

01. Introduction to Paul's Letter to the Philippians :



Re the 'Acts of the Apostles' by Luke

Luke was a close companion of Paul in his mission.

Luke was a historian: 'I have decided, after investigating everything carefully, to write an orderly account for you so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed' (Luke 1:3-4).

First century historians used all the tools of rhetoric to impress the reader, and they were expected to create speeches, but only after 'investigating everything carefully.'

born in Tarsus

“I am from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of an important city”

(Acts 21:39).

According to Jerome (died c.420), Paul’s parents emigrated to Tarsus from Gischala in Galilee (*Commentary on Philemon 23-24*).

He refers to himself as a **προεσβύτης** (late 50’s) in his Letter to Philemon (composed c.54AD)



Saul was a Jew

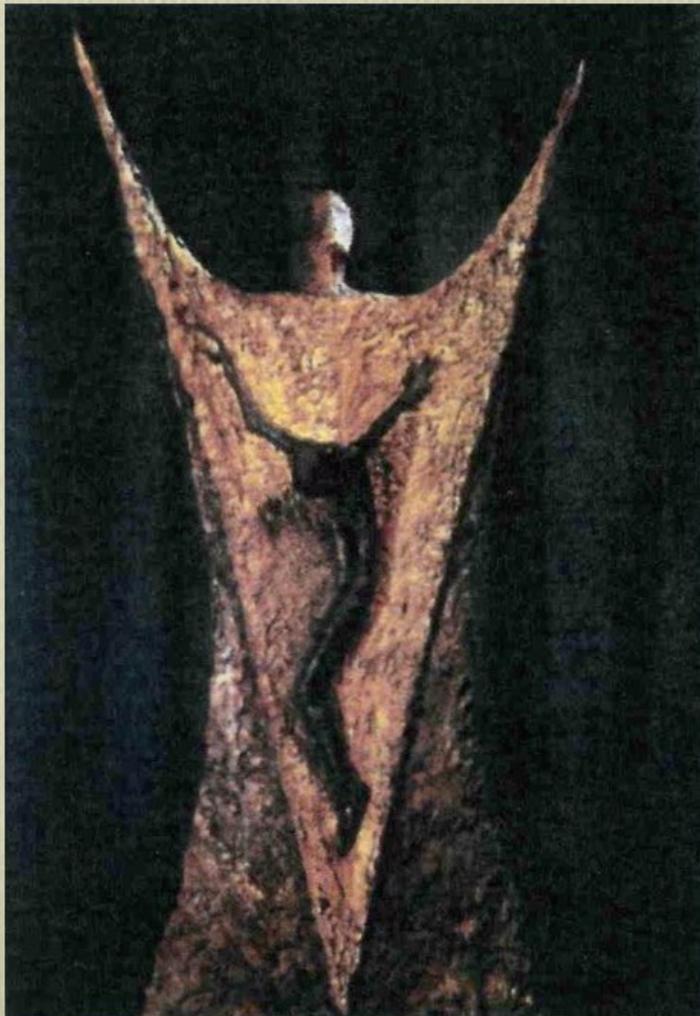
‘I was circumcised on the eighth day’ (Philippians 3:5).

- In his Letter to the Philippians (3:5), he refers to himself as ‘a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews.’
- Given the name ‘Saul’ (Acts 7:58).

- He was a 'Pharisee' (Philippians 3:5; see Acts 26:5)
- He studied in Jerusalem under Gamaliel, 'educated strictly according to our ancestral Law' (Acts 22:3).
- He inherited Roman citizenship (Acts 22:28).

33AD

Acts 7:58-60



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Lyn Constable Maxwell MRBS
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‘The members of the council dragged Stephen out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man (νεανίας, 37?) named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he died. And Saul approved of their killing him.’

- Paul claims to have been ‘intensely zealous in persecuting the Church of God and was trying to destroy it’ (Galatians 1:13; see Philippians 3:6; Acts 9:1-2, 22:4, 26:9-11).

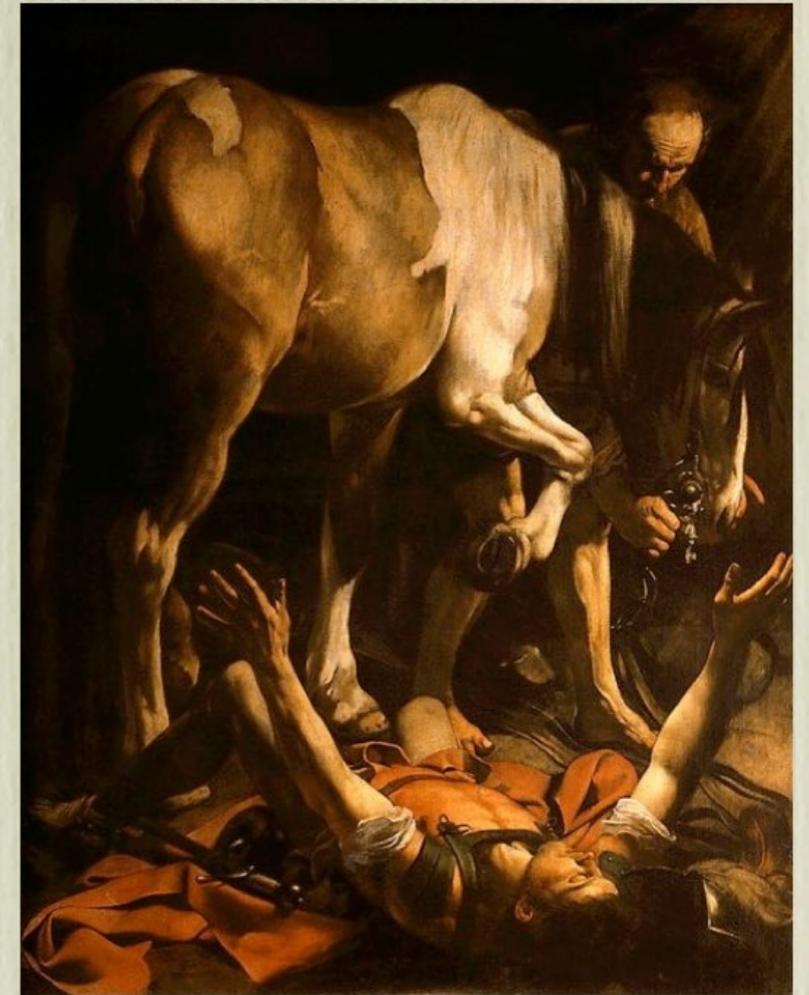
34AD

His Encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus

(Acts 9:1-19; 22:6-16; 26:13-18).

Acts 9:3-6

‘As Saul was approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” He asked, “Who are you, Lord?” “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.”’



Carravaggio. Rome, Santa Maria del Popolo
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‘I received the Gospel through a revelation of Jesus Christ’ (Galatians 1:12).

‘God called me through his grace and was pleased to reveal his Son in/to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles’ (Galatians 1:15-16).

‘Have I not seen the Lord’ (1 Corinthians 9:1).

‘He was seen also by me’ (1 Corinthians 15:8).

Acts 9:17-19

‘Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptised, and after taking some food, he regained his strength. For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus.’

34-37AD

In 'Arabia' (The Nabataean kingdom)
(Galatians 1:17-18; Acts 9:20-25)

'I went away at once to Arabia,
and afterwards I returned to
Damascus' (Galatians 1:17).



37AD

‘In Damascus, the governor under King Aretas guarded the city of Damascus in order to seize me, but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands’ (2 Cor 11:32-33).

Saul pays a short visit to Jerusalem ‘to talk things over with **Cephas**’ (Galatians 1:18)

37-45AD

‘Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, and I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea that are in Christ; they only heard it said, “The one who formerly was persecuting us is now proclaiming the faith he once tried to destroy” (Galatians 1:21-23).



46AD

‘Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for an entire year they met with the church and taught a great many people’ (Acts 11:25-26).

Saul visits Jerusalem with Barnabas and Silas and confers with Peter, John & James concerning conditions for accepting Gentiles into the Christian community (Galatians 2:1-10; Acts 11:27-30)

47AD

Sent on mission

Acts 13:1-4

‘In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers ... While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia; and from there they sailed to Cyprus.’

After Paul and Barnabas met Sergius Paulus, the proconsul of Achaia, Luke begins to call Saul 'Paul' (the name Paul uses in all his letters). Do he and the proconsul happen to have the same Roman name, or did the proconsul, upon his conversion, offer Paul patronage?

47-48AD

After leaving Cyprus, Paul and Barnabas travelled through the southern town of the Roman Province of Galatia



48AD

‘They sailed back to **Antioch**, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had completed’ (Acts 14:26).



Acts 14:27-28

When they arrived back at Antioch, they called the church together and related all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith for the Gentiles. And they stayed there with the disciples for some time.



Acts 15:1-2

Then certain individuals came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to discuss this question with the apostles and the elders.

48AD

Paul writes from Antioch to Galatia

Letter to the Galatians

49AD

Shortly after writing to the Galatians Paul went with Barnabas to the [Assembly in Jerusalem](#) which decided that Gentiles could be welcomed into the community as Gentiles.

To help harmony in a Christian community of Jews and Gentiles, the Council concluded that the Gentiles should follow only the instructions in Leviticus that applied to Gentiles living in a Jewish territory.

Gentiles were asked to abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from πορνεία.

49AD

Paul returns to Galatia, accompanied by Silas. They are joined by Timothy

Acts 16:11

Mission to Macedonia

‘We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi.’



Philippi had been reconstructed by Philip of Macedonia, the father of Alexander the Great, in 356BC. It held a strategically important position, guarding a mountain pass on the overland trade route between Europe and Asia. In 168BC it was incorporated into the Roman Empire. In 42BC it was the scene of the victory of Antony and Octavian (who was to become the emperor Augustus) over Brutus and Cassius, and was established as a Roman colony where members of the victorious army could retire with all the rights of Roman citizens. It was a Roman city with Latin as the official language. There were some Jews there, but not enough it seems for a synagogue.

Luke tells us of Paul's meeting with Lydia and some other women, and of her baptism (Acts 16:13-15). He also tells us of Paul's healing of a slave girl with a spirit of divination, of a riot, of Paul's being flogged and imprisoned and of the conversion of the gaoler and his household (see Acts 16:16-34). Paul himself speaks of the shameful treatment which he received while in Philippi (1Thessalonians 2:2; Acts 16:11-40).

Acts 17:1

They left Philippi and came to Thessalonica.



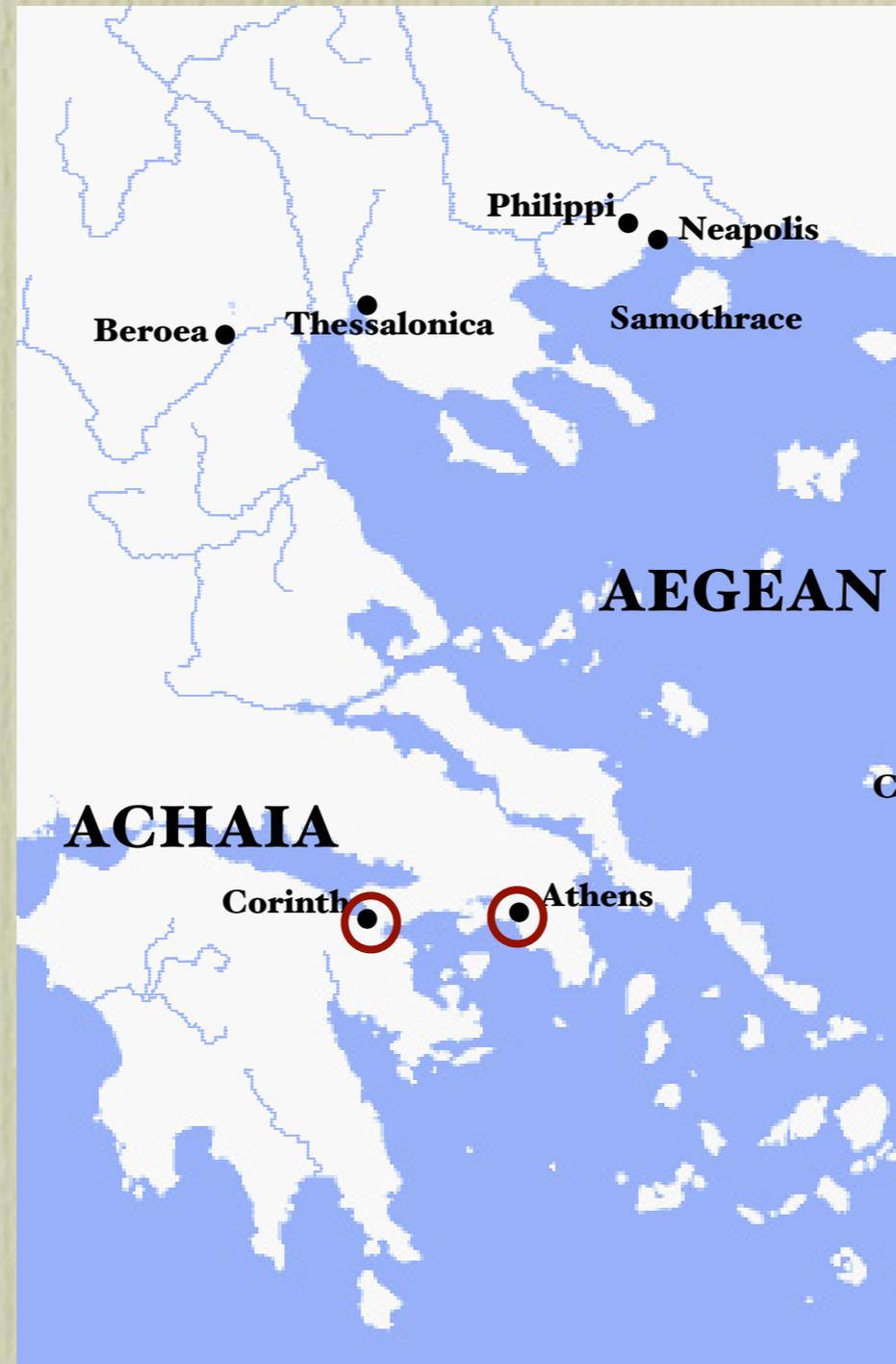
They were forced to leave the Via Egnatia and less to Beroea

Acts 17:13-15

But when the Jews of Thessalonica learned that the word of God had been proclaimed by Paul in Beroea as well, they came there too, to stir up and incite the crowds. Then the believers immediately sent Paul away to the coast, but Silas and Timothy remained behind. Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as **Athens**; and after receiving instructions to have Silas and Timothy join him as soon as possible, they left him.



‘After a brief stay in Athens **Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.**’
(Acts 18:1).



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(Acts 18:1).



In Corinth Paul met Aquila and Priscilla. Like Paul they worked with They worked with a needle, making canvas shades for the market-place, as well as tents and coverings for the caravans and other cloth and leather goods (Acts 18:3).

It was while in Corinth that Paul wrote his

Letters to the Christian community
in Thessalonica

We know from a letter written by his brother, Seneca, that Gallio, who was proconsul of Achaia while Paul was in Corinth [Acts 18:12-16] retired before the completion of his term.

Acts 18:11, 18

Paul stayed there a year and six months ... He said farewell to the believers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila.

It would seem that Paul arrived in Corinth before the onset of winter in the year 50 and left at the same time as Gallio in the spring of 52.

Letters to the Christian community in Thessalonica

52AD

‘Paul sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila ... When they reached Ephesus he left them’ (Acts 18:18-19).



52AD

- When the sailing season opened, Paul left Corinth for Ephesus with Aquila and Priscilla. He went straight on the Jerusalem, then Antioch, and then back to Ephesus, a journey of 3,000ks



Ephesus: 52-55AD

Letters from Ephesus

First Corinthians 53AD

Philemon 54AD

Colossians 54AD



55AD

In 55 Paul left Ephesus and went to Macedonia via Troas



2 Cor 1-9 was composed in Macedonia in 55

2Cor 10-13 the following year after Paul had been in Illyricum

winter of 56-57

‘Paul came to Greece where he stayed for three months’ (Acts 20:1-2).

Letter to the Romans



57AD

From Corinth to Macedonia
to Troas and Miletus, to
Jerusalem (Acts 20:3 - 23:32)



57-59AD

At Caesarea
awaiting trial

Acts 23:32- 26:32

From Caesarea to
the churches in the
East.

'Ephesians'



General Letter to the communities in the East



After two years under a form of house arrest in Caesarea, Paul used his right as a Roman Citizen to demand that he be taken to Rome and tried by Caesar.

Sea Voyage via Crete and Malta to Rome 60AD Acts 27-28



The last words of the Acts

‘Paul lived in Rome two whole years at his own expense and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance’ (Acts 28:30-31).

Letter to the Philippians

during Paul's
house arrest
in Rome.

60-62AD

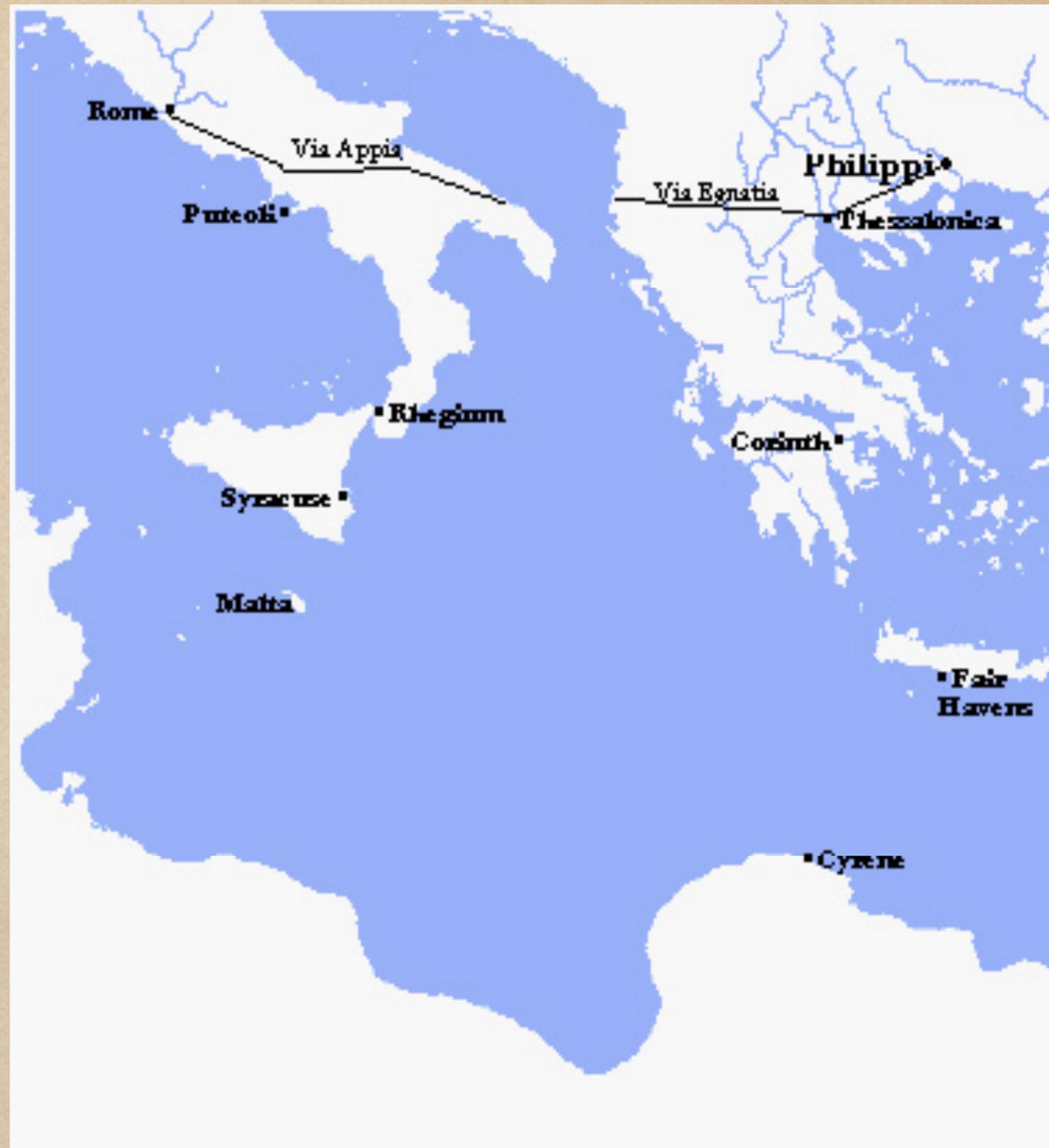


Visits to Philippi

50AD (Acts 16;
1 Thess 2:2)

55AD (Acts 20:2)

57AD (Acts 20:6)



62AD Letter to the Philippians