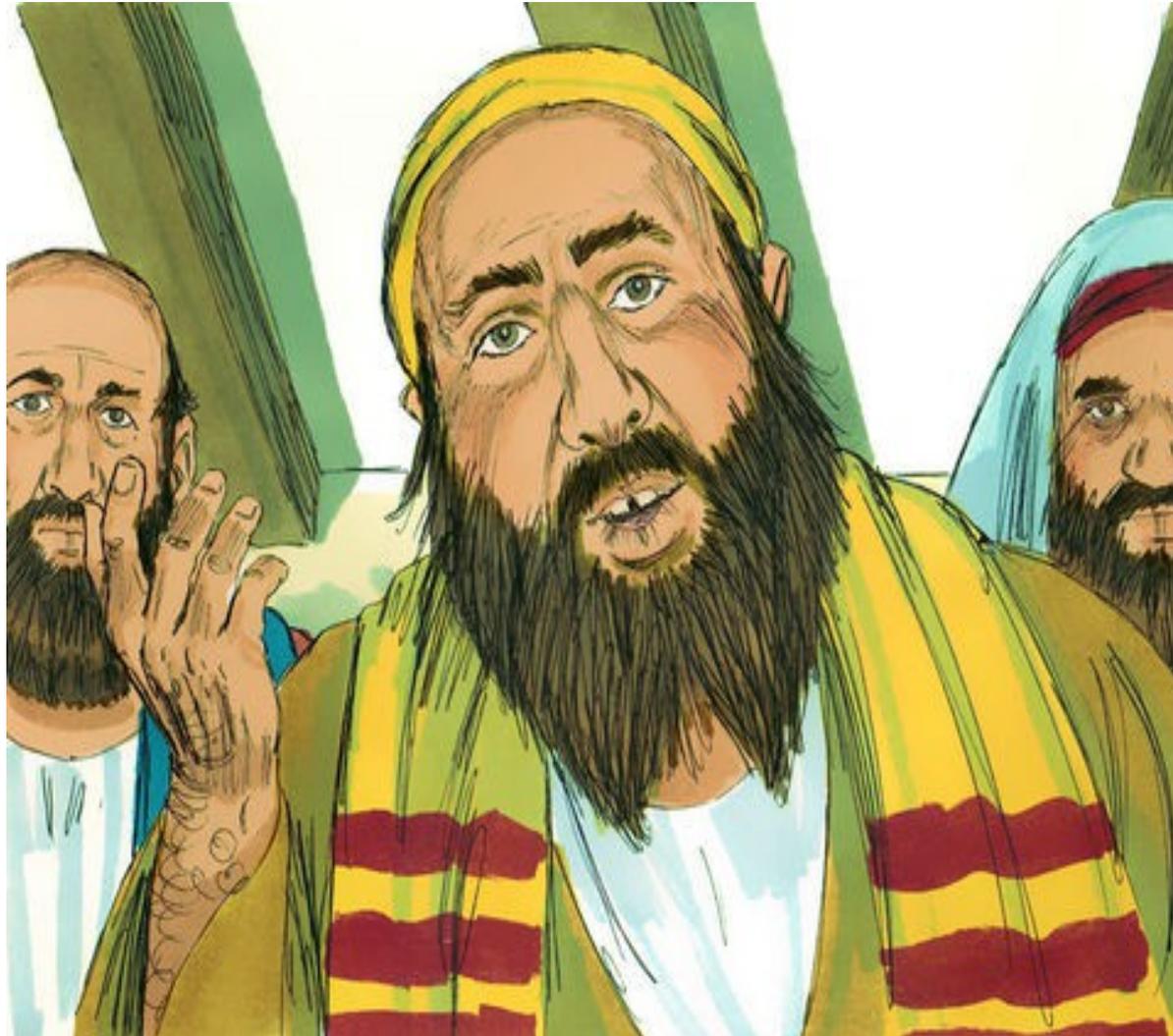
When Paul arrived in Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the commander of the imperial guards, who had custody of all persons to be tried before the emperor. It was probably by the influence of the centurion that Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with a soldier who guarded him.



Three days after Paul's arrival in Rome, he called together the local leaders of the Jews. He told them how he had been wrongfully arrested in Jerusalem, how the Romans authorities had wanted to release him but the Jewish leaders had protested, and how he finally had appealed to Caesar. Paul told them that he was in chains because he believed that the Messiah had already come.



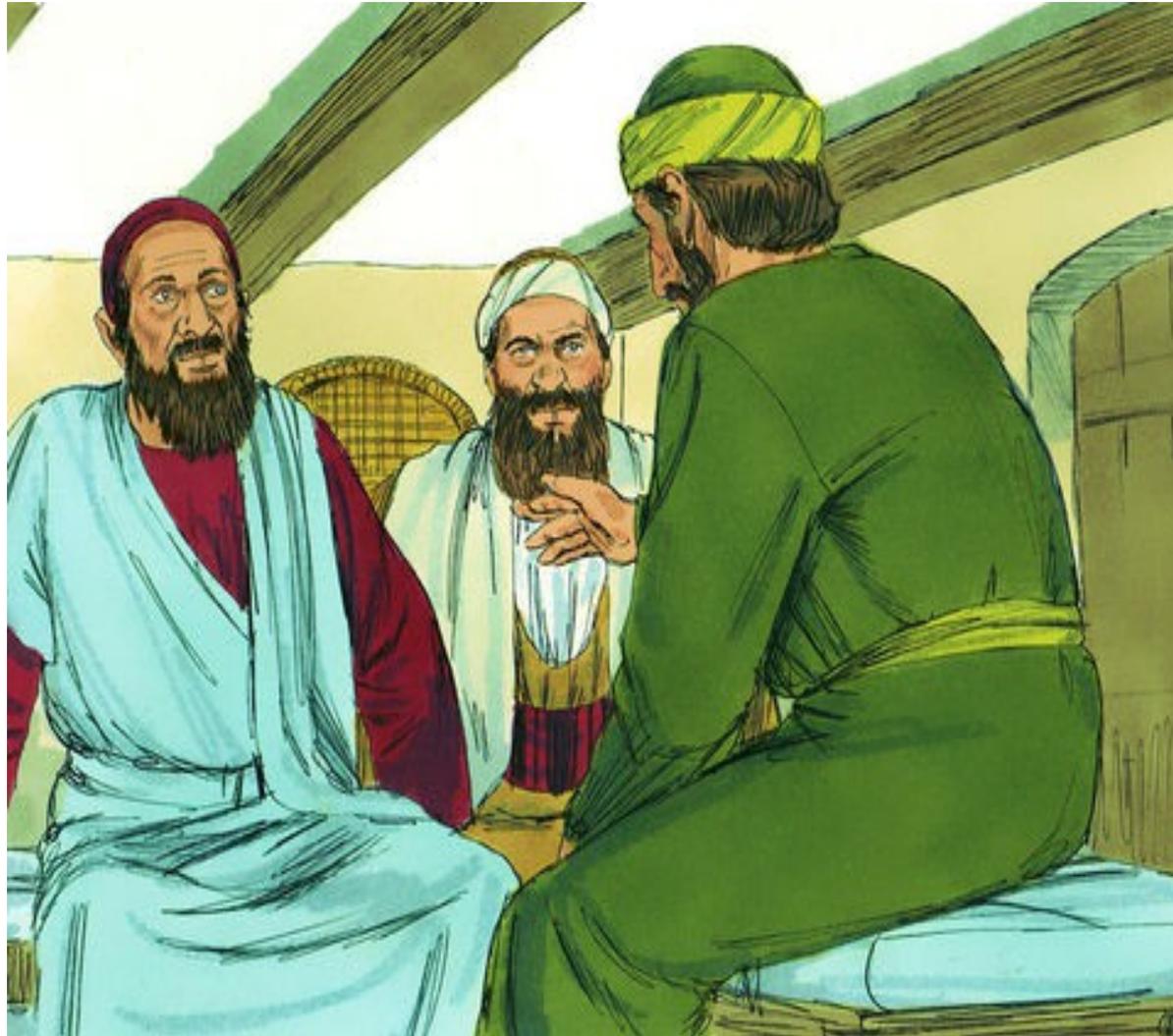
The Jewish leaders said they had heard no news from Judea about Paul. However, they said they would like to hear Paul's views because they had heard of this sect (Christianity or the Way) and knew that it was widely spoken against.



On an appointed day, great numbers of people came to Paul's lodging to hear him speak. He preached to them from morning to evening from the scriptures about the kingdom of God as he tried to convince them that Jesus was the Messiah.



Some of the people were convinced by what Paul said, but others did not believe. Finally, as the unbelievers left, Paul made this statement which is found in Acts 28:25b-28:



25... **“The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet:**

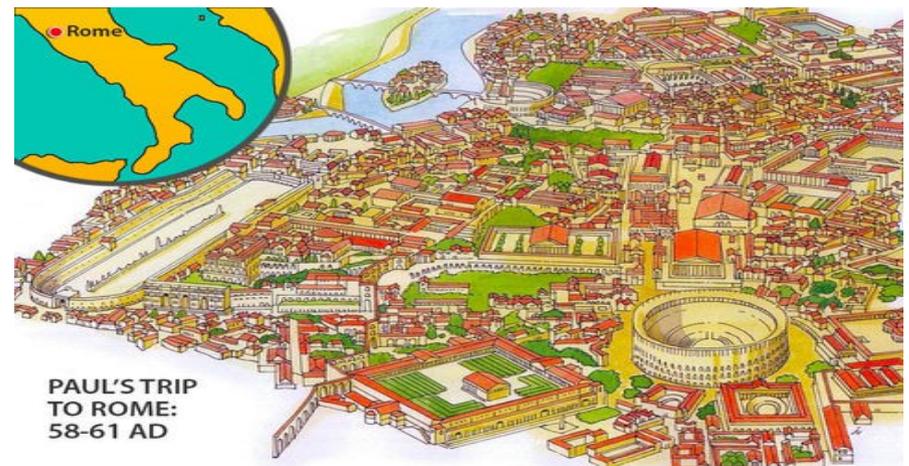
26 **“Go to this people, and say, “You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive.”**

27 **For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.'**

28 **Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.”**

(In other words, just as their ancestors had rejected the words of the prophet Isaiah, many of the Jews absolutely refused to listen and accept the good news about Jesus Christ. It was to the Jews that the gospel was first preached. They heard the word, but so many didn't believe it. Paul rejoiced over those who believed, but he grieved for those who turned away. Finally, Paul tells these unbelievers that although they rejected Jesus, the salvation of God, the Gentiles would listen.)

For the next two years, Paul lived in Rome at his own expense. He welcomed all who visited him, boldly teaching about Jesus Christ. No one tried to stop him. The Bible does not say what happened next, but it is reported that Ignatius, an early writer at around 110 A.D., wrote that Paul had been martyred. Many biblical scholars believe that Paul was beheaded outside the gates of Rome during the last year of Nero's reign. This is, of course, not something we can know for sure. What we do know is that the apostle Paul dedicated most of his life to preaching the gospel, undeterred by persecution and hard times. In II Timothy 4:7-8 he writes: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing."



The material presented here is largely taken from the free website listed below. Other paraphrasing and direct scripture quotations have been incorporated by Margaret Ann Sanders.



These illustrations are the copyright of Sweet Publishing and licensed by FreeBibleimages for free download under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Share-alike 3.0 unported licence.

www.freebibleimages.org

