

Book of Acts

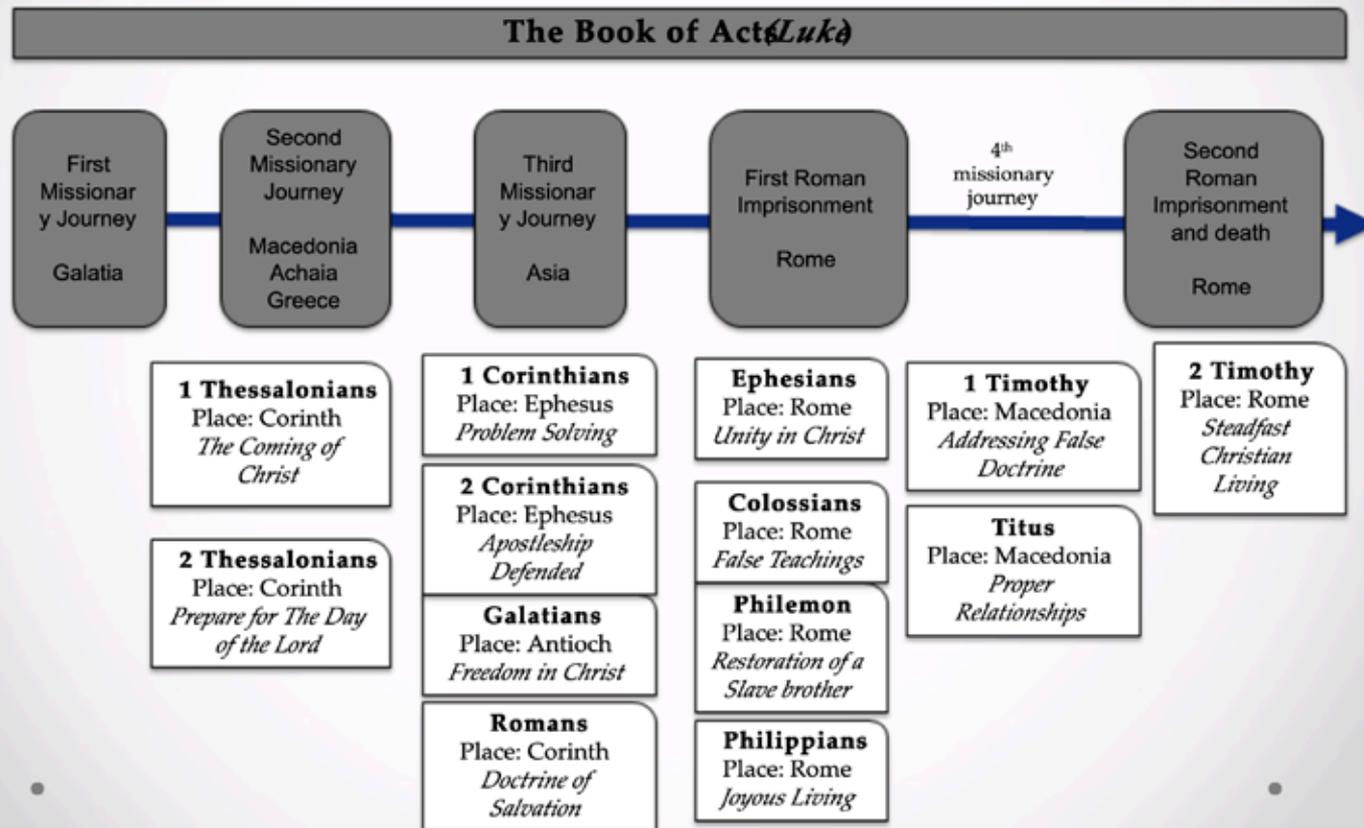
Chapter 17

*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:

They happened one after another.

They deal with a common theme of God's answer to evil – the Messianic Kingdom.

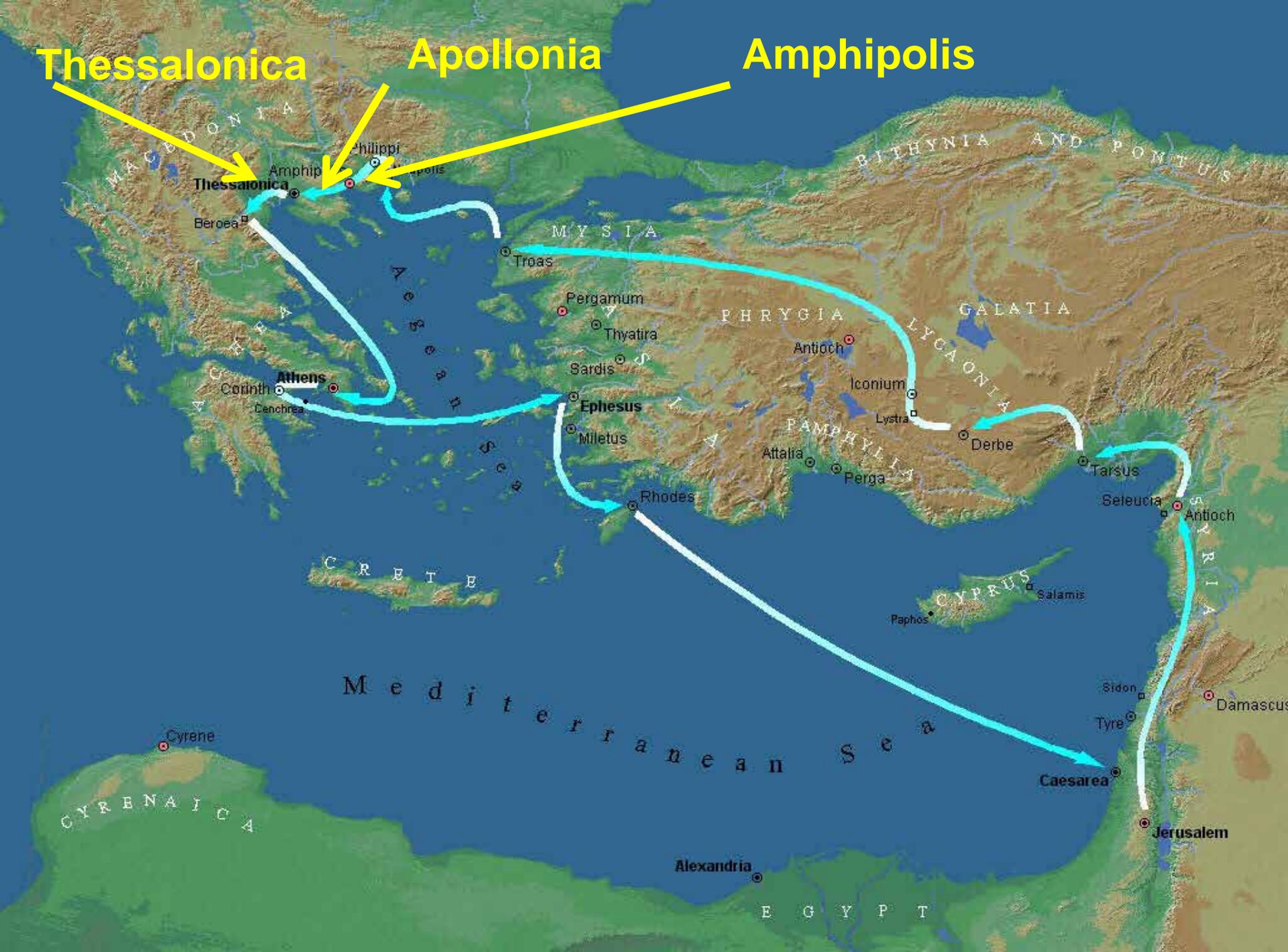
✦ To the Jews in Thessalonica and Berea he speaks of the “Messiah (the Christ)”. Acts 17:3

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

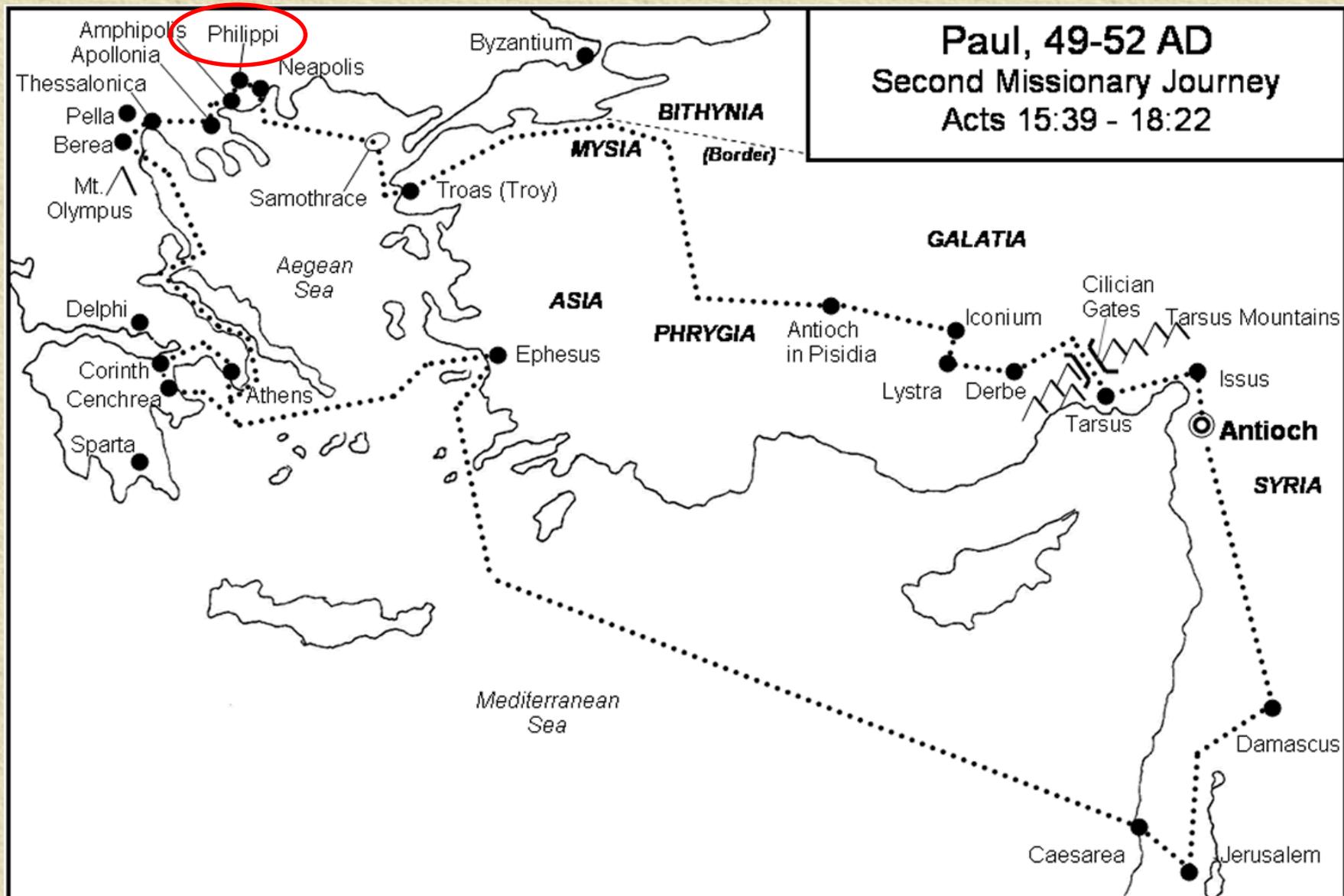
Thessalonica

Apollonia

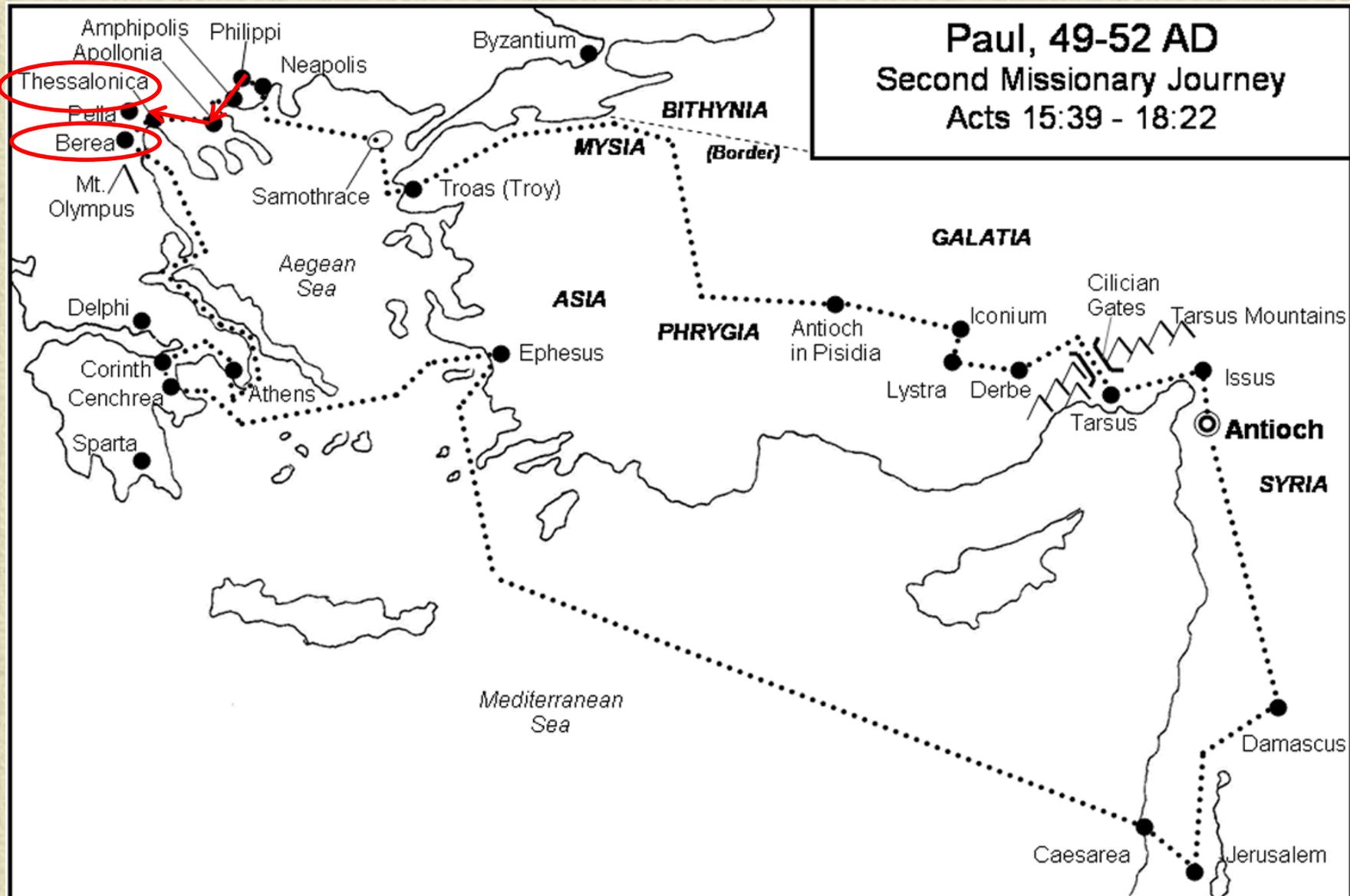
Amphipolis



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

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- ✦ 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, (Westerners) 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

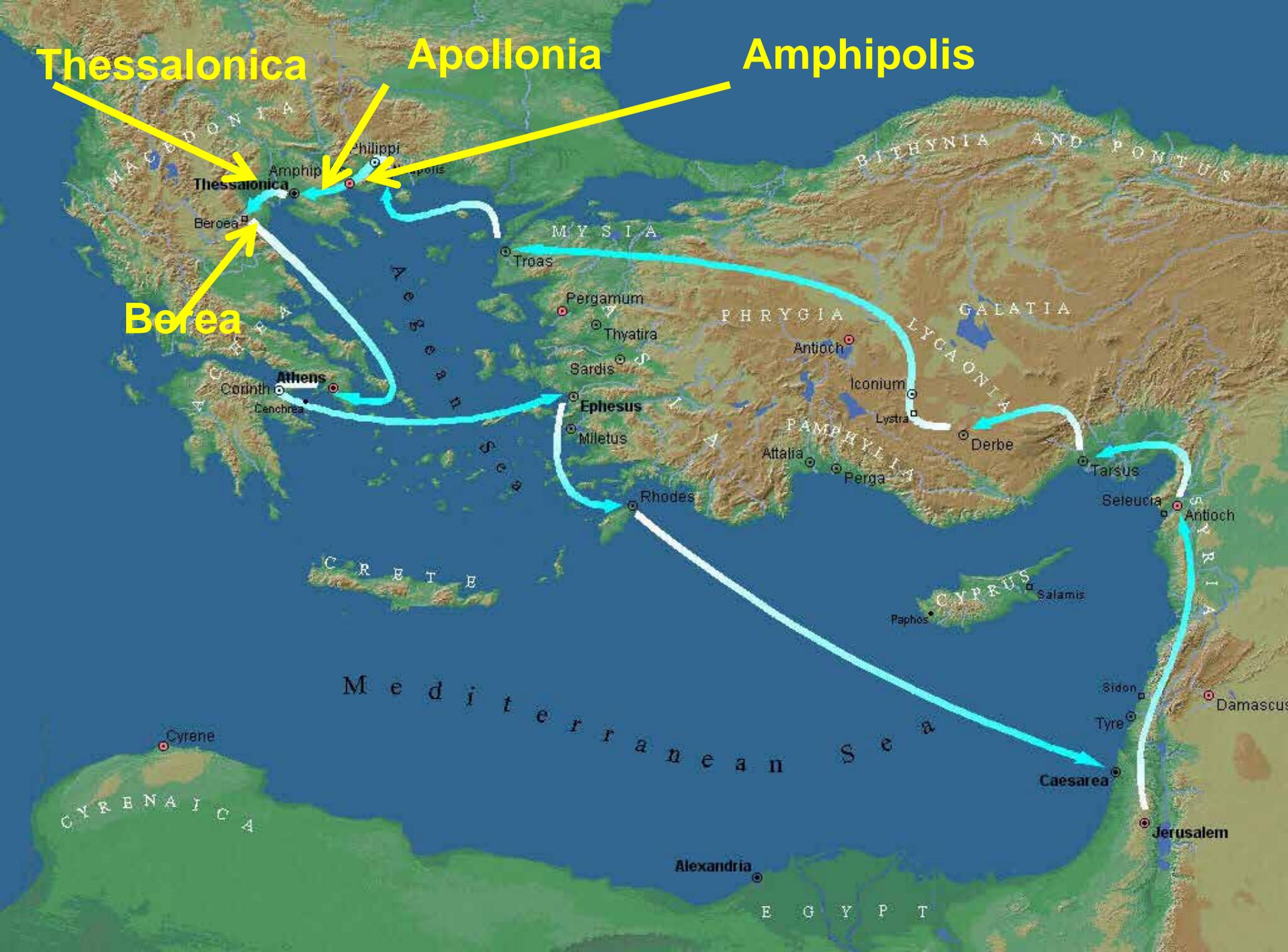
- ✦ Jason became the “surety” for Paul. The one who had shown him the True “Surety of a better testament”.
 - ✦ Surety is a legal term for guarantee.
 - ✦ “And Judah said unto Israel his father.... I will be *surety* for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, ...then let 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



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)

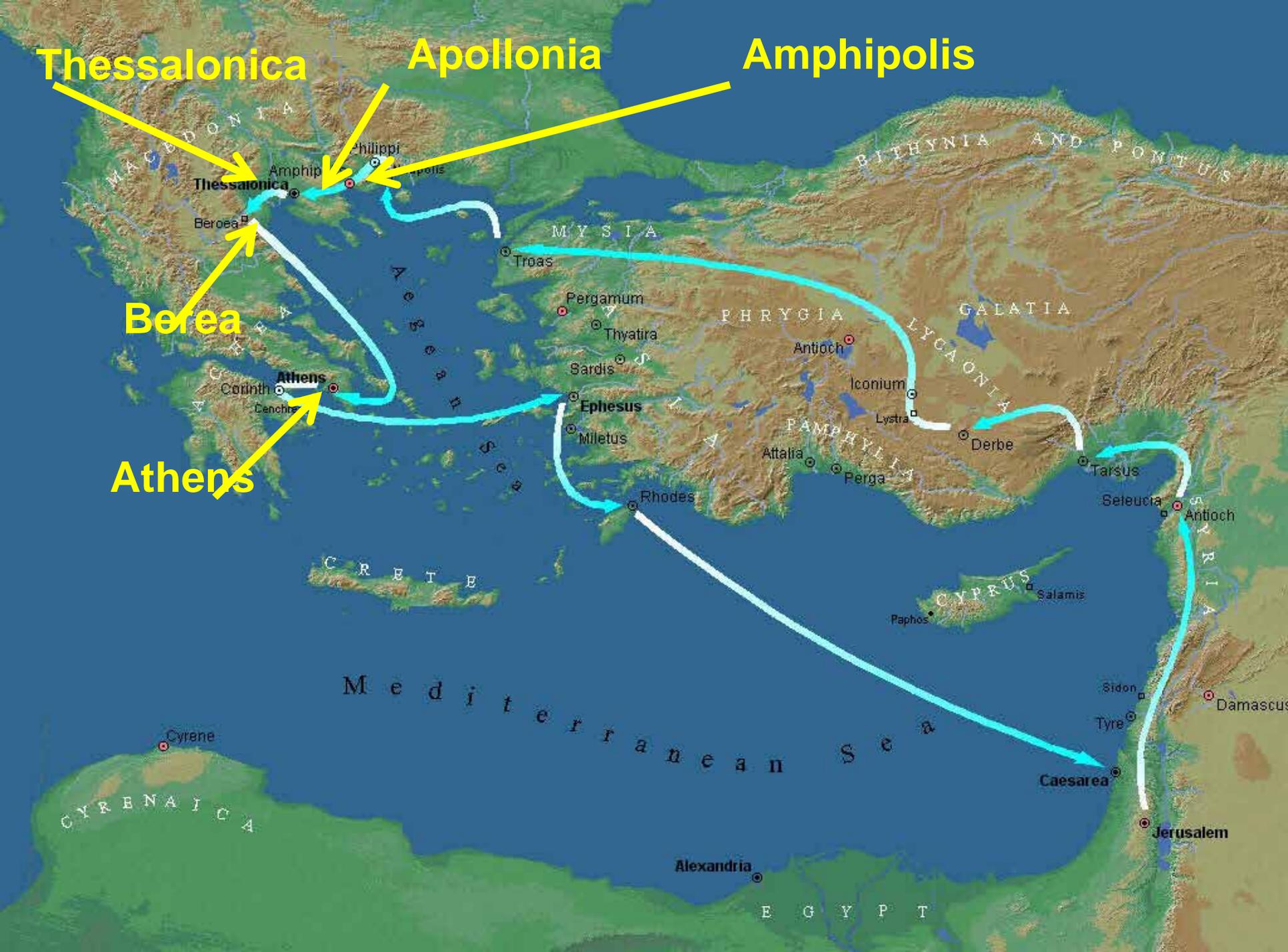
Thessalonica

Apollonia

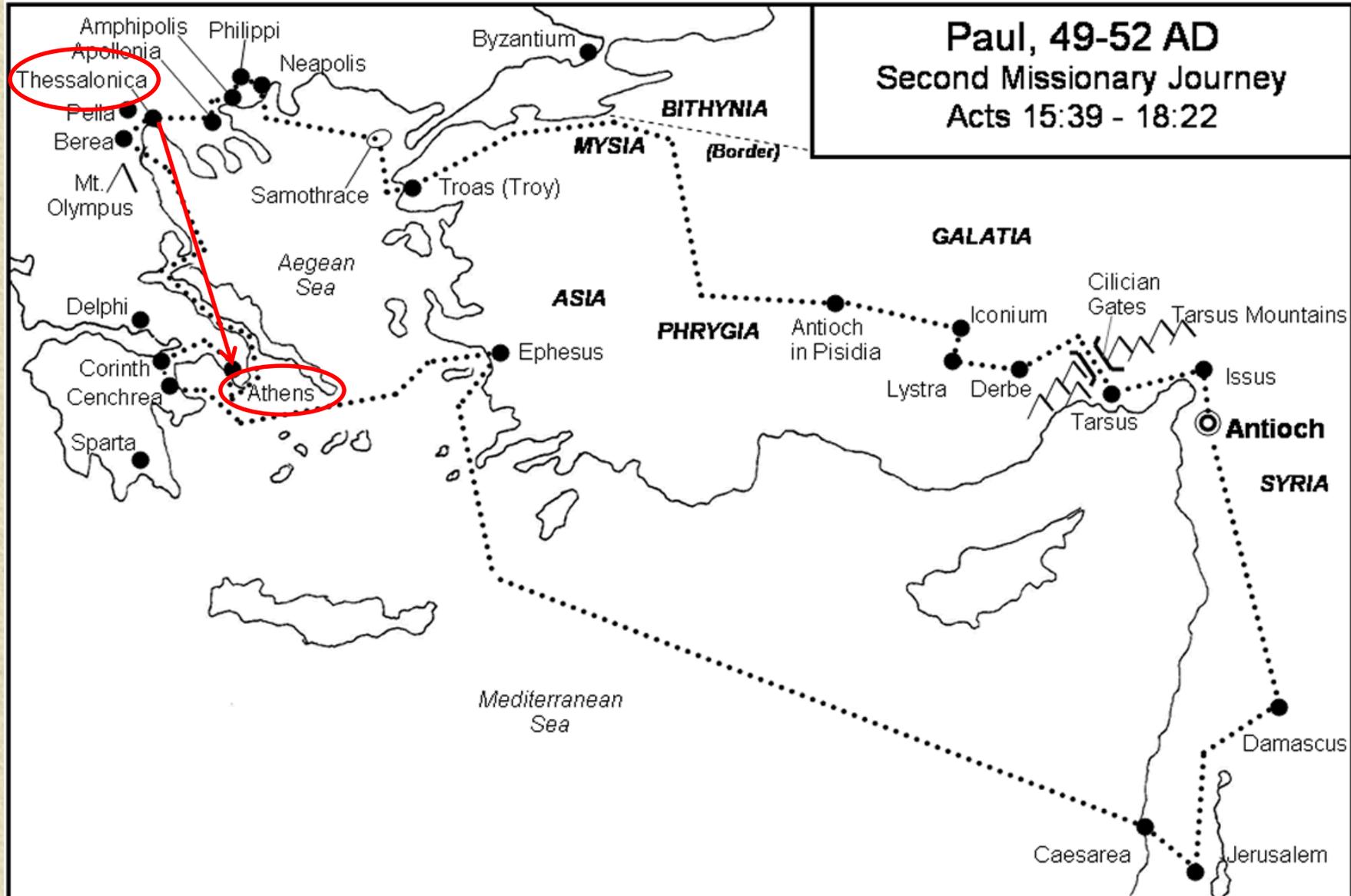
Amphipolis

Berea

Athens

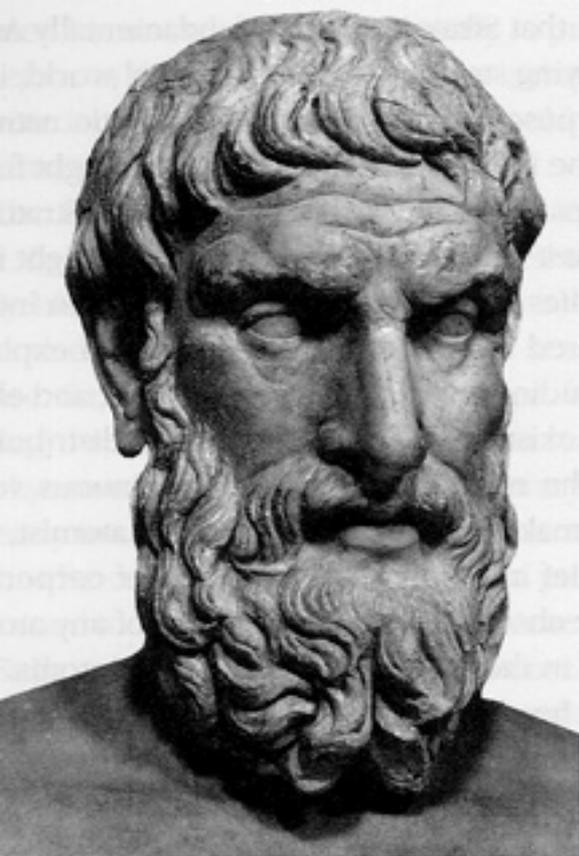


Athens



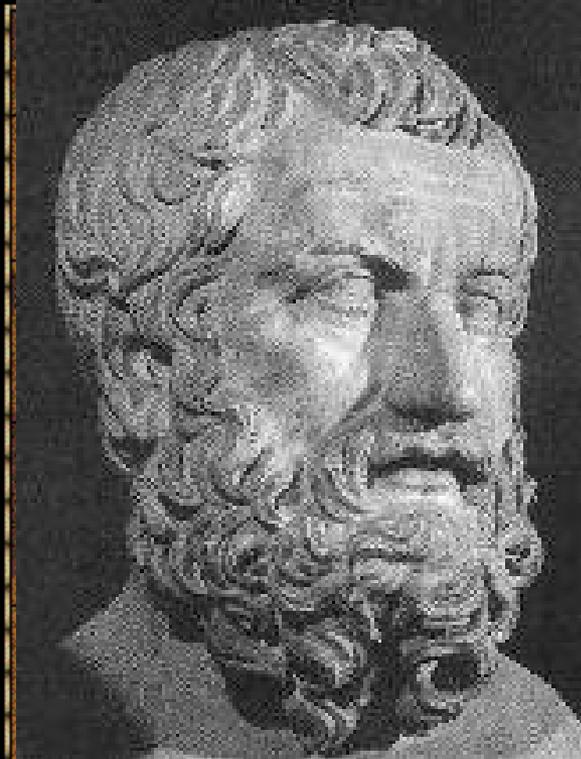
Athens

- ✦ 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

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- ✦ 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)