

New Testament Chronology and Historical Background With Reading Order of Paul's Epistles Not by length but by chronologically

TUESDAY BIBLE CLASS
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(Transcribed by Bob Leinen)
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References used:

Revolutionary Bible Study by Gene Edwards, miscellaneous biblical scholars, and the historical records including Josephus; also see **The Original Bible Restored** by Ernest Martin. These two references were primary sources. Many other Biblical references and commentaries were also consulted.

Ancient heathen bookbinding practice allowed works to be gathered and bound together in codex form by the length of each section, rather than date, or substance. There are only two books still published in this manner:

1. The New Testament
2. The Koran

Theme:

For optimal understanding a best practice in the study of the New Testament is to study the books in a particular order:

1. The Gospels
2. The book of Acts (Praxis – i.e. “practice” of those delegated and sent forth)
3. The letter of James (Yacob)
4. The letters of Peter (Kepa)
5. The letters of John (Yahannon)
6. The letters of Paul (Shaul) in chronological order
7. The book of Revelation

Chronological Order of Paul's Epistles: *Note – BOLD type = undisputed authorship by Paul*

<u>Book</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Background</u>
GALATIANS	48-50 As late as 53 or 56	Background begins at Acts 13:1 Written at Acts 15:40 From Antioch to Galatia
I THESSALONIANS	50-51	Background begins at Acts 15:40 – to 18:1 Written at Acts 18:1 From Southern Greece to Northern Greece

II THESSALONIANS	52 As early as 51	Background begins at Acts 18:1 – to 18:5 Written at Acts 18:5 From Southern Greece to Northern Greece
I CORINTHIANS	55 -57	Background begins Acts 18:5 – to 19:23 Written Acts 19:23 From Ephesus to Corinth
II CORINTHIANS	55 -57	Background begins Acts 19:23 – to 20:4 Written Acts 20:4 From Ephesus to Corinth
ROMANS	57 -58	Background begins Acts 20:1-4 Written Acts 28:31 Romans 16 From Corinth to Rome
Jerusalem Council	50-59	Establishment of guidelines regarding Jewish and Gentile believers
GOSPEL OF LUKE	59-63	The Gospel (preaching of the good news) was written as the first half of Luke's work with the Acts of the Apostles being the second half.
Book of Acts ends	59	
Book of Acts is written	60	Luke, a student of Paul, writes Acts. Paul is the central figure but is not the subject. He is not treated as an <u>Apostle</u> . Paul treats himself as an apostle to the gentiles. Three missionary journeys are constructed from Acts.
After Acts ends	58-67	Letters to the Hebrews, Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon are written and all of them contain important HISTORICAL INFORMATION, giving information after Acts.
JAMES	Before 62 Some say as Early as 40 CE or as late as 140	Provides essential information on putting faith to work
I JOHN	Early 60's	Provides essential information on expressing love
GOSPEL of MARK	55 -70	Mark, an another student of Paul, records eye witness accounts of Jesus' ministry
GOSPEL OF MATTHEW	Between 58-75	Eye witness testimony of Jesus' ministry. Eastern tradition places Matthew before Mark. Papias and others claim it was written in Hebrew or Aramaic originally.

COLOSSIANS	63	All four of these books were written from Rome Background for all four books covered in time period from 58-63.
EPHESIANS	63	
PHILEMON	62 or 63	
PHILIPPIANS	63	
I TIMOTHY	62-65	From Rome to Asia Minor. Background of 63 CE
TITUS	64-65	Written from Rome to Crete.
I PETER	65	From Peter fleeing Jerusalem during Neroian persecution
II TIMOTHY	64 -67	Background begins in 65. From Rome to Neapolis
HEBREWS	Before 70	Traditionally attributed to Paul or Barnabas and written to Jewish believers
GOSPEL OF JOHN	40-110	Most probable dating is around 85 CE
REVELATION	65 -90	Eastern tradition places this with Neroian persecution at 65 CE. Not in Peshitta canon until added in 4 th Century
JUDE	70-130	Not included in Peshitta canon
II PETER	160-175	Not included in Peshitta canon
II and III John	90-95	Not included in Peshitta canon

To understand Holy Scripture you must consider:

1. **Context**
2. **Genre – What type of writing is it?** law, history, poetry, apocalyptic, epistle etc. *The history in the Chronicles differs from that of Samuel because of perspective – what happened vs. what should have happened.*
3. **Principles of Holy Scripture Study** – 10 Principles in a separate article and presentation by Dr. DeFrancisco.

To understand Paul you must consider:

1. The fact that he lived during very challenging times
2. He had a radical life transformation
3. He encountered much resistance
4. He never met Christ (The Messiah) in the flesh or sat under His teachings
5. He had a mystical experience in encountering Christ (The Messiah) as well as other followers of Jesus (Yeshua) in visions
6. All of his writings were letters to specific groups & congregations or individuals and were never intended to be used universally or foundationally
7. His writings should be studied last after all other New Testament books other than Revelation
8. His writings should be studied in a chronological order and not in the normal order found in our Bibles, which is based on the size of each letter with the longest/largest ones first working to the smallest in an ancient bookbinding methodology.
9. The events surrounding his epistles (letters) must be considered to understand the context of his letters
10. The tense and style should be considered in determining authorship, recipient(s) and the message(s).
11. The letters should be viewed from the perspective of the recipients they were addressed to and not as universal or foundational teachings for readers today, nor as independently quoted verses and passages used as “proof texts”.
12. Using the 11 methods above will open each letter and give the reader rich understanding of the early congregations.

New Testament Chronological Order and Historical Background

Considerations:

- Locations (6) Acts 15:40; 18:1,18:5, 19:23, 20:1-3, 20:3-4
- Look at events before and after each of the 13 letters
 - Book of Acts – most eventful years 30 ,37 & 47
 - History of Roman empire
- Mirror – look at the letters from the view of the recipients
- Years 30 – 47 are familiar to most Christians and years 47 – 70 are unfamiliar

I. JERUSALEM – Jewish Congregations – One Culture (30-47 CE)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION and HISTORICAL BACKGROUND</u>
30	Acts 1 & 2 - Crucifixion, of Jesus resurrection, Pentecost (supernatural event – not a program), Rabbi Hillel died and Gamaliel (his son) takes his place.
31	Acts 3 – Peter and John enter temple for prayer and heal a lame beggar. The congregation (“church” - group of early disciples of Jesus) is growing.
32	Acts 4 – Pontius Pilate used temple funds for an aqueduct resulting in violence in Israel. Peter was arrested and threatened along with John.
33	Acts 4 – Gaius Caligula marries Claudia – he later (37 CE) becomes emperor at Tiberius' death. The congregation is growing rapidly in Jerusalem.
34	Acts 4-5 -- Paul leaves Tarsus and moves to Jerusalem and studying under Gamaliel. The congregation is in crisis because of enormous growth rate along with foreigners staying in Jerusalem. The actions and sudden death of Ananias and Sapphira stunned the city causing more growth in the congregation .
35	Acts 5 – Tiberius sent Vitellius to restrain Antipas and Aretas from war (Antipas divorced Aretas of Syria's daughter). Caiaphas orders the arrest of the Apostles (those legates sent out by the congregation for missionary activity). Gamaliel dissuades the council from considering their execution. The Twelve were released.
36	Acts 6 - Pontius Pilate relieved and recalled to Rome because of a report from Vitellius that Pontius Pilate allowed the apostles to be beaten and that he ruled with too heavy a hand. Also rebellions started and Pilate attacked the Samaritians. The congregation experienced internal strife because the Hellenic Jews felt that the food distribution favored local widows in Jerusalem. Stephen (not of the Twelve) performed miracles and debated with foreign Jews in the Greek Language.

37 Acts 6,7,8,9 – Tiberius dies and the mad Gaius Caligula is crowned emperor at age 25 with his treacherous 19 year old sister Agrippina at his side. He assassinated 2 grandparents. Agrippina bore a son, Germanicus (also known as Nero). After an illness and fever that added to his madness, Caligula killed everyone he suspected of opposition.

Stephen is arrested and stoned. Paul is directing the persecution of the followers of Yeshua Ha Meschiach (Jesus the Christ). Philip is preaching in Samaria. Paul is given permission to make arrests in Syria. On the way to Damascus (168 miles from Jerusalem) he encounters Christ (The Messiah) mystically and is baptized by Ananias. Unbelieving Jews plot to kill Paul and he receives his first beating with 39 lashes. Aretas closes the city of Damascus to find and kill Paul. Paul escapes and meets with James and Peter in Jerusalem for 15 days. Paul sailed to Tarsus (429 miles from Ceasarea).

38 Acts 8-9 – Caligula marries Lollia. Anti Jewish rioting occurs in Alexandria. Joseph (son of Caiaphas) was replaced by Theophilus, son of Ananus, as high priest. The Jerusalem congregation is in hiding. Peter preaches in Joppa (39 miles from Jerusalem). Persecution causes the apostles to finally go to Judea, Samaria and Galilee to raise up “churches” (assemblies, congregations).

Note: “church” is a loaded term that has taken on many meanings that were not existent for the early movement started by Jesus and the Apostles: they did not erect buildings; they had no hierarchy – especially in the Gentile congregations; their groups were families and friends who met in whatever places were available (schools, parks, gardens, etc.). The Hebrew word for church or synagogue is Kneset which simply means an assembly or congregation. The Aramaic word is Eta which means to assemble – especially to celebrate, i.e. throw a party.

39 Acts 10 – Caligula (now 27 years old) takes Milonia as his 4th wife. The treasury of the empire is empty. He increases taxes, forced the wealthy to will their inheritance to him (killing some of them to collect it), turned a wing of the palace into a brothel. He argued with the Senate and threatened to make his horse a senator. He argued with (what he believed to be his father) Zeus in the temple of Zeus/Jupiter. He became fascinated with the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem. Antipas asked Caligula to make him King. Agrippa influenced Caligula to depose and exile Antipas. Agrippina was caught plotting against Caligula and he ordered for her to be serially raped for a week, selling her to the highest bidders. Then he banished her.

In 39 CE Marullus is governor of Judea, Antipas governor in Galilee. The congregations were miniature duplicates of the original Jerusalem congregation . An all Jewish congregation was raised up in Antioch. Gentiles were receiving the Gospel in Antioch.

40 This year is not covered in Acts – Agrippa is made Tetrarch in Galilee. Caligula announced that he would have a statue of himself placed in the Holy of Holies. This resulted in 10,000 Jews protesting. They knelt before the gates of Jerusalem and bared their necks - vowing to die before the statue would enter Jerusalem. Agrippa convinced Caligula to back down. Caligula began forcing the wives of all the senators to “participate” in his brothel.

The emperor was outside the law (“the man of lawlessness”). Caligula was the type of character that later earned a title from the Jews, “Anti-Messiah”.

Antipas is banished and Agrippa I (grandson of Herod the Great) becomes the ruler of Galilee, Judea, and Samaria as “King”.

41 Acts 11 – Caligula is assassinated by his own bodyguards and Claudius takes the throne.

Peter reports to Jerusalem about the Gentiles receiving the word of God (11:1)
A “church” (congregational assembly) is born in Antioch (11:19).

42 Acts 11 – The Jerusalem congregation is notified of Antioch's problems regarding Gentile congregations and Gentiles not being circumcised. Barnabas sent to Antioch (it wasn't until 50 CE before an “apostle” (sent one, emissary) would go to Antioch). By 42 CE Antioch was the second largest congregation (after Jerusalem). Barnabas searched for Paul in Tarsus (125 miles from Antioch) to help with the Gentile congregation in Antioch.

43 Acts 11 – Claudius conquers Britain. Vespasian was one of his fighting men. A prophet arrives in Antioch predicting world-wide famine. The Antioch “congregation ” aids the congregation in Jerusalem. Gentiles are helping Jews changing the relationship between Jews and Gentiles.

Note: Within this study, by “Jews” are meant all Israelites left in Israel, by “Gentiles” are meant the Semitic relatives of the Jews (cousins, kin) who worship the one true God, and by “Pagans” are meant the Greeks, Romans, and other non-Semitic people who worship other gods.

44 Acts 12 – Paul and Barnabas deliver Antioch's aid to Jerusalem. James and Peter are arrested by Agrippa. James is beheaded. Peter is delivered miraculously from prison (Acts 12:1-18). Famine strikes. Agrippa had grain and when people addressed him as “god”, he died (see Acts 12:23 and writings of Josephus). Claudius had Fadus, a Roman soldier, replace Agrippa resulting in more unrest. Cassias is appointed governor of Syria.

45 The year 45 CE is not Mentioned in Acts – Antioch congregation continues to grow and spread.

Claudius returns to Rome. Several false messiahs (Thoudas and Judas the Galilean) appear and are executed by Fadus.

46 Acts 13:1 – 5 prophets in Antioch prayed and proclaimed Christ (Yeshua Ha Meschiach). Up to this point the Jerusalem congregation and their line followed the Jewish culture, traditions and rituals.

II. ANTIOCH – 47-53 CE Acts 13:1-18:3 Raised by itinerant workers that leave shortly after raising each congregation. Each local “congregation ” found their own natural expression.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION and HISTORICAL BACKGROUND</u>
47	<p>Acts 13 – Events leading to the Epistle to the Galatians.</p> <p>Rome's 800th birthday. Joseph, son of Camith, is high priest in Israel.</p> <p>Prayer meeting in Antioch (Acts 13:1-4) in which Paul and Barnabas are set apart for ministry by the Holy Spirit. (Acts 13:2) and sail to Cyprus (Acts 13:4) with John Mark. Antioch congregation becomes a bridge from the Jewish congregations to the Gentile congregations. It moves from being a Jewish congregation to becoming a Gentile congregation and thus brings in a whole new kind of congregation.</p> <p>According to tradition, Paul and Barnabas are beaten at the synagogue in Old Paphos. Paul's first shipwreck in voyage from Cyprus to Perga of Pamphylia. Arrival in Galatia. Paul spent short periods in various cities: Pisidia (5 months), Iconium (5 months) and did not erect “churches” or buildings.</p>
48	<p>Acts 14 – Paul goes to Lystra (4 months), Timothy joins Paul in Lystra. Paul is stoned at Lystra and then he left for Derbe (4 months). Thadus (governor in Palestine) is replaced by Cumanus. Numerous incidents created tension in Israel. A Roman soldier gave an obscene gesture to Jews and then another incident occurred when a Torah scroll was torn and burned. This created unrest between Jews and Romans in Jerusalem. Israel experienced a repeat of the story of the Maccabean revolt and applied it to Rome hoping for the Messiah to appear. Cumanus ordered the soldier who burned the Torah beheaded. Messalina (wife of Claudius) committed adultery and publicly flaunted it. Claudius had her publicly executed.</p>
49	<p>Acts 14 -15 Paul revisited Galatia (2 to 4 weeks stay), Derbe (for 4 months), Lystra (1 month), Iconium (1 month), Pisidia (1 month), and Perga (Pamphylia). Paul was away from the congregations from their original planting for periods ranging from 4 months (Derbe) to 17 months (Pisidia) with none of the present day “biblical” church features in any of these local assemblies. Paul was away from Antioch for 2 years. He and Barnabas reported to the Antioch congregation and this meeting included Luke and Titus. Jews in Rome revolted so Claudius expelled all the Jews from Rome and Claudius was called “anti-messiah”. Claudius also married his niece Agrippina. From the year 49 onward, there were no Jews or Jewish Christians in Rome, only Gentile Christians.</p>
50	<p>Acts 15 – Luke wrote this C: 59-63 CE. Compare the beginning of Acts 15 with Galatians 2:11 and all of Galatians 1 and 2. Peter is rebuked by legalists (Gal. 2:11-21; Acts 15). Paul was accused of being a false apostle who had publicly rebuked Peter. Legalists went to Galatia to enforce circumcision and ruin Paul's reputation, (as a self proclaimed, renegade “apostle” who had never been with Jesus or the Twelve). The legalists went to Lystra and were confronted publicly by Timothy (20 years old). Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem and their report was received regarding Galatia with awe and joy. James (brother of Jesus) ended the debate – circumcision</p>

(and conversion to Judaism) was not necessary for Gentile believers. A letter to this effect was sent from Jerusalem elders to Antioch but, interestingly, it didn't address the subject of elders nor was it addressed to any elders (Acts 15:23-30). Paul was against John Mark joining with Barnabas and himself. Barnabas took Mark to Cyprus. Paul learned that the legalists who had been in Antioch had also gone to Galatia. He also learned about the accusations against him and wrote the letter to 4 congregations in Galatia, known as "Galatians". Acts 15:40 is when Galatians was written.

Note: Galatians should not be applied indiscriminately to individuals as it is today. It was addressed to a specific group and to a specific set of problems. It is considered to be the first piece of Christian literature ever written (Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John cover the years 26 to 30 CE, but were written in later – Mark between 55-70 CE, Matthew between 58-75 CE, Luke between 59-63, and John between 40-110 CE). It was 20 years since Pentecost. The New Testament was not available as 27 books (or 22 books for Syriac) until after 330 CE. The congregations had commerce, community, and communication (to them, for them, applicable to them, and penned by a "church planter" – an apostle). Christian life is not lived independently but through interdependence of brothers and sisters – in an assembly. Paul mentioned Titus in the letter he wrote and sent Titus ahead of him. Titus told people in Derbe what happened in Jerusalem and that Paul was totally backed by the Twelve. There are several significant issues in play at Galatia:

1. Recognition of Paul as an Apostle
2. Paul's authority recognized by Jerusalem and Antioch
3. Paul's opposition
4. Pagan customs and sin in Galatia
5. Jews sharing the table with Gentiles (purity laws)
6. Whether Gentile Christians needed to become Jewish proselytes

Note: The main issue in Galatians is that there are no requirements for Jewish believers to be circumcised and enter into the Mosaic covenant. They are children of Abraham.

50-51 Acts 15:40 -18:1 – Background to 1 Thessalonians

50 Acts 16-17 – Paul and Silas walked from Antioch to Derbe (253 miles). Ages of 4 Galatian congregations in 50 CE (Pisidia's Antioch – 32 months old; Iconium – 28 months old; Lystra – 25 months old; Derbe – 17 months). The Holy Spirit forbade Paul from going east to Bithynia so he went to Troas where he had a vision (Acts 16:9-11). Paul arrives in Greece and enters Philippi (a totally Roman city where Latin – not Greek was used). All Jews were expelled when Claudius' order regarding Rome was received (Philippi was the "15th" district of Rome). Only God-fearers (righteous Gentiles) remained (Lydia and her friends). Paul and Silas were arrested and beaten. Paul stayed in Philippi 3 months and then went to Macedonia. Claudius adopted Nero (now 12 years old). Corresponds with Acts 16:12-40.

51 Acts 17:1-20 – Cumanus becomes involved in local problems that lead to his removal as governor. The Samaritans attacked a caravan of Galileans on their way to a festival in Jerusalem and the Jews took the matter in their own hands (defying Rome). Paul went to Thessalonica (the capital of Northern Greece –

Macedonia) and planted a congregation. Aristarchus and Secundus are brought to Christ. Emperor(s) are perceived as “one person” (Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius).

Note: “The Emperor” = “man of lawlessness”, “man of sin”, “anti-messiah”, “anti-Christ”. One Emperor – many individuals in succession.

Thessalonica was a free city as long as it was loyal to Rome and its leaders did not want to lose that freedom. Paul was in Thessalonica for 5 months and left for fear of the new believers being accused of treason. Paul crossed a mountain pass to the city of Berea. Jewish Christians searched the Holy Scriptures in the room where the Torah was kept in the synagogue at Berea. Sopater was a young man who believed in Yeshua Ha Meschiach at Berea. Paul spent 4 months in Berea and left for Athens. (Acts 17:10-15).

Paul is now up to six young trainees: Titus, Timothy, Gaius, Aristarchus, Secundus, and Sopater. Silas and Timothy cared for oppressed congregations in Berea and Thessalonica while Paul was in Athens for one month. Paul then went to Corinth (Acts 18:1) and wrote I and II Thessalonians. He was in Corinth 18 months.

52 Acts 18:1-5 – II Thessalonians Zealous Thessalonians believed Christ was coming shortly. Paul emphasized the need to continue working in II Thessalonians. From around late 53 - 57 CE Paul did not write any other letter that we currently know of.

Acts 18:5 – 19:23 and I Corinthians – Paul has 2 goals:

1. Train men
2. Plant congregations

Felix replaced Cumanus as governor and rules until 60 CE. Roman soldiers kill rioting Jews at a festival in Jerusalem and the Jewish secret society of Sicarii (the Daggermen) is founded. Paul left Corinth (now having planted 8 congregations), but there is no mention of elders in either I or II Thessalonians. Priscilla and Aquila were at his side – on his way to Ephesus.

53-70 The Ephesian Line (Acts 18:3 – 28:31) is raised up by workers trained by Paul.

53 Acts 18 – Paul 's 4th visit to the congregation in Jerusalem (Acts 18:22). Paul's “thorn” has continued to follow him from the time he was at Galatia. Paul and Timothy walked north to Antioch and spent 1 year there. Paul was busy writing letters (to Galatia, Thessalonica and Berea), raising up congregations and caring for them through infrequent visits, and training workers. Apollos (a traveling Jewish-Greek philosopher) arrived in Ephesus. Priscilla and led him to the Lord and sent him to Corinth. As an orator he almost took over the congregation.

54 **Status of 8 Congregations** **Year Born** **Age as of 54 CE**

Paul's 1st Journey: to Galatia

Pisidia's Antioch	47	7
Iconium	47	7
Lystra	48	6

Derbe	48	6
<i>Paul's 2nd Journey: to Greece</i>		
Philippi	50	4
Thessalonica	51	3
Berea	51	3
Corinth	Late 51	3

54 Acts 19 – Paul visits all 8 congregations en route to Ephesus. He picked up Gaius of Derbe, Anistarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica, and Sopater of Berea and took them to Ephesus. Timothy was already with him. Agrippina poisoned Claudius and made Nero emperor at the age of 16. Agrippina minted a coin with her face and Nero's on it horrifying Rome. In Israel, the Sicarii were becoming politically powerful. Felix failed to bring the nation under control. Paul and his trainees went to Ephesus and they added Tychicus and Trophimus (now the trainees were up to 8 men – apprentices).

Training the “Apprentices” was based on active involvement with a leader, interaction and not merely the school classroom model – (not the Greek – seminary/school model)

- time with apostles and other trainees
- life in an organic congregation of disciples
- visiting other congregations
- standing up to opposition and living through suffering
- moving from law to grace – especially Gentile congregations
- watching Paul raise up Gentile congregations
- cross-pollination of experiences
- planning for additional trips (“missionary journeys”)
- surviving storms, problems and crises

Jerusalem was going through major changes. The Sicarii were killing wealthy Jews and Roman sympathizers. Pharisees were being added to the congregation and some of them emphasized strict obedience to the law of Moses. Revolution was preached so that the Messiah would appear. Paul's reputation suffered because of his work with the Gentiles, his emphasis on grace, and the circumcision issue. The Sicarii spread to Asia Minor looking for Paul. Paul left Antioch and went to Ephesus and stayed for 3 years raising up a congregation and training his 8 men.

55 Acts 19 – Paul teaching in Tyrannus' school in Ephesus as the congregation grew large. Agrippina was becoming a nuisance to Nero when she accused him of taking a mistress as he was advised to do by Seneca. Agrippa II was given more responsibility in Judea but could not control the growing unrest. Peter was becoming hated in Israel for baptizing Gentiles. Gospel of Mark is written.

56 Acts 19 – Paul sent Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia (Acts 19:22). Seneca and Burrus oversaw the Roman empire while Nero indulged himself. Fear spread as the Sicarii and Zealots increased. Paul planned a Gentile congregation in Rome since Jews were still forbidden there. Paul sent Priscilla to Rome (even though he hadn't been there himself). When he wrote Romans a year or two later Paul knew over 20 Christians in Rome because they were sent there. They went from Lydia's home in Ephesus with Priscilla.

57 Acts 19 – Philemon from Colossae comes to believe in Christ and becomes a disciple while in Ephesus. Epaphras from Colossae now also believes in Christ and becomes a disciple. People in Ephesus are burning magic books and sales of silver statues of Artemis are way down, putting Ephesus in an economic recession. In Israel terror was gripping the people because of the Sicarii. Ceasarea was divided between Syrian and Jews and they each struggled for control. While in Ephesus Paul wrote I Corinthians (Acts 19:23) because of a multi-faceted crises. Apollos (from Alexandrian philosophical schools) was combining Jewish Scripture and Greek philosophy. This made Greek Christians jubilant and they wanted him to lead. Another group wanted signs, wonders, and the power of Peter to be the hallmark. Another group, was of Paul and another only of Jesus (Yeshuah) creating dissension. There were also lawsuits, issues with women speaking at the bema, and vegetarianism. Demetrius causes a riot against Paul and Christians in Ephesus.

Acts 19:23 – 20:4 II Corinthians – There is only 4 months between I and II Corinthians.

Acts 20:1-4 and Romans 16 – Paul sent Titus from Philippi to Corinth to determine how the Corinthian congregation was doing and how they felt about Paul. Titus was missing for a time but reappeared and relieved Paul of his fears. Corinthian congregation still loved Paul, considered him their founder, and would follow him. He wrote II Corinthians from Philippi, Greece. II Corinthians gives much insight into his struggles – including his thorn (the man – or men – that opposed him). He wrote Romans from Philippi while he was with Luke and the 8 men in training with him. He sent Phoebe to Rome with the Roman letter. Paul had no suffering threshold (was shipwrecked 4 times) and kept pressing on despite obstacles in his path.

58 Acts 20-22 – Israel is at a boiling point. New Jewish prophets arose. Felix accepted bribes. The Sicarii are growing and chased Paul – arriving in Corinth. Agrippina was telling Nero what he should do which eventually would lead to her death. Paul stealthily left Corinth and walked to Philippi. Paul went to Israel to: 1) Preserve the fragile unity between Gentile and Jewish congregations, and 2) to prove he was a totally “orthodox” Jew (Acts 20:17). From Ptolemais Paul, Luke and the eight men in training sailed to Caesarea by the Sea (Acts 21:7-15). In Jerusalem Paul met with congregational leaders. They advised him to show his devotion to Jewish law and traditions. Paul was assaulted and then rescued from the mob and taken to the Mark Anthony Fortress.

59 Acts 23 -24 – Nero (age 21) takes a mistress and ordered to Praetorian Guard to kill his mother, Agrippina. Nero becomes more sadistic and mad. Ananias presented charges against Paul (Acts 24:3-8) and Paul made his defense (Acts 24:10-22). Paul was imprisoned in Herod's palace from 58 to 60 CE.

Note: By this time, Matthew wrote his biography of Jesus Christ (c: 58-60CE) and 8 books of the New Testament now exist: Paul's 6 letters, Gospels of Mathew and Mark. Luke was Paul's personal physician. Luke was also recording what he learned for a 3rd biography of Jesus as well as the book of Acts.

60 -61 Acts 25 - 26; 27:1 – 28:31 – Felix is replaced by Festus who had another Jewish prophet and group of devout Jews cut down. Ishmael, the high priest had the walls of the temple built up because Agrippa II had the walls of his palace raised to allow Roman guards to peer into the temple area. Ishmael protested to Nero and won his case but was kept hostage in Rome as long as Festus was governor. Nero gave the Syrians a

slight advantage over the Jews in controlling Ceasarea. Paul is shipwrecked on Malta for 3 months. (Acts 27:1 – 28:31) Paul sets sail for Rome (123 miles). The Jews were now allowed back in Rome. Paul had already planted a Gentile congregation (“church”) in Rome, the most Gentile city in the ancient world. Paul was not “a full time Christian worker.” He worked a business while doing ministry.

61-62 Ananus, son of Annas becomes high priest. There is a growing hatred between Greek-Syrians and Jews in Caesarea. Epaphras raised up a congregation in Colossae which gathered in the home of Philemon. Burrus, close advisor to Nero, urged him not to divorce his wife, Octavia, and was poisoned. Nero ordered Seneca to retire and hand over his wealth to Nero. Nero divorced Octavia and married his mistress Poppaea. Seneca was soon dead and Nero had Octavia killed.

Epaphras was on his way to Rome. After the death of Festus and before the arrival of the new governor, Albinus, the high priest Ananas called the Sanhedrin together and had James (brother of Jesus) executed. He did not have Rome's consent so Albinus deposed Ananas. The Sicarii grew in power.

63 Onesimus, slave of Ephaphras (Gr. - Epaphroditus), goes to Rome. Paul writes a letter to Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis which, according to Gene Edwards and others, is misnamed “Ephesians”.

Note: The Five-fold ministry probably does not make sense for a small home “church in a town of 5000 people. Ephesus may have had nothing to do with the letter of Ephesians (as it was named 300 years later) per Edwards. There is some debate over the intended recipient of “Ephesians” though most scholars accept Ephesus now. Also, see Ephesians 1:1 in Greek and in Syriac where Ephesus is specifically addressed. Some Greek texts also include Ephesus at the end of the letter.

The letter to Philemon is humorous because it is filled with hints and comparisons between Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus.

Epaphras becomes seriously ill. Paul gives 3 letters to Tychicus for Colossae. Epaphras recovered and Paul called him an apostle (for raising a congregation) in Philippians 2:25 according to Edwards and he is supported by Greek and Syriac texts.

Paul is brought before Nero. He was released from prison. And Caesar's household was witnessed to. Nero dreamed of changing “Rome” to “Neo-opolis” and building a colossus statute of himself which would be over 90 feet high.

Note: Compare Nero with Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon as depicted in the book of Daniel as well as Isaiah.

Herod's temple was completed. Jews appealed to Nero not to allow Gentiles to control Caesarea.

64-65 Titus, I Peter, and I Timothy are written. There is a Jewish/ “Christian” exodus from Israel fearing Roman vanquish of Israel. Refugees joined Gentile congregations raised by Paul.

Rome is burned and Christians were blamed and massacred. Only 4 of the 14 districts were unaffected. One was Trans-Tiber where most of the Christians lived causing them

to be suspected. Nero had Christians arrested and divided into 2 groups: 1) Brought to Circus Maximus, covered with blood soaked animal skins and attacked by dogs; 2) Covered with pitch, dangled from trees in Nero's garden and ignited by Nero as he drove his chariot under them. Consider Paul's letter to Romans in Chapter 8. The emperor is the Anti-Messiah. Florus went into Judea expecting to gain personal wealth, took gold from the temple, plundered the city, and was Israel's last Roman governor as Jewish resistance grew.

65 Paul wrote Titus and Timothy. I Peter was written. Elders (mature leaders) were needed in the Gentile congregations (Titus). Peter emphasized submitting to those already in authority. Timothy needed elders in the Gentile congregations (which were not yet focused on elders). Timothy did not even know what an elder was. Peter and Paul ensured that elders were in place – not to be overthrown by Jewish Christians. Peter wrote to the believing Jews who were fleeing Israel (I Pet 1:1-2) Paul writes II Timothy from Rome while in prison.

Nero stomps his wife Poppaea, and her unborn child, to death. Nero has his opposition either killed or forced into suicide (Seneca is forced into suicide and his estate is seized).

66 Nero was renovating a beautiful palace while Rome was in recession. Israel was sinking into civil war and riots. Florus confiscated the Temple treasury for himself. Matthias, son of Theophilus, was high priest. Nero placed the Syrian Greek faction in total control of Caesarea igniting rebellion. The Syrians seized somewhere between 2,000 to 20,000 Jews and slaughtered them in the stadium. War began. Jerusalem became the capitol city. All debt was abolished and new coinage was issued by the provisional government. There were at least five factions vying for control of Israel. The largest were the Sicarii and the Zealots. In 66 – 67CE over half of Israel's population was slaughtered. Romans were laying out logistics for a massive invasion of Israel. Those who heeded the words of Jesus Christ (Matthew 24) took his advice and fled. Ananus, son of Ananus was the new high priest and head of the provisional government. Nero went to the Olympic games and “won” over 1800 medals and appointed Vespasian Flavius to handle the Jewish revolt. 60,000 Roman soldiers were on the march. Paul was re-arrested and imprisoned in Rome.

Paul's 12 letters and Mark, Matthew, Luke, Acts and I Peter were all finished. Hebrews and II Timothy would soon be written.

67 In addition to chaos in Israel, Jews were being attacked and killed in Alexandria and Syria. “This was the real tribulation” as Edwards, puts it. Zealots seized control of Jerusalem. The Sicarii seized the temple. Titus Flavius joined his father Vespasian, as the Roman army began closing in on Israel. The Sicarii took possession of Masada. Nero was having senators executed and competing in athletic games.

68 Nero's palace was finished. Vespasian later destroyed it and constructed the Coliseum on its site. Paul was beheaded. Vespasian turned part of his army over to Titus and headed back to Rome from Israel when he heard of Nero's death (by suicide with assistance from a servant – knife wound to Nero's neck).

69 Vespasian becomes emperor. Now 21 New Testament books exist.

70 Titus destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. 22,000 Jewish men are enslaved

and taken to Rome to build the Coliseum.

Remaining 6 letters:

Hebrews – possibly written 64 to 68 CE by Barnabas or Paul.

James – written as early as 40 CE or as late as 65 CE by James, brother of John, or James, brother of Jesus.

Jude – e: 70 CE?

1,2,3 John – written by John the Apostle either between 65 – 70 CE or 90 CE.

Revelation – written either at 68 CE or 90 CE, during reign of Nero or Domitian as respective emperor (the Roman emperor – one continuous person and Anti-Messiah)

Additional Factors for Consideration

Today's church practices date from:

- 1 Constantine era (300 – 337 CE)
- 2 Reformation era (1520-1670 CE)

Original Method of Growing Congregations of Disciples - Saturate people in the experience of the Lord Jesus Christ for 4 to 6 months, then leave them alone for 1 to 2 years!

The **STORY** takes precedence over verses – or – collections of verses. Bible teaching today often uses “proof texts” taken out of context, i.e. there is little or no consideration given to the story, who is addressed, what the circumstances were, etc.

Great Awakening – Phases Influencing North America

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|-----------------|-------------|--|
| 1 st | 1730 -1760 | European styles of church organization ended; experiential and democratic evangelicalism formed. |
| 2 nd | 1800 – 1830 | Calvinist dominance ended; free will emphasized, more volunteerism & benevolence emphasized. |
| | 1840- | Advent movement (Miller)
Rapture and Dispensationalism (Darby) |
| 3 rd | 1890 – 1920 | Social gospel with progressive politics and Pentecostalism |
| 4 th | 1960 - | Pluralism - the religious de-emphasized and spirituality emphasized
Church membership and attendance de-emphasized
Rise of contemporary Evangelical mega-churches
Vatican 2 and Expulsion of Dalai Lama from Tibet pushing ecumenicalism and eastern mysticism throughout the world |