

Acts 27:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.

Analysis

When it was determined that we should sail into Italy—Luke's "we" marks his personal presence on Paul's journey to Rome. The Greek *ekrithē* (ἐκρίθη, "it was determined") indicates official Roman decision, yet reveals divine sovereignty directing Paul's long-anticipated Roman ministry. **They delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.** The title *speira Sebastē* (σπείρα Σεβαστή, "Augustan cohort") was an elite imperial unit. Julius's later kindness to Paul (vv. 3, 43) suggests God providentially placed a sympathetic officer in charge.

Paul's prisoner status fulfilled Christ's prophecy: "thou must bear witness also at Rome" (Acts 23:11). What appeared to be defeat—chains, trial, custody—actually advanced gospel purposes. Reformed theology emphasizes God's sovereignty over human affairs: Roman imperial machinery unknowingly served divine ends, transporting the gospel's greatest missionary to empire's heart at state expense. Paul's arrival in Rome would fulfill his long-cherished desire (Romans 1:10-15, 15:22-29), though not as envisioned.

Historical Context

This voyage began around AD 59 from Caesarea after Paul's two-year imprisonment (Acts 24:27). The "Augustan cohort" may have been an auxiliary unit tasked with official communications and prisoner transport. Sea travel dominated

Mediterranean commerce and military movement. Autumn sailing (this departed late in the season, v. 9) was notoriously dangerous—ancient ships lacked compasses, relied on coastal navigation, and feared winter storms.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's arrival in Rome as a prisoner rather than a free missionary challenge your expectations of how God answers prayers?
2. What does God's use of Roman imperial structures to advance the gospel teach about His sovereignty over earthly powers?

Interlinear Text

Ὡς	δὲ	ἐκρίθη	τοῦ	ἀποπλεῖν	ἡμᾶς	εἰς	τὴν
when	And	it was determined	G3588	should sail	that we	into	G3588
G5613	G1161	G2919		G636	G2248	G1519	

Ἰταλίαν	παρεδίδουν	τόν	τε	Παῦλον	καί	τινας	ἑτέρους
Italy	they delivered	G3588	G5037	Paul	and	certain	other
G2482	G3860			G3972	G2532	G5100	G2087

δεσμώτας	ἐκατοντάρχη	ὀνόματι	Ἰουλίῳ	σπείρης
prisoners	a centurion	unto one named	Julius	band
G1202	G1543	G3686	G2457	G4686

Σεβαστῆς
of Augustus
G4575

Additional Cross-References

Acts 25:25 (Parallel theme): But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.

Acts 25:12 (Parallel theme): Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go.

Acts 10:1 (Parallel theme): There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band,

Acts 27:11 (References Paul): Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

Acts 18:2 (Parallel theme): And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.