

# This Must Be the Place

The ancient stories of the Bible seem a little more relatable when we see that they happened in real places.

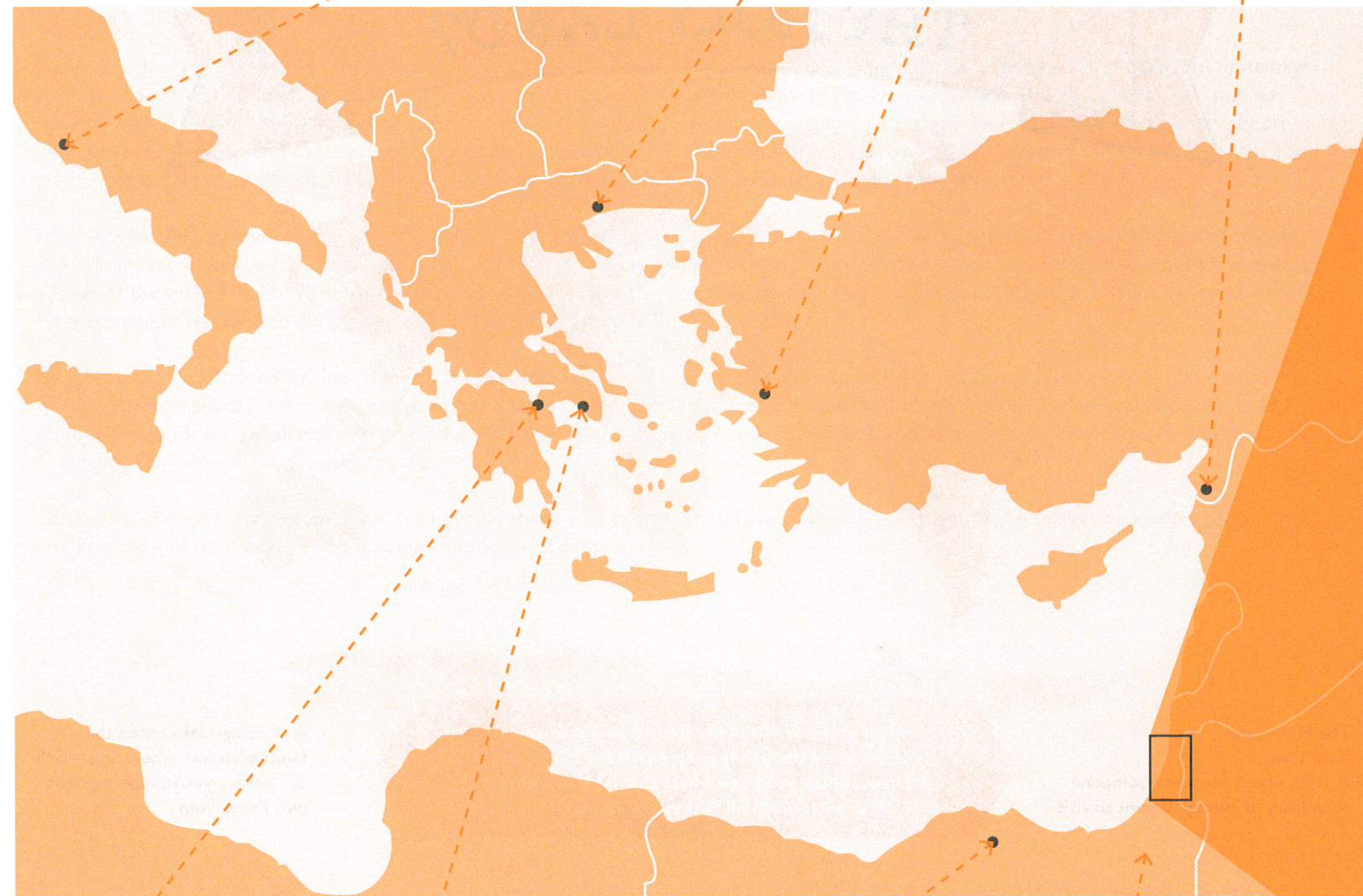
## THE HOLY LAND

**Rome:** The capital of the Roman Empire, where Paul was taken for trial and later put to death.

**Philippi:** Site of one of the early churches.

**Ephesus:** The site of another of the early churches.

**Antioch:** Where the apostle Paul began his traveling ministry.



**Corinth:** An important travel destination for Paul.

**Athens:** One of the many places Paul traveled to bring the message of Jesus to the Gentiles (that is, non-Jewish people).

**Rameses:** The part of Egypt where the Hebrew people lived under Pharaoh's rule.

**Egypt:** The land where the Hebrews lived in captivity for generations and where Mary and Joseph fled when Herod was trying to kill young Jesus.

### WHAT MAKES THE HOLY LAND HOLY?

Christians aren't the only ones who think of this area as the Holy Land. In addition to Christianity, two of the world's other major religions have roots in this region, and all three have holy sites in a small part of the city of Jerusalem. Talk as a group about some of the challenges this creates for people living in this area today.



Judaism



Christianity



Islam

### WHERE IN THE WORLD?

Look up these stories and find their locations on the map. How can knowing the location of a story add to the way you understand it?

- David defeats Goliath (1 Samuel 17:1-2). All of these cities are still there!
  - Joshua leads his mighty band of priests (Joshua 6:1-27).
  - Jesus calls the first disciples (Matthew 4:18-22).
  - Jesus meets a Samaritan woman at a well (John 4:1-9).

**Samaria:** The capital of the Northern Kingdom and home to the Samaritans, who were later seen by the Pharisees and Sadducees as having broken away from the true faith.

**Cana:** The site of Jesus' first miracle.

**Damascus:** Saul/Paul, a Jewish leader and persecutor of Christians, was traveling here when he had an encounter with Jesus that changed his life.

**Sea of Galilee:** The center of activity for Jesus and the disciples.

**Nazareth:** Hometown of Mary and Joseph.

**Jordan River:** One of the most important geographic features in the region, this river plays a role in more than one hundred Old Testament stories and one very important New Testament story.

**Shechem:** An important crossroads for travelers through this area and the first capital of the Kingdom of Israel.

**Valley of Elah:** The site of numerous battles in the Old Testament.

**Jericho:** Where Israel, under Joshua's leadership, won a great battle by marching around the city walls and sounding trumpets.

**Jerusalem:** Center of worship for the people of Israel. Also known as Zion.

**Bethlehem:** Hometown of David and birthplace of Jesus.



### LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

The geographic features of an area have all sorts of implications for what happens there. Look at the map and notice where some of the most well-known locations are. Why would the most important cities be built on mountains?

Why would Jesus and Paul have spent so much time in places near the water?

### ON THE ROAD

People in the Bible traveled a lot. Some of those journeys took days, others months. And one well-known trek took forty years! Add the following routes to the map:

- Draw a line from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Which famous people in the Bible made this journey? (If necessary, see Luke 2:1-7.) Write your answer on the map near their route.
- The apostle Paul often traveled by boat to get to the many churches we read about in the New Testament. Draw the most efficient route to get him from Damascus to Antioch and onto the churches at Corinth, Philippi, and Ephesus, and then back to Jerusalem. Now look at the map of Paul's journeys in the back of your Bible. Did he follow your suggested route?
- Joseph was just seventeen when his brothers sold him into slavery. This pulled Joseph far from his home in Shechem and led the Israelites into Egypt where they would eventually become slaves. Read the story in Genesis 37:12-24, 25-28; 41:14-16, 25-26, 39-43; 42:6-8; and 45:4-15. Then chart Joseph's route from Shechem to Egypt.