

## Acts of Apostles-Journeys of Paul

### Skits

25 points for each group member as skit is prepared

25 points for each group member as skit is presented

Group 1 Acts 13:1-12

Group 2 Acts 13:44-52

Group 3 Acts 14: 8-18

Group 4 Acts 16: 19-34

Group 5 Acts 22: 22-29

Group 6 Acts 28: 7-16

**Skit must clearly present: (this is not a joke, or comedy routine!)**

Where is this happening?

Who are the people?

What are the events being depicted

Narrator **must explain who people are**

and **give scripture citation for group.**



## THE TRAVELS OF ST. PAUL

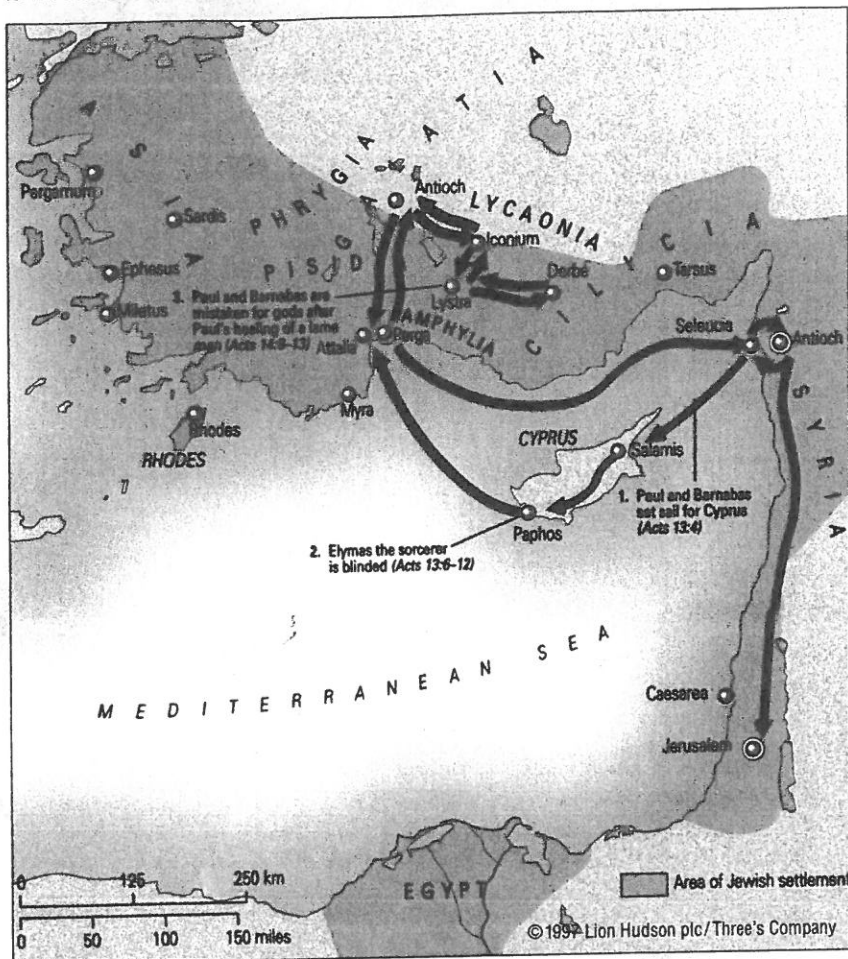
St. Paul's tireless and intrepid missionary work spread the Christian Faith far beyond the borders of Palestine and across most of the Roman Empire, founding some of the earliest and most prominent early Christian communities along the way. By some estimates, St. Paul's travels totaled well over 10,000 miles and brought him to Jerusalem, to every corner of Asia Minor, into Arabia, across Macedonia and Greece, to Eastern Europe, Rome, and many scholars believe he may have traveled as far as Spain.

Along the way, he found many eager disciples, but he also found many enemies among both the Jews and Gentiles. He endured many dangers and sufferings along the course of his travels. He describes some of his experiences in 2 Corinthians 11:24-25: "Five times I have received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I have been beaten with rods: once I was stoned. Three times I have been shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been adrift at sea." St. Paul was driven out of many cities by mobs. He narrowly escaped death several times, as when he sneaked out of Damascus in a basket to avoid the guards at the gate (cf. Acts 9:23-25). Other times, he did not escape, as in Lystra where a mob caught him, stoned him until they thought he was dead and dragged him out of the city (cf. Acts 14:19).

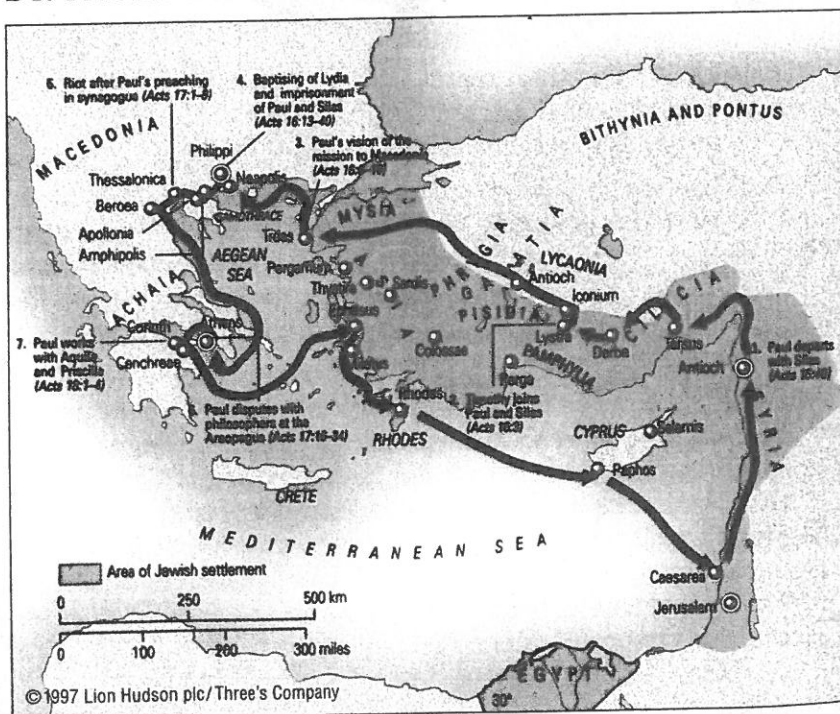
St. Paul was fearless in his apostolate despite his physical shortcomings. There are several accounts of what St. Paul looked like. Even in his own words, he writes that his "bodily presence is weak" (2 Cor 10:10). Other early Christian accounts coincide in saying that he was short, broad-shouldered, bow-legged, and balding. He also had big eyes, a rather long nose, a thick, grayish beard and closely-knit eyebrows.

St. Paul also spent a good deal of time in prison. He was arrested in Philippi, and again later in Jerusalem, after which he spent a two-year stint in Caesarea, and two more years on house arrest in Rome. He was finally martyred in Rome around the year A.D. 64 by beheading. Tradition holds that when he was beheaded, his head bounced three times, and each time it hit the ground a fountain miraculously sprang up.

### ST. PAUL'S FIRST JOURNEY, ca. A.D. 46-48

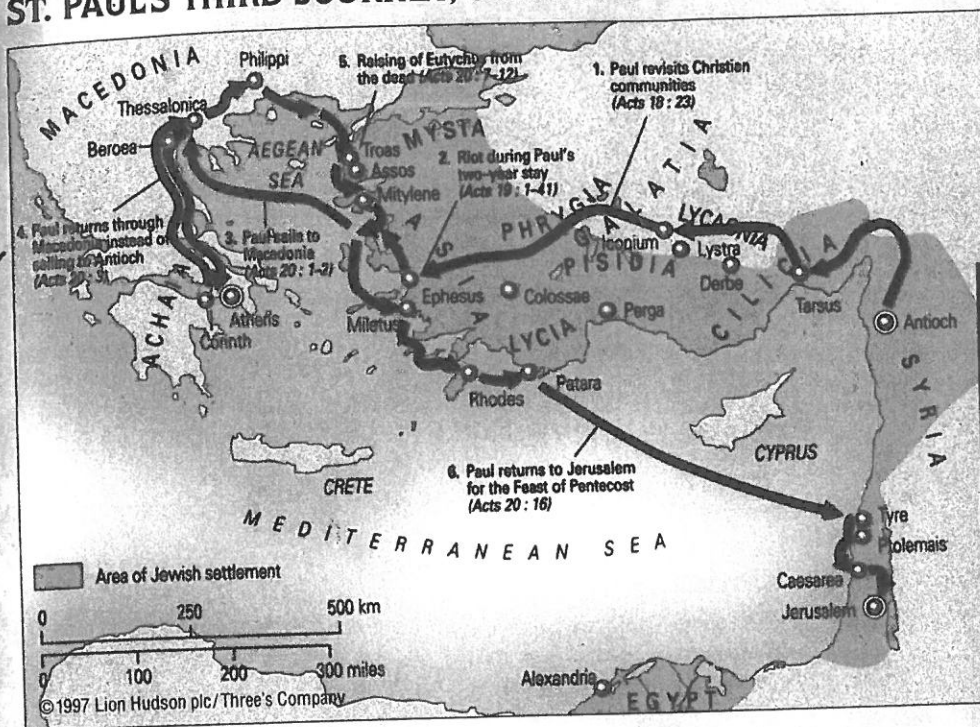


### ST. PAUL'S SECOND JOURNEY, ca. A.D. 49-52



# JESUS CHRIST AND THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH

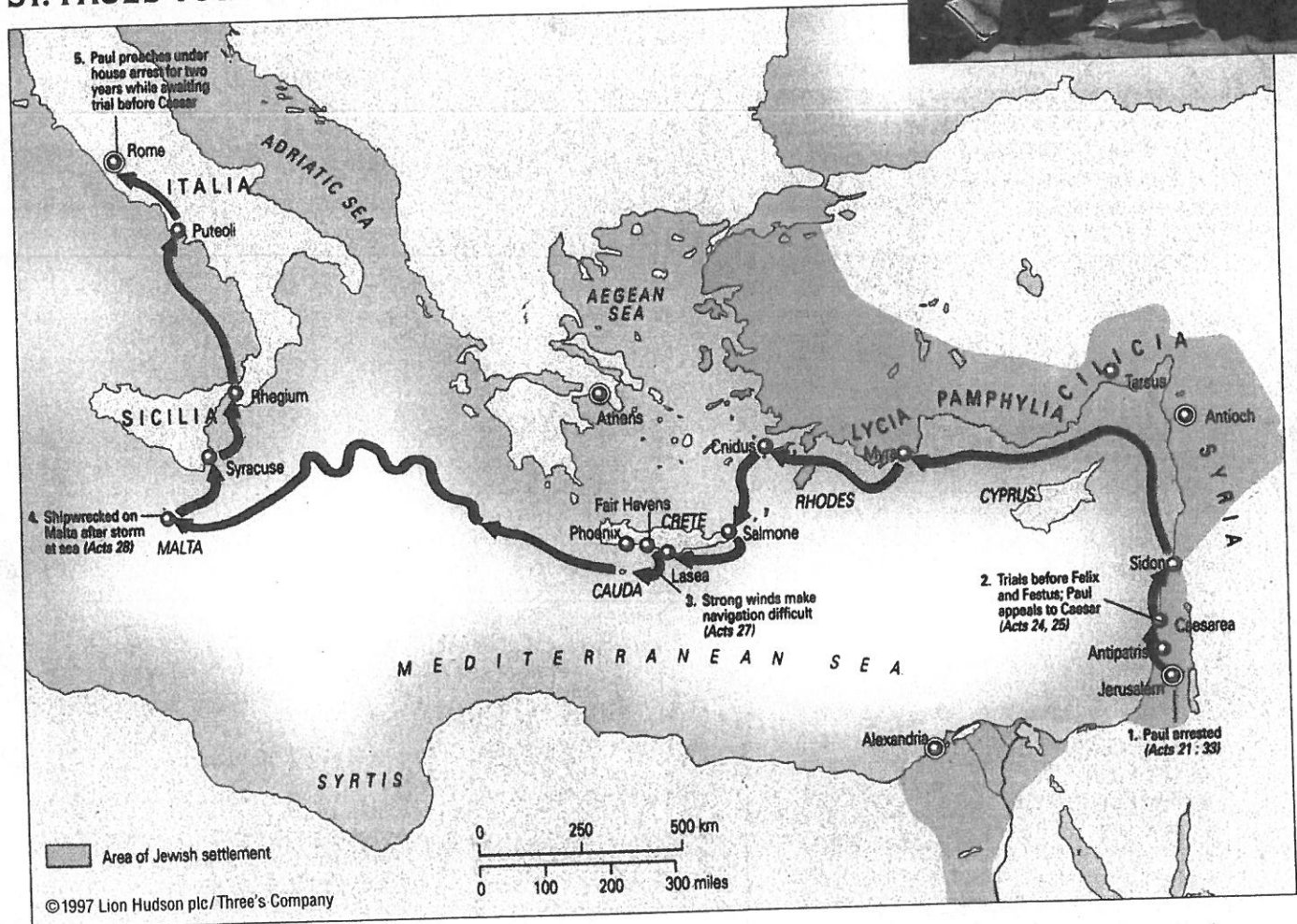
## ST. PAUL'S THIRD JOURNEY, ca. A.D. 53-57



In Ephesus, St. Paul performed miracle after miracle, and conversions were many. The new converts brought their books of magic and burned them in public. (Acts 19:1-20)



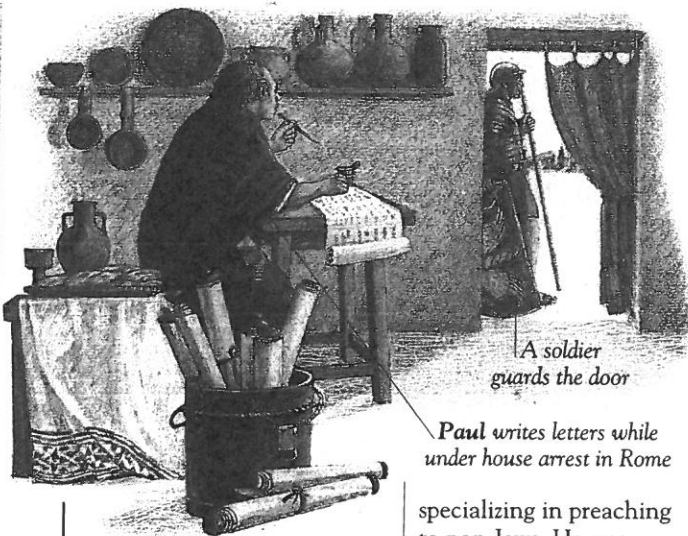
## ST. PAUL'S VOYAGE TO ROME, ca. A.D. 61-62





# THE FIRST MISSIONARIES

**T**HE STORY OF THE first Christians centers on those whose mission it was to pass on the good news about Jesus. Most Christians did this in a small way, but some devoted all their time to spreading the message. It was not long before the news had been taken around the Mediterranean world, and beyond.



*A soldier guards the door*  
*Paul writes letters while under house arrest in Rome*

## PAUL

Meaning: *Small*

Appears: 196 verses in the New Testament, esp. Acts 7–9, 13. When he is first mentioned, Paul is referred to by his Hebrew name Saul (“God hears”). Paul was his second, Greek name. A brilliant young Pharisee, Paul was originally determined to stamp out Christianity. On his way to Damascus to arrest the Christians there, Jesus appeared to him in a vision and Paul was converted to Christianity. Very soon he started preaching the Christian message. Over the next thirty years he traveled all around the Greek-speaking world,

specializing in preaching to non-Jews. He was thrown in prison several times, but kept in touch with his new churches by letter. Thirteen of his letters now form part of the New Testament.

## JOHN MARK

Meaning: *God is gracious*

Appears: Acts 12, 13, 15; Col. 4; 2 Tim. 4; Philem. 24; 1 Pet. 5. John Mark’s mother had a large house in Jerusalem where the first Christians used to meet. John Mark went as a helper with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, but he lost heart halfway and went back to Jerusalem. He later went to Rome with Peter. John Mark is the author of Mark’s Gospel.

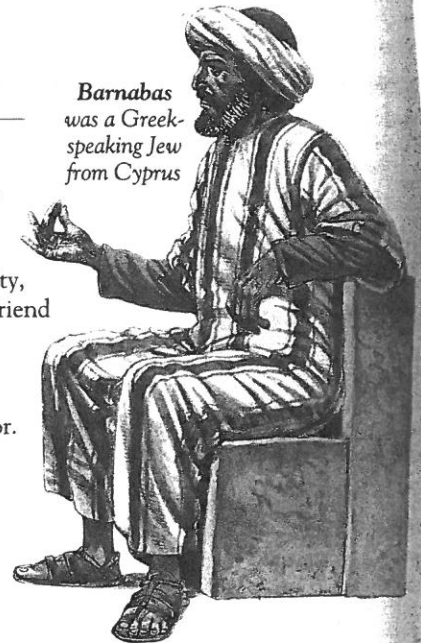
## BARNABAS

Meaning: *Son of encouragement*

Appears: Acts 4, 9, 11–15; 1 Cor. 9; Gal. 2; Col. 4

One of the earliest converts to Christianity, Barnabas was a close friend of Paul, and traveled with him on his first missionary journey to Cyprus and Asia Minor. His real name was Joseph. “Barnabas” was a nickname the apostles gave him, because he was so good at teaching and encouraging people.

*Barnabas was a Greek-speaking Jew from Cyprus*



## PAUL’S MESSAGE

**M**issionaries like Paul felt that they had a unique message to pass on. They believed that Jesus died to save the world from evil, that he had risen from death to give people new life, and that God would give his Holy Spirit to all who believed.



## Paul’s conversion

Paul discovered that he was to be a missionary while on the road to Damascus. Jesus appeared to him in a heavenly light, and told Paul to go out and preach all over the world. For three days he could not see and did not eat. Not all missionaries had a dramatic vision like Paul.

*PAUL BECOMES A CHRISTIAN*  
*This painting by Francesco Mazzola (1503–40) shows Paul’s conversion.*

## Paul’s journeys

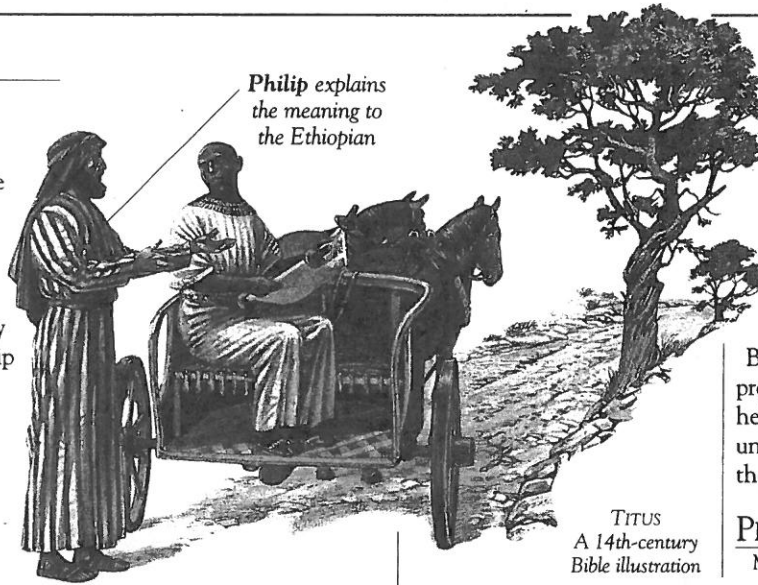
Paul made three long journeys from his home church in Antioch, Syria. Sometimes he went by ship, but he often walked from town to town, preaching on the way. He gave a famous sermon in Athens.

*THE AGORA IN ATHENS*  
*Paul sat here to discuss Christianity with the other teachers.*



## PHILIP

Meaning: *Lover of horses*  
Appears: Acts 6, 8, 21  
Philip's first job was distributing food to the poor in Jerusalem. He became a missionary and was the first to preach the good news in Samaria. On his way back to Jerusalem, Philip was taken by an angel to help an Ethiopian official who was confused by a passage in Isaiah. The official was so impressed, he asked to be baptized and became the first Ethiopian Christian.



Philip explains the meaning to the Ethiopian

TITUS  
A 14th-century Bible illustration

## LUKE

Meaning: *unknown*  
Appears: Col. 4; 2 Tim. 4; Philem. 24  
Luke is the author of Luke's Gospel and also the Acts of the Apostles. He was a good friend to Paul, and was with him when they experienced the storm and shipwreck (Acts 27). He was a Gentile and a doctor, and was able to care for Paul who suffered from a mysterious illness. Luke was the only person with Paul when he finally faced execution in Rome.



LUKE  
This page is from the 9th-century Irish Macdurnan Gospels.

## SILAS

Meaning: *Woody*  
Appears: Acts 15, 16, 17, 18; 2 Cor. 1; 1 Thess. 1; 2 Thess. 1; 1 Pet. 5  
Silas traveled as a missionary with both Paul and Peter. He also sang hymns in jail with Paul during the earthquake in Philippi. Impressed by their faith, the jailer became a Christian. Peter described Silas as "a faithful brother."



SILAS

## TIMOTHY

Meaning: *One who honors God*  
Appears: Acts 16, 17; Rom. 16; 1 Cor. 4, 16; Phil. 1; Col. 1; 1 Thess. 3; 1 Tim. 1  
One of Paul's chief helpers, Timothy also went on missions of his own. Paul called him "my true son in the faith" and gave him advice in two letters in the New Testament.

## TITUS

Meaning: *Pleasant*  
Appears: 2 Cor. 2, 7, 12; Gal. 2; 2 Tim. 4; Titus 1  
Titus was one of Paul's most trusted associates. Paul gave him an especially difficult task: to go ahead of Paul to the new church in Corinth, which was rebelling against Paul's leadership. Paul was delighted when Titus came back and said that the Corinthian Christians had now begun to soften their attitude. Later, Paul wrote Titus a letter (the book of Titus) that is preserved in the New Testament.



## EPAPHRODITUS

Meaning: *Handsome, charming*  
Appears: Phil. 2, 4  
A leader of the church in Philippi, Epaphroditus was sent by the church with a gift for Paul, who was under house arrest in Rome. Epaphroditus stayed to help Paul, but fell seriously ill. When he recovered, he returned home with Paul's letter to the Philippians.

## APOLLOS

Meaning: *Named after the Greek god Apollo*  
Appears: Acts 18, 19; 1 Cor. 1, 3, 4, 16; Titus 3  
A Jew from Alexandria in Egypt, Apollos was a missionary before he met Paul. He had been a disciple of John the Baptist and was a powerful preacher. Priscilla and Aquila helped Apollos to a clearer understanding of Jesus when they met him in Corinth.

## PHOEBE

Meaning: *Radiant*  
Appears: Rom. 16  
Phoebe was a church leader near Corinth. Unlike Jewish synagogues, many early Christian churches gave women leadership positions. Phoebe traveled to Rome, probably taking Paul's letter to the Romans.

## TYCHICHUS

Meaning: *Lucky*  
Appears: Acts 20; Eph. 6; Col. 4; 2 Tim. 4; Titus 3

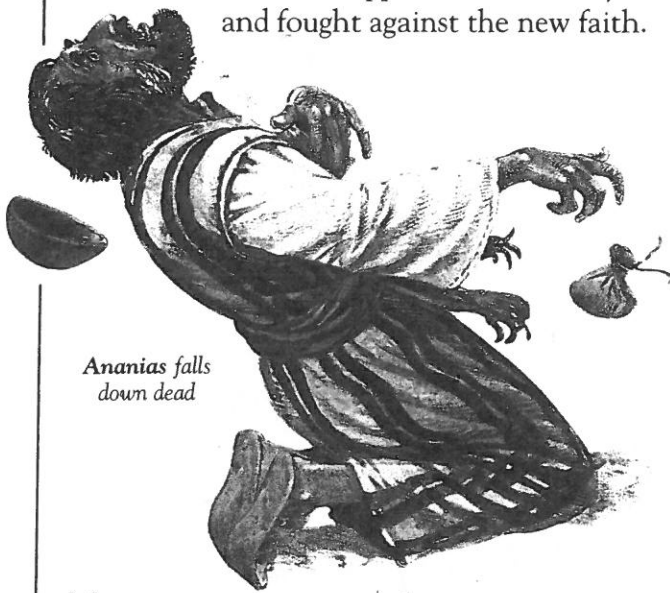
A Christian from Asia, Tychichus traveled with Paul to Jerusalem. He also took Paul's letters to the Ephesians and the Colossians to the churches there, and gave them news of Paul at the same time. Paul trusted him with other missions as well.

## SEE ALSO

- + John the Baptist p 40
- + Peter p 46
- + Paul p 52
- + Priscilla and Aquila p 56

# CHURCH MEMBERS AND OPPONENTS

**S**T. LUKE TELLS the story of the first Christians in the Acts of the Apostles. This provides a record of the first thirty years of the church and describes the work of the apostles as well as that of ordinary church members. It also gives an account of those who opposed Christianity and fought against the new faith.



Ananias falls down dead

## MATTHIAS

Meaning: Gift of God  
Appears: Acts 1  
After Judas Iscariot committed suicide, the remaining apostles decided to replace him. Of the two candidates, Matthias was chosen as the new apostle.



MATTHIAS

## ANANIAS

Meaning: God is gracious  
Appears: Acts 5  
Together with his wife Sapphira, Ananias joined the church in its earliest days. The love between the first Christians was so strong that they were willing to give up all their possessions if they were needed by other church members. Some brought very large gifts that they presented to the apostles to be distributed among the poor in Jerusalem. Ananias and Sapphira sold a field, but pretended they had sold it for less than the actual amount, and secretly kept the extra money for

themselves. God told Peter what Ananias had done, so Peter confronted him. "You did not have to give the whole sum," he said, "but you have lied to the Holy Spirit!" As Peter spoke, Ananias collapsed and died.

## SAPPHIRA

Meaning: Beautiful  
Appears: Acts 5  
About three hours after her husband Ananias's death, Sapphira called on Peter the apostle, not knowing what

had happened. Peter tested her by asking if the money was the total from the land sale, but she kept up the pretense about the value of their gift. She and Ananias wanted to be admired for making a greater sacrifice than they actually had. Peter knew how God would react, and warned her. It was too late – she collapsed and died. As a result, people inside and outside the church became very afraid, realizing that they could not be dishonest with God.

## THE FIRST MARTYR

**I**t was not long before the church mourned its first martyr – someone who gives their life for their faith. Stephen was the first of a long line of people who died for proclaiming their Christian beliefs.

### St. Stephen

When Stephen was brought before the Sanhedrin, he made a long speech in his defense. As he finished, he had a vision of Jesus standing beside God. This incensed his enemies who stoned him to death. Before dying he said, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them."



DEATH OF ST. STEPHEN  
This painting is by Juan de Juanes (1523–79).

High Priest and members of the Sanhedrin



## The Sanhedrin

The Sanhedrin – from the Greek word for council – was the Jewish high court. It had seventy-one members, with chief priests, teachers of the law, and elders. New Testament members included Gamaliel, Caiaphas, and Nicodemus.



## STEPHEN

Meaning: Crown

Appears: Acts 6, 7, 11, 22

Stephen was one of seven young men chosen to organize help for the poor, and to distribute food in Jerusalem. He was a deep thinker and a gifted speaker, and was full of the Holy Spirit. He miraculously healed the sick, and argued powerfully with the Greek-speaking Jews, persuading many of them to become Christians. But opposition to him grew and his enemies accused him falsely before the Sanhedrin. He was wrongly convicted of blasphemy and stoned to death. He became the first Christian martyr.

*Stephen sees  
a vision of  
God and Jesus*



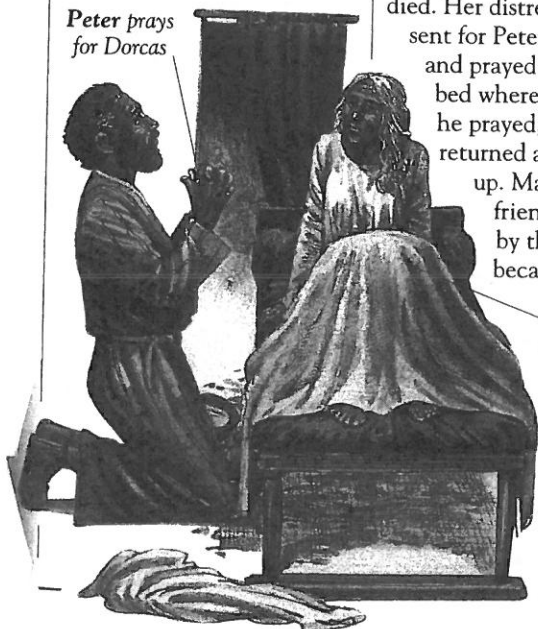
## ANANIAS OF DAMASCUS

Meaning: God is gracious

Appears: Acts 9

One of the Christians in Damascus, Ananias was told by God to go to the house where Paul went after being blinded. Ananias knew that Paul had come to arrest all the Christians, but he went anyway. As he prayed, Paul's sight was restored.

*Peter prays  
for Dorcas*



## DORCAS (TABITHA)

Meaning: Gazelle

Appears: Acts 9

Dorcas lived in Joppa (modern Jaffa), where she was much loved for her many good works. One day she suddenly fell ill and died. Her distressed friends sent for Peter, who came and prayed beside the bed where she lay. As he prayed, her life returned and she sat up. Many of her friends, overjoyed by this miracle, became believers.

*Dorcas  
suddenly sits  
up in bed*

## SIMON THE TANNER

Meaning: God hears

Appears: Acts 9, 10

Tanners are people who treat the skins of animals to produce leather. They were generally shunned by strict Jews because of their contact with dead animals. Simon the Tanner must have been delighted when the great apostle Peter did not avoid him, but stayed at his home outside Joppa.

## CORNELIUS

Meaning: unknown

Appears: Acts 10

Cornelius was a Roman soldier stationed at Caesarea. He was a "God-fearer," the name given to Gentiles who joined the



RHODA, THE SERVANT

## RHODA

Meaning: Rose

Appears: Acts 12

Rhoda worked in Mary's house. She was praying for Peter, who was in prison awaiting execution the next day. When Rhoda heard Peter's voice at the door she was so amazed that she forgot to let him in.



*Cornelius kneels  
before the  
apostle Peter*

synagogue, seeking God. One day an angel appeared and told him to send for Peter. Cornelius gathered his friends and relatives to meet Peter. When he arrived, Cornelius knelt before him, but Peter said "I am only a man myself!" Then he told them about Jesus, and as he spoke the Holy Spirit came upon Cornelius and his friends. They were baptized immediately, praising God.

## MARY, MOTHER OF JOHN MARK

Meaning: unknown

Appears: Acts 12

Mary's house in Jerusalem was where church members met. According to tradition, the last supper took place there.

### SEE ALSO

- + Nicodemus p 43
- + Peter 46
- + Caiaphas p 49
- + Gamaliel p 49
- + Paul p 52



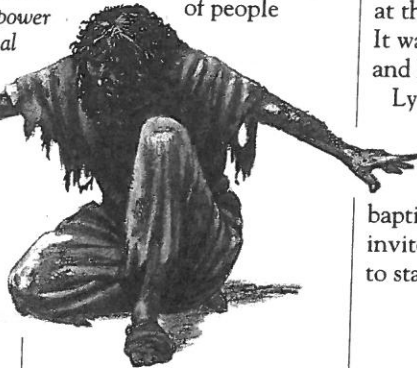


### SIMON MAGUS

Meaning: God hears (Simon);  
Sorcerer (Magus)  
Appears: Acts 8

Simon was a magician in Samaria. When Philip arrived there, Simon already had a large following of people

*Simon envies Philip's power to heal*



### JUDAS BARSABBAS

Meaning: Praised  
Appears: Acts 15  
A member of the Jerusalem church, Judas took an important letter to the church in Antioch. Church officials had been discussing whether Gentile believers should be circumcised. The apostles met in Jerusalem to talk about this, and sent their answer through Judas and Silas: no, they need not be circumcised.

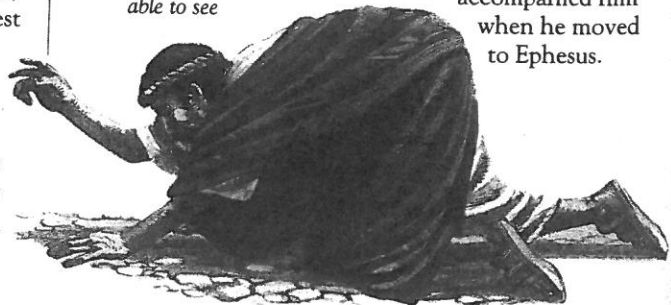


*Judas carries the apostles' reply back to Antioch*

who regarded him as a manifestation of God. Simon saw the miracles that Philip performed and recognized the great power behind them, so he became a Christian. However, he really only wanted the power, for which he offered money to Peter. Peter told him, "Your heart is not right before God!" According to tradition, Simon became even more famous, but he continued to value magic above true faith in God.

### ELYMAS

Meaning: unknown  
Appears: Acts 13  
Elymas was a Jewish magician, who had great influence with the Roman Governor of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus. When Paul arrived, and Sergius showed interest in the Christian message, Elymas saw his position threatened. In turn, Paul denounced Elymas as "a child of the devil," and he was struck with temporary blindness. Sergius Paulus was so amazed that he became a Christian.



*Elymas is no longer able to see*

### LYDIA

Meaning: Lady from Lydia  
Appears: Acts 16  
Lydia lived in Philippi, where she had a successful business selling purple cloth from her hometown of Thyatira. She was a Gentile, seeking God by worshiping at the Jewish prayer center. It was here she met Paul and his fellow missionaries. Lydia responded warmly to the Gospel, and she and all her family and workers were baptized. She immediately invited Paul and his friends to stay in her home.



LYDIA

### JASON

Meaning: God saves  
Appears: Acts 17  
Jason was a Jew, living in Thessalonika. Paul came to the synagogue there and convinced Jason and others of the truth of the Christian message. But some of the Jews were jealous and had Jason thrown into prison.

### STEPHANAS

Meaning: Crown  
Appears: 1 Cor. 1, 16  
Stephanas and his household were the first people to become Christians during Paul's ministry in Achaia, the Greek province that included Corinth where he lived. Stephanas and his household were baptized by Paul. As the church grew, Stephanas began to care for new Christians himself. Paul always retained a special affection for Stephanas, and was delighted when he visited him in Ephesus.

### PRISCILLA

Meaning: Ancient  
Appears: Acts 18; Rom. 16; 1 Cor. 16; 2 Tim. 4  
Priscilla and Aquila, her husband, worked closely with Paul, and even risked their lives for him. They became loved and respected in many churches in Greece and Asia Minor. Unusually, Priscilla's name is often mentioned before Aquila's.

### AQUILA

Meaning: Eagle  
Appears: Acts 18; Rom. 16; 1 Cor. 16; 2 Tim. 4  
Aquila was a Jew from Pontus who ran a successful business in Rome. When Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome, he and his wife traveled to Corinth where they met Paul and became Christians. They became good friends with Paul, and accompanied him when he moved to Ephesus.

## DEMETRIUS

Meaning: *Servant of Demeter*

Appears: Acts 19

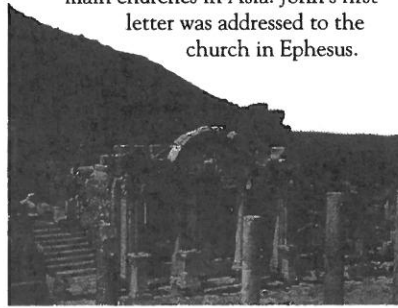
Demetrius was a silversmith in Ephesus. He made a good living selling silver images of the goddess Artemis, whose temple in Ephesus was visited by many people. Paul's ministry in Ephesus began to affect sales because people stopped buying idols. Demetrius persuaded his fellow craftsmen that the honor of Artemis was under threat. They started shouting, "Great is Artemis" and soon the city was in an uproar. Paul tried to speak to the crowd, but his friends stopped him. In the end, the city clerk quelled the riot.

## JOHN'S REVELATION

The Book of Revelation, the last book in the Bible, was written by John. John's vision is a celebration of Jesus' triumph over death.

### At Ephesus

An angel of God told John to write his visions down and send them to the seven main churches in Asia. John's first letter was addressed to the church in Ephesus.



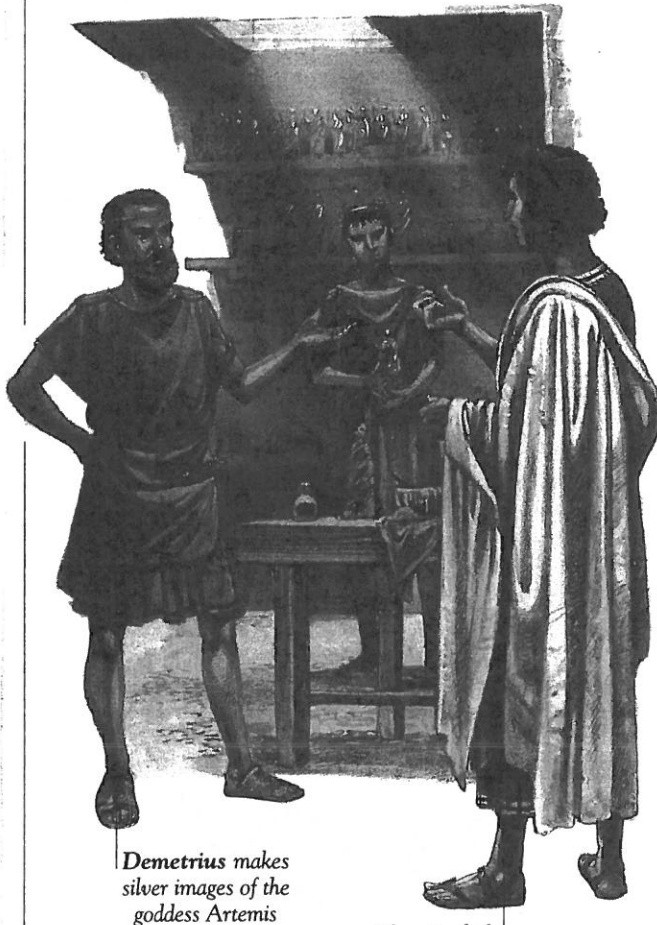
TEMPLE IN  
EPHESUS, TURKEY

### John's Revelations

While imprisoned on the Greek island of Patmos, John had an amazing series of visions. First he saw the risen Christ, then John himself was called up to heaven where he saw events on Earth, both present and future.



JOHN'S VISION  
This painting is by Hans  
Memling (c.1433-94).



Demetrius makes  
silver images of the  
goddess Artemis

The city clerk  
suggests the  
craftsmen go to court

## EUTYCHUS

Meaning: *Lucky*

Appears: Acts 20

On his last evening in Troas, Macedonia, Paul was preaching and talking with a group of Christians. The heat from several lamps and the stuffy atmosphere in the room led Eutychus, a young man, to fall asleep on a third-floor window ledge. Unfortunately, Eutychus fell three stories to his death below. Everyone rushed downstairs and Paul embraced Eutychus. "Do not worry," he said, "he is alive!" Eutychus soon regained consciousness.

Eutychus falls asleep  
as Paul is talking



## AGABUS

Meaning: *Desire*

Appears: Acts 11, 21

Agabus was a Christian prophet from Jerusalem. He predicted the famine that caused great hardship in Jerusalem. He also met Paul during Paul's last journey to Jerusalem and predicted that he would be imprisoned by the Romans there. Paul's friends tried to persuade him not to continue but they failed. Agabus's prophecy came true.

## PHILEMON

Meaning: *Kiss*

Appears: *Philemon*

Philemon was a wealthy Christian of Colossae, who was converted by the apostle Paul. Philemon had a slave named Onesimus who ran away but became a Christian when he met Paul. Paul sent him back to his master, asking Philemon to receive him as a "beloved brother."

### SEE ALSO

- + Philip p 47
- + Sergius Paulus p 51