



Book of Acts

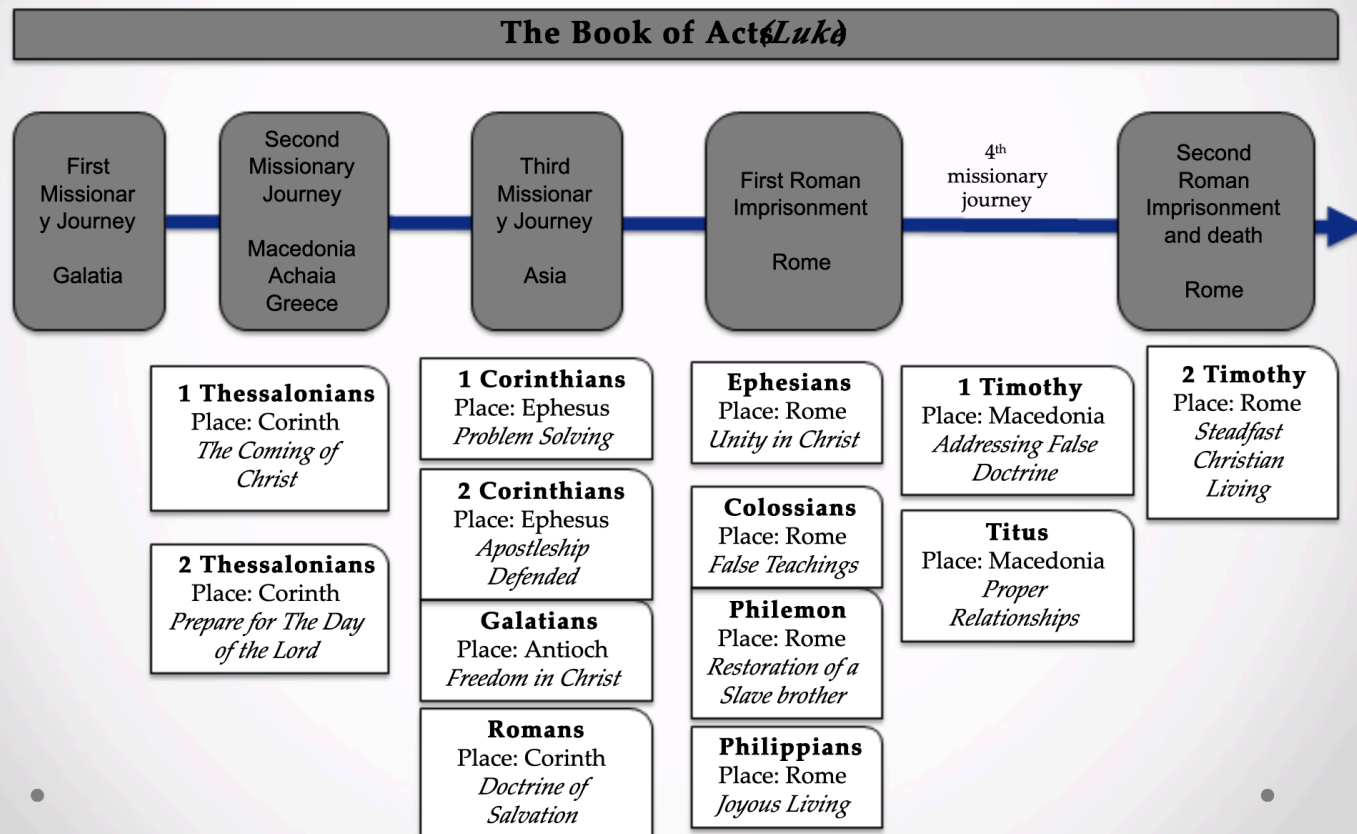
Chapter 17

Theme: The second missionary journey of Paul continued


(Paul in Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens)

Time Chart


The Letters of Apostle Paul




Introduction to Chapter 17

 Paul's visits to Thessalonica, Berea and Athens are grouped together for 2 reasons:

- ① They happened one after another.
- ② They deal with a common theme of God's answer to evil – the Messianic Kingdom.

 To the Jews in Thessalonica and Berea he speaks of the “Messiah (the Christ)”. Acts 17:3

 To the Athenians he speaks of Jesus as “the man whom God has appointed to judge the world in righteousness.”. Acts 17:31

Thessalonica

Apollonia

Amphipolis



Thessalonica

Athens

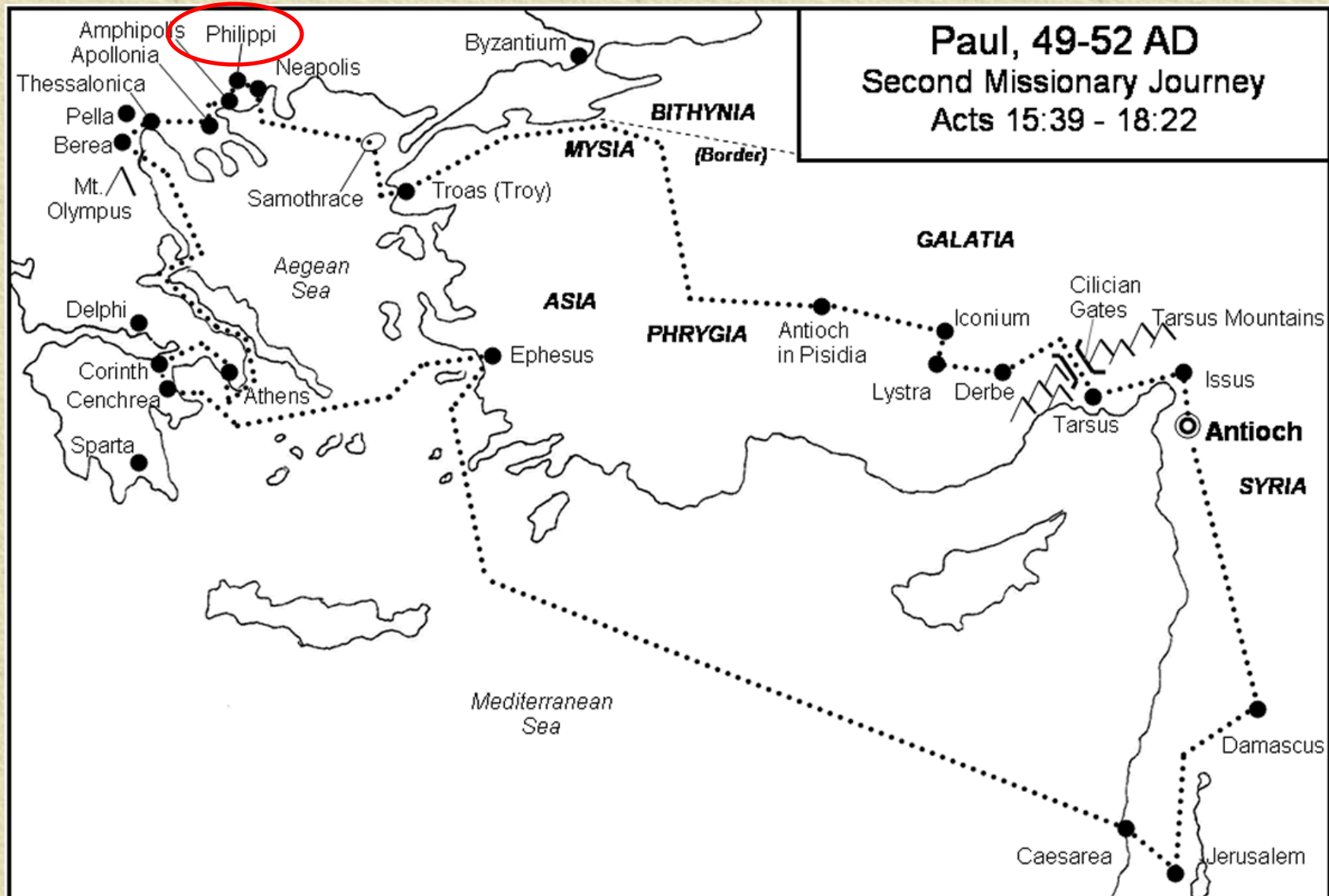
Ephesus

Caesarea

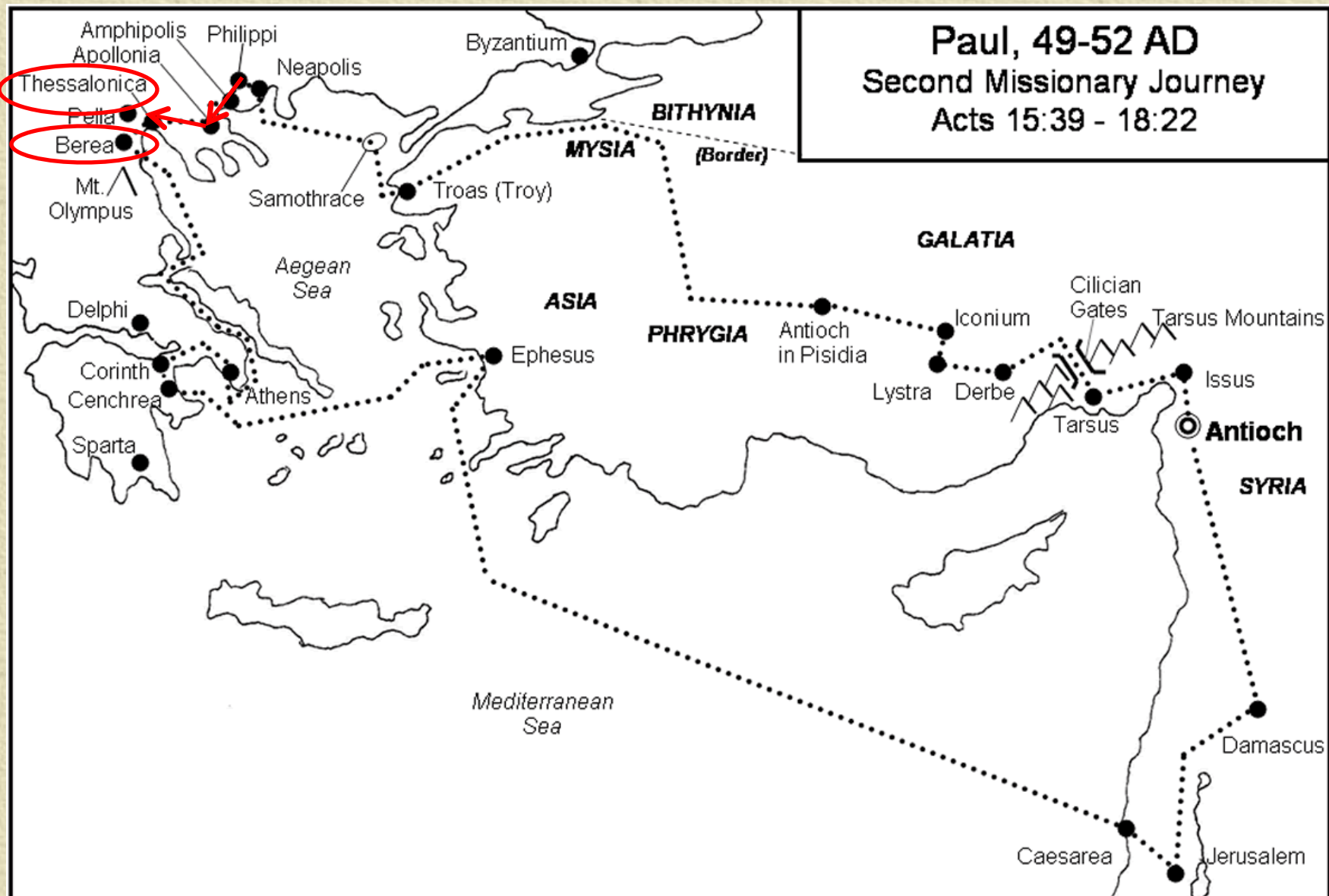
Jerusalem

M e d i t e r r a n e a n S e a

Leaving Philippi



Thessalonica and Berea



Thessalonica Capital of Macedonia

Arch of Galerius



Thessalonica

- ✦ 2nd largest city in both ancient and modern Greece.
- ✦ 1st Century Population ~200,000.
- ✦ 100 miles WSW of Philippi.
- ✦ Most important seaport of Macedonia.
- ✦ Idolatry: Mt. Olympus just to the West.
- ✦ Large Jewish community.
- ✦ Church established here was largely Gentile.
 - ◆ Not 1 OT quote in the epistles written to this church


Acts 17:5



Interesting how the Gospel evokes faith in some and envy/hatred in others.


- ◆ Remember the words of our Lord, “Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.” (Luke 12:51-52)
- ◆ Why 5? 2 against 3?
- ◆ Have you ever been in an uneven argument?

Acts 17:5

 Interesting, there is no mention of the Jewish unbelievers refuted the theology of Paul and Silas.

- ◆ So often the Gospel is accused of not being reasonable or logical.
- ◆ “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD” Isa. 1:18

Acts 17:6

 Paul and Silas are accused of undermining Caesar's rule, as also in Philippi.

- ◆ But as the Lord Himself said “My kingdom is not of this world”. John 18:36
- ◆ Paul wrote later to the Thessalonians that they had been called “unto His kingdom and glory”. I Thess. 2:1-2
- ◆ From I & II Thessalonians we note that the church there needed clarification on future events (Rapture vs. Day of the Lord), not those of the current day.
- ◆ What Kingdom are we living for?

Acts 17:6



**Turned
the world
up side
down?**

The World up side down


- ✦ Paul and Silas were accused first in Philippi and then again here in Thessalonica of “*Turning the world upside down*”.
- ✦ Today many people, particularly in Asia, see Christianity as a Western religion. They resent attempts to convert them as an affront to their own cultures and religions.
- ✦ Interesting that in the earliest days of Christianity that Europeans, (Westerner's) saw Christianity as an Eastern, (Asiatic) religion, and resisted and resented in the same way!

Acts 17:6



**Turned
the world
right side
up?**


Acts 17:9

 Jason became the “surety” for Paul. The one who had shown him the True “Surety of a better testament”.

◆ Surety is a legal term for guarantee.

◆ “And Judah said unto Israel his father.... I will be *surety* for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, ...then let me bear the blame for ever” Gen 43:8-9

◆ “By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.”
Heb. 7:22

 How do we treat our “Paul’s and Silas””?

Thessalonica

Apollonia

Amphipolis

Berea



Thessalonica

Berea

Amphipolis

Athens

Ephesus

Antioch

Caesarea

Jerusalem

M e d i t e r r a n e a n S e a

C Y R E N A I C A

Alexandria

E G Y P T

M A C E D O N I A

C o r i n t h

C e n c h r e a

C R E T E

Troas

Pergamum

Thyatira

Sardis

Miletus

Rhodes

Attalia

Pamphylia

Perga

Paphos

CYPRUS

Salamis

Sidon

Tyre

Tarsus

Seleucia

Antioch

Damascus

BITHYNIA AND PONTUS


PHRYGIA

GALATIA


LYCAONIA

SYRIA

Acts 17:15

 “Earnest saints have earnest enemies; pleased with their success at Thessalonica, the Jews used the same tactics at Berea; yet they only gave wings to the feet of the missionaries and kept the light moving on.”

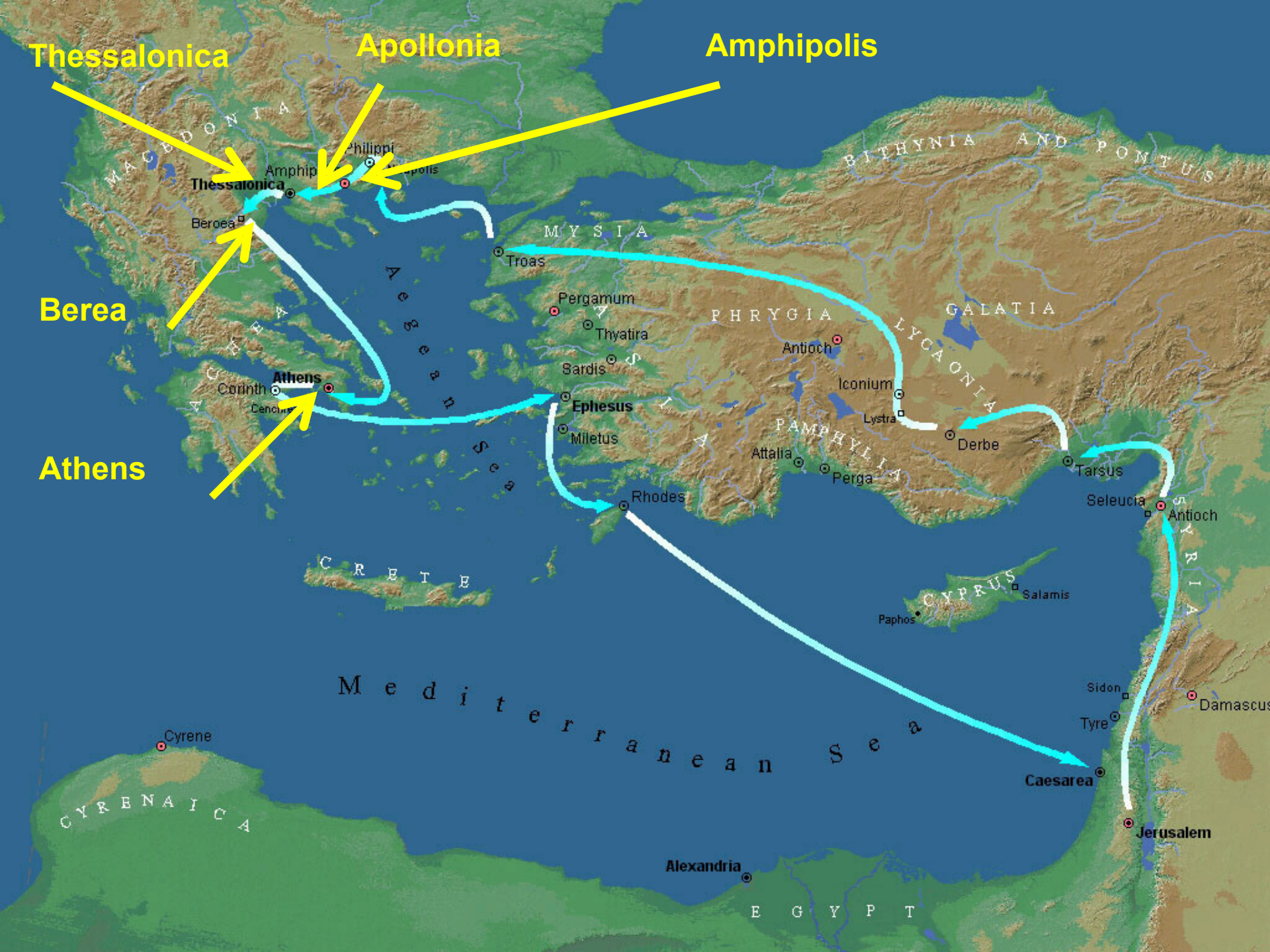
- Spurgeon

 Through the lens of history more has been done to spread the Gospel via oppression than by ease.

Adversity Predicted in Luke – Fulfilled in Acts

Table 2: Predictions of Persecution and Proclamation

| <i>Prediction in Luke</i> | <i>Fulfillment in Acts</i> |
|---|---|
| They will lay hands on you (21:12) | Peter and John (4:3); apostles (5:18); church (12:1); Paul (21:27) |
| They will persecute you (21:12) | Church (8:1); believers' persecution by Paul (9:4–5; cf. 22:4, 7–8; 26:11, 14–15) |
| They will hand you over to synagogues (21:12; cf. 12:11) | Stephen (6:9); believers by Paul (9:2; cf. 22:19; 26:11) |
| They will put you in prison (21:12) | Apostles (5:18–19; cf. 4:3); Peter (12:3); Paul and Silas (16:23) |
| You will be brought before kings and governors (21:12; cf. 12:11) | Paul (24:10; 26:2, 30; cf. 9:15) |
| For my name's sake (21:12, 27) | Apostles (5:28, 40–41); Paul (9:15–16) |
| This will lead to testimony (21:13) | Apostles (5:32); Stephen (22:20); Paul (22:15) |
| Wisdom, which your adversaries cannot withstand (21:15) | Peter and John (4:12–14); Stephen (6:10) |
| The Holy Spirit will teach you (12:12) | Peter/apostles (4:8; 5:32); church (4:31); Stephen (6:10; 7:55); Paul (20:22) |
| They will kill some of you (21:16) | Stephen (7:54–60); James (12:2) |
| No hair of your head will perish (21:18) | Paul and fellow passengers (27:34) |



Thessalonica

Apollonia

Amphipolis

Berea

Athens

Thessalonica

Berea

Athens

Corinth

Cenchreae

Crete

Mediterranean Sea

Cyrenaica

Cyrene

Alexandria

Egypt

Caesarea

Jerusalem

Sidon

Tyre

Damascus

Antioch

Seleucia

Tarsus

Galatia

Phrygia

Paphlagonia

Paphos

Salamis

Lystra

Iconium

Attalia

Parga

Miletus

Ephesus

Sardis

Thyatira

Pergamum

Troas

Philippi

Amphipolis

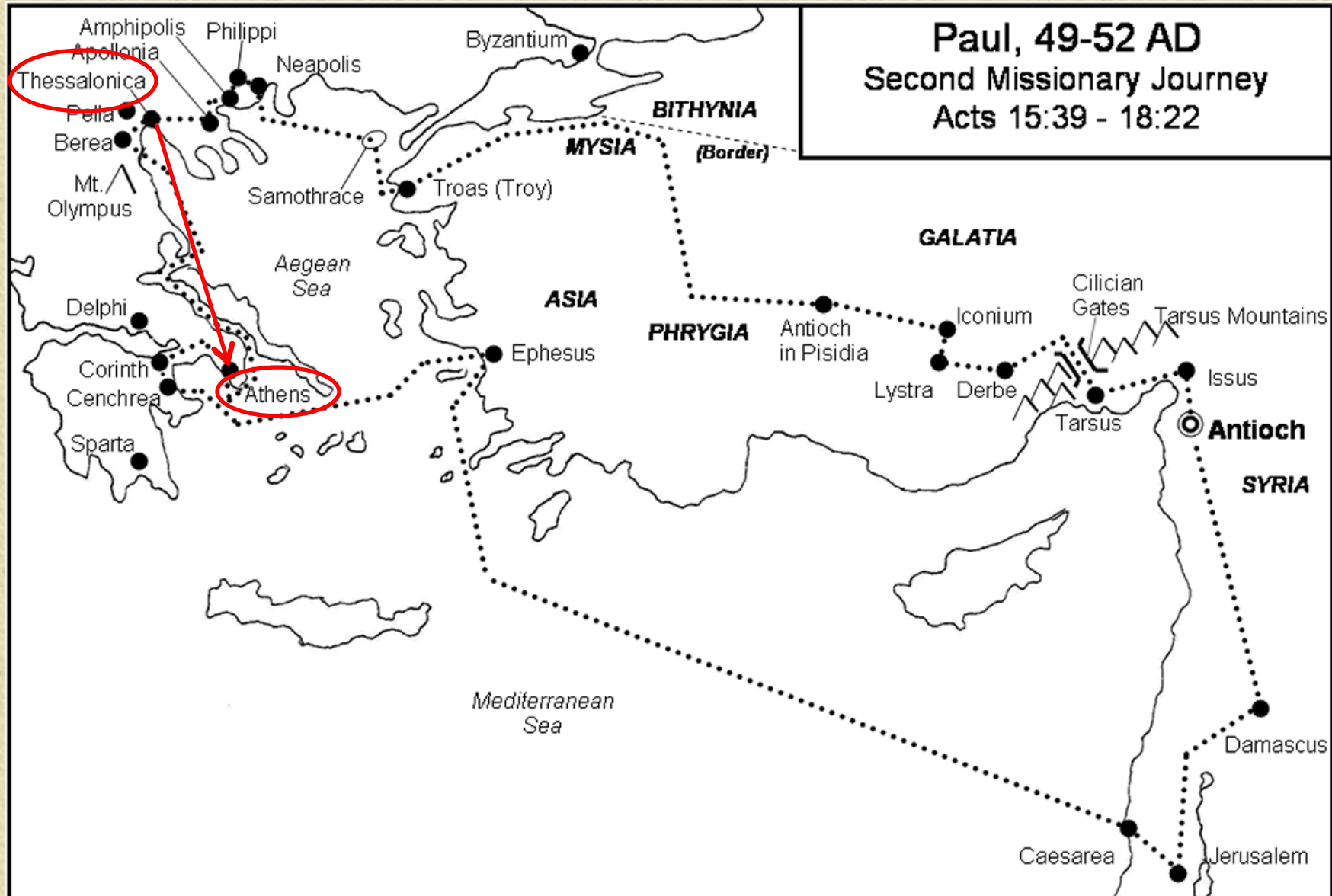
Amphipolis

Macedonia

Bithynia and Pontus

Acrothea

Athens



Athens

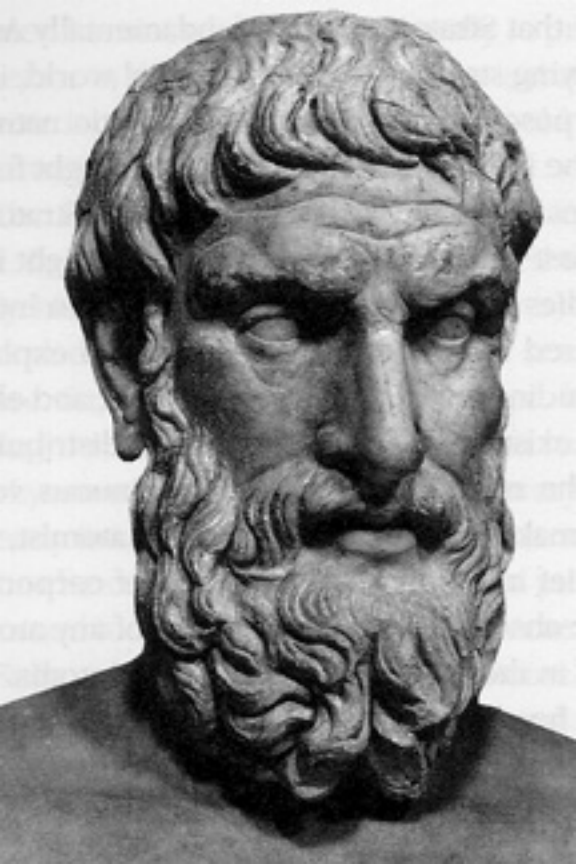
✦ Athens was the cultural capitol of the world.

✦ No city in the world had more known idols than Athens.

✦ *“It is easier to find a god than a man in Athens!”*
Petronius, Roman Consul, died A.D. 66

✦ They sought after wisdom that would never lead to the True God.

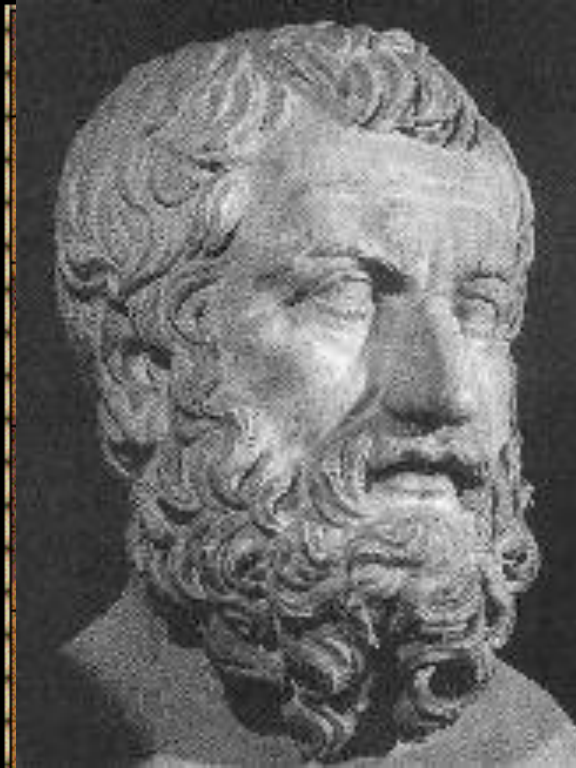
◆ “For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.” I Cor. 1:19



Epicureans

- ✦ Epicurus (340-270 B.C.)
- ✦ No afterlife.
- ✦ Gods are uninvolved (agnostic).
- ✦ Similar to today's secularists.
- ✦ Chief good consisted in gratification of the appetites.
- ✦ Pleasure was the only end in life.
- ✦ *Eat, drink, be merry!*





Stoics

- ✦ Zeno (340-265 B.C.)
- ✦ Met in Stoa in Athens.
- ✦ Man should be free from passion, moved by neither joy nor grief, pleasure nor pain.
- ✦ Believed in gods, but that all human affairs were governed by solely by fate.
- ✦ Divine spark in all.
- ✦ Today's New Age thinkers.
- ✦ *Accept fate!*



An Advocate on the Areopagus

Paul Declares the Nature of God

- ◆ Jehovah is a Powerful God (Acts 17:24-25)
- ◆ Jehovah is a Purposeful God (Acts 17:26)
- ◆ Jehovah is a Personal God (Acts 17:27-28)

Paul Declares the Nature of Man

- ◆ Man Shares a Common Origin (Acts 17:26)
- ◆ Man Shares a Common Purpose (Acts 17:27-28)
- ◆ Man Shares a Common Responsibility (Acts 17:29-31)

Paul's Message

✦ Paul made a Connection (vs. 22-24)

✦ Paul gave a Correction (vs. 25-28)

✦ Paul issued a Challenge (vs. 29-31)

✦ Paul dealt with Critics (vs. 32)

✦ Paul saw Converts (vs. 33-34)