

Chronology of the New Testament

Some of the dates used in this chronology are approximate and thus allow a leeway of up to two (or possibly three) years.

5 BC — The birth of Jesus Christ. Matt. 1 and Luke 1–2.

3 BC — The visit of the wise men. The murder of the children in Bethlehem. The death of Herod the Great. Matt. 2.

AD 26 — John the Baptist began preaching in the wilderness. Jesus began his ministry about six months later.

AD 30 — Jesus was crucified, rose again and ascended into heaven. Pentecost. Acts 1–2.

AD 32 — The stoning of Stephen. Acts 7.

AD 33 — The disciples were scattered after Stephen's death. They went into Judea and Samaria preaching the gospel. Acts 8.

AD 35 — Jesus revealed himself to Saul on the Damascus highway. Sometime during the following three years, he went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. He later escaped Damascus and fled to Jerusalem. Acts 9 and Gal. 1:16–18.

AD 38 — Saul's first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion. He stayed fifteen days with Peter. Gal. 1:18.

AD 40–45 — Paul began a five-year ministry in Cilicia and Syria. Gal. 1:21. Peter preached in Lydda, Joppa and Caesarea. His first Gentile convert was Cornelius. Acts 9:32–10:48.

AD 42 — Gentiles were received into the church at Antioch. Barnabas is sent to investigate. He asked Saul to minister at Antioch. Acts 11:19–26.

Event: Jerusalem expanded its walls with the result that the place of Jesus' crucifixion was now within the city's limits.

AD 43 — Barnabas and Saul took relief to the church in Jerusalem, which had suffered through a severe famine. This was Saul's second visit to Jerusalem after his conversion. Acts 11:27–30.

AD 44 — Herod Agrippa I, a grandson of Herod the Great, murdered James, the brother of John. Herod died. Acts 12:1–2, 20–24.

AD 47–48 — Barnabas and Saul were sent on their FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY. They went to Cyprus, Perga, Antioch (Pisidia), Iconium and Lystra, before retracing their steps back to Antioch (Syria). It became apparent almost immediately that Saul was to be the main speaker, thus the order of their names was changed. During this time, Saul also started using his Roman name Paul. Acts 13:1–14:25.

AD 49 — Paul made this third post-conversion visit to Jerusalem, this time to deal with the question of Gentile circumcision at the Jerusalem Council. Afterward, he and Barnabas, Judas and Silas returned to Antioch. Acts 15:1–35 and Gal. 2:1–10.

Book written: MATTHEW.

Event: Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome because of “Chrestus” (Christ?). This explains why Aquila and Priscilla were in Corinth a few years later. Acts 18:2.

AD 51–53 — Paul and Silas began their SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY. This time they traveled through Cilicia, Lycaonia, Galatia, Troas, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens and Corinth. Acts 15:36–18:18.

Books written: Paul wrote 1 THESSALONIANS from Corinth about AD 51. 2 THESSALONIANS was written just a few months later.

Event: Gallio became proconsul of Achaia in AD 51, a position he occupied for only one or two years. This gives a precise date for Paul’s ministry in Corinth. Acts 18:12.

AD 53 — After spending a year and a half in Corinth, Paul returned to Jerusalem to keep the feast. This was his fourth visit to Jerusalem after his conversion. Acts 18:18–22.

AD 54–59 — Paul and Silas then began their THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY. This took them through Galatia, Phrygia, the interior of Asia Minor, Macedonia and Achaia. Paul labored for three years in Ephesus. Acts 18:23–21:9.

Books written: JAMES alludes to Matthew and was probably written within five years of the gospel. Paul wrote GALATIANS and 1 CORINTHIANS about AD 55 during his three-year stay at Ephesus. 1 Cor. 16:7–8. ROMANS and 2 CORINTHIANS were probably written about two years later.

AD 59 — Paul returned to Jerusalem and was arrested. Acts 21:10–23:22.

AD 60–61 — Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea for two years. During this time, he appeared before Felix, Festus and Herod Agrippa II. Acts 23:23–26:32.

Book written: Paul’s Caesarean imprisonment gave LUKE an opportunity to write his gospel and perhaps most of the early chapters of ACTS.

AD 61 — Paul began his trip to Rome for his trial. During the trip, he suffered shipwreck and spent the winter in Malta. Acts 27:1–28:10.

AD 62–64 — Paul arrived in Rome and was placed under house-arrest for at least two years. The book of Acts concludes before the verdict is given. Acts 28:11–31.

Books written: During Paul’s Roman imprisonment, he wrote his “prison epistles.” EPHESIANS, COLOSSIANS, PHILEMON were probably written about the same time and delivered by Tychicus. Eph. 6:21 and Col. 4:7. PHILIPPIANS was written a little later after

several other messages had been exchanged. The date of HEBREWS is uncertain. It was evidently written before the siege of Jerusalem since the priesthood, etc., are portrayed as still functioning, but it's not likely that it was written much before.

AD 64–67 — Paul was confident that he would be released from prison. Phil. 1:19–25; 2:19–24 and Philemon 22. Earlier, he had wanted to minister in Spain. Rom. 15:23–28. His plans may have changed, though. It's likely that he ministered in Crete and Nicopolis between imprisonments. Titus 1:5; 3:12.

Books written: The book of ACTS was completed shortly after the last event recorded in chapter 28. Paul wrote 1 TIMOTHY and TITUS before his final arrest and 2 TIMOTHY while in prison. JOHN wrote his gospel and REVELATION shortly before the siege of Jerusalem.

Events: A large section of Rome burned in AD 64. Nero blamed the Christians for it and began an official, though mostly localized, persecution of the church. About the same time, the Jews rebelled against Rome. This resulted in the Romans sending armies against various cities, including Jerusalem. The siege against Jerusalem began a year later.

AD 67 — Paul was martyred for the faith. 1 Clement 5 places his death in the last days of Nero, but doesn't say that he died by decapitation.

Books written: Peter probably wrote 1 and 2 PETER after Paul's martyrdom. The gospel that Peter wanted to have written was MARK. 2 Pet. 1:15. JOHN'S EPISTLES are hard to date but seem to presuppose that he had already written his gospel.

AD 68 — Peter was martyred. Clement also mentioned his suffering and martyrdom. Again, however, there is no mention of the method of death. John 21:18–19 is probably a prophecy of his crucifixion.

Books written: JUDE and 2 Peter cover a lot of the same material. The question that arises from this is, Which came first? Because the statements they have in common seem most natural to Peter, it's assumed that he wrote first. Jude probably wrote his epistle within a year or two of Peter.

Events: The Roman armies, led by Titus, destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70. They took gold from the temple to finance the building of the Coliseum, which was later used for the torture and murder of believers.