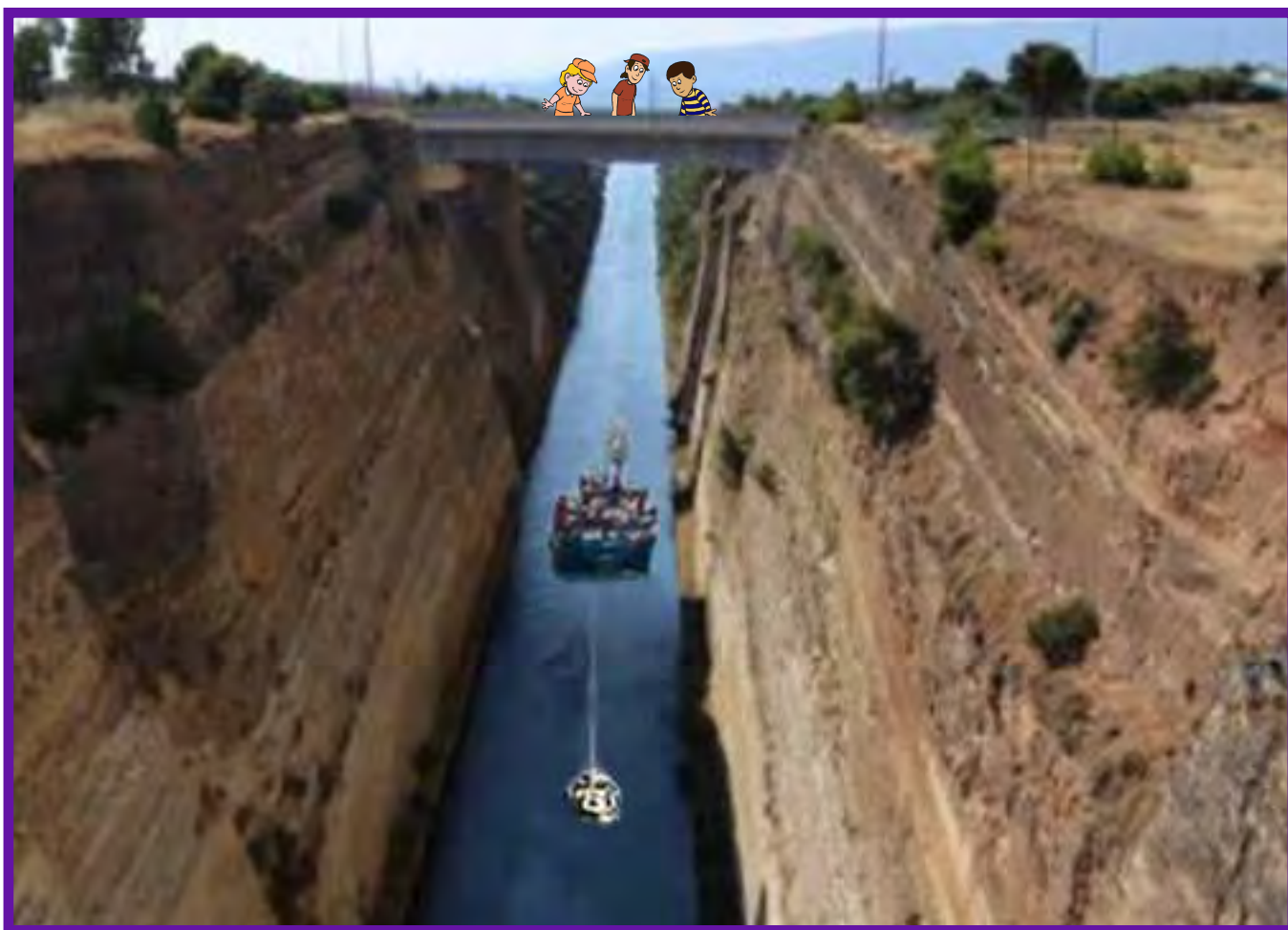


## Tour of the Holy Lands - The Corinth Canal

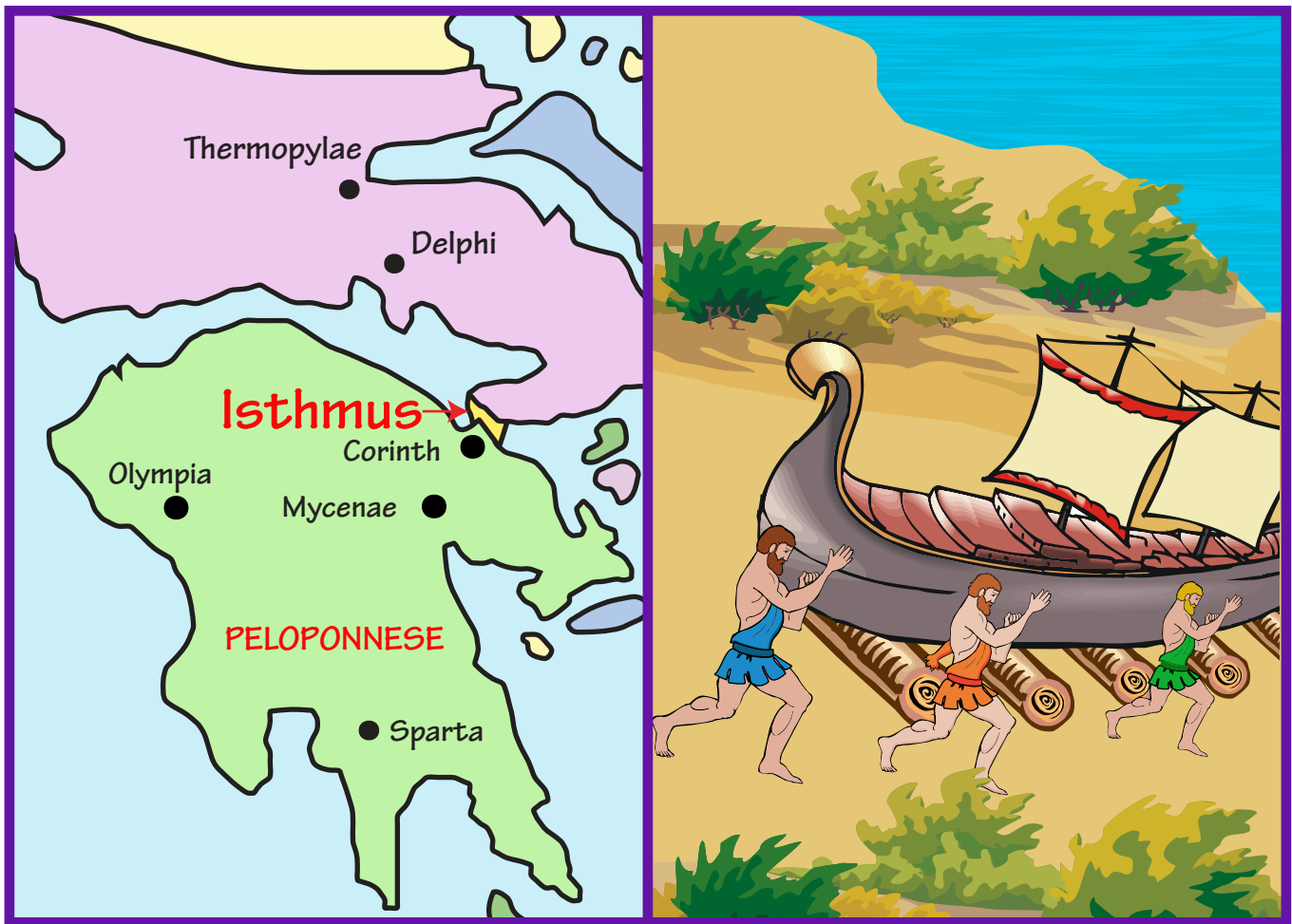


To catch up with Paul, we have to get from where we are — on the island of Peloponnese — to Athens, which is on the mainland of Greece. Check the map to see how far we have to go. Can you see that the island is shaped like an upside-down hand? The thumb is closest to Athens.

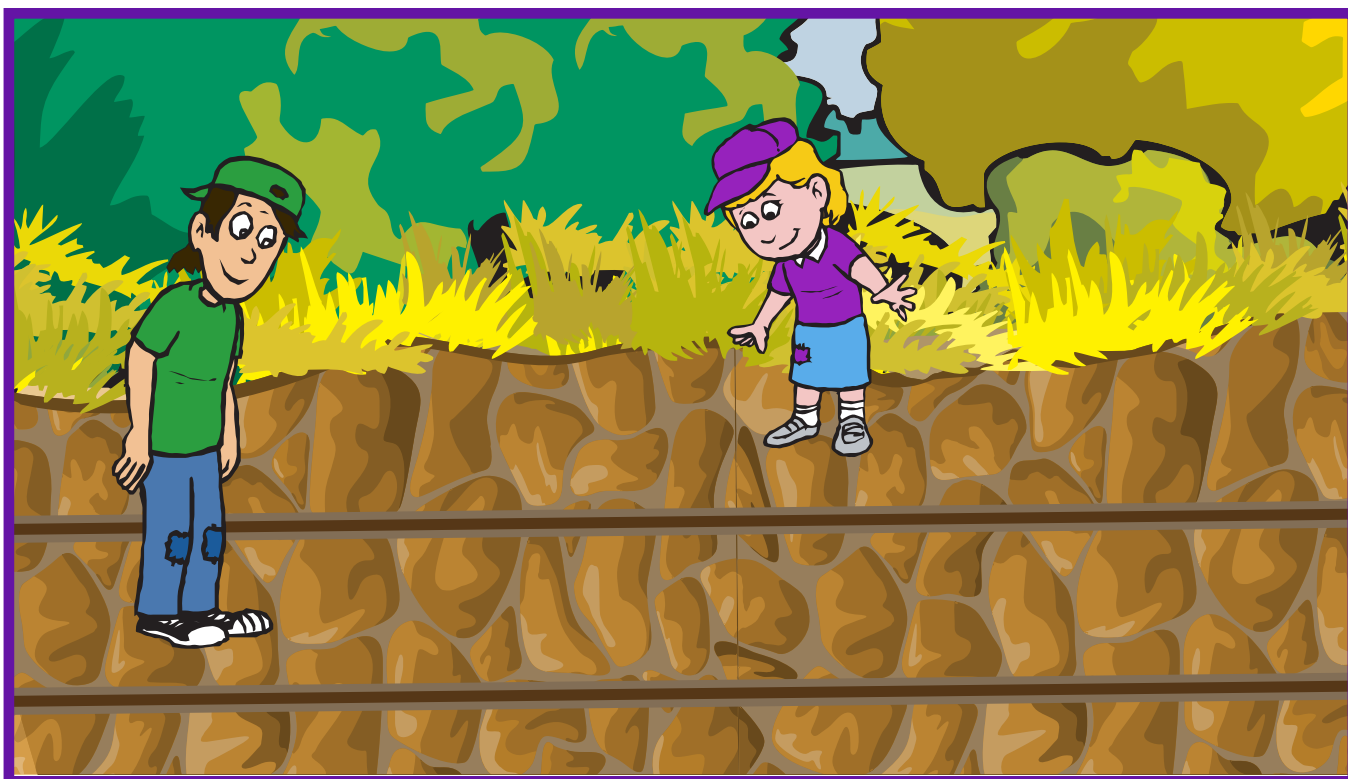


We arrived on the Peloponnese by crossing a new bridge at the north end of the island. Studying the map on the previous page, you can see that we'll leave the island by crossing an old bridge. It should only take a little more than an hour to drive to Athens. But before we get going, let's find out what all the people standing by the side of the bridge are doing.

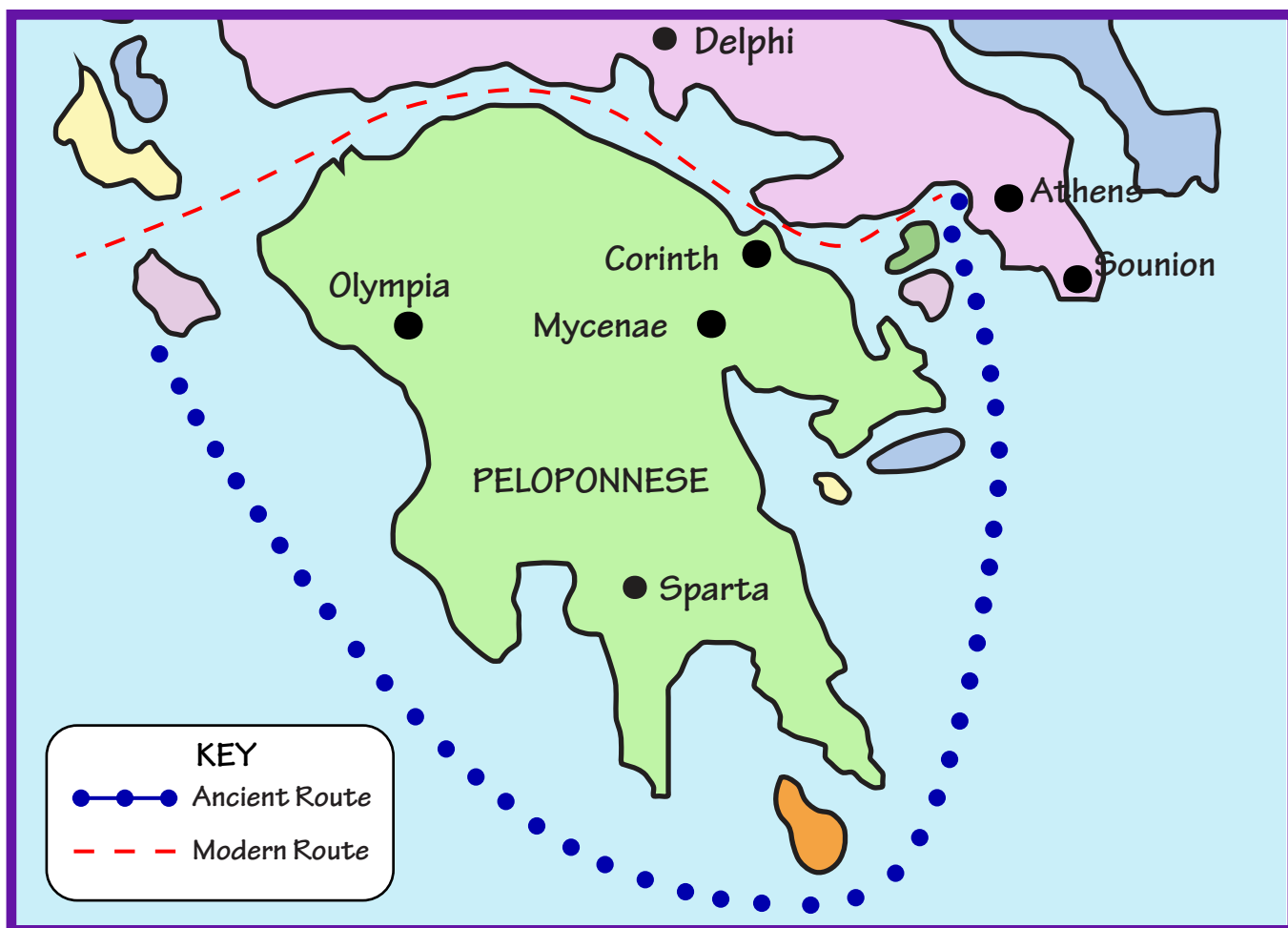
Hold on tight to the railing and look way down to the water. Do you see the large ship that's being pulled through the water by a smaller ship? This deep cut in the earth between the island and the mainland is called a canal, and it's man-made. It wasn't here in Bible times.



Right where we're standing used to be a land bridge called an *isthmus*, a Greek word meaning "neck." If the isthmus was the neck, where was the head? You can find it on the map above. The head was the Peloponnese. Each ship captain who sailed up to the isthmus from either side of it wanted to find a way to cross it, instead of having to sail all the way around the Peloponnese which is long and stormy. Crossing the isthmus would be a perfect short cut. People tried for years to dig a canal, but it was difficult and dangerous. Many died. At some point, they lifted their ships onto logs and rolled them across the land bridge!



Eventually, the engineers of that time period came up with an easier way for ships to cross the isthmus. It was called a Diolkos (dee'oh-kos). A road was built with large smooth stones, and two grooves were cut into it, about 5 feet apart. Then, special wagons were built with wheels that fit in the grooves. The ship's cargo was put in one wagon and the ship itself was loaded into a second wagon. Some archeologists have determined that slaves, using ropes, pulled both wagons for 4 long miles across the isthmus. This ancient railway was used for close to 1000 years! It was so much faster than sailing all the way around the island that people started saying, "as fast as a Corinthian," which means "as quick as a bunny" or "as quick as a wink."



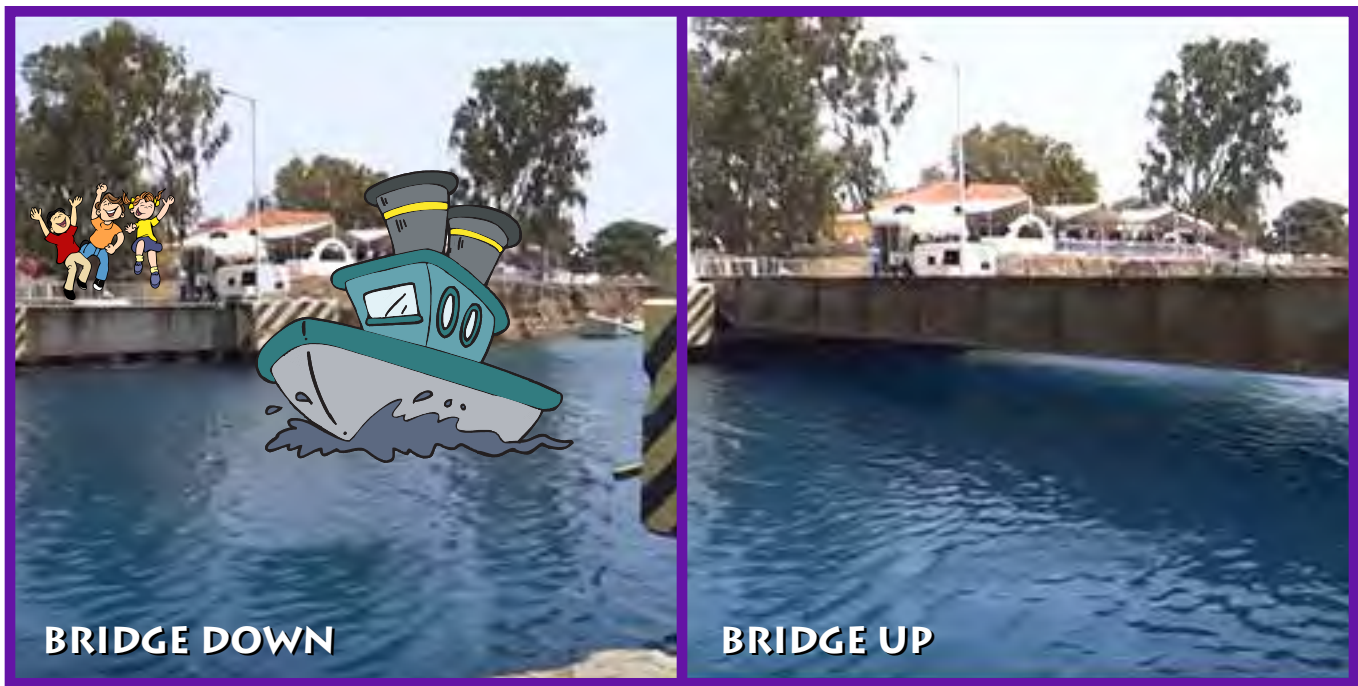
The Romans were the most successful at starting the canal below us. They used slaves to cut the rock away and break through the isthmus. But the canal wasn't finished for hundreds of years — not until 1893, after many more people had worked on it. It was the Greeks who finally finished it. The canal is 4 miles long and 70 feet wide. That sounds pretty big, doesn't it? Actually, it's too small for modern ships to fit through, so it's mostly used by tourist boats.

Use your finger to trace the path around the Peloponnese taken by ships in ancient times. Then trace the path taken by ships in more modern times. The canal saved ships 200 miles on trips to Athens.

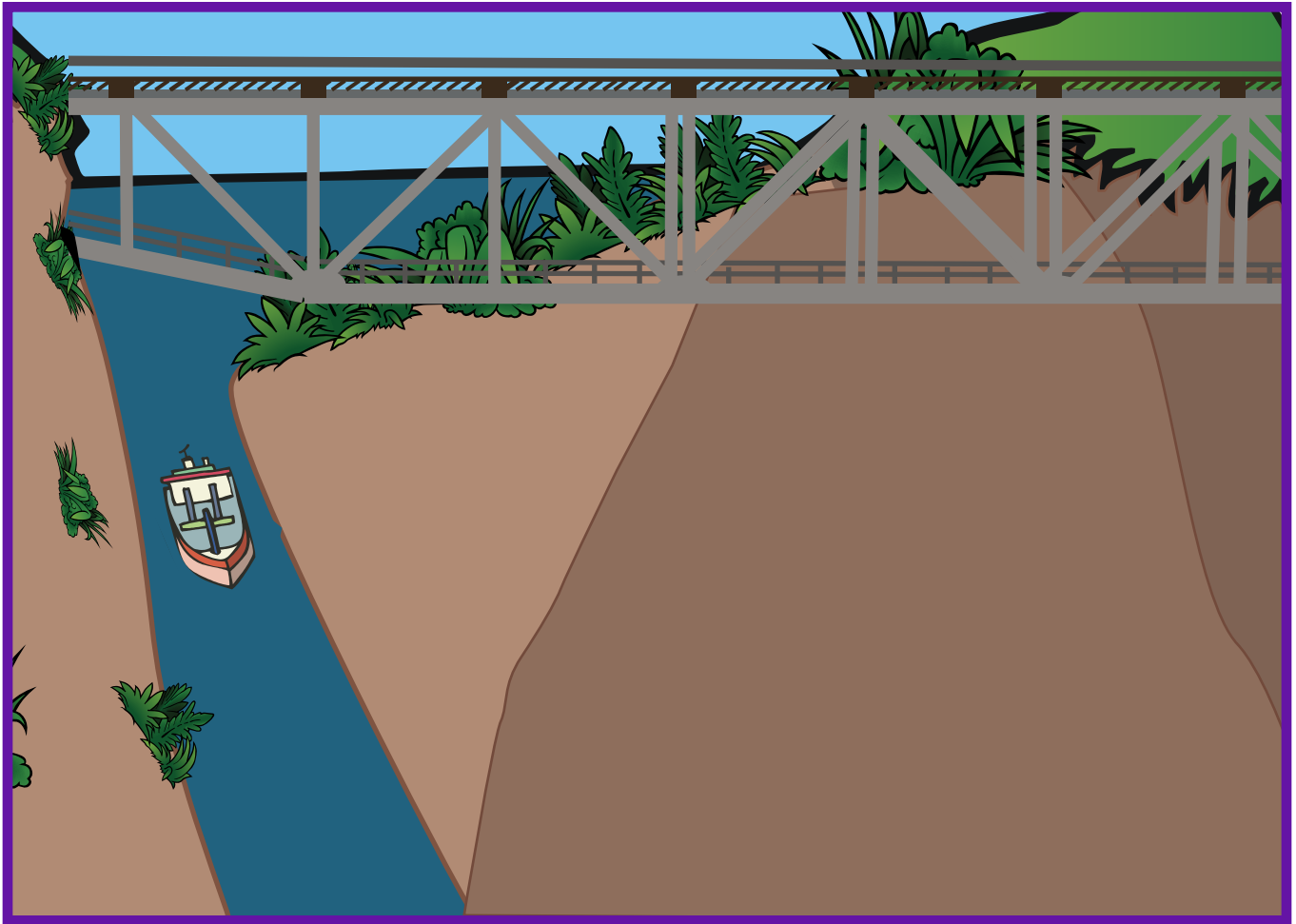




There are signs pointing to two other bridges, one at each end of the canal. Let's drive to one of them for a closer view of the canal. We can walk across the bridge next to the cars that are driving across it.



Wow! It's like nothing we've seen before. As a ship approaches the canal, this bridge sinks way below the water's surface. This allows the ship to sail "over" the bridge. After the ship passes, the bridge rises back up above the water so that the cars, buses and people can cross the bridge. That's pretty cool!



As we leave the Corinth Canal, let's try to remember all the different amazing structures we've seen that the ancient Romans and Greeks built without the help of modern tools, trucks, or technology. Do you think we have it easy compared to them?

Our next stop is Athens, one of the most famous cities in the world. There we'll finally catch up with Paul and find out what he's been doing!

