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Chronology and Locations of the Writing of Acts and Paul's Letters

and of Key Individuals and Events Mentioned in them

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For the letters explicitly attributed to Paul it is almost always possible to determine where they were written (except **Galatians** and **Titus**) and when they were written (except **Galatians**) based on information provided in the letters themselves. I also include the date of writing of [Acts](#), which was written by **Luke**, and I often mention **Luke**'s involvement, since he was a key player in Paul's life and ministry, and his biographer.

Names of letters and their places of writing are in **red** and dates and major time periods are in **green**. The thick horizontal **green** lines mark the beginnings and ends of Paul's **Missionary Journeys** and his **Journey to Rome**, as well as his three imprisonments (One in Caesarea and two in Rome).

I will also often highlight **individuals** who are mentioned in Paul's letters, in **boldface**, especially those mentioned in more than one context in the life of Paul. For those I have chosen to highlight I have included all references to these individuals in Paul's letters, and also nearly all occurrences in the relevant part of **Acts**.

Coauthors of Paul's letters are listed in column 3 in **boldface**. These are always mentioned at the very beginning of each letter. Except for **1 Corinthians**, coauthored by **Sosthenes** (see below), only **Timothy** (6 letters) and **Silvanus (Silas)** (2 letters) are **coauthors** with Paul.

(Sometimes a coauthor seems to have had little or no actual part in the writing, but was more in **the** role of someone who affirmed what Paul had written, since Paul often writes the entire letter in first person singular as if there is no coauthor. For instance, in **1 Corinthians** **Sosthenes** is listed as the coauthor, but is never referred to again, and Paul uses "I" or "me" very often throughout the book. The times he uses "we" or "us" it is clear that he is either including his readers or some other clearly identified leader like **Apollos** or **Barnabas** in the "we" or "us", never **Sosthenes**. On the other hand, in **1** and **2 Thessalonians**, which were coauthored by **Timothy** and **Silvanus (Silas)**, Paul treats them as genuine coauthors, so that "we" and "us" are the rule, "I" is very rare and "me" never occurs. The other letters will be somewhere in between.)

I also include in column 1 some important events mentioned in Paul's letters (some only mentioned there). I have also included a few events that are not mentioned directly in Paul's letters, but which are helpful in providing a context for those that are. These are indicated with a **grey background**.

Letter, Time Period, or Key Event	Where Written or Occurred	Date, coauthor if any, etc. ¹	Evidence for where and when a letter was written, as well as events that occurred before and after to show the context in which it was written	External References	References in the Letters
Founding of Antioch church	Antioch (in Syria)	43	Paul and Barnabas ² found the church here.	Acts 11:19-28	
Paul's celestial vision	Antioch??	43-44?	Paul has a marvellous vision of heaven in which he "heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter", which he writes about 14 years later in 2 Corinthians , written probably in Fall 57 . If we subtract 14 from 57 we find that this would have occurred in 43 , which would put it during Paul's first year of teaching with Barnabas in the church in Antioch described in Acts 11:26. (See my New Testament chronology page .) However, some commentators would associate it with the trance mentioned by Paul in Acts 22:17, which occurred in Jerusalem, and the time frame would permit this if it occurred during the famine relief visit in 44 . However, this assumes that Paul is talking about this visit to Jerusalem in Acts 22:17, whereas it seems more natural to me to assume it occurred on the earlier visit after his conversion in 38 mentioned in Acts 9:26-30 and Galatians 1:18-19. (Search for Acts 22:17 on this page to see arguments for and against this theory.)		2 Cor. 12:2-4

Collection for Judea famine and Jerusalem visit	Antioch, Jerusalem	44	Paul and Barnabas visit Jerusalem with a collection for the famine there.	Acts 11:27-30	
Death of James	Jerusalem	44	The Apostle James is killed by Herod (Agrippa I).	Acts 12:1-2	
			Miraculous escape of Peter , first mention of John Mark .	Acts 12:3-19	
		44	Death of Herod (Agrippa I).	Acts 12:19-24	
			Paul and Barnabas return home to Antioch, taking John Mark with them.	Acts 12:25	
First Missionary Journey	Cyprus, Pamphylia, Galatia	Time unknown	Paul and Barnabas set out on their First Missionary Journey into Asia Minor, taking John (Mark) (Acts 13:5) with them. However, John (Mark) abandons them in Pamphylia and returns to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13), which becomes an issue later on.	Acts 13 Acts 14	
Problem about circumcision	Antioch	Early 49?	Paul and Barnabas are involved in a sharp dispute with some Jews from Judea who said that believers must be circumcised to be saved. The church sends them to Jerusalem to a council.	Acts 15:1-3	
Council in Jerusalem	Jerusalem	Early 49?	This was the first church council, <u>and</u> Paul and Barnabas <u>attended</u> from Antioch. See also the comment on Galatians 2:1-10 in the discussion of the date of writing of Galatians below. Peter (Cephas) and James (the brother of Jesus) confirmed that they should not put a heavy yoke on the Gentiles. Galatians 2:1-3 is the earliest mention of Titus , who surprisingly is never mentioned by name in Acts , though other important disciples and companions of Paul, like Timothy , figure largely there. ³ Thus the only information we have about him is found in Paul's letters. He does not appear again for another 8 years, when he is mentioned repeatedly in 2 Corinthians (see multiple references in the year 57 below). He was evidently a Greek, possibly from Antioch, and was apparently never circumcised (as this passage shows), unlike Timothy (Acts 16:3). This event is also the earliest mention of Silas (called Silvanus in Paul's letters and in 1 Peter 5:12), not yet as a companion of Paul, but as one of two delegates sent by the council from Jerusalem to Antioch with the results of the council. They apparently return to Jerusalem as stated in Acts 15:33, but Silas reappears in Antioch a few months later as Paul's companion on his Second Missionary Journey a few months later. ⁴	Acts 15:4-35 Acts 15:22, 27,32,(33,34)	Gal. 2:1-10 Gal. 2:1-3
Visit of Peter to Antioch	Antioch	49??	Peter visits Antioch, acts hypocritically with respect to the principles resolved in the Council in Jerusalem (and which had already been established in part in Acts 11:1-18), because of the arrival of some brothers from James (the brother of Jesus) in Jerusalem, and leads many other Jews astray, including Barnabas , but is confronted by Paul. This event is only mentioned in Galatians . Most commentators take the natural sequence of events in Galatians and place this event after the Council in Jerusalem. It looks a bit like what happened in Acts 15:1-3, but is clearly a distinct event. I have placed it here, but it could have occurred later, any time before the writing of Galatians , which itself is quite uncertain.		Gal. 2:11-14
Start of Second Missionary Journey	Antioch (in Syria)	Late 49?	Paul and Barnabas prepare to leave again on a Second Missionary Journey , but have a serious disagreement about whether to take along his cousin John Mark , who had abandoned them in the middle of the First Missionary Journey (Acts 13:13), and part company. Barnabas and John Mark set out for Cyprus, whereas Paul sets out for Syria, accompanied this time by Silas . (However, this rift between Paul and Barnabas and John Mark turns out not to have been permanent: Barnabas is mentioned several times in Paul's letters (see endnote 2), always positively, and John Mark is similarly mentioned quite positively, in Colossians 4:10 as someone to be welcomed, in 2 Timothy 4:11 as someone useful to Paul for ministry, and in Philemon 24 as sending greetings to Philemon . And John Mark was apparently Peter 's companion later on, as is suggested in 1 Peter 5:13.)	Acts 15:36-40	

	Derbe & Lystra		Timothy joins them in Lystra (his hometown) and is circumcised. Paul had probably met him several years earlier on his First Missionary Journey (see NT Chronology expanded).	Acts 16:1-3	
	Iconium & Antioch (in Pisidia)?		They travel from town to town, strengthening the churches. (The only other churches we know to have existed in the area then were those in Iconium and Antioch.)	Acts 16:4-5	
	Phrygia & Mysia		They continue travelling, but the Holy Spirit forbids them to preach the word in the province of Asia.	Acts 16:6-8	
	Troas		Paul receives the “Macedonian call”.	Acts 16:9	
			Luke apparently meets Paul and his companions in Troas (possibly for the first time), joins their group from that point on, as evidenced by his suddenly beginning to use the pronoun “we” and its corresponding verb forms, and travels with them to Philippi. (See the “we” sections of Acts in NT Chronology expanded .)	Acts 16:10-17	
	Philippi		Paul and Silas are arrested in Philippi (and plant the church there). (Their companions Timothy and Luke are not arrested with them.)	Acts 16:12-40	1 Thess. 2:2
			(Luke may have remained in Philippi for the next nine years, until April 58 , since the next time he travels with Paul they leave from Philippi. See the “we” sections of Acts in NT Chronology expanded .)	(Acts 20:5-6)	
	Thessalonica		Paul and Silas plant the church in Thessalonica.	Acts 17:1-9	1 Thess. 1:4-2:16, 3:4
	Berea		Paul and Silas are forced to leave Thessalonica (for Berea).	Acts 17:10-13	1 Thess. 2:17
	Athens		Paul reaches Athens, waits for Silas and Timothy .	Acts 17:14-34	
			Silas and Timothy arrive in Athens, and Timothy (and Silas) are immediately sent back to Thessalonica.		1 Thess. 3:1-5
	Corinth		Paul moves on to Corinth, meets Aquila and Priscilla .	Acts 18:1-4	
		50, January	Silas and Timothy arrive in Corinth.	Acts 18:5	1 Thess. 3:6-10
1 Thessalonians	Corinth	50 Timothy & Silvanus (Silas)	Paul immediately writes 1 Thessalonians , with Silas (Silvanus) and Timothy ’s help. The book itself makes it clear that it was written in this context, since it details almost all of Paul’s itinerary in Europe up to this point, as can be seen in the rightmost column for the events above. This allows us to cross-reference it with Acts . It is this cross-referencing that makes it clear that the letter was written from Corinth, immediately after the arrival of Timothy (and Silas).		1 Thess. 1:1, 3:6
	Corinth		Paul plants the church in Corinth, and baptizes Crispus , the ruler of the synagogue, Gaius , who will be his host for three months 7 years later when he writes Romans , and the household of Stephanas , who were the very first converts in Corinth. Stephanas later visited him in Ephesus before he wrote 1 Corinthians . (See below twice at Winter 57-58 for more on Gaius .)	Acts 18:1-8 Acts 18:8	1 Cor. 3:6a 1 Cor. 1:14 Rom. 16:23, 1 Cor. 1:14 1 Cor. 1:16 1 Cor. 16:15-18
2 Thessalonians	Corinth	50-51 Timothy & Silvanus (Silas)	It is clear that this book was also written during Paul’s stay in Corinth, based on 2 Thess. 1:1 and the subject matter, but after 1 Thessalonians (2 Thess. 2:15). (This is the last information we have about Silas / Silvanus travelling with Paul. He may have returned to Antioch, his home church, since he apparently does not accompany Paul when he leaves Corinth. He is mentioned one more time by Paul in 2 Corinthians 1:19 in 57 (as Silvanus), but only looking back at this period. Peter later refers to a Silvanus in 1 Peter 5:12, who may have been the same person.)		
	Corinth		Paul remains in Corinth for more than 1½ years, establishing the church there.	Acts 18:11	1 Cor. 3:6a

End of Second Missionary Journey		Fall 51	Final legal attack on Paul by the Jews before the proconsul Gallio. It ends with Sosthenes the synagogue ruler being beaten by his fellow Jews. He may later have become a believer and been the same Sosthenes who coauthored 1 Corinthians with Paul 6 years later.	Acts 18:12-17	
	Ephesus	Late 51?	Paul leaves Corinth with Priscilla and Aquila and goes to Ephesus, ministering briefly and leaving Priscilla and Aquila there, which was the very beginning of the church-planting work there, though the real planting of the church would apparently not begin for another 2 or 3 years.	Acts 18:18-20	
	Antioch	Late 51?	Paul leaves Ephesus and returns to Antioch, apparently alone, completing the Second Missionary Journey .	Acts 18:21-22	
In Antioch	Antioch	Late 51?- Late 53?	“After spending some time there...” Paul continues to minister in Antioch some two years.	Acts 18:23a	
Galatians	??	50's?	<p>Galatians 2:1-10 is almost certainly (in my opinion, weighing all the evidence) talking about the Council in Jerusalem, which probably occurred in early 49 (see above). If so, then this book must have been written sometime after that, but cannot be pinned down any more than that. (This is the earliest mention of Titus, and one of the few mentions of Barnabas outside of Acts. See the Council in Jerusalem above.)</p> <p>Other events and time spans mentioned in Galatians from the year 35 to the year 49 can best be seen on my New Testament chronology page, and are not included in this chart.</p> <p>However, I should mention that Galatians is the only place that clarifies that the apostles that Saul was introduced to by Barnabas in Acts 9:27 were actually only Cephas (Peter) and “James the Lord’s brother”</p> <p>Galatia was not a city, but a Roman province (shown in green on the map below). The only places we know of that Paul visited in this province were Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, all in the far south of the province, and he apparently visited these cities on all three of his Missionary Journeys. Evidently this letter was intended to be circulated among all of these churches.</p>		Gal. 1:18-19
Start of Third Missionary Journey	Antioch	Late 53?	“...he departed...” Paul leaves Antioch to begin his Third Missionary Journey , apparently alone, which was unusual, or else his companions are simply not mentioned.	Acts 18:23b	
	Galatia & Phrygia		<p>“...and went from one place to the next through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples”. The only places we know of where there were believers in Galatia were Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia, where Paul planted churches on his First Missionary Journey and visited on his Second Missionary Journey and again here.</p> <p>As for where in Phrygia there were believers, this is not clear. On the Second Missionary Journey around 49 he and Silas travelled through Phrygia (Acts 16:6), probably the northern part since they were headed for Mysia, but there is no record of them doing any evangelism there, in fact the verse says that the Holy Spirit had forbidden them to speak in the province of Asia, of which Phrygia formed a part. The cities of Colossae and Laodicea were part of Phrygia, but the evidence suggests that Paul had never met any of the believers there, and it seems likely that the churches there had not yet been planted (see Colossians below). Antioch in Pisidia and Iconium were sometimes considered part of Phrygia, which the Romans had split between the provinces of Asia and Galatia, and it seems likely that the believers in one or both of these towns are the ones referred to.</p>	Acts 18:23c	
	(Ephesus)		Apollos arrives in Ephesus; Priscilla and Aquila correct his doctrine.	Acts 18:24-26	
	(Corinth)		Apollos arrives in Corinth and greatly helps the believers. Thus when Paul says “I planted the seed” in 1 Cor. 3:6 he is referring to Paul’s 1½ years in Corinth in 50 and 51 , and when he says “ Apollos watered it” he is referring to this period of time when Apollos was in Corinth.	Acts 18:27- 19:1a	1 Cor. 3:6b
	Ephesus	54?	Paul arrives in Ephesus, where he will stay for three years.	Acts 19:1-7	

(earlier letter to the Corinthians)	Ephesus??	??	1 Corinthians was not Paul's first letter to the Corinthians: there was an earlier letter about which we know very little. It may have been written during this time.		1 Cor. 5:9-10
(earlier letter from the Corinthians)	(Corinth)	56??	The Corinthians had also written an earlier letter to Paul, probably after the preceding, raising various questions, which he answers starting in chapter 7. Answers to specific questions are introduced by the phrase "Now concerning..." (in the ESV), in 1 Cor. 7:1, 7:25, 8:1, 12:1, 16:1, and 16:12. It was almost certainly written during Paul's stay in Ephesus, since he would not likely have waited three years to answer their important questions.		1 Cor. 7:1
	Ephesus		Sometime before the writing of 1 Corinthians , Paul is visited in Ephesus by Stephanas , Fortunatus , and Achaicus from the church in Corinth, and is encouraged and refreshed by them. Stephanas was one of the few people that Paul had baptized during his initial stay in Corinth in 50-51. They could have brought the letter from the Corinthians to Paul.		1 Cor. 16:15-18, 1:14
		Early 57?	Paul's initial plans were to visit Corinth first after leaving Ephesus, but he changes his mind before writing 1 Corinthians , because of the problems in the church in Corinth, and decides to visit Macedonia first, but to write them a letter (1 Corinthians) first to address the problems.		2 Cor. 1:15-2:4 1 Cor. 16:6-8
			Paul sends Timothy and Erastus ahead to Macedonia, with the intention that they continue on to Corinth if possible, as he makes clear in two places in 1 Corinthians , their purpose in Corinth being "to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church" (1 Cor. 4:17), and perhaps they were also to take the time to encourage and exhort the churches in Macedonia. However, since Timothy is still in Macedonia at the writing of 2 Corinthians a few months later, and since Paul found it necessary to send Titus to Corinth in the meantime (see below), it seems probable that they never got there.	Acts 19:22	1 Cor. 4:17 1 Cor. 16:10-11
1 Corinthians	Ephesus	Spring 57? Sosthenes ⁵	<p>Paul writes 1 Corinthians from Ephesus before Pentecost, planning to spend the winter there. I believe that this is the letter later referred to in 2 Corinthians, though others have assumed an intermediate letter that was even more severe than 1 Corinthians!</p> <p>Apparently Apollos is back in Ephesus, and Paul had apparently wanted to send him back to Corinth "with the other brothers" who were taking the letter, but it was not convenient, and he would come "when he has opportunity". (Among the Corinthians factions had developed around Paul and Apollos and others like Cephas (Peter), as various passages in the book show, but clearly Paul and Apollos are in perfect unity.)</p> <p>This letter includes the only confirmation that Jesus appeared separately to Cephas (Peter) after the resurrection, told very briefly in Luke 24:34.</p> <p>It also contains the only indication that Jesus appeared to his own brother James after the resurrection.</p> <p>This letter also includes one of the few mentions of Barnabas outside Acts, where Paul says, "is it only I and Barnabas who must work for a living?", as distinguished from others like Cephas (Peter).</p> <p>Aquila and Priscilla are apparently now living in Rome, and they and their church send greetings.</p>		<p>1 Cor. 16:6-8 2 Cor. 2:3-4, 7:8,12</p> <p>1 Cor. 16:12 (1:12, 3:4-9,22, 4:6)</p> <p>1 Cor. 15:5</p> <p>1 Cor. 15:7 1 Cor. 9:5-6</p> <p>1 Cor. 16:19</p>
			At some point after writing 1 Corinthians Paul apparently sends Titus to visit Corinth to see how his letter was received, expecting to meet him later in Troas (see below). This is only the second time Titus appears in the record, after the Council in Jerusalem 8 years earlier.		(2 Cor. 2:12-13, 7:5-8, 7:13-15)

		May-June 57?	Paul leaves Ephesus for Macedonia at Pentecost, after having gone through serious trials in Ephesus. Acts 20:1 makes it sound like he was alone, but from 2 Cor. 7:5-8 we know that he was not alone, because of the “we” verb forms used. Who was with him? It was not Luke , who would not rejoin Paul’s party until April 58 when they leave Philippi (see the “we” sections of Acts in NT Chronology expanded). Nor was it Timothy or Erastus , who had been sent ahead to Macedonia (Acts 19:22). Coneybeare and Howson (page 479) suggest that it was probably Tychicus and Trophimus , since they are with him later in Corinth (Acts 20:4) and were both from the province of Asia, Trophimus specifically from Ephesus (Acts 21:29) and Tychicus probably so. John Phillips also proposes this, and it seems quite likely.	Acts 19:23-20:2	1 Cor. 16:8 1 Cor. 1:8-10 2 Cor. 7:5-8
	Troas		He passes through Troas, expecting to find Titus there with news of his visit to Corinth, and apparently plans to stay there a while, but when he does not find Titus there, he hurries on to Macedonia.		2 Cor. 2:12-13
	Macedonia		He arrives in Macedonia (city not specified), and finds Titus there with good news from Corinth.	Acts 20:2	2 Cor. 7:5-8, 7:13-15
2 Corinthians	Macedonia (city not specified)	Fall 57? Timothy Carriers: Titus (8:16-17) & 2 others (8:18-19,22, 12:18)	Paul writes 2 Corinthians from Macedonia, after experiencing more severe trials there. He apparently sends Titus back to Corinth with the letter, and also to get things moving for the collection for Judea. Two other brothers accompanied him, who are not named. The first of these, described in 2 Cor. 8:18-19 as a famous preacher and companion of Paul, may have been Luke (who may have lived in Philippi from Late 49 until April 58 ; see the “we” sections of Acts in NT Chronology expanded), but if so he returned to Macedonia before Paul went there to spend the winter , since he does not travel again with Paul until April 58 . However, it could just as easily have been someone else. (See biblehub.com/2_corinthians/8-18.htm , especially Jamieson-Fausset-Brown.) See also endnote 3. The second is similarly unknown; various opinions can be seen at biblehub.com/2_corinthians/8-22.htm .		2 Cor. 2:13, 7:5, 8:6, 8:16-24, 12:18
	Corinth	Winter 57-58?	Paul arrives in Corinth in Achaia, stays three months, and receives from them the collection for Judea.	Acts 20:2-3	1 Cor. 16:1-7 2 Cor. 8-9
			He is the guest of Gaius , whom he had baptized there 7 years earlier. (See more below.)	Rom. 16:23	1 Cor. 1:14 2 Cor. 12:14, 13:1, 2:1
			This was Paul’s third visit to Corinth. The first visit was clearly the one in Acts 18, because that was when the church was planted, but when the second one occurred is not known. The second visit was apparently a painful one, since Paul wanted to avoid “another painful visit” (2 Cor. 2:1) before writing 2 Corinthians . Some (e.g. the <i>New Bible Dictionary</i> , 1960 edition) have suggested that this first painful visit was <i>after</i> writing 1 Corinthians , but this would be hard to fit into the tight time frame. Others (e.g. <i>Expositor’s Greek Testament</i>) suggest that it was during Paul’s 3-year stay in Ephesus.)		
Romans	Corinth	Winter 57-58? Carrier: Phoebe? (Rom. 16:1-2) Amanuensis or personal	Paul writes Romans from Corinth. This is suggested by the following facts: 1. Paul asks the Roman Christians to give Phoebe a good reception. She was from the church in Cenchreae, a town near Corinth. This letter may have been delivered by her. 2. The Gaius in Corinth whom Paul had baptized is likely the same Gaius who provided hospitality to Paul and many others mentioned in Romans . He seems to be a native of Corinth whom Paul met there, and who remained there for at least the next 7 years. So he would probably not be the same as Gaius the Macedonian who was with Paul in Ephesus in Acts 19:29. Nor would he be the same as Gaius of Derbe who was actually with Paul in Corinth in Acts 20:4 at the same time that Paul would have baptized this Gaius , or at least was there at the end of Paul’s time in Corinth, because he then left Corinth with Paul (Acts 20:4-5), whereas this Gaius apparently stayed.	1 Cor. 1:14	Romans 16:1-2 Romans 16:23

		secretary: Tertius (Rom. 16:22)	<p>3. Erastus, the “city treasurer” (ESV) or “city’s director of public works” (NIV) (ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως) mentioned in Romans, is likely the same Erastus that Paul will leave behind in Corinth a decade later. He is also likely mentioned in the Erastus Inscription (with pictures here), found in Corinth in 1929.⁶ (I personally doubt that he was the same Erastus as mentioned in Acts 19:22 as being Paul’s helper who was sent from Ephesus to Macedonia, since he would have been an important official in Corinth.)</p> <p>4. Timothy and Sosipater are with Paul as he writes, and Timothy and Sopater (similar though not identical name, but evidently the same person) accompanied Paul to Jerusalem right at the end of his Third Missionary Journey, soon after his departure from Corinth.</p> <p>5. He expects to visit Rome after he delivers the collection for Judea from the Macedonian and Achaian churches, after which he plans to go to Spain. This clearly puts the date at the end of the Third Missionary Journey.</p> <p>Priscilla and Aquila are still living in Rome, and Paul greets them.</p>	2 Tim. 4:20	Romans 16:23
End of Third Missionary Journey	Macedonia (specifically Philippi)	Early 58	Paul returns to Macedonia.	Acts 20:3b-5	
		58, April	He leaves Philippi (after Unleavened Bread), accompanied again by Luke , who had not travelled with him since Late 49 , and who may have remained in Philippi during the intervening nine years. Luke may have remained with him for the rest of his life. See the “we” sections of Acts in NT Chronology expanded .	Acts 20:5-6	
	Jerusalem	58, May-June	He arrives in Jerusalem, probably by Pentecost. This completes the Third Missionary Journey .	Acts 21:15 Acts 20:16	
Imprisonment in Caesarea	Caesarea	Summer 58-Summer 60	Paul is arrested in Jerusalem and imprisoned for two years in Caesarea. The second “we” section of Acts ends with Acts 21:25 (21:18 is the last usage of “we” or “us”, but Luke was clearly there for the rest of the meeting), but this does not prove that Luke left him at this point, simply that he had no occasion to use a first-person plural pronoun or verb again until chapter 27. The great detail of the intervening chapters suggests to me that he was present. See the “we” sections of Acts in NT Chronology expanded .	Acts 21:16-26:32	
Journey to Rome		Summer 60-January 61	Paul is sent to Rome by ship, again accompanied by Luke (see the “we” sections of Acts in NT Chronology expanded), and is shipwrecked on the way.	Acts 27:1-28:16	
Start of First Roman Imprisonment	Rome	January 61	Paul arrives in Rome, where he will be imprisoned for two years, his First Roman Imprisonment . The four letters written during this time are commonly called the <i>Prison Epistles</i> . (He was also in prison when he wrote 2 Timothy , but it is not normally included in this group, forming instead a part of the <i>Pastoral Epistles</i> .)	Acts 28:16-31	

Ephesians	Rome	61-63 Carrier: Tychicus (Eph. 6:21-22)	<p>Paul is in prison, which makes Rome the likely place of writing. It makes no mention of Paul’s imminent death, suggesting the first imprisonment. Tradition concurs with this.</p> <p>A few manuscripts, including some of the oldest, omit “in Ephesus,” but the vast majority includes this phrase, and the claim that it was not sent to Ephesus seems to have been started by the heretic Marcion. The problem with this idea is that the Greek seems to require an expressed location:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="784 245 2002 358"> <tr> <td>...</td> <td>τοῖς</td> <td>ἁγίοις</td> <td>τοῖς</td> <td>οὔσιν</td> <td>[ἐν Ἐφεσῶ]</td> <td>καὶ</td> <td>πιστοῖς</td> <td>ἐν</td> <td>Χριστῷ</td> <td>Ἰησοῦ·</td> <td>...</td> </tr> <tr> <td>...</td> <td>to the</td> <td>saints</td> <td>the</td> <td>who are</td> <td>[in Ephesus]</td> <td>and /</td> <td>faithful (ones)</td> <td>in</td> <td>Christ</td> <td>Jesus:</td> <td>...</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>(ones)</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>also</td> <td>/ believers</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>If “in Ephesus” was not in the original it would leave the phrase “to the saints who are” incomplete! The footnote in the ESV suggests that the phrase that follows would complete it: “to the <i>saints who are also faithful</i> in Christ Jesus,” and the Greek certainly allows this, but it seems an odd thing to say. Which saints who are also faithful? All of them? It still seems incomplete. And it is unlike the salutation in any other letter Paul wrote, and Paul is clearly the author (1:1, 3:1), something no one has disputed, except some liberal scholars since the 19th century. So I am convinced that it was indeed addressed to the saints in Ephesus.</p> <p>However, the lack of any personal comments, again something all of Paul’s other letters have, and the fact that Paul writes as if he had not met at least some of his readers but had only heard about them (1:15) and they about him (3:2), makes it probable that it was intended to be circulated among various churches near Ephesus, including Colossae and Laodicea and probably also Hierapolis,⁷ after the Ephesians had read it, like the letter to the Galatians. In fact, it is quite possible that this is “the letter from Laodicea” (i.e. the letter that would come to them by way of Laodicea) referred to in Col. 4:16.</p>	...	τοῖς	ἁγίοις	τοῖς	οὔσιν	[ἐν Ἐφεσῶ]	καὶ	πιστοῖς	ἐν	Χριστῷ	Ἰησοῦ·	to the	saints	the	who are	[in Ephesus]	and /	faithful (ones)	in	Christ	Jesus:	...				(ones)			also	/ believers						Ephesians 3:1, 4:1, 6:20
...	τοῖς	ἁγίοις	τοῖς	οὔσιν	[ἐν Ἐφεσῶ]	καὶ	πιστοῖς	ἐν	Χριστῷ	Ἰησοῦ·	...																														
...	to the	saints	the	who are	[in Ephesus]	and /	faithful (ones)	in	Christ	Jesus:	...																														
			(ones)			also	/ believers																																		
Philippians	Rome	Late 62- Early 63 Timothy	<p>Carrier: Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25, 4:18)</p> <p>Paul is in prison (1:7,13,14,17), but expects to be released soon (2:24). This clearly places it as written from Rome in late 62 or early 63. He hopes to send Timothy to them soon (2:19-23), though evidently later than Epaphroditus who carried the letter.</p>																																						
Colossians	Rome	Late 62-	These two letters were evidently written at the same time, and delivered together to Colossae, the first to																																						

Philemon		<p>Early 63 Timothy</p> <p>Carriers: Onesimus (Phm. 10-21, Col. 4:9) & Tychicus (Col. 4:7-8).</p>	<p>the church in general, and the second personally to Philemon (and Apphia and Archippus in Philemon 2, presumably members of his family, perhaps wife and son, the latter also mentioned in Colossians 4:17), by his runaway slave Onesimus, who had run away to Rome, and there met Paul and became a Christian. He is accompanied by Tychicus. The two letters mention a number of the same people. Paul is in prison (Col. 4:3,10,18, Phm. 9,13,23), but expects to be released soon (Phm. 22). This clearly places these letters as written from Rome in late 62 or early 63, around the same time as Philippians.</p> <p>Paul did not apparently plant the churches in Colossae and Laodicea, nor had he apparently ever visited them (1:4,7-9, 2:1), though he would probably have passed through both cities around 53 on his Third Missionary Journey, since both were on the main road from Antioch in Pisidia to Ephesus. Those churches, and apparently a third one in nearby Hierapolis,⁸ were apparently planted by Paul's colleague Epaphras (Col. 1:7-8, 4:12-13, Phm. 23), who was apparently from Colossae (Col. 4:12). When they were planted is unknown, but it was probably after Paul passed through there, which would explain why he hadn't met the believers. It may have been shortly after that: the <i>New Bible Dictionary</i> suggests that it was during Paul's 3-year stay at Ephesus from 54 to 57. Thus Epaphras may have been sent by the Ephesian church back to his home to evangelize and plant the church.</p> <p>But Paul clearly knows Philemon and his family (Phm. 1-2,7,17,22), had evidently led him to the Lord (19), and had worked together with him (1,17), perhaps in Ephesus or in Rome.</p> <p>The letter to the Colossians was also intended to be read by the church in Laodicea, and a letter he sent to Laodicea was to be read also in Colossae (Col. 4:15-16). This is either a lost letter, or quite possibly it was the letter to the Ephesians (see discussion above). One interesting thing that makes this more likely in my mind is that both Colossians and Ephesians were delivered by Tychicus. If this is true, then all four of the Prison Epistles would have been written in late 62 or early 63.</p> <p>Luke is mentioned in Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24 as being with Paul at this time and sending greetings, confirming the evidence of Acts. (See the "we" sections of Acts in NT Chronology expanded.) John Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, is also mentioned in Colossians 4:10 and Philemon 24 as being with Paul and sending greetings.</p>		
End of First Roman Imprisonment	Rome	Early 63	Paul is evidently released from prison, since Luke suggests in Acts 28:30 that he was released after a two-year imprisonment.	(Acts 28:30)	
Acts (written by Luke)	??	63?	This is the obviously the earliest possible time for the writing of the book of Acts , because of Acts 28:30. The simple fact that the book ends at this point suggests that the book was written soon after, explaining why Luke omits the remainder of Paul's life, even though he probably remained with him until the end, as is evidenced by the fact that he is with Paul at the writing of 2 Timothy (2 Tim. 4:11). Further evidence is found here: carm.org/when-was-acts-written .		
	Various locations		Paul's travels after this point are difficult to follow, but see Paul's Life After his First Imprisonment . The letters he wrote from this point on are known as the <i>Pastoral Epistles</i> , since he sent them to pastors rather than churches.		
1 Timothy	Macedonia	64-66?	Paul is not in prison, but is evidently in Macedonia (1:3), having recently left Timothy in Ephesus. This is evidently later than the events in Acts , so it falls in the years between his two imprisonments.		

Titus	??	64-66?	<p>Paul is not in prison, having recently left Titus in Crete (1:5) to organize things, and is making plans to spend the winter in Nicopolis (3:12), but it is not known where he is when he writes the letter. Again this is later than the events in Acts, so it falls in the years between his two imprisonments.</p> <p>Several things seem to suggest that Titus's assignment in Crete was not permanent: first that Paul summons him to winter with him at Nicopolis (3:12), being replaced either by an otherwise unknown Artemas or by Tychicus who is well known in other contexts, and second that Paul later sends him to Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10). However, church tradition (which must be taken with a grain of salt) suggests instead that these travels were temporary, and that he returned to Crete and remained there until his death.</p> <p>In Titus we have the last reference to Apollos (3:13), whose ministry had been so important in Corinth. He apparently was in Crete along with an otherwise unknown lawyer Zenas. He may just have been visiting, or he may have been helping Titus in the churches there and was now ready to move on. Either way Paul again heartily endorses him.</p>		
2 Timothy	Rome	67-68?	<p>Paul is again in prison (1:8, 2:9), his Second Roman Imprisonment, and expects to die soon (4:6-8), which makes it clear that this was written during his final imprisonment in Rome, during the persecution under Nero, probably near the end of Nero's life. His only companion at this time is Luke (4:11).</p> <p>Apparently Timothy is still in Ephesus, as various things in the letter suggest (1:15-18, 4:19). We know nothing about his later life except that Paul asks him to come to him in Rome (4:9) because he has no companions left except Luke. Paul asks him to bring John Mark with him (4:11), so apparently he is also in Ephesus at this time. 4:12 suggests that perhaps Tychicus replaces him (as he may have done with Titus). However, again church tradition (for what it is worth) suggests that he remained in Ephesus until his death.</p> <p>Priscilla and Aquila have apparently moved back to Ephesus from Rome, and Paul greets them.</p> <p>We also get a last glimpse of Trophimus, whom Paul left sick in Miletus.</p>		<p>2 Tim. 4:19 2 Tim. 4:20</p>

(Barnabas, Silas (Silvanus), Luke, John Mark, Peter (Cephas), James (the brother of Jesus), Timothy, Titus, Apollos, Priscilla and Aquila, Philemon, Erastus, Epaphroditus, Epaphras, Onesimus, Trophimus, Crispus, Gaius, Stephanas, Sosthenes, Fortunatus, Achaicus, Phoebe, Tertius, Sosipater, Sopater, Apphia, Archippus, Artemas, Zenas, and Tychicus)



● Red:
 Missionary sending points
 or churches that were
 recipients of Paul's letters
 ■ The seven churches of
 Asia (Revelation 1-3)

Paul's Missionary Journeys
 — First (Acts 13-14)
 — Second (Acts 15:36-18:26)

¹ There was no mail service at that time for private citizens, so the only way to send a letter was with a courier or traveller who was going that way. In a few cases we know who the courier or letter-carrier was. In each of these cases I have indicated this information with “Carrier(s):”, usually in column 3 though occasionally in column 4.

In one case we know who served as Paul’s amanuensis or personal secretary in writing a letter: **Tertius** in Romans 16:22 (not mentioned elsewhere); this is the only case I know of. However, there is some evidence that Paul had vision problems, as in Galatians 6:11, where Paul’s statement “See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!” suggests that he wrote this and the next paragraph himself, to make a special point, unlike the rest of the letter, which would have been written by his amanuensis or personal secretary. Phm. 19-21 is probably another such case. And in a few cases he seems to have simply added a sentence in his own hand to prove the letter’s authenticity, as in 1 Cor. 16:21, Col. 4:18, and 2 Thess. 3:17. So it is likely that he used an amanuensis or personal secretary for many of his letters, but we only have the name in one case.

² In many previous versions of this article prior to 15-Aug-2017 I had said, “**Barnabas** is only mentioned in **Acts**, never in any of the New Testament letters, which is why I have not made his name bold.” This is simply not true, and contributor Todd Smith kindly pointed this out to me. Thanks, Todd!

I am confused as to how I could have made such an error: all I can think is that I made a search for **Barnabas** on [Bible Gateway](#), and that I thought I had a complete list, but instead I only had the first 25 occurrences, which is what Bible Gateway automatically provides. And of course, I knew that Paul and **Barnabas** separated before Paul wrote any of his letters and because of that **Barnabas** was never coauthor of a letter with him, as several other people were (detailed in column 3 of the chart above). And because I knew this I was inclined to accept his never being mentioned.

But he *is* mentioned, 3 times in Galatians 2 in the discussion of the Council in Jerusalem, once in 1 Corinthians 9:6 in the context of the obligation of the church to support full-time Christian workers, and once in Colossians 4:10 where (**John**) **Mark** is mentioned as being the cousin of **Barnabas**.

Errors like this are the reason I need feedback from readers like Todd, and why I view this project as a collaborative effort. Please send in your comments!

(See also comments about **Barnabas** at the beginning of the [Second Missionary Journey](#).)

³ **Titus** is never mentioned by name in **Acts**, though he is referred to indirectly in Acts 15:2 among “some of the others” who accompanied Paul and **Barnabas** to the Council in Jerusalem. One possible reason could be that **Luke** may never have met him. If we study the time period when **Luke** and **Titus** were with Paul, they apparently never overlap, except possibly in Philippi in [Fall 57](#) when Paul writes **2 Corinthians**. (However, some even suggest that not only did **Luke** meet **Titus**, but that he accompanied him to Corinth to deliver the letter, as I mention [above](#).) Either way, **Luke** must at least have heard of him, and it is surprising that he does not mention him.

⁴ Some manuscripts, including the *Textus Receptus* on which the King James is based, add verse 34: “Notwithstanding it pleased **Silas** to abide there still”. This is not found in the earliest manuscripts, but seems to be an emendation to explain why **Silas** was still in Antioch, but verse 33 seems to make it clear that he had returned to Jerusalem with Judas Barsabbas (see Acts 15:22 and following), and he presumably returned later to Antioch or was asked to return by Paul, though it is impossible to be sure what happened.

⁵ Before now (20-Feb-2018) I had said that I did not think that this **Sosthenes** was the same as the **Sosthenes** mentioned in Acts 18:17 who was the ruler of the synagogue and was beaten after Paul’s trial before Gallio. However, the *New Bible Dictionary* points out that “**Sosthenes** is not the commonest of Greek names”, and suggests that they *were* the same. I now find the arguments in favor of this idea to be convincing, though I find that [commentators](#) are about evenly split on the issue, and we cannot be certain. I had also erroneously said that the **Sosthenes** of Acts 18:17 lived in Ephesus, whereas he was really a Corinthian. My mistake! Thus it seems quite probable that the two were the same person, and that while in Ephesus he collaborated with Paul (or at least provided affirmation) in writing a letter to the believers in his hometown.

⁶ This inscription is dated to the middle of the first century based on the lettering style, as [Clarke](#) points out. Later this became somewhat [controversial](#), but I consider the evidence adequate.

⁷ My colleague Eduardo Contreras provided a good part of the information in this paragraph. See also the comments about the planting of the churches in these three cities in the discussion about **Colossians** and **Philemon** that follows.

⁸ These three cities were in the valley of the Lycus River (Greek Λύκος Lykos), a tributary of the Maeander River (Greek Μαίανδρος Máianδros). The main road from the interior of Asia Minor passed through Colossae and Laodicea and then followed the Maeander valley to the coast near Ephesus. See [bibleatlas.org/full/colossae.htm](#). My colleague Eduardo Contreras suggested this additional information.