

KNOWING CHRIST THROUGH ACTS AND THE EPISTLES

I. Overview



The Gospels, which are the first four books of the New Testament, record the good news of God's plan for a Savior through the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Each writer has a particular method or style to communicate the life and message of Jesus Christ.

<p>MATTHEW</p> <p>Who: Matthew (also called Levi) What: Gospel Where: Judea When: c. AD 60 Why: To show Jesus as the Son of David, the Kingly Messiah who fulfills prophecy.</p> <p>Outline (Chapter)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth and Early Life (1–4) • Ministry of Christ (5–20) • Death and Resurrection (21–28) <p>Key Verse: Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:18–19)</p>	<p>MARK</p> <p>Who: John Mark What: Gospel Where: Rome When: c. AD 50s Why: To show Jesus as the Suffering Son of Man sent to serve and not be served.</p> <p>Outline (Chapter)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction (1) • Ministry of Christ (2–10) • Death and Resurrection (11–16) <p>Key Verse: Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Mark 10:43–45)</p>	<p>Acts is the record of the radically changed "acts" or "actions" of the followers of Jesus Christ after the resurrection. Acts opens with the out-flowing of the Holy Spirit and describes the missionary efforts of the early followers of Jesus as they spread the message of the gospel to Judea and Samaria. Acts also records the actions of the apostle Paul as he and other courageous believers continued to spread the good news of Jesus to the Jews and Gentiles of the Roman Empire.</p>
<p>LUKE</p> <p>Who: Luke (The Physician) What: Gospel Where: Caesarea When: c. AD 60–AD 62 Why: To show Jesus as the Savior of the World who has compassion for all human beings.</p> <p>Outline (Chapter)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth and Early Life (1–4) • Ministry of Christ (5–19) • Death and Resurrection (20–24) <p>Key Verse: Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it." (Luke 9:23–24)</p>	<p>JOHN</p> <p>Who: John (The Beloved Disciple) What: Gospel Where: Asia Minor When: c. AD 85–AD 95 Why: To show Jesus as the Son of God, the Word made flesh, who provides eternal life for all who believe in him.</p> <p>Outline (Chapter)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction (1) • Ministry of Christ (2–12) • Private Ministry (13–17) • Death and Resurrection (18–21) <p>Key Verse: For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)</p>	<p>ACTS</p> <p>Who: Luke (The Physician) What: History of Early Church Where: Caesarea and Rome When: c. AD 60–AD 62 Why: To record how the Holy Spirit acted through believers to spread the Word of God.</p> <p>Outline (Chapter)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jerusalem (1–7) • Judea and Samaria (8–11) • Paul's Journeys (12–20) • Paul Taken to Rome (21–28) <p>Key Verse: 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)</p>

PAUL'S EPISTLES (LETTERS)

The apostle Paul wrote 13 letters to young churches, pastors, and friends in order to guide, encourage, and correct them. Most of these letters served a specific purpose or addressed a specific question or problem.

ROMANS

Who: Paul
What: Letter to Roman Christians
Where: Corinth
When: c. AD 57
Why: To illustrate law, faith, salvation, and righteous living.

Outline (Chapter)

- Christian Gospel (1–8)
- Israel (9–11)
- Christian Life (12–16)

Key Verse: Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. (Romans 12:1–2a)

1 CORINTHIANS

Who: Paul
What: Letter to Church in Corinth
Where: Ephesus
When: c. AD 55–AD 56
Why: To address division and immorality and to encourage them to love each other.

Outline (Chapter)

- Divisions (1–4)
- Morality (5–11)
- Spiritual Gifts (12–14)
- The Resurrection (15–16)

Key Verse: Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. (1 Corinthians 13:4–5)

2 CORINTHIANS

Who: Paul
What: Letter to Church in Corinth
Where: Philippi
When: c. AD 56
Why: To defend Paul's call as an apostle, to address deceivers.

Outline (Chapter)

- Apostolic Characteristics (1–7)
- Giving (8–9)
- Paul's Defense (10–13)

Key Verse: But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. (2 Cor. 12:9)

GALATIANS

Who: Paul
What: Letter to Churches in Galatia
Where: Asia Minor
When: c. AD 48–49 or AD 54–55
Why: To warn against legalism and defend justification by faith as well as Paul's apostolic authority.

Outline (Chapter)

- Paul's Defense (1–2)
- Justification by Faith (3–4)
- The Christian Life (5–6)

Key Verse: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22–23)

EPHESIANS

Who: Paul
What: Letter to Church in Ephesus
Where: Prison in Rome
When: c. AD 60–AD 62
Why: To show believers what it means to be a follower of Christ and encourage them in their spiritual walk.

Outline (Chapter)

- Spiritual Blessings (1–3)
- The Christian Life (4–6)

Key Verse: For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8–9)

PHILIPPIANS

Who: Paul
What: Letter to Church in Philippi
Where: Prison in Rome
When: c. AD 60–AD 62
Why: To express Paul's love and affection for the Philippians.

Outline (Chapter)

- Joy of Life (1)
- Humility of Christ (2)
- Finish the Race (3)
- Thanks and Greetings (4)

Key Verse: Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe. (Philippians 2:14–15)

COLOSSIANS

Who: Paul
What: Letter to Church in Colossae
Where: Prison in Rome
When: c. AD 60–AD 62
Why: To counteract heretical teachings and exhort believers.

Outline (Chapter)

- Thanksgiving (1)
- Work of Christ (1–2)
- Finish the Race (3–4)
- Final Greetings (4)

Key Verse: For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority. (Colossians 2:9–10)

1 THESSALONIANS

Who: Paul
What: Letter to the Church in Thessalonica
Where: Corinth
When: c. AD 50–AD 52
Why: To emphasize Christ's return and to stress commitment.

Outline (Chapter)

- Faith and Example (1–3)
- Living for God (4)
- Christ's Return (4–5)

Key Verse: Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil. (1 Thessalonians 5:16–22)

2 THESSALONIANS

Who: Paul
What: Letter to the Church in Thessalonica
Where: Corinth
When: c. AD 50–AD 52
Why: To emphasize Christ's return and to encourage believers.

Outline (Chapter)

- Praise and Encouragement (1)
- Christ's Return (2)
- Pray and Work (3)

Key Verse: We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command. May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. (2 Thessalonians 3:4–6)

1 TIMOTHY

Who: Paul
What: Letter to Timothy
Where: Rome
When: c. AD 62–AD 66
Why: To remove false doctrine and suggest proper leadership for the church in Ephesus.

Outline (Chapter)

- Trouble in Ephesus (1)
- Church Leadership (2–3)
- False Teachers (4)
- Discipline (5)
- Paul's Advice to Timothy (6)

Key Verse: Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. (1 Timothy 4:12–13)

Timothy was Paul's good friend and spiritual son. Timothy had a Jewish grandmother (Lois) and mother (Eunice) who were of Jewish descent. They both were faithful Christians. His father was Greek and not known to be a believer. Acts 16:1; 2 Timothy 1:5.

2 TIMOTHY

Who: Paul
What: Letter to Timothy
Where: Prison in Rome
When: c. AD 66–AD 67
Why: To encourage Timothy to remain faithful in ministry even in the midst of suffering.

Outline (Chapter)

- Thanksgiving (1)
- Call to Remain Faithful (2)
- Authority of God's Word (3)
- Lead a Godly Life (3–4)

Key Verse: From infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:15–17)

TITUS

Who: Paul
What: Letter to Titus
Where: Rome
When: c. AD 64–AD 66
Why: To encourage the church in Crete to do good works.

Outline (Chapter)

- Instruction for Titus (1)
- Living the Faith (2–3)
- Final Instructions (3)

Key Verse: But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:4–7)

PHILEMON

Who: Paul
What: Letter to Philemon
Where: Prison in Rome
When: c. AD 60–AD 62
Why: To appeal to Philemon to forgive and receive Onesimus, a runaway slave.

Outline (Verses)

- Salutations (1–3)
- Philemon's Love and Faith (4–7)
- Paul's Appeal (8–22)
- Final Greetings (23–25)

Key Verse: So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self. (Philemon 17–19)

Philemon was a slave owner in Colossae who became a Christian.

GENERAL EPISTLES & REVELATION

The eight General Epistles were written by other apostles and leaders including Simon Peter, James, John, and Jude. The General Epistles were addressed to the early Christians to provide guidance, encouragement through persecution, and warnings of false teachings.

HEBREWS

Who: Unknown
What: Letter to Hebrew Believers
Where: Unknown
When: c. AD 60–AD 69
Why: To emphasize the superiority of Christ over the Old Covenant.

Outline (Chapter)

- Supremacy of Christ (1–4)
- The New Covenant (5–10)
- The Life of Faith (11–13)

Key Verse: Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2)

JAMES

Who: James
What: Letter to Jewish Believers
Where: Jerusalem
When: c. AD 49
Why: Encouragement to live out one's faith within the Christian community.

Outline (Chapter)

- Living a Life of Faith (1–2)
- Faith without Works (2–3)
- Speech and Wisdom (3–4)
- Wealth and Prayer (5)

Key Verse: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. (James 1:19–20)

1 PETER

Who: Peter
What: Letter to All Christians
Where: Rome
When: c. AD 64–AD 65
Why: To call Christians to holiness.

Outline (Chapter)

- Holiness and Submission (1–2)
- Suffering (3–4)
- Advice for Old and Young (5)

Key Verse: The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. (1 Peter 4:7)

2 PETER

Who: Peter
What: Letter to All Christians
Where: Rome
When: c. AD 64–AD 65
Why: To warn against false teachers.

Outline (Chapter)

- Living Like Christ: False Teachers (1–2)
- The Return of Christ (3)

Key Verse: For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21)

1 JOHN

Who: John
What: Letter to All Christians
Where: Ephesus
When: c. AD 85–AD 95
Why: To emphasize love in Christ.

Outline (Chapter)

- Living in the Light (1–2)
- Living in Love (3–4)
- Living by Faith (5)

Key Verse: Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. (1 John 4:8)

2 JOHN

Who: John
What: Letter to the Elect Lady
Where: Ephesus
When: c. AD 85–AD 95
Why: To warn against heresy and false teachers.

Key Verse: Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. (2 John 8)

3 JOHN

Who: John
What: Letter to Gaius
Where: Ephesus
When: c. AD 85–AD 95
Why: To praise Gaius for his loyalty to the truth and criticize Diotrephes for his pride.

Key Verse: I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth. (3 John 4)

JUDE

Who: Jude
What: Letter to all Christians
Where: Unknown
When: c. AD 60s–AD 80s
Why: To warn against heresy.

Key Verse: To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy. (Jude 24)

The book of Revelation addresses seven churches in Asia Minor (Turkey today). It encourages believers who are experiencing persecution. Revelation illustrates that God is in control and that all people were created to love and worship God.

REVELATION

Who: John
What: Letter to Seven Churches
Where: Island of Patmos
When: c. AD 90–AD 96
Why: To give hope to persecuted Christians and provide a vision of Christ's return.

Key Verse: Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. (Revelation 21:1)

Outline (Chapter)

- The Seven Churches (1–4)
- Visions (5–16)
- God's Triumph (17–20)
- The New Creation (21–22)

Jesus's brother James wrote the book of James. Jesus' brother Jude wrote the book of Jude. They were not original apostles (the twelve).

Jesus had at least four brothers and at least two sisters.

Brothers:
 James
 Joseph (Joses)
 Simon
 Jude (Judas)

Sisters:
 At least two

References:
 Matthew 13:55–56
 Mark 6:3.

Peter and Paul

These two men had very different spiritual journeys to Christ, but a common goal of spreading the gospel and glorifying God in every aspect of their lives.

Peter	Paul
Also called Simon and Cephas which means "the rock" (John 1:42).	Also called Saul, his Hebrew name; Paul is his Roman or Gentile name (Acts 13:9).
A Jew and fisherman from Capernaum in Galilee (Matt. 4:18; 8:5, 14).	A Jew and Roman citizen by birth from Tarsus in Cilicia (Acts 16:37–38; 21:39).
An "unschooled" man who was trained by Jesus (Acts 4:13).	Trained in the Scriptures by the famous Pharisee Gamaliel (Acts 22:3).
Married (Matt. 8:14).	Unmarried (1 Cor. 7:7–8).
Called by Jesus to be one of the twelve apostles (Matt. 4:18–20; 10:2).	Encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1–16). Became an "apostle to the Gentiles" (Gal. 2:8).
Denied knowing Jesus three times when Jesus was arrested (Luke 22:54–62).	Violently persecuted believers before his conversion (Acts 8:3).
Commissioned by the Lord to care for believers; "feed my sheep" (John 21:15–17).	Commissioned by the Lord to proclaim Jesus to gentiles, kings, and Israel (Acts 9:15).
Filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in Jerusalem (Acts 2:4).	Filled with the Holy Spirit in Damascus (Acts 9:17).
Proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah (Matt. 16:16; Acts 2:36).	Proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah (Acts 17:3).
A leader of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:7).	Launched his missionary journeys from Antioch of Syria (Acts 13:1–3).
Performed miracles, exorcised evil spirits, and raised the dead (Acts 2:3–8; 5:16; 9:36–43).	Performed miracles, exorcised evil spirits, and raised the dead (Acts 14:8–10; 19:12; 20:9–12).
Received a vision about what "God has made clean" (Acts 10:9–16).	Received a vision of a man from Macedonia (Acts 16:9–10).
Imprisoned for his faith (Acts 12:3–5).	Imprisoned for his faith (Acts 24:27; 2 Tim. 1:16).
Wrote two epistles in the New Testament (1 and 2 Peter) and may have been the main source for the gospel of Mark.	Wrote thirteen epistles in the New Testament.
Martyred in Rome during Emperor Nero's persecution. According to tradition, he was crucified upside down.	Martyred in Rome during Emperor Nero's persecution. According to tradition, he was beheaded.
Jesus had said that even in the manner of his death, Peter would glorify God (John 21:19).	In his last epistle, Paul wrote, "My departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:6–7).

Rose Chronological Guide to the Bible

World of the First Christians: Then



0 50 100 150 200 250 300 350 400 450 500 km

0 50 100 150 200 250 300 miles

✠ One of the Seven Churches of Asia (Rev. 1-3)

● City or Town

⋯ Ancient Ruins/Sites

▲ Mountain

⊙ Modern Capital cities

World of the First Christians: **Now**



Ancient cities that exist today are underlined in red.

† One of the Seven Churches of Asia (Rev. 1-3)

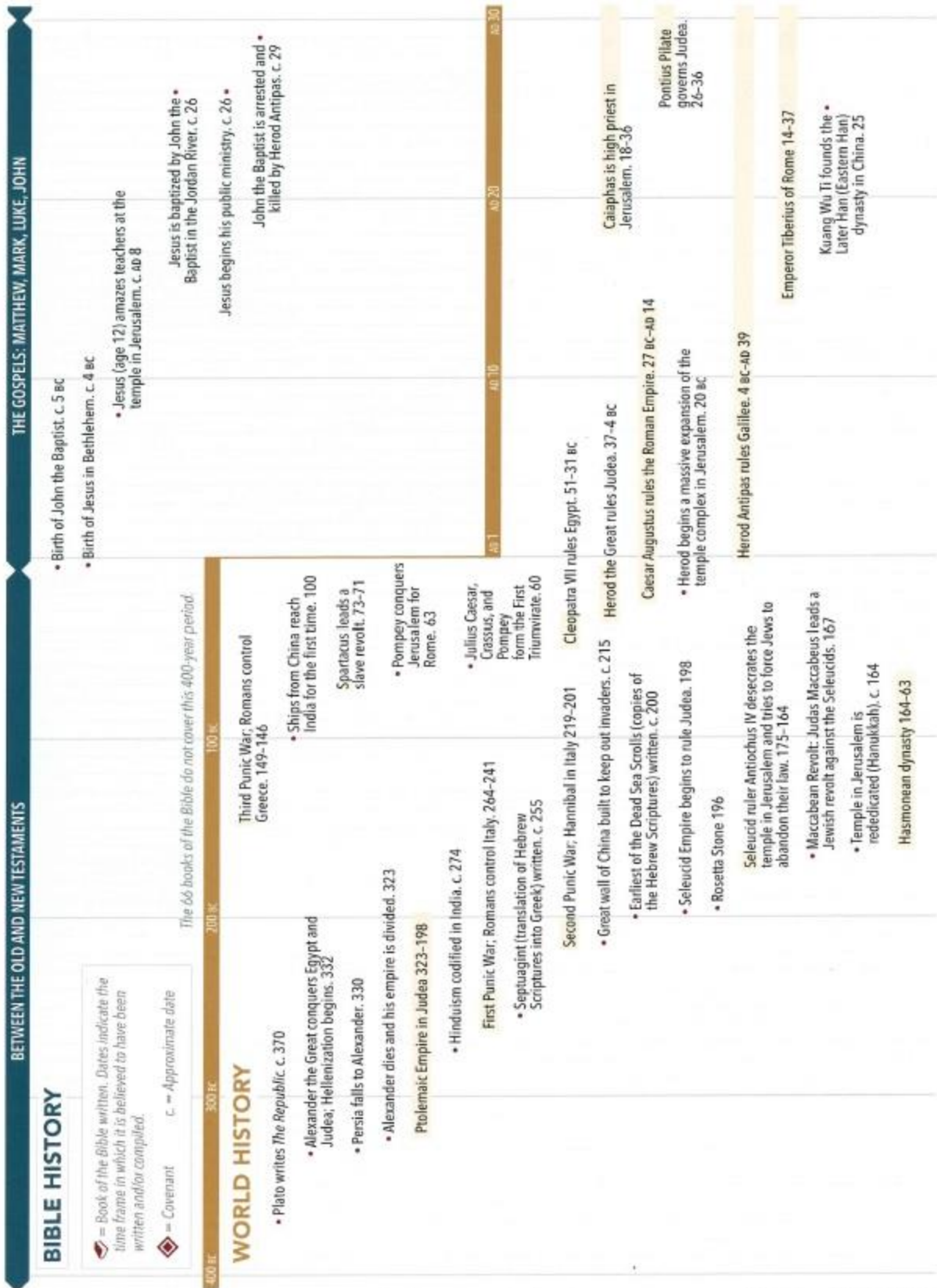
● City or Town

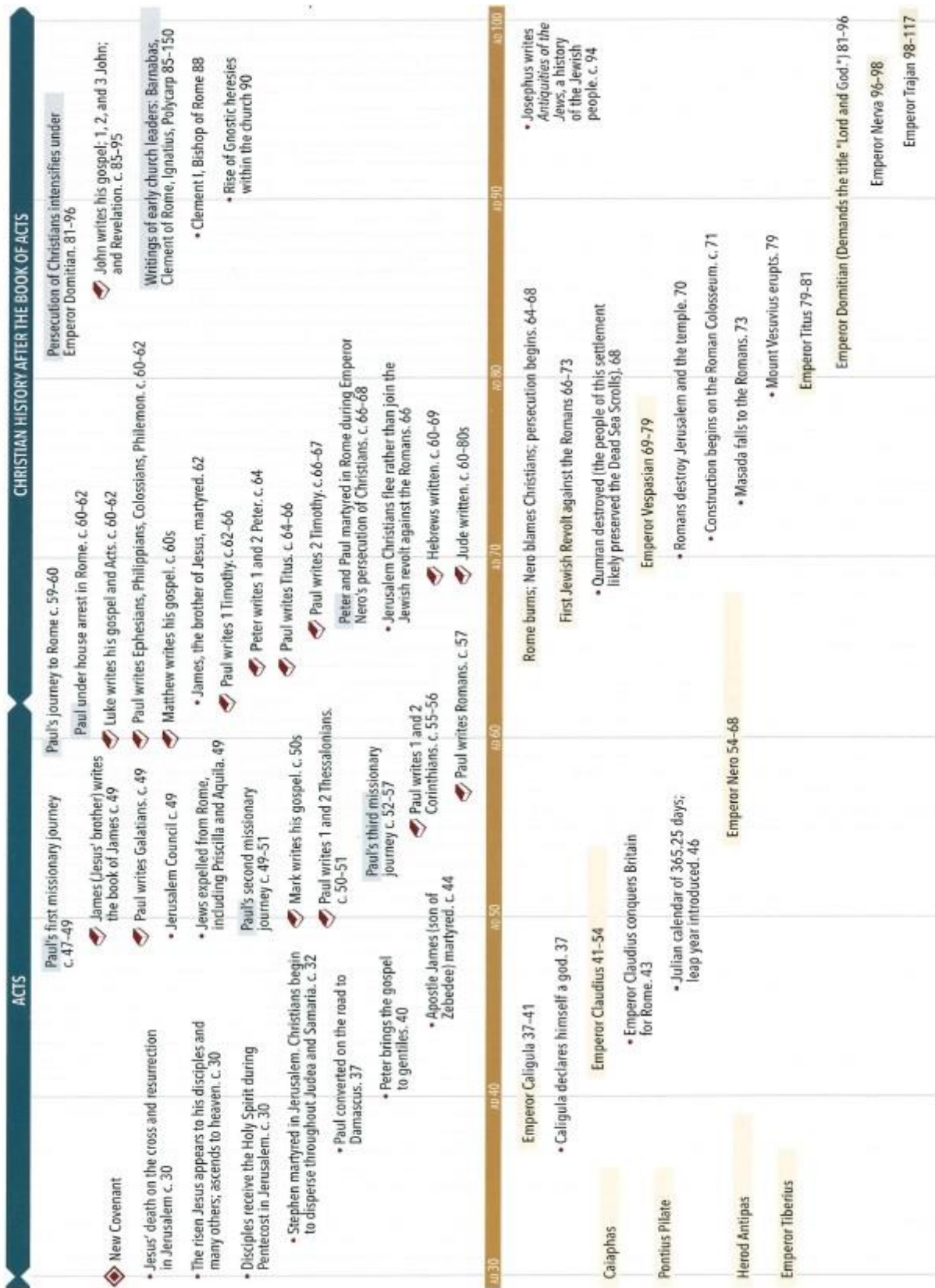
⬢ Ancient Ruins/Sites

▲ Mountain

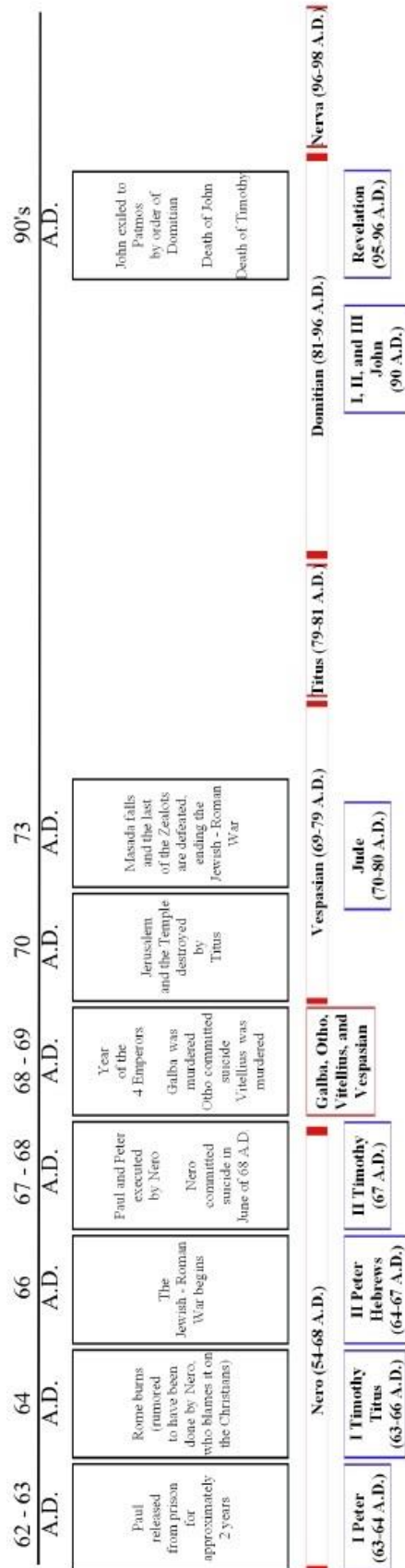
⊙ Modern Capital cities

New Testament Timeline





30 A.D.	33 A.D.	34 - 37 A.D.	40 A.D.	41 - 44 A.D.	47 - 49 A.D.					
Acts 1 - 2	Acts 3 - 4	Acts 5	Acts 6 - 7	Acts 8	Acts 9	Acts 10	Acts 11	Acts 12	Acts 13	Acts 14
The birth of the Church on the Day of Pentecost Peter's message 3000 added to the Church	The lame man healed Peter's message 5000 added to the Church Peter and John before the Sanhedrin The Church's response to persecution	The judgment of Ananias and Sapphira Demonstrations of power by the Apostles followed by persecution and imprisonment The Apostles freed by an angel	Selection of the 7 deacons Demonstrations of power by Stephen followed by his being called before the Sanhedrin, where he was stoned to death following his message of judgment on Israel (1st martyrdom overcomer)	Persecution and scattering of the Church Philip's evangelistic ministry in Samaria, Gaza, and Azotus Peter and John come to Samaria and the Samaritans are baptized with the Holy Spirit Confrontation with Simon the sorcerer	Paul's vision on the Damascus road followed by his conversion and baptism in the Holy Spirit Paul preaches in Damascus and in Arabia for 3 years, after which the Jews plot to kill him Paul goes up to Jerusalem where he eventually meets with Peter and James (Galatians 1:17-19) Peter heals a cripple at Lydda and raises Dorcas from the dead at Joppa, both events resulting in many turning to the Lord	Peter and the household of Cornelius The first full Gentiles receive Christ and the baptism of the Holy Spirit	Peter and the Church at Jerusalem debate the Gentile issue and agree God opened the door of salvation to the Gentiles Barnabas is sent from Jerusalem to Antioch to help establish the Church there Barnabas goes to Tarsus to recruit Paul to help him in the work at Antioch Agabus's prophecy and the Church's provision	Herod Agrippa executes John and imprisons Peter Peter is delivered from prison by an angel An angel strikes Herod Agrippa with disease and he dies soon after The Church grows and multiplies John Mark back to Antioch with them Paul and Barnabas take	Paul and Barnabas were called by the Spirit and commissioned by the Church to go out on their 1st Missionary Journey (with John Mark) Paul and Barnabas in Cyprus Elymas the sorcerer stands against the message and is struck blind Sergius Paulus, the governor, becomes a believer Paul and Barnabas in Perga and Attalia in Pamphylia before returning home to Antioch in Syria Paul and Barnabas in Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe	Paul and Barnabas return to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Syria Paul preaches in Rome The ship is shipwrecked on Melita Paul is protected from the bite of a venomous serpent Paul heals Publius's father and others on the island Paul arrives at Rome and is held there under house arrest for 2 years
Tiberius (13-37 A.D.)										
Caligula (37-41 A.D.)										
Claudius (41-54 A.D.)										
49-50 A.D.	50-51 A.D.	52 - 55 A.D.	56 - 57 A.D.	57 - 59 A.D.	60 - 62 A.D.					
Acts 15	Acts 16	Acts 17	Acts 18	Acts 19	Acts 20	Acts 21 - 22	Acts 23	Acts 24 - 26	Acts 27 - 28	
The Council at Jerusalem Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch from Jerusalem Paul and Barnabas divide over John Mark's inclusion in their 2nd Missionary Journey Paul and Silas leave for Syria and Cilicia	Paul and Silas in Lystra, Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, Troas, Samothracia, Neapolis, and Philippi Paul and Silas imprisoned and freed by an earthquake	Paul in Athens judging the judges on Mars Hill	Paul in Corinth, Cenchrea, Ephesus and Caesarea before returning to Antioch Apollon comes to Ephesus and encounters Aquila and Priscilla	3rd Missionary Journey Paul comes to Ephesus and establishes the Church there, remaining for more than 2 years disputing and teaching in the synagogue and in the school of Tyrannus, and working miracles through the laying on of hands and prayer The 7 sons of Sceva rebuffed attempting to cast out an evil spirit resulting in a revival and rejection of occultism A riot breaks out in Ephesus over the goddess Diana	Paul in Macedonia and Greece (where Eutychus is raised from the dead by Paul) Assos, Mitylene, Thios, Samos, and Trogyllium to Miletus Paul summons the elders of Ephesus to Miletus to meet with him	Paul journey's through Coos, Rhodes, and Patara finally arriving at Tyre, before traveling on through Ptolemais, Caesarea, and finally to Jerusalem, where he gives a report of his work to James and the Jerusalem Church Paul is attacked by a rioting mob in Jerusalem and is taken by the captain of the Roman guard Paul is permitted to speak to the crowd and gives his testimony, and the crowd grows violent again Paul reveals his Roman citizenship to the captain and is given the opportunity to testify before the Sanhedrin	Paul testifies before the Sanhedrin The Lord appears to Paul and tells him that he will testify of him at Rome The Jews plot to kill Paul and the Roman captain sends him Caesarea to Felix, governor of Judea	Paul testifies before Felix but does not accept Christ, instead holding Paul as prisoner for 2 years awaiting a bribe Festus replaces Felix as governor and Paul testifies before him Festus suggests that Paul testify at Jerusalem, and Paul appeals to Caesar's judgment Paul testifies before King Agrippa and Festus, the former stating that he was nearly convinced to become a believer	Paul is taken to Rome A great storm comes upon Paul's ship, but an angel appears to Paul to let him know he will make it to Rome The ship is shipwrecked on Melita Paul is protected from the bite of a venomous serpent Paul heals Publius's father and others on the island Paul arrives at Rome and is held there under house arrest for 2 years	
Claudius (41-54 A.D.)										
Nero (54 - 68 A.D.)										
James (45-50 A.D.)	Galatians (49-50 A.D.)	Thessalonians (50-51 A.D.)	Corinthians (55-56 A.D.)	Romans (57-60 A.D.)	Ephesians Philippians Colossians Philemon (60-61 A.D.)					



Timeline of Early Church History

II. Acts (The Acts of the Apostles)¹⁷⁵

A. Theme

In Acts, believers are empowered by the Holy Spirit to bear witness to the good news of Jesus Christ among both Jews and Gentiles, and in doing this they establish the church. In addition to this, Acts explains how Christianity, although it is new, is in reality the one true religion, rooted in God's promises from the beginning of time. In the ancient world it was important that a religion be shown to have stood the test of time. Thus Luke presents the church as the fulfillment and extension of God's promises.

B. Uniqueness

Acts is unique among the NT writings, in that its main purpose is to record a selective history of the early church following the resurrection of Christ. It is the second part of a two-volume work, with the Gospel of Luke being the first volume. Both books are dedicated to a person named Theophilus, and Acts 1:1 explicitly refers back to Luke's Gospel.

C. Setting

c. A.D. 30–62. The book of Acts records the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome, thus fulfilling the risen Christ's words to his apostles in Acts 1:8.

Acts 1:8 (Jesus speaking, 40 days after his resurrection)

⁸ *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

D. Author

Both the Gospel of Luke and Acts are anonymous, but the earliest discussions attribute them to **Luke**. The name "Luke" appears only three times in the NT: Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24. All three references are in epistles written by Paul from prison, and all three mention Luke's presence with Paul.

The earliest discussion of the authorship of Luke and Acts is from Irenaeus, the bishop of Lyons in Gaul, writing in the late second century. He attributes the books to Luke, the coworker of Paul, and notes that the occurrence of the first-person narrative ("we") throughout the later chapters of Acts (starting at 16:10) indicates that the author of Acts was a companion of Paul and present with him on these occasions. These "we" passages in Acts are the key to the authorship of both Acts and the Gospel of Luke.

Colossians 4:14 indicates that **Luke was a physician**, and attempts have been made to bolster Lukan authorship by arguing that Luke and Acts use technical medical language. This does not seem to be the case, as Luke seems to have avoided technical language in order to communicate plainly to his readers, but his detailed description of illnesses perhaps reflects his interests as a physician (cf. Acts 28:8). In addition, all the external evidence refers to Luke as the author.

¹⁷⁵ *ESV Study Bible*, 2073-2077.

E. Date

A number of scholars date Acts as early as A.D. 62, basing their view primarily on the abrupt ending of the book. Since Acts ends with Paul in Rome under house arrest, awaiting his trial before Caesar (28:30–31), it would seem strange if Luke knew about Paul's release (a proof of his innocence), possibly about his defense before Caesar (fulfilling 27:24), and about his preaching the gospel as far as Spain (cf. note on 28:30–31), but then did not mention these events at the end of Acts. It seems most likely, then, that the abrupt ending is an indication that Luke wrote Acts c. A.D. 62, before these events occurred.

F. Features

Though Acts has much in common with the Gospels, it has a number of unique features. One of these is its *genre*: it is the only NT book that tells about the ministry of the apostles, hence its traditional name, "The Acts of the Apostles." It deals primarily with two of them, Peter and Paul. Often Luke shows how events in their ministries parallel each other and the ministry of Jesus as well.

Among the unique features of Acts are the frequent **summaries**, where Luke provides a broad generalization about the life of the church at a particular time or place, such as the common life after Pentecost (2:42–47), the early Christian sharing of goods (4:32–35), and the apostolic miracles (5:12–16). Sometimes the summaries are much briefer, such as the single verse that sums up Paul's ministry of more than two years in Ephesus (19:10). Luke's usual method of presenting the Christians' ministry is more "episodic," highlighting individual incidents that illustrate their work, giving it greater liveliness and interest. For instance, at Ephesus this includes the conversion of some disciples of John the Baptist (19:1–7), the "backfiring" exorcism of the sons of Sceva (19:13–16), and the riot occasioned by the silversmith Demetrius (19:23–41).

The most distinctive feature in Acts is the **speeches or sermons**, constituting nearly a third of the total text of Acts. Ten of these are major: **three by Peter** (2:14–36; 3:11–26; 10:34–43), **one by Stephen** (7:1–53), and **six by Paul**. Three of Paul's are defense speeches in Jerusalem and Caesarea (22:1–21; 24:10–21; 26:1–29). The other three consist of one speech on each of Paul's missionary journeys, each to a different type of assembly: to Jews on his first journey (13:16–47), to Gentiles on his second (17:22–31), and to Christians on his third (20:18–35). Many shorter testimonies run throughout Acts (e.g., 5:29–32; 14:15–17). All are primarily a witness to Christ in one form or another. Much of the theological material of Acts is to be found in these speeches.

Another distinctive feature of Acts is its **journey narratives**. Often these are only lists of stopping places or ports that are passed by (e.g., 16:6–8; 20:14–15; 21:2–3). These give the impression of the Christian missionaries being constantly on the move and are the main reason for giving Paul's ministry the label of "journeys." In fact, that label best applies to the first of Paul's missions (chs. 13–14). The others consisted mainly of more lengthy stays in the major cities (e.g., Corinth, Ephesus).

G. Outline

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES¹⁷⁶ **A.D. 30-62**

Acts 1:8

⁸ *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

Part One: The Witness in Jerusalem (1:1-8:3) 30-32

I. The Power of the Church (1:1-2:47) 30

- A. Prologue (1:1-2)
- B. The resurrected Jesus appears (1:3-8)
- C. Jesus ascends into heaven (1:9-11)
- D. The Lord chooses Matthias to be an apostle to replace Judas (1:12-26)
- E. The Holy Spirit descends at Pentecost (2:1-13)
- F. Peter explains Pentecost (2:14-41)
- G. The Christian community shares a life in common (2:42-47)

II. The Progress of the Church (3:1-8:3) 30-32

- A. Peter heals a lame man (3:1-10)
- B. Peter preaches in the temple square (3:11-26)
- C. Peter and John witness before the Jewish council (4:1-22)
- D. The Christian community prays for boldness in witness (4:23-31)
- E. The community shares together (4:32-37)
- F. Ananias and Saphira lie (5:1-11)
- G. The apostles perform many signs and wonders (5:12-16)
- H. The apostles are arrested and appear before the Jewish council (5:16-42)
- I. The believers chose seven men as the first deacons (6:1-7)
- J. Stephen is falsely accused, gives a speech, and is stoned to death (6:8-7:60)
- K. Saul persecutes the church (8:1-3)

Part Two: The Witness in Judea and Samaria (8:4-12:25) 33-44

I. The Witness of Philip (8:4-40) 33

- A. Philip witnesses to the Samaritans (8:4-25)
- B. Philip witnesses to the Ethiopian Eunuch (8:26-40)

II. The Conversion of Saul (9:1-31) 37

- A. Saul encounters Christ on the road to Damascus (9:1-9) “The Way” (9:2)
- B. Saul encounters Ananias (9:10-19)
- C. Saul witnesses in Damascus and Jerusalem (9:20-31)

¹⁷⁶ Nelson’s Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts, 359-361, and ESV Study Bible, 2077-2079. Maps from Rose Chronological Guide to the Bible.

III. The Witness of Peter (9:32-11:18) 40

- A. Peter heals Aeneas at Lydda (9:32-35)
- B. Peter raises Dorcas at Joppa (9:36-43)
- C. Peter witnesses to Cornelius at Caesarea (10:1-11:18)

IV. The Witness of the Early Church (11:19-12:25) 44

- A. The Antioch church witnesses to Gentiles (11:19-26) 1st called "Christians" at Antioch (11:26)
- B. The Antioch church sends a relief offering to Judea (11:27-30)
- C. Herod Agrippa I persecutes the church; the church multiplies and spreads (12:1-25)

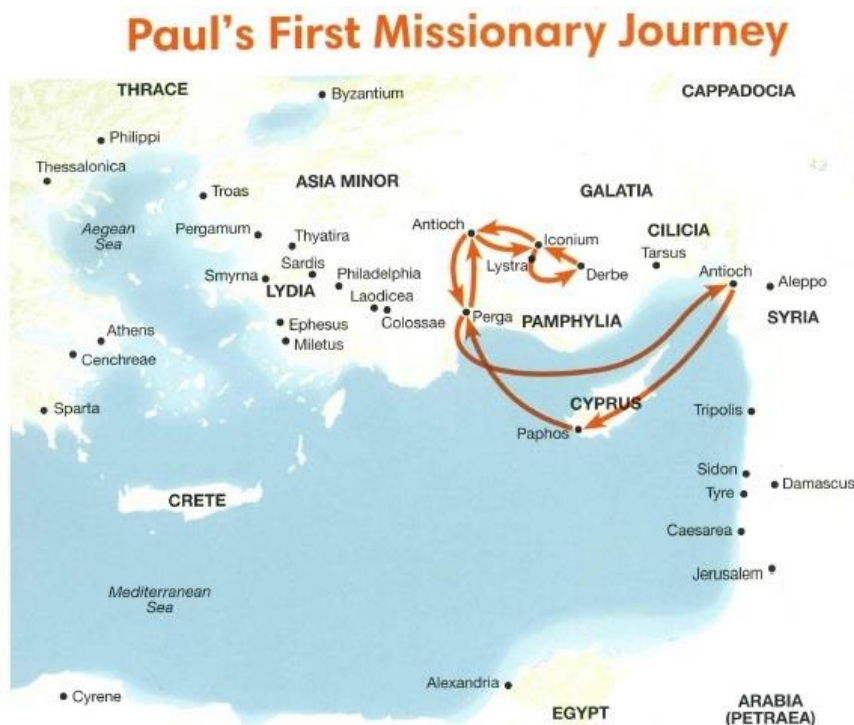
Part Three: The Witness to the End of the Earth (13:1-28:31) 47-62

I. Paul's First Missionary Journey (13:1-14:28) 47-49

- A. The Antioch church commissions Paul and Barnabas (13:1-3)
- B. Paul and Barnabas witness on Cyprus (13:4-12)
- C. Paul preaches in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch (13:13-43)
- D. Paul turns from preaching to the Jews to preaching to the Gentiles (13:44-50)
- E. Paul and Barnabas are rejected at Iconium (13:51-14:7)
- F. Paul and Barnabas witness in Lystra (14:8-23)
- G. Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch (14:24-28)

49 James the brother of Jesus writes James

49 Paul writes Galatians



II. The Jerusalem Council (15:1-35) 49

- A. The circumcision party criticizes the mission to the Gentiles (15:1-5)
- B. Peter defends the mission to the Gentiles and affirms salvation by grace (15:6-11)
- C. James the brother of Jesus proposes a solution¹⁷⁷ (15:12-21)
- D. The apostles and elders send a letter to the Gentile believers in Antioch (15:22-35)

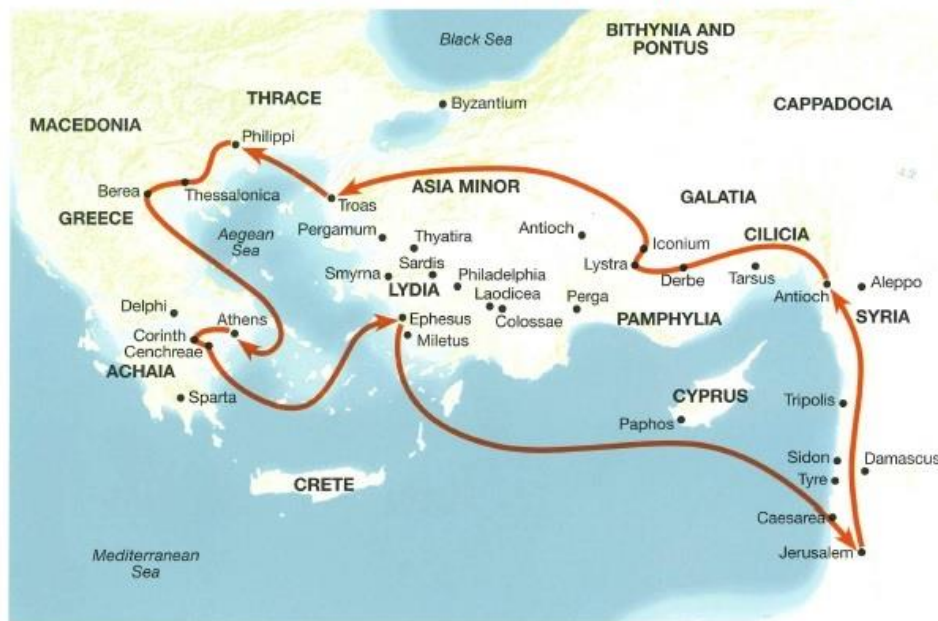
III. Paul's Second Missionary Journey (15:36-18:22) 49-51

- A. Paul and Barnabas separate: Paul takes Silas; Barnabas takes Mark (15:36-41)
- B. Timothy joins Paul at Lystra and is circumcised (16:1-5)
- C. Paul is called to Macedonia (16:6-10)
- D. Paul witnesses in Philippi; Lydia and Philippian jailer believe in Jesus (16:11-40)
- E. Paul witnesses in Thessalonica (17:1-9)
- F. Paul witnesses in Berea (17:10-15) "Examining the Scriptures to see if these things are so" (17:11)
- G. Paul witnesses in Athens (17:16-34)
- H. Paul witnesses in Corinth (18:1-22)

50 Mark writes the Gospel of Mark

50 Paul writes 1 and 2 Thessalonians

Paul's Second Missionary Journey



¹⁷⁷ Acts 15:19-21: ¹⁹ "Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, ²⁰ but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood. ²¹ For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues."

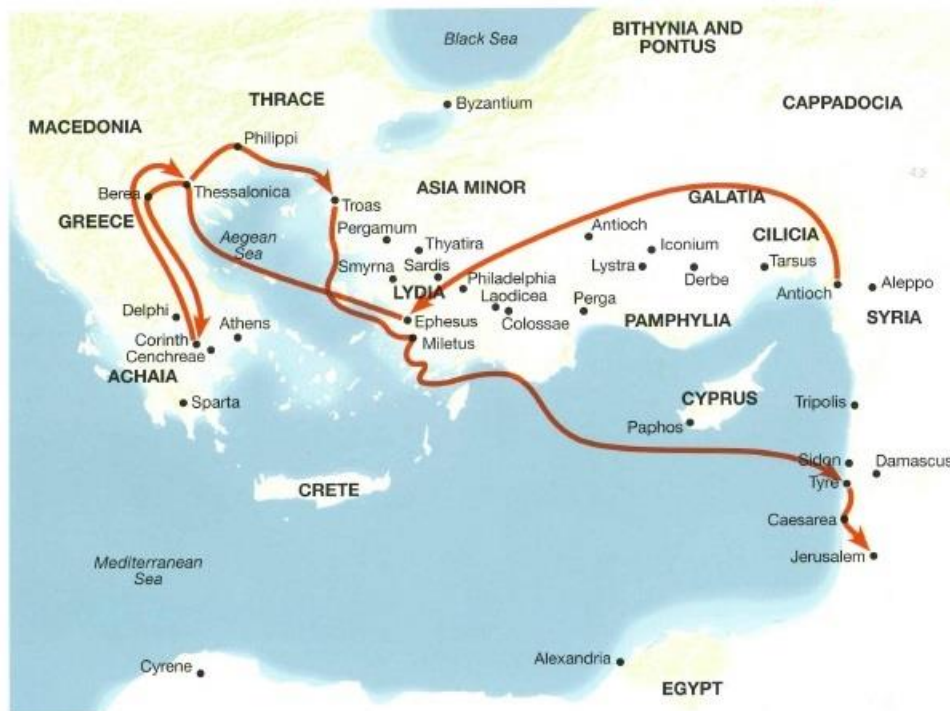
IV. Paul's Third Missionary Journey (18:23-21:16) 52-57

- A. Priscilla and Aquila instruct Apollos at Ephesus (18:23-28)
- B. Paul encounters disciples of John the Baptist at Ephesus (19:1-10)
- C. Paul encounters false religion at Ephesus (19:11-22)
- D. Paul experiences violent opposition at **Ephesus** (19:23-41) **A silversmith causes a riot.**
- E. Paul completes his ministry in Greece (20:1-6)
- F. Paul travels to Miletus (20:7-16)
- G. Paul addresses the Ephesian elders at Miletus (20:17-35)
- H. Paul journeys to Jerusalem (20:36-21:16)

56 Paul writes 1 and 2 Corinthians

57 Paul writes Romans

Paul's Third Missionary Journey



V. Paul's Arrest in Jerusalem (21:17-23:30) 57-58

- A. Paul participates in a Nazirite ceremony (21:17-26)
- B. An angry mob attacks Paul (21:27-39)
- C. Paul addresses the Jewish crowd (21:40-22:21)
- D. Paul reveals his Roman citizenship (22:22-29)
- E. Paul appears before the Sanhedrin (22:30-23:11)
- F. Zealous Jews plot against Paul (23:12-22)
- G. Paul is sent to the governor Felix (23:23-30)

VI. Paul's Witness in Caesarea (23:31-26:32) 59

- A. Paul is delivered to Governor Felix (23:31-35)
- B. Paul appears before Felix (24:1-27)
- C. Paul appeals to Caesar (25:1-12)
- D. Governor Festus presents the case to King Agrippa II (25:13-22)
- E. Paul witnesses to Agrippa II (25:23-26:32)

VII. Paul's Journey to Rome (27:1-28:31) 59-62

- A. Paul travels toward Rome by sea (27:1-44) shipwrecked off the island of Malta
- B. Paul witnesses on Malta (28:1-10)
- C. Paul arrives in Rome (28:11-16)
- D. Paul is held under house arrest in Rome (28:17-31)

60s Matthew writes the Gospel of Matthew

62 Luke writes the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles

60-62 Paul writes Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon

60s Author of Hebrews writes Hebrews

60s Jude the brother of Jesus and James writes Jude

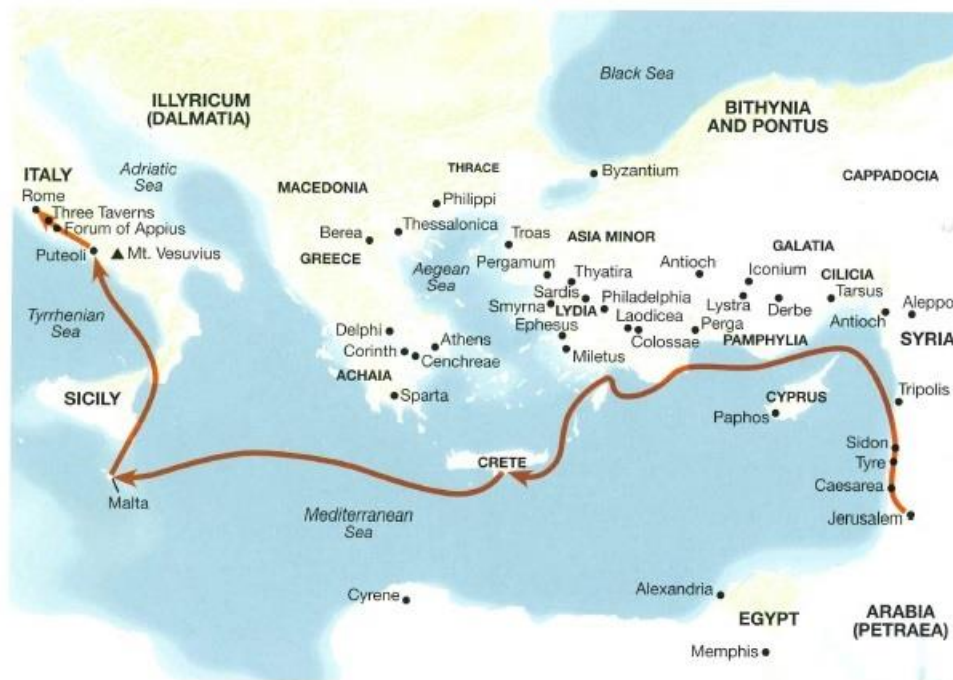
62-67 Paul writes 1 and 2 Timothy

64-66 Paul writes Titus

64 Peter writes Peter

85-95 John writes the Gospel of John, 1, 2, 3 John, and Revelation

Paul's Journey to Rome



Paul's Travels and Missionary Journeys

Paul's Early Travels Acts 9–12

- ▶ To Damascus to persecute Christians (Conversion) Acts 9
- ▶ Stays in Damascus Acts 9
- ▶ Arabia Galatians 1:17
- ▶ Leaves Damascus Acts 9:25
- ▶ Jerusalem Acts 9:26
- ▶ Caesarea and Tarsus Acts 9:30; Galatians 1:21
- ▶ In Antioch of Syria for a year Acts 11:26
- ▶ To Judea/Jerusalem for famine relief Acts 11:30
- ▶ Antioch of Syria Acts 12:25

Paul's First Journey Acts 13:1–14:28

Traveled with: Barnabas, John Mark

Main route: Cyprus and Turkey; 1,400 miles

Cities/Places:

- ▶ Antioch of Syria
- ▶ Seleucia
- ▶ Salamis and Paphos (on Cyprus)
- ▶ Perga
- ▶ **ANTIOCH of Pisidia**
- ▶ Iconium
- ▶ Lystra and Derbe
- ▶ Lystra
- ▶ Iconium and Antioch of Pisidia
- ▶ Perga (via Pisidia and Pamphylia)
- ▶ Attalia
- ▶ Antioch of Syria
- ▶ Jerusalem (via Phoenicia and Samaria) Acts 15

Paul's Second Journey Acts 15:36–18:22

Traveled with: Silas, Timothy, Priscilla and Aquilla, Luke

Main route: Syria, Turkey, Greece, Jerusalem; 2,800 miles

Cities/Places:

- ▶ Through Syria and Cilicia
- ▶ Derbe and Lystra
- ▶ Through Phrygia and Galatia
- ▶ (past Mysia) Troas
- ▶ Samothracia (Samothrace) and Neapolis
- ▶ Philippi in Macedonia
- ▶ Amphipolis and Apollonia
- ▶ Thessalonica
- ▶ Berea (Beroea)
- ▶ Athens (Mars Hill—"Aeropagus")
- ▶ **CORINTH**
- ▶ Cenchrea (Cenchreae)
- ▶ Ephesus
- ▶ Caesarea
- ▶ "Went up" to Jerusalem
- ▶ Antioch of Syria

Paul's Third Journey Acts 18:23–21:16

Traveled with: Timothy, Luke, and others

Main route: Turkey, Greece, Lebanon, Israel; 2,700 miles

Cities/Places:

- ▶ Through Galatia and Phrygia
- ▶ **EPHESUS**
- ▶ Through Macedonia
- ▶ Through Greece (Achaia)
- ▶ Philippi in Macedonia and Troas
- ▶ Assos, Mitylene; near Chios, Samos, (Trogyllium), Miletus
- ▶ Cos, through Rhodes, Patara
- ▶ Tyre and Ptolemais
- ▶ Caesarea
- ▶ Jerusalem

Paul's Journey to Rome Acts 21:17–28:31

Traveled with: Roman guards, Luke, others

Main route: Israel, Lebanon, Turkey, Crete, Malta, Sicily, Italy; 2,250 miles

Cities/Places:

- ▶ Jerusalem
- ▶ Antipatris and Caesarea
- ▶ Sidon, Myra, Cnidus
- ▶ Fair Havens (Crete)
- ▶ Claudia (Cauda)
- ▶ Malta (Melita)
- ▶ Syracuse, Rhegium, Puteoli
- ▶ Appii Forum and Three Taverns
- ▶ **ROME**

Other Travels Before Paul's Death

Cities/Places (order unknown):

- ▶ Macedonia 1 Timothy 1:3
- ▶ Troas and Miletus 2 Timothy 4:13, 20
- ▶ Crete Titus 1:5
- ▶ Planned to go to Spain Romans 15:28
- ▶ Nicopolis Titus 3:12
- ▶ Back to Rome 2 Timothy 1

How to Remember Paul's Journeys

Paul was a **PACER** in a race!

(A pacer takes the lead or sets an example.)

P - PAUL ("I have run the race; I have kept the faith.")

A - ANTIOCH of Pisidia First Journey

C - CORINTH area Second Journey

E - EPHESUS area Third Journey

R - ROME Fourth Journey

Paul's First Missionary Journey



Travelers: Paul, Barnabas, John Mark

Distance: 1,400 miles (2,253 km)

Dates: AD 47-49

1. **Antioch of Syria:** The Holy Spirit sends Paul and Barnabas to be missionaries. John Mark goes along as their helper. Acts 13:1-4
2. **Paphos:** Paul confronts a sorcerer and blinds him. Acts 13:5-12
3. **Perga:** John Mark leaves the group and returns to Jerusalem. Acts 13:13
4. **Antioch of Pisidia:** Paul preaches his longest recorded sermon, and many become believers. Jewish leaders drive Paul and Barnabas out of the city and the Lord calls Paul to focus his ministry on gentiles. Acts 13:14-52
5. **Iconium:** Plots against their lives force them to flee. Acts 14:1-7
6. **Lystra:** When Paul heals a lame man, the townspeople think he and Barnabas are Greek gods. Jews from Antioch and Iconium stir up the crowd, and Paul is stoned and left for dead outside the city. But he survives and goes back into the city. Acts 14:8-20
7. **Derbe:** Many disciples are added to the church. Acts 14:20-21
8. **Derbe to Antioch of Syria:** On the return trip, Paul and Barnabas appoint elders in the churches they had planted. Acts 14:21-25
9. **Antioch of Syria:** Paul and Barnabas report all that God had done. Acts 14:26-28

Rose Chronological Guide to the Bible

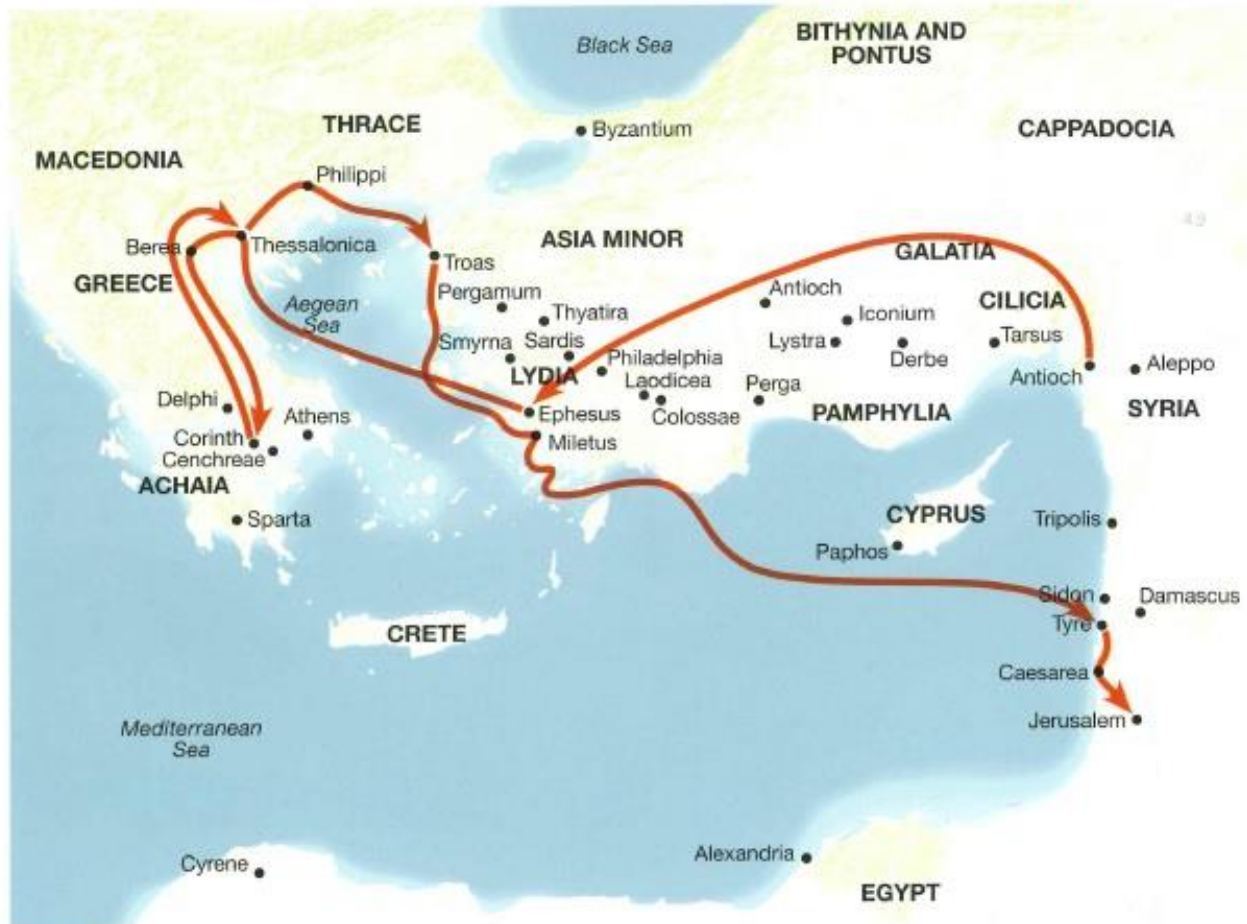
The map illustrates the route of Paul's missionary journey across the Eastern Mediterranean. The route is marked by a red line with arrows, starting from Jerusalem, passing through Syria, Cilicia, Galatia, Asia Minor, and Greece, before returning to Jerusalem. Key locations include Jerusalem, Damascus, Tyre, Sidon, Tripolis, Caesarea, Antioch, Iconium, Derbe, Tarsus, Lystra, Perga, Colossae, Laodicea, Philadelphia, Sardis, Thyatira, Smyrna, Troas, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Cenchreae, and Sparta. The map also labels major regions like Macedonia, Thrace, Bithynia and Pontus, Cappadocia, Galatia, Cilicia, Paphlagonia, Pamphylia, Lydia, Ionia, Aegean Sea, and Crete.

Dates: AD 49–51

- earthquake, Paul and Silas stay in their cells. The jailer also becomes a believer. Acts 16:11-40

- ## Acts and Epistles

Paul's Third Missionary Journey



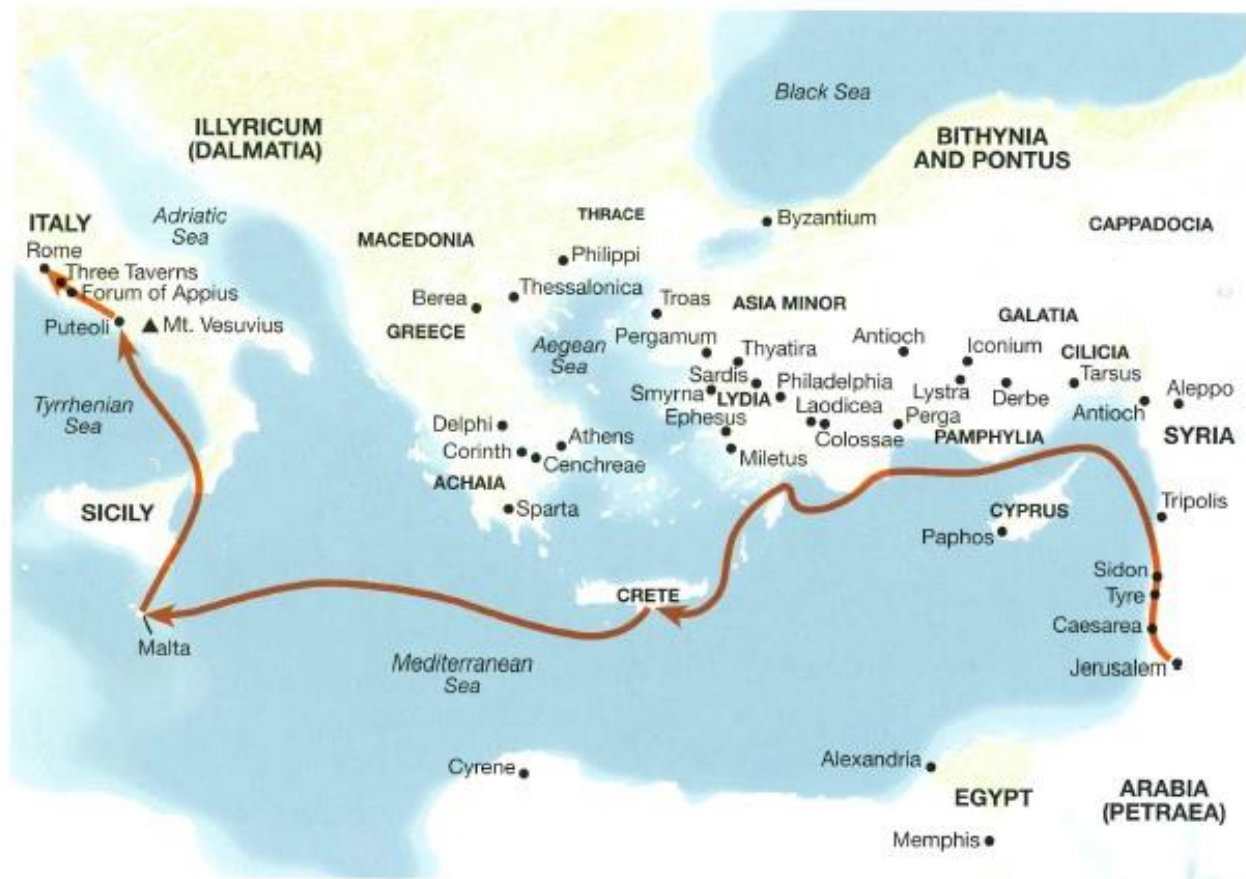
Travelers: Paul, Timothy, Luke, and others

Distance: 2,700 miles (4,345 km)

Dates: AD 52-57

1. **Galatia:** Paul visits the churches in this region. Acts 18:23
2. **Ephesus:** Paul stays here two years. So many people convert to Christianity that the silversmiths who manufacture idols start a riot. Acts 19:1-41
3. **Macedonia and Greece:** Paul gives encouraging words to believers in this region. He stays three months. Acts 20:1-3
4. **Troas:** While Paul is preaching, a young man falls asleep, falls from a third-story window, and dies. Paul revives him. Acts 20:4-12
5. **Miletus:** Elders from Ephesus meet the ship at Miletus and Paul tells them that he expects to be imprisoned in Jerusalem. Acts 20:13-38
6. **Tyre:** Believers warn Paul not to go to Jerusalem. Acts 21:1-6
7. **Caesarea:** A prophet predicts that Paul will be imprisoned and handed over to the gentiles. Acts 21:7-16
8. **Jerusalem:** Paul and his team report to the church leaders, who urge Paul to participate in a purification ritual at the temple to counteract rumors that Christianity is anti-Jewish. Acts 21:17-26

Paul's Journey to Rome



Travelers: Paul, Roman guards, Luke, and others

Distance: 2,250 miles (3,621 km)

Dates: AD 59–60

1. **Jerusalem:** After Paul is arrested, the Roman commander learns of a death threat against Paul, so he orders an armed escort to take Paul to Caesarea. Acts 23:12–35
2. **Caesarea:** Paul is tried before governor Felix, but Felix leaves him in prison for two years. Paul again stands trial, but this time before Festus, the new governor. Paul demands his right as a Roman citizen and appeals his case to Caesar. Herod Agrippa II visits Festus, and Paul appears before him as well. It's decided that Paul should go to Rome. Acts 24:1–26:32
3. **Sidon:** The centurion in charge of Paul lets him visit with friends. Then Paul boards a ship and sets sail for Rome. Acts 27:1–4
4. **Crete:** Paul recommends that the ship stay in safe harbor, but the centurion orders the ship to sail on. Acts 27:5–12
5. **Malta:** After a two-week storm, the ship is wrecked near the island of Malta. Everyone on the ship makes it to shore. Acts 27:13–28:10
6. **Puteoli:** Paul stays with believers for a week. Acts 28:11–14
7. **Forum of Appius and Three Taverns:** Paul is met by believers from Rome. Acts 28:15
8. **Rome:** Paul remains under house arrest for two years sharing the gospel with everyone he can. Acts 28:16–31

Pentecost¹⁷⁸

Summary:

Pentecost, described in Acts 2, occurred 50 days after Jesus' resurrection, fulfilling the Jewish Feast of Weeks (Shavuot). This timeline is rooted in the Jewish calendar system and Leviticus 23:15–16, which commands counting seven full weeks (49 days) from the day after the Sabbath following Passover, with the 50th day being the feast. This day commemorated the giving of the Law at Sinai and later became the day when God poured out the Holy Spirit on the early church. Acts 2:1 explicitly mentions Pentecost as the day the Spirit descended, connecting the Old Testament festival with its New Testament fulfillment. A careful look at the biblical timeline—from the Last Supper to the resurrection, ascension, and Pentecost—confirms that this took place exactly 50 days after Jesus rose from the dead.

Definition of Pentecost and the Feast of Weeks:

“Pentecost” comes from the Greek word *pentēkostē*, meaning “fiftieth.” In the Old Testament, it is called the Feast of Weeks (*Shavuot* in Hebrew), described in Leviticus 23:15–16. It was celebrated 50 days after the “day after the Sabbath” that followed Passover, marking the end of the grain harvest and commemorating the giving of the Law at Sinai. In the New Testament, Pentecost came to signify the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Jesus' followers (Acts 2:1–4), launching the church's mission.

Jewish Calendar and Leviticus 23:15–16:

Leviticus 23:15–16 commands the Israelites to count “seven full weeks” from the day after the Sabbath following Passover, totaling 49 days, and then to celebrate the Feast of Weeks on the 50th day. In the Jewish calendar, this count begins with the day after the Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, often interpreted as the Sunday following Passover. This makes Pentecost always fall on a Sunday, 50 days later.

Timeline of Jesus' Final Events:

1. **Last Supper** – Thursday evening, the night before Jesus' crucifixion, Jesus celebrated Passover with His disciples.
2. **Crucifixion and Death** – Friday (Preparation Day for the Sabbath), Jesus was crucified and died before sundown.
3. **Burial before the Sabbath** – Jesus had to be buried before sundown Friday because the Sabbath (Saturday) began at sunset. Jewish law prohibited work, including burial, on the Sabbath.
4. **Resurrection** – Sunday morning, the first day of the week, three days after His death.
5. **Post-Resurrection Appearances** – Jesus appeared to His disciples over a span of 40 days (Acts 1:3).
6. **Ascension** – On the 40th day after his resurrection, Jesus ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9–11).
7. **Pentecost** – 10 days after the ascension, on the 50th day after the resurrection, the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples (Acts 2:1–4).

Conclusion:

The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) fulfilled in Acts 2 falls exactly 50 days after the resurrection of Jesus, aligning perfectly with the command in Leviticus 23. Jesus' death during Passover, His resurrection on the first day of the week, and the Spirit's coming on the 50th day form a divinely orchestrated timeline. The burial before the Sabbath ensured obedience to Jewish law, and each step of the timeline demonstrates how Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament festivals with precision and purpose.

¹⁷⁸ ChatGPT.

Before Pentecost, did the Holy Spirit:

- Regenerate people (give new spiritual life, give the new birth, “circumcise the heart,” Deuteronomy 30:6) to enable them to believe in God for salvation?

Yes. Notice these gospel accounts in which people were born again during the time of Jesus (before the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost).

John 1:12-13

¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ **who were born**, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but **of God**.

John 3:1-8

¹ Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ² This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.” ³ Jesus answered him, “**Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.**” ⁴ Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵ Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘**You must be born again.**’ ⁸ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

John 6:63-65

⁶³ “**It is the Spirit who gives life**; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴ But there are some of you who do not believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) ⁶⁵ And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”

- Indwell (take up residence in) believers?

No.

John 7:37-39

³⁷ On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” ³⁹ **Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.**

John 14:15-17

¹⁵ “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ **And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,** ¹⁷ **even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.**”

James Hamilton:

“Were old covenant believers indwelt by the Holy Spirit?”

No. They did not need to be. God dwelt in the temple. He was thereby with them.

How did old covenant believers become and remain faithful? They became faithful by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, which in the OT is described more as ‘circumcision of the heart’ (Jer. 9:25) than as ‘new birth from above’ (John 3:3). They remained faithful not by the Spirit dwelling in them, but by the Spirit dwelling in the temple (Ps. 73:17), where they longed to be (Ps. 116:18–19). Further, the Spirit was active through Israel’s prophets (1 Pet. 1:11). As the prophets proclaimed God’s word, the Spirit instructed and admonished God’s people (Neh. 9:20, 30).

Under the old covenant, the Spirit gave life and was with the people as he dwelt in the temple. Under the new covenant, the Spirit gives life and dwells in God’s people; they are his temple.”¹⁷⁹

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

¹⁷⁹ James Hamilton, “Were Old Covenant Believers Indwelt by the Holy Spirit?” The Gospel Coalition.
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/article/were-old-covenant-believers-indwelt-by-the-holy-spirit/>.

