BIBLE TOPICS · NEW TESTAMENT

The Apostle Paul

Persecutor, Apostle, Missionary and Martyr · c. A.D. 5–67

Tarsus
Born a Jew and a Roman

Damascus Road
Met Jesus, c. A.D. 34

Three Journeys
And a voyage to Rome

13 Letters
Romans to Philemon

TIMELINE

Timeline of Paul's Life

Twelve moments from Tarsus to Rome. Dates are approximate and follow the order of Acts and Paul's letters.

1 c. A.D. 5 · ACTS 22:3

Born in Tarsus

A Jew of the tribe of Benjamin and a Roman citizen.

2 ACTS 22:3

Taught by Gamaliel

Trained in Jerusalem as a strict Pharisee.

3 c. A.D. 33 · ACTS 7–8

Stephen Stoned

Saul guards the coats and then ravages the church.

4 c. A.D. 34 · ACTS 9

The Damascus Road

The risen Jesus meets him; Ananias baptizes him.

5 GALATIANS 1:17–18

Arabia and Jerusalem

Three years later he meets Peter in Jerusalem.

6 c. A.D. 44 · ACTS 11

Antioch

Teaching with Barnabas where believers are first called Christians.

7 c. A.D. 46–48 · ACTS 13–14

First Journey

Cyprus and Galatia with Barnabas.

8 c. A.D. 49 · ACTS 15

Jerusalem Council

Salvation by grace for Jew and Gentile.

9 c. A.D. 49–52 · ACTS 16–18

Second Journey

The gospel crosses into Europe.

10 c. A.D. 53–57 · ACTS 19–21

Third Journey

Three years in Ephesus; Romans written.

11 c. A.D. 57–62 · ACTS 21–28

Arrest and Rome

Caesarea, shipwreck on Malta, two years in Rome.

12 c. A.D. 67 · 2 TIMOTHY 4

Faithful to the End

Martyred in Rome under Nero.

KEY VERSE

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day."

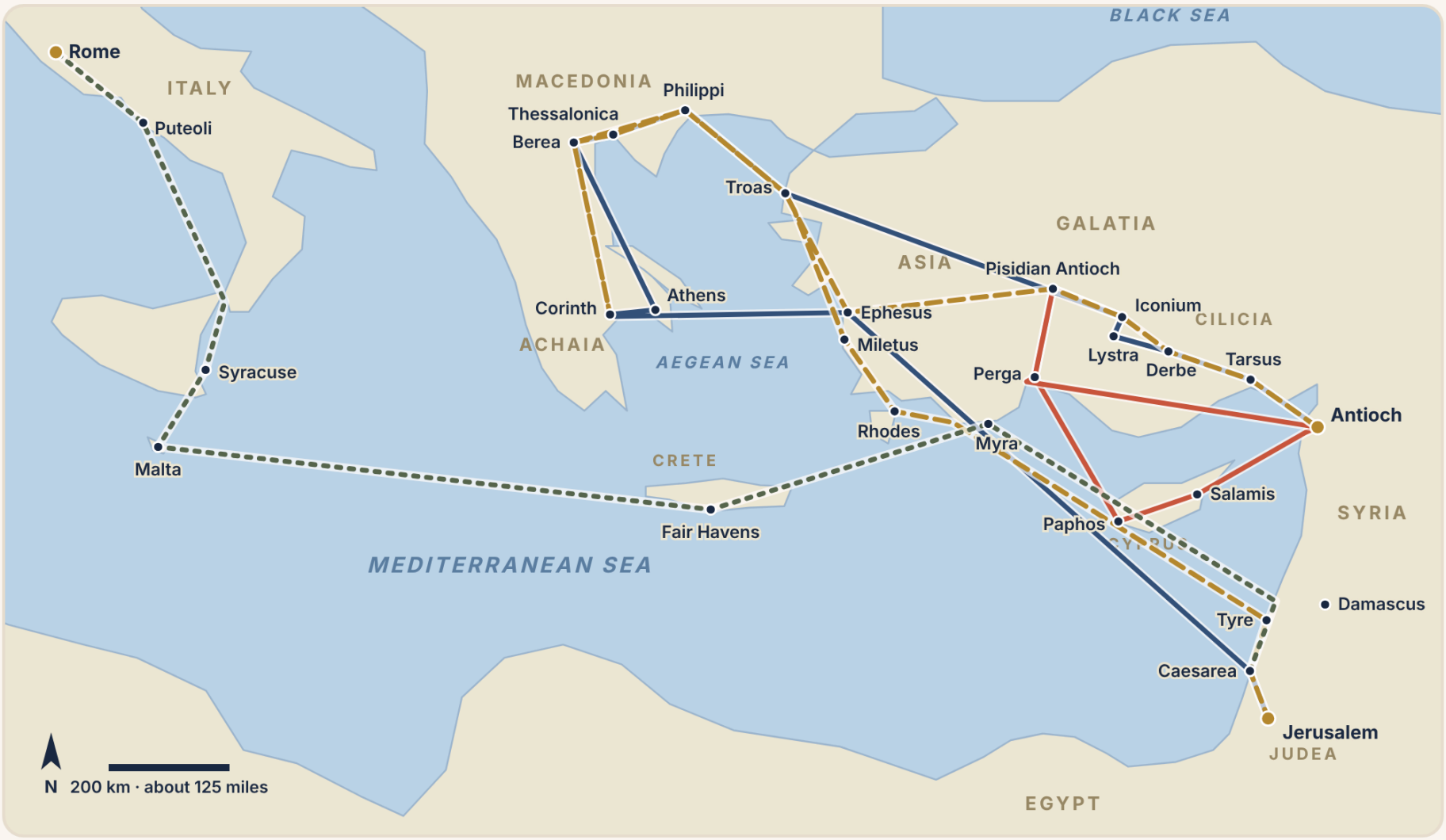
2 Timothy 4:7-8 (KJV)

Map of Paul's Missionary Journeys

ACTS 13 – 28 · c. A.D. 46–60

Paul's Missionary Journeys

From Antioch to the ends of the Roman world



First journey
c. A.D. 46–48 · Acts 13–14

Second journey
c. A.D. 49–52 · Acts 15:36–18:22

Third journey
c. A.D. 53–57 · Acts 18:23–21:16

Voyage to Rome
c. A.D. 59–60 · Acts 27–28

KEY VERSE

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith"

2 TIMOTHY 4:7 (KJV)

BibleStudyForAll.com · Scripture quotations from the King James Version

The Damascus Road and His Letters

ACTS 9

The Damascus Road

Paul told the story of his conversion three times in Acts (9, 22 and 26). It changed his life and the history of the church.

A Light from Heaven

At midday, brighter than the sun.

“and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven”

ACTS 9:3

The Voice of Jesus

To persecute the church is to persecute Christ.

“Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?”

ACTS 9:4

Who Art Thou, Lord?

The risen Jesus revealed Himself.

“I am Jesus whom thou persecutest”

ACTS 9:5

A Chosen Vessel

God told Ananias of Paul’s calling.

“for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel”

ACTS 9:15

Scales Fall

Paul received his sight and was baptized.

“And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales”

ACTS 9:18

He Preached Christ

At once the persecutor became a preacher.

“And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.”

ACTS 9:20

ROMANS – PHILEMON

The Thirteen Letters of Paul

Thirteen books of the New Testament begin with Paul’s name. Nine were written to churches and four to individual believers.

Letters to Churches

ROMANS

The Gospel Explained

Sin, justification by faith and life in the Spirit.

1 CORINTHIANS

A Divided Church

Unity, purity, love and the resurrection.

2 CORINTHIANS

Strength in Weakness

Paul’s heart for a troubled church.

GALATIANS

Freedom in Christ

Saved by grace, not by the law.

EPHESIANS

The Church in Christ

Every spiritual blessing in Christ.

PHILIPPIANS

Joy in Christ

Written from prison, full of joy.

COLOSSIANS

Christ Above All

The fulness of God in Christ.

1 THESSALONIANS

The Lord’s Coming

Comfort and hope for a young church.

2 THESSALONIANS

Stand Fast

The day of the Lord and faithful work.

Letters to Individuals

1 TIMOTHY

Order in the Church

Sound doctrine and godly leaders.

2 TIMOTHY

His Last Letter

Preach the word; endure to the end.

TITUS

Good Works

Grace that teaches godly living.

PHILEMON

A Brother

Receive Onesimus as a brother.

Each letter has its own study page under Bible Books.

His Fellow Workers and His Sufferings

FELLOW WORKERS

People in Paul's Life

Paul never worked alone. These men and women served, travelled, suffered and prayed with him.

DISCIPLE

Ananias

Laid hands on Saul and restored his sight.

ACTS 9:10–17

ENCOURAGER

Barnabas

Brought Paul to the apostles and to Antioch.

ACTS 9:27; 11:25–26

PARTNER

Silas

Sang with Paul in the Philippian jail.

ACTS 16:25

SON IN THE FAITH

Timothy

Paul's closest helper and the receiver of two letters.

ACTS 16:1–3; 1 TIMOTHY 1:2

PHYSICIAN

Luke

Travelled with Paul and wrote Acts.

COLOSSIANS 4:14; 2 TIMOTHY 4:11

TENTMAKERS

Aquila and Priscilla

Worked and taught with Paul.

ACTS 18:2–3; ROMANS 16:3–4

FIRST CONVERT IN EUROPE

Lydia

Her heart the Lord opened at Philippi.

ACTS 16:14

RESTORED

John Mark

Left the first journey, later "profitable" to Paul.

ACTS 15:37–39; 2 TIMOTHY 4:11

SON IN THE FAITH

Titus

Trusted with hard tasks in Corinth and Crete.

2 CORINTHIANS 7:6; TITUS 1:4–5

2 CORINTHIANS 11

What Paul Suffered for Christ

Jesus said of Paul, "I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake" (Acts 9:16). Paul listed some of them himself.

1

Beaten

Five times by the Jews, three times with rods.

2 CORINTHIANS 11:24–25

2

Stoned

At Lystra, and left for dead.

ACTS 14:19

3

Shipwrecked

Three times, even before the wreck on Malta.

2 CORINTHIANS 11:25; ACTS 27

4

Imprisoned

In Philippi, Caesarea and Rome.

ACTS 16:23; 24:27; 28:16

5

A Thorn in the Flesh

God answered with grace, not removal.

"My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

6

Care for the Churches

Daily concern for every church.

"that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

2 CORINTHIANS 11:28

> *"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."*
>
> Romans 8:18 (KJV)

Lessons and Themes

FOR TODAY

Lessons from Paul's Life

Paul invited believers to follow him as he followed Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1). His life still teaches us.

1

No One Is Beyond Grace

If God saved Paul, He can save anyone.

"Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering"

1 TIMOTHY 1:16

2

Forget What Is Behind

Paul did not let his past hold him back.

"forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before"

PHILIPPIANS 3:13

3

Be Content

Christ is enough in plenty and in need.

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

PHILIPPIANS 4:13

4

Do Not Be Ashamed

Share the gospel boldly.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ"

ROMANS 1:16

5

Invest in Others

Pass on what you have learned.

"the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

2 TIMOTHY 2:2

6

Finish Well

Run the race to the end.

"I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

PHILIPPIANS 3:14

KEY THEMES

Six Themes of Paul's Life

These six threads run through Paul's story and his letters.

1

Grace to the Worst of Sinners

God saved the man who persecuted His church.

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

1 TIMOTHY 1:15

2

Saved by Grace Through Faith

Paul's great message: salvation is God's gift.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God"

EPHESIANS 2:8

3

The Gospel for All Nations

Jew and Gentile are one in Christ.

"for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth"

ROMANS 1:16

4

Christ Is All

Knowing Christ was worth more than everything else.

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

PHILIPPIANS 1:21

5

Strength in Weakness

Suffering showed God's power, not Paul's.

"for when I am weak, then am I strong."

2 CORINTHIANS 12:10

6

Faithful to the End

He finished the race God gave him.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith"

2 TIMOTHY 4:7