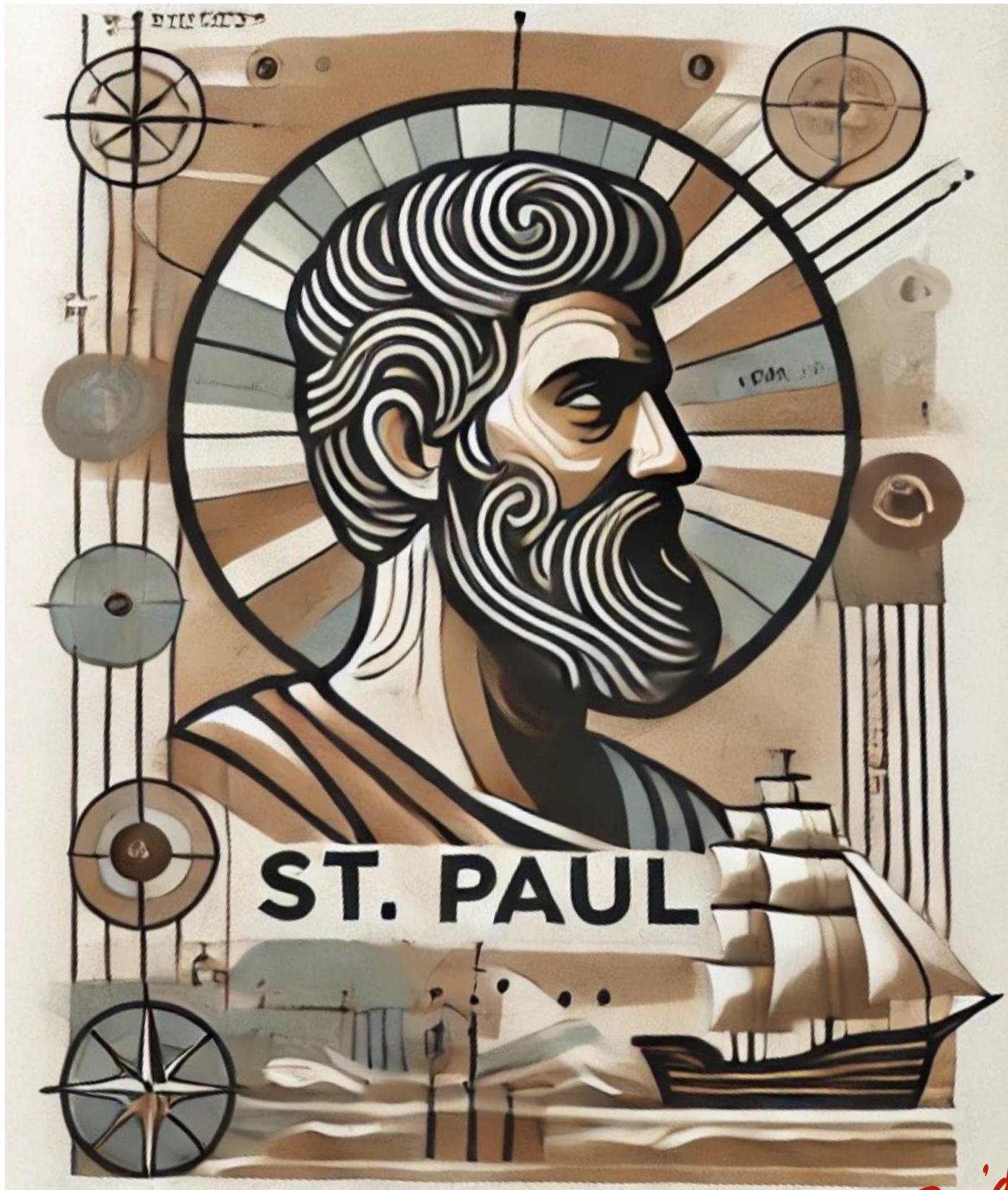




**12 MAR - 09 APR 2025**  
**WEDNESDAY / 5 WEEKS**



**TIME**  
**10.00 AM**



*by Rev'd Terry*

**BEXHILL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**

# **LENT BIBLE STUDY 2025**

*St. Paul's Mission Journeys*

## WEEK 1 - Introduction

### *St. Paul and his Mission*

#### OVERVIEW - Acts 9:1-19, Gal1:11-24

St. Paul, originally known as Saul of Tarsus, is one of the most influential figures in Christian history. Before his dramatic conversion, Paul was a zealous Pharisee who actively persecuted early Christians (Acts 8:3; Philippians 3:5-6). His encounter with the risen Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-19) is a pivotal moment in Christian theology, symbolising the transformative power of divine grace. Paul's conversion is a testament to God's ability to use even the most unlikely individuals for His purposes.

Paul's mission was deeply rooted in the belief that the Gospel was meant for all people, not just the Jews. This conviction led him to become the Apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13), breaking down cultural and religious barriers. His letters (epistles) form a significant part of the New Testament, providing profound theological insights on salvation, grace, faith, and the nature of the Church.

#### KEY THEMES

- **Divine Calling and Grace:** Paul's transformation underscores the concept of grace—God's unmerited favour—highlighting that salvation is not based on human merit but on God's initiative (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- **Universal Scope of the Gospel:** Paul's mission to the Gentiles reflects the inclusive nature of the Christian message, fulfilling God's promise to Abraham that "all nations will be blessed" (Genesis 12:3, Galatians 3:8).
- **The Church as the Body of Christ:** Paul's theology emphasises the unity and diversity of the Church, describing it as the Body of Christ where all members, regardless of background, are equal (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

#### GROUP DISCUSSION

1. How does Paul's background as a Pharisee inform his

later ministry to the Gentiles?

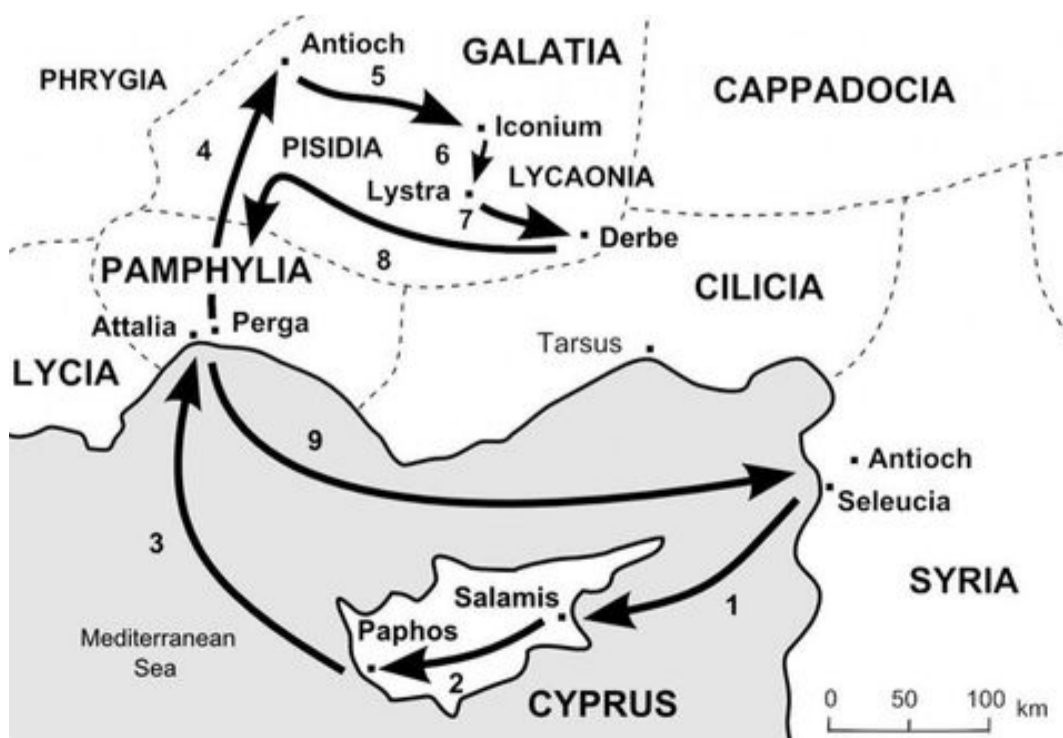
2. In what ways does Paul's conversion experience challenge our understanding of God's grace?
3. How can the Church today learn from Paul's commitment to inclusivity in spreading the Gospel?

## WEEK 2 -

### *The First Mission Journey*

#### OVERVIEW: Acts Chapter 13~14

Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 13-14) was a groundbreaking expedition, marking the first major effort to evangelise Gentile territories. Accompanied by Barnabas, Paul set out from Antioch, which became a central hub for early Christian missions. This journey highlighted several key aspects of Paul's mission strategy, including his focus on urban centres and synagogues, where he would preach to Jews before turning to Gentiles. This journey is significant for its demonstration of the early Church's resilience in the face of opposition. Paul's message of salvation by faith in Jesus (Acts 13:38-39) challenged both Jewish legalism and pagan idolatry. His success among Gentiles illustrates the fulfilment of God's promise to extend His covenant beyond Israel.



• **Route:** Antioch (in Syria) → Cyprus → Perga → Antioch (in Pisidia) → Iconium → Lystra → Derbe → Return to Antioch.

## KEY THEMES

- **The Role of the Holy Spirit:** The journey begins with the Holy Spirit setting apart Paul and Barnabas for their mission (Acts 13:2), emphasising the Spirit's guidance in the spread of the Gospel.
- **Spiritual Warfare and Opposition:** Throughout the journey, Paul encounters spiritual and physical opposition, including sorcery (Acts 13:6-12) and persecution, which highlights the reality of spiritual warfare in ministry.
- **Grace vs. Law:** In his sermon at Pisidian Antioch, Paul stresses that salvation comes through faith in Jesus, not through the Law of Moses (Acts 13:38-39), laying the groundwork for the doctrine of justification by faith.

## GROUP DISCUSSION

1. How does the Holy Spirit guide and empower Paul's missionary work?
2. What can we learn from Paul's approach to addressing both Jewish and Gentile audiences?
3. How does Paul's experience of persecution encourage us to persevere in our own faith journeys?

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## WEEK 3 -

### *The Second Mission Journey*

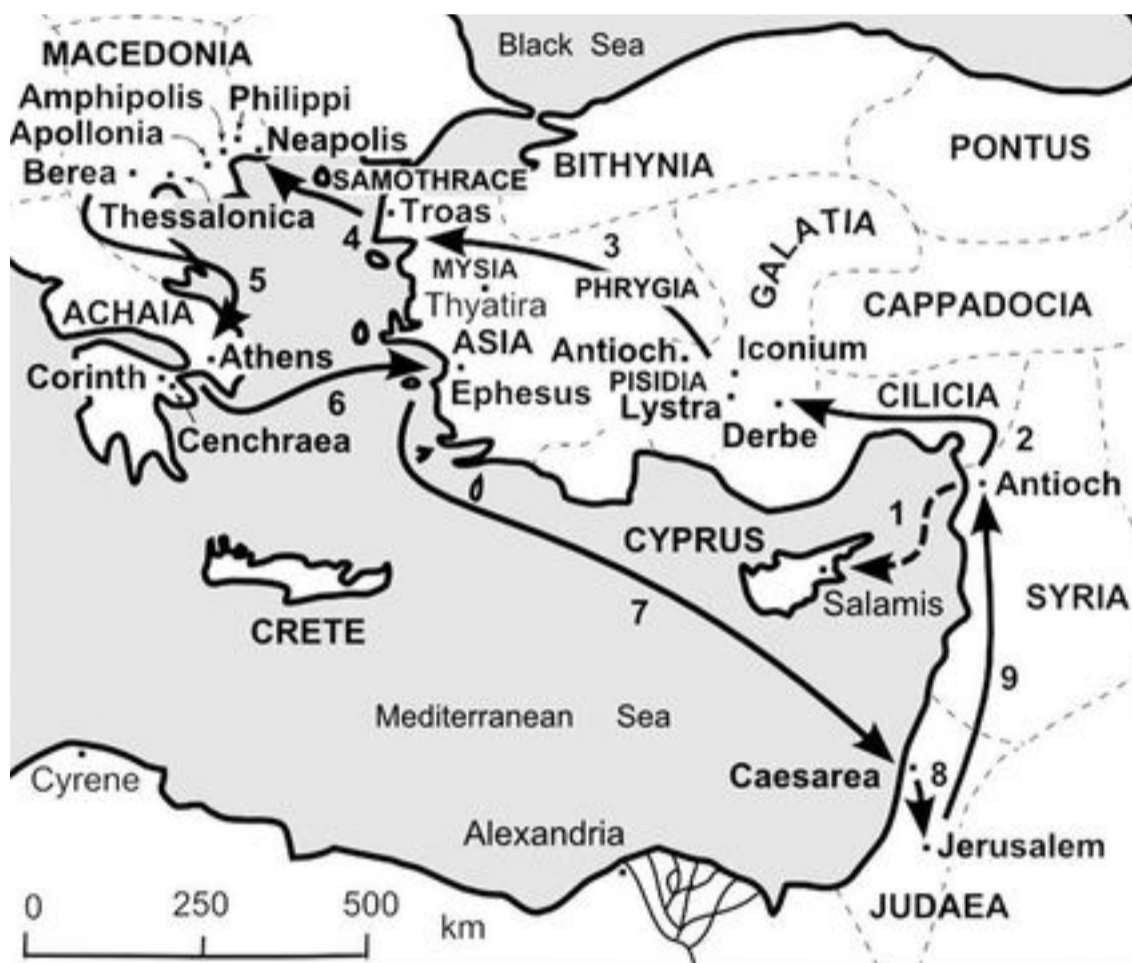
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## OVERVIEW- Acts 15:36~18:22

Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 15:36-18:22) was crucial in expanding the Gospel to Europe. This journey began with the sharp disagreement between Paul and Barnabas over John Mark (Acts 15:37-40), which led to a split. This incident highlights the theme of God's sovereignty in using even human conflicts to further His

purposes.

A significant moment in this journey is the Macedonian call (Acts 16:9-10), where Paul receives a vision prompting him to bring the Gospel to Europe, beginning with Philippi. Paul's engagement with diverse cultures, especially in cities like Athens, demonstrates his ability to contextualise the Gospel message. His address at the Areopagus (Acts 17:22-31) is a masterclass in apologetics, as he presents the Gospel in a way that resonates with Greek philosophical thought.



• **Route:** Antioch → Syria and Cilicia → Derbe → Lystra → Troas → Philippi → Thessalonica → Berea → Athens → Corinth → Return via Ephesus to Antioch.

## KEY THEMES

- **God's Sovereignty in Guidance:** The Holy Spirit's guidance is evident throughout the journey, from forbidding Paul to preach in certain areas (Acts 16:6-7) to directing him towards Macedonia.
- **Cross-Cultural Evangelism:** Paul's ability to adapt his message without compromising the Gospel shows the importance of understanding and engaging with different worldviews.

• **Community and Conflict:** The journey highlights the challenges of church planting and the need for resilience and adaptability in ministry.

**GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. How does the vision of the Macedonian man reflect God's desire to reach all nations?
2. What lessons can we draw from Paul's engagement with the philosophers in Athens?
3. How does Paul's willingness to adapt his methods inspire us in our own evangelistic efforts?

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**WEEK 4 -**

*The Third Mission Journey*

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**OVERVIEW - Acts 18:23~21:17**



• **Route:** Antioch → Galatia and Phrygia → Ephesus → Macedonia → Corinth → Troas → Return to Jerusalem.

Paul's Third Missionary Journey (Acts 18:23-21:17) Focuses on Strengthening the Churches He Had Previously Founded, Particularly in Ephesus, Where He Spends Over Two Years. This Period Is Marked by Deep Theological Teaching and Miraculous Signs, Such as the Extraordinary Miracles Performed Through Paul's Handkerchiefs (Acts

19:11-12).

Paul's Farewell Speech to the Ephesian Elders (Acts 20:17-38) Is One of the Most Personal and Poignant Moments in his Ministry. It Highlights his Pastoral Heart, his Willingness To Suffer for the Sake of the Gospel, and his Commitment to the Spiritual Well-Being of the Church.

## KEY THEMES

- **Discipleship and Teaching:** Paul's extended time in Ephesus underscores the importance of grounding new believers in sound doctrine.
- **Spiritual Authority:** The confrontation with demonic forces in Ephesus (Acts 19:13-20) demonstrates the power of the Gospel over spiritual darkness.
- **Faithfulness in Ministry:** Paul's speech to the Ephesian elders is a powerful reminder of the cost of discipleship and the call to shepherd the flock of God faithfully.

## GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What can we learn from Paul's approach to discipleship and church planting?
2. How does Paul's spiritual authority challenge our understanding of the power of the Gospel?
3. What does Paul's farewell address teach us about the role of leaders in the Church?

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## WEEK 5 -

### *The Final Journey to Rome*

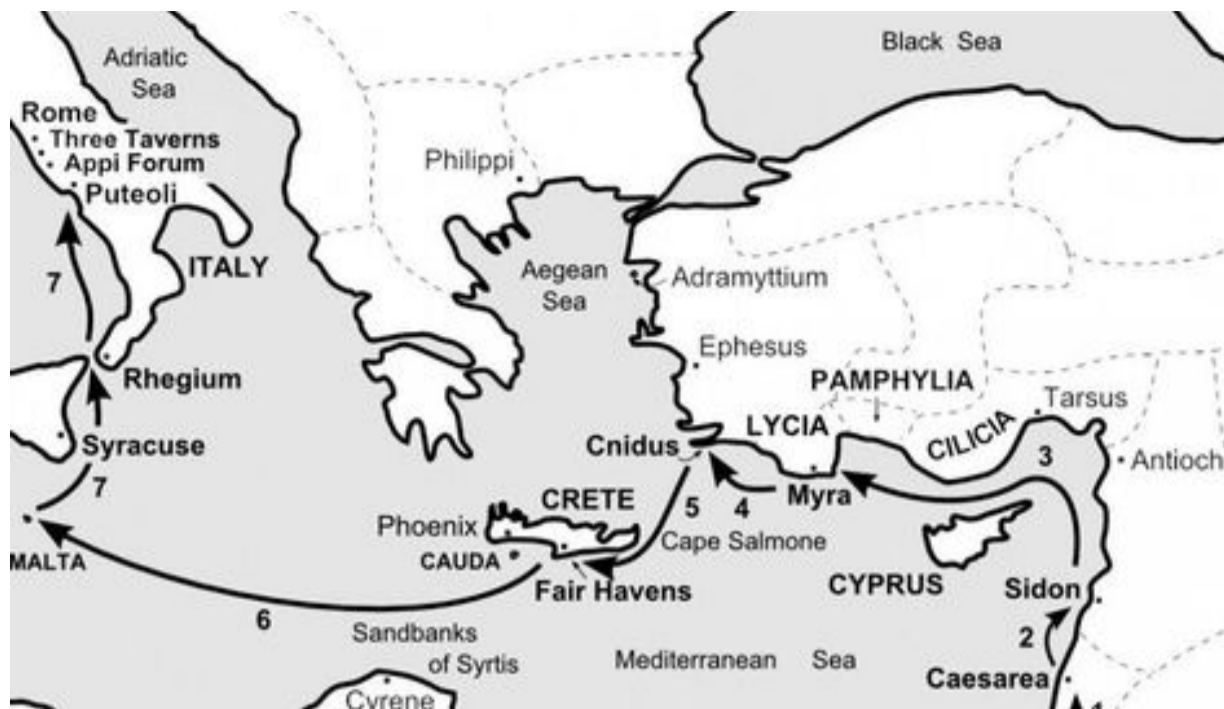
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## OVERVIEW - Acts 21:18~28:31

Paul's journey to Rome is often seen as a journey of faith under trial. Despite being a prisoner, Paul remains steadfast in his mission, witnessing to Roman officials, fellow prisoners, and even the inhabitants of Malta after a shipwreck.

This journey reflects the fulfilment of God's promise that Paul would testify in Rome (Acts 23:11). Paul's time in

## 8 / ST. PAUL'S MISSION JOURNEYS



Rome, where he lived under house arrest, marks the transition of Christianity from a sect within Judaism to a global faith. His unwavering commitment to preach the Gospel, even in chains, serves as an example of faithfulness under persecution.

- **Route:** Jerusalem → Caesarea → Fair Havens (Crete) → Malta → Rome.

### KEY THEMES

- **Witness in Suffering:** Paul's perseverance highlights the power of the Gospel to bring hope even in the midst of suffering and imprisonment.
- **God's Providence:** The narrative demonstrates God's providential care, as seen in the protection during the storm (Acts 27) and Paul's effective ministry in unexpected places.
- **The Universality of the Gospel:** Paul's ministry in Rome signifies the Gospel reaching the heart of the Roman Empire, symbolising its global and timeless relevance.

### GROUP DISCUSSION

1. How did Paul turn his imprisonment into an opportunity for ministry?
2. What can we learn from Paul's trust in God's providence during the storm and shipwreck?
3. How does Paul's journey to Rome inspire us to be bold in sharing our faith, regardless of circumstances?

The images of the journeys from: <https://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/bj-paul-maps/>



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