



Bethel School of Discipleship

New Testament Survey
Acts, Galatians, & Thessalonians

Acts Overview

- Great Commission
- Ascension
- Pentecost & Holy Spirit
- Expansion of the Church
 - Judea/Samaria
 - Cornelius
 - 1st Missionary Journeys; Cyprus & Asia Minor,
 - Conflict & Council
 - 2nd & 3rd Greece
 - Trip to Rome
 - 4th Missionary Journey

Great Commission

- Kingdom of God
 - Mk. 1:14,15 – Acts 1:3 – “He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God”
 - Acts 1:6 – “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”
- Great Commission/God’s Mission – Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”
 - Abraham: The **nations will be blessed** through Abraham.
 - Moses: God will set Israel high above **all nations & will draw the nations** to himself. A prophet like Moses will come in the future.
 - David: A descendant will rule on the throne forever. God will rule over and bless **all the nations**.
 - Prophets: God will bring about a restoration that will involve Israel, **the nations** of the world, and even the creation itself.

Ascension

- Ascension – Acts 1:9-11 “After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”
 - Inauguration of Christ’s Rule
 - Immediate Promise of Christ’s Return - Totality and Fullness of His Rule
 - Realized Eschatology – in between

The Good News & Realized Eschatology

Now

- ❖ Reconciliation to God through the Forgiveness of our Sins
- ❖ Removal of our Shame and Guilt
- ❖ Release from Fear and Anxiety
- ❖ Relief to the Brokenhearted
- ❖ Rest and Peace to the Weary
- ❖ Reassurance of His Love and Mercy toward us
- ❖ Adoption into a new and loving Family
- ❖ The Power and Presence of His Spirit in our lives

Not Yet

- ❖ The Resurrection of the dead and life everlasting;
- ❖ The Resolution and end of suffering;
- ❖ The Retribution for all evil;
- ❖ The Reward for good;
- ❖ The Reign of Peace & Justice among the Nations;
- ❖ The Renewal of Humanity and Culture
- ❖ The Restoration of Creation



Pentecost & the Birth of the Church

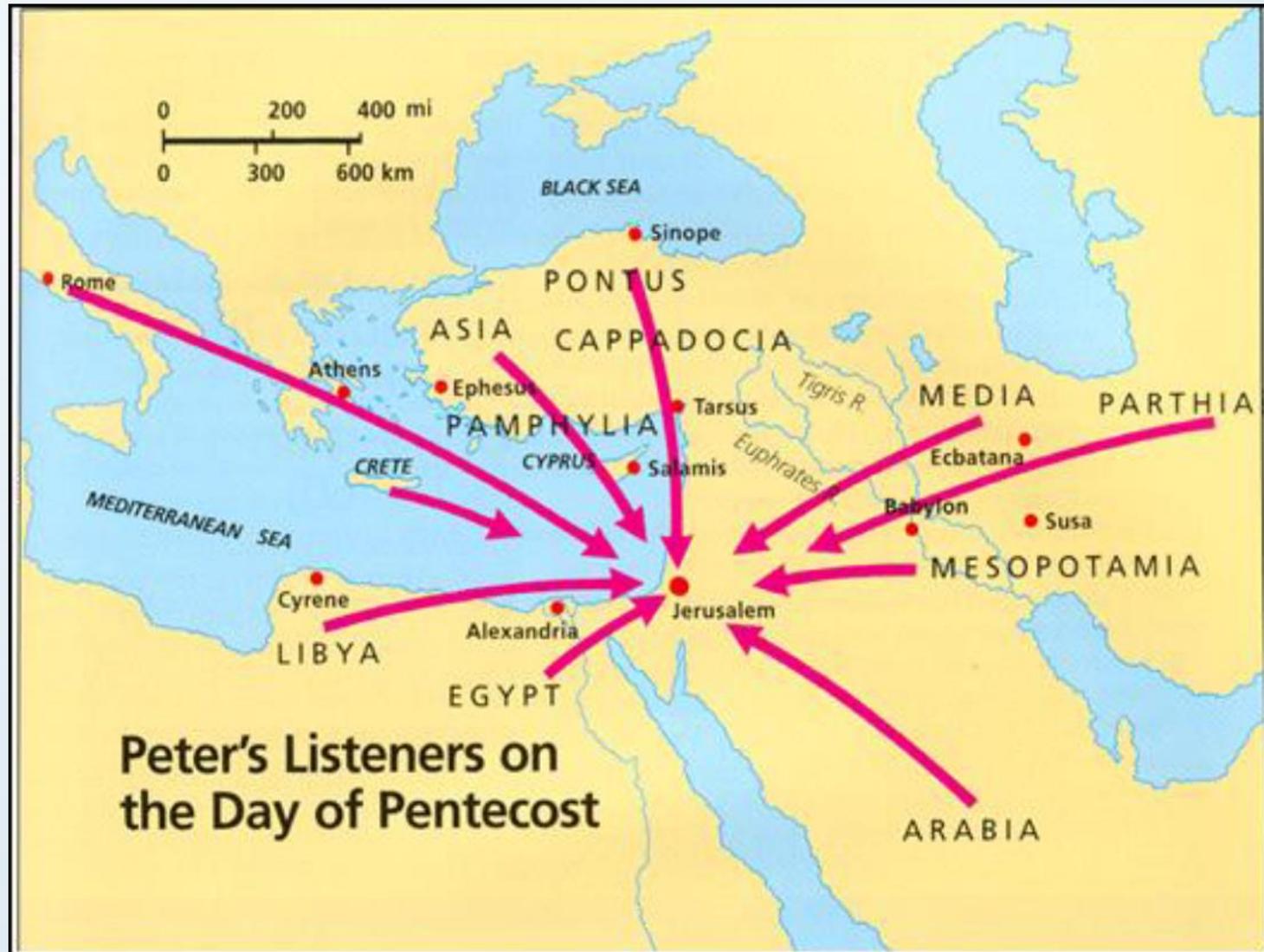
- Pentecost - Pouring out of Promised Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-32)
 - Acts 2:1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.
- Peter's Message
 - Acts 3:19 "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, 20and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. 21Heaven must receive him **until the time comes for God to restore everything**, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets."

Pentecost & the Birth of the Church

- Visitors to Jerusalem

- Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. ⁷Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? ⁹**Parthians, Medes and Elamites**; residents of **Mesopotamia**, Judea and **Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia**, ¹⁰**Phrygia and Pamphylia**, **Egypt** and the parts of **Libya** near **Cyrene**; visitors from **Rome** ¹¹(both Jews and converts to Judaism); **Cretans** and **Arabs**—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” ¹²Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”

Pentecost & the Birth of the Church



The Birth & Expansion of the Church

Birth of the Church

- Acts 2:41 – “Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were **added** to their number that day.”

Expansion in Jerusalem

- Acts 5:14 - 14Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and **were added to their number**. 15As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter’s shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. 16Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by impure spirits, and **all of them were healed**.
- Acts 6:7 – “And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples **multiplied greatly** in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.”

Expansion of the Church

Expansion in Judea & Samaria

- Acts 9:31 – “So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, **it multiplied.**”

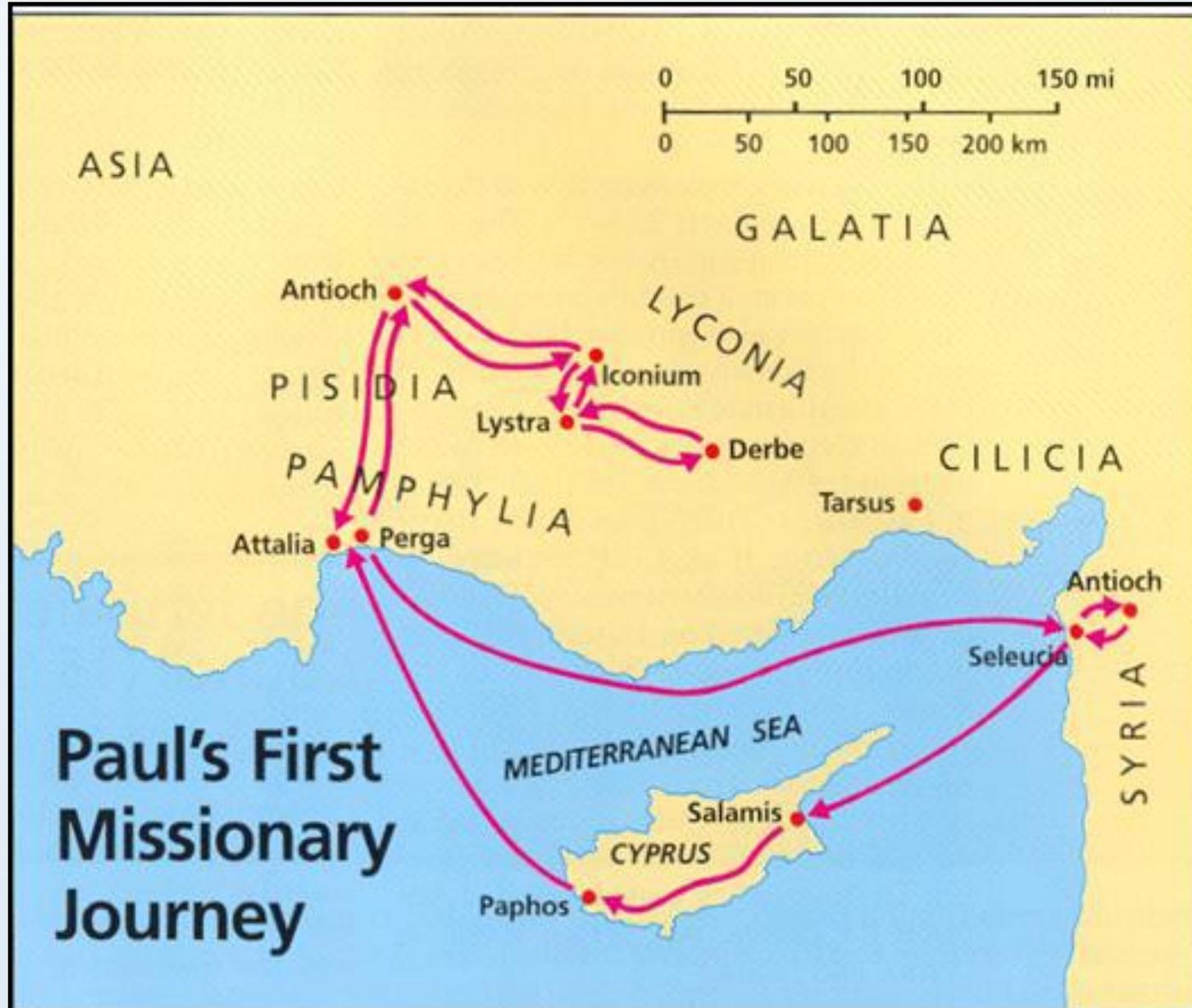
Expansion to the Gentiles

- Acts 10:44 “While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. 45And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because **the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles.**
- Acts 12:24 – “But the word of God **increased and multiplied.**”

Expansion to the Nations

- Acts 13:2 – “While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them...4The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus.

Paul's First Missionary Journey



Jerusalem Council

The First Far-Reaching Controversy – Inclusion of Multi-ethnic Believers into the Covenant People of God

- ❖ **The Issue** – Paul and Barnabas planted multi-ethnic communities of new believers throughout Asia Minor and taught these new believers that they now through their faith in Christ alone belonged fully to the people of God – known to that point as Israel.
- ❖ **The Objection** – God chose Israel for salvation. Only those who belong to the ethnic, covenant people of Israel can be among the righteous. Belonging to Israel necessarily involves circumcision, obedience to the Law of Moses, and most particularly those laws demonstrating Israel's distinctiveness from the other nations, e.g. food laws, Sabbath, etc. If the Gentiles are to receive the benefits of the covenant, then they need to belong to the people of the covenant and follow the rules of the covenant.
- ❖ **The Logic: Circular Reasoning** – A->B, then B->A e.g. All Ravens are black; that bird is black therefore it is a Raven. The Promise was given to Israel; therefore all who receive the promise must become part of ethnic Israel.

Jerusalem Council

The Jerusalem Council – Acts 15; cf. Gal. 2

1. Paul vs. The Circumcision Group

Acts 15:1-2, Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.” This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question.

2. What about Moses & the Law? What about Abraham?

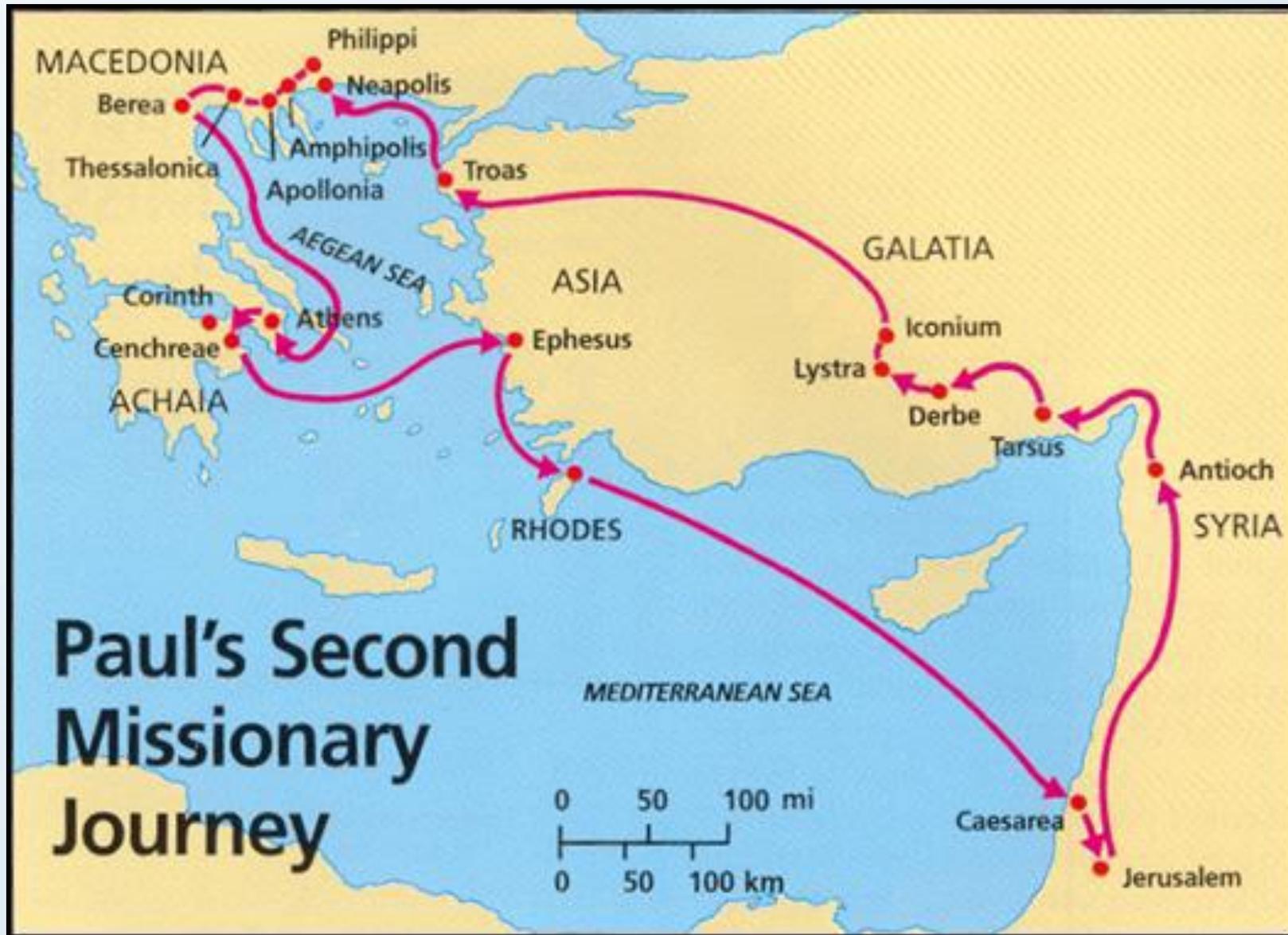
- “this dynamic narrative of God’s saving purpose for all nations through Abraham—is the heart of the gospel as announced by the Scriptures.”¹
- “The ingathering of the nations was the very thing Israel existed for in the purpose of God; it was the fulfillment of the bottom line of God’s promise to Abraham...to belong to Israel was to be a true child of Abraham, no matter what a person’s ethnicity is, for ‘If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise’ (Gal. 3:29)”²

Jerusalem Council

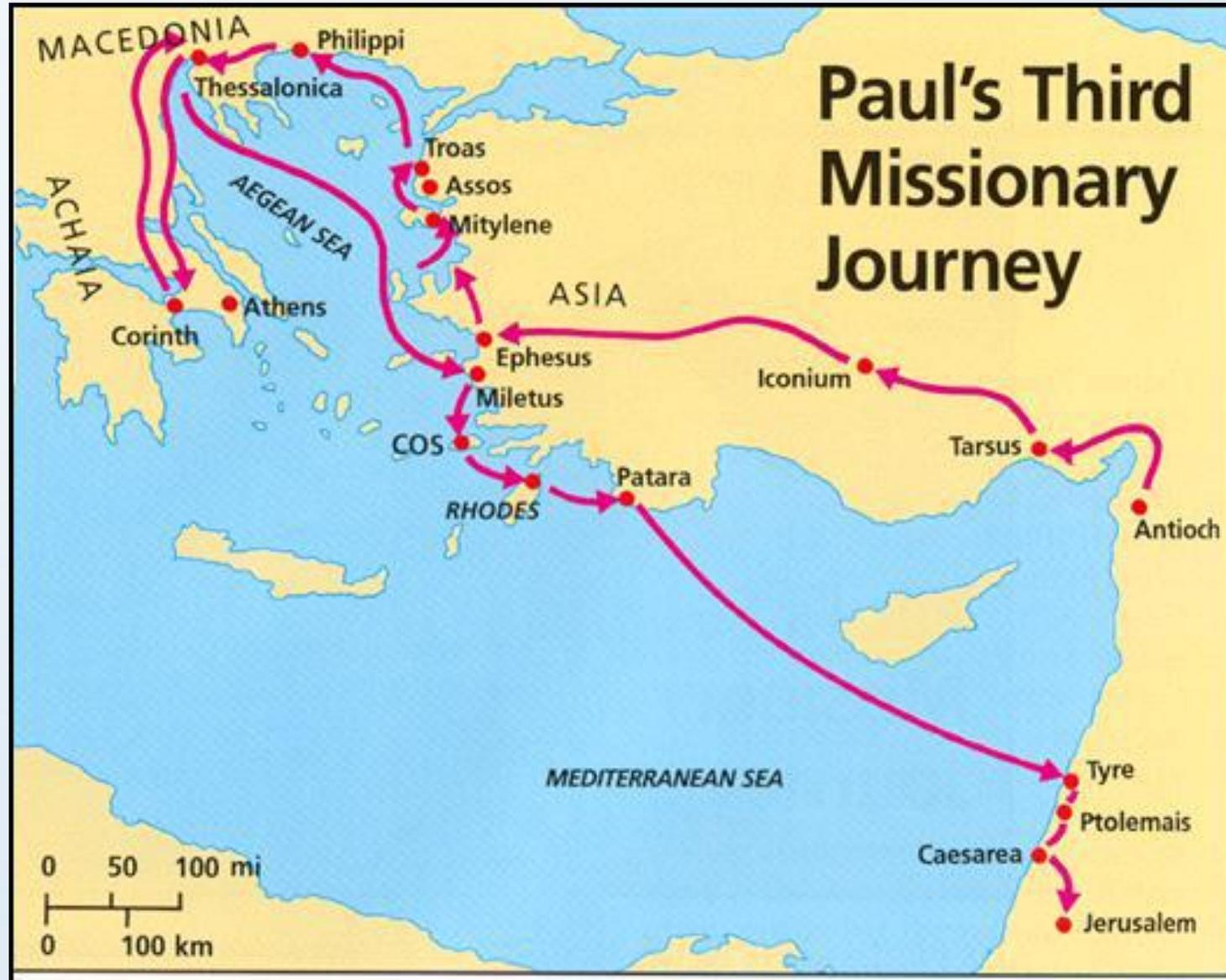
Conclusions

- The Gospel is all-inclusive by faith in Christ alone
- The apostles admonished unity among the culturally diverse believers by advocating self-restraint from that which is particularly offensive to others.
- This powerful message brought joy and hope to diverse Gentile communities
- Although the apostles' ruling was authoritative, scripturally-based, and clearly proclaimed, many continued the Judaizing practices causing upheavals within the fledgling church and even violent riots in the cities.
- Most of Paul's Epistles address unity within the multi-ethnic church and attack the corruption of the gospel by the Judaizers. Paul's juxtaposed themes of Circumcision/Uncircumcision, Jew/Gentile, Flesh/Spirit, Law/Grace are all interwoven with the mission to the Gentiles, the Sufficiency of Faith in Christ, and the conclusions of the Council

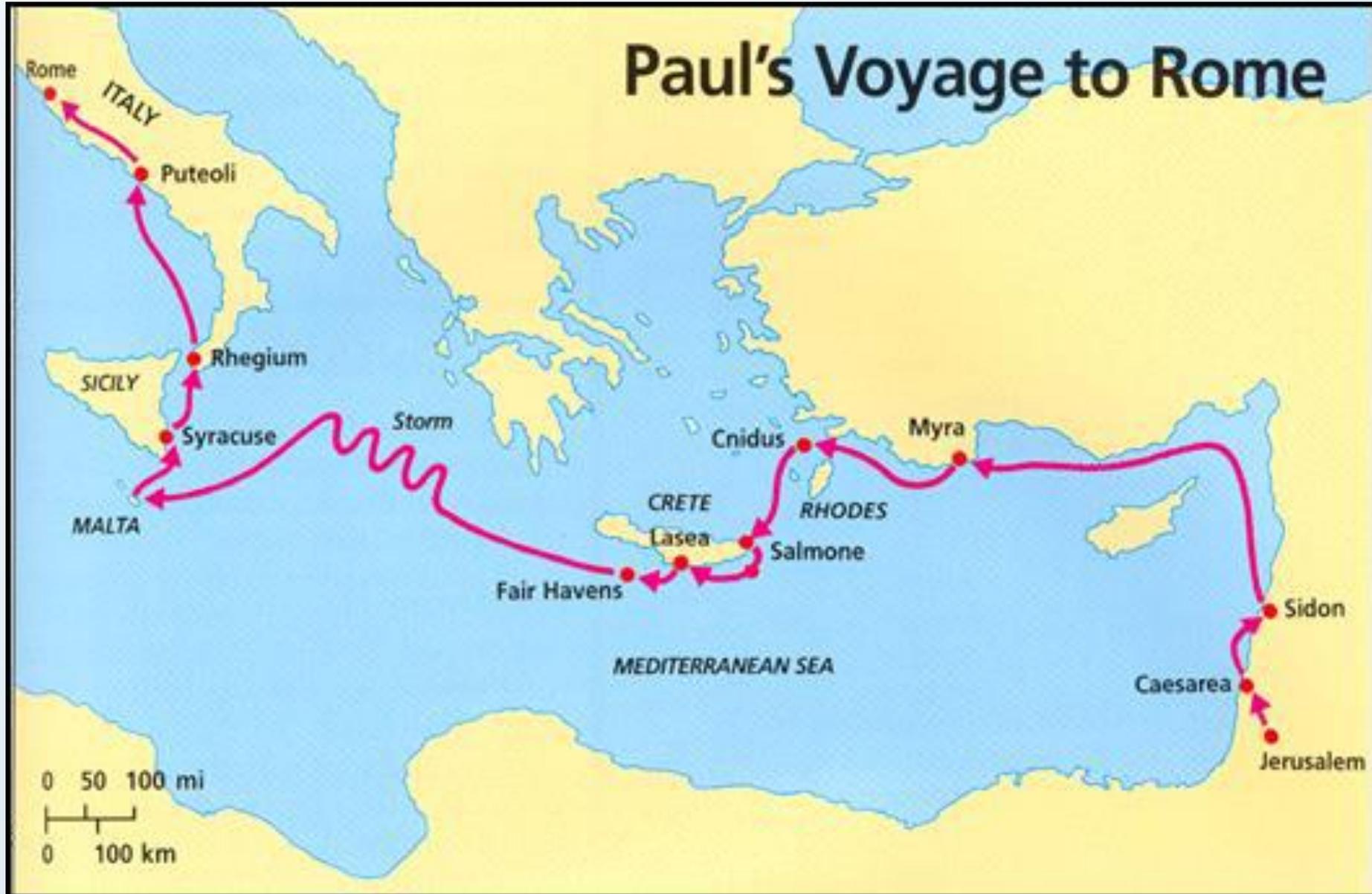
Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey



Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey

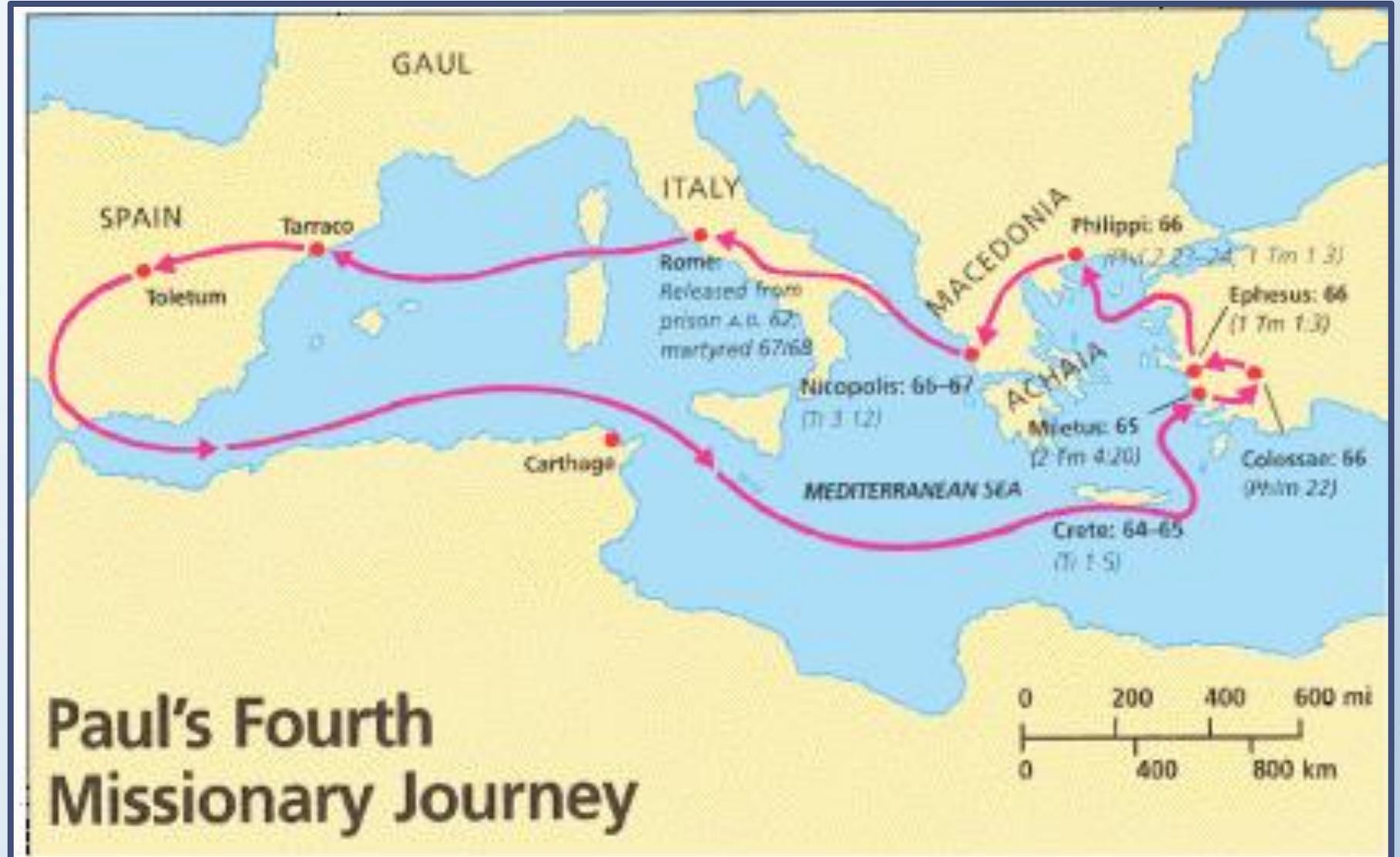


Paul's Trip to Rome

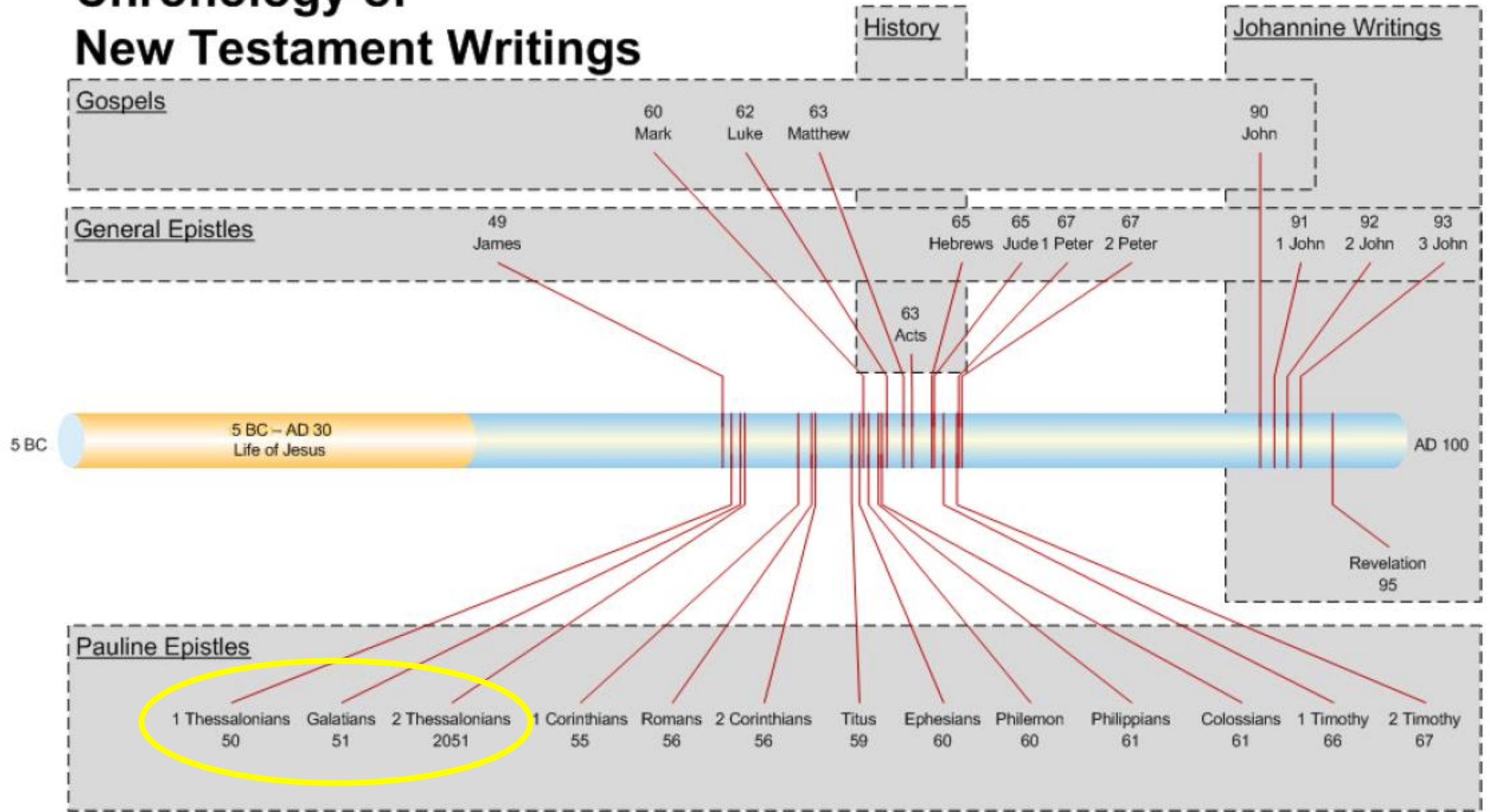


Paul's Final Journeys

1. Rome – released from prison 62 AD
2. Spain – 62-64 (Ro. 15:24,28)
3. Crete – 64-65 (Tit. 1:5)
4. Miletus – 65 (2 Tim. 4:20)
5. Colosse – 66 (Phm. 22)
6. Ephesus – 66 (1 Tim 1:3)
7. Philippi – 66 (Ph. 2:23; 1 Tim. 1:3)
8. Nicopolis 66-67 (Tit. 3:12)
9. Rome – 67 (2 Tim 1:17)
10. Martyrdom – 67/68 (2 Tim. 4:6)



Chronology of New Testament Writings



1 Thessalonians 50
Galatians 51
2 Thessalonians 2051

Galatians

Judaizers

- Moral, Upright Jewish Believers in Jesus
- Salvation comes through Israel (ethnic)
- Sincere, yet Narrow-minded
- What about Moses and the Law?

Paul's Response

- This is another Gospel
- His Authority
- Enforcing Jerusalem Council Decision
- Very Serious 1:8,9 – anathema, eternally condemned
- What about Abraham? Preeminence of Abraham before Moses
 - 3:7 Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. 8 Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." 3:8 Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18 9 So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Thessalonians

