



Although much of the Old Testament took place in the Middle East, much of the activity in the New Testament had moved west, into the lands of the expansive Roman Empire.

Citizens of Rome called the Mediterranean Sea, *Mare Nostrum*, Latin for “our sea.” In the first century AD, their empire encompassed all of southern Europe, most of north Africa, and deep into Asia in the west. God used this extensive empire as the starting point to expand Christianity to the whole world.

Just 70 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus, Christianity had spread to Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, Egypt and Syria, as shown in brown in the map. By 300AD, there were churches throughout the empire, as the tan shading shows. The number of Christians during those years is difficult to estimate, but the geographical scope is well documented. Jesus’s disciples in Jerusalem had multiplied and dispersed throughout almost of the Roman empire by 300 AD.

This Handout is provided as a Bible study aid. Feel free to copy and distribute to help others better understand the Scriptures.

## Where Did They Go and How Did They Get There?

During most of human history, walking has been the primary way of getting from one place to another. The pace of walking was slow compared to our modern methods. Rough or wooded terrain were impediments, as were mountains, rivers and seas.

For that reason, many people in antiquity never traveled far from their birthplace. But the Bible mentions many migrations, where people traveled for a variety of reasons. Abraham left his home to look for the promised land. Jacob’s family sought out food in Egypt. Jews were marched to Babylon as captives. Jesus walked to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover.

Each of these travels involved hard work. There were constant dangers. Travel was not a luxury as it is for many today. Abraham trusted the one True God, and the first expression of his faith was to leave his home, trusting God for provision and protection.

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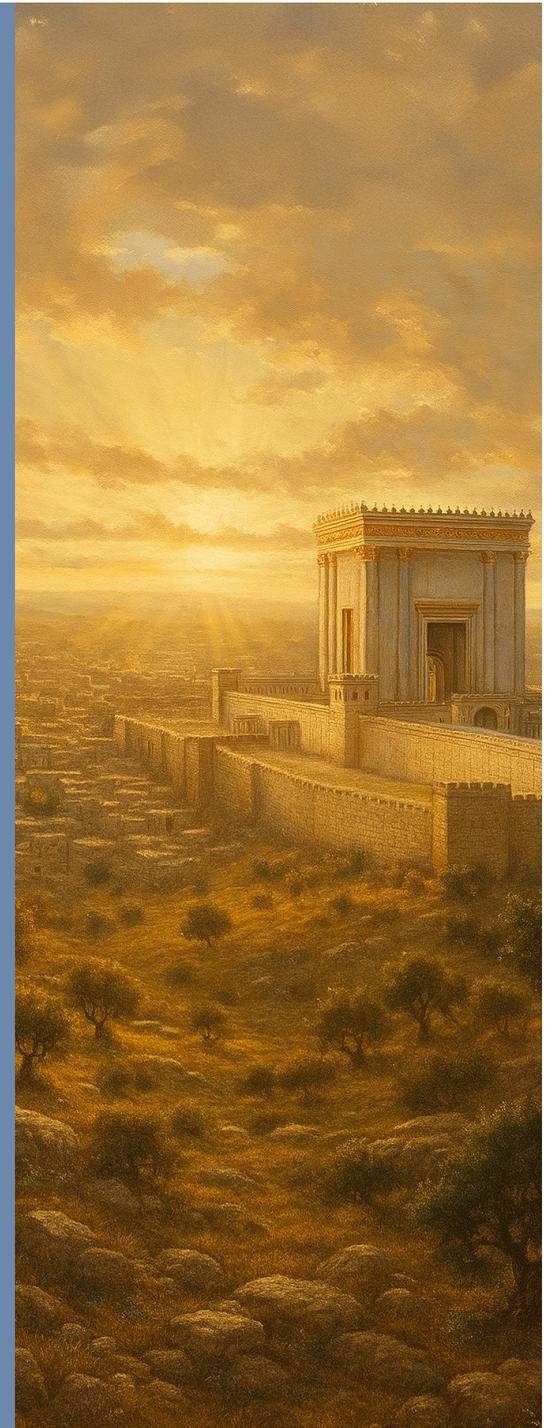
Now the LORD said to Abram,  
 “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s  
 house to the land that I will show you.

*Genesis 12:1*

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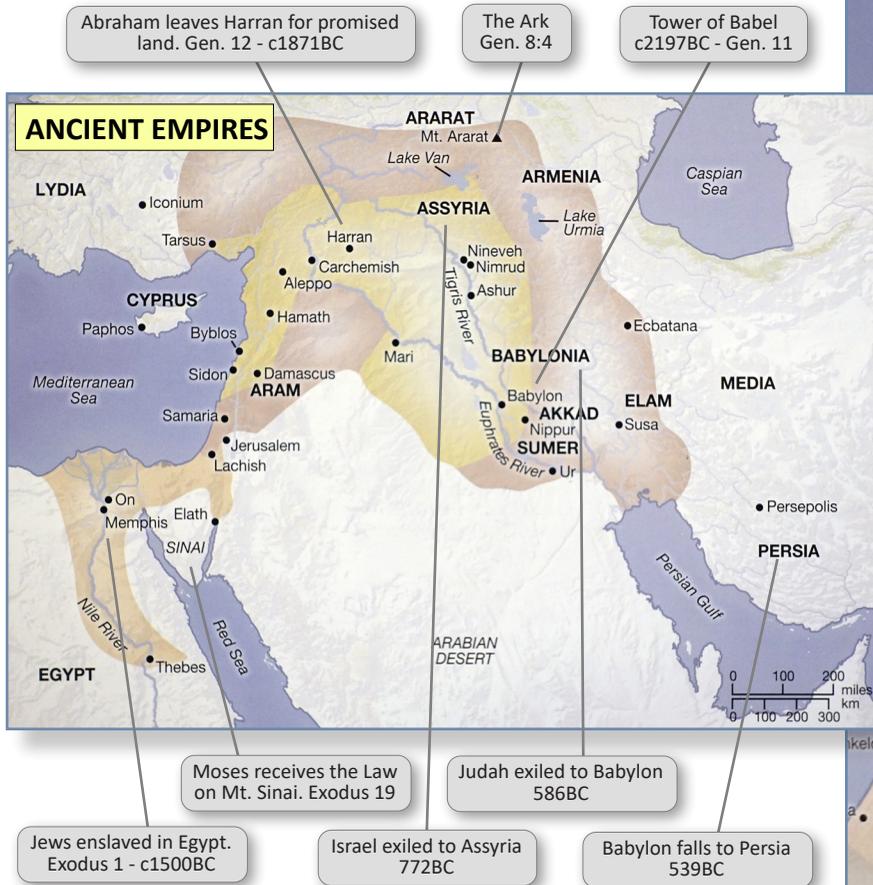
This Geography of the Bible handout will help you better understand the places and relationships of biblical places. But it can also remind you of the providence of God and the faith of His people who were willing to walk where He commanded, no matter what the cost.

GEOGRAPHY OF THE BIBLE

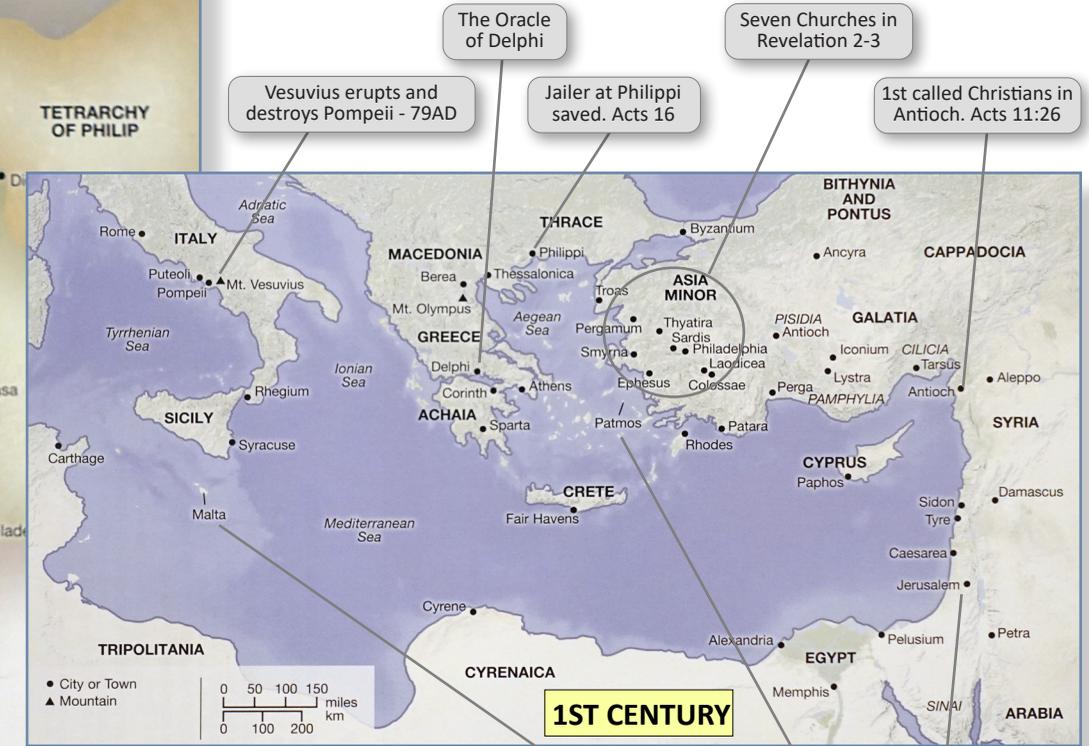


# Geography of the Bible

WHERE DID THEY GO AND HOW DID THEY GET THERE?



**Roman Roads:** Augustus Caesar reorganized the management of the Roman road system about the time Jesus was born. The changes involved new quality standards for aqueducts, drainage ditches and roads. It was these Roman roads that Paul used as he walked across Asia Minor and into Macedonia and Greece spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



## TIME OF CHRIST

**Flora & Fauna:** In Jesus's day, the Holy Land was forested with Pine, Oak, Terebinth, Sycamore fig and Olive trees. Lions and bears roamed through the wooded forests. The hillsides of Galilee were lush with flowering plants, fields of wheat and barley and vineyards. Jesus often visited the Garden of Gethsemane, but by the time the Romans had destroyed Jerusalem in 70AD, the garden was barren. All the trees had been used for firewood during the siege. Neglect and the destruction of war has left the Holy Land as we see it today, a place of rocky deserts and dry plains. The forests and indigenous large mammals have been gone for thousands of years.

## Key Places in the life of Jesus:

1. Born in Bethlehem - Luke 1
2. Raised in Nazareth - Matt. 2
3. Baptized at Bethany beyond Jordan - Matt. 3
4. Tempted in the Nabatean desert - Luke 4
5. Did first miracle in Cana - John 2
6. Talks to Samaritan woman in Sychar - John 4
7. Preached on shores of Galilee - Matt. 5
8. Raised widow's son at Nain - Luke 7
9. Delivers man in Gadara - Mark 5
10. Feeds 5000 at Bethsaida - Luke 9
11. Transfigured at Mt. Tabor - Mark 9
12. Healed blind man at Jericho - Matt. 10:46
13. Crucified & resurrected in Jerusalem - John 19

Apostle John writes Revelation. Rev. 1 - 89AD

**Walking Award:** Abraham gets the walking award in the Bible. He left Harran and went to Shechem, then down to Beersheba. From there he went to and from Egypt, then back north to rescue Lot from the Northern Kings. That's more than 1,950 miles by foot, meaning he spent more than three months of his life traveling.



By the time of the Jewish captivity in Egypt, horse-drawn chariots were commonly used by armies to transport a driver and archer at speeds up to 40 MPH for two miles.

Horses were not commonly used for riding until saddles with stirrups were invented around 500BC. At a walking pace, a horse can go 20 miles at 4 MPH.

Camels and donkeys carried heavy loads and were often ridden. Donkeys are slow with a short range but camels can travel at 25 MPH for up to two hours, more than 50 miles per day.

By the time of Paul's missionary journeys, merchant ships had been sailing in the Mediterranean Sea for hundreds of years. At 7 miles per hour, the 1,500 mile trip to Rome from Antioch took at least 214 days.

Walking is the most common form of human transportation. Some of Paul's journey's involved walking 800 miles or more. The time to travel such distances was measured in months or seasons.