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## Session 1

### The Starting Point

1. Inspiration - book as a whole    2 Tim 3:16-17
2. Confirmation:
  - A. Forming the Canon
    1. Early church fathers quoted often from New Testament books (90-170 AD)
    2. The Beginning Assimilations
      - a. Muratorian Canon - Mark, Luke, John, 13 letters of Paul, 2 of John, Jude, Revelation (c. 170)
      - b. After 200 AD, most New Testament books easily referred to as Scripture. Those not universally accepted: Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude
      - c. By 300, Hebrews gains acceptance (Eusebus)
      - d. By 360, Athanasius of Alexandria cites all 27
      - e. Third Council at Charthage (397), all 27 received a
    3. Standards by which authenticity were judged
      - a. Apostolic origin
      - b. How it was received by the original churches
      - c. Consistency of doctrine
  - B. Others:
    1. Martin Luther relegated 4 books to secondary status: Hebrews, James, Jude and Revelation.
    2. Calvin ignored 2 and 3 John and Revelation
  - C. Evangelicalism's creedal statement
  - D. Why I accept the existing text?
    1. Test of time - no other writings have emerged with the same weight
    2. Internal consistency - no big issues arise.
    3. Bears witness in relationship (God who is knowable)
3. Dictated By God, or uniquely inspired writers?
  - A. Fig tree narratives
  - B. Resurrection accounts
  - C. Cleansing the temple - beginning or end, once or twice?

## Session 2

### Who is God Really?

1. God's Character & the Clash of the Testaments
  - A. OT: Master/slave, offended, angry deity. Curses and punishes with violent interaction, whose name cannot even be mentioned.
  - B. NT: friend to friend (John 15:15), bride to bridegroom, Abba to children (Romans 8:15)
  - C. What is substantive and what is perception?
2. Something changes between the Testaments
  - A. Sodom and Gomorrah vs. James and John wanting to call down fire
  - B. "Stone the Adulterer" to John 8 forgiveness & empowerment
  - C. To Fear or Not to Fear
  - D. The New Testament Fear Factor (PP) – Why the need? Why is it easier to believe
3. Could it be our perception of God changing, not God himself?
  - A. OT Focus on Love
    1. "The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love." Psalm and numerous other places.
    2. "Do not be afraid" Almost every time God makes himself known
    3. Deuteronomy 6 – the previously greatest command: Love God and love others
    4. Lovingkindness (184 x in NAS)
    5. Look up the use of love
    6. Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "I will be your God you will be my people." Lamentations 3:22-23:
4. Holding in tension those seemingly contradictory portions of Scripture 2 Peter 3:16

## Session 3

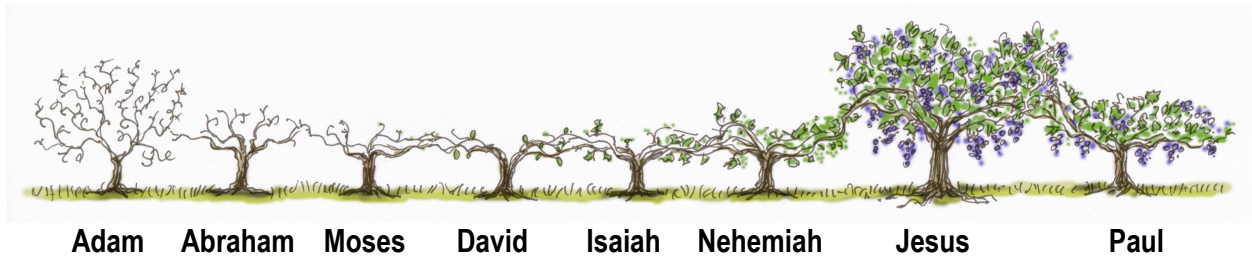
### The Story of Redemption

1. The Scriptures are progressive revelation of God inviting people out of darkness into his light. Galatians 4:1-7
2. Revelational Flow in Scripture
  - A. Sacrifices & Offerings
  - B. Curses
  - C. Executing the Law
  - D. Naming God (unspoken) to Abba & Jesus (Yeshua)
3. Evidence of this story
  - A. You heard the ancients say this.... (Jesus)
  - B. Peter 1:10-12 (PP) longed to look, couldn't understand, even angels
  - C. Matthew 11:11 about John the Baptist
  - D. OT misconceptions overturned in the New
    1. God is responsible for everything that happens
    2. Foods are really unclean
    3. People's sin is the cause of their own pain (James 1, John 9, Tower of Siloam,

Luke 13:4)

4. God as the author of lies, destruction, etc., instead of the rescuer.

#### 4. The Story of Redemption



- A. God created a world for us to enjoy him
- B. We chose a life apart from him and plunged the creation into darkness
- C. God set himself to win us back to himself from our own sin and shame.
  - Reveals himself as loving.
  - Invites us to follow his ways.
  - Faithful even in our faithlessness.
  - Holds sin in check until Redeemer comes
- D. Incarnation – God appears in the creation to show us what he’s like and to redeem the broken world.
- E. Believers explore that relationship and its resulting transformation
- F. Hints of the end where the created order is restored in a new heaven and new earth, a pure, undefiled eternity.

5. The Problem of Proof texting **Why proof-texting outside “the story” misleads**
- A. No one thing true at the expense of all others to be true!
  - B. Interpret inside the story
  - C. Let Scripture say what Scripture says. Acts 17:11

## Session 4

### The Jesus Lens

- 1. Jesus as the fulfillment and its conclusion
  - A. Emmaus Rd – Luke 24
  - B. The Word made flesh – John 1
  - C. John 5:39-40 – the beacon to Jesus!
- 2. I want to know the Jesus of Scripture well enough so that anything that comes my way I can take to him. Three voices must line up for me to have confidence
  - A. The Jesus I’m growing to know
  - B. The Scriptures
  - C. My conversations with others, including the voice of past followers
- 3. A Plan to understand the Story of Scripture
  - A. Begin with Jesus inside a relationship → The Gospels
  - B. See how the early church worked it out → Acts and the Epistles
  - C. See how history leads to that conclusion → Old Testament

4. What do we need to interpret Scripture?
  - A. Be a lover of truth – God as he really is!
  - B. Intellectual honesty and curiosity
  - C. Inside a conversation with Jesus in you
  - D. Maybe not all in one person but in the conversations that we have
5. Translations and Study Bibles

## **Session 5**

### **The Word of God**

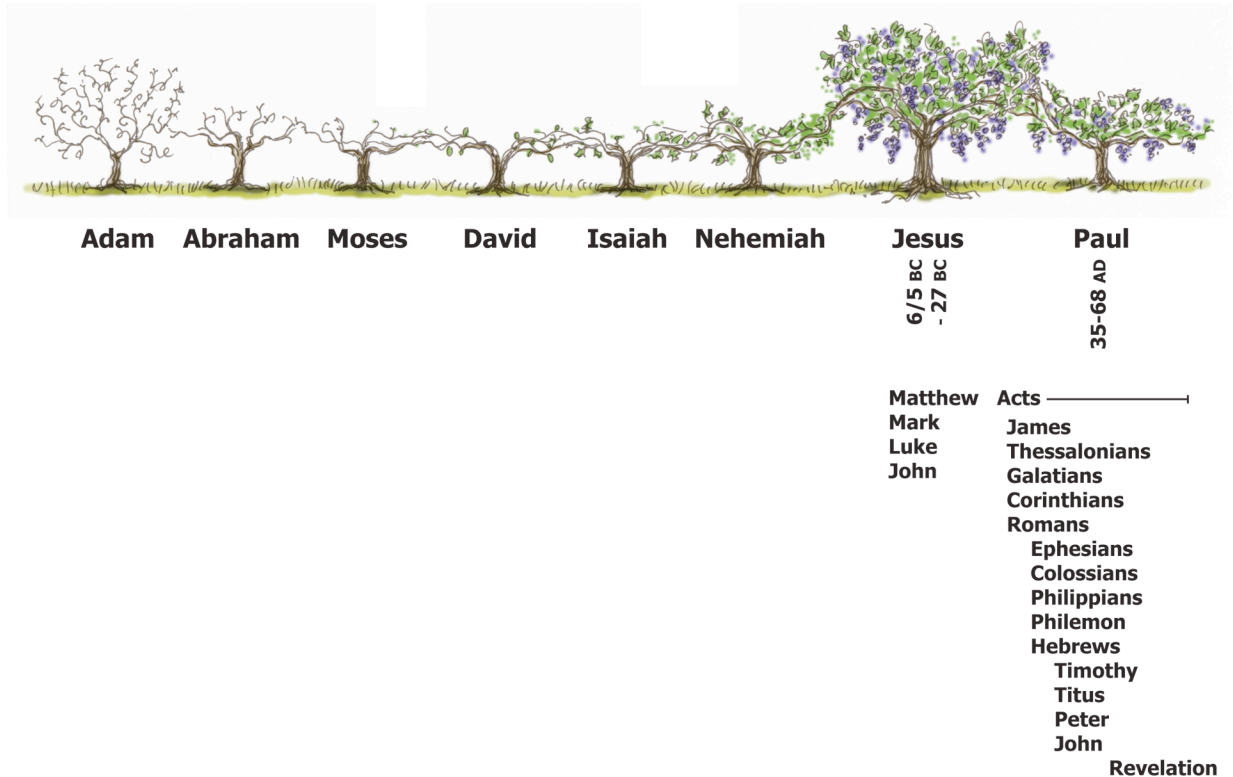
1. What is the Word of God, a book or a person? book or a person?  
John 14:6 The Way, Truth and Life.
2. How is it used in Scripture
  - A. A proclamation straight from him
  - B. Jesus the person
  - C. The gospel message
3. Calling the Bible the “Word of God” substituted a book and its principles for a relationship with Jesus
  - A. Follow the rules became more important than following him
  - B. The academics became the arbiters of truth, when they couldn’t recognize Jesus if he sat right in front of them. Following principles or following him!
  - C. Distorts so many passages
    1. Acts: “Teaching/preaching the Word”, “the word of God spread”, etc.
    2. 2 Cor. 4:2
    3. Hebrews 4:12

## **Session 6**

### **Beginning at the End — The Gospels**

1. The crowning climax of the story. We start at the ending.
  - A. The apostolic foundation for life in Christ
  - B. The Revelation of Jesus –
    1. Acts 3 Peter’s sermon at Pentecost
    2. Acts 10 Peter’s sermon at Cornelius’ house

## The Scripture Story



### 2. Relationship to Each Other and John's Gospel

#### A. Covering the Life of Jesus

Book	Similarities	Uniqueness
Mark	93%	7%
Matthew	58%	42%
Luke	41%	59%
John	8%	92%

#### B. Content

1. Synoptics – Mostly chronological accounts
2. John – Thematic with signs to convince he was the Christ

#### C. Focus:

1. Synoptics – Parables of the kingdom
2. John – Eternal life

#### D. Structure of the Gospels

1. Birth, Announcement, Baptism, and Temptations
2. His Ministry
  - a. Major Sermons (Matthew 5-7, Matthew 13, Matthew 23-25, John 13-16)
  - b. Miracles
  - c. Time with disciples and other followers
  - d. Personal encounters
  - e. Conflict with religious leaders
3. Passion and Resurrection

## Interpretive Key: Parables

1. Purpose: To demonstrate the radical changes of the kingdom, by very specific attachment to illustrations in this age. Matthew 13:10-17 Why do you teach us in parables?
  - A. To conceal truth from those who did not want it, external relationship with teaching, but not internal
  - B. To reveal to those who want to know the mysteries of the kingdom
2. What are they? Stories with a meaning or point
3. Interpreting
  - A. One chief point of comparison
    - a. Luke 11:5-13
    - b. Exception The wheat and tares
  - B. Understand the earthly details as well as the original hearers
  - C. Context: Who addressed and what is happening? (Luke 15)
  - D. Conclusion statement, if given
4. How does this point relate to the reign of God in his kingdom?
 

Widow in Luke 18 – not God's character, but our need to persevere

## **The Gospel According to Mark**

1. Background
  - A. Author and Recipients
    1. Probably the first gospel written--a quick overview of Jesus life, not including near as much detail as the other gospel writers.
    2. Most likely reflects Peter's preaching about the life of Jesus, given their close relationship, the perspective of this gospel, and their association in Rome about the time it was written.
    3. Writing to non Jewish people.
  - B. Date of writing – After Peter's death in Rome about 65 AD
2. Theme: The Son of God (Mark 10:45)
3. Characteristics
  - A. Overview at a brisk pace
  - B. Point of view – narrator who explains everything
  - C. Significant conflict with demons, Jewish leaders, disciples and how Jesus prevails
  - D. Jesus praying in early morning or night time.

## **The Gospels Continued**

### **The Gospel According to Matthew**

1. Background
  - A. Author and Recipients - Matthew, tax-gatherer, with Jewish readers in mind
  - B. Date of writing – AD 50 – AD 115
2. Theme: Demonstrating Jesus to be the Messiah
  - A. Quotes from Old Testament 53 times, from 19 different books; alludes to Old Testament, 67 times from 25 different books
  - B. Uses “that it might be Fulfilled,” 13 times
3. Characteristics
  - A. Major Teachings
    1. Sermon on the Mount (5-7)
    2. Ministry Charge to the Disciples (10)
    3. Kingdom Parables (13)
    4. Church and Discipleship (16, 18)
    5. The Second Coming (24 – 25)
  - B. Uses the term ‘kingdom’ 54 times in the gospel

### **The Gospel According to John**

1. Background
  - A. Author and Recipients – From the beginning – John, “the one who leaned on Jesus’ chest.”
  - B. Date – Late 1<sup>st</sup> century – uniqueness – Lazarus, water to wine, Nicodemus
2. Theme: Jesus is the Son of God – Deity emphasized
  - A. Purpose stated in John 20:30-31, so that others might believe.
  - B. The person of Christ, belief or unbelief, the result of death or eternal life depending on how one responded to him.
  - C. Father and Son emphasized
3. Major Characteristics
  - A. Intensely personal gospel, reflecting the relationship he had with Jesus.
  - B. Gives evidences of the deity of Christ – his preexistence with God, his claims in the “I am” proclamations and the seven “sign” miracles.
  - C. Most interpretive gospel, arranged theologically, not chronologically
  - D. Frequently used words: bread, water, love, life, light, truth
  - E. Very simple, but intensely profound – lots of symbolism and double meanings

#### 4. Outline and Contents: Mix of Story and Teaching

<b>Story</b>	<b>Teaching</b>	<b>Theme</b>
First disciples First miracle (1:19 – 2:25)	Nicodemus Testimony of John the Baptist Samaritan Woman (3:1-4:42)	Believe & Live
Nobleman's son, paralytic (4:43-5:18)	Teaching in Jerusalem (5:19-47)	Hear & Live
Feeding 5,000 Walking on water (6:1-21)	Teaching in Capernaum (6:22-71)	Eat & Live
Festival of Tabernacles (7:1-13)	Teaching and Dialogue (7:14-8:59)	Look & Live
Blind Man Chapter 9	Teaching on the Good Shepherd Chapter 10	Follow & Live
Lazarus Plot against Jesus Anointing of Jesus Triumphal Entry (11:1-12:19)	Teaching on the grain of wheat (12:20-50)	Die & Live
Crucifixion, Burial, Resurrection (Chapters 18-20)	Farewell Teaching Upper Room Jesus' prayer (Chapters 13-17)	Receive Spirit and live
Fishing (21:1-14)	Conversation with Peter (21:15-25)	Serve & Live

## The Gospel According to Luke

### 1. Background

#### A. Author and Recipients

1. To show the certainty of the events surrounding Jesus' life (1:1-4)
2. With Acts the largest contributor to the New Testament
3. First Christian historian – progressive narrative
4. Heavily influenced by Paul and travels. Put him in touch with others.
5. A Gentile, physician (Col. 4:14), medical terminology

#### B. Date – 70s, perhaps during Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea

### 2. Theme: Jesus the Son of Man – His Humanity

- A. How God equipped the Messiah – active role of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38)
- B. Healer as well as deliverer
- C. An apologetic – to convince of the certainty of Christ's life

### 3. Major Characteristics



- A. Great attention to detail, verifying dates and facts by Roman governors
  - B. Great attention given to homier details
  - C. Emphasis on Jesus' prayer
  - D. Prominent concepts
  - E. Medical interest – how Jesus come to be conceived
  - F. Significant time to birth and infancy
4. See Acts as a continuation of Luke

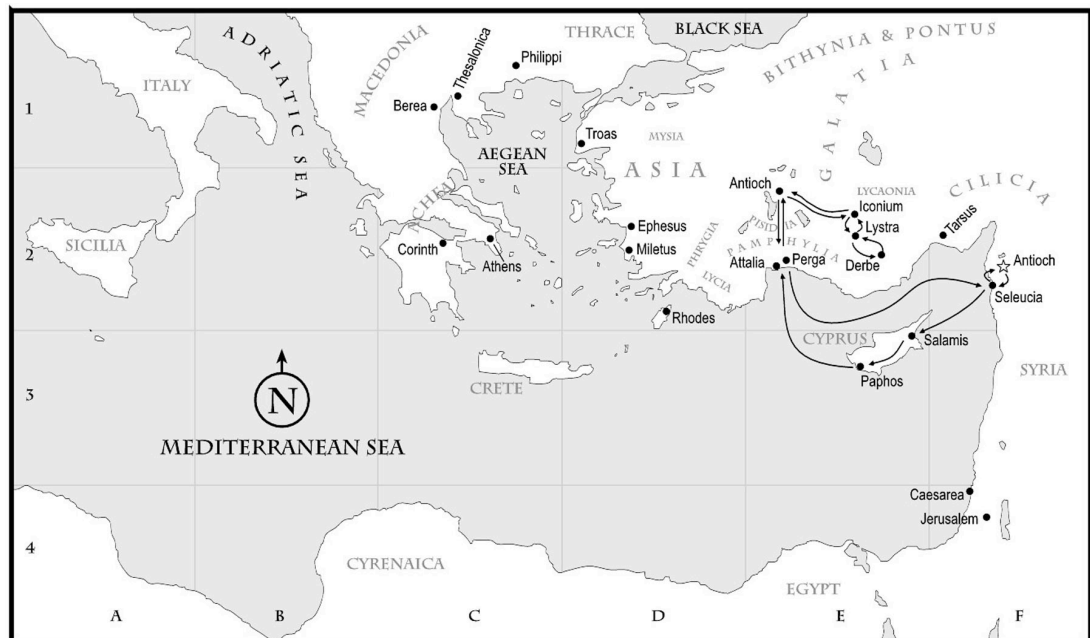
## **Session 8**

### **Those Early Believers**

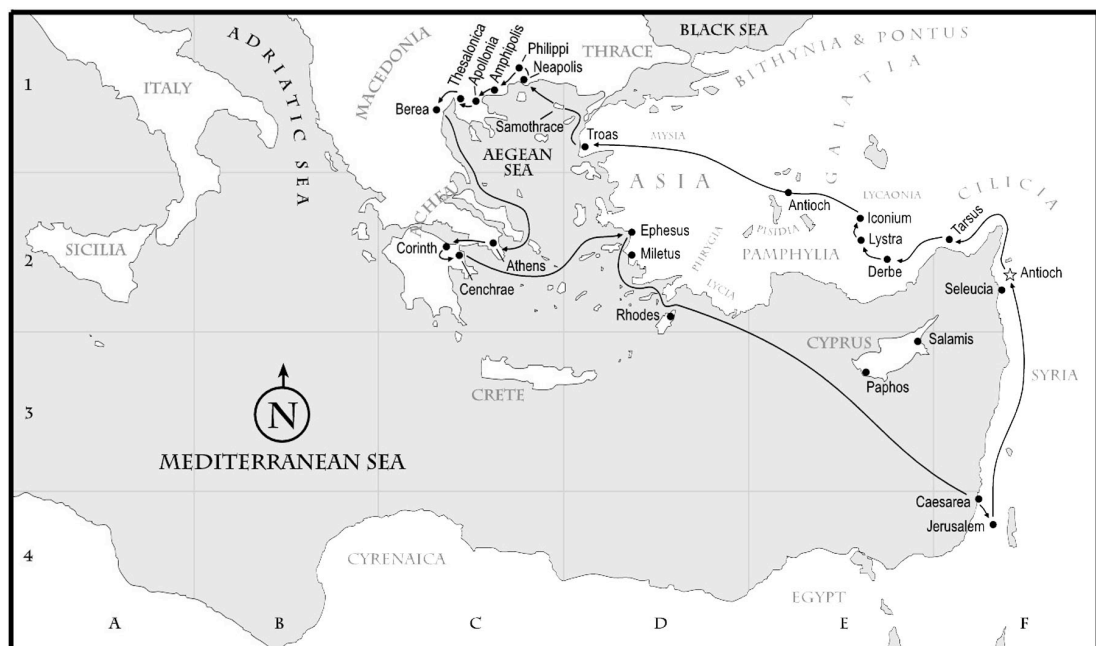
#### **The Acts of the Apostles**

1. Background
  - A. Author and Recipients
    1. Luke – same as Gospel
    2. Vindicated Christian witness, wherever falsely charged
  - B. Date – Two key dates
2. Theme: The growth and development of the early church
  - A. Who, what, when, why, how and where
  - B. It's place in the New Testament. A vital transition
3. Characteristics
  - A. A model for church life and structure: an evangelistic community
  - B. Two major characters: Peter and Paul
  - C. Two major centers of Christianity: Jerusalem and Antioch
  - D. Systematically organized with great accuracy for details and the Roman world
  - E. Paul's three missionary journeys and then trip to Rome
  - F. Major Sermons in Acts
    1. Peter at Pentecost (2)
    2. Peter in Solomon's Colonnade (3)
    3. Stephen's Defense (7)
    4. Peter at Cornelius' House (10)
    5. Paul at Pisidian Antioch (13)
    6. Paul at the Aeropagus (17)
    7. Paul to the Ephesian elders (19)
    8. Paul Defense before Jews (21-22), Felix (24), Agrippa (26)
4. Contents
  - A. Four sub-themes
    1. The acts of the Holy Spirit
    2. Response to Persecution
    3. Universality of the Gospel
    4. The Fullness of Time
  - B. Developed in ever-expanding geography (Acts 1:8)
    1. Jerusalem and Judea
    2. Samaria, Gaza, Ceasarea and Antioch
    3. The Ends of the Earth

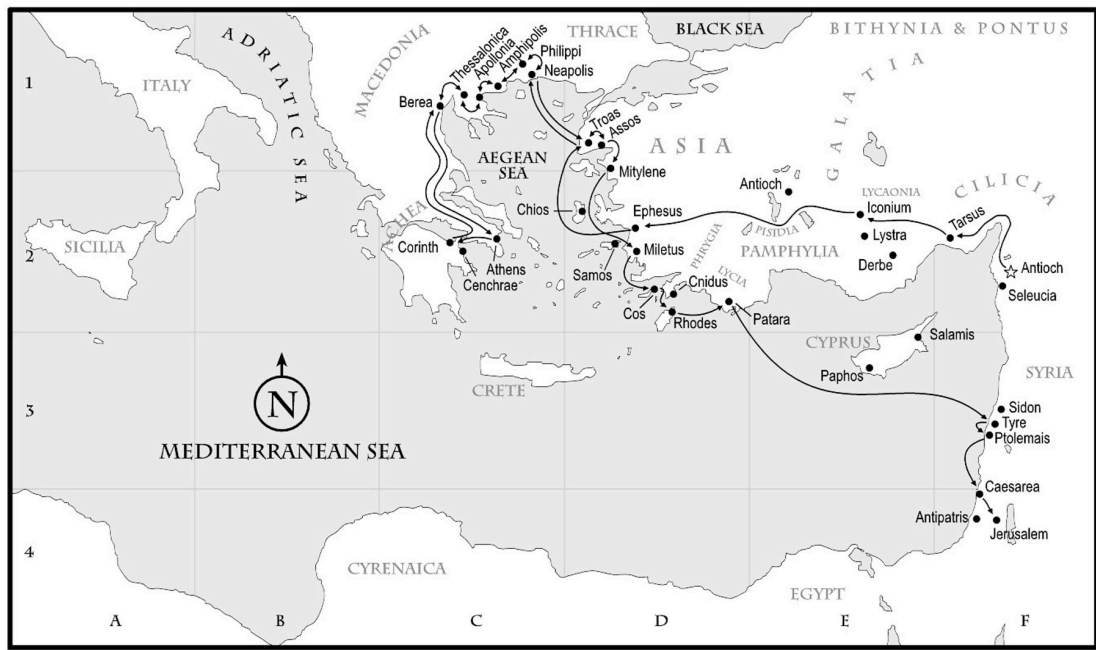
C. The Missionary Trips of Paul  
 1. The first journey with Barnabas (Acts 13-14)



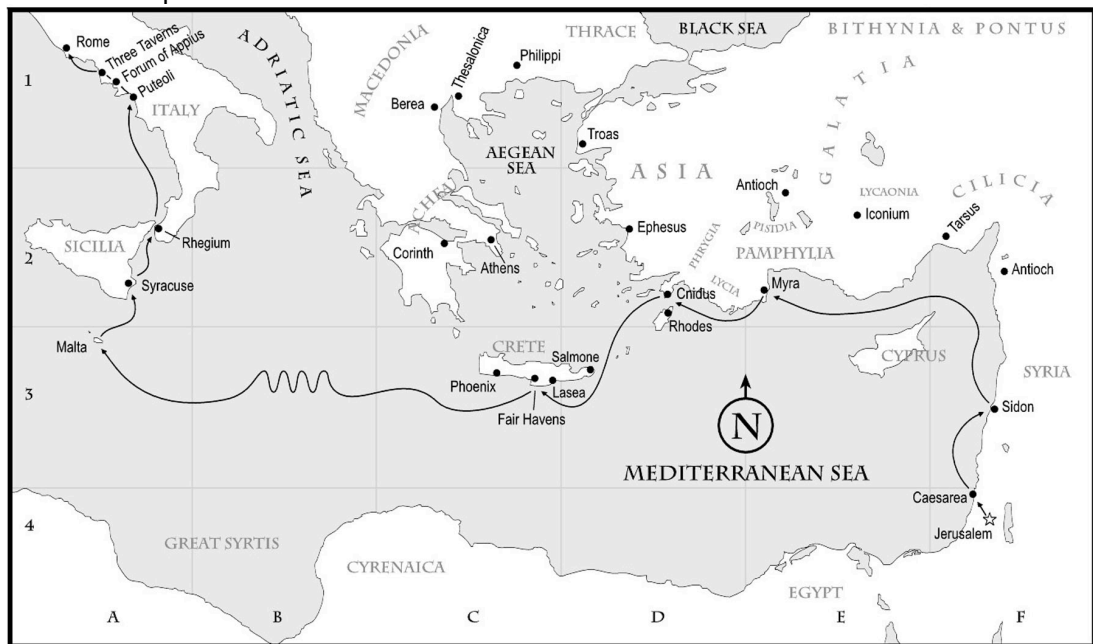
2. The second journey with Silas and Timothy (Acts 16-18:22)



3. The third journey (Acts 18:23-19:21)



#### 4. The final trip to Rome



#### 5. How do you plan for this?

##### Church at Beginning of Acts

120 people  
Jews  
Powerless  
Peter/James  
Jerusalem

##### Church at End of Acts

Thousands  
Jews and Gentiles  
Influential and threatening  
Paul/Silas & Luke  
Throughout Mideast, Asia,  
Europe, Africa

## A Chronology of New Testament Writings

<b>Book</b>	<b>*Date</b>	<b>Location of Recipient(s)</b>	<b>Theme</b>
James	47	Scattered tribes	The Practice of Christianity
Galatians	48-49	Galatia (from Antioch)	Our Freedom in Christ
Matthew	50	Unknown (from Jerusalem)	Jesus is the Messiah
I Thess.	51	Thessalonica (from Corinth)	The Second Coming of Jesus
II Thess.	51	Thessalonica (from Corinth)	Attitudes Toward the Second Coming
I Cor.	55	Corinth (from Ephesus)	Correcting Problems
II Cor.	55	Corinth (from Macedonia)	Persevering in Christ
Romans	57	Rome (from Corinth)	Righteousness that comes from Faith
Luke	59	Unknown (from Rome)	Jesus as the Son of Man
Ephesians	60	Ephesus (from Rome)	The Church as the Body of Christ
Colossians	60	Colosse (from Rome)	Christ is All in All
Philemon	60	Colosse (from Rome)	Restitution in Christ
Philippians	61	Philippi (from Rome)	Unity in Christ
I Timothy	63-65	Ephesus (from Macedonia)	The Importance of Sound Doctrine
Titus	63-65	Crete (from Corinth)	Calling to Personal Purity
Acts	64	Unknown	The History of the Early Church
II Timothy	66-67	Ephesus (from Rome)	Fulfill Your Calling
I Peter	67	Asia (Galatia)	Hope in the Coming Age
II Peter	67	Asia (Galatia)	True Knowledge & False Teaching
Hebrews	68	Unknown	The Superiority of Jesus
Mark	68-69	Rome (from Rome)	Jesus as the Servant of God
Jude	65	Unknown	Oppose False Teaching
John	85	Unknown	To stimulate belief in Jesus
I John	90	Ephesus	That you might know--and love!
II John	90	Ephesus	Truth--receive it, obey it, cherish it
III John	90	Ephesus	True and False Leadership
Revelation	95	Area around Ephesus	The End of the Age

\*Dates and locations are not always exactly known, but the most likely possibility is used primarily to show the books timing as related to other books in the New Testament.