

A CHRONOLOGY OF EARLY CHRISTIAN HISTORY

By David Paul, October 13, 2022

The purpose of this timeline is to provide information to students of the Bible about when certain events in the Bible occurred. Please note that I have designated this as “a chronology” rather than “the chronology.” Some uncertainty exists in extrapolating these dates. Moreover, this timeline is a work in progress and will be updated. When I update this document, I will update the date on the document.

9 BC – 40 AD Reign of King Aretas over Nabataea (2 Cor 11:32)¹
6 BC Birth of Jesus²

¹ “A ruler under king Aretas guarded the city of Damascus in order to arrest” Paul (2 Cor 11:32). Paul escaped by being lowered from a basket. This event is also mentioned in Acts 9:25. According to Galatians 1:18, Paul had been in Christ for three years before his first visit to Jerusalem, which immediately followed his flight from Damascus. Since Aretas died in 40 AD, this means that the latest date for Paul’s conversion was three years before his death in 37 AD. See Bruce, 275-276.

² The exact date of Jesus’ birth is not known; however, the year of his birth can be approximated through three methods. (1) Looking at historical references in Matthew and Luke, (2) dating the star of Matthew 2, and (3) using the beginning date of His ministry. Matthew 2:1 states that Jesus was born “in the days of King Herod, who was still alive two years after the birth of Jesus. The two years is indicated by Matthew 2:16, where Herod killed all the boys around Bethlehem according to the time he received from the magi from the east. Since Herod died in 4 BC, it is likely that Jesus was born in 6 BC at the latest. John the Baptist’s conception also occurred during the time of Herod (Luke 1:5). Luke 2:1 provides another historical marker for Jesus’ birth, “In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus (r. 27 BC to 14 AD) that the whole empire should be registered. This registration was before Quirinius governed Syria.” For a detailed defense of this translation of Luke 2:2, see Garland, 117-119. Briefly Garland argues that *prote* is translated comparatively as “before” rather than adjectivally as “first.” The genitive clause *hegemoneuontos tes Syrias Kureniou* is a temporal clause following this first census. Quirinius is reported by Josephus as undertaking a large-scale census in 6-7 AD, which would have been the most memorable census of that period. By this interpretation, Luke 2:1-2 is reporting a smaller census that preceded that census. In contrast, Wallace argued that he could not fully resolve the tensions of translating this verse (Wallace, 304-305). In conclusion, not much is able to be determined from either Matthew or Luke regarding the year of Jesus’ birth. The only indication is that Jesus was born during the reign of Caesar Augustus who reigned from 27 BC to 14 AD). Regarding astrological signs, Humphreys argued that a comet in 5 BC could have been the star that the magi saw from the east (Humphreys, 389-407). However, that evidence is far from conclusive. If Humphrey’s hypothesis were correct, it would correspond to the 6 BC date of Jesus’ birth and the 4 BC arrival of the magi assumed in this chronology. It is possible by these arguments that Jesus was born earlier than 6 BC since both King Herod I and Caesar Augustus reigned for significant time periods before the birth of Jesus. The date of His birth is limited by Luke 3:23 that indicates that Jesus was “about thirty” when He began His ministry. This phrase can be understood that Jesus was in His 30s, meaning between 30-39 years of age. Thus, if He began His ministry at the age of in 30 AD, He would have been within the permissible range.

4 BC	Magi from the east come to worship Jesus (Matt 2:1-12) ³
4 BC	Flight of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus to Egypt (Matt (2:13-18)
4 BC	Death of King Herod I (Matt 2:1-19) (r. 37 BC to 4 AD)
4 BC – 39 AD	Herod Antipas tetrarch ⁴ of Galilee (Matt 14:1-6; Mark 6:14-22; Luke 3:1, 19; 9:7, 9; 13:31; 23:7-15)
4 BC – 6 AD	Archelaus, son of King Herod I ethnarch of Samaria, Judea, and Idumea (Matt 2:22)
6 AD	Jesus in Jerusalem (Luke 2:41-50) ⁵
6-15 AD	Annas, son of Seth, Jewish high priest ⁶
14	Death of Roman Emperor Augustus (r. 27 BC to 14 AD)
14-37	Reign of Roman Emperor Tiberius
15-16	Ishmael, son of Phiabi, Jewish high priest
16-17	Eleazer, son of Annas, Jewish high priest
17-18	Simon, son of Camith, Jewish high priest
18-36	Joseph Caiaphus Jewish high priest (Luke 3:1)
26-36	Pontius Pilate prefect ⁷ of Judea (Luke 3:1) ⁸
26/27	Ministry of John the Baptist (Luke 3:1-2) ⁹

³ Matthew 2:16 indicates that the magi came about two years after the birth of Jesus.

⁴ A tetrarch was a governor over one of four divisions of a Roman province.

⁵ This event occurred when Jesus was twelve years old (Luke 2:42). There is no indication in the New Testament of Jesus' life between the ages of 12 and 36. Later apocryphal literature developed fantasies about His early life but all of these writings were much later than the New Testament and should not be regarded.

⁶ Most of the dating of Jewish leaders is derived from the writings of Joesphus in correspondence from other historical sources. For the purposes of this timeline, I have taken the dates of the high priests from Schnabel's timeline.

⁷ A type of civil official under the leadership of Rome.

⁸ There are fifty-seven references to Pontius Pilate in the New Testament.

⁹ Luke 3:1-2 is full of historical details about when the word of God came to John the Baptist. "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar (approx. 26/27 AD), while Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea (26-36 AD), Herod was tetrarch of Galilee (4 BC-39 AD), his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphus (18-36 AD). Of these dates, the fifteenth year of

27	Baptism of Jesus ¹⁰
27-30	Ministry of Jesus ¹¹
30	Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus (Thursday, April 6, 33 AD) ¹²
30	Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus (Friday, April 7, 30 AD) ¹³

the reign of Tiberius Caesar is the firmest date, however some ambiguity exists in this date as well. Tiberius became Caesar on August 19, 14 AD, however he became co-princeps with Caesar Augustus in 12 AD according to Suetonius. Suetonius wrote, “Since the consuls caused a law to be passed soon after this that [Tiberius] should govern the provinces jointly with Augustus and hold the census with him, he set out for Illyricum on the conclusion of the lustral ceremonies; but he was at once recalled, and finding Augustus in his last illness but still alive, he spent an entire day with him in private” (Suetonius, *The Life of the Twelve Caesars: the Life of Tiberius*, 21.1). Therefore, it is possible that the fifteenth year of Tiberius’ reign was measured from either 12 AD or 14 AD. It is mostly likely that it is measured from 12 AD to harmonize these dates with the ministry of Paul. It is difficult to harmonize a Pauline chronology based on dates and information in Acts and Galatians if Jesus died in 33 AD, which would be the case if John the Baptist’s ministry was fifteen years past 14 AD. However, a 30 AD date is possible for Jesus’ death if measured from 12 AD, which creates greater harmony with the rest of the biblical data. If the 12 AD date is assumed for the beginning of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, then fifteen years later was 26 AD if part of 12 AD and part of 26 AD were included. The latest date for the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar would have been in 27 AD. Therefore, John the Baptist’s ministry begin in that timeframe.

¹⁰ Jesus was baptized to begin his ministry, which began after the ministry of John the Baptist. There are three primary historical markers for the date of Jesus’ baptism: (1) the date of the crucifixion, (2) the dating of John the Baptist’s ministry, and (3) the length of Jesus’ ministry. Comparing the data on those three points (see the relevant footnotes), the most likely year for Jesus’ baptism was 27 AD.

¹¹ The ministry of Jesus was at least three years because three Passovers are mentioned in the Gospel of John (2:13, 23; John 6:4; John 11:55; 12:1). It is possible that Jesus’ ministry could have been four years. If John the Baptist’s ministry began in 26 AD, Jesus could have been baptized in 26 AD and crucified in 30 AD. There is nothing in Scripture that limits this possibility to only three years. One more indication of dating Jesus’ ministry is Luke 3:23 that states that Jesus was “about thirty years old” when he began His ministry. The Greek of “about thirty” denotes an approximation. Some have argued that “about thirty” means that Jesus was in His thirties, meaning between 30-39 years old when He began His ministry. If Jesus began His ministry in 27 AD and was born in 6 BC, He would have been 33 years old at that time, which is well within His thirties. It may have been important for Jesus to be at least thirty years old, since as Levites could not begin their ministry until they were thirty (Num. 4:34-35). As the high priest coming to administer a new covenant, it was important that Jesus fulfill all the Old Testament regulations, which included a minimum prescribed age for priesthood.

¹² The gospels show that Jesus was arrested the day before His trial and crucifixion while He was praying in the garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-65). “When daylight came” the following day, Jesus faced the Sanhedrin (Luke 22:66). They then brought Him to Pilate that morning (Luke 23:1), which led to the sequence of events of His crucifixion.

¹³ Jesus was most likely crucified either on April 7, 30 AD or April 3, 33 AD. All four gospels agree that Jesus was crucified while Pontius Pilate was the prefect of Judea between 26-36 AD (Matt 27:2; Mark 15:1; Luke 23:1; John 18:28-29). All four gospels agree that Jesus was crucified just before the Sabbath at the time of the Passover. Since the Passover was to begin on Saturday, then the crucifixion must have been on a Friday before a Saturday Passover. From 26-36

30	Burial of Jesus (Friday, April 7, 30 AD)
30	Resurrection of Jesus (Sunday, April 9, 30 AD)
30	Ascension of Jesus (Acts 1:9) (May 19, 30 AD) ¹⁴
30	Pentecost and the Founding of the Church (Acts 2:1-41) (May 28, 30 AD) ¹⁵
30-41	Mission of the disciples in Jerusalem and in Judea (Acts 2-5) ¹⁶
30/31	Martyrdom of Stephen in Jerusalem (Acts 6/7)
30/31	Mission of Philip in Samaria (Acts 8)
30/31	Mission of Peter in Samaria (Acts 8:25)
30/31	Mission of Christians from Jerusalem in Antioch (Syria) (Acts 11:19-24)
30/31	Conversion and call of Saul/Paul near Damascus (Acts 9:1-19; Gal 1:13-17) ¹⁷

AD (the time of Pilate), only two Fridays were the day before Passover: April 7, 30 and April 3, 33 (See Humphreys and Waddington). Therefore, it is assumed that one of those two dates was the date of the crucifixion of Jesus. Modern evangelical biblical scholars are divided between these two dates. For example, Köstenberger holds to 33 AD (Köstenberger, “April 3, AD 33”), while Schnabel holds to 30 AD (Schnabel, *Acts*, 43). The difference between these two options is primarily based on whether John the Baptist began his ministry in 26 or 28 AD, which is based on the date of the beginning of the reign of Tiberius Caesar. The primary issue with the 33 AD crucifixion date is that it makes it difficult to harmonize a Pauline chronology, especially the clause “Then after 14 years I went up again to Jerusalem” in Galatians 2:1. Since 30 AD harmonizes with the available data and harmonizes with a Pauline chronology, it is the preferred date here.

¹⁴ Acts 1:4 says that Jesus appeared the disciples over a period of forty days, speaking to them about the kingdom of God. It is possible that forty here is symbolic rather than exact. However, forty days as an exact date corresponds well to the timeframe between Passover and Pentecost.

¹⁵ Pentecost, or the Festival of Weeks, was a prescribed Jewish feast that fell on May 28 in 30 AD (see Exodus 34:22). If Jesus died in 30 AD, then this is the date of the original Pentecost.

¹⁶ In Acts 2-5, the only historical figure mentioned is Gamaliel, who died approximately 52 AD. Paul was a disciple of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Therefore, it is difficult to date these chapters. There is no clear indication within the text about how long these events took.

¹⁷ The two primary markers for dating Saul’s conversion are the death of Herod Agrippa I in 44 AD (see Acts 12:20-23) and Paul’s description of his second visit to Jerusalem being fourteen years after his conversion (see Gal 2:1). In Galatians 2:1, Paul wrote, “Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas.” In his testimony in Galatians 1:11-2:10, Paul was demonstrating that he could not have learned his gospel from the other apostles but that he only received it by revelation directly from Jesus (see 2 Cor 12:1-1-5, which occurred in about 42 AD). Paul swore an oath that he was being truthful about his interactions with the other apostles (Gal 1:19-20). Since the famine relief visit of Acts 11:27-12:25 is Paul’s second Jerusalem visit in Acts, it best corresponds to the Galatians 2:1-10 visit. Paul’s famine relief visit happened around the time of the death of Herod Agrippa I in 44 AD. Therefore, fourteen years before his death would have been quite close to the crucifixion in either 30 or 31 AD, depending on how years are counted. Regarding the phrase “After

30-33	Mission of Paul in Arabia and Damascus (Acts 9:19-22; Gal 1:17-18) ¹⁸
33	Paul's first visit to Jerusalem (Acts 9:26-30; Gal 1:18) ¹⁹
33-43	Mission of Peter in Judea, Galilee, Samaria, and the coastal plain (Acts 9:32-11:18) ²⁰
33-43	Mission of Paul in Syria and Cilicia (Gal 1:21-24) ²¹
36	War between Herod Antipas and the Nabatean King Aretas IV
36-37	Marcellus prefect of Judea
36-37	Jonathan, son of Annas, Jewish high priest
37-41	Reign of Roman Emperor Gaius Caligula
37-44	Herod Agrippa I is appointed king (Acts 12:1-23); ruled Judea from 41-44 AD ²²
37	Vitellius, governor of Syria, organizes Judea after Pilate's removal
37-41	Marullus prefect of Judea

fourteen years" in Galatians 2:1, it is possible to count this as fourteen years from Paul's conversion or fourteen years from Paul's first Jerusalem visit (See Schreiner, 119).

¹⁸ In Galatians 1:17-18, Paul reported that he spent three years in Arabia and Damascus before going to Jerusalem. It is likely that he was involved with missionary activity during that period. He was so forceful in his proclamation that Paul (1) made disciples during this period (Acts 9:25) and the authorities in Damascus sought to kill him for it (Acts 9:23-25). In 2 Corinthians 11:32, Paul reported that it was a ruler under King Aretas (d. 40 AD) that sought to capture and kill Paul. Therefore, Paul's flight from Damascus after three years of ministry must have occurred before 40 AD.

¹⁹ After fleeing from Damascus, Paul reported he went to Jerusalem and spent fifteen days with Peter (Gal 1:18). This time period was insufficient for Paul to learn all his gospel and teaching from the former apostles as he argues in Galatians (Gal 1:11-2:10). He proclaimed the gospel so boldly in Jerusalem that the Jews there also tried to kill him, so he was sent to his home city of Tarsus (Acts 9:30).

²⁰ Acts 9:32-11:18 lacks temporal references, so it is possible that these events were occurring during some of the other chapters in Acts 8-11. Peter was in Jerusalem while Paul was there (Gal 1:18) and was arrested in Jerusalem in Acts 12:3. It is likely that Acts 8-11 were all occurring in overlapping time periods.

²¹ Paul claimed to spend several years in ministry in Syria and Cilicia (Gal 1:21). Tarsus was a city in Cilicia and Antioch was a city in Syria. Paul was sent to Tarsus in Acts 9:30. Then in Acts 11:25, Barnabas went to Tarsus, found Paul, and brought him to Antioch to minister with him there. Acts 11:26 reports that Paul and Barnabas ministered in Antioch "for a whole year" before going on the famine visit to Jerusalem (Acts 11:27-30; 12:25).

²² The territory of Herod Agrippa I grew over his reign. Bruce, 276.

37-41	Theophilus, son of Annas, Jewish high priest
39-41	Petronius governor in Syria
39-40	Unrest in Antioch (Syria) between Jews and Gentiles
41-54	Reign of Roman Emperor Claudius
41-42	Simon Cantheras Jewish high priest
41	Emperor Claudius' first edict concerning the Jews, prompted by unrest
41	King Herod Agrippa I received Judea and Samaria, extending his rule ²³
42	Paul's Heavenly Vision (2 Cor 12:1-4; Gal 2:2) ²⁴
42-43	Matthias, son of Annas, high priest
43-44	Paul active in Antioch in Syria, together with Barnabas (Acts 11:25-26) ²⁵
43-44	Elioenai, son of Cantheras, high priest
43	Church in Antioch organized a famine relief for Jerusalem Christians (Acts 11:27-30; 12:25). ²⁶
43	Consultation of Paul with Peter, James, and John in Jerusalem (Acts 11:27-30; Gal 2:1-10) ²⁷

²³ The events of Acts 12:1-23, therefore, occurred sometime between 41-44 AD since that was the only time King Herod Agrippa I was over Jerusalem. According to various dating issues, the persecution was mostly likely 42 or 43 AD. Two issues lead to this conclusion. First, Herod Agrippa was already dead before Passover in 44 AD. Second, Herod Agrippa was otherwise occupied in Rome in 12 AD. Bruce, 276-278.

²⁴ Paul reported that he was caught up to the third heavens fourteen years before writing Second Corinthians (56 AD). This places the vision in about 42 AD. It is likely that this was the vision that Paul reported as a purpose for his trip to Jerusalem in 44 AD (Gal 2:2). Paul wrote that he went up "according to a revelation" to set before the pillars of the church his gospel and calling. It seems that Paul wanted to ensure from other godly leaders that his vision and what he learned from Jesus during that vision were legitimate. Thus Paul was able to say that he did not receive his gospel from a human source nor was he taught it, but he obtained his gospel by a revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal 1:12).

²⁵ Paul and Barnabas ministered in Antioch together for a whole year (Acts 11:26). They then went to Jerusalem on the famine relief visit. During their famine relief visit, Herod died in 44 AD.

²⁶ A significant drought and famine occurred in 44 AD in Judea under Claudius. The effects of that famine lasted from 45-48 AD. Bruce, 278-279.

²⁷ It is most likely that Galatians 2:1-10 and the famine relief visit of Acts 11:27-30; 12:25 are the same event. See the footnote on dating Paul's letter to the Galatians for details.

43	Persecution of the Jerusalem church by Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:1-4) ²⁸
43	James, son of Zebedee, the apostle, executed in Jerusalem (Acts 12:2)
43	Departure of Peter from Jerusalem (Acts 12:17) ²⁹
43	Change of leadership in the Jerusalem church – Peter to James (Acts 12:17) ³⁰
43	Departure of the Twelve for international missionary work (Eusebius, <i>Church History</i> , 3.1.1-2) ³¹
43	James, the brother of Jesus, leader of the Jerusalem church (Acts 12:17; 15:2, 13; 21:18)
43	Peter active in the northeastern regions in Asia minor (1 Peter 1:1)
Mid-40s	Thomas' missionary activity in India (Acts of Thomas) ³²
44-47	Joseph son of Camei high priest
44	Death of Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:19-23) (March 5, 44 AD)
44	Emperor Claudius organized Judea again as a Roman province
44-46	Cuspius Fadus procurator (i.e., governor) of Judea
44	Conversion to Judaism of Helena, Queen of Adiabene (Josephus, <i>Antiquities of the Jews</i> , 20.2.1)

²⁸ The biblical narrative places the death of Herod Agrippa I (44 AD) near this persecution. Therefore, they are both dated in 44 AD here.

²⁹ It is not certain that Peter left Jerusalem at this time. See the footnote for the change of leadership in the Jerusalem church.

³⁰ It is possible that Peter simply stayed in Jerusalem in a different place for a period. However, there are three things that indicate that he left Jerusalem at this time. First, in Acts 15:13-21, it is James who made the final verdict at the Jerusalem council. In Acts 21:18, James was clearly leading the church at Jerusalem. Therefore, Acts 12:17 could be the time when leadership of the Jerusalem church passed from Peter to James. Second, Peter is reported as having an itinerant ministry that reaches to Corinth (1 Cor 1:12; 3:22; 9:5) as well as Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1 Peter 1:1). Finally, church tradition, such as Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.1.1-2 says that Peter was involved in itinerant ministry and eventually died at Rome.

³¹ Eusebius wrote, "Such was the condition of the Jews. Meanwhile the holy apostles and disciples of our Saviour were dispersed throughout the world. Parthia, according to tradition, was allotted to Thomas as his field of labor, Scythia to Andrew, and Asia to John, who after he had lived some time there, died at Ephesus. Peter appears to have preached in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia to the Jews of the dispersion" (Eusebius, *Church History*, 3.1.1-2). Since Eusebius was written in the fourth century, not all details in that book should be accepted. Therefore, while Eusebius indicated a dispersion of the Twelve throughout the world, there are few early sources that provide any details.

³² The *Acts of Thomas* are a dubious historical source that were probably written in the third century AD. However, there is a persistent witness from early in Indian Christian history (clearly established by the fourth century) that Thomas did begin the church in what is now Kerala and was martyred in India. Some have suggested that the *Acts of Thomas* are mostly fiction but built around some truth. This suggestion seems likely.

Mid-40s	Letter of James (early/mid 40s?) ³³
45-47	Mission of Paul and Barnabas on Cyprus and southern Galatia (Acts 13-14) ³⁴
47-58	Ananias, son of Nebedaios, Jewish high priest
48	Paul's letter to the Galatians ³⁵

³³ There is little internal evidence in the book of James to indicate the exact circumstances and date of this book. However, it is commonly argued that this epistle was either the first or one of the earliest epistles based on theological and thematic elements in the book. Since James was killed in 62 AD, this book was written before that date.

³⁴ There is little inside of Acts 13-14 that provides dating for this missionary journey. In Acts 13:7, Sergius Paulus is mentioned as the proconsul. Sergius Paulus is mentioned on a few inscriptions from that time period, but the data is inconclusive from those inscriptions for dating his life with any certainty. However, the death of Herod in 44 AD and the Gallio as proconsul of Achaia in 51-52 AD provide some indication of how long Paul's journey to Cyprus and Galatia was. Between 44 AD to 51 AD, the following events occurred. (1) Paul and Barnabas returned from Jerusalem to Antioch – Acts 12:25. (2) Paul and Barnabas were sent by the church at Syrian Antioch – Acts 13:1-4. (3) Paul and Barnabas evangelized Cyprus – Acts 13:4-12. (4) Paul and Barnabas evangelized Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe – Acts 13:13-14:21a. (5) Paul and Barnabas returned to Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra to establish churches – Acts 14:21-23. (6) Paul and Barnabas evangelized Perga – Acts 14:25. (7) Paul and Barnabas returned to Syrian Antioch and spent “considerable time with the disciples” – Acts 14:26-28. (8) A dispute arose about whether uncircumcised Gentles could follow Jesus without circumcision – Acts 15:1-3. (9) The concerned parties travelled to Jerusalem and held a council to judge on the requirements for Gentiles to come to Christ – Acts 15:4-29. (10) Paul and Barnabas travelled with the Jerusalem letter to Antioch with Silas and Judas and spent some time there – Acts 15:30-35. (11) After some time, Paul and Barnabas determined to resume their missionary activity, but split and formed two different teams – Acts 15:36-40. (12) Paul travelled with Silas overland through Syria and Cilicia to strengthen the churches (Acts 15:41). (13) Paul spent time with the Galatian churches – Acts 16:1-5. (14) Paul travelled overland from Galatia to Troas and determined to travel to Macedonia – Acts 16:6-10. (15) Paul and Silas evangelized Philippi and established the church there – Acts 16:11-40. (16) Paul and Silas evangelized Thessalonica – Acts 17:1-9. (17) Paul and Barnabas evangelized Berea – Acts 17:10-15. (18) Paul and his team evangelized Athens – Acts 17:16-34. (19) Paul established himself as a tent-maker in Corinth – Acts 18:1-3. (20) Paul and his team wrote 1 and 2 Thessalonians. (21) Paul and his team began the evangelization of Corinth where they stayed for one and a half years – Acts 18:1-17. Between these events there was significant travel. Trying to place all of these events together, most have concluded that Paul and Barnabas were only able to spend 1-3 years on their journey to Cyprus and Galatia, yet were able to establish churches throughout those areas.

³⁵ There is some debate about whether Paul's letter to the Galatians occurred before or after the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15). The debate between these views is significant enough that some scholars prefer an early date in 48 AD where Paul wrote this letter before going to Jerusalem. A minority of scholars favor a view that Paul wrote Galatians after the Jerusalem council in about 50 AD. The primary reason is that Paul provided his testimony in Galatians 1:11-2:10 to demonstrate that he did not receive his gospel from man nor was he taught it, but rather Paul received his gospel by revelation (Gal 1:12). In his testimony, Paul only had two visits to Jerusalem. First, for fifteen days after he went fled from Damascus (Gal 1:18; Acts 9:26-30). In Acts, Paul visited Jerusalem a second time to deliver a gift from the church at Antioch to the churches of Judea (Acts 11:27-30). Paul swore on oath that he retailed to the Galatians all his interactions with the other apostles (Gal 1:19-20). The view that holds to the early writing of Galatians sees Galatians 2:1-10 as a private meeting with Peter, James, and John during the famine visit of Acts 11:27-30. The view that holds to the later writing of Galatians sees Galatians 2:1-10 as corresponding to the

49	Jerusalem Council – requirements for Gentile conversion (Acts 15:4-29)
49-52	Mission of Barnabas and John Mark on Cyprus (Acts 15:39) ³⁶
49-52	Mission of Paul in Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 16-18) ³⁷
49	Missionary activity of Jewish Christians in Rome; disturbances (Acts 18:2) ³⁸
50	Paul in Corinth (from Feb/March 50 to September 51) ³⁹
50	Paul's letters to the Thessalonians ⁴⁰
50	Claudius's expulsion of the Jews from Rome (Acts 18:2; Suetonius, <i>Divus Claudius</i> 25.4) ⁴¹
52-55	Mission of Paul in Ephesus (Acts 19) ⁴²

Jerusalem council. The primary issue with that view is that Paul either lied in his testimony in Galatians 1:11-2:10 or he simply forgot about one of his visits to Jerusalem. For a more detailed discussion of the recipients and dating of Galatians, see Schreiner, 22-31.

³⁶ It is unknown how long Barnabas travelled in Cyprus. He was later known to the churches of Corinth (1 Cor 9:6), which indicates that he continued his itinerant ministry.

³⁷ The primary historical marker for this date is Gallio's time as proconsul from July 1, 51 to June 30, 52. Therefore, it is likely that Paul's ministry in Corinth spanned that time.

³⁸ See the footnote on Claudius' expulsion of the Jews from Rome for indications about this missionary activity. The gospel spread to Rome far before Paul wrote his letter to the church at Rome around 57 AD.

³⁹ The dating of Paul's mission to Corinth is indicated by Gallio's time as proconsul of Achaia (Acts 18:12). Gallio served as the proconsul of Achaia from July 1, 51 to June 30, 52. Acts 18 indicates that Paul's 18-months in Corinth corresponded to the time Gallio was in office. The Gallio inscription at Delphi provides evidence for these dates. See Schnabel, *Acts*, 761.

⁴⁰ Internal evidence is that Paul wrote these letters shortly after leaving from Thessalonica.

⁴¹ Claudius "banned from Rome all the Jews, who were continually making disturbances at the instigation of one Chrestus" (Suetonius, *Divus Claudius* 25.4). Historians commonly assume that "Chrestus" was a miswriting of Christ by a pagan author. Therefore, these Jewish disturbances are presumed to be against Christian missionary activity in Rome. The most likely dating is 49-50 AD for this event. In Acts 18:2, Paul met Aquilla and Priscilla in Corinth who had "recently" (Greek *prasphatos*) come to Corinth from Rome due to this expulsion. The term "recently" is unclear and uncommon, therefore it is only possible to say that Paul arrived in Corinth either a few months or a few years after the expulsion of the Jews from Rome.

⁴² Luke reported that Paul spent three years in Ephesus (Acts 20:31, cf Acts 19:8-10). During this time all of Asia Minor was evangelized (Acts 19:10).

53/55	Epaphras established the churches at Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis ⁴³
54/55	Paul's letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor) ⁴⁴ – sent through Titus (2 Cor 7:5-10)
52-59	Antonius Felix procurator (i.e., governor) of Judea (Acts 24:27) ⁴⁵
53-93	Herod Agrippa II appointed king, receives territory of Chalcis
54-68	Reign of Emperor Nero
54	Herod Agrippa II receives further territories in Galilee and Perea
53/54	Paul sent Timothy and Erastus to Corinth but remained in Ephesus (Acts 19:21-22)
55	Paul traveled to Macedonia (Acts 20:1)
56	Paul's letter to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians; written in Philippi?) ⁴⁶ – sent through Titus (2 Cor 8:16-19)
56	Revolt of an Egyptian Jew who leads 4,000 Sicarii into the desert

⁴³ Paul's letter to the Colossians indicates that Epaphras planted that church (Col 1:7-8). Internal evidence in Colossians and Philemon indicates that Epaphras established the gospel in three cities during that time (esp. Col 4:13-17).

⁴⁴ Paul wrote, "I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost," (1 Cor 16:8), indicating that this letter was written during his Ephesian ministry. Additionally, Paul wrote instructions in 1 Corinthians about the collection for the churches of Judea (1 Cor 16:1-4). Paul then travelled to Judea in 57 AD to deliver that offering, which provides additional evidence that this letter as written shortly before 57 AD.

⁴⁵ In Acts 24:27, Paul was in prison when Porcius Festus succeeded Felix. Historical data indicates that this succession occurred in 59 AD. Therefore, Paul's two years in prison ("after two years had passed" – Acts 24:27) were from 57-59 AD. Paul then appealed to Caesar. He began his ship journey to Rome in 59 AD but was shipwrecked (Acts 27:1-28:14). They did not arrive until 60 AD. Since Paul was under house arrest in Rome for a further two years (Acts 28:30), the date of his Roman imprisonment was 60-62 AD. Additionally, in Acts 24:24, Felix was married to Drusilla the sister of King Herod Agrippa II. Their marriage did not occur until at least 54 AD (See Bruce 283-284).

⁴⁶ Second Corinthians was written shortly after First Corinthians. This fact is established because Paul was still writing to them about the offering to be taken to the churches of Judea in 57 AD (2 Cor 8-9, cf., 1 Cor 16:1-4). In addition, Second Corinthians describes Paul and Titus' travel in such a way that it indicates that this letter was written shortly before Paul's arrival at Corinth (2 Cor 1:15-2:4; 2:12-13; 7:5-16; 8:16-19). In brief, Paul had planned to visit Corinth on his way to Macedonia, but instead chose to send Titus to prepare the Corinthians for his arrival not wanting another painful visit (1:15-2:4). As Paul travelled from Ephesus towards Corinth, he passed through Troas, expecting to find Titus there. However, Titus was not there, which troubled Paul (2:12-13). However, Paul and Titus reunited in Macedonia, where Paul received his report (7:5-16). After receiving he report, Paul remained in Macedonia and sent Titus and another brother to Corinth ahead of him with Second Corinthians (8:16-19). Paul was planning to come to Corinth soon for his third visit (12:14; 13:1). From the timeline, it is not entirely clear when Paul's second visit to Corinth was. Most likely, Paul took a trip to Corinth during his three years at Ephesus (see Acts 19:21).

56	Mission of Paul in Illyricum (Rom 15:19) ⁴⁷
56	Paul visited Achaia/Corinth (Acts 20:1-6) ⁴⁸
57	Paul wrote Romans from Corinth – sent through Phoebe (Rom 16:1-2)
57	Paul travelled to Macedonia and left Philippi after the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Acts 20:6) (April 7, 57) ⁴⁹
57	Paul travelled to Troas and Miletus – meeting with the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:6-38)
57	Paul met with Christians at Tyre and Caesarea (Acts 21:1-14)
57-59	Paul arrested in Jerusalem and imprisoned in Caesarea (Acts 21-26) ⁵⁰
59-60	Paul transported from Judea to Rome as a prisoner (Acts 27:1-28:16) ⁵¹
59-61	Ishmael, son of Phiabi II, Jewish high priest
59-62	Porcius Festus procurator (i.e., governor) of Judea (Acts 24:27-25:27; 26:32)
59	Unrest in Caesarea between Jews and Syrians over citizenship Gospel of Mark (end of the 50s? Or 68/69?)
60-62	Paul as prisoner in Rome (Acts 28:11-31)
60-62	Paul sent a letter to the Philippians

⁴⁷ The only evidence in the New Testament of Paul's work in Illyricum is Romans 15:19. If Paul personally preached the gospel in Illyricum, it could have been during the period between being in Ephesus and returning to Jerusalem (55-56 AD). It would have been before Paul finished writing the book of Romans in 56/57 AD.

⁴⁸ This was Paul's third visit to Corinth (see 2 Cor 12:14; 13:1). It is unclear when Paul's second visit to Corinth occurred. Acts 19:21 describes Paul's desire to travel to Achaia, which would have included Corinth, but does not say whether that visit occurred at that time.

⁴⁹ The Feast of Unleavened Bread and Passover fell on April 7, 57 AD. The Jewish calendar is lunar. This date was approximated based upon modern Jewish date calculators. Therefore, Paul left Philippi after April 7, 57 AD.

⁵⁰ Acts 24:27 provides a historical marker showing that Paul was arrested in 57 AD and in prison in Caesarea for two years. In 59 AD, Porcius Festus succeeded Felix as the Roman leader of Judea. Since Paul had been in jail for two years by 59 AD, we know that Paul was arrested in 57 AD.

⁵¹ From Acts 24:27-27:1, it seems that Paul was sent from Caesarea to Rome during the first year of Porcius Festus. Since Paul's journey started so late in 59 AD, the storms had begun (Acts 27:9). This resulted in a shipwreck on Malta, where they were stuck for three months (Acts 28:1-11). Acts 28:11 says that they left on a ship that had wintered on Malta, meaning that they did not leave Malta until 60 AD.

60-62	Paul sent letters to Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians ⁵² - sent by Tychicus as a batch (Eph 6:21-22; Col 4:7-9)
61	Peter in Rome (?) (1 Peter 5:13)
62-63	Jesus, son of Damnaeus, Jewish high priest
62	James, Jesus' brother, and other Christians killed in Jerusalem (Josephus, Ant. 20.9) ⁵³
Mid-60s	Luke wrote his two-volume work, Luke-Acts (60-65 AD?) Paul released from imprisonment in Rome ⁵⁴
63/64	Mission of Paul in Spain (1 Clement 5:5-7; cf. Rom 15:23-28) ⁵⁵
64	Fire in Rome from July 18/19 to 27
64	Nero's Persecution of Christians in Rome (Tacitus, Ann. 15.44) ⁵⁶
64-66	Gessius Florus procurator (i.e., governor) of Judea
64/65	Paul's return to Asia and Macedonia (1 Tim 1:3) ⁵⁷

⁵² The Prison Epistles were all likely written during Paul's imprisonment at Rome. This assumption is made based on internal evidence in these letters.

⁵³ Josephus wrote, "When therefore Ananus was of this disposition, he thought he now had a proper opportunity [to exercise his authority]. Festus was now dead; and Albinus was but upon the road. So he assembled the Sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some of his companions. And when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned" (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 20.9).

⁵⁴ Most modern New Testament scholars believe that Paul was released after his imprisonment in Rome from 60-62 AD (e.g., Köstenberger 28-32). He then travelled to visit churches he had previously planted and engaged in further pioneer ministry.

⁵⁵ One purpose of the book of Romans was for Paul to recruit the church at Rome to support him in a new mission to Spain (Rom 15:23-28). Clement, the leader of the church at Rome at the end of the first century, wrote that Paul "taught righteousness to the whole world, and came to the limits of the West, bearing his witness before the rulers" (1 Clement 5:7). It is doubtful that Clement considered Rome to be "the limits of the West." It is more likely that Paul had pioneered the gospel ministry in Spain, although this cannot be established with certainty.

⁵⁶ Tacitus described Nero placing the blame of the fire in Rome on local Christians. "Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome" (Cornelius Tacitus, *Annals* 15.44). This event was the first major persecution against Christians by the Roman government.

⁵⁷ Paul left Timothy in Ephesus to deal with false teachers in Asia Minor (1 Tim 1:3-4). He also said that he was sent on to Macedonia from Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3). Therefore, it is most likely that Paul wrote First Timothy from Macedonia. In addition, Paul indicates that he visited Troas, Corinth, and Miletus after

64/65	Paul wrote 1 Timothy to Timothy who was in Ephesus ⁵⁸
64/65	Mission of Paul with Titus on Crete (Titus 1:5)
65/66	Mission of Paul to Epirus (Titus 3:12) ⁵⁹
65/66	Paul wrote Titus – sent by Zenas and Apollos (Titus 3:13)
	Peter wrote to Christians in Asia Minor (1 Peter) (?)
65-68	Matthias son of Theophilus son of Annas high priest
66-70	Jewish Revolt in Judea against the Romans
66	Casennius Gallus, legate of legio XII fulminate, conquered Galilee
	Gospel of Matthew (late 60s, before 70)
	Letter to the Hebrew Christians (late 60s, probably before 70 AD)
66	Paul wrote 2 Timothy from prison in Rome ⁶⁰
67	Martyrdom of Paul and Peter in Rome ⁶¹

his first Roman imprisonment, indicating that he broadly travelled to churches he previously planted after his release. He left his cloak in Troas, indicating a visit (2 Tim 4:13). Paul wrote, “Erastus has remained at Corinth” (2 Tim 4:20), which could imply that Paul left Erastus there just as he left Timothy in Ephesus and Titus in Crete. If so, then this clause indicates that Paul visited Corinth. Again, Paul wrote, “I left Trophimus sick at Miletus” (2 Tim 4:20), which clearly indicates that Paul visited Miletus. The cumulation of this evidence is that Paul visited the churches he pioneered in Acts 13-19 after his release in 62 AD.

⁵⁸ Paul’s intention was for Timothy to have a temporary task of correcting false teachers in Asia Minor. The temporary nature of this charge is indicated by two temporal clauses in 1 Timothy. “I write these things, hoping to come to you soon” (1 Tim 3:14), and “Until I come” (1 Tim 4:13).

⁵⁹ In Titus 3:12, Paul called Titus to join him for the winter in Nicopolis. It is most likely that Nicopolis was the capital of Epirus, which was a Roman province adjacent to Achaia. Up until Paul’s mission to Epirus, there is no mention of evangelizing that province in the New Testament. See Köstenberger, *1-2 Timothy and Titus*, 353-354.

⁶⁰ In Second Timothy, Paul referred to himself as a prisoner (1:8), being in chains (1:18), being bound like a criminal (2:9), and often referred to his suffering (1:12, 2:10; 3:11). Paul indicated that he was near death in prison when he wrote Second Timothy (4:6-8).

⁶¹ Eusebius recounted that Peter and Paul were martyred by Nero at Rome. “Peter appears to have preached in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia to the Jews of the dispersion. And at last, having come to Rome, he was crucified head-downwards; for he had requested that he might suffer this way. What do we need to say concerning Paul, who preached the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem to Illyricum, and afterwards suffered martyrdom in Rome under Nero? These facts are related by Origen in the third volume of his Commentary on Genesis. After the martyrdom of Paul and Peter, Linus was the first to obtain the episcopate of the church at Rome. Paul mentions him, when writing to Timothy from Rome, in the salutation at the end of the epistle” (Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 3.1-2). Linus sent greeting to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:21, giving evidence that he was in Rome near the time of Paul’s death. There are other witnesses the testify about the martyrdom of Peter and Paul, but Eusebius’ testimony is most complete. See 1 Clement 5-6; Ignatius, *Romans* 5-6;

67 Timothy succeeded Paul as the leader of the Gentile mission⁶²
70 The destruction of Jerusalem

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⁶² A major theme of Second Timothy is that it is a letter of succession to Timothy to continue the Pauline mission after Paul's death. For example, Köstenberger wrote, "In 2 Timothy Paul seeks to prepare Timothy for assuming the mantle of Paul's mission (Köstenberger, *1-2 Timothy and Titus*, 364).

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