

DAY 1

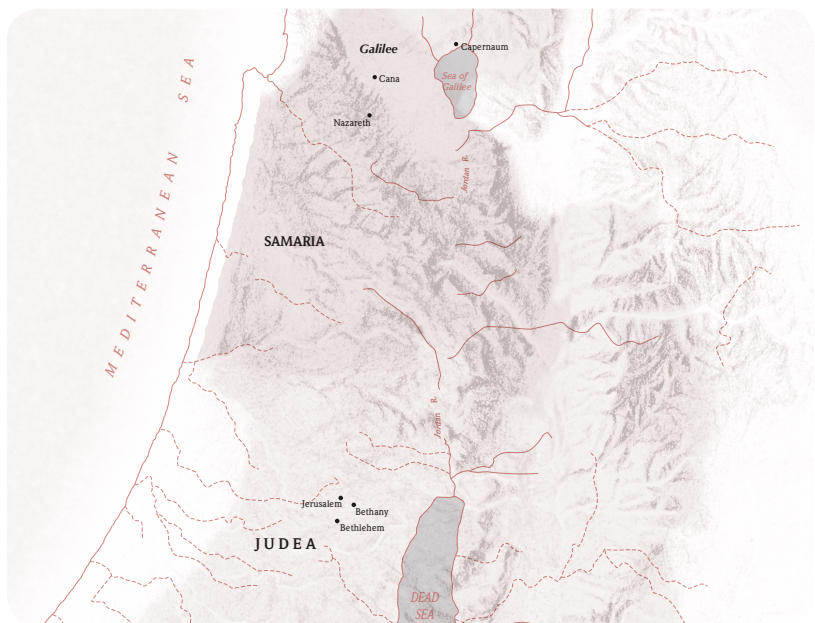
THE GOSPELS OF MATTHEW & LUKE

Well, you made it. As we start our fifth week together, we are entering a sacred time in history. I hope this week blesses you in a new way because you have a better understanding of how God prepared a context for His Son to arrive.

God's chosen people have been waiting for the promised Messiah to come, and 400 years have passed since the time of the prophet Malachi.

In those 400 years, the Greeks conquered the promised land. The Jews temporarily took over again, and then the Romans conquered the entire Mediterranean world. As the New Testament begins, Caesar Augustus rules the Roman Empire, and he has appointed several officials to rule over different parts of Israel.

* Look at the map below and familiarize yourself with the following places: Galilee, Capernaum, Cana, Nazareth, Bethany, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Judea.



BIRTH

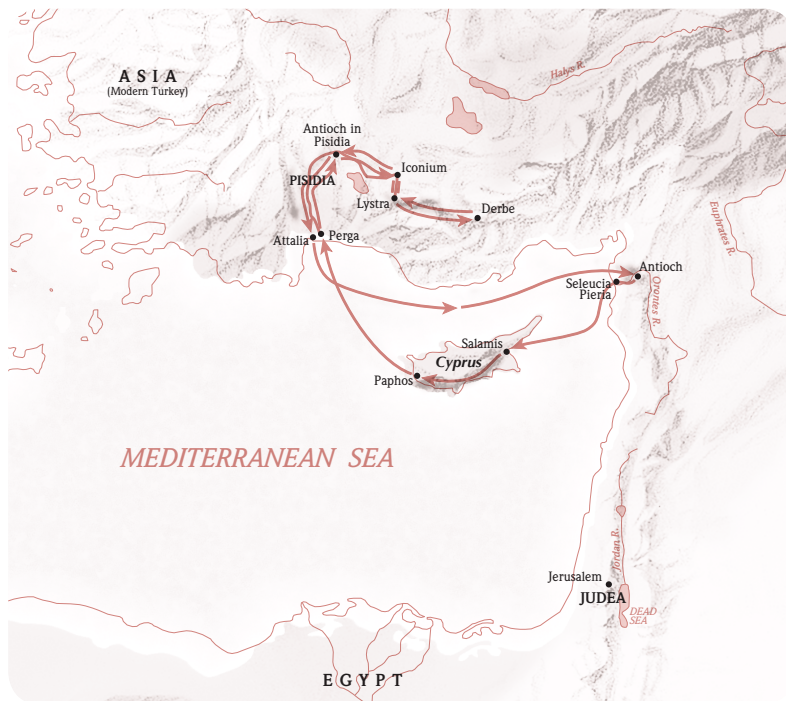


Kidding. I'm kidding.

But seriously, I know that looks like a ton of facts and maybe you can't quite sort them out, but I want you to have it in front of you as we look at the rest of the Bible.

Let's go in order. Understanding the Bible chronologically means we jump to 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

You can read about Paul's first missionary journey in Acts 13–14. He probably didn't write any letters during that first trip (some scholars



think he wrote Galatians). He was hanging out in the area we know as Turkey (Roman Asia and Galatia) and getting his bearings as a traveling missionary.

On his second missionary journey (described in Acts 15–17), Paul, with Timothy and Silas, stopped in Thessalonica, Greece. After he left, he wrote them a letter to encourage them in their newfound faith. Because he had heard they seemed to be misunderstanding the return of Christ, Paul focused on setting the record straight.

* Describe at least one promise Paul extended to these young believers 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

□ 1 & 2

THESSALONIANS=
Paul encouraging
the church at
Thessalonica



PERSECUTION



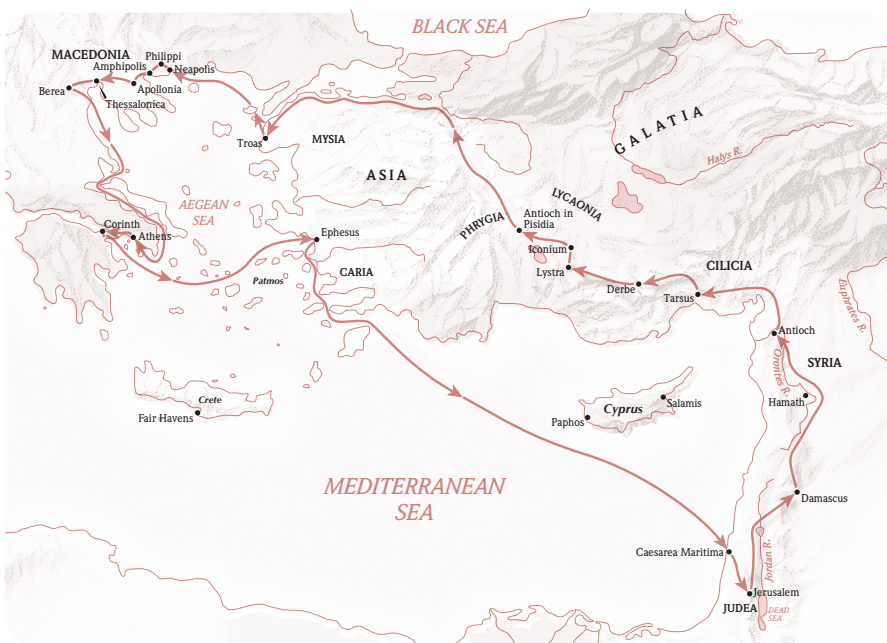
See? Doesn't it make a little more sense now? Gracious, I'm praying it does. Paul handwrote the letter and had Timothy deliver it to the new church at Thessalonica a short time after first coming to them.

We can tell that 2 Thessalonians was written shortly after the first letter because Silas and Timothy are still with Paul.

* *What emotions does 2 Thessalonians 2:2 suggest the people in the new church might have been feeling?*

Yeah. They're rattled. They don't understand the second coming of Christ and Paul wants to set their minds at ease. That's the heart of both of these letters.

After his stay in Athens, Paul traveled to Corinth. During Paul's lifetime, the city of Corinth was the commercial center of Greece. He spent a year and a half there establishing a church.



* *Flip over to Acts 18 and read verses 1-11. Who did Paul stay with? _____ and his wife _____.*



- * Who is Paul testifying to at this point in his ministry?
(Acts 18:5)
- * What happens as a result of his frustration with them?
(Acts 18:6)

After starting the church in Corinth, Paul returned to report to his home church in Antioch. He soon sets out on his third trip to Asia and Europe. It lasted for about 4 years and is covered in Acts 18:23–21:16.



On this third missionary journey Paul wrote 1 Corinthians from Ephesus to address some of the many problems in that turbulent congregation. If you ever get discouraged with the imperfections among God's people, just read 1 Corinthians. Talk about a messed up bunch!

Hoping the letter did some good, Paul sent a messenger to see how they were doing. The report came back saying, in essence, "Most everyone in the church gets what you're saying, but some of them aren't sure you're really an apostle. They say they don't know if they should believe you because you weren't one of the 12 that Jesus chose."

So he writes another letter explaining that yes, he is an apostle, and no, he will not be back to visit them because of the pain he has caused.

God bless him, Paul loves a little drama.



GENTILES

