

GPS: God's Positioning System

Reading the Bible through a Geographical Lens



Session 6

From Jerusalem to Rome

Geography of the Early Church

Acts 1.12: Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, ... a Sabbath day's journey away



<http://goo.gl/maps/xOXJ5>

“Sabbath’s day journey” = ~ .6 miles = ~1km
(cf. Luke 24.50: “as far as Bethany”)

DISTRIBUTION OF ROMAN LEGIONS IN THE TIME OF TIBERIUS

- City
- X Gemina Roman legions
- Roman Empire
- Provincial boundaries



THE JEWISH DIASPORA AT PENTECOST

- City with a Jewish population at the time of Pentecost
- Region attested at Pentecost (Acts 2:9ff)
- Other regions of Jewish diaspora

EARLY SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY ACCORDING TO ACTS

Acts 1-7: Church in Jerusalem
Martyrdom of Stephen >

Philip in Samaria (Peter & John)
Philip & eunuch in Gaza

Conversion of Saul
(Damascus > Jerusalem)

Acts 9.31: The church throughout
Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had
peace and was built up. Living in
the fear of the Lord and in the
comfort of the Holy Spirit, it
increased in numbers.

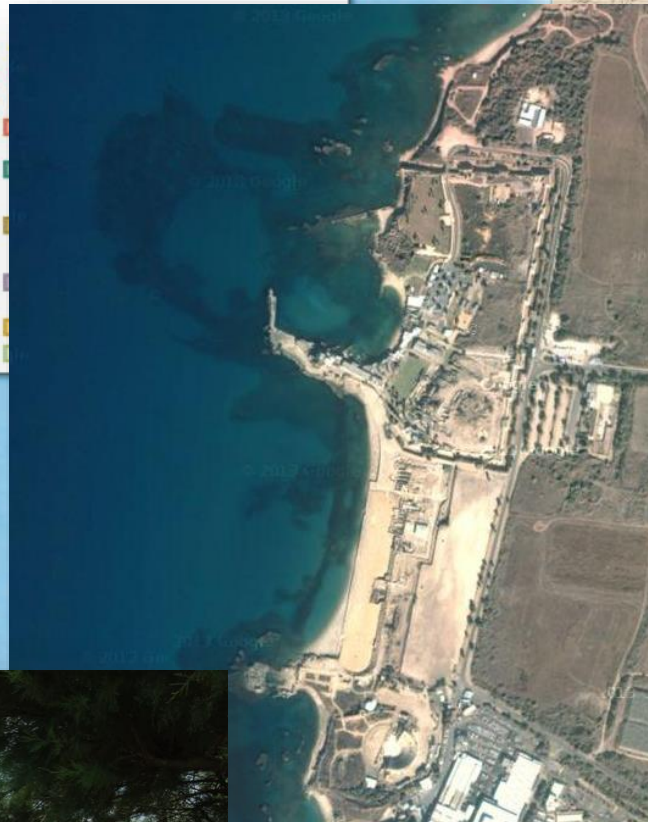
Peter in Lydda & Joppa >>...



ACTS 10: THE BEGINNING OF THE GENTILE MISSION

Cornelius the Gentile
in Caesarea Maritima

KINGDOM OF HEROD THE GREAT



FIRST MISSION JOURNEY

Barnabas and Paul start from Antioch Acts 13-14

ACTS 15:
Jerusalem Council Confirmation of the Gentile Mission

15.36ff: Paul (w/ Silas) & Barnabas (w/ Mark) split

NMAB

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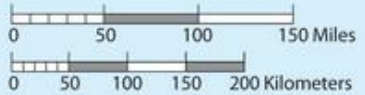




SECOND MISSION JOURNEY Acts 16-18

- ✘ 16.6ff: Commission – Vision of Macedonian Man
- ✘ Troas > Samothrace > Neapolis > Philippi

●	City
▲	Mountain peak
≡	Mountain pass
LYCIA	Roman provincial name
—	Second Missionary Journey: Paul and Silas





Neapolis





Via Egnatia to/ in Philippi





Philippi



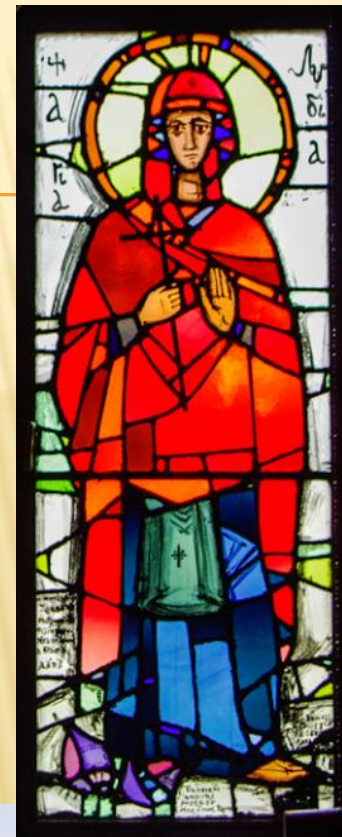
Looking south

Philippi forum in foreground and ruins of Basilica B (6th century CE) behind

In distance is Plain of Philippi where Battle of Philippi fought in 42 BCE and Octavian (Augustus) and Mark Antony defeated Brutus and Cassius

PAUL IN PHILIPPI

✕ 16.13ff: Lydia

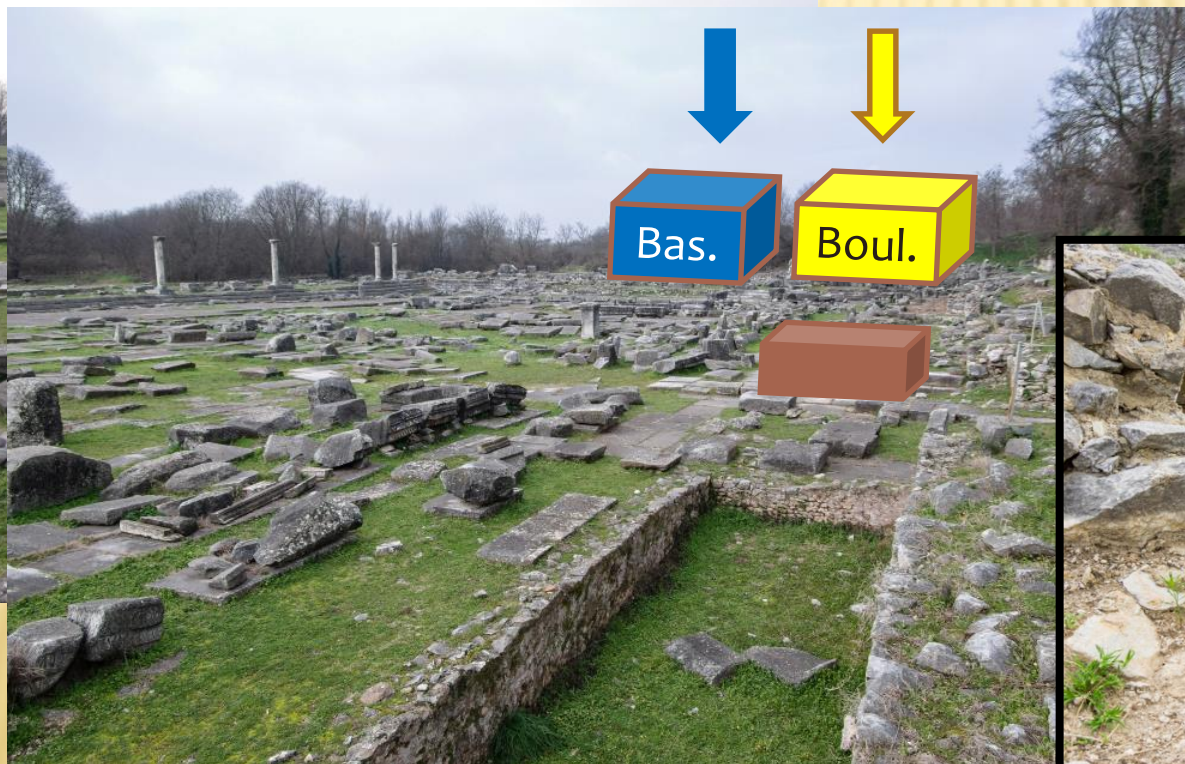


Acts 16.13: “On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there.”



PAUL IN PHILIPPI

- ✘ 16.16ff. – Ugliness involving fortune-telling slave girl
- ✘ “But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities, and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates...”



✘ *Earthquake and escape from prison*

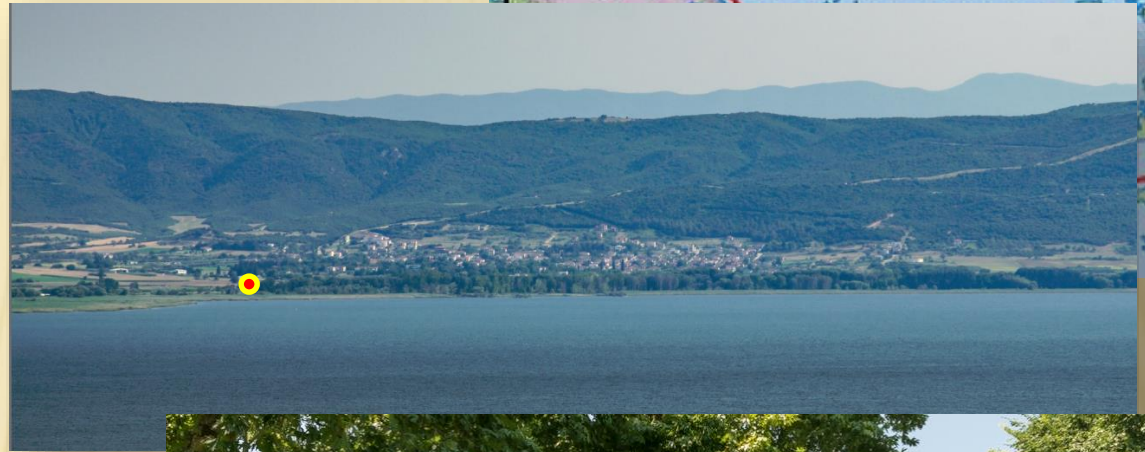


ACTS 17.1

After Paul and Silas had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica...



Philippi > Amphipolis > Apollonia > Thess.



Apollonia
on south
shore of
Lake Volvi



The Lion of Amphipolis

ACTS 17

Thessalonica > Berea > Athens

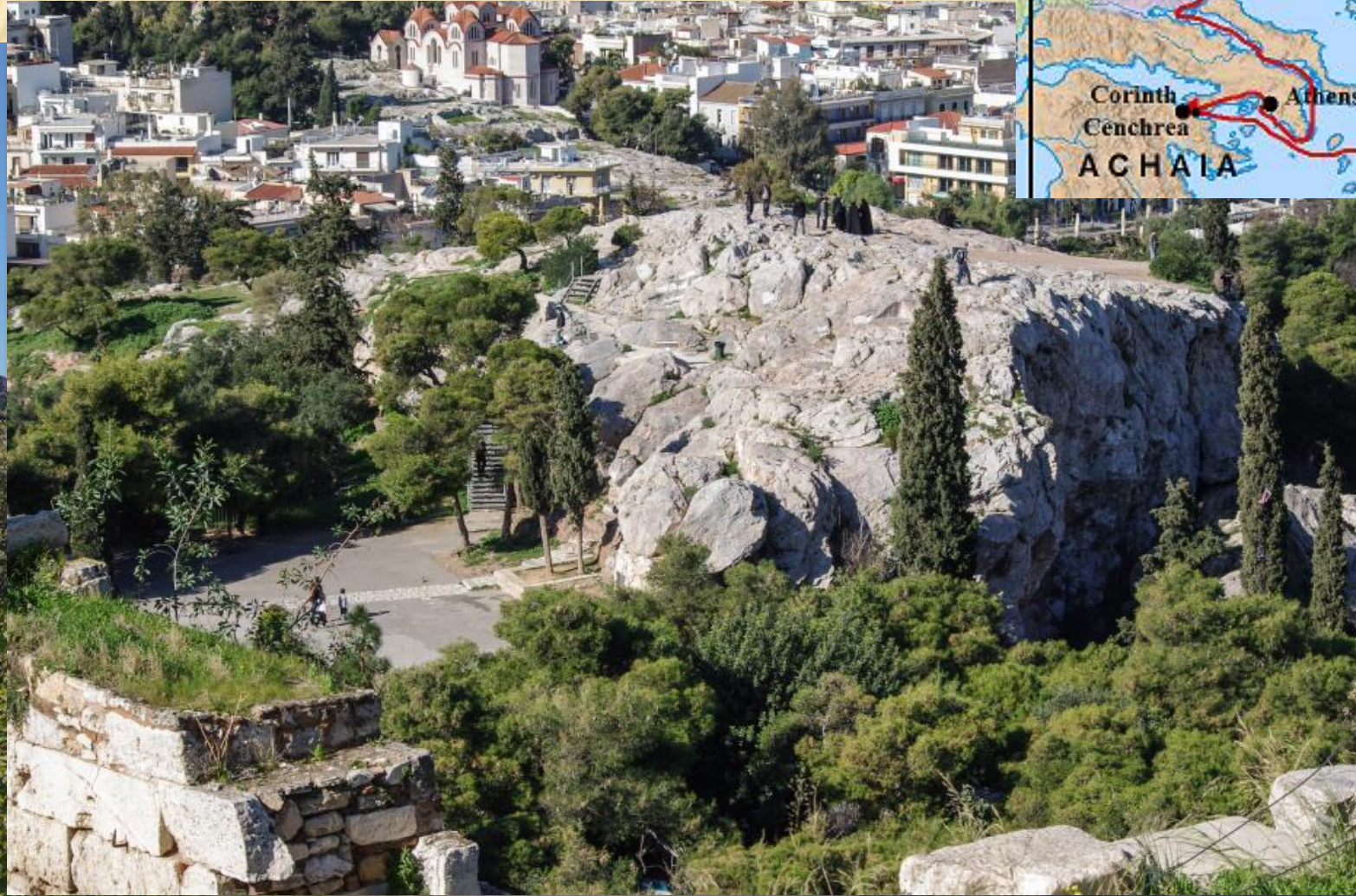


Thessalonica (poor Jason...)

Beroea

ACTS 17

Beroea > Athens



Agora &
Parthenon

Aeropagus

ACTS 18

Athens > **Corinth**

Paul spends at least 1.5 years here



Gallo inscription from Delphi
Acrocorinth / Lechaion St



18.12: But when Gallio (52CE) was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal.

ACTS 18

Corinth > **Cenchreae** > Ephesus >
Caesarea/Jerusalem > Antioch



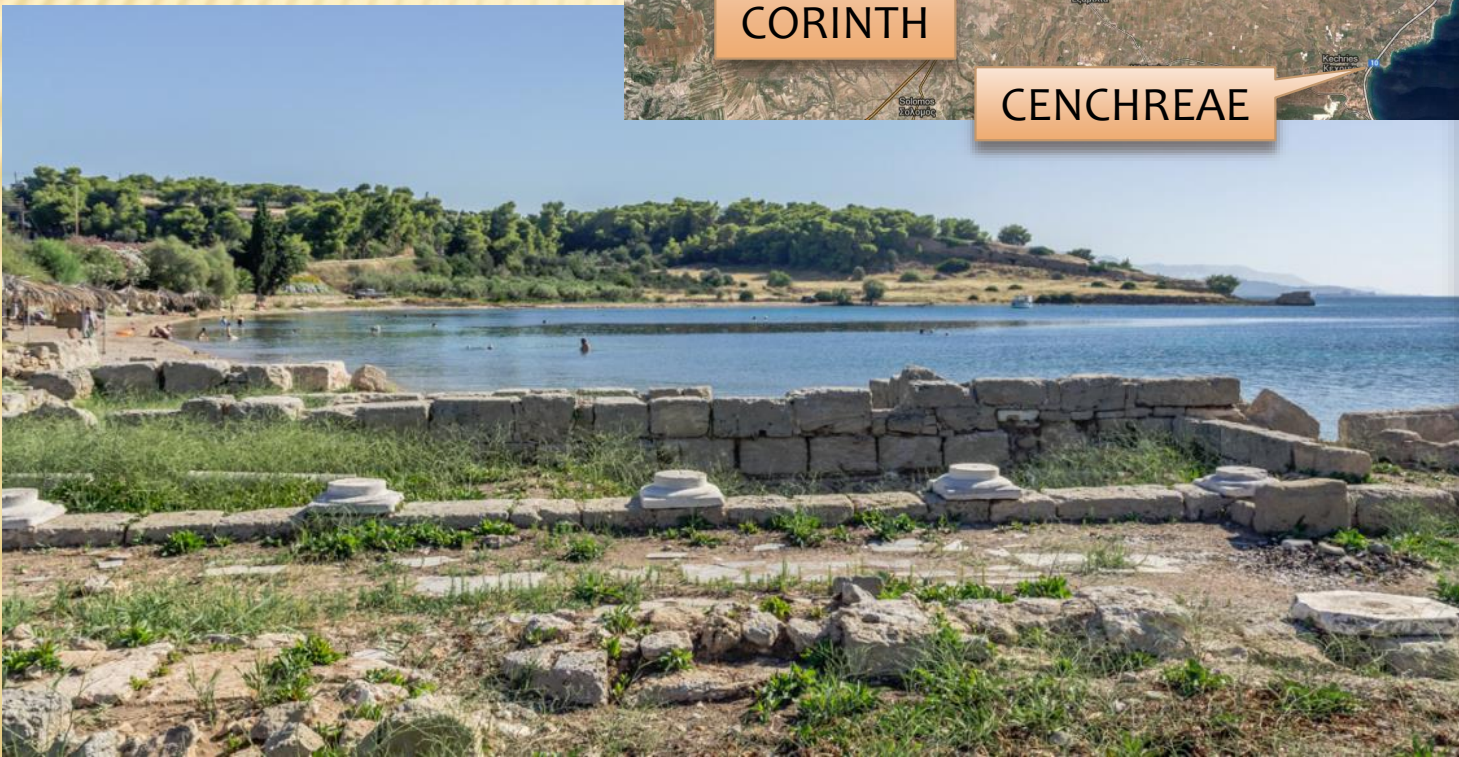
LECHAION

Diolkos
Modern Canal

CORINTH

ACTS 18

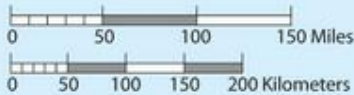
Corinth >
Cenchreae >
Ephesus >
Caesarea/Jerusalem
> Antioch





THIRD MISSION JOURNEY

- City
- ⊙ Addressee of Pauline Epistle
- ▲ Mountain peak
- ≡ Mountain pass
- LYCIA Roman provincial name
- Third Missionary Journey : Paul



3

3

ACTS 19: EPHESUS

2 years >> riot!

Curetes Street

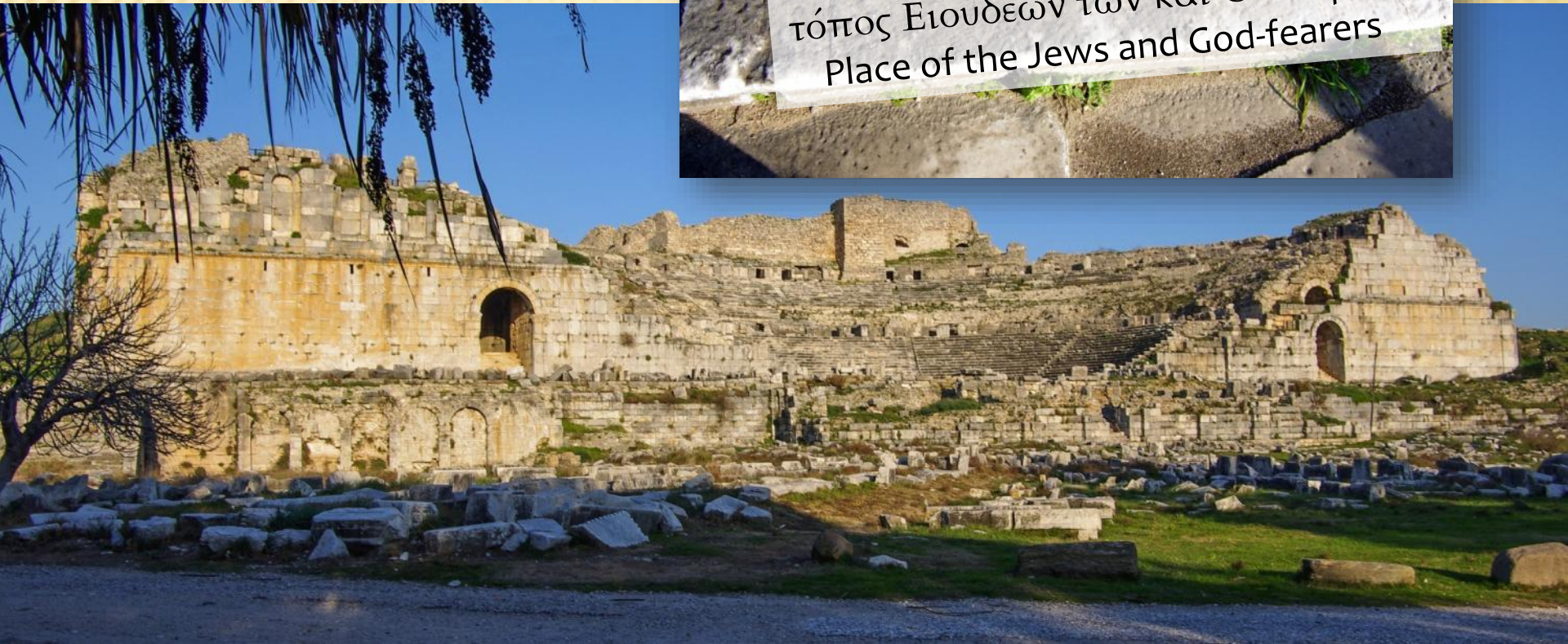


Temple of Artemis

Library of Celsus (2nd CE)

ACTS 20:

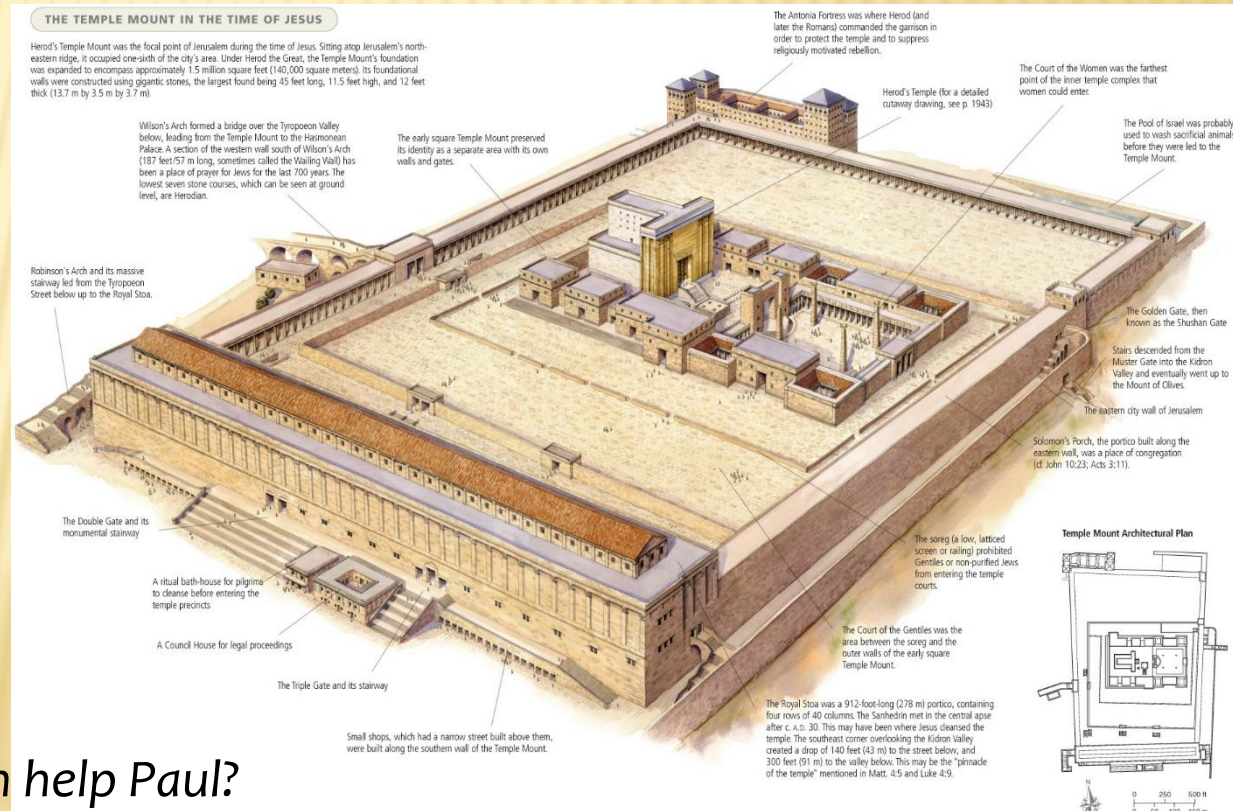
Ephesus > Macedonia >
Greece (Corinth) > Philippi >
Troas (Eutychus!) > **Miletus** >
Sidon > Caesarea >
Jerusalem



PAUL IN JERUSALEM

- In his letters, Paul talks about the importance of the offering for the Jerusalem Christians he has gathered from his Jewish / Gentile Christian congregations
- This offering is never mentioned in Acts...
- Instead, when Paul visits with James and elders in Jerusalem (21.17ff), they express concern about his teaching >> Paul pays for purification rites for self and 4 others
- Paul causes riot at Temple (falsely charged w/ bringing in a Gentile), dragged out and nearly killed
- Antonia cohort rescues Paul > Temple defense (22)
- Paul's defense before Council (23.1-10)
- Death plot > night flight to Antipatris > Caesarea (23.11-35)
- Paul imprisoned for 2-3 years; trials before Felix > Festus, Agrippa II / Bernice > appeal to Caesar

What about the offering?
 Why didn't Jerusalem Church help Paul?



PAUL'S JOURNEY TO ROME





Pergamum

Thyatira

Smyrna

Sardis

Philadelphia

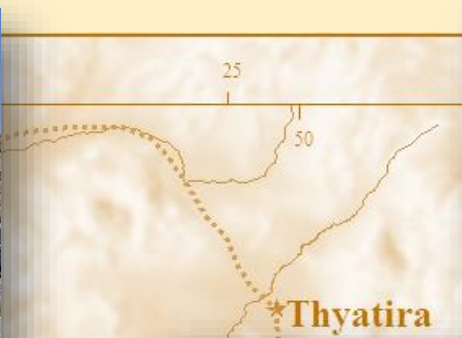
Ephesus

Meander River

Laodicea

PATMOS

Seven Churches of Revelation



100 mi

Thyatira



Hermus River



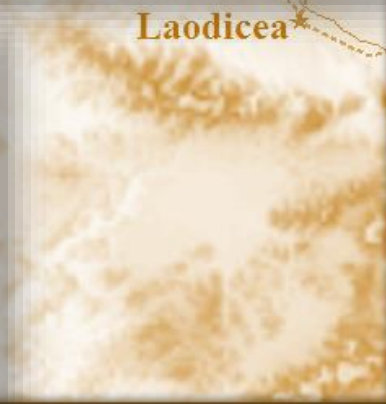
Ephesus



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Laodicea



SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY IN ROMAN EMPIRE



GPS: God's Positioning System

Reading the Bible through a Geographical Lens

- Today, when everyone and everything is so digitally connected, does geography matter at all?
- In 1000 years, if some archaeologist were to excavate your church, what conclusions would they draw?
- Is it helpful or harmful to have a sense of a “holy land”?
- What are the holy places in your faith community?
- Is the idea of pilgrimage a good thing?
- If you should visit the biblical lands, what places would you most want to see? What would you hope to experience?

ONE LAST MATTER...

Geology and geography explain why things happened *where* they did.

Ancient literature and archaeology explain *what* happened.

The Bible explains *why* things happened.

How will the study of the biblical world affect what we believe and think and what we do in the modern world?