



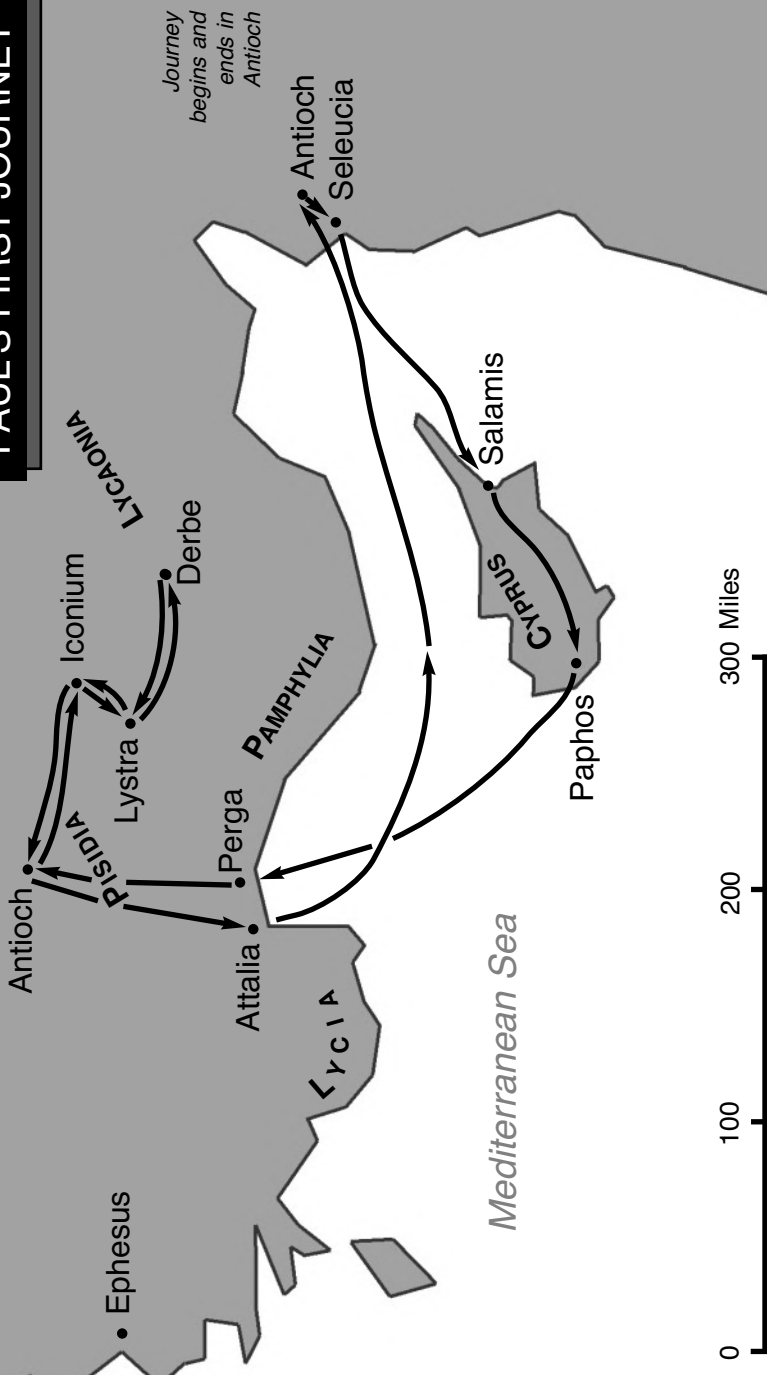
CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

ACTS
Week 3

PAUL'S FIRST JOURNEY



Journey begins and ends in Antioch

Antioch

• Ephesus

Attalia

Perga

Iconium

Lystra

Derbe

LYCIA

PAMPHYLIA

LYCAONIA

Mediterranean Sea

Salamis

Paphos

CYPRUS

Antioch
Seleucia



The Lame Man Walks

DAY 15

Acts 14:1-28

What superstitions or myths have you believed in? (a) atheism, (b) the Bermuda Triangle, (c) the tooth fairy, (d) Santa Claus, (e) the gospel of health and wealth.

1. Who stirred up trouble for the apostles and believers in Iconium (vs. 1-7)? How was violence stirred up?
 2. What great miracle occurred in Lystra (vs. 8-10)? How did the crowd there respond (vs. 11-20)? Note that Zeus was the chief god in Greek mythology, and Hermes served as messenger for Zeus.
 3. How did Paul address this excited crowd (vs. 14-18)? How was God presented? As fulfiller of Old Testament prophecy or as Creator?
 4. Who created the greatest problems in the city?
 5. After visiting Derbe, was it courage or faith that enabled Paul to go back through Lystra and Iconium to Antioch of Pisidia?
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1. How do you speak boldly about the grace of our Lord (v. 3)? By the spoken or written word? By example? By service?
 2. How does the message of the apostles in verse 22 apply in your life?
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*At **Iconium** Paul preached in the synagogue, and both Jews and Greeks believed. However, Jews who refused to believe stirred up the predominantly gentile city, poisoning their minds against Paul and Barnabas. The tension in the city apparently became so toxic that Paul, Barnabas and their group had to flee.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

Law or Grace?

Acts 15

OPENING
up to the Word

How have these famous debates affected our society? (a) Galileo versus the bishops, (b) Martin Luther versus the Catholic Church, (c) evolution versus creation, (d) Roe versus Wade.

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What was at stake in this dispute between believers from Judea and the church in Antioch (vs. 1-2)?
2. What requirements were the Judeans trying to impose on converted gentiles (v. 1)?
3. How was this dispute handled (vs. 2-6)?
4. Compare Peter's speech (vs. 7-11) with another event that occurred in Antioch (Gal 2:11-17). Did Peter and Paul agree?
5. Compare the summation by James that followed the evidence given by Paul and Barnabas (Ac 15:12-21). What was decided? Why did they add reminders to be careful not to offend others (vs. 20-21)?
6. Why does Luke then tell a story about disagreement and separation (vs. 36-41)? Why was Paul opposed to taking John Mark with him (Ac 13:13)? Did they later resolve the problem (2Ti 4:11)?

LIVING
out the Word

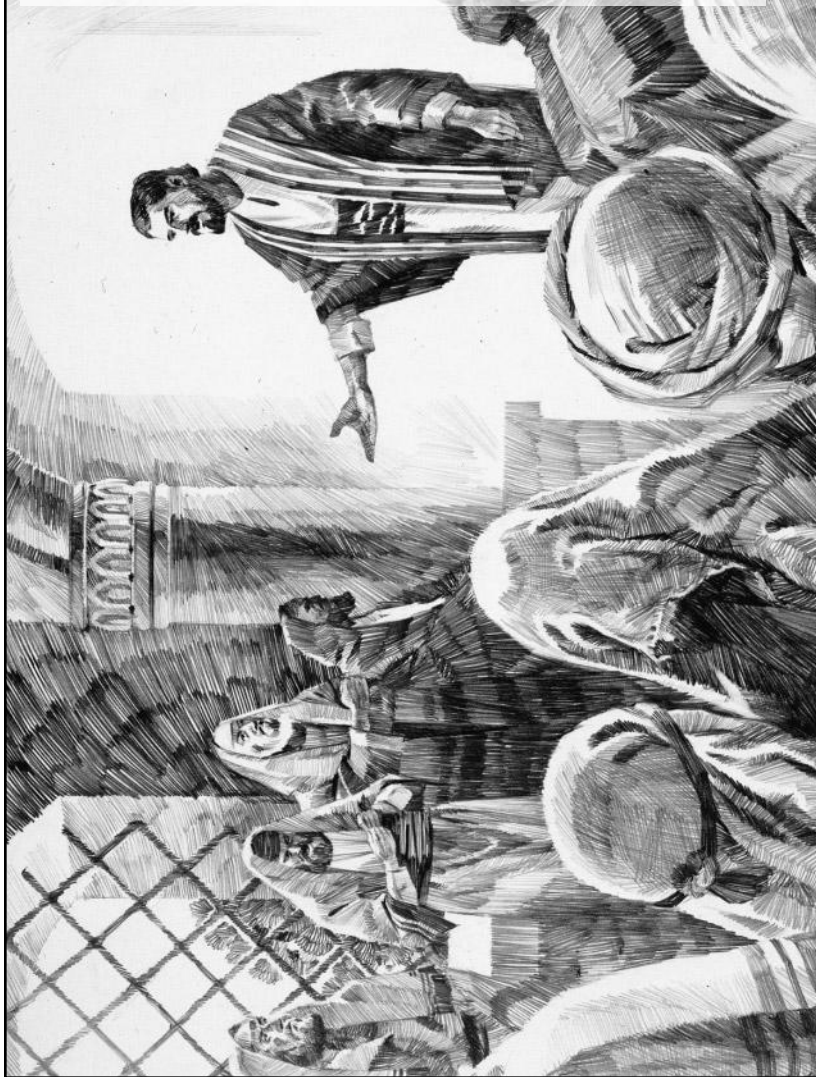
1. What does God require of you to be saved? Can you ever do enough good works to please him? Can you ever erase your evil deeds with good ones?
2. Is it difficult or easy to respond to and embrace God's grace? Why?

WINDOW
on the Word

***The Council of Jerusalem** is pivotal to the gospel being spread throughout the world. By about A.D. 49, strife had escalated between many of Jewish heritage and culture with those who had come to Christ, including many gentiles from pagan backgrounds. The apostle Paul found himself battling for freedom in Christ, against the legalistic requirements of the law of Moses.*

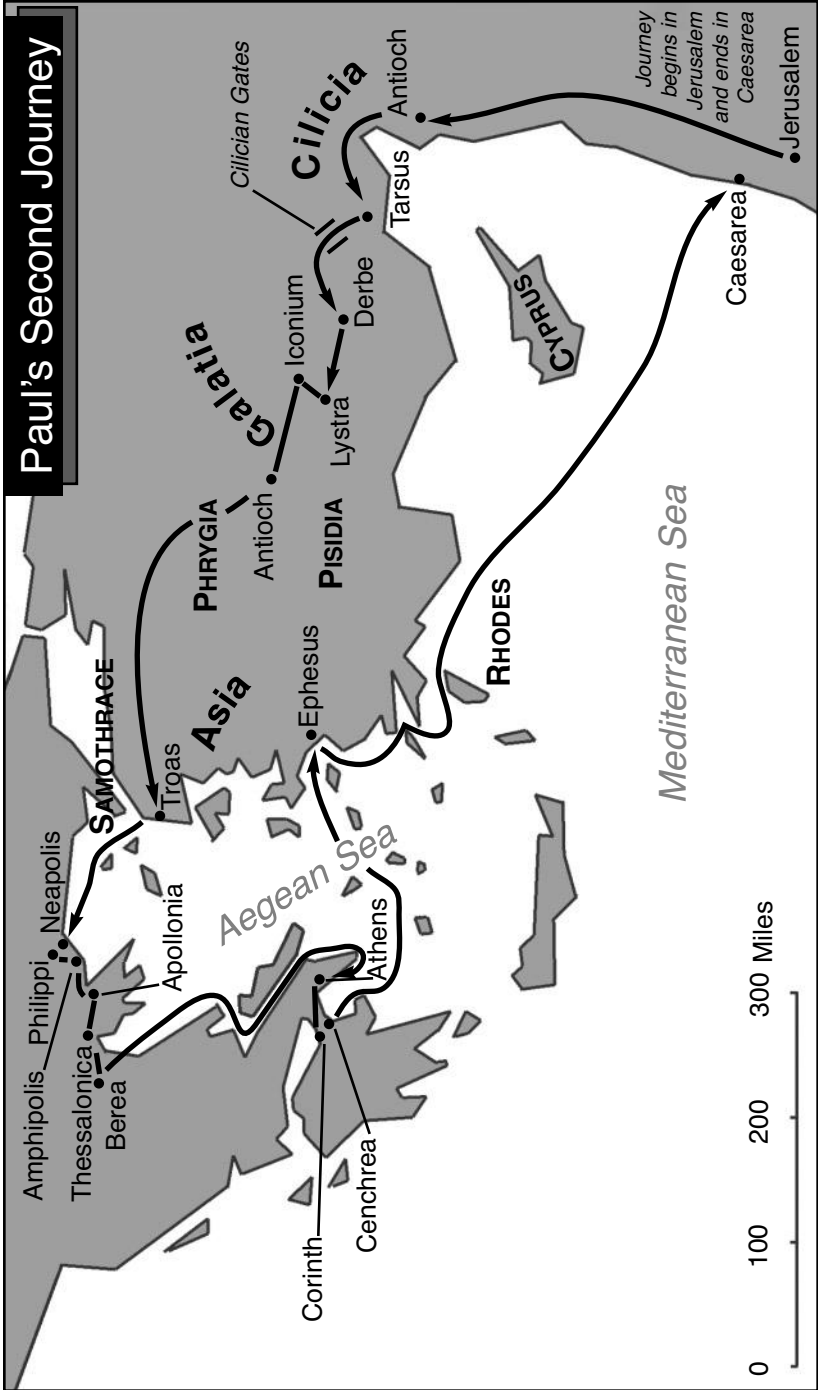
“After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: ‘Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe.’”

Acts 15:7



Artwork by Ken Tunell

Paul's Second Journey



The Jailer is Freed

DAY 17

Acts 16

Have you ever experienced an earthquake? What was your reaction?

1. Had earlier persecution in Iconium, Lystra and Derbe (14:1-25) embittered or strengthened the hearts of the Christians there (16:1-5)? This background sets the stage for Timothy to accompany Paul and to assist in his ministry. Why was Timothy circumcised (v. 3)?

2. Who is the first recorded convert in Europe (vs. 11-15)? How did she, a Greek God-fearer, respond to God's call (vs. 14-15, 40)?

3. Why was Paul so annoyed with the slave girl (vs. 16-18)? Was she interfering in the work of spreading the gospel?

4. What circumstances lead to the conversion of the jailer in Philippi (vs. 19-34)? Why do you think Paul did not escape when he had a chance? Did it have something to do with preaching the gospel (vs. 30-34)?

5. Once released from prison, what was Paul's first concern (vs. 35-40)?

1. Would you return to a place where people had tried to kill you (14:19)? If so, why?

2. How do you respond to God's grace? Are you hospitable like Lydia (v. 15)?

3. If you were falsely imprisoned, how would you react?

Ethnicity was a major issue in the first century. Gentiles were not welcome at the Temple unless they were proselytes (converts to Judaism). A person's ethnicity was determined based on the ethnicity of the mother. Since Timothy's mother was Jewish, Timothy was considered Jewish, not Greek.

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

The Unknown God

Acts 17

OPENING
up to the Word

When someone mentions idolatry, what image comes to mind? (a) the Golden Calf, (b) Artemis of Ephesus, (c) Buddha, (d) the almighty dollar, (e) sports heroes, (f) Hollywood stars.

DIGGING
into the Word

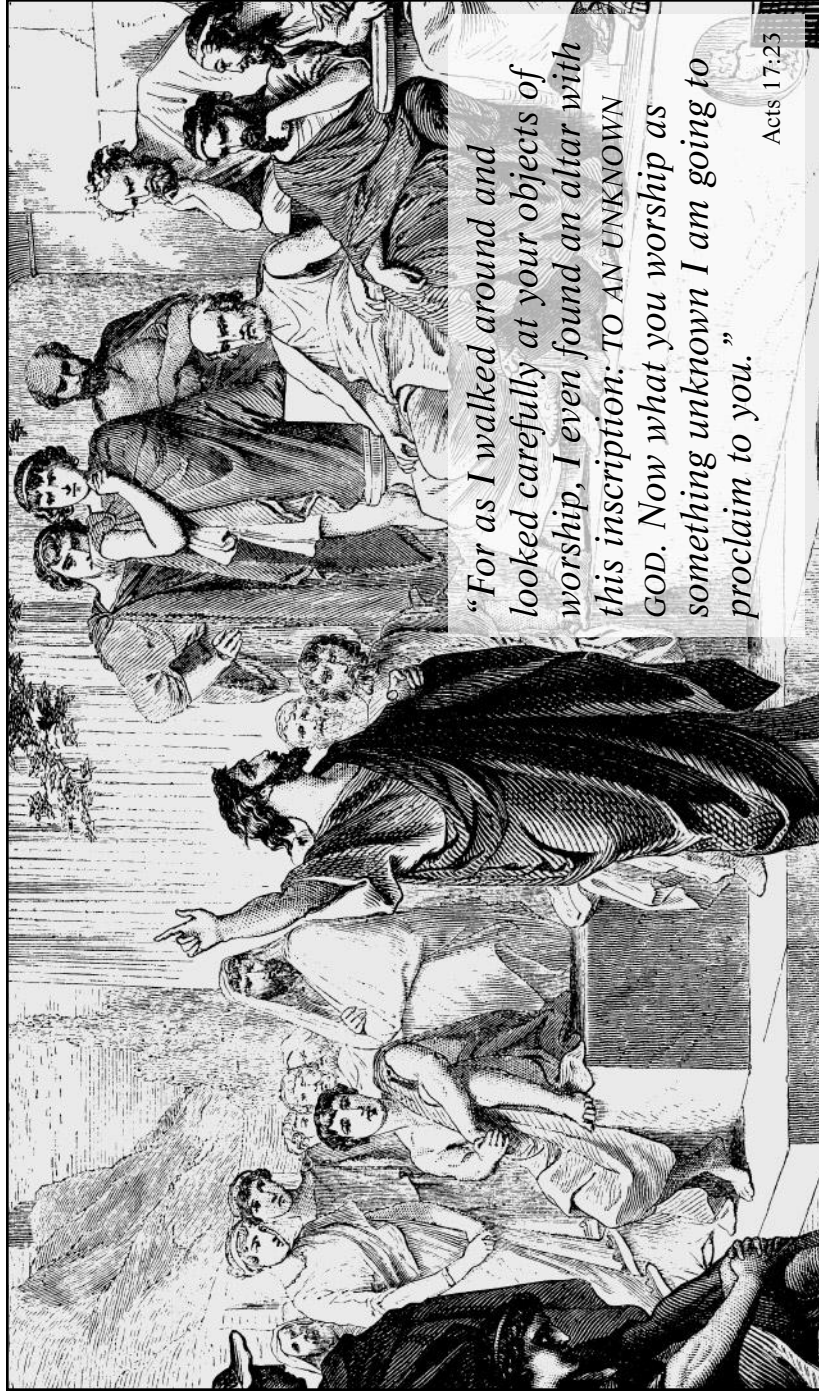
1. In the synagogue in Thessalonica, what did Paul prove from the Scriptures (vs. 1-3)? At that time, the only Scriptures were the books of the Old Testament.
2. What reactions did his sermon evoke (vs. 4-9)? Why was Jason in trouble?
3. What is noteworthy about the Bereans to whom Paul preached next (vs. 10-15)? Who tried again to disrupt God's work through Paul?
4. In Athens, why was Paul deeply distressed (v. 16)? What led to his speech at the Areopagus (vs. 17-22)?
5. In his sermon (vs. 22-31), how did Paul explain God's power? Where God lives? The extent of his rulership? His command to humanity? His judgment of humanity?
6. Considering the curiosity of the crowd about Jesus (v. 18), how were Paul's words received (vs. 32-34)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Does idolatry bother you like it did Paul? What things in today's world demonstrate the idolatry of false gods and materialism?
2. How do *you* explain the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

WINDOW
on the Word

Athens is the site of the Parthenon, originally dedicated to the goddess Athena. A gigantic statue of Athena stood on the Acropolis, a herald to all travelers. The golden helmet and spear, glistening in the sun, could be seen from the port of Pireas, five miles to the west. Paul was impressed by the many temples to gods that dotted the city. Statues of the gods lined the walkways and stood in the temples. The Greeks dedicated an altar "to an unknown god" to hedge their bets. They feared the wrath of the gods—even the gods of other nations unknown to the Greeks.



“For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.”

Acts 17:23

Worship the Lord

Acts 18:1-22

OPENING
up to the Word

Do you know fellow Christ-followers in your neighborhood and at your place of work? What do you share in common?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Who did Paul stay with in Corinth (vs. 1-3)? Why?

2. What incident led Paul to his decision to focus his ministry on the gentiles (v. 6)? Who was the next person to be converted (Ac 18:8)? Consider Acts 9:15.

3. How did Paul know to make Corinth his “home away from home” on this journey (18:9-11)?

4. Why did proconsul Gallio (A.D. 51-52) reject the Jews’ accusation of Paul (vs. 12-17)? On whom did the Jews take out their anger?

5. At the end of his 18-month stay in Corinth, what did Paul do to show his thankfulness for God’s deliverance (vs. 18-22)? As a Christian, having renounced the old covenant law and its regulations, why do you think Paul had his hair cut off (v. 18)? Consider 1 Corinthians 9:20-21.

LIVING
out the Word

1. Have you ever gotten so upset that you decided to stop doing something (as Paul did in verse 6), only to have God lead you through circumstances that compelled you to do it again (as Paul did in 19:8)?

2. Have you ever helped others to a deeper understanding of the Scriptures? Did you start by posing questions to them or preaching at them?

WINDOW
on the Word

*In this chapter we see the **structure of the courts** in gentile cities. The Roman Empire maintained control of the justice system through proconsuls, also known as governors, ruling over districts. These men were responsible for issues involving crime and sedition (v. 14). They did not care about religious law and they turned a blind eye to most episodes of religious groups disciplining their own people. In Jerusalem, the **Sanhedrin** held religious power over the Jews. Outside of Jerusalem and Judea it was the president of each synagogue who wielded such power.*

“Great Is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

DAY 20

Acts 18:23–19:41

Are you uncomfortable in crowds? Have you ever been part of a crowd or mob that seemed to be getting out of control? How did you handle it?

1. Who explained to Apollos the “way of God more adequately” (v. 26)? Consider verse 2. What do you suppose they explained to him?
2. How did Paul deal with the followers of John the Baptist in Ephesus (19:1-7)? Since John had been dead for over 20 years, why do you think these disciples were clinging to his doctrine?
3. What was Paul’s experience in the synagogue of the Jews and the lecture hall of the gentile Tyrannus (vs. 8-10)? Did Ephesus become his “home away from home” like Corinth?
4. What surprise did Demetrius the silversmith have for Paul (vs. 23-30)? What do you think was most important to many Ephesians—finding and obeying the one true God, or money?
5. How did the city clerk, who was responsible for maintaining civil peace, calm the unruly mob (vs. 31-41)? Had Paul spoken directly against the goddess Artemis? Or had he simply preached the gospel?

Have you ever helped someone understand the teachings of Jesus? How?

*In the first century A.D. Roman world, many people had a keen interest in the **supernatural**. As we read the story of Paul in Ephesus, we learn that “God did many extraordinary **miracles** through Paul.” In this context, we also read about the **magicians** of Ephesus (vs. 13-20). **The Temple of Artemis** in Ephesus is considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Gold-leafed columns stood 60 feet tall, ringing another 127 columns and the temple itself, standing on a foundation the size of a football field. Artemis (who corresponded to the Greek goddess Diana) was the principal goddess of Ephesus. Archaeologists have uncovered records of gold statues that weighed three to seven pounds, which would have decorated the home shrines of wealthy Ephesians.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

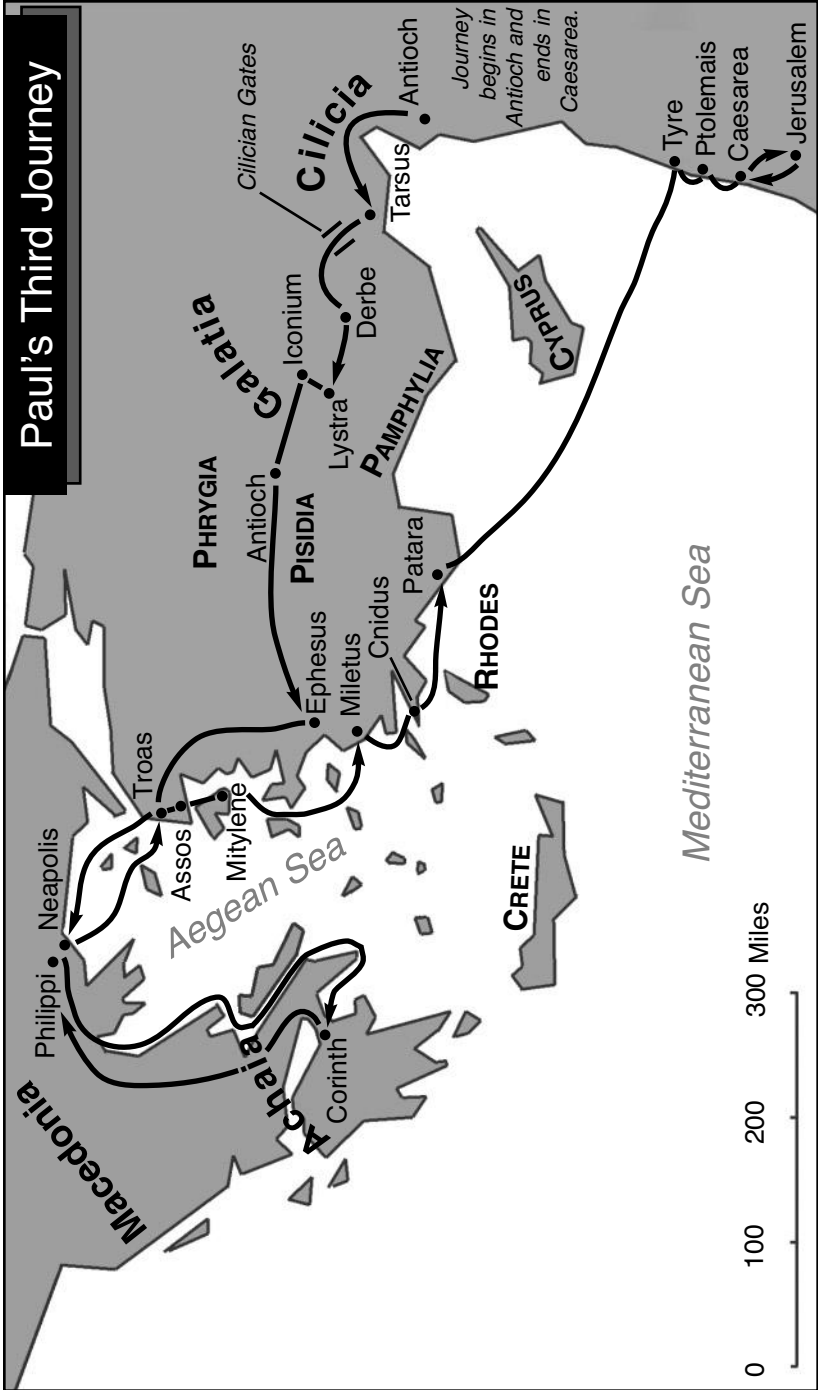
LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

Paul's Third Journey



Source: Reader's Digest Atlas of the Bible. Map by Omar Cova

Paul the Caretaker

DAY 21

Acts 20

What is the longest sermon you've sat through? Do you remember the message? Or just the numbness?

1. After Paul went to Macedonia and spent three months in Greece, who changed the sailing plans (vs. 1-3)?

2. From where did Paul assemble his missionary team (vs. 4-5)?

3. Look at the event in Troas (vs. 6-12). How long had Paul preached before the incident? After the incident?

4. What was Paul's reason for bypassing Ephesus (vs. 13-17)? Could the riot and hard feelings from earlier on this journey have been an additional reason?

5. What was the main topic of Paul's only speech in Acts that was given to Christians (vs. 18-38)? How were these elders instructed to care for the church of God?

6. Look at Paul's itinerary. Where did he go (20:1-6, 13-15)?

1. How do you feel about the church of God (v. 28)? How important is it to you? What threatens its strength (vs. 29-31)? Is the church composed only of those who frequent a building? Isn't the church who we are far more than a place we attend?

Sunday evening in Roman custom was the first day of the week, and these Christians gathered to "break bread"—to celebrate the Lord's Supper. In the Roman Empire, Saturday and Sunday were typically work days. Poor Eutychus—he fell asleep during Paul's long sermon! Rich Eutychus—he was restored to life!

OPENING

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