

A Study in Acts

Post Acts

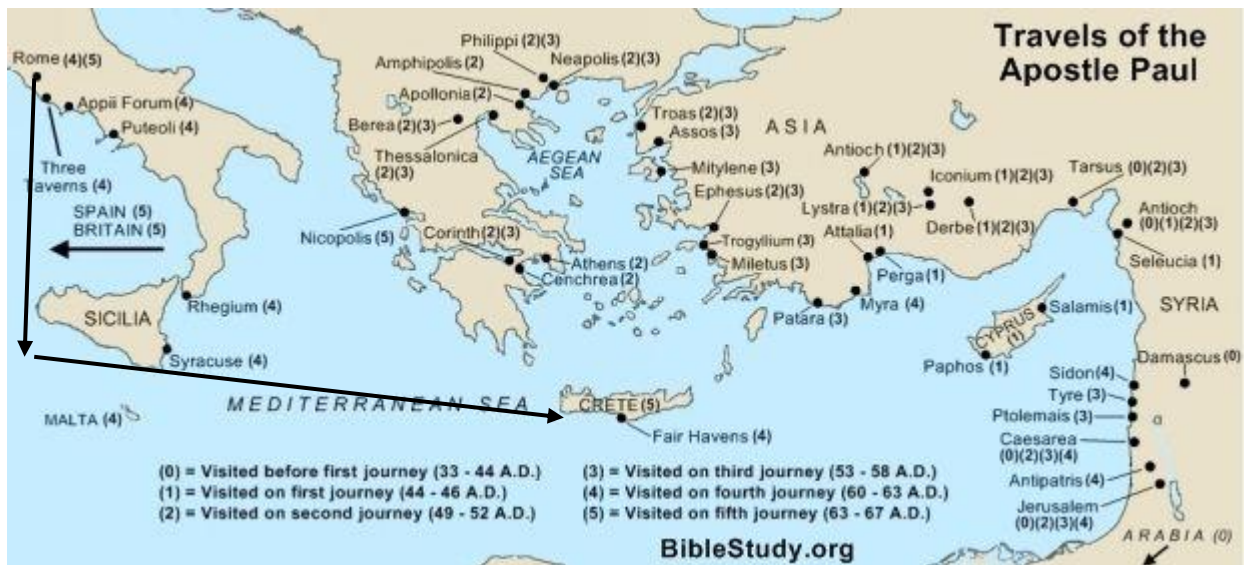
ACTS 28:30-31:

Acts 28:30-31 *“Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, ³¹preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.”*

In the final two verses of Luke’s historic record, we see Paul for two years in Rome, which we covered in our previous lesson including the writing of four books of the New Testament. It is at this point that we will cover what transpires after the two years are complete.

Now there is not a specific record like Luke’s that directly deals with what transpires after Paul’s time in Rome is complete. However, if we follow clues left for us in the narrative of the letters he would write after he leaves Rome the first time, we can follow a remarkably interesting final journey of the Apostle to the Gentiles. We will follow the breadcrumbs left behind for us by the Apostle and see if we cannot reconstruct his post Acts activities.

#1 – Crete



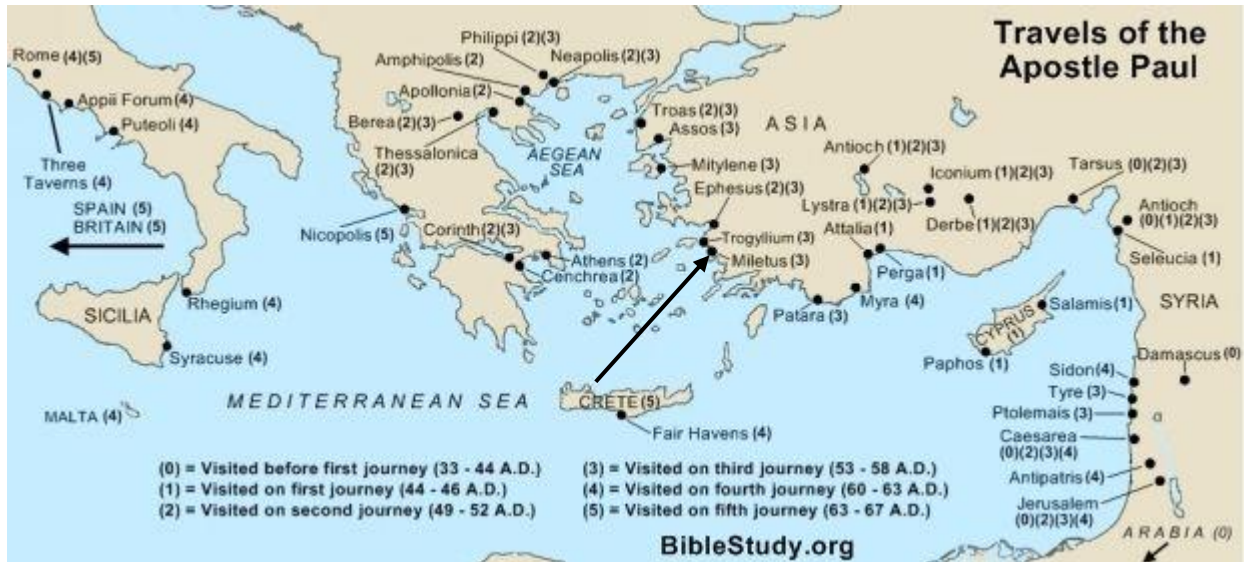
Titus 1:5

“For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—”

We have started here, not because this is the first letter that Paul writes after he is released from prison in Rome, it isn’t, as we will soon see; however, it is here that we start for the simple reason that it does not make sense that Paul will sail past Crete only to come back. We will see that when Paul does write back to Titus and give him Apostolic authority for the things he has already commanded him to teach and demand, he is in Nicopolis – **Titus 3:12**.

We will cover these letters in order at the end of this visit to the trips of Paul. We simply apply this as the first stop based solely on the location in proximity to Rome.

#2. Ephesus (probably Miletus)



1 Timothy 1:3

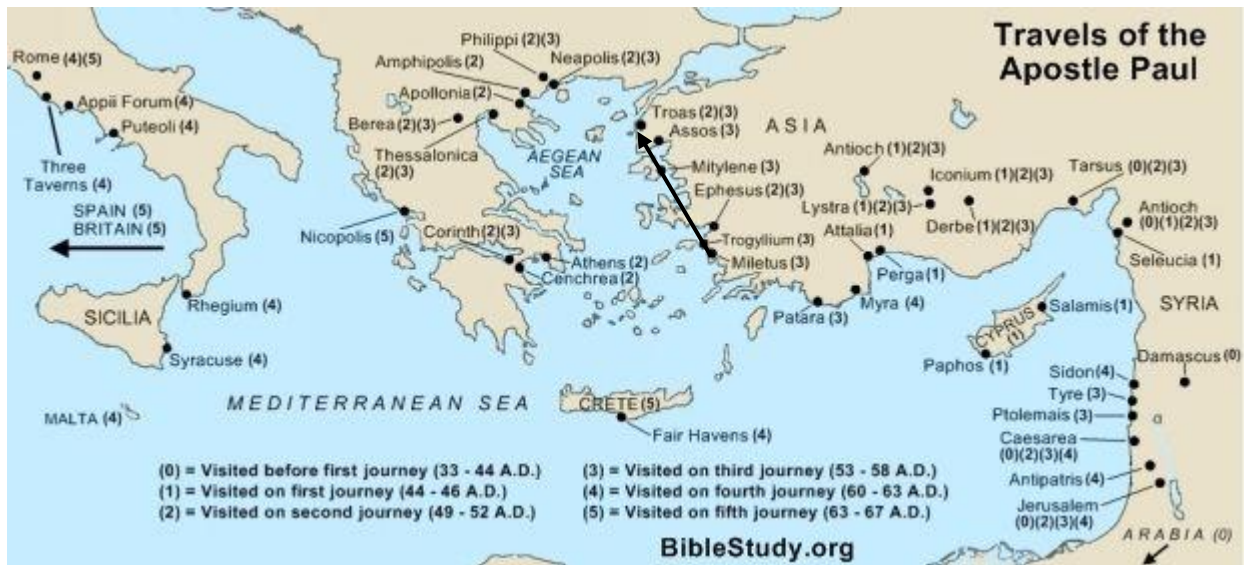
“As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine,”

Why Miletus instead of Ephesus? First remember the words of Paul himself when he told the elders of Ephesus that he would not see them again – **Acts 20:25**. I think Paul was not going to make himself a liar and has dropped Timothy off at Miletus with his commission (much like that of Titus), and will later, from Macedonia send back Apostolic authority for the things commanded him to teach and preach.

In addition, we have this little note added later by Paul that gives additional support to Miletus and not Ephesus:

2 Timothy 4:20 “Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick.”

#3. Troas

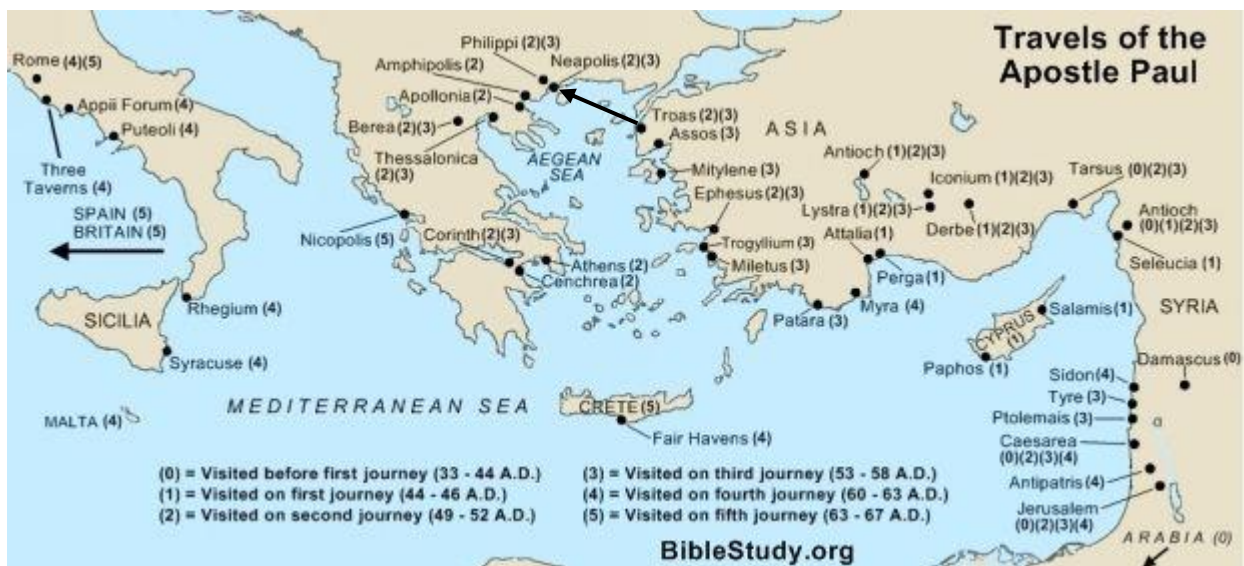


2 Timothy 4:13

“Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments.”

As we know, Paul has been to Macedonia several times from Asia Minor and returned to Asia Minor from Macedonia, his launching point and landing point has always been Troas. It would seem here by this note; he again launched into Macedonia from this point and left a cloak behind. We know from his opening to Timothy in the first letter that Macedonia was his destination goal.

#4. Macedonia

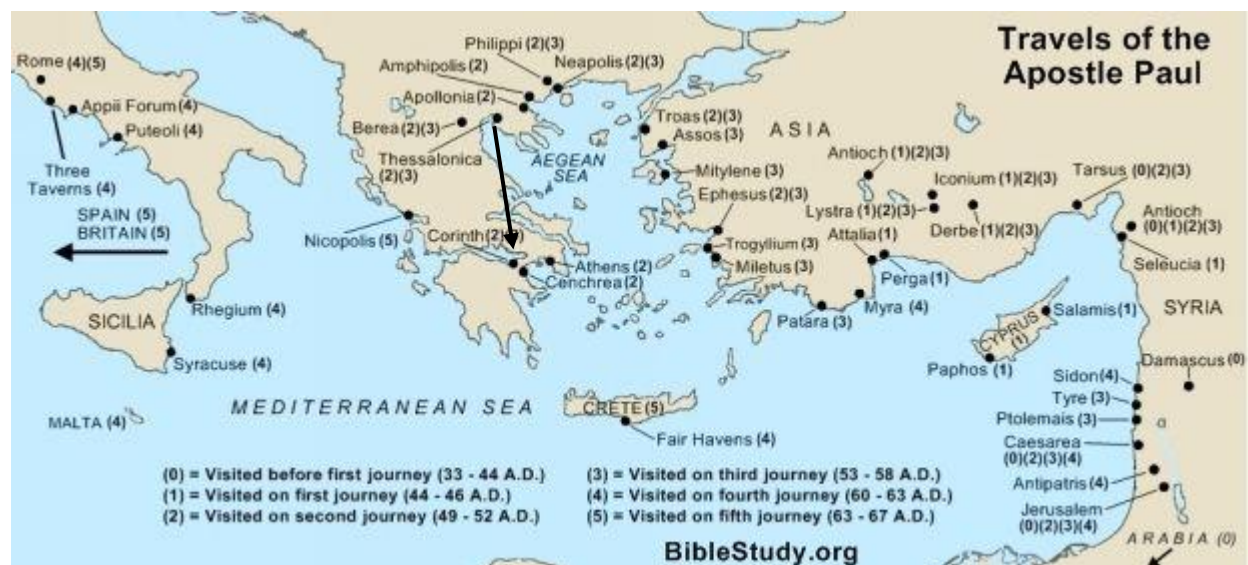


1 Timothy 1:3

“As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine,”

Paul never tells us if there is a specific location in Macedonia he uses or if he visits all the churches there and there is not secondary history to draw from. All we are left with is this universal term for the area, and we know that he is now going to write the first of three post prison letters. The first letter back to Timothy.

#5. Corinth



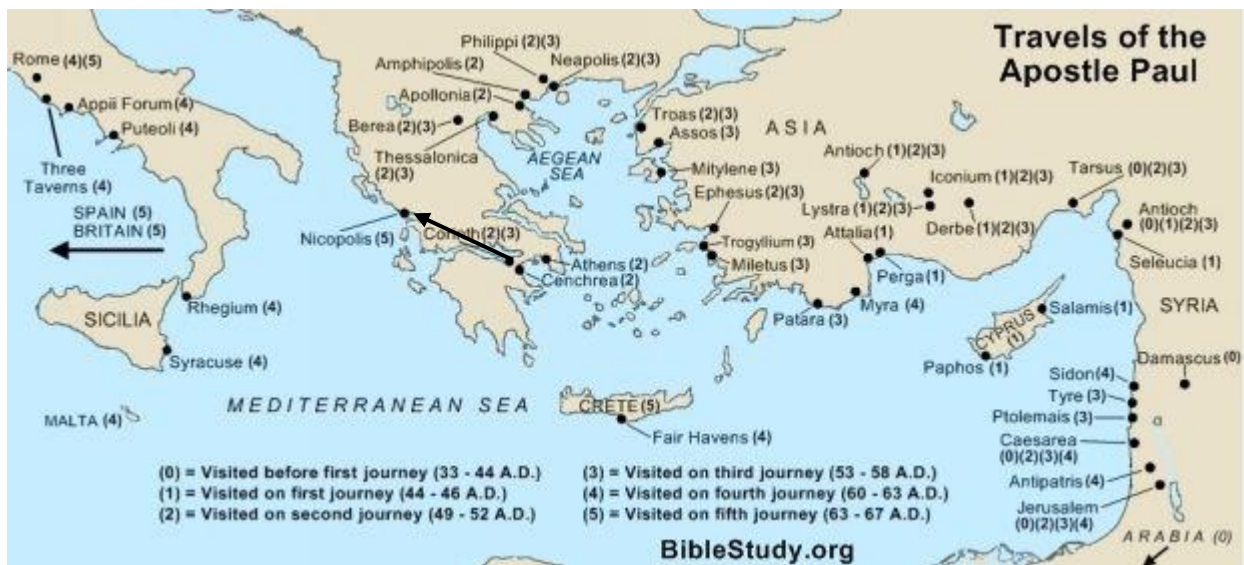
2 Timothy 4:20

“Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick.”

With a keen notice we can see that Paul has left another traveling companion behind on his final journey. Now we know that Titus and Timothy left Rome with Paul and were stationed by him in their specific locations. These others, we are never told nor is it identified that they left Rome with Paul, or they have been picked up along the way. We only know that Paul shares why they are not with him anymore and it gives us clues to the path Paul has taken.

This Erastus is the same Erastus that is mentioned in **Romans 16:23**, that is with Paul in Corinth when he writes the letter to the Roman Christians (**Acts 20:2**).

#6. Nicopolis

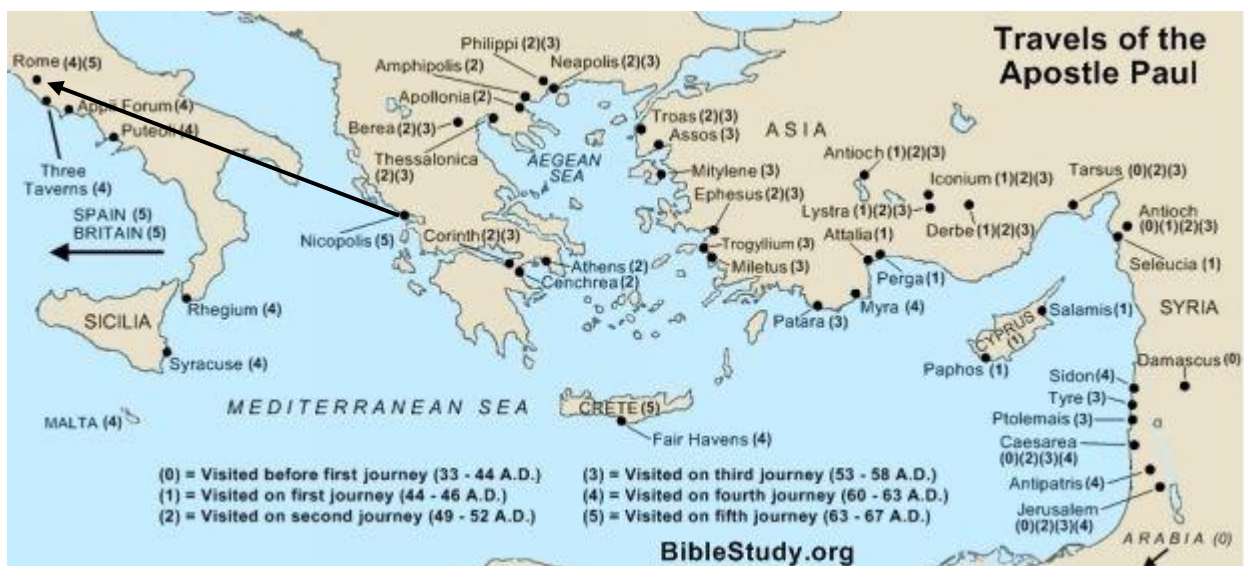


Titus 3:12

“When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.”

The majority believe that Titus’ letter was written from Nicopolis, however, based on the tense of this verse, it is possible that the letter was written from Corinth with the intent of going to Nicopolis next. Either way, it does not change the locations up to this point that Paul has been or will go, nor does it change the order of the letters (1 Timothy, then Titus).

#7. Rome



2 Timothy 1:17

“but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found *me*.”

In Paul's final letter to Timothy, his son in the faith, he shares that he has been found in Rome (where we know historically, he is going to die). In addition, this second letter is filled with language by Paul of his inevitable end and will mark and end Paul's New Testament work and fingerprint.

We know Nero dies in 68 AD; we know historically that Nero is credited with the deaths of both Paul and Peter.

A fourth-century Church historian named Eusebius, blames both Paul and Peter's deaths on the emperor Nero.

“After [Nero] had made clear that he was indeed the foremost enemy of God among them, he was stirred up for the slaughter of the apostles. It is therefore recorded that Paul was beheaded in Rome itself and that Peter was likewise crucified under him.”

Most date the prison epistle to have been written approximately 62 AD; and if we put Paul's death toward the end of Nero's reign, we are looking at five to six years after his release from Rome the first time, to his death by Nero. I will let you decide if he ever made to Spain (**Romans 15:28**), as some believe. Remember, there is absolutely no internal reference to this being accomplished. Now consider the internal evidence for the places we have traveled to after his release.

Our last lesson will be to look at the post Acts letters in order – **1 Timothy, Titus, and 2 Timothy**.