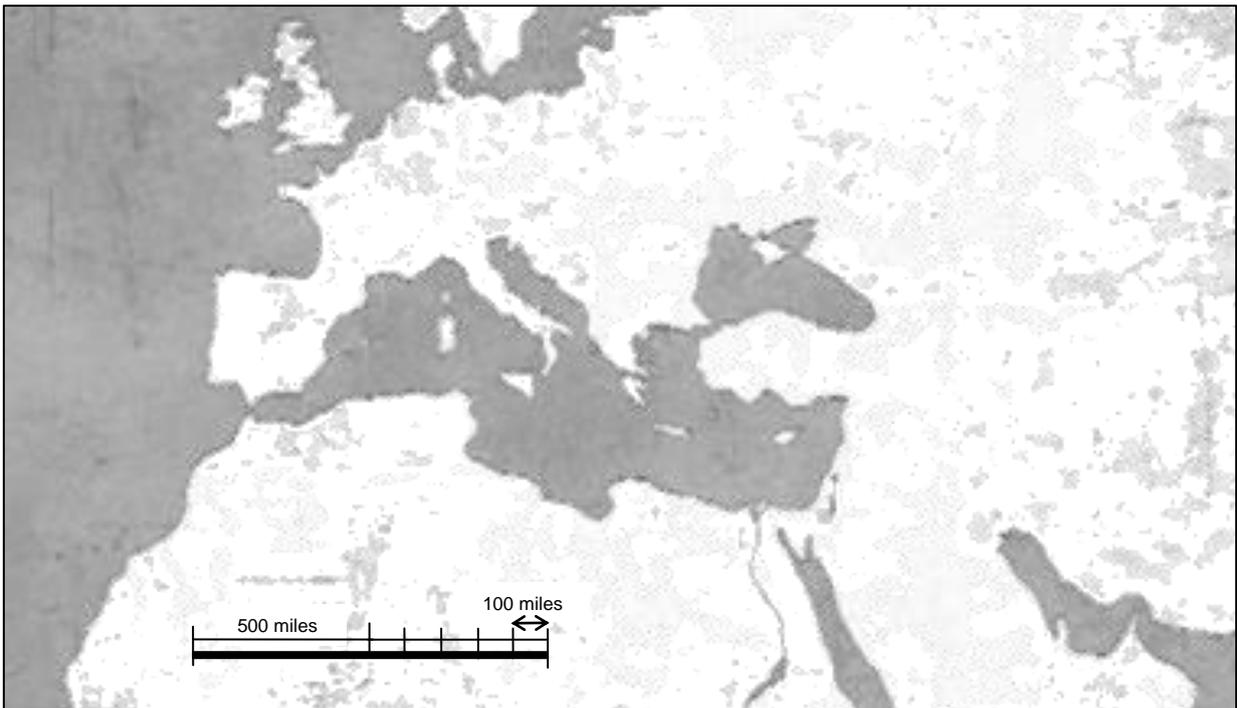


## The Jesus Accounts: Fact or Fiction?

### Communication, Travel and Technology

When the accounts of Jesus' life were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John life was very different than it is in Britain today. There were no 'instant' methods of communication like mobile phones, Twitter and broadband. There was no air transport, no trains or cars. The pace of life was considerably slower and most people rarely travelled far from their homes. However, it would be wrong to assume that people were 'backward' and unsophisticated. Within the limits of the technology they had developed they had the ability to achieve levels of communication which were relatively rapid and they could travel great distances if the need arose. Today we expect engineers, inventors and scientists to develop new technologies for us. Strangely, in the first century AD other groups of people were perfectly capable of developing new ways of doing things – among them were the first Christians.

### Communication and Travel



*On the map mark the following places: Jerusalem, Rome, Athens and Alexandria*

*Draw a route*

- 1) from Jerusalem to Rome mainly by sea
- 2) from Jerusalem to Rome mainly by land

A sea voyage from Jerusalem to Rome took around 5 weeks. A traveller could go about 20 miles a day overland using a horse or on foot.

*Using your overland route how quickly could you carry a copy of the stories of Jesus from Jerusalem to Rome? Which is the quicker route – by land or by sea?*

\*\*\*\*\*

Papyrus was expensive, so only very important documents were written on it. Letters must be kept short. *Write a letter to a friend explaining what you know about Jesus in 100 words.* You need to make sure you mention the most important things you know.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Technology

The documentary shows pictures of a scroll, a long length of papyrus rolled up with writing on the inner surface. This was the normal way of writing letters and important documents. In the first century Christians took a new development – the book, sheets of papyrus employed to form a book like we use today – and began to use it. It was another 400 to 500 years before other people began to use books regularly and the scroll stopped being used, except for special purposes.

The oldest fragment of an account of Jesus' life that has been discovered was found south of Alexandria in Egypt. It was written, probably copied from another copy, about 90 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus. Between 10 and 25 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus, Paul, one of the first Christians, travelled to cities like Athens to tell people about Jesus. He also wrote several letters to cities along the route from Jerusalem to Athens.



On the map above calculate the approximate distance from Jerusalem to Alexandria and also from Jerusalem to Athens. *How many days would it take to get to Alexandria from Jerusalem and to Athens from Jerusalem?*

\*\*\*\*\*

*If you were Matthew, one of the writers of the books about Jesus, how could you make sure that people read your book? Work with your neighbour to create a strategy for passing your book on to as many people as possible, as fast as possible.*

*Remember*

- *you are not rich*
- *you are afraid that Romans officials will burn your books if they find them*
- *there are no printing presses*

*Together write down reasons why Christians chose to use books rather than scrolls. How did this help them pass on their message about Jesus? How quickly do you think you could get copies to Christians all over the Roman Empire? A month? Six months? A year? Ten years?*