

The Apostle Paul Timeline

From persecutor to apostle to martyr — every journey, every letter placed where it was written. Dates approximate, anchored to the Gallio inscription (c. AD 51–52); blue entries mark epistles as they enter the story.

8

ERAS

29

EVENTS

114

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

James McLaughlin

jayms.com

*A free printable reference.
Attribution appreciated but not required.*

Contents

I	Saul of Tarsus — Pharisee & Persecutor	c. AD 5 – 33
II	Damascus Road & The Hidden Years	c. AD 33/34 – 46
III	First Missionary Journey & The Jerusalem Council	c. AD 46 – 49
IV	Second Missionary Journey — The Gospel Enters Europe	c. AD 49 – 52 · Anchored by the Gallio Inscription
V	Third Missionary Journey — Ephesus & The Great Letters	c. AD 52 – 57
VI	Jerusalem Arrest & Two Years at Caesarea	c. AD 57 – 59
VII	The Voyage, the Shipwreck & the First Roman Imprisonment	c. AD 59 – 62
VIII	Release, the Pastorals & Death Under Nero	c. AD 62 – 67

HOW TO READ THIS TIMELINE

Major Event

Standard Event

Epistle Written

Post-Biblical Tradition

Saul of Tarsus — Pharisee & Persecutor

C. AD 5 – 33

C. AD 5-10 **STANDARD EVENT** *Acts 21:39; 22:3,28; Phil 3:5-6*

Born in Tarsus — Three Worlds in One Man

A Hebrew of Hebrews, a Greek-speaking citizen of a university city, and a Roman citizen from birth — God spent decades building the one man equipped to carry the gospel across all three worlds.

- ACTS 22:3** “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. I studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the law of our ancestors.” — trained under the most respected rabbi of the era (Acts 5:34).
- PHIL 3:5-6** “Circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.” — his pre-Christ résumé, written out so he could call it loss.
- ACTS 22:28** “I was born a citizen.” — Roman citizenship by birth; the legal status that will shape his trials and carry him to Caesar.
- ACTS 18:3** A tentmaker by trade — every rabbi learned a craft; this one will fund missionary journeys.

C. AD 33-34 **MAJOR EVENT** *Acts 7:54-8:3; 26:9-11*

The Stoning of Stephen — Saul Approving; The Persecution Unleashed

The first martyr dies seeing the Son of Man standing — and the coats of the witnesses are laid at the feet of the young man who will become the apostle to the nations.

- ACTS 7:58** “The witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.” — the first mention of the most consequential convert in church history, presiding at an execution.
- ACTS 8:1-3** “Saul approved of their killing him... Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.” — the persecution scatters the believers, which spreads the gospel (Acts 8:4). The weapon backfires.
- ACTS 26:10-11** Paul’s own testimony: “I cast my vote against them... I tried to force them to blaspheme. I was so obsessed with persecuting them that I even hunted them down in foreign cities.” — no soft-pedaling of his past.

Damascus Road & The Hidden Years

C. AD 33/34 – 46

C. AD 33/34 **MAJOR EVENT** *Acts 9:1-19; 22:6-16; 26:12-18*

The Damascus Road — “Saul, Saul, Why Do You Persecute Me?”

Told three times in Acts — the risen Jesus intercepts his fiercest enemy in broad daylight. Not a conversion from one religion to another, but the shattering discovery that the crucified one is the enthroned Lord of Israel’s God.

- ACTS 9:3-5** “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” “Who are you, Lord?” “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.” — Jesus so identified with his church that to strike it is to strike him.
- ACTS 9:15-16** To Ananias: “This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.” — commission and cost in one sentence.
- ACTS 9:17-19** Ananias — “Brother Saul” — lays hands on him; something like scales fall from his eyes; he is baptized. The persecutor’s first word from the church: brother.
- ACTS 26:18** The mission stated in cosmic terms: “to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.” — dominion-transfer language; the gospel as rescue from occupied territory.
- GAL 1:11-12** “The gospel I preached is not of human origin... I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.” — Paul’s own account: apostleship direct from the risen Lord.

C. AD 34-37 **STANDARD EVENT** *Gal 1:15-18; Acts 9:20-25; 2 Cor 11:32-33*

Arabia, Damascus, and the Basket Over the Wall

Three years mostly off the record — Arabia (Nabataea), then back to Damascus, preaching the Son of God until an assassination plot ends in the least dignified apostolic escape on record.

- GAL 1:17-18** “I went into Arabia. Later I returned to Damascus. Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days.” — Galatians supplies the chronology Acts compresses.
- ACTS 9:20-22** “At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God... Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.”
- 2 COR 11:32-33** “In Damascus the governor under King Aretas had the city guarded... But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands.” — Paul lists this escape among his “boasts” in weakness.

Jerusalem Fifteen Days; Tarsus Silence; Barnabas Retrieves Him to Antioch

Roughly a decade in Tarsus that Scripture passes over in a verse — then Barnabas, needing help with the explosive Gentile church at Antioch, goes looking for the one man built for the job.

- ACTS 9:26-27** The Jerusalem disciples are afraid of him, “not believing that he really was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles.” — the son of encouragement vouches for the former persecutor.
- ACTS 11:25-26** “Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch... The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.” — the hidden years end; the staging base for world mission is set.
- ACTS 11:29-30** The famine-relief visit: Barnabas and Saul carry the Antioch church’s gift to the Judean elders — Gentile believers supporting Jewish believers; the pattern of his later collection (Rom 15:26) already forming.

First Missionary Journey & The Jerusalem Council

C. AD 46 – 49

C. AD 46-48 MAJOR EVENT *Acts 13:1-14:28*

Cyprus and Galatia — The First Journey

Set apart by the Spirit at Antioch — Cyprus, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe. Somewhere on this journey “Saul” becomes “Paul,” and the pattern locks in: synagogue first, Gentiles next, riot after.

- ACTS 13:2-3** “While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’” — the first deliberate cross-cultural mission in church history, launched from prayer.
- ACTS 13:9-12** On Cyprus: “Saul, who was also called Paul” — the name shift at the confrontation with Elymas the sorcerer; the proconsul Sergius Paulus believes.
- ACTS 13:38-39,46** Pisidian Antioch sermon: “Through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses.” Then the turn: “We now turn to the Gentiles.”
- ACTS 14:8-18** At Lystra a lame man healed — the crowd declares Barnabas Zeus and Paul Hermes and tries to sacrifice oxen to them. The apostles tear their clothes: “We too are only human, like you.”
- ACTS 14:19-20** The same crowd, turned, stones Paul and drags him out of the city as dead. “But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city.” — back in, the same day.
- ACTS 14:21-23** The return loop: strengthening disciples — “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God” — and appointing elders in every church. Evangelize, establish, entrust.

C. AD 48-49 EPISTLE WRITTEN *Gal 1-6*

GALATIANS Written — No Other Gospel

Likely Paul’s first letter (on the early/South-Galatian dating — the dating is a genuine scholarly dispute; the later view places it c. AD 55). White-hot, no thanksgiving section — the gospel of grace defended against the circumcision party.

- GAL 1:6-8** “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you... even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God’s curse!”
- GAL 2:16** “A person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ.” — the thesis of the whole letter.
- GAL 2:20** “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”
- GAL 3:13-14** “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us... so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.” — Deuteronomy’s curse absorbed; Abraham’s blessing released to the nations.
- GAL 5:22-23** “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

The Jerusalem Council — Gentiles Free of the Yoke

The most consequential church meeting ever held — must Gentiles become Jews to be saved? Peter, Paul, Barnabas, and James answer no, and the gospel stays the gospel.

- ACTS 15:1** The presenting issue: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.” — salvation itself is on the table.
- ACTS 15:10-11** Peter: “Why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”
- ACTS 15:16-19** James cites Amos 9:11-12 — the rebuilt tent of David gathering the nations — and rules: “We should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.”
- ACTS 15:28** “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...” — the letter to Antioch; four abstentions for table fellowship, no circumcision, no yoke.

Second Missionary Journey — The Gospel Enters Europe

C. AD 49 – 52 · ANCHORED BY THE GALLIO INSCRIPTION

C. AD 49 STANDARD EVENT *Acts 15:36-16:10*

The Sharp Disagreement; Timothy Joins; The Macedonian Call

Paul and Barnabas split over John Mark — honestly recorded, later reconciled — and the Spirit blocks every door but one: a man of Macedonia, begging.

- ACTS 15:39-40** “They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company.” Barnabas takes Mark to Cyprus; Paul takes Silas. Two teams instead of one — and years later: “Get Mark... he is helpful to me” (2 Tim 4:11).
- ACTS 16:1-3** At Lystra: Timothy — the young disciple who becomes Paul’s “true son in the faith” (1 Tim 1:2) and co-sender of six letters.
- ACTS 16:6-10** Kept by the Spirit from Asia and Bithynia; then the night vision at Troas: “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” — the gospel crosses into Europe. The “we” passages begin (16:10): Luke joins the team.

C. AD 49-50 MAJOR EVENT *Acts 16:11-40*

Philippi — Lydia, the Jailer, and a Midnight Hymn Service

The first European church planted through a businesswoman, a slave girl, and a jailer — and Paul’s Roman citizenship deployed like a chess piece.

- ACTS 16:14** “The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message.” — Lydia, dealer in purple cloth; her household the first baptized in Europe.
- ACTS 16:25-26** “About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken.” — worship from the inner cell, beaten and in stocks.
- ACTS 16:30-31** “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” — “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your household.”
- ACTS 16:37** “They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens... Let them come themselves and escort us out.” — the citizenship card played to protect the fledgling church’s legal standing.

Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens — Mars Hill

Three weeks of synagogue argument, noble-minded Bereans testing everything against Scripture, and the most famous cross-cultural sermon in the NT — preached to philosophers from their own altar.

- ACTS 17:6** “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also.” — the accusation at Thessalonica; the best compliment the mission ever received.
- ACTS 17:11** The Bereans “received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.” — the gold standard for hearing any teacher, Paul included.
- ACTS 17:22-23** “People of Athens!... I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship — and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.” — starting from their categories, quoting their poets (17:28), landing on resurrection.
- ACTS 17:30-32** “He has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.” Some sneer; some say “we want to hear you again”; some believe — including Dionysius the Areopagite and Damaris.

Corinth — Eighteen Months; The Gallio Anchor

Aquila and Priscilla, tentmaking, a vision in the night, and the hearing before Gallio — the proconsul whose Delphi inscription gives the whole Pauline chronology its firmest date.

- ACTS 18:9-10** “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.” — the Lord’s election as the missionary’s courage.
- ACTS 18:12-16** “While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews of Corinth made a united attack on Paul.” Gallio dismisses the case as an internal Jewish dispute. The Delphi inscription dates Gallio’s term to c. AD 51-52 — the fixed peg of Pauline dating.
- ACTS 18:11** “So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.”

1 & 2 THESSALONIANS Written — Hope for the Dead in Christ

Among the earliest Christian documents in existence — written to a weeks-old church under persecution, anxious about believers who had died before the Lord’s return.

- 1 THESS 1:9-10** “You turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven... Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.” — conversion, service, hope: the whole Christian life in two verses.
- 1 THESS 4:13-17** “We do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope... the dead in Christ will rise first.” — grief permitted; despair retired.
- 1 THESS 5:16-18** “Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”
- 2 THESS 2:1-3** Correcting panic that “the day of the Lord has already come” — that day will not come until the rebellion and the man of lawlessness are revealed. Eschatology pastoral, not speculative.
- 2 THESS 3:10** “The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat.” — end-times excitement is no excuse for idleness.

Third Missionary Journey — Ephesus & The Great Letters

C. AD 52 – 57

C. AD 52-55 MAJOR EVENT Acts 19:1-41; 20:31

Ephesus — Three Years; The Word Conquers the Occult Capital

Paul's longest stay anywhere — daily lectures in the hall of Tyrannus, extraordinary miracles, a public bonfire of magic scrolls, and a riot led by the silversmiths of Artemis whose business is collapsing.

- ACTS 19:9-10 “He had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.” — the seven churches of Revelation likely seeded from this hall.
- ACTS 19:13-17 The seven sons of Sceva try the name of Jesus as a spell: “Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?” — the demonized man overpowers all seven. The Name is not magic.
- ACTS 19:18-20 Sorcery scrolls burned publicly — value: fifty thousand drachmas (a laborer's wage for ~135 years). “In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.” Ephesus was the occult capital of Asia; the gospel beat it on its home field.
- ACTS 19:23-34 Demetrius the silversmith: “this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people... there is danger that our trade will lose its good name.” Two hours of “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” — the riot of a dying industry.

C. AD 54-55, FROM EPHEBUS EPISTLE WRITTEN 1 Cor 1-16

1 CORINTHIANS Written — A Messy Church, A Patient Apostle

Divisions, lawsuits, immorality, idol food, chaotic worship, resurrection doubts — every modern church problem appears in Corinth first, and chapter 13 sits in the middle of the mess on purpose.

- 1 COR 1:18 “The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”
- 1 COR 10:13 “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.”
- 1 COR 13:4-8 “Love is patient, love is kind... It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.” — written not for weddings but for a church at war with itself over spiritual gifts.
- 1 COR 15:3-8 “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day...” — the earliest resurrection creed, with a witness list still mostly alive to be questioned (15:6).
- 1 COR 15:54-58 “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?... Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you.”

2 CORINTHIANS Written — Strength in Weakness

The most personal letter — written after a painful visit and a severe letter, defending an apostleship that looks like a beating list and boasts only in weakness.

- 2 COR 4:7-9** “We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.”
- 2 COR 5:17-21** “If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come... We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us... God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” — the ambassador commission in its clearest form.
- 2 COR 11:24-28** The credentials: five times the thirty-nine lashes, three beatings with rods, one stoning, three shipwrecks, a night and day in the open sea, danger everywhere, hunger, cold — “besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.”
- 2 COR 12:9-10** “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness... For when I am weak, then I am strong.” — the thorn stays; the grace holds.

ROMANS Written — The Gospel Systematically Unfolded

Written during three winter months in Corinth to a church he had never visited — the fullest statement of the gospel ever penned, carried to Rome by Phoebe the deacon (Rom 16:1-2).

- ROM 1:16-17** “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes... For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed — a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith” (Hab 2:4).
- ROM 3:23-24** “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”
- ROM 5:8** “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
- ROM 8:1,38-39** “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus... neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons... nor any powers... will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” — the powers themselves listed and defeated.
- ROM 15:23-28** The plan: deliver the collection to Jerusalem, then Rome, then Spain. He will reach Rome — in chains, at imperial expense.

Jerusalem Arrest & Two Years at Caesarea

C. AD 57 – 59

C. AD 57 STANDARD EVENT Acts 20:17-38; 21:1-14

The Road to Jerusalem — Warnings All the Way; The Miletus Farewell

The Spirit testifies in every city that chains await — and Paul keeps walking. The farewell to the Ephesian elders at Miletus is his pastoral last will and testament.

- ACTS 20:22-24** “Compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there... However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me.”
- ACTS 20:28-31** “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you... Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth.” — fulfilled in Ephesus within a generation (Rev 2:2 ; 1-2 Timothy).
- ACTS 21:11-13** Agabus binds his own hands and feet with Paul’s belt: “In this way the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt.” Paul: “Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”

C. AD 57 MAJOR EVENT Acts 21:27-22:29

Seized in the Temple — The Riot, the Rescue, the Testimony on the Steps

A false rumor about Trophimus ignites the Temple mob; Roman soldiers pull Paul out of a lynching, and he asks to address the crowd that was just beating him.

- ACTS 21:30-32** “The whole city was aroused... they dragged him from the temple... While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops.” — saved from the mob by the empire that will eventually execute him.
- ACTS 22:6-21** Paul retells Damascus in Aramaic from the barracks steps — the crowd listens until the word “Gentiles” (22:21-22), then erupts again. The offense was never miracles; it was the nations included.
- ACTS 22:25-29** Stretched out for flogging: “Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn’t even been found guilty?” The commander is alarmed — he had bought his citizenship; Paul was born to it.

C. AD 57-59 STANDARD EVENT Acts 23:1-24:27

Felix, the Plot, and Two Years in Caesarea

Forty men vow not to eat until Paul is dead; his nephew foils the plot; 470 soldiers escort one prisoner to Caesarea — where Felix leaves him in custody two years hoping for a bribe.

- ACTS 23:11** “The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, ‘Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.’” — the destination guaranteed; the route left unstated.
- ACTS 23:16-22** “The son of Paul’s sister heard of this plot” — the one glimpse of Paul’s family in Acts, and it saves his life.
- ACTS 24:24-26** Paul speaks to Felix and Drusilla “about righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come. Felix was afraid and said, ‘That’s enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you.’” — convenient never came; he also hoped for money.

Festus and Agrippa — “I Appeal to Caesar!”

The new governor proposes a Jerusalem trial Paul knows is an ambush; the citizen plays his final legal card, then gives King Agrippa the fullest account of his calling in all of Acts.

- ACTS 25:10-12 “I appeal to Caesar!” Festus: “You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!” — the appeal that turns a provincial case into the road to Rome.
- ACTS 26:19-20 “So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven.” — the whole life summarized in one line of obedience.
- ACTS 26:28-29 Agrippa: “Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?” Paul: “Short time or long — I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains.”
- ACTS 26:31-32 “This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment... He could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.” — innocent by Rome’s own verdict, and bound for Rome anyway. Providence rides the legal system.

The Voyage, the Shipwreck & the First Roman Imprisonment

C. AD 59 – 62

C. AD 59-60 MAJOR EVENT Acts 27:1-28:10

Storm, Shipwreck, and Malta

Luke's masterpiece of ancient sea narrative — fourteen days driven before the northeaster, 276 souls saved exactly as promised, and a viper that changes the Maltese verdict from “murderer” to “god.”

- ACTS 27:23-25** “Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me and said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.’ So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me.” — the prisoner becomes the captain.
- ACTS 27:35** “He took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat.” — grace said over breakfast in a hurricane.
- ACTS 28:3-6** The viper fastens on his hand; the islanders wait for him to swell up and drop dead; he shakes it into the fire. Opinion swings from “murderer pursued by Justice” to “he is a god” — crowds remain crowds.
- ACTS 28:8-9** Publius's father healed of fever and dysentery; “the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured.” Three months of unplanned mission field.

C. AD 60-62 STANDARD EVENT Acts 28:11-31

Rome at Last — Two Years in His Own Rented House

Acts ends mid-story, on purpose — the gospel has reached the capital of the world, preached “with all boldness and without hindrance” by a man chained to a praetorian guard.

- ACTS 28:16** “Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.” — house arrest; the guard rotation becomes a captive audience (Phil 1:13 : “the whole palace guard” knows why he’s in chains).
- ACTS 28:30-31** “For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ — with all boldness and without hindrance!” — the last word of Acts in Greek: *akōlytōs*, unhindered. The book ends with the word still running.

The Prison Epistles — EPHESIANS, COLOSSIANS, PHILEMON, PHILIPPIANS

Four letters from the chain — the highest cosmic Christology Paul ever wrote, produced not in triumph but in custody. (Caesarean or Ephesian origin is argued by some scholars; Rome remains the traditional and majority placement.)

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| EPH 1:20-22 | Christ seated “far above all rule and authority, power and dominion... And God placed all things under his feet.” — the powers named and outranked; the dominion-transfer chain at its “recovered” link. |
| EPH 2:8-10 | “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works.” |
| EPH 6:12 | “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” — written by a man chained to flesh-and-blood Rome, who knew the real adversary sat higher. |
| COL 1:15-20 | The Christ-hymn: “The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation... all things have been created through him and for him... and through him to reconcile to himself all things... by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” — thrones, powers, rulers, authorities: created by him, defeated at the cross (2:15). |
| PHLM 15-16 | Onesimus sent back “no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother.” — one runaway, one letter, and the logic that would eventually crack slavery’s foundation. |
| PHIL 2:6-11 | The kenosis hymn: “He humbled himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place... every knee should bow... every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord.” |
| PHIL 4:11-13 | “I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation... I can do all this through him who gives me strength.” — a contentment verse forged in custody, not on a podium. |

Release, the Pastorals & Death Under Nero

C. AD 62 – 67

C. AD 62-66 STANDARD EVENT *Titus 1:5; 1 Tim 1:3; Rom 15:24*

Release and Further Travels — Crete, Macedonia, Possibly Spain

The Pastorals presuppose movements Acts never records — Crete with Titus, Macedonia, Nicopolis. The Spain ambition of Romans 15 may have been realized: 1 Clement says he reached “the limit of the west.” Tier the release-and-second-imprisonment reconstruction honestly: it is the best fit for the data, held by most of tradition, not narrated by Scripture.

- TITUS 1:5** “The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town.” — a mission window Acts doesn’t cover.
- 1 TIM 1:3** “As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus” — Timothy holding the line against the very wolves predicted at Miletus.
- ROM 15:24,28** 1 Clement 5 (c. AD 95-96): Paul “taught righteousness to the whole world, having reached the limit of the west.” Read by many as Spain (Rom 15:24,28 fulfilled) — but a serious counter-reading (Schnelle) takes “the limits of the west” as Rome itself, the place of martyrdom. Early, tantalizing, and genuinely ambiguous; the Spain mission stays UNRESOLVED.

C. AD 62-66 EPISTLE WRITTEN *1 Tim 1-6; Titus 1-3*

I TIMOTHY & TITUS Written — Order in the Household of God

Manuals for the second generation — qualified elders and deacons, sound doctrine, and grace that trains. The movement is being built to outlive its founder.

- 1 TIM 1:15** “Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the worst.” — present tense, decades after Damascus.
- 1 TIM 3:1-13** The overseer and deacon qualifications — almost entirely character, barely any skill: above reproach, faithful, temperate, hospitable, not a lover of money. Who you are outranks what you can do.
- TITUS 2:11-13** “For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness... while we wait for the blessed hope — the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.” — grace as teacher; Jesus as God stated plainly.

2 TIMOTHY Written — The Last Letter

No longer house arrest — a cold cell, a coming winter, a verdict already sensed. The final letter of the apostle to the nations is a baton-pass to his son in the faith.

- 2 TIM 1:12** “I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.”
- 2 TIM 3:16-17** “All Scripture is God-breathed (theopneustos) and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
- 2 TIM 4:6-8** “The time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness.” — the race of Acts 20:24, finished.
- 2 TIM 4:11,13** “Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you... When you come, bring the cloak I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.” — Mark restored; a cold man wanting his coat and his books. The most human verse in the corpus.
- 2 TIM 4:16-17** “At my first defense, no one came to my support... But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion’s mouth.”

Beheaded Under Nero — TRADITION, Strongly Attested

Scripture does not narrate his death; 2 Timothy anticipates it. Tier: martyrdom in Rome under Nero = strong early tradition; beheading (the citizen’s execution, not crucifixion) = consistent across the early sources; the exact site and date = later detail.

1 Clement 5 (c. AD 95-96, from Rome): Paul, “having borne witness before the rulers, departed from the world and went to the holy place — the greatest example of endurance.” Written within thirty years, from the city where it happened.

The beheading detail first appears in the Acts of Paul (late 2nd c.) — an apocryphal text, but here carrying a plausible detail: the sword was the citizen’s execution. Eusebius (Hist. eccl. 2.25) connects the death to Nero’s persecution and makes clear that sources before him already spoke of Paul’s beheading at Rome.

The “same day as Peter” pairing and the Tre Fontane location details are later embellishments. Hold the core (Rome, Nero, sword) firmly; hold the trimmings loosely.

Gaius of Rome (c. AD 200): “I can point out the trophies of the apostles. For if you go to the Vatican, or to the Ostian Way, you will find the trophies of those who founded this church.” — “trophies” = monuments marking the traditional burial sites.

Archaeology adds weight: structures beneath St. Paul Outside the Walls have been plausibly identified (Camerlenghi) as part of the very trophy Gaius pointed to, preserved by Constantine because Christians had gathered there for generations.

The Measure of the Man — Thirteen Letters, Three Continents, One Obsession

From Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, roughly ten thousand miles by foot and sail, churches in four Roman provinces, thirteen canonical letters — and Peter’s verdict already treating them as Scripture.

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| ROM 15:19 | “From Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ.” — the eastern Mediterranean seeded in roughly fifteen working years. |
| 1 COR 9:22-23 | “I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel.” — the missionary method in one sentence. |
| 2 PET 3:15-16 | “Our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him... His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures.” — within Paul’s own generation, his letters are classed with “the other Scriptures.” |

About This Timeline

This sheet is the printable form of <https://jayms.com/bible-study-tools-2/the-apostle-paul-timeline-and-letters/>, where the same material is searchable, filterable by era, and every reference links straight through to the text.

It is free. Print it, copy it, hand it round a class, put it in a bulletin. No permission needed and no attribution required, though a link back is always welcome and is what keeps work like this findable.

James McLaughlin writes long-form study notes on Scripture, symbolism and story at jayms.com.

Other Free Timelines

The Life of Jesus Timeline

jayms.com/bible-study-tools-2/the-life-of-jesus-timeline

The Old Testament Timeline

jayms.com/bible-study-tools-2/the-old-testament-timeline

The Gospel of Luke Timeline

jayms.com/bible-study-tools-2/the-gospel-of-luke-timeline

The Twelve Apostles Timeline

jayms.com/bible-study-tools-2/the-twelve-apostles-timeline-and-traditions

The Ante-Nicene Age AD 100 – 325

jayms.com/bible-study-tools-2/the-ante-nicene-age-timeline

How We Got the New Testament Canon Timeline

jayms.com/bible-study-tools-2/how-we-got-the-new-testament-canon-timeline

The Psalter · Command Center

jayms.com/bible-study-tools-2/the-psalter---command-center