

From a Room to the World

Mapping the Rapid Geographic Spread of Early Christianity (33 AD – 70 AD)

Tracing the literal routes, verifiable dates, and empirical historical records of the first-century missionaries who fulfilled the directive to reach the “ends of the earth” in a single generation.



33 AD: The Jerusalem Epicenter

Mid-May, 33 AD. Following the Pentecost event, the church explodes from 120 followers to over 10,000 members within two years.

 **12 Apostles**
Centralize in
the Temple

 **10,000+**
Gathered
Believers

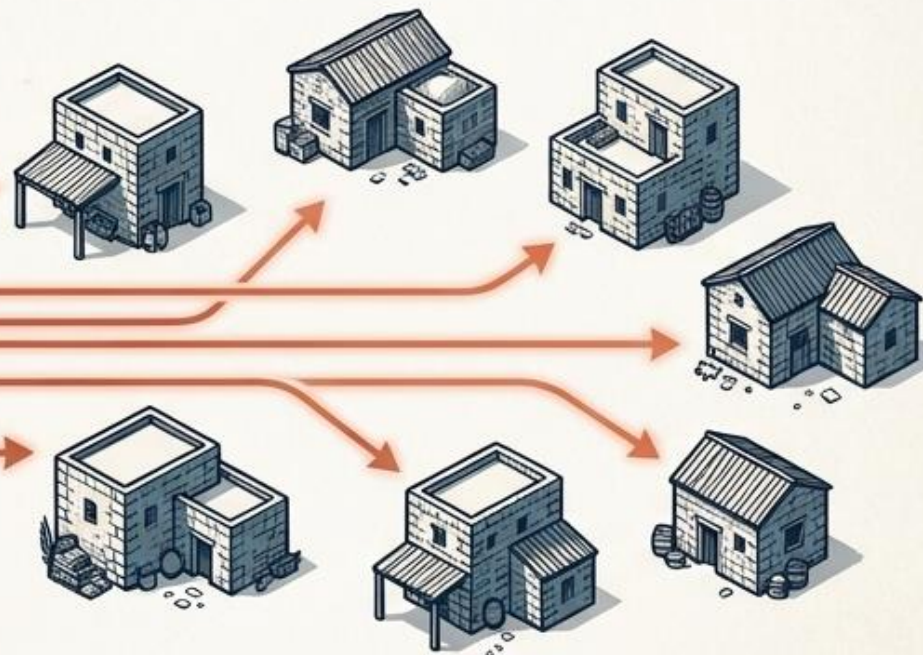
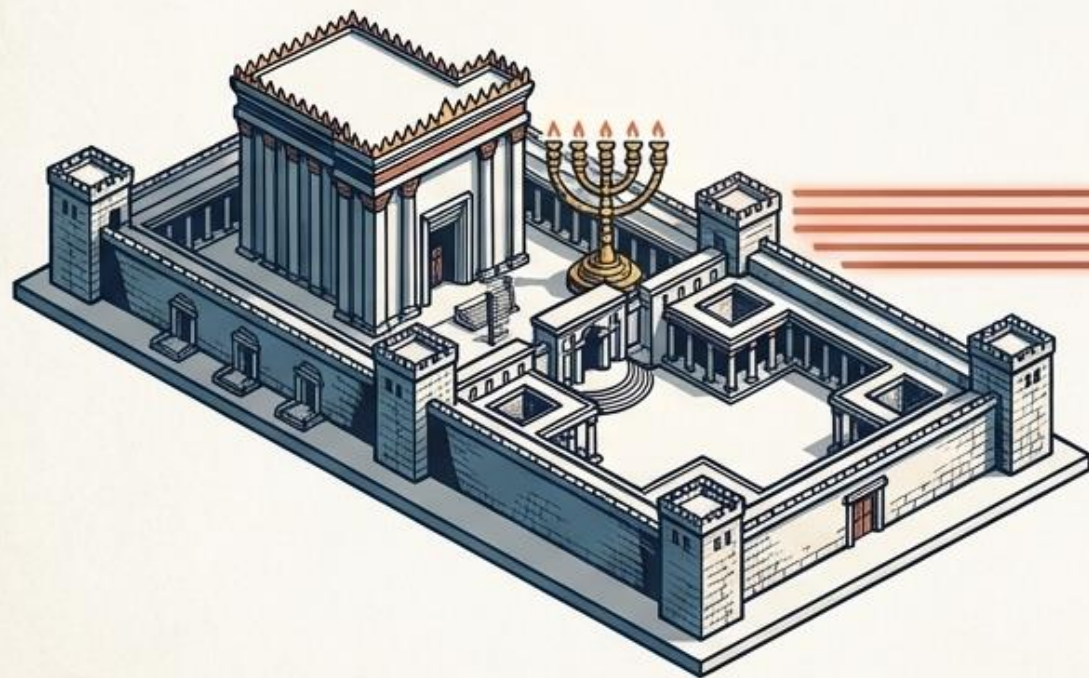
 **Oral Phase:**
Apostles standardize
the key stories and
teachings of Jesus.



**Centralized
Apostolic Teaching**



**Decentralized House-to-House
Breaking Bread**



 **33 AD**

34 AD

35 AD

36 AD

37 AD

38 AD

39 AD

40 AD

41 AD

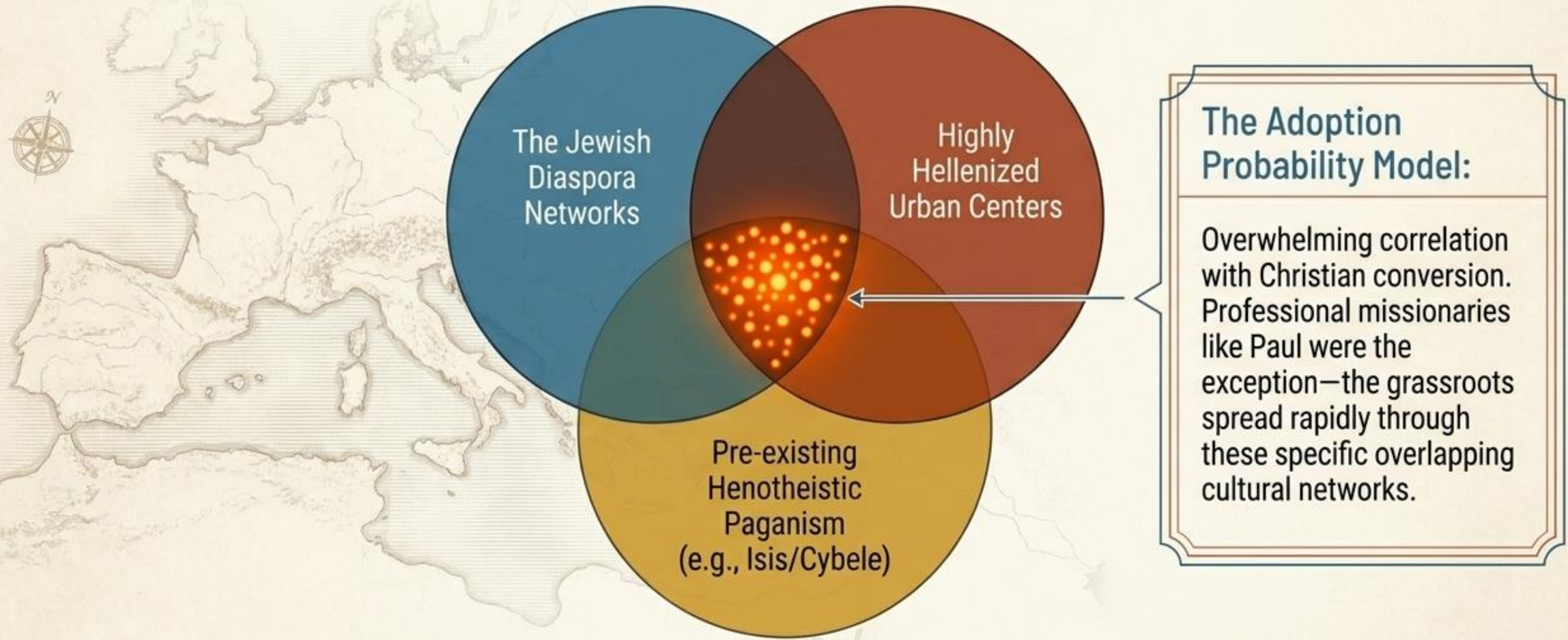
42 AD

43 AD

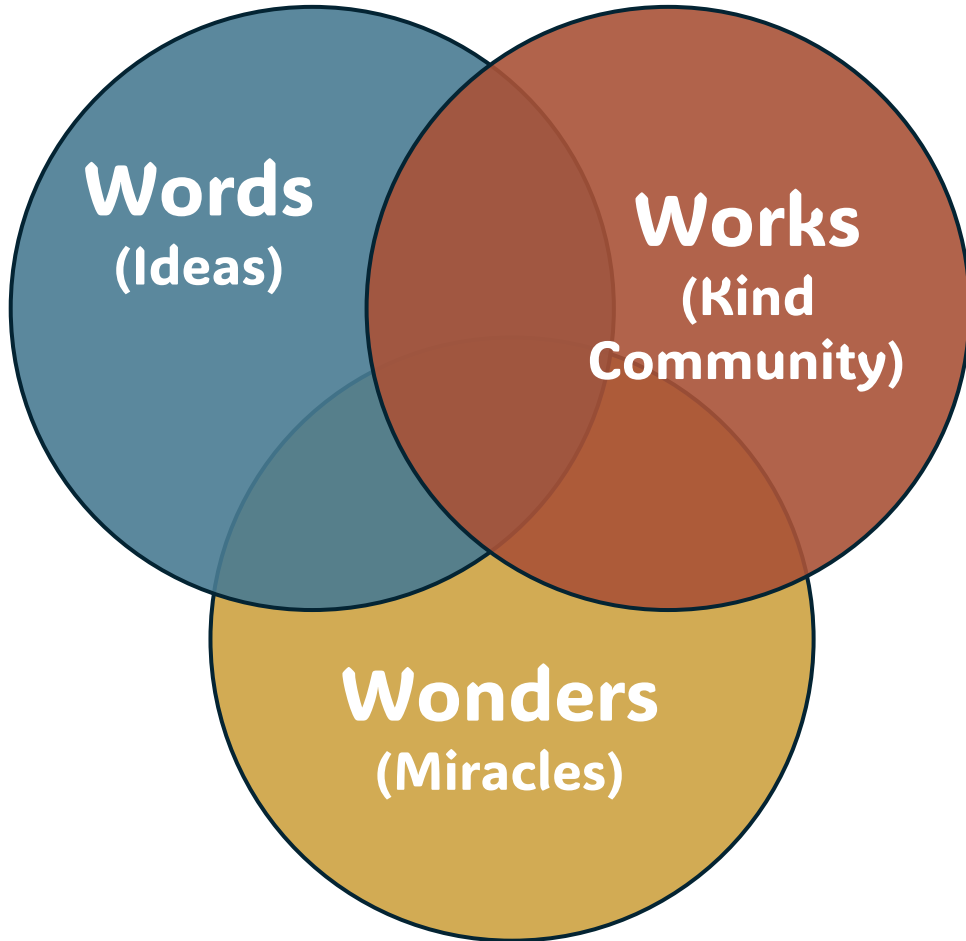
44 AD

The Soil: Why did it grow so fast?

Sociologist Rodney Stark's baseline for 1st-century church expansion.



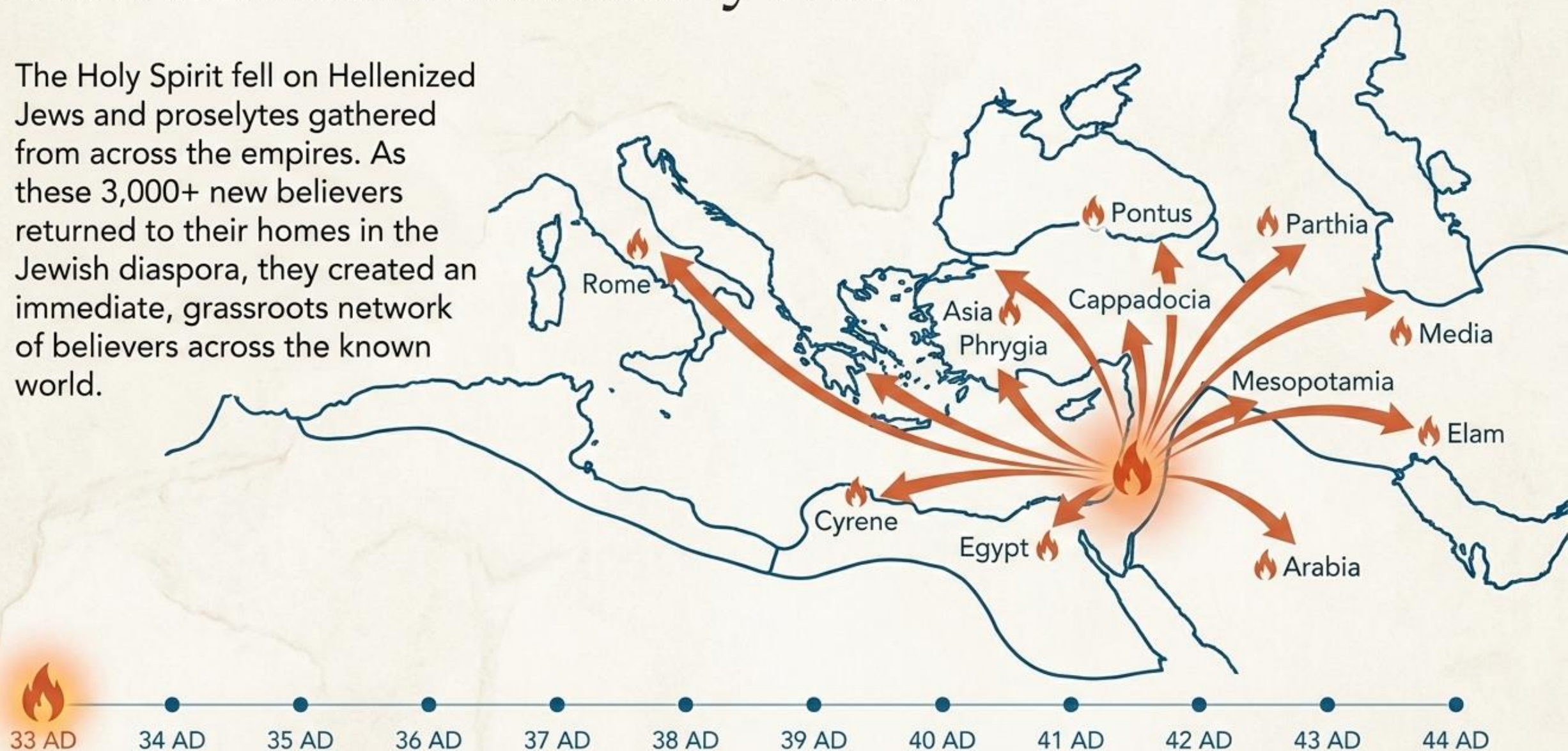
The Soil: Why did it grow so fast?



Scholar	Reason
Adolph von Harnack	A powerful, practical social network of active love
Ramsay MacMullen (Yale)	Miracles, personal persuasion, and social influence in conversion.
Rodney Stark (Baylor University/Beijing)	Sociological factors such as social networks, care during plagues, and higher fertility.
Bart Ehrman (N. Carolina)	Social, historical, and cultural factors combined with sincere resurrection belief.
Tom Holland Historian & Author	Moral and Social Ideas
Larry Hurtado (Edinburgh)	Devotion to Jesus as divine, expressed in distinctive worship and communal identity.
N T Wright	The Resurrection.

The Accidental Missionary Force

The Holy Spirit fell on Hellenized Jews and proselytes gathered from across the empires. As these 3,000+ new believers returned to their homes in the Jewish diaspora, they created an immediate, grassroots network of believers across the known world.



The Pivot Point & The African Frontier (34 AD)

Trigger Event:

The martyrdom of Stephen (34 AD) sparks the first major purge. Saul's house-to-house search forces believers out of Jerusalem.

Profile 1: Philip the Evangelist

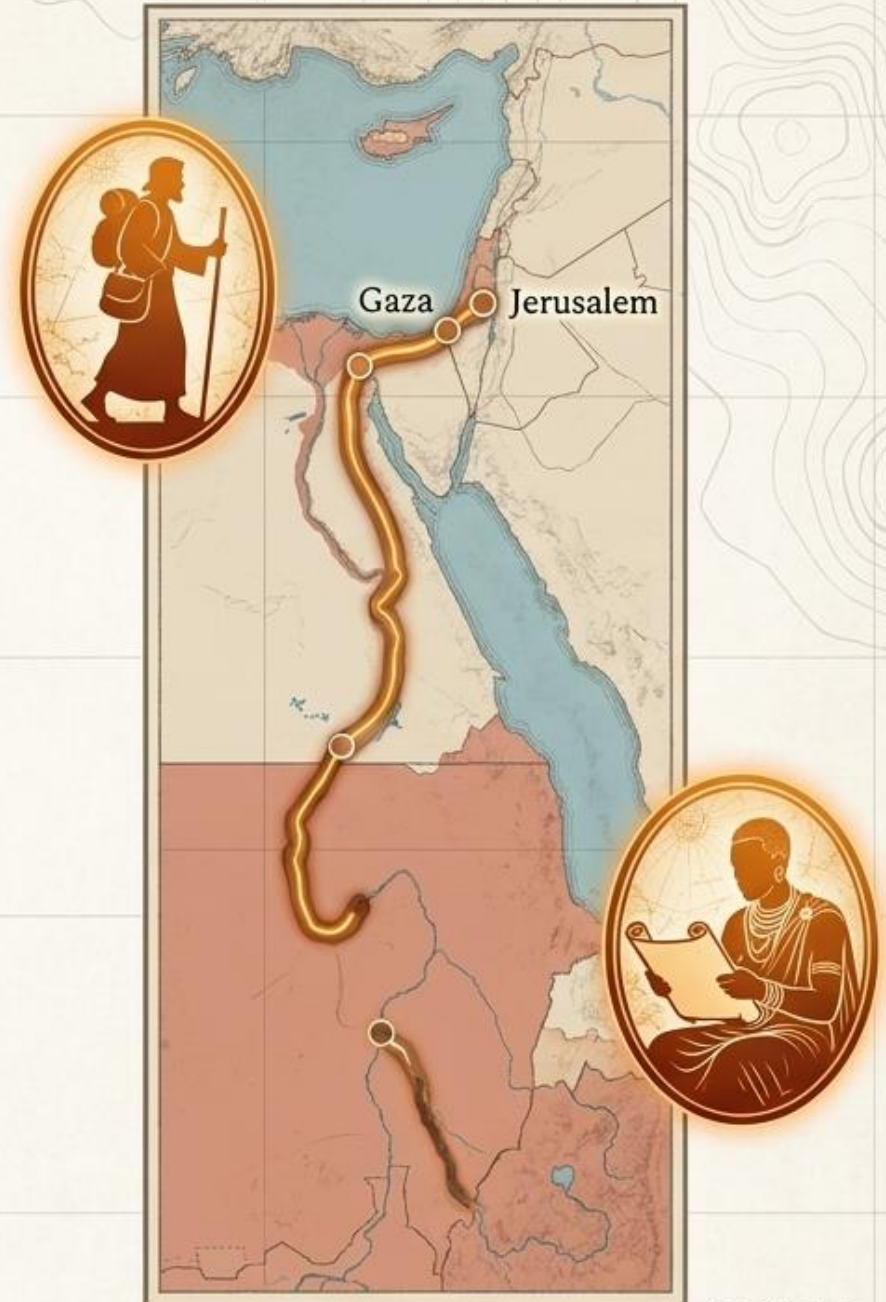
Flees to Samaria, then heads south toward Gaza.

Profile 2: Simeon Bachos (The Ethiopian Eunuch)

Treasurer of Ethiopia. Excluded from full temple participation, his conversion fulfills Isaiah 56.

The Impact: Simeon Bachos carries the Gospel deep into Sub-Saharan Africa (Sudan/Ethiopia). Today, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church numbers over 136 million members.

"This man was also sent to the regions of Ethiopia to preach that he had himself believed..." — Irenaeus



Andrew the First-Called: The Systematic Northern Missions

Andrew intentionally retraced the steps of the international visitors from Pentecost, establishing local leadership in diaspora communities.

Route 1 (34–39 AD): The Black Sea Coast

Travels via Samaria and Gaza to Edessa. Reaches Byzantium, strategically appointing Stachys as the first Bishop in 37 AD to maintain order.

Route 2 (40–49 AD): The Steppes and Beyond

Travels the Silk Road to Sogdiana and the Altai Mountains (meeting point of modern China, Mongolia, and Russia). Preaches to the Scythians and Alani tribal groups.

Tradition assigns Andrew the regions of Scythia, establishing churches across Pontus, Galatia, and Cappadocia. — Origen & Hippolytus

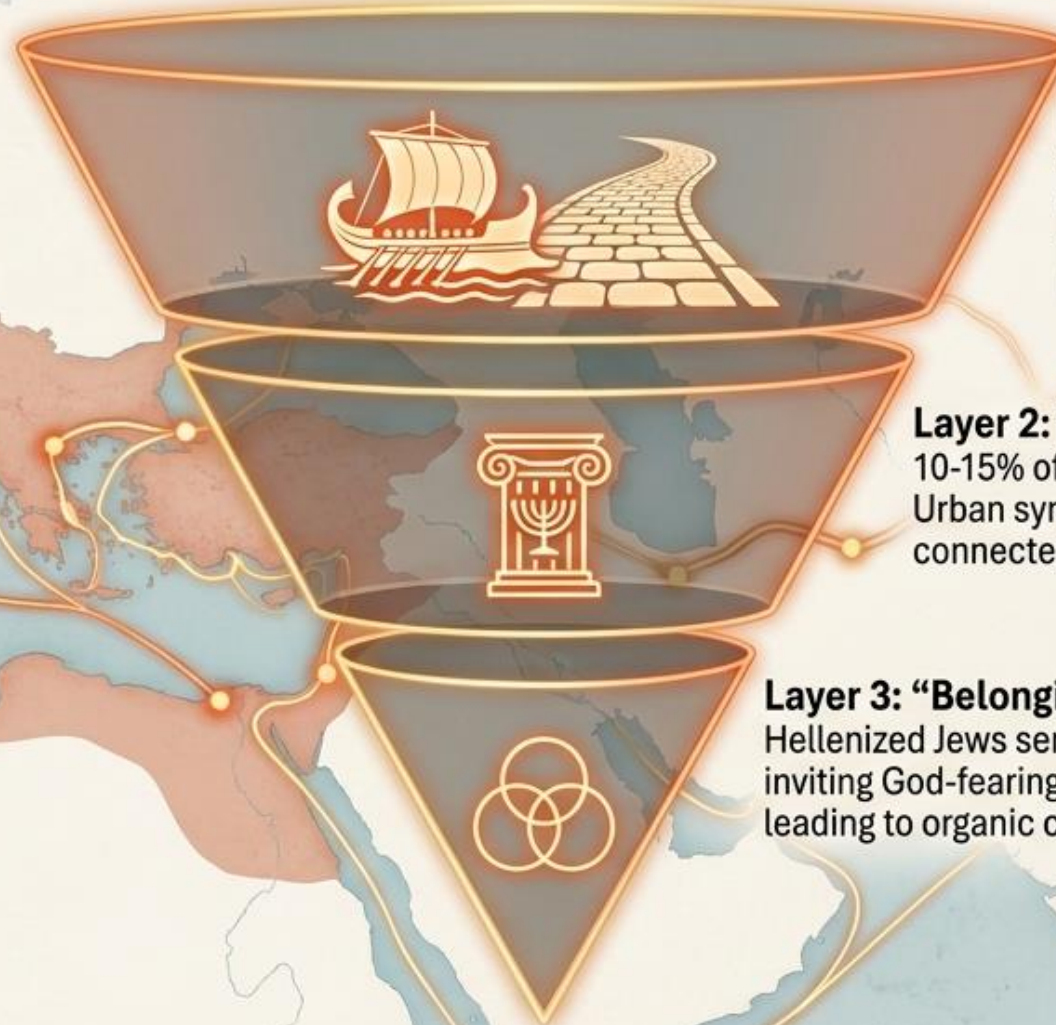


Geopolitical Tensions & Prophetic Deadlines

In 40 AD, Emperor Caligula attempts to place his statue in the Jerusalem Temple. The Church views this through Jesus' warnings and Daniel's prophecy. This intense apocalyptic urgency spurs the completion of Matthew's texts and signals that the time of peace in Jerusalem is ending.



The Sociological Engine: Infrastructure & Identity



Layer 1: Roman & Greek Infrastructure
Safe maritime shipping lanes, the Red Sea canal, and the Silk Road enabled staggering travel speeds (e.g., Mediterranean to Britain in 45 days).

Layer 2: The Hellenized Diaspora
10-15% of the Roman Empire was Jewish. Urban synagogues provided pre-existing, highly connected launchpads in all major cities.

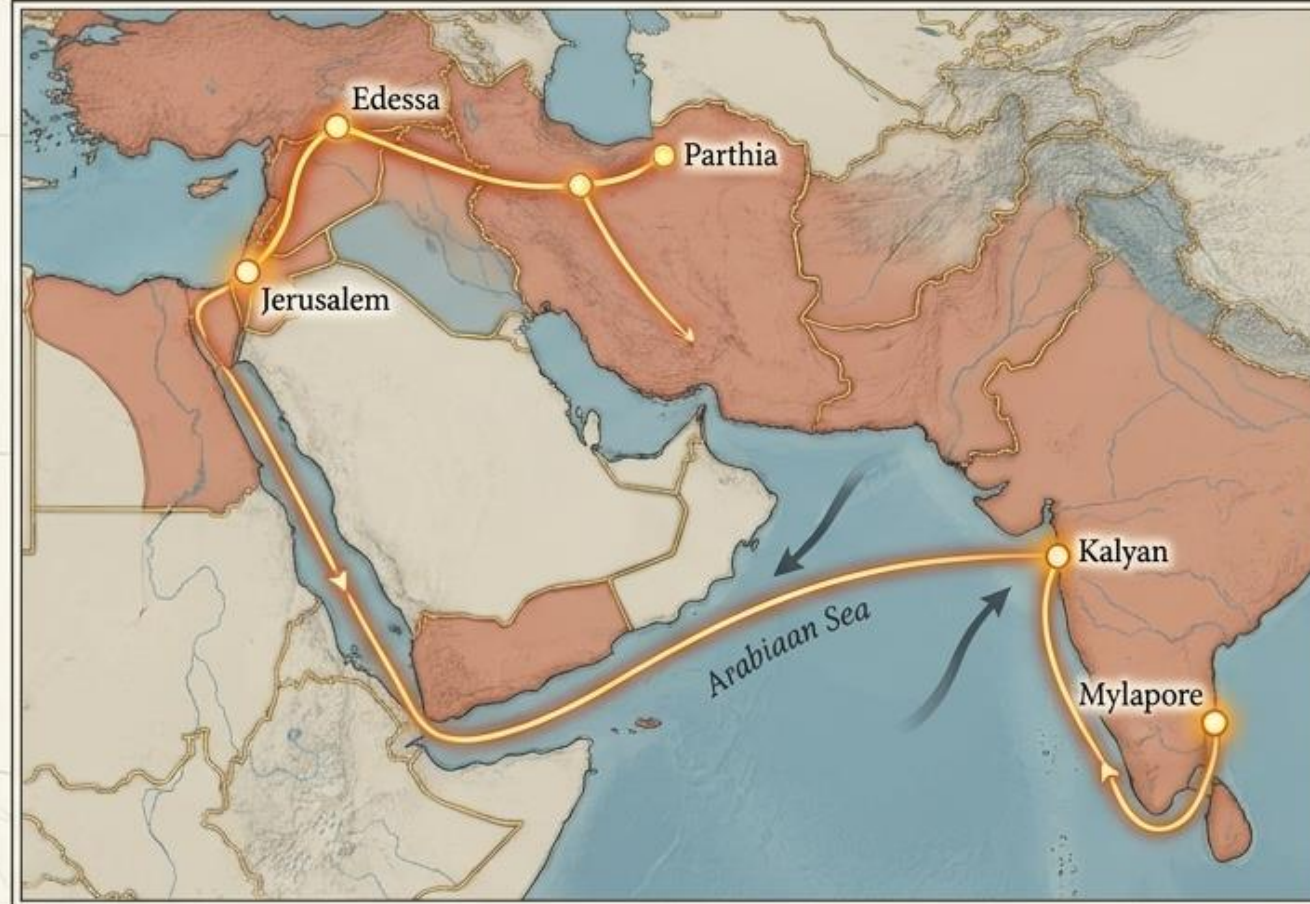
Layer 3: "Belonging Before Believing"
Hellenized Jews served as the vital cultural bridge, inviting God-fearing pagans into social circles, leading to organic conversions.

Takeaway: The Apostles strategically targeted ripe, highly connected urban hubs, not just isolated outposts.

To the East: Edessa, Parthia, and India

The Edessa Hub (34–40 AD):

Thomas dispatches Thaddaeus (St. Addai) to Edessa. It rapidly becomes a major missionary sending church on the Turkish/Syrian border.



The India Missions (50–72 AD):

Thomas travels via the Red Sea canal and monsoon winds to the port of Kalyan (Southern India). He converts officials of Raja Gondophares (historically verified by coin discoveries). Martyred in Mylapore, 72 AD.

Bartholomew also travels maritime trade routes to India, carrying Matthew's Gospel.

Pantaneus found "some who had known Christ... for Bartholomew had left them the Gospel according to Matthew in Hebrew." — Jerome



1st-Century Coin of Raja Gondophares

Paul & “The Apostles of the Assemblies”

Paul operated a sophisticated missionary hub, delegating authority to a trusted team of itinerant ministers (Timothy, Titus, Epaphras) to plant and manage churches across the Greco-Roman world.



1
47 AD:
First Journey
(Cyprus, Galatia)

2
**50 AD: Second
Journey** (Macedonia,
Athens, Corinth)

3
**54-57 AD: The
Ephesian Base.** Paul
consolidates the
Aegean network.

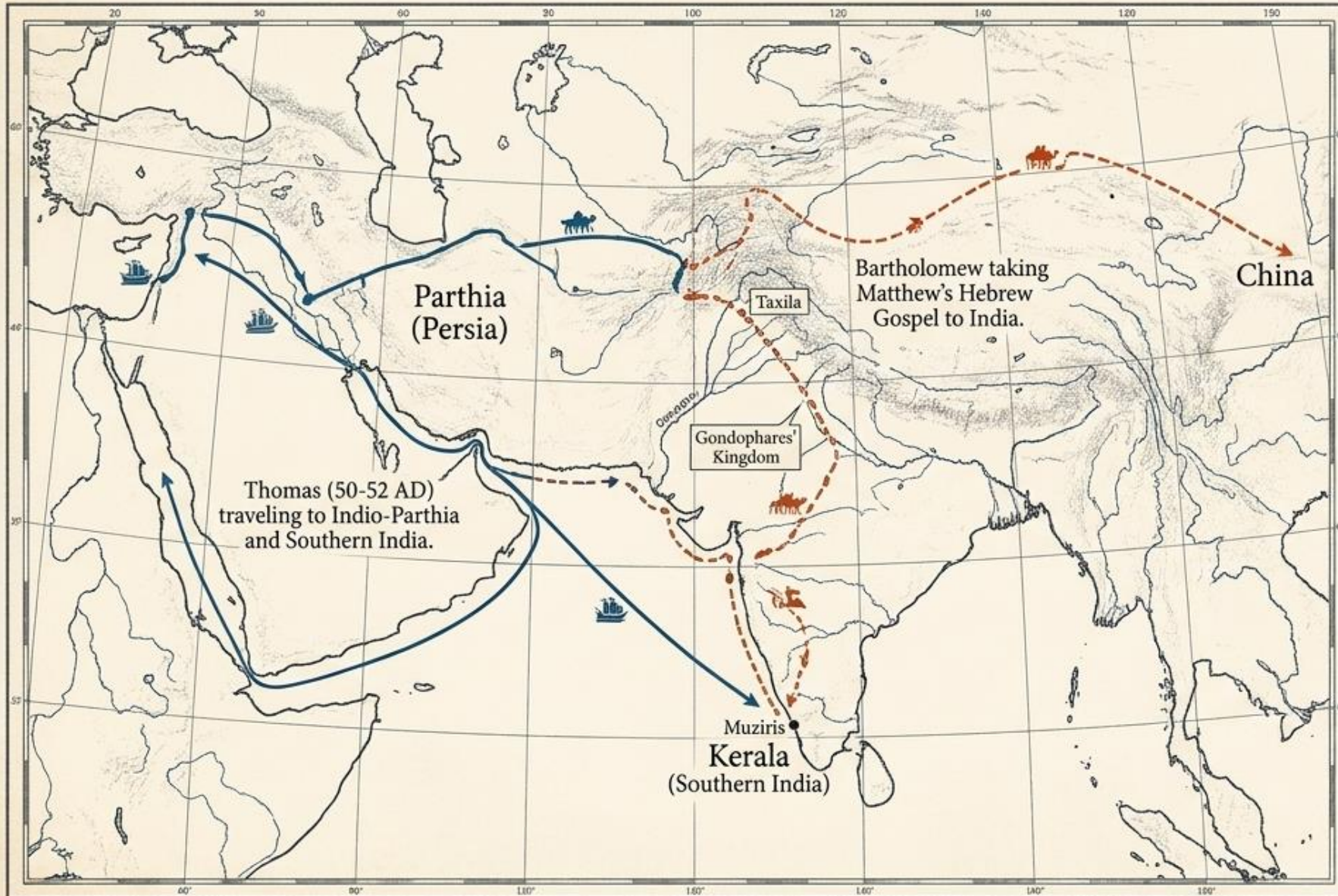
“But now there is nothing more to keep me in these parts... I will set out for Spain by way of you.” — Paul, Romans 15 (c. 57 AD)

The Northern Front: Andrew's Second Journey

Pushing into the steppes, the Silk Road, and beyond the Roman borders.



The Eastern Front: Thomas, Bartholomew & The Silk Road



Historical Verification

The Gondophares Coins

19th-century numismatic discovery validating the exact 1st-century Rajah named in the 'Acts of Thomas'.



Chinese Tombs (86 AD)

Christian art (nativity scenes, loaves/fishes) identified by Prof. Wang Weifan in Xuzhou. Linked to St. Aggai, the Chinese silk merchant converted in Edessa.



The Ultimate Periphery: Han Dynasty China

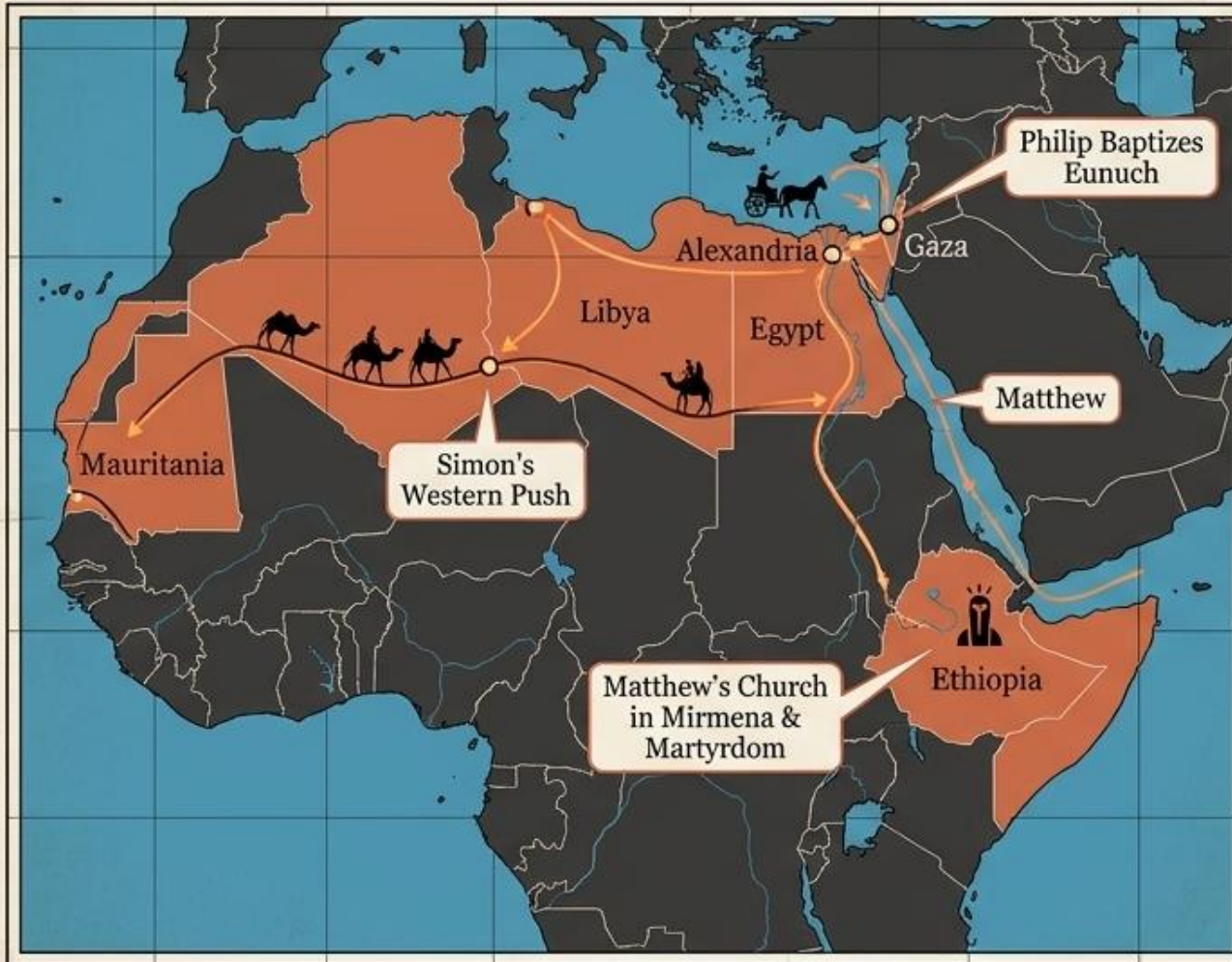
Isolated from direct Roman contact, the Silk Road provided a conduit for Syrian and Edessan missionaries to reach the Chinese empire.

The Xuzhou Tombs (Dated 86 AD):
Secularly dated Chinese tombs containing explicit, non-traditional Christian motifs.

Insight: Physical evidence firmly matches the linguistic precision of the Apostolic claim to have reached the edges of the civilized world.



The Southern Front: Africa and the Nile



1

The Spark

Philip the Evangelist baptizes the Ethiopian Eunuch (bringing the faith to the African court).



2

The Anchor

Matthew travels the Trajan Canal to Ethiopia, establishing a church in Mirmena (and suffering martyrdom).



3

The Western Push

Simon the Zealot pushes through Egypt, Mauritania, and Libya.



Relay

Legacy: The Ethiopian Orthodox Church today boasts 136 million members, possessing a distinct theology and canon born directly from these 1st-century roots.

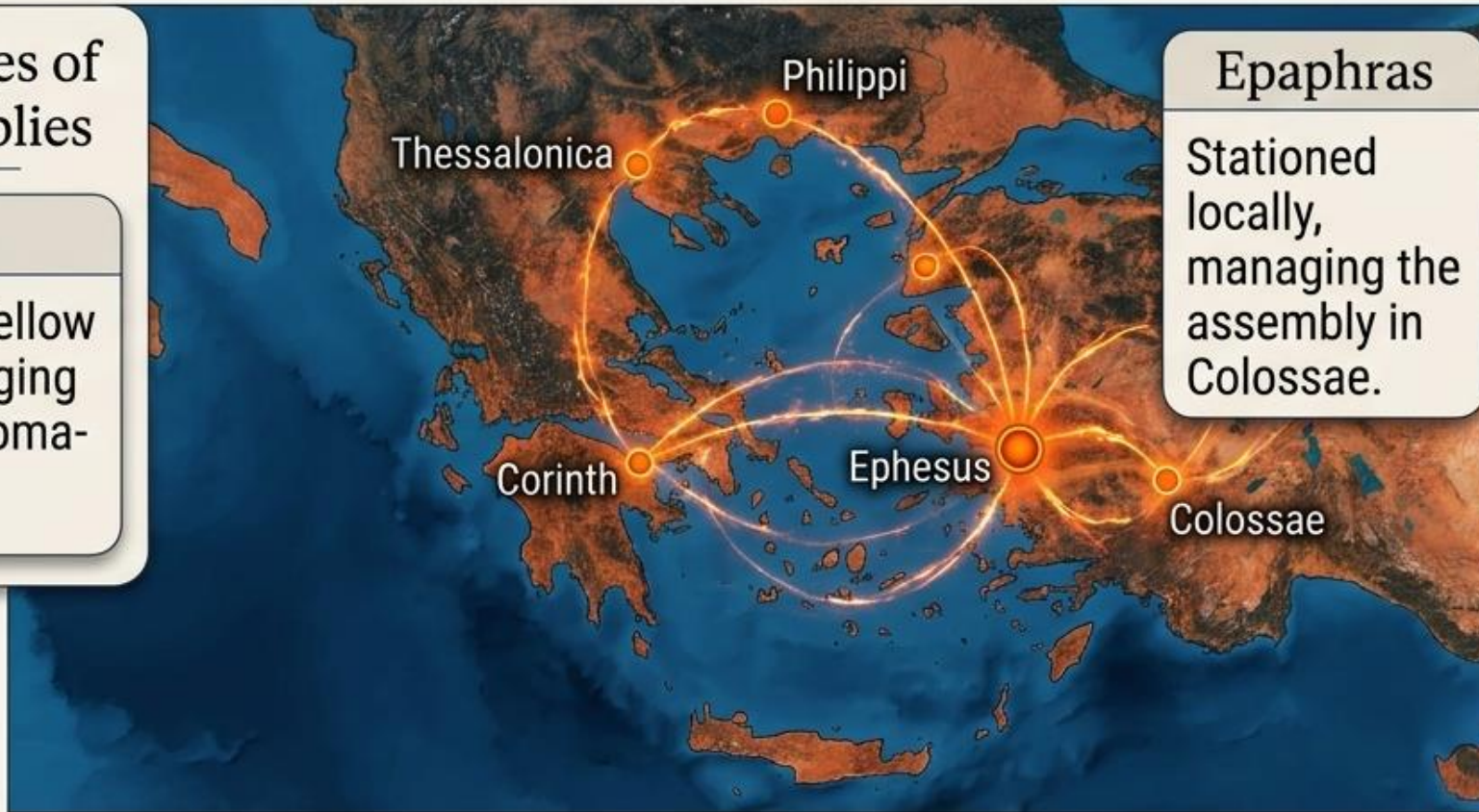
The Western Hub (54-57 AD)

Paul in Ephesus: Shifting from itinerant preacher to regional network architect.

The Apostles of the Assemblies

Titus

Partner and fellow worker managing complex diplomatic relations.



Epaphras

Stationed locally, managing the assembly in Colossae.

Timothy

Mixed-culture proxy leader picked up in Galatia, operating as Paul's direct envoy.

Key Outputs: 1 & 2 Corinthians written, Luke's Greek Gospel distributed regionally.

Profile of a Roman Patrician



Subject:	Pomponia Graecina
Status:	High-born Patrician Nobility, representing the absolute pinnacle of Roman societal power and visibility.
Spouse:	Aulus Plautius, the celebrated Roman General who recently commanded the legions that conquered Britain for Emperor Claudius.
Household Power:	Governs a massive domestic empire comprising up to 2,000 retainers, dependents, and slaves.

The archaeological smoking gun in the catacombs.



The Evidence:

Centuries later, an excavation in the oldest explicitly Christian cemetery in Rome reveals this tomb.

The Cultural Proof:

The Romans universally cremated their dead. Christians buried theirs. Finding her household's name in a Christian burial site confirms her faith with 99.9% certainty.

The Translation:

"The people (or retainers) of Pomponia Graecina."

From British Royalty to Roman Apostles: The Family of Caratacus

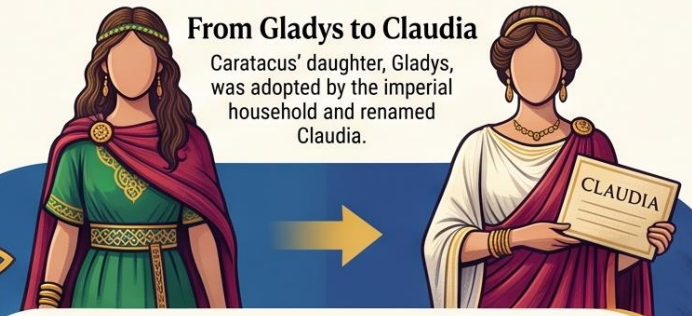
The Capture and Pardon of Caratacus

After his 51 AD defeat, the Emperor Claudius spared Caratacus' family, granting them Roman freedom.



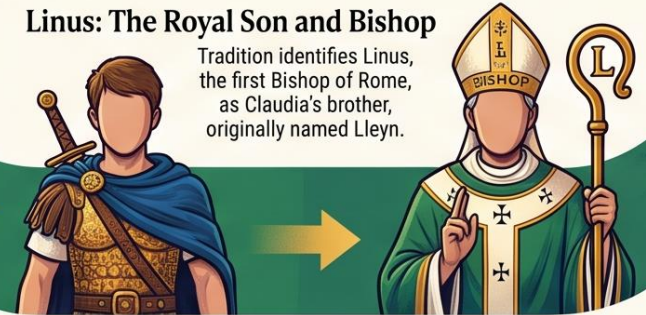
From Gladys to Claudia

Caratacus' daughter, Gladys, was adopted by the imperial household and renamed Claudia.



Linus: The Royal Son and Bishop

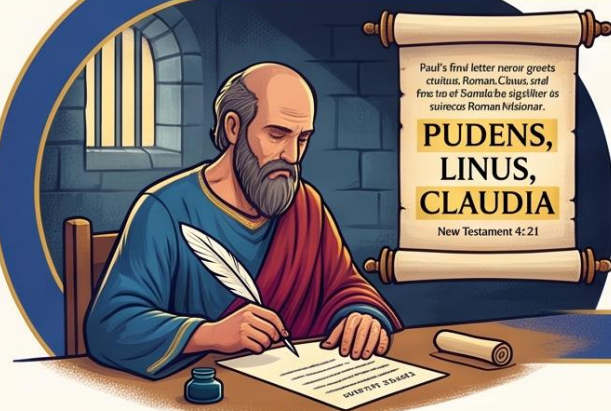
Tradition identifies Linus, the first Bishop of Rome, as Claudia's brother, originally named Lleyn.



The Biblical and Historical Synthesis

2 Timothy 4:21: The Roman Connection

Paul's final letter greets Pudens, Linus, and Claudia together as active Roman believers.



The Marriage of Claudia and Pudens

The poet Martial records the marriage of "Claudia Rufina" to Roman centurion Aulus Pudens.



The House of Pudens

The Pudens family home became a primary center for the early Roman Church.



Reaching the Western Edge

“Nikephoros I: Simon the Zealot taught to the “Occidental Sea, and the Isles called Britanniae.”

“Gildas (480 AD): “...to the island stiff with frost and cold... He spread his bright gleam to the whole world in the latest days of Tiberius Caesar.”

Simon the Zealot Reaching Britannia

Paul's Final Journey to Spain (64-66 AD)

LEGEND:

- Confirmed historical presence.
- Strong ancient tradition.

