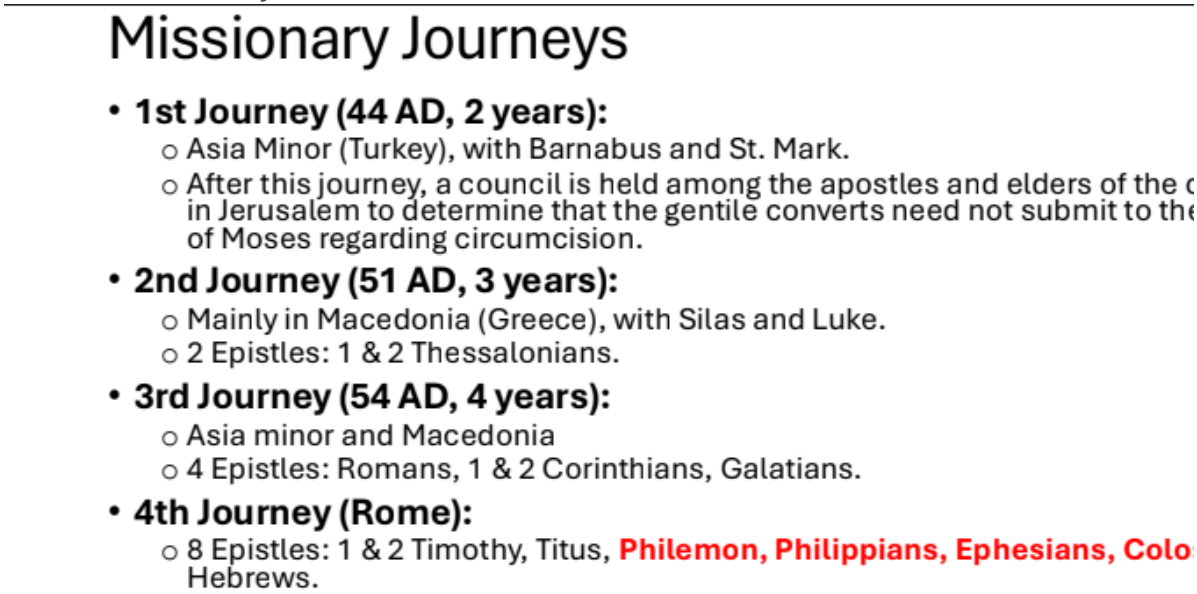
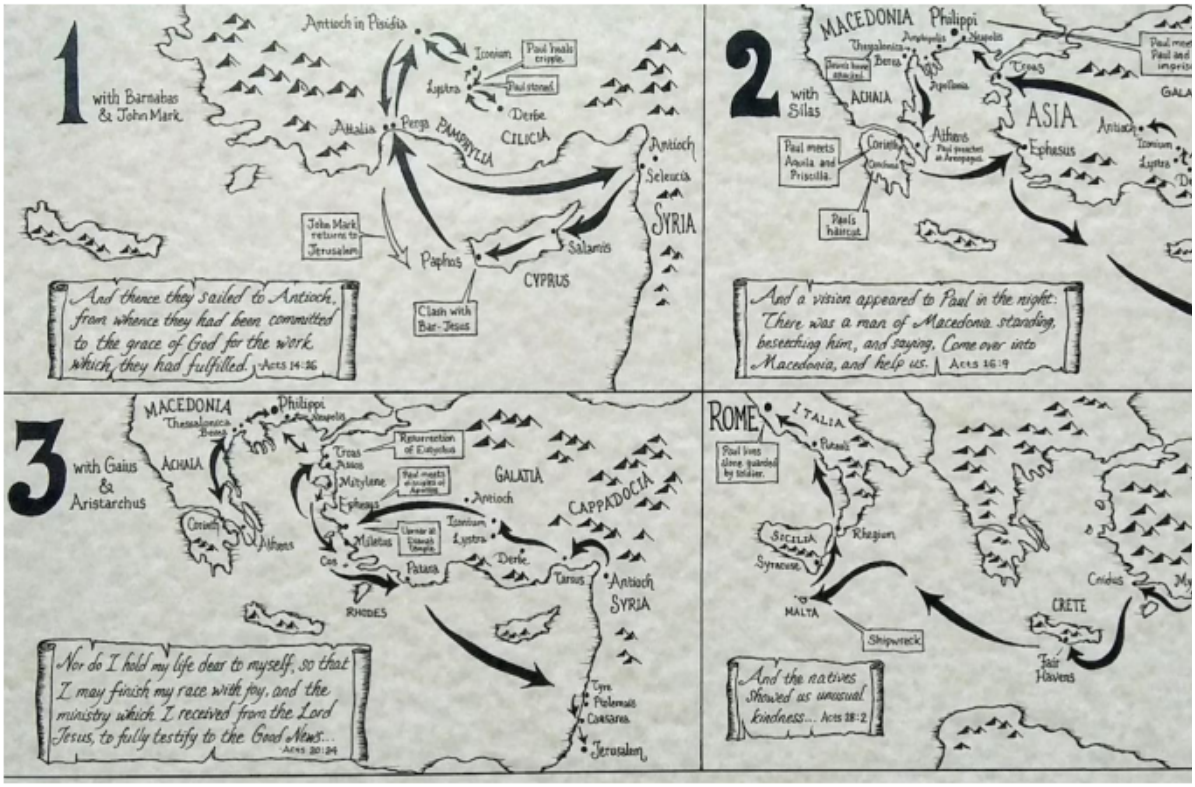
Week 5: St. Paul's trials

- **Brief introduction about St. Luke and the Book of Acts:**
  - St. Luke accompanied the St. Paul on his missionary journeys, so he accurately narrated what he witnessed. Being a physician, he also described events in detail.
  - He did not conclude the book of Acts with "Amen" like the other books because the *Synaxarion* (Church calendar of saints and events) comes after it, serving as the continuation of the Church's history beyond the Book of Acts.
  - The Church reads the **Synaxarion** (the lives of the saints of the day) after the Book of Acts during the liturgy, to declare that the Word of the Lord continues to grow and multiply in His holy Church.
  - The placement of the Book of Acts between the **Gospels** and the **Epistles** serves as a connection between them: the Gospels present the life of Christ, the Book of Acts shows the preaching of the Gospel, and the Epistles reflect how to live according to the Gospel.
- **Introduction:**
  - **Author**: St. Luke
  - **Time of writing:**
    - It was written around the year 63 AD in Rome, after he had written his Gospel. It covers a period of about thirty years—from the Ascension of Christ to Paul's first imprisonment in Rome.
  - **Purpose of the book**
    - A clear record of the ministry of Peter and Paul.
    - Demonstrates the behavior of the early Christians as high examples for us.
    - Shows the mighty work of the Holy Spirit in fulfilling Christ's promises and establishing the Church.
    - Displays the divinity of the Son.
    - Proclaims the divinity of the Holy Spirit.
- **Outline**
  - - **Chapter 1** – *The Apostles in Jerusalem from the Ascension to Pentecost:* Includes the selection of Matthias and the worship of the Church.
    - **Chapters 2–7** – *The Beginning of Evangelism until the Martyrdom of Stephen:* Includes the gifts of the Spirit, the growth of the Church, the healing of the lame man, threats against the apostles, the death of Ananias and Sapphira, the imprisonment of the apostles, the selection of seven deacons, and the stoning of Stephen.
    - **Chapters 8–12** – *The Persecution of the Church in Jerusalem:* Includes the faith of the Ethiopian eunuch, the conversions of Paul and

Cornelius, the founding of the Church in Caesarea, the martyrdom of James, the imprisonment of Peter, and the death of Herod.
    - **Chapters 13–15** – *The Evangelism of Paul and Barnabas Until Their Separation:*
      Includes the story of Elymas the sorcerer, the Church in Antioch, the healing of the lame man in Lystra, the stoning of Paul, and the First Council of Jerusalem.
    - **Chapters 16–20** – *Paul's Preaching in Europe*
    - **Chapters 21–28** – *Paul's Trials:*
      Includes his journey to Jerusalem, his arrest and transfer to stand trial in Rome, his trials before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, the shipwreck in Malta, and finally his arrival in Rome and preaching there for two years.
- **Reading:**
  - Chapters 21-28
- **Resources:**
  - The Book of Acts - Fr. Daoud Lamei English
- **Key verse:**
  - "'I have set you to be a light of the nations, for you to be for salvation to the end of the earth." *Acts 13:47*

- **Comments:**
  - **Introduction about St. Paul**
    - St. Paul wrote 14 epistles out of the 27 books in the New Testament.
    - Known as the Apostle of the Gentiles.
    - Received 4 crowns: martyrdom, purity, apostleship, and righteousness.
    - Early preparation for ministry:
      - **Roman Citizen**: enabling him for safe travel and legal protection.
      - **Greek education:** Exposure to Greek philosophy
      - **Jewish heritage:** Adhering to Jewish law and traditions and studied under Gamaliel in Jerusalem.
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- **Acts 21**
  - **Paul goes to Jerusalem and is arrested**
    - **St. Paul journey toward Jerusalem despite warnings (Acts 21: 1–5)**
      - St. Paul knew danger awaited him in Jerusalem, but obeyed God's will anyway.
      - His courage shows faith over fear.
    - **St. Paul is falsely accused and arrested in the temple (Acts 21: 21-40)**
      - Arrested in the temple, yet he stayed calm and focused on sharing the Gospel.
- **Acts 22**
  - **ST. Paul's defense before the Jews (Acts 22: 1–21)**
    - St. Paul spoke to them in Hebrew to show them, his respect and connection to his Jewish roots
    - He shares his personal story, his zeal, conversion, and calling. His testimony reveals that God can transform anyone.
  - **St. Paul reveals his Roman citizenship (Acts 22: 25–30):**
    - This shows that being spiritual does not mean being naïve, you can use your rights to defend yourself
- **Acts 23**
  - **St. Paul divides the council by mentioning the resurrection (Acts 23: 6–12)**
    - The Pharisees believe in spirits and the resurrection, while the others, the Sadducees, do not believe in that. They think that the soul dies with the body and does not rise
    - On the following night, the Lord appeared to Paul to comfort and encourage him, and also to tell him that he would go to preach in Rome

- The rest of the Chapter:
  - A group of Jews plots to kill Paul.
  - Paul's nephew hears of the plot and warns him.
  - The commander sends Paul under heavy guard to Governor Felix in Caesarea for safety.
- **Acts 24**
  - **Paul’s Trial Before Felix (Acts 24: 1-21)**
    - Tertullus accused Paul of three charges and considered him a corrupter and harmful to society.
      - Another accusation that Tertullus brought against Paul was that he had defiled the temple.
    - **St. Paul defended himself saying:**
      - He had only arrived in Jerusalem twelve days earlier, most of which he spent imprisoned because of the Jews.
      - He came to worship in the temple. Therefore, he respected worship in the temple and was not defiling it as they accused him.
- **Acts 25**
  - **Festus takes over and hears Paul’s case (Acts 25: 1–12)**
    - Paul appeals to Caesar
    - St. Paul never missed an opportunity to spread the ministry, even in Rome, the capital. His personal case did not occupy his mind, but rather how he could go to Rome to preach the Gospel
- **Acts 26**
  - **Paul Testifies Before Agrippa (Acts 26: 1-23)**
    - **Personal Testimony:** He recounts his past as a persecutor, his encounter with Christ, and his mission to preach.
    - **Focus on the Resurrection:** The first resurrection from the dead, Christ was not the first to rise from the dead—many before Him in the Old Testament had been raised, and He Himself raised many. However, He is the first to rise by His own power and enter Paradise and the Kingdom. The others returned to Hades because Christ had not yet completed the redemption.
    - Agrippa almost believes: “You almost persuade me to become a Christian” (Verse 28)
    - Paul is found innocent but must go to Caesar
- **Acts 27**
  - **St. Paul sails to Rome; the storm intensifies (Acts 27:14–26):**
    - Here we compare Paul, who through his obedience to God became a reason for the salvation of the ship's passengers, with the prophet Jonah, who through his disobedience to God became a source of trouble for the ship's passengers—until they threw him into the sea, and the storm calmed down.
    - Shipwrecked at Malta, all survive
- **Acts 28**
  - **St. Paul Heals and ministers in Malta (Acts 28: 1-10)**
    - Paul turns a shipwreck into a mission field

- **St. Paul arrives to Rome and stays under house arrest (Acts 28: 11-16)**
- **St. Paul preaching in Rome (Acts 28: 17-31)**
  - Even in chains, St. Paul preaches boldly and freely. His house becomes a church, showing that **no barrier can stop the Gospel**.
- Paul continued to preach boldly while awaiting trial, without fear or complaint. Though God allowed him to face hardship and imprisonment, He remained with him, using every situation to spread the Gospel. The Book of Acts ends with the message reaching **Rome**, fulfilling Christ's promise to reach the **ends of the earth** (Acts 1:8).
  After his first release from prison, Paul preached for five more years before being arrested again. During his second imprisonment in Rome, he wrote **2 Timothy**, and was **martyred in A.D. 68**.

1. Review/recap questions

   ** Servant may add more questions

8. Homework

   ** Servant may add more questions



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