



# 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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### 1. Introduction

For the letters explicitly attributed to Paul the apostle (a.k.a. Saul of Tarsus) 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.

In the chart below the names of letters (and other books of the New Testament) 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**.<sup>1</sup>

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

### 2. The Chronological Chart

Letter, Time Period, or Key Event	Where Written or Occurred	Date, coauthor if any, etc. <sup>2</sup>	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, or events described in Paul's letters	External References	References in the Letters
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Conversion of Saul (Paul)	Road to Damascus	35?	Saul is converted on the road from Jerusalem to Damascus after hearing the voice of Jesus. (He is always called Saul in <b>Acts</b> up until Acts 13:9; see below at <b>First Missionary Journey</b> .) According to Galatians 2:1 his conversion occurred <b>14 years</b> before the Council in Jerusalem mentioned in Acts 15, which probably occurred in <b>early 49</b> (see below).	Acts 9:1-22	Gal. 1:15-16
Saul in Arabia	Arabia		(We are given no other details about why or exactly where, nor how much time he spent there.)		Gal. 1:17
Saul returns to Damascus	Damascus		<i>Baker's New Testament Commentary</i> and other commentators suggest that the sojourn in Arabia occurred between verses 22 and 23, taking the phrase “After <b>many days</b> had gone by” to indicate the interval in Arabia. Different commentators think he spent more time in Arabia, or more in Damascus, but we do not know.		Gal. 1:17
Saul flees from Damascus		38?	Saul is forced to flee the city because the Jews conspired to kill him, and he was let down in a basket from a window in the wall. <b>Galatians</b> makes clear that this was <b>3 years</b> after his conversion. <b>2 Corinthians</b> informs us that Damascus at this time was held by the Nabatean king <a href="#">Aretas IV Philopatri</a> s, who reigned from <b>9 B.C.</b> to <b>40 A.D.</b> , and that the Jews apparently appealed to Aretas's governor (ethnarch, ἐθνάρχης), who tried to arrest Saul.	Acts 9:23-25	2 Cor. 11:32-33 Gal. 1:18
Saul returns to Jerusalem	Jerusalem		He is initially rejected by the disciples out of fear, but after <b>Barnabas</b> introduces him to some of the apostles he is accepted. ( <b>Galatians</b> clarifies that the only apostles that Saul met then were actually <b>Cephas (Peter)</b> and “ <b>James</b> the Lord's brother”.) He also preaches boldly throughout the city.	Acts 9:26-28	Gal. 1:18-20
Saul spends <b>5 years</b> at home in Tarsus	Tarsus	38?-43	Because of further death threats he is sent home to Tarsus in Cilicia. (This time period was calculated indirectly from all of the other figures given here.) We are told nothing about what Paul did during this long period of time, but some indirect evidence suggests that he continued to evangelize boldly, as he always did, from his conversion on, and even that he planted several churches during this time. We are told that Paul and <b>Silas</b> , after leaving Antioch at the beginning of the <b>Second Missionary Journey</b> around <b>late 49</b> , “went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches” (Acts 15:41). However, on the <b>First Missionary Journey</b> Paul and <b>Barnabas</b> had not travelled through Cilicia or the part of Syria north of Antioch, so they did not plant those churches then. It is quite probable that Paul had planted one or more churches in Tarsus while he was living there, and perhaps in nearby places as well, and many of the commentators agree. (These “believers in...Syria and Cilicia” are also mentioned in Acts 15:23 as some who would receive the report from the Jerusalem council, and in fact are specified as including Gentiles, suggesting that Paul had begun to follow even this early his mandate to evangelize the Gentiles. This mandate is recorded in Acts 22:11 and 26:17. However, some of these churches may have been founded later from the church in Antioch.)	Acts 9:29-30 (Acts 15:41)	Gal. 1:21
Start of Antioch church	Antioch (in Syria)	43?	Jewish believers fleeing from persecution evangelize Gentiles in Antioch, forming the first multiethnic church that we hear about. (But see previous line.)	Acts 11:19-21	
<b>Barnabas</b> sent from Jerusalem	”	43	<b>Barnabas</b> <sup>3</sup> takes the leadership there.	Acts 11:22-24	
<b>Barnabas</b> brings Paul from Tarsus	”	43-44	“So for a <b>whole year Barnabas</b> and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people.”	Acts 11:25-26	Gal. 1:21

Paul's celestial vision	Antioch??	43-44?	Saul (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 <a href="#">New Testament chronology page</a> .) 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 in 38 (3 years after his conversion) mentioned in Acts 9:26-30 and Galatians 1:18-19. (Search for Acts 22:17 on <a href="#">this page</a> to see arguments for and against this theory.)		2 Cor. 12:2-4
Collection for Judea famine and Jerusalem visit	Antioch, Jerusalem	44	Barnabas and Saul 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), and is never mentioned after this in Acts or in any of the New Testament letters. Every mention of James after this is to James the Lord's brother.	Acts 12:1-2	
			Miraculous escape of Peter, first mention of John Mark (Acts 12:12).	Acts 12:3-19	
		44	Death of Herod (Agrippa I).	Acts 12:19-24	
			Barnabas and Saul return home to Antioch, taking John Mark with them.	Acts 12:25	
First Missionary Journey	Cyprus, Pamphylia, Galatia	Time unknown	Barnabas and Saul set out on their First Missionary Journey into Cyprus (Barnabas's home province, Acts 4:36) and 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. Up to this point Luke has always called Paul "Saul", but in Acts 13:9 Luke says: "Then Saul, who was also called Paul...", after which he switches entirely to calling him "Paul", with no further explanation. According to Baker's New Testament Commentary the name Paul, Greek Παῦλος, is a loan word from Latin "paulus" which means "the little one", perhaps a nickname like "shorty" indicating his stature. Apparently not just Luke but everyone else, including Paul himself in his letters, uses this name from here on, except when Paul is recounting his conversion in Acts 22:7,13 and 26:14. Also, up until now Luke has always said "Barnabas and Saul", never "Saul and Barnabas", but from here on he usually says "Paul and Barnabas", seldom "Barnabas and Paul", suggesting that the leadership has shifted from Barnabas to Paul.	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, and Paul and Barnabas attended from Antioch. See also the comment on Galatians 2:1-10 in the discussion of the date of writing of Galatians below. James (the brother of Jesus) and the apostles Simon Peter (Cephas) and John confirmed that they should not put a heavy yoke on the Gentiles.  (The apostle John is never mentioned again in Acts or anywhere else in Paul's letters. The only place he is mentioned after this is several times in the book of Revelation. He is not even mentioned in the three letters that John wrote, except in the titles of these letters. The writer of 3 John calls himself simply "the elder".)	Acts 15:4-35	Gal. 2:1-10
				(3 John 1, Rev. 1:1,4,9, 22:8)	

			Galatians 2:1-3 is the earliest mention of <b>Titus</b> , who surprisingly is never mentioned by name in <b>Acts</b> , though other important disciples and companions of Paul, like <b>Timothy</b> , figure largely there. <sup>4</sup> Thus the only information we have about him is found in Paul's letters. He does not appear again for another <b>8 years</b> , when he is mentioned repeatedly in <b>2 Corinthians</b> (see multiple references in the <b>year 57</b> below). He was evidently a Greek, possibly from Antioch, and was apparently never circumcised (as this passage shows), unlike <b>Timothy</b> (Acts 16:3).		Gal. 2:1-3
			This event is also the earliest mention of <b>Silas</b> (called <b>Silvanus</b> 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 <b>Silas</b> reappears in Antioch <b>a few months</b> later as Paul's companion on his <b>Second Missionary Journey</b> . <sup>5</sup>	Acts 15:22, 27,32,(33,34) (1 Peter 5:12)	
Visit of <b>Peter</b> to Antioch	Antioch	49??	<b>Peter</b> 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 <b>James</b> (the brother of Jesus) in Jerusalem, and leads many other Jews astray, including <b>Barnabas</b> , but is confronted by Paul. This event is only mentioned in <b>Galatians</b> . Most commentators take the natural sequence of events in <b>Galatians</b> 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, since it seems to follow naturally after the account in <b>Galatians</b> of the Council in Jerusalem, and would not likely have been separated from it by the <b>Second Missionary Journey</b> . In any case it occurred before the writing of <b>Galatians</b> , but this is itself quite uncertain, so doesn't help much.		Gal. 2:11-14
Start of <b>Second Missionary Journey</b>	Antioch (in Syria)	Late 49?	Paul and <b>Barnabas</b> prepare to leave again on a <b>Second Missionary Journey</b> , but have a serious disagreement about whether to take along his cousin <b>John Mark</b> , who had abandoned them in the middle of the <b>First Missionary Journey</b> (Acts 13:13), and part company. <b>Barnabas</b> and <b>John Mark</b> set out for Cyprus, whereas Paul sets out for Syria, accompanied this time by <b>Silas</b> .  (However, this rift between Paul and <b>Barnabas</b> and <b>John Mark</b> turns out not to have been permanent: <b>Barnabas</b> is mentioned several times in Paul's letters (see endnote 3), always positively, and <b>John Mark</b> 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 being Paul's fellow worker and sending greetings to <b>Philemon</b> .)  ( <b>John Mark</b> was apparently <b>Peter</b> 's companion later on, as is suggested in 1 Peter 5:13, and early tradition, likely reliable, says that he wrote the <b>Gospel of Mark</b> from Rome based on material provided by <b>Peter</b> .)	Acts 15:36-40  (1 Peter 5:13)	
	Syria and Cilicia		They go "through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches". See the discussion above at <b>38?-43</b> .	Acts 15:41	
	Derbe & Lystra		<b>Timothy</b> joins them in Lystra (his hometown) and is circumcised. Paul had probably met him <b>several years earlier</b> on his <b>First Missionary Journey</b> (see <a href="#">NT Chronology expanded</a> ).	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	

			<b>Luke</b> 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 Greek verb forms, and travels with them to Philippi. (See the “we” sections of <b>Acts</b> in <a href="#">NT Chronology expanded</a> .)	Acts 16:10-17	
	Philippi		Paul and <b>Silas</b> are arrested in Philippi (and plant the church there). (Their companions <b>Timothy</b> and <b>Luke</b> are not arrested with them.)	Acts 16:12-40	1 Thess. 2:2
			( <b>Luke</b> may have remained in Philippi for the next <b>9 years</b> , until <b>April 58</b> , since the next time he travels with Paul they leave from Philippi. See the “we” sections of <b>Acts</b> in <a href="#">NT Chronology expanded</a> .)	(Acts 20:5-6)	
	Thessalonica		Paul and <b>Silas</b> plant the church in Thessalonica.	Acts 17:1-9	1 Thess. 1:4-2:16, 3:4
	Berea		Paul and <b>Silas</b> are forced to leave Thessalonica (for Berea).	Acts 17:10-13	1 Thess. 2:17
	Athens		Paul reaches Athens, waits for <b>Silas</b> and <b>Timothy</b> .	Acts 17:14-34	(1 Thess. 3:1)
			<b>Silas</b> and <b>Timothy</b> arrive in Athens.		(1 Thess. 3:1)
			<b>Timothy</b> is immediately sent back to Thessalonica to see how the church is doing and to strengthen and encourage them.		1 Thess. 3:1-5
			<b>Silas</b> evidently also leaves Paul in Athens, since he is not with him when he leaves Athens, to also go to Macedonia, though apparently not to join <b>Timothy</b> , since they apparently do not travel together at all. <i>Baker’s New Testament Commentary</i> suggests that he might have been sent to Philippi, on a mission similar to <b>Timothy’s</b> .	(Acts 18:1,5)	
	Corinth	<b>50, January</b>	Paul moves on to Corinth and meets <b>Aquila</b> and <b>Priscilla</b> , who had recently come from Rome because of the <a href="#">expulsion of the Jews by Claudius</a> , which some external evidence suggests occurred in <b>49</b> , which fits perfectly into the time frame.	Acts 18:1-4	
			<b>Silas</b> arrives in Corinth from Macedonia before <b>Timothy</b> does.	Acts 18:5	(1 Thess. 3:6)
			<b>Timothy</b> arrives in Corinth from Thessalonica in Macedonia.	Acts 18:5	1 Thess. 3:6-10
<b>1 Thessalonians</b>	Corinth	<b>50 Timothy &amp; Silvanus (Silas)</b>	Paul immediately writes <b>1 Thessalonians</b> , with <b>Silas (Silvanus)</b> and <b>Timothy’s</b> 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 <b>Acts</b> . It is this cross-referencing that makes it clear that the letter was written from Corinth, immediately after the arrival of <b>Timothy</b> (and <b>Silas</b> ).		1 Thess. 1:1, 3:6
	Corinth		Paul plants the church in Corinth,	Acts 18:1-8	1 Cor. 3:6a
			with the important collaboration of <b>Silas (Silvanus)</b> and <b>Timothy</b> ,		2 Cor. 1:19
			and baptizes <b>Crispus</b> , the ruler of the synagogue,	Acts 18:8	1 Cor. 1:14
			<b>Gaius</b> (of Corinth), who will be his host for <b>3 months 7 years</b> later when he writes <b>Romans</b> ,		Rom. 16:23, 1 Cor. 1:14
			and the household of <b>Stephanas</b> ,		1 Cor. 1:16
			who were the very first converts in Corinth. <b>Stephanas</b> later visited him in Ephesus before he wrote <b>1 Corinthians</b> . (See below twice at <b>Winter 57-58</b> for more on <b>Gaius</b> .)		1 Cor. 16:15-18
<b>2 Thessalonians</b>	Corinth	<b>50-51 Timothy &amp; Silvanus (Silas)</b>	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 <b>1 Thessalonians</b> (2 Thess. 2:15). (This is the last information we have about <b>Silas / Silvanus</b> 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 <b>57</b> (as <b>Silvanus</b> ), but only looking back at this period. <b>Peter</b> later refers to a <b>Silvanus</b> in 1 Peter 5:12 as the coauthor of the letter, who may have been the same person.)		2 Thess. 1:1



	Corinth		Paul remains in Corinth for more than <b>1½ years</b> , 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 <b>Sosthenes</b> the synagogue ruler being beaten by his fellow Jews. He may later have become a believer and been the same <b>Sosthenes</b> who coauthored <b>1 Corinthians</b> with Paul <b>6 years</b> later.	Acts 18:12-17	
	Ephesus	Late 51?	Paul leaves Corinth with <b>Priscilla</b> and <b>Aquila</b> and goes to Ephesus, ministering briefly and leaving <b>Priscilla</b> and <b>Aquila</b> there. They probably began the planting of the church that met in their home (mentioned <b>5½ years</b> later by Paul in 1 Corinthians 16:19) as early as this, though Paul would not rejoin them to help expand the work until <b>2 or 3 years</b> later. <sup>6</sup>	Acts 18:18-20	
	Antioch	Late 51?	Paul leaves Ephesus and returns to Antioch, apparently alone, completing the <b>Second Missionary Journey</b> .	Acts 18:21-22	
In Antioch	Antioch	Late 51?- Early 54?	“After spending some time there...” Paul continues to minister in Antioch some <b>2 years</b> . <i>(This 2-year figure for Paul’s stay in Antioch is not provided in the text of Acts. Instead, I calculated it from both ends, from the two known dates of Gallio in 51 and Porcius Festus in 60, both known from extra-biblical sources and shown in lavender on the <a href="#">New Testament chronology</a> page), and then using other clues in the text to work towards the middle. Thus, the date of the end of the <b>Second Missionary Journey</b> depends on when Gallio was proconsul in Achaia in mid-51, whereas the start of the <b>Third Missionary Journey</b> depends on when Porcius Festus became procurator of Judea in mid-60, and is then calculated back to early 54 by using all of the other figures provided in the text of Acts.<sup>7</sup> (For both of these dates see <a href="#">Chronology of the Early Church</a>.) Another evidence of the reliability of the Bible is that all of these figures fit nicely into the time available.)</i>	Acts 18:23a	
Galatians	??	50’s?	Galatians 2:1-10 is almost certainly (in my opinion, weighing all the evidence) talking about the Council in Jerusalem, which probably occurred in <b>early 49</b> (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 <b>Titus</b> , and one of the few mentions of <b>Barnabas</b> outside of Acts. See the Council in Jerusalem above.) Other events and time spans mentioned in <b>Galatians</b> from the <b>year 35</b> to the <b>year 49</b> can be seen above and on my <a href="#">New Testament chronology page</a> . Galatia was not a city, but a Roman province (shown in green on the <a href="#">map</a> 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 <b>Missionary Journeys</b> . Evidently this letter was intended to be circulated among all of these churches.		
Start of Third	Antioch	Early 54?	“...he departed...” Paul leaves Antioch to begin his <b>Third Missionary Journey</b> , apparently alone, which was unusual, or else his companions are simply not mentioned.	Acts 18:23b	

Missionary Journey	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 <b>First Missionary Journey</b> and visited on his <b>Second Missionary Journey</b> and again here.</p> <p>As for where in Phrygia there were believers, this is not clear. On the <b>Second Missionary Journey</b> around <b>49</b> he and <b>Silas</b> 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 <b>Colossians</b> 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)		<b>Apollos</b> arrives in Ephesus; <b>Priscilla</b> and <b>Aquila</b> correct his doctrine.	Acts 18:24-26	
	(Corinth)		<b>Apollos</b> 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 <b>1½ years</b> in Corinth in <b>50 and 51</b> , and when he says “ <b>Apollos</b> watered it” he is referring to this period of time when <b>Apollos</b> was in Corinth. ( <b>Apollos</b> and Paul had evidently not yet met at this point, since Paul will only arrive in Ephesus after <b>Apollos</b> left. See comments in <b>Spring 57</b> below.)	Acts 18:27-19:1a	1 Cor. 3:6b
	Ephesus	<b>Mid 54?</b>	Paul arrives in Ephesus at some time during <b>Apollos</b> ’s time in Corinth, and he will stay there for <b>3 years</b> , continuing the work of planting a church there that was started by <b>Priscilla</b> and <b>Aquila</b> . They are not mentioned here or again in <b>Acts</b> , but are clearly still there and working with Paul, as 1 Corinthians 16:19 suggests (see more below at <b>1 Corinthians</b> ). <sup>8</sup> (For more details about this time period, see my <a href="#">New Testament chronology page</a> .)	Acts 19:1-20	
(earlier letter to the Corinthians)	<b>Ephesus??</b>	<b>??</b>	<b>1 Corinthians</b> was not Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians: there was an <b>earlier letter</b> about which we know very little. It may have been written during this time.		1 Cor. 5:9-10
(earlier letter from the Corinthians)	( <b>Corinth</b> )	<b>56??</b>	The Corinthians had also written an <b>earlier letter</b> 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 <b>3 years</b> to answer their important questions.		1 Cor. 7:1
	Ephesus		Sometime before the writing of <b>1 Corinthians</b> , Paul is visited in Ephesus by <b>Stephanas</b> , <b>Fortunatus</b> , and <b>Achaicus</b> from the church in Corinth, and is encouraged and refreshed by them. <b>Stephanas</b> was one of the few people that Paul had baptized during his initial stay in Corinth in <b>50-51</b> . They could have brought the letter from the Corinthians to Paul.		1 Cor. 16:15-18, 1:14
		<b>Early 57?</b>	Paul’s initial plans (as expressed in 2 Cor. 1:15-2:4) were to visit Corinth first after leaving Ephesus, but he changes his mind before writing <b>1 Corinthians</b> , because of the problems in the church in Corinth, and decides to visit Macedonia first, but to write them a letter ( <b>1 Corinthians</b> ) first to address the problems. This new plan is expressed in 1 Cor. 16:6-8 and in Acts 19:21.	Acts 19:21	2 Cor. 1:15-2:4 1 Cor. 16:6-8

			<p>Paul sends <b>Timothy</b> and <b>Erastus</b> ahead to Macedonia, with the intention that they continue on to Corinth if possible, as he makes clear in two places in <b>1 Corinthians</b>, 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 <b>Timothy</b> is still in Macedonia at the writing of <b>2 Corinthians</b> a few months later, and since Paul found it necessary to send <b>Titus</b> to Corinth in the meantime (see below), it seems probable that they never got there.</p> <p>Paul “himself stayed in Asia for a while” (Acts 19:22), specifically planning to stay until Pentecost (1 Cor. 16:8).</p>	Acts 19:22	1 Cor. 4:17 1 Cor. 16:10-11
1 Corinthians	Ephesus	Spring 57? Sosthenes <sup>9</sup>	<p>Paul writes <b>1 Corinthians</b> from Ephesus before Pentecost, planning to spend the winter in Corinth. I believe that this is the letter later referred to in <b>2 Corinthians</b>, though others have assumed an intermediate letter that was even more severe than <b>1 Corinthians</b>!</p> <p>Apparently <b>Apollos</b> is back in Ephesus from his time of “watering the seed” in Corinth (see above), and evidently he and Paul first meet here at some point during Paul’s 3-year stay in Ephesus. According to 1 Cor. 16:12, Paul had wanted to send him back to Corinth “with the other brothers” who were taking this letter, but it was not convenient, and he would come “when he has opportunity”. (Among the Corinthians factions had developed around Paul and <b>Apollos</b> and others like <b>Cephas (Peter)</b>, as various passages in the book show, but clearly Paul and <b>Apollos</b> feel no rivalry and are in perfect unity.)</p> <p>This letter includes the only confirmation that Jesus appeared separately to <b>Cephas (Peter)</b> 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 <b>James</b> after the resurrection.</p> <p>This letter also includes one of the few mentions of <b>Barnabas</b> outside <b>Acts</b>, where Paul says, “is it only I and <b>Barnabas</b> who must work for a living?”, as distinguished from others like <b>Cephas (Peter)</b>. (<b>Simon Peter</b> has figured largely in <b>Acts</b> and in two of Paul’s letters, <b>Galatians</b> and <b>1 Corinthians</b>. The only other time he is mentioned in the latter part of the New Testament is as the writer of <b>1 and 2 Peter</b>.)</p> <p><b>Aquila</b> and <b>Priscilla</b> are still living in Ephesus,<sup>10</sup> having presumably lived there for the last 5½ years, since around late 51. They were mentioned once in the interim, around early 54, in Acts 18:24-26. Paul says that they and “the church [that meets] in their house” send greetings, which is clearly not the entire Christian church in Ephesus at the time, since the very next verse says “All the brothers [and sisters] send you greetings” (ESV). This might suggest that there were multiple full churches.<sup>11</sup> Whether this was more of a Bible study or an official church congregation is unclear. (Similar questions arise in Romans 16:5, Colossians 4:15, and Philemon 2.)</p>		1 Cor. 1:1 1 Cor. 16:6-8 2 Cor. 2:3-4, 7:8,12
					1 Cor. 16:12 (1:12, 3:4-9,22, 4:6)
					1 Cor. 15:5
					1 Cor. 15:7
					1 Cor. 9:5-6
					(1 Peter 1:1) (2 Peter 1:1)
					1 Cor. 16:19
	Ephesus		<p>At some point after writing <b>1 Corinthians</b> Paul apparently sends <b>Titus</b> 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 <b>Titus</b> appears in the record, after the Council in Jerusalem 8 years earlier.</p>		(2 Cor. 2:12-13, 7:5-8, 7:13-15)
Riot in Ephesus		May-June 57?	<p>The event that brings about Paul’s departure from Ephesus is a major riot that occurs by idol worshippers against the Christians. <b>Gaius</b> and <b>Aristarchus</b>, described as “Macedonians who were Paul’s companions in travel” are with Paul during the riot, and are seized and dragged along by the crowd.</p>	Acts 19:23-41	



“hardships we suffered in the province of Asia”	Ephesus?	(probably 54-57)	This riot could have been the “hardships we suffered in the province of Asia” that Paul mentions in 2 Cor. 1:8-10, though this is just one possibility. (As <i>Baker’s New Testament Commentary</i> and a number of other commentators point out, Paul’s friends kept him relatively safe during the riot, so it seems unlikely that he “despaired even of life”.) It could just as easily have been an event that is not related by <b>Luke</b> in <b>Acts</b> , as explained in “(Other hardships Paul suffered at some point)” below.		2 Cor. 1:8-10
		May-June 57?	Paul leaves Ephesus for Macedonia, presumably at Pentecost (unless the riot prompted him to leave earlier, which is unclear). Acts 20:1 makes it sound like he was alone, but from 2 Cor. 7:5-7 we know that he was not alone, because of the first person plural Greek verb forms and pronouns used (“we”, “us”, “ours”). Who was with him? It was not <b>Luke</b> , who would not rejoin Paul’s party until <b>April 58</b> when they leave Philippi (see the “we” sections of <b>Acts</b> in <a href="#">NT Chronology expanded</a> ). Nor was it <b>Timothy</b> or <b>Erastus</b> , who had been sent ahead to Macedonia (Acts 19:22). <a href="#">Coneybear and Howson</a> (page <a href="https://archive.org/stream/lifeepistlesofsa00will#page/479/mode/2up">https://archive.org/stream/lifeepistlesofsa00will#page/479/mode/2up</a> ) suggest that it was probably <b>Tychicus</b> and <b>Trophimus</b> , since they are with him later in Corinth (Acts 20:4) and were both from the province of Asia, <b>Trophimus</b> specifically from Ephesus (Acts 21:29) and <b>Tychicus</b> probably so. <a href="#">John Phillips</a> also proposes this, and it seems quite likely.	Acts 20:1-2	(1 Cor. 16:8) (2 Cor. 7:5-7)
	Troas		He passes through Troas, expecting to find <b>Titus</b> there with news of his visit to Corinth, and apparently plans to stay there a while, but when he does not find <b>Titus</b> there, he hurries on to Macedonia.		2 Cor. 2:12-13
	Macedonia		He arrives in Macedonia (city not specified), and finds <b>Titus</b> there with good news from Corinth.	Acts 20:2	2 Cor. 7:5-8, 7:13-15
(Other hardships Paul suffered at some point)		(all before writing 2 Corinthians in Fall 57)	Here Paul gives a long list of things he suffered at some point in his ministry, and a number of these things are not related at all by <b>Luke</b> in <b>Acts</b> , so we know that <b>Acts</b> is an incomplete narrative. Specifically, <b>Luke</b> only mentions one imprisonment before Paul wrote <b>2 Corinthians</b> , but evidently there were more; <b>Luke</b> mentions no cases of the Jews’ 39 lashes, and only one case of a beating of any kind; and the only shipwreck <b>Luke</b> mentions is in Acts 27, <b>3 years</b> after writing <b>2 Corinthians</b> .		2 Cor. 11:23-27
2 Corinthians	Macedonia (city not specified)	Fall 57? <b>Timothy</b> Carriers: <b>Titus</b> (8:16-17) & 2 others (8:18-19,22, 12:18)	Paul writes <b>2 Corinthians</b> from Macedonia, after experiencing more severe trials there. He apparently sends <b>Titus</b> 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 <b>Luke</b> (who may have lived in Philippi from <b>Late 49</b> until <b>April 58</b> ; see the “we” sections of <b>Acts</b> in <a href="#">NT Chronology expanded</a> ), but if so he returned to Macedonia before Paul went there to spend the <b>winter</b> , since he does not travel again with Paul until <b>April 58</b> . However, it could just as easily have been someone else. (See <a href="http://biblehub.com/2_corinthians/8-18.htm">biblehub.com/2_corinthians/8-18.htm</a> , especially Jamieson-Fausset-Brown.) See also endnote 4. The second is similarly unknown; various opinions can be seen at <a href="http://biblehub.com/2_corinthians/8-22.htm">biblehub.com/2_corinthians/8-22.htm</a> .		2 Cor. 2:13, 7:5, 8:6, 8:16-24, 12:18
	Corinth	Winter 57-58?	Paul arrives in Corinth in Achaia, stays <b>3 months</b> , 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 <b>Gaius</b> (of Corinth), whom he had baptized there <b>7 years</b> earlier. (See more below.)	Rom. 16:23	1 Cor. 1:14
			This was Paul’s third visit to Corinth. The first visit was clearly his <b>1½-years</b> stay (2 Cor. 18:11) in <b>50-51</b> , 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 <b>2 Corinthians</b> . Some (e.g. the <i>New Bible Dictionary</i> and <i>Baker’s New Testament Commentary</i> ) have suggested that this first painful visit was <i>after</i> writing <b>1 Corinthians</b> , but this would be hard to fit into the tight time frame of the <b>year 57</b> . Others (e.g. <i>Expositor’s Greek Testament</i> ) suggest that it was during Paul’s <b>3-year</b> stay in Ephesus in <b>54-57</b> .)		2 Cor. 12:14, 13:1, 2:1

Romans	Corinth	Winter 57-58?	Paul writes <b>Romans</b> from Corinth. This is suggested by the following facts:		
		Carrier: <b>Phoebe?</b> (Rom. 16:1-2)	1. Paul asks the Roman Christians to give <b>Phoebe</b> a good reception. She was from the church in Cenchræe, a town near Corinth. This letter may have been delivered by her.		Romans 16:1-2
		Amanuensis or personal secretary: <b>Tertius</b> (Rom. 16:22)	2. The <b>Gaius</b> in Corinth whom Paul had baptized is likely the same <b>Gaius</b> who provided hospitality to Paul and many others mentioned in <b>Romans</b> (or, following translations like the ESV: “ <b>Gaius</b> , who is host to me and to the whole church”, some commentators think that “the whole church” in Corinth met at his house). He seems to be a native of Corinth whom Paul met there, and who remained there for at least the next <b>7 years</b> . In this case he would not be the same as <b>Gaius</b> the Macedonian who was with Paul in Ephesus in Acts 19:29. Nor would he be the same as <b>Gaius</b> of Derbe who was actually with Paul in Corinth in Acts 20:4 at the same time that Paul would have baptized this <b>Gaius</b> , 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 <b>Gaius</b> apparently stayed. (One other <b>Gaius</b> is mentioned in the New Testament, as the addressee of the book of <b>3 John</b> , but it is impossible to know if he is to be identified with any of the <b>Gaiuses</b> associated with Paul.)	1 Cor. 1:14  (3 John 1)	Romans 16:23
			3. <b>Erastus</b> , the “city treasurer” (ESV) or “city’s director of public works” (NIV) (ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως) mentioned in <b>Romans</b> , is likely the same <b>Erastus</b> that Paul will leave behind in Corinth a decade later. He is also likely mentioned in the <a href="#">Erastus Inscription</a> (with pictures <a href="#">here</a> ), found in Corinth in 1929. <sup>12</sup> (I personally doubt that he was the same <b>Erastus</b> 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.)	2 Tim. 4:20	Romans 16:23
			4. <b>Timothy</b> and <b>Sosipater</b> are with Paul as he writes, and <b>Timothy</b> and <b>Sopater</b> (similar though not identical name, but evidently the same person) accompanied Paul to Jerusalem right at the end of his <b>Third Missionary Journey</b> , soon after his departure from Corinth.	Acts 20:4	Romans 16:21
			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 <b>Third Missionary Journey</b> .	Acts 19:21	Romans 15:23-29
			<b>Priscilla</b> and <b>Aquila</b> are evidently now living in Rome again, having moved back there in the <b>last few months</b> , since they were still in Ephesus at the writing of <b>1 Corinthians</b> in <b>Spring 57</b> , and Paul greets them and “the church [that meets] in their house”. Claudius died in <b>54</b> (see <a href="#">NT Chronology expanded</a> ), so presumably his expulsion decree was no longer in force, and Rome may have been their home town (or at least <b>Priscilla</b> ’s, since Acts 18:2 says <b>Aquila</b> was from Pontus).		Romans 16:3-5
		End of <b>Third Missionary Journey</b>		<b>Early 58</b>	Paul leaves Corinth. “ <b>Sopater</b> the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; and of the Thessalonians, <b>Aristarchus</b> and Secundus; and <b>Gaius</b> of Derbe, and <b>Timothy</b> ; and the Asians, <b>Tychicus</b> and <b>Trophimus</b> .”
Troas			The others go on ahead to wait at Troas.	Acts 20:5	
Philippi			Paul returns to Macedonia (Philippi) alone.	Acts 20:(3b),(6)	
Troas	<b>58, April</b>		He leaves Philippi (after Unleavened Bread), accompanied again by <b>Luke</b> , who had not travelled with him since <b>Late 49</b> , and who may have remained in Philippi during the intervening <b>9 years</b> . <b>Luke</b> may have remained with him for the rest of his life. See the “we” sections of <b>Acts</b> in <a href="#">NT Chronology expanded</a> . They arrive in Troas, where they meet the brothers who had gone on ahead. They stay there <b>7 days</b> .	Acts 20:5-6	
			Paul raises Eutychus the <b>last day</b> of his visit.	Acts 20:7-12	
			Travel to Miletus	Acts 20:13-16	
Miletus			Paul speaks to the Ephesian elders	Acts 20:17-38	

			Travel to Jerusalem	Acts 20:1-14	
	Jerusalem	58, May-June	They arrive in Jerusalem, probably by Pentecost. This completes the <b>Third Missionary Journey</b> . (It is not stated how many made the entire trip from Troas to Jerusalem, but at least Paul, <b>Luke</b> , <b>Trophimus</b> , and <b>Aristarchus</b> did, since we hear about these later. <i>Baker's New Testament Commentary</i> suggests that "The seven men [mentioned in Acts 20:4], delegates from various churches [who were sending money for the church in Jerusalem], accompanied Paul to protect him from physical harm. Their numbers also safeguarded the money they were bringing to the Jerusalem church." Thus it is probable that the entire group made the trip, 9 in all.)	Acts 21:15 (Acts 20:16)	
	Jerusalem		They visit <b>James</b> and the elders of the Jerusalem church and give a report. This is the last mention of <b>James</b> in <b>Acts</b> or any of the letters except in <b>James</b> , the letter he wrote, and <b>Jude</b> , the letter his brother wrote. <b>Tradition</b> suggests that he was martyred <b>not too many years</b> after this, perhaps as early as <b>62</b> . (Apparently by this point the apostles are no longer an important part of the leadership in Jerusalem, even though at the Council in Jerusalem <b>9 years</b> earlier mentioned in Acts 15 they definitely are. They are never mentioned again after Acts 16:4, shortly after the Council. Perhaps many have moved elsewhere or possibly even died.)	Acts 21:17-19 (James 1:1) (Jude 1)	
The leaders suggest a plan for Paul to improve his reputation among the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, which Paul follows.			Acts 21:20-26		
Paul is arrested in Jerusalem (as a result of a misunderstanding concerning <b>Trophimus</b> ). After various turmoils the decision is made to move him to Caesarea for his own safety.			Acts 21:17-23:30		
<b>Imprisonment in Caesarea</b>	Caesarea	Summer 58-Summer 60	Paul is imprisoned for <b>2 years</b> in Caesarea. The second "we" section of <b>Acts</b> ends with Acts 21:25 (21:18 is the last usage of "we" or "us", but <b>Luke</b> was clearly there for the rest of the meeting), but this does not prove that <b>Luke</b> 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 <b>Acts</b> in <a href="#">NT Chronology expanded</a> .	Acts 23:31-26:32	
<b>Journey to Rome</b>		Summer 60-January 61	Paul is sent to Rome by ship, again accompanied by <b>Luke</b> (see the "we" sections of <b>Acts</b> in <a href="#">NT Chronology expanded</a> ) and by <b>Aristarchus</b> (Acts 27:2), who may have stayed with them since leaving Corinth in <b>Early 58</b> . They are shipwrecked on the way.	Acts 27:1-28:16	
<b>Start of First Roman Imprisonment</b>	Rome	January 61	Paul arrives in Rome, where he will be imprisoned for <b>2 years</b> , his <b>First Roman Imprisonment</b> . The four letters written during this time are commonly called the <i>Prison Epistles</i> . (He was also in prison when he wrote <b>2 Timothy</b> , 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: <b>Tychicus</b> (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 <a href="#">Marcion</a>. The problem with this idea is that the Greek seems to require an expressed location:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="779 243 1994 357"> <tr> <td>...</td> <td>τοῖς</td> <td>ἀγίοις</td> <td>τοῖς</td> <td>οὖσιν</td> <td>[ἐν</td> <td>Ἐφέσῳ]</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</td> <td>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></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 19<sup>th</sup> 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,<sup>13</sup> after the Ephesians had read it, like the letter to the <b>Galatians</b>. 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	ἀγίοις	τοῖς	οὖσιν	[ἐν	Ἐφέσῳ]	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	ἀγίοις	τοῖς	οὖσιν	[ἐν	Ἐφέσῳ]	καὶ	πιστοῖς	ἐν	Χριστῷ	Ἰησοῦ·	...																																
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Philippians	Rome	Late 62- Early 63 <b>Timothy</b>	<p>Carrier: <b>Epaphroditus</b> (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 <b>late 62 or early 63</b>. He hopes to send <b>Timothy</b> to them soon (2:19-23), though evidently later than <b>Epaphroditus</b> who carried the letter.</p>		Php. 1:1 Php. 2:25, 4:18 Php. 2:19-23																																							
Colossians, Philemon	Rome	Late 62- Early 63 <b>Timothy</b>  Carriers: <b>Onesimus</b> (Phm. 10-21, Col. 4:9) & <b>Tychicus</b> (Col. 4:7-8).	<p>These two letters were evidently written at the same time, and delivered together to Colossae, the first to the church in general, and the second personally to <b>Philemon</b>, and to <b>Apphia</b> and <b>Archippus</b>, probably members of his family, most commentators assuming them to be his wife and son, the latter also mentioned in Colossians 4:17; the letter is also addressed to “the church (or perhaps Bible study; see <b>1 Corinthians</b> above) [that meets] in your (singular, i.e. <b>Philemon</b>’s) house” (<b>Philemon</b> was the owner and head of the family). The letters were delivered by <b>Philemon</b>’s runaway slave <b>Onesimus</b>, who had run away to Rome, and there met Paul and became a Christian, and by <b>Tychicus</b> (though he is not mentioned in <b>Philemon</b>, so it is possible that <b>Onesimus</b> delivered <b>Philemon</b> personally and privately). 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 <b>late 62 or early 63</b>, around the same time as <b>Philippians</b>.</p>		Col. 1:1-2 Col. 4:17 Phm. 1 Phm. 2 Phm. 10																																							



			<p>Paul did not apparently plant the churches in Colossae and Laodicea, nor had he apparently ever visited them (Col. 1:4,7-9, 2:1), though he would probably have passed through both cities around 54 on his <b>Third Missionary Journey</b>, since both were on the main road from Antioch in Pisidia to Ephesus. Those churches, and apparently a third one in nearby Hierapolis,<sup>14</sup> were apparently planted by Paul’s colleague <b>Epaphras</b> (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 <b>3-year</b> stay at Ephesus from 54 to 57. Thus <b>Epaphras</b> may have been sent by Paul and the Ephesian church back to his home area to evangelize and plant these churches. However, by the time these letters were written he was a prisoner in Rome along with Paul, as stated in Philemon 23, though we are not given any further information. He is not mentioned outside these two letters.</p> <p>But Paul clearly knows <b>Philemon</b> and his family (Phm. 1-2,7,17,22), had evidently led him to the Lord (Phm. 19), and had worked together with him (Phm. 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 <b>Colossians</b> and <b>Ephesians</b> were delivered by <b>Tychicus</b>. If this is true, then all four of the <i>Prison Epistles</i> would have been written in <b>late 62 or early 63</b>.</p> <p><b>Luke</b> is mentioned in Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24 as being with Paul at this time and sending greetings, confirming the evidence of <b>Acts</b>. (See the “we” sections of <b>Acts</b> in <a href="#">NT Chronology expanded</a>.) <b>John Mark</b>, the cousin of <b>Barnabas</b>, is also mentioned in Colossians 4:10 and Philemon 24 as being with Paul and sending greetings.</p> <p>A certain <b>Demas</b> is mentioned in Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24 as sending greetings, and is called Paul’s “fellow worker” in Philemon 24, in the same category as <b>Luke</b>, <b>John Mark</b>, and <b>Aristarchus</b>, and other important figures throughout Paul’s letters. The only other time he is mentioned is in 2 Timothy 4:10 some <b>5 years</b> later, where he proves to be a disappointment to Paul, being described as “in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica”.</p> <p><b>Aristarchus</b> is also mentioned in Colossians 4:10 and Philemon 24 as sending greetings, and is called Paul’s “fellow worker” in Philemon 24 and “fellow prisoner” in Colossians 4:10, suggesting that he was imprisoned after their arrival in Rome, though we have no particulars, and are told no more about him after this. We have seen him several times before as Paul’s companion, starting with the end of Paul’s ministry in Ephesus in 57. He marks a notable contrast to <b>Demas</b>, since he was evidently willing to go to prison for the sake of the gospel.</p>		<p>Col. 1:7-8, 4:12-13, Phm. 23</p> <p>Phm. 1-2,7,17,19, 22</p> <p>Col. 4:10,14 Phm. 24</p> <p>2 Tim. 4:10</p> <p>Col. 4:14 Phm. 24</p> <p>Col. 4:10 Phm. 24</p>
End of <b>First Roman Imprisonment</b>	Rome	<b>Early 63</b>	Paul is evidently released from prison, since <b>Luke</b> suggests in Acts 28:30 that he was released after a <b>2-year</b> imprisonment.	(Acts 28:30)	
<b>Acts</b> (written by <b>Luke</b> )	??	<b>63?</b>	This is obviously the earliest possible time for the writing of the book of <b>Acts</b> , 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 <b>Luke</b> 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 <b>2 Timothy</b> (2 Tim. 4:11). Further evidence is found here: <a href="http://carm.org/when-was-acts-written">carm.org/when-was-acts-written</a> .		



	Various locations		Paul's travels after this point are difficult to follow, but see <a href="#">Paul's Life After his First Imprisonment</a> . 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?	Written to <b>Timothy</b> , his long-time disciple. Paul is not in prison, but is evidently in Macedonia (1:3), having recently left <b>Timothy</b> in Ephesus. This is evidently later than the events in <b>Acts</b> , so it falls in the <b>years between his two imprisonments</b> .		1 Tim. 1:2 1 Tim. 1:3
Titus	??	64-66?	<p>Written to <b>Titus</b>, his long-time disciple. Paul is not in prison, having recently left <b>Titus</b> in Crete (1:5) to organize things, and is making plans to spend the <b>winter</b> 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 <b>Acts</b>, so it falls in the <b>years between his two imprisonments</b>.</p> <p>Several things seem to suggest that <b>Titus's</b> assignment in Crete was not permanent: first that Paul summons him to winter with him at Nicopolis (3:12), after Paul sends either an otherwise unknown <b>Artemas</b> or <b>Tychicus</b> who is well known in other contexts to replace him, 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 <b>Titus</b> we have the last reference to <b>Apollos</b> (3:13), whose ministry had been so important in Corinth. He apparently was in Crete along with an otherwise unknown lawyer <b>Zenas</b>. He may just have been visiting, or he may have been helping <b>Titus</b> in the churches there and was now ready to move on. Either way Paul again heartily endorses him.</p>	2 Tim. 4:10	Titus 1:1 Titus 1:5 Titus 3:12  Titus 3:12  Titus 3:13
2 Timothy	Rome	67-68?	<p>Written to <b>Timothy</b>, his long-time disciple. Paul is again in prison (1:8, 2:9), his <b>Second Roman Imprisonment</b>, 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 <b>Luke</b> (4:11).</p> <p>Apparently <b>Timothy</b> 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 <b>Luke</b>. Paul asks him to bring <b>John Mark</b> with him (4:11), so apparently he is also in Ephesus at this time. 4:12 suggests that perhaps Paul sent <b>Tychicus</b> from Rome to replace him (as he may have done with <b>Titus</b>). However, again church tradition (for what it is worth) suggests that he remained in Ephesus until his death.</p> <p><b>Priscilla</b> and <b>Aquila</b> have evidently moved back to Ephesus from Rome, where we last saw them <b>10 years</b> earlier, and Paul greets them.</p> <p>We also get a last glimpse of <b>Trophimus</b>, whom Paul left sick in Miletus.</p> <p>The last glimpse we get of <b>Timothy</b> in the New Testament seems to be at the end of the book of <b>Hebrews</b>, whose author is unknown, where we are informed that "our brother <b>Timothy</b> has been released". Nowhere in <b>Acts</b> or Paul's letters are we told that <b>Timothy</b> was imprisoned, so it seems likely that <b>Hebrews</b> was written after <b>2 Timothy</b>, and that <b>Timothy</b> was imprisoned and released after the writing of <b>2 Timothy</b>.</p>		2 Tim. 1:1  2 Tim. 4:19 2 Tim. 4:20 Heb. 13:23

### 3. The Map



● 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)

The links in the map above are not clickable. The first link is simply this page; the second link can be clicked on here: [commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:RomanEmpire\\_117.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:RomanEmpire_117.svg).

\* In Acts 27:27 **Luke** says that, as their storm-driven ship approached land at Malta (in some versions Melita), “we were being driven across the Adriatic Sea”. However, this could not possibly have been the Adriatic Sea as we now understand it, the “[body of water separating the Italian Peninsula from the Balkan Peninsula](#)”, but was clearly much farther south, as the track of the Journey to Rome in the map above shows. However, the NIV footnote for this verse says, “In ancient times the name referred to an area extending well south of Italy”, and this is confirmed by the article by F. F. Bruce on the Sea of Adria in the *New Bible Dictionary*:

“Adria. The ‘sea of Adria’ (Acts 27:27), across which the ship of the Alexandrian grain fleet, which was taking Paul to Italy, drifted in a W direction for 14 days, was the Central Mediterranean, including the Ionian Sea (cf. Strabo, *Geog.* 2. 5. 20; Jos. Vita 15; Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 5. 25. 3; Ptolemy, *Geog.* 3. 4. 1; 15. 1). It is to be distinguished from the *gulf* of Adria (cf. the town of Adria or Hadria N of the Po), which is known to us as the Adriatic Sea.”

This web page also confirms that this area was considered part of the Adriatic Sea at that time: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adriatic\\_Sea#Name](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adriatic_Sea#Name).

#### 4. Why have I not included the chronology of other books of the New Testament?

Why have I not included in the chart above the dates when the 4 gospels were written, or those of the New Testament letters by other writers (often called the “General Epistles”) or the book of Revelation? The short answer to that is that the dating of those books is much less clear than the dating of Paul’s letters or the book of Acts. The one exception is Revelation, which I have shown at [the bottom of my main Bible chronology chart](#) as being written about the year 95, based on the fact that “a number of ancient authors, such as Irenaeus and Eusebius...state categorically that the book was written in the time of [emperor] Domitian” (*New Bible Dictionary*).

However, the rest of the books are much harder to date, and in fact there is wild disagreement even among conservative, Bible-believing authorities about their dating. However, I will list what evidence there actually is, that seems to be generally agreed upon by them:

- Mark and Luke: Of the four gospels, Mark was written first, because both Matthew and Luke used large parts of Mark, but Mark does not seem to have used any material from Matthew or Luke. There is extensive evidence that Mark was written by the **John Mark** mentioned in Acts and in Paul’s letters, as discussed in the chart above, with a great deal of input from **Peter**, whose companion he was in Rome (“Babylon”; see 1 Peter 5:13). One fascinating piece of evidence that it was written from Rome is that Mark 15:21 says, “And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and **Rufus**, to carry his cross.” The only other place in the New Testament that a **Rufus** is mentioned is in Romans 16:13, where Paul greets him, indicating that he was a believer living in Rome and well known to Paul around the years 57-58. **Rufus** was not a common name, and most authorities believe that the same person is referred to. This suggests that Mark’s initial audience was the church in Rome, who would have known Alexander and **Rufus**, but perhaps not their father. As to when it was written, the book would have been written before Luke, which in turn must have been written before Acts, which was its sequel and was probably written in 63 A.D. after Paul’s release from prison. We know that **Mark** was living in Rome not long before that and was Paul’s “fellow worker” during that time, based on Colossians 4:10 and Philemon 24. How much earlier than this Mark was written is unclear.

- Matthew: We have already established that Mark and Luke were not written later than about 63 A.D. In all three of these books Jesus clearly prophesies the destruction of the temple (Matthew 24:1-2, Mark 13:1-2, Luke 21:5-6), which occurred in 70 A.D., so this shows that Matthew could not have been written much later than the other two.

- John: There is a broad range of opinions about when John was written. It does not include the prophecy of the destruction of the temple, and **John** lived to nearly the end of the century, so many have suggested that it was written toward the end of his life. However, there is one very interesting evidence that suggests otherwise: in John 5:2 it says, “Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades.” The pool, which was located just north of the temple mount, or at least the surrounding colonnades, could not have avoided the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 A.D., but John uses the present tense for both. [Daniel B. Wallace](#) makes an excellent case that this requires us to assume that John was written before 70 A.D.

- 1 and 2 Peter: **Peter** probably died around 64 A.D., so this letter must have been written before that, almost certainly from Rome (“Babylon”, 1 Peter 5:13), after both his and **Mark**’s moves to Rome. However, the dates of these are unknown.

For the rest of the books of the New Testament the evidence for date of writing is even more meager, though authorship is fairly clear for all but Hebrews.

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<sup>1</sup> About half of these individuals are never mentioned in **Acts**, only in Paul’s letters: **Apphia, Achaicus, Archippus, Artemas, Demas, Epaphras, Epaphroditus, Fortunatus, Onesimus, Philemon, Phoebe, Stephanas, Tertius, Titus, and Zenas**. **Rufus** is mentioned once in **Romans** and once in **Mark**, as mentioned in the main text. And of course **Luke** never names himself in **Acts**, even though he is clearly the author, and we know that he was present for large parts of the action in **Acts** because of the “we” sections: see the “we” sections of **Acts** in [NT Chronology expanded](#).

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<sup>2</sup> [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.

<sup>3</sup> **Barnabas** is mentioned various times in Paul’s letters, 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**.

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

However, 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.

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!

<sup>4</sup> **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 periods 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> Prior to 6-Sep-2018 I had implied that **Aquila** and **Priscilla** did not actually plant a church in Ephesus at this time, saying, “the real planting of the church would apparently not begin for another 2 or 3 years”. However, this was merely an assumption on my part.

<sup>7</sup> I realized that I needed to explain this when contributor Charles Miksch asked me what clues in the text provided this two-year figure. Thanks, Charles! I also added an indication on the chart in [NT Chronology expanded](#) showing that all of the dates from [54](#) to [63](#) depend on the accession date of Porcius Festus.

<sup>8</sup> Various versions based on the Latin Vulgate even add the phrase “with whom I also lodge” in 1 Corinthians 16:19, which could suggest that Paul lived with them here just as he did in Corinth, though we cannot take such a variation which never occurs in the Greek as reliable.

<sup>9</sup> Before 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.

<sup>10</sup> Prior to 6-Sep-2018 I had erroneously said here: “**Aquila** and **Priscilla** are apparently now living in Rome”. This was totally wrong; I was obviously not paying attention to where Paul was when he wrote this letter. I may have been mixing it up with Romans 16:3, when they really were living in Rome and hosting a church in their home. Contributor Charles Miksch brought this error to my attention. Thanks, Charles!

<sup>11</sup> Prior to 27-Jun-2019 I had erroneously said, “However, after [**Aquila** and **Priscilla**] leave Ephesus (see **Romans** below) it appears that “the whole church” was meeting at the house of **Gaius**, according to Romans 16:23 (ESV)”. However, **Romans** was written from Corinth, not Ephesus, so this makes no sense. I really wasn’t paying attention when I wrote this paragraph!

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> These three cities were in the valley of the Lycus River (Greek Λύκος Lykos), a tributary of the Maeander River (Greek Μαίανδρος Máiandros). 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.