

3. The Greeks

Ancient Greece was a civilization that dominated much of the Mediterranean thousands of years ago. At its peak under Alexander the Great, ancient Greece ruled much of Europe and western Asia. The Greeks came before the Romans and much of the Roman culture was influenced by the Greeks.

Ancient Greece formed the foundation of much of Western culture today. Everything from government, philosophy, science, mathematics, art, literature, and even sports was impacted by the ancient Greeks.



Periods in History

Historians often divide up the history of ancient Greece into three periods:

Archaic Period - (800 BC - 480 BC) This period ran from the start of Greek civilization to the introduction of democracy. This period also included the start of the Olympic Games.

Classical Period – (480 BC - 323 BC) The Classical Period began with the introduction of democracy in Athens. Athens, the capital, was governed by a democracy and great philosophers like Socrates and Plato. A philosopher is a thinker who develops new ideas. Also, the wars between Sparta and Athens occurred during this time. This period ended with the rise and then the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC.

Hellenistic Period - (323 BC - 31 BC) The Hellenistic period lasted from the death of Alexander the Great until 31 BC. The name Hellenistic comes from the Greek word "Hellas", which is the original word for Greece. In 146 BC Rome defeated the Greeks at the Battle of Corinth making it part of the Roman Empire.

Interesting Facts about Ancient Greece

- The Greeks often ate dinner while lying on their sides.
- They invented the yo-yo which is considered the 2nd oldest toy in the world after the doll.
- About one third of the population of some city-states were slaves.
- There were more city-states than just Sparta and Athens. Ancient Greece had around 100 city-states.
- The Romans copied much of the Greek culture including their gods, architecture, language, and even how they ate!

Activities

1. Draw a linear (horizontal) timeline showing the three periods of ancient Greek history, and the dates.
2. Draw three boxes representing the three periods. In each box draw one picture that is a key event in that period.

Two major cities: Athens and Sparta

Athens and Sparta were the two main city-states that ruled much of ancient Greece. They were often rivals and fought each other. At other times they united together in order to protect the Greek lands from invaders. The cultures of the two cities were very different. Sparta was almost entirely focused on war and how to fight, while Athens focused on the arts and learning.

Athens

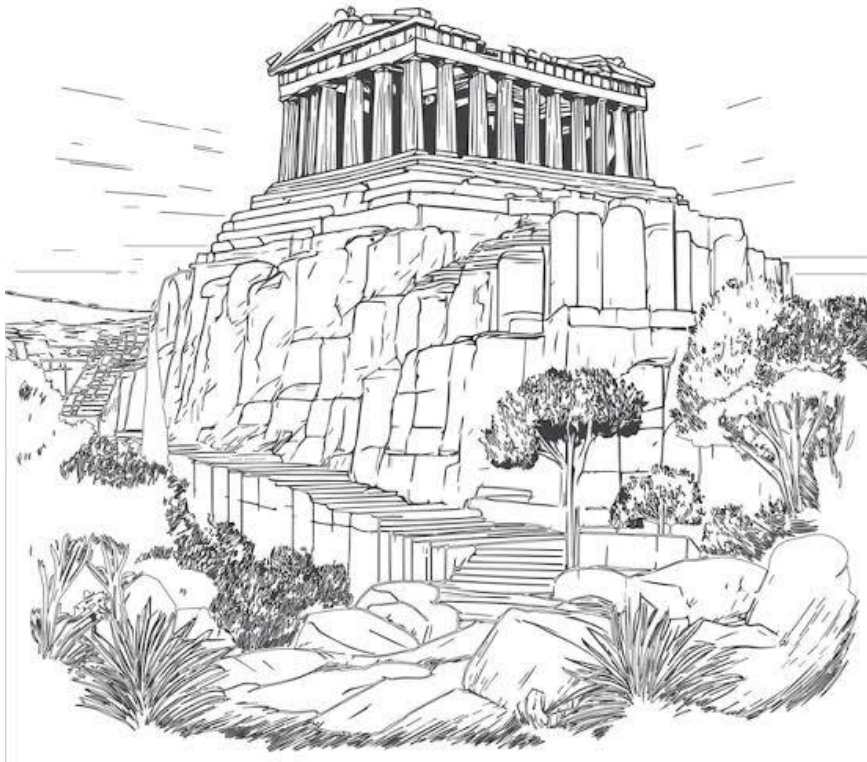
Athens is one of the great cities of the world. During the time of the Ancient Greeks, it was the centre of power, art, science, and philosophy in the world. It is the birth place of democracy and the heart of the Ancient Greek civilization. It is the capital of Greece today.

Named after Athena

Athens is named after the Greek goddess Athena. She was the goddess of wisdom, war, and civilization and the patron of the city of Athens. Her shrine, the Parthenon, sits on top of a hill in the centre of the city.

The Acropolis

The Acropolis was a collection of structures built on a hill in the middle of the city of Athens. Surrounded by stone walls, it was originally built as a fortress where the people could retreat when the city was attacked. Later, many temples and buildings were built here to overlook the city. It was still used as a fortress for some time, however. The most famous building, still standing today is the Parthenon.



Sparta

Sparta was one of the most powerful city-states in Ancient Greece. It is famous for its powerful army as well as its battles with the city-state of Athens. Sparta was located in a valley on the banks of the Eurotas River in the south-eastern portion of Greece.

Warrior Society

Unlike their counterparts in the city of Athens, the Spartans didn't study philosophy, art, or theatre; they studied war. The Spartans were widely considered to have the strongest army and the best soldiers of any city-state in Ancient Greece. All Spartan men trained to become warriors from the day they were born.

The basic equipment used by the Spartan soldiers included their shield, a spear, and a short sword. They also wore a crimson tunic so their bloody wounds wouldn't show. The most

important piece of equipment to a Spartan was their shield. The biggest disgrace a soldier could suffer was to lose his shield in battle.

Spartan boys were trained to be soldiers from their youth. They were raised by their mothers until the age of seven and then they would enter a military school called the Agoge. At the Agoge the boys were trained how to fight, but also learned how to read and write.

Activity

Write a comparison between the two cities, Athens and Sparta. Explain similarities and differences.

The Persian Empire

The Persian Wars were a series of wars fought between the Persians and the Greeks from 492 BC to 449 BC.

Who were the Persians?

In 559 BC the Persian king Cyrus II founded the Persian Empire. The Persian Empire was the largest and most powerful empire in the world at the time of the Persian Wars. They controlled land that stretched from Egypt all the way to India.



Who were the Greeks?

The Greeks were made up of a number of city-states such as Sparta and Athens. Typically, these city-states fought each other, but they united to fight against the Persians.

First Greek cities to be taken by Persia

The Greek cities of Ionia were Greek settlements on the west coast of Asia Minor, (today's Turkey). These cities fell into Persian hands 530 500 BC. The Ionians decided to revolt against the Persian rule. The revolt lasted from 499 to 493 BC. This uprising of Greek cities in Ionia against the Persian Empire, and was the beginning of the Greco-Persian Wars.

First Invasion of Greece

Darius I, King of Persia, decided he wanted to conquer the Greeks in 490 BC. He gathered a vast army of soldiers that outnumbered any army the Greeks could muster. They boarded the Persian fleet and headed to Greece.

Second Invasion of Greece

Ten years later, in 480 BC, the son of Darius I, King Xerxes, decided to get his revenge on the Greeks. He amassed a huge army of over 200,000 soldiers and 1,000 warships.

After the first invasion, the Athenians built up a mighty fleet of ships. The Persian Empire would eventually be conquered by the Greeks under the leadership of Alexander the Great.



Kings of the Persian Empire – Biblical History

King Cyrus

Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Persian Empire, is a significant figure in biblical history, particularly in the context of the Jewish exile and return. He is mentioned in several books of the Bible, including Isaiah, Daniel, and Ezra.

In the book of Ezra, Cyrus is depicted as a liberator of the Jewish people. Ezra 1:1-2 records the decree of Cyrus, which allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.

To the Greeks, he was known as Cyrus the Elder and was particularly renowned among scholars of the day, because of his tolerance for peoples' customs and religions in the lands that he conquered, including the Jews.

Darius 1

Darius I, (or Darius the great), reigned from 522 to 486 BC. He was a prominent Persian ruler, mentioned in the books of Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. In the book of Daniel, Darius is portrayed as a ruler who respected Daniel and his God. What did Darius say in Daniel 6:25-27, after Daniel's deliverance from the lions' den?

In the book of Ezra, Darius plays a crucial role in the continuation of the temple rebuilding project. Ezra 6:1-12 describes how Darius confirmed the decree of Cyrus and supported the

Jewish efforts to rebuild the temple, providing resources and protection for the project. This support is seen as part of God's special care for His people and His purposes.

Xerxes 1

Xerxes I, the fourth king of Persia, also known as Ahasuerus in the Hebrew Bible, was a Persian king who reigned from 486 to 465 BC. He was the son of Darius I. He inherited a vast empire that stretched from India to Ethiopia, encompassing many diverse peoples and cultures. His reign is noted for its ambitious building projects, and for his military campaigns. He is best known for his invasion of Greece in 480 BC. most notably against Greece.

The Book of Esther provides the most detailed biblical account of Xerxes, referring to him as Ahasuerus. The narrative begins with a grand banquet in the third year of his reign, showcasing the wealth and splendour of his kingdom (Esther 1:3-4). During this feast, Queen Vashti is deposed for her refusal to appear before the king, setting the stage for Esther, a Jewish woman, to become queen, and saving the Jewish race from death.

Esther's cousin Mordecai uncovers a plot to annihilate the Jewish people orchestrated by Haman, a high-ranking official in Xerxes' court. Esther courageously intervenes, revealing her Jewish identity to the king and pleading for her people. Xerxes responds favourably, granting Esther's request and authorizing the Jews to defend themselves (Esther 8:11).

Artaxerxes

Artaxerxes I, son of Xerxes 1, was the fifth King of Kings of the Persian Empire, reigned from 464 to 424 BC, and is known as the biblical figure Ahasuerus. He is known for his role in the return of the Jewish community to Jerusalem after their exile.

He is mentioned in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Artaxerxes is known for his favourable policies towards the Jewish people, allowing them to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city walls. In Ezra 7:11-26, Artaxerxes issues a decree granting Ezra the priest permission to lead a group of exiles back to Jerusalem and to teach the Law of God: "Now this is the text of the letter that King Artaxerxes had given to Ezra the priest and scribe, a man learned in matters of the commandments and statutes of the LORD for Israel."

Nehemiah, a cupbearer to Artaxerxes, also received permission from the king to return to Jerusalem and oversee the rebuilding of the city walls. Artaxerxes's support for the Jewish people is seen as a continuation of God's provision and faithfulness, enabling the restoration of Jerusalem and the reestablishment of the Jewish community in their homeland.

Rise of the Greek Empire

Alexander the Great

Alexander the Great was born 356 BC, in Macedonia (northwest of Thessalonica), Greece. He and his army overthrew the Persian Empire. He died at age 32 from a severe illness. No one knows the cause of the illness but poisoning has not been out ruled.

He succeeded his father Philip II to the throne in 336 BC at the age of 20, and spent most of his reign conducting a lengthy military campaign throughout Asia and Egypt. By the age of 30, he had created one of the largest empires in history, stretching from Greece to northwestern India. He was undefeated in battle and is widely considered to be one of history's greatest and most successful military commanders.

Fall of the Greek Empire

Years of internal wars weakened the once powerful Greek city-states of Sparta, Athens, Thebes, and Corinth.

When Alexander the Great died, there was a huge gap in power. Alexander's empire was divided among his generals. These new divisions soon began fighting. Although the Greek culture had spread throughout much of the world, it was politically divided.

Hellenistic Greece

The period of Ancient Greece after Alexander the Great is called Hellenistic Greece. During this time, the city-states of Greece fell into decline. The real centres of Greek culture moved to other areas in the world including the cities of Alexandria (Egypt), Antioch (Turkey), and Ephesus (Turkey).

The Rise of Rome

While the Greeks were in decline, a new civilization in Italy (the Romans) rose to power. As Rome grew more powerful, the Greeks started to see Rome as a threat. In 215 BC, parts of Greece allied with Carthage against Rome. Rome declared war on Macedonia (northern Greece). They defeated Macedonia in two battles.

Activities

1. Who ruled Greece from 559 BC to 323 BC?
2. Which kings of this empire are mentioned in the Bible during this time?
3. Who was Alexander the Great and what is he famous for?
4. What happened to Greece after his death?
5. Who finally defeated and took over Greece?

Lifestyle of Ancient Greeks

What were the Ancient Greek's homes like?

Greek homes were built around an outdoor courtyard. The courtyard was the centre of activity. It usually had a well for water, an altar to worship the gods, and was a good place for the kids to play.

Around the courtyard were the rooms of the house. Different rooms included a work room, a store room, and bedrooms. There also was a room called an andron where the men of the house would gather and entertain their male friends or business associates. Sometimes there was a separate entrance to this room so visiting men would not see the women of the house. Generally, the woman stayed away from the men in the house, especially visiting men. Oftentimes the house had a room set aside just for the women.



The walls of Greek homes were made from sun dried bricks with small windows set high in the walls. They were designed to keep the house cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

What was it like growing up in Ancient Greece?

When a Greek child was born, the father could decide whether to keep the child or not. If the child appeared weak or was a girl, sometimes the father would abandon the child. Once a child was accepted by the father, he or she was treated well. Greek children had toys and spent the day playing games. When boys became seven years old, they started school. They learned math, reading, and writing. Sometimes they would also learn a musical instrument. When they got older, they learned how to debate. Girls did not go to school. Children were considered adults by the age of 13.

What food did they eat?

The Ancient Greeks mostly ate bread dipped in wine, cheeses, fish, olives, and vegetables. Meat like pork or beef was only eaten on rare occasions such as festivals. Watered down wine was the main drink.

The men would often have dinner parties for their friends. They would start at sundown and run until late. Only the men attended and women were not allowed.

What clothes did they wear?

The ancient Greeks wore a tunic. Both men and women wore the tunic. It was a basic tunic made from a single rectangle of cloth cut into two. It was fastened at different places and a

belt was used at the waist. There were tunics of different lengths and colours. They were generally made out of a thin wool material. Some people could afford linen or even silk.

Jobs in Ancient Greece

There were many jobs for men in Ancient Greece including farmer, fisherman, soldier, teacher, government worker, and craftsman. The women, however, were generally homemakers and would raise the children and cook the meals.



Activities

1. Draw a picture of a Greek home, showing the outside.
2. Draw a possible floor plan of a Greek home, (an architectural bird's-eye view). Label the rooms.
3. What authority did the father of the house have over children?
4. What was the difference between the treatment of boys and girls?
5. Draw and label the typical clothing for a man.

Slaves

Slavery was a common practice during the time period of Ancient Greece. Most Greek families owned at least one slave and slaves were an important part of the culture and economy of Ancient Greece.

There were different types of slaves in Ancient Greece and different rules depending on the city where the slave lived. However, in general, slaves had few rights. They had to work long hours doing whatever job their owner demanded. Slaves couldn't own property and had fewer rights than citizens. In most cases, they could not be put to death without a fair trial.

Did the Greeks have a lot of slaves?

Historians aren't sure exactly how many slaves the Greeks owned, but they usually estimate that between 30 and 40 percent of the population were slaves. Even the poorest families owned at least one slave with some wealthy families owning hundreds.

Where did the slaves come from?

Most of the slaves were foreigners who had been captured in war or purchased through the slave trade.

What kind of work did they do?

Slaves did a wide variety of work depending on their skills and who owned them. Some slaves performed hard labour in the mines or on farms. Other slaves did household chores or worked as artisans in the city.

Were slaves ever set free?

Yes, slaves were sometimes set free by their owners. Owners may also allow the slave to save up money and buy their own freedom. Freed slaves were still not considered full citizens and often had obligations to their former owners.

How did they know who was a slave?

It was sometimes difficult to tell a slave from a free person in Ancient Greece. Slave women often had their hair cut short. This would have marked them as a slave because free women kept their hair long. Sometimes slaves were marked with scars or tattoos so they could be recognized as slaves.

Slaves of the Spartans

The Spartans ruled over a group of people called the Helots. The Helots were treated like slaves by the Spartans. They farmed the land and performed other manual labour for the Spartans. There were actually a lot more Helots than Spartans. In order to keep control, the Spartans had secret police who kept track of the Helots and killed anyone who they thought might rebel.

Interesting Facts About Slaves in Ancient Greece

- Slave owners were responsible for any crimes their slaves committed.
- Slaves participated in most occupations in Greece, but were not allowed to participate in politics.
- The worst job for a slave was working in the mines. This was dangerous and hard work. Slaves working in the mines didn't live very long.
- Wealthy Greeks would buy slaves as an investment and then rent them out to others.
- Slaves were often captured by pirates or bandits and sold at the slave market.

Activity

Write a piece of persuasive writing to the government of the day: "Recommendations for reforming the treatment of slaves"

Women in Greece

Women in Ancient Greece were considered second class citizens to men. Before getting married, girls were subject to their father and had to obey his commands. After getting married, wives were subject to their husbands. Women were looked down upon by men and were considered no smarter than children.

Staying at Home

Women were expected to stay at home and manage the household. In the city-state of Athens, men sometimes wouldn't allow their wives to leave the home. They were basically prisoners in their own homes. Women managed the household slaves and even lived in a separate part of the house.

Wealthy Women

Women married to wealthy men were often confined to their homes. Their jobs were to manage the household and to bear sons for the husband. They lived in a separate area of the home from the men and even ate their meals separate from the men. They had servants who helped with raising the children, doing household chores, and running errands. Most women, even wealthy women, helped to weave cloth for the family's clothing.

Poor Women

Poor women often had more freedom than wealthy women because they couldn't afford as many slaves. Because they didn't have a lot of slaves, poor women needed to leave the house to run errands, fetch water, and shop. They sometime took jobs as servants for the wealthy or worked in the local shops.

Did women have legal rights?

In some Greek city-states, such as Athens, women had few legal rights. In Athens, women generally couldn't own property, couldn't vote, and weren't allowed to participate in the government. In other city-states, women had a few more rights, but still had less rights than men.

Marriage

Women usually had no say in who they married. They were "given" in marriage by their father to another man. Sometimes very young girls were wed to older men.

Slave Women

Slave women were the lowest class in Ancient Greece. They not only were slaves, but they were also women.

Women in Sparta

Life was different for the women of the city-state of Sparta. In Sparta, women were respected as the "mothers of warriors." Although they were not considered equal with men, they had more rights and freedom than the women of Athens. They were educated, played sports, allowed to walk around the city freely, and were also able to own property.

Activity

Write a piece of persuasive writing to the government of the day: "Recommendations for reforming the treatment of women."

Greek gods

The Greeks had many gods, the Greeks believed that each god had a special role. Many were given symbols. For example:

- Zeus controlled the weather. His symbol was a thunderbolt.
- Apollo was the god of the sun, as well as archery. His symbol was a bow and arrow.
- Demeter was the god of crops. His symbol was wheat.
- Poseidon was the god of the sea. His symbol was a 3-pronged fork and sometimes a fish.
- The Greeks added the symbols to their paintings or their decorated pottery.

Greek art and architecture

Greek Painting

Written record shows that the Greeks enjoyed painting and that it was one of their most important types of art. However, very few of their paintings have survived as they were painted on wood panels or walls which have since been destroyed.

Pottery

One place where Greek painting did survive was on pottery and ceramics. We can tell from the intricate detail and quality of work that the Greeks were very talented painters.



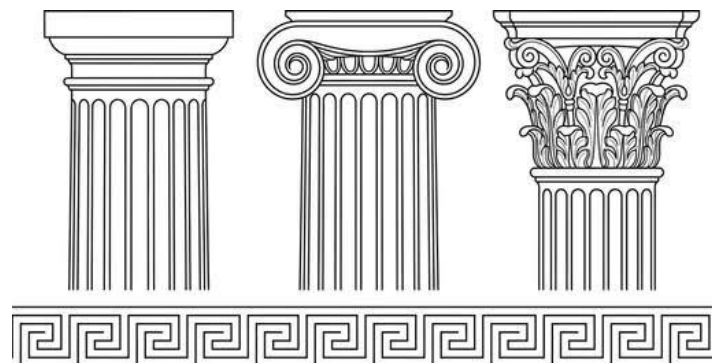
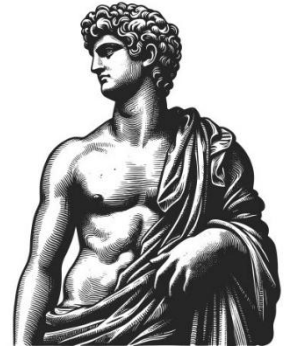
Sculpture

Greek sculpture was meant to show perfection. They wanted to create lifelike images of near perfect humans. Unlike the Romans, the Greeks never showed human imperfections in their art.

Architecture

Greek Architecture was intertwined with their art. A big part of their architecture was their columns. The Greek columns have been used in western architecture for the past 2500 years.

In Greek Architecture there were three main types of columns that were used: The Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian. See below for examples, (Doric left, Corinthian right).



The Parthenon

The Acropolis is a collection of structures sitting on a rocky hill. The Parthenon is a specific temple located on the Acropolis, in Athens. Dedicated to the goddess Athena, it is known for its Doric columns and exquisite sculptural details. The Parthenon is an important historical site, still standing today. It was built in the 5th Century BC in honour of the goddess Athena. It was a symbol of Athena's power and glory.

The Parthenon was later used as a Christian church. In the 1700s it was used by the Turks as a place to store gunpowder. When the gunpowder exploded the Parthenon was severely damaged. The latest threat to the Parthenon is damage caused by pollution.



Activities

1. What is the connection between Greek gods and art?
2. Draw and label the three types of columns invented by the Greeks.
3. Research to find the name of a building somewhere in the world today that uses one of these 3 types of columns in its architectural style. Make a rough sketch of the building.
4. In dot point form, give a brief history of the Parthenon.

The Olympic Games

The Greeks started the Olympic Games almost 3000 years ago in 776 BC. They were held nearly every four years for over a thousand years until they were stopped in 393 AD.

Who competed in the Ancient Olympic games?

In order to participate, athletes had to be a free man (no slaves) who spoke Greek. There may have also been a rule about age. Apparently, they wanted the athletes to be youthful, or at least youthful looking. From what we know, athletes were supposed to only be men. However, there are records of at least one woman winning an event, probably as an owner in a chariot race. Before the start of the games, athletes also had to take a vow to Zeus that they had been training for ten months.

The winners of the games were considered heroes. They got olive branches for winning, but also became famous. Sometimes they received large sums of money from their home town.

Where were the games held?

The Olympic Games were held in Olympia, hence the name Olympics. They were held there because the gods lived on Mount Olympus and the games were in honour of the king of the gods, Zeus. Athletes would travel to Olympia from many different Greek city-states and sometimes from far away Greek colonies to compete.

Ancient Olympic Events

The original Olympics had fewer events than what we have at the modern Olympics today. At the first Olympics there was only a single event. It was called the stadion and was a running race that went the length of the stadium, or around 200 meters. It wasn't until the 14th Olympics that they added in a second event. It was another running event that was one lap around the stadium; around 400 meters.

More events were added over the next several Olympics. These events included more running races of different lengths, wrestling, chariot racing, boxing, and the pentathlon. The

pentathlon combined the total scores of five events: long jump, discus throw, javelin throw, a stadion race, and wrestling.

Some of the events had similar names to events we have today, but had different rules and requirements. For example, in the long jump, jumpers used hand weights to help propel their bodies forward. Also, boxing and wrestling were very dangerous events with few rules. In boxing you could hit the opponent while they were down, and the match didn't stop until one fighter gave up or died. It wasn't a good idea to kill your opponent, however, as the dead boxer was given the victory.



Activities

1. What is the olive branch equivalent to in today's Olympic Games?
2. What is the origin of the name "Olympic"?
3. What was the stadion?
4. What was the second event added at a later day?
5. What is the 'pentathlon'?
6. Which event involved horses?
7. What were the dangers involved in the boxing event?
8. What Olympics event is the sculpture on the right depicting?



Greek history in the Bible

Greece plays a significant role in biblical history, particularly through the missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul and the cultural context of early Christianity.

Key Locations and Events

Apostle Paul's Missionary Journeys: Greece is prominently featured in the New Testament, especially through the travels of the Apostle Paul. He visited several key cities, including Athens and Corinth, where he established early Christian communities. His teachings and letters to these communities are foundational to Christian doctrine.

Athens: Known as a centre of philosophy and culture, Athens was where Paul preached at Mars Hill, engaging with the Greek philosophers. His famous speech about the "Unknown God" is recorded in Acts 17.

Corinth: This city was a major commercial hub and is significant in Paul's letters, particularly the First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians. Paul spent considerable time in Corinth, addressing issues of morality and community within the church.

Philippi: Located in Macedonia, Philippi was the first city in Europe where Paul preached. The conversion of Lydia and the imprisonment of Paul and Silas are notable events that occurred here, marking the establishment of one of the first Christian communities in Europe.

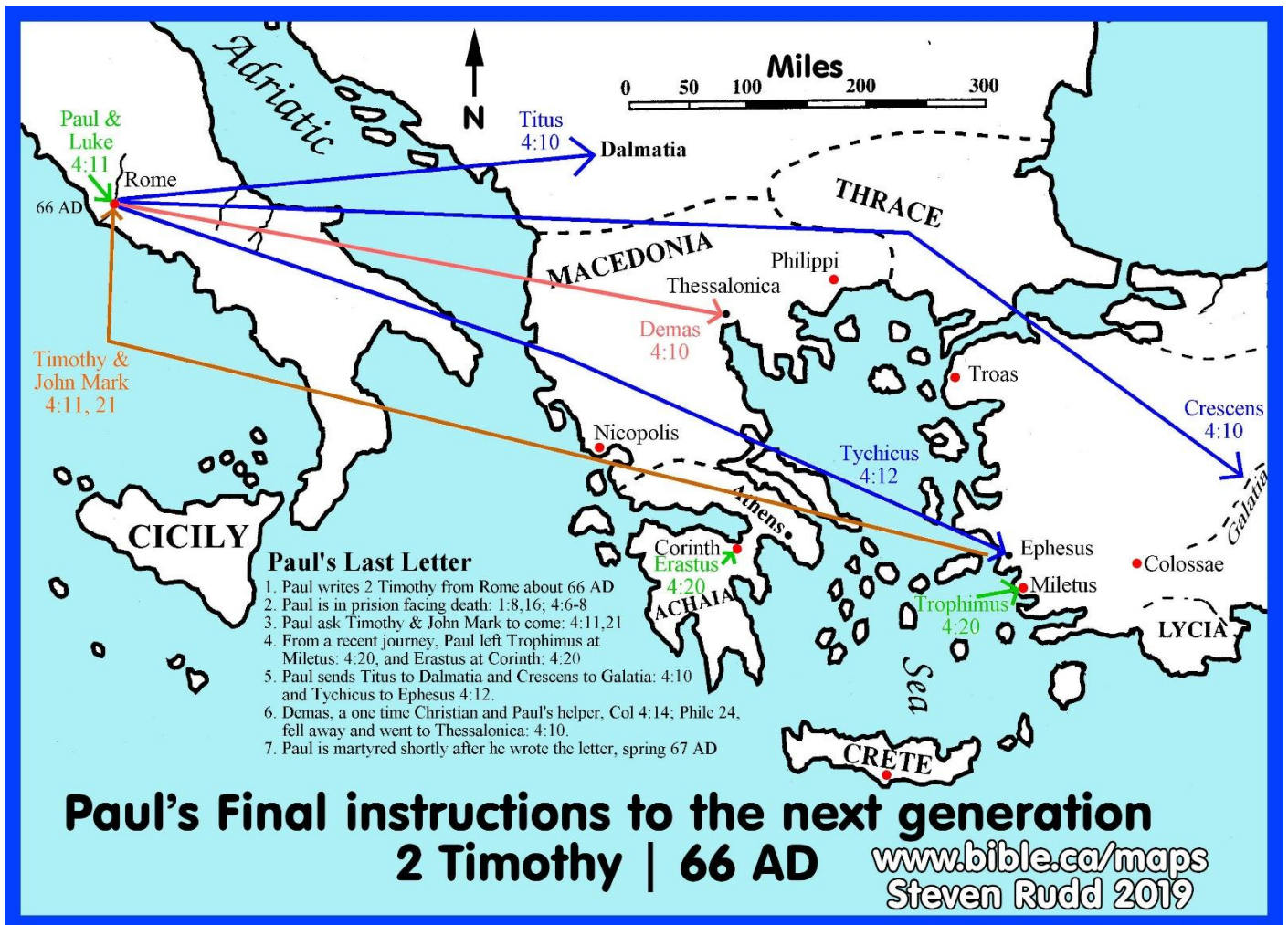
The Greeks were one of the first examples of Gentiles

Once the Gospel was preached in countries surrounding Israel, the new Christians were called 'gentiles' because they were not Jews. Many new Christians were Greeks. In the following verses, the word 'Greek' is used symbolically for 'gentile'. For those who become Christians – whether Jew or and Greek, we are all one in Christ.

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the Gospel. For it is the power of God unto salvation for all believers, the Jew first, and the Greek.

Romans 10:12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. For the same Lord is over all, richly in all who call upon him.

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither servant nor free; there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.



Note that the cities pf Athens, Corinth, Thessalonica and Ephesus still exist today.



Activities

Look up the following Bible verses to find out Paul's activities in the cities of Greece while on his missionary journeys. Write a brief outline of the events for each.

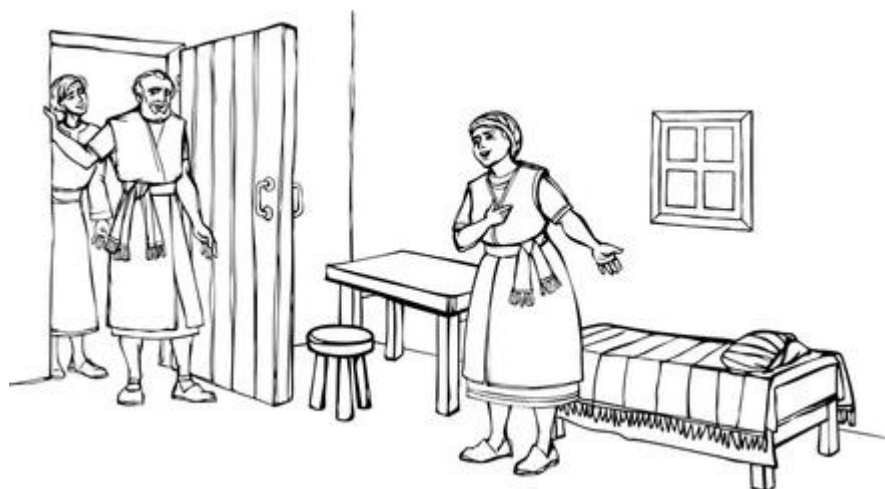
1. Macedonia – Acts 16:6-10
2. Philippi - Acts 16:13-15 (Lydia) and Acts 16:16-38 (Paul & Silas in prison)
3. Thessalonica – Acts 17:1-9
4. Berea – Acts 17:10-15
5. Athens – Acts 17:15-34
6. Corinth – Acts 18

Note that Paul also wrote letters to the people of Philippi and Corinth.

These are the books of Philippians and 1 & 2 Corinthians.



Paul in Athens



Lydia