

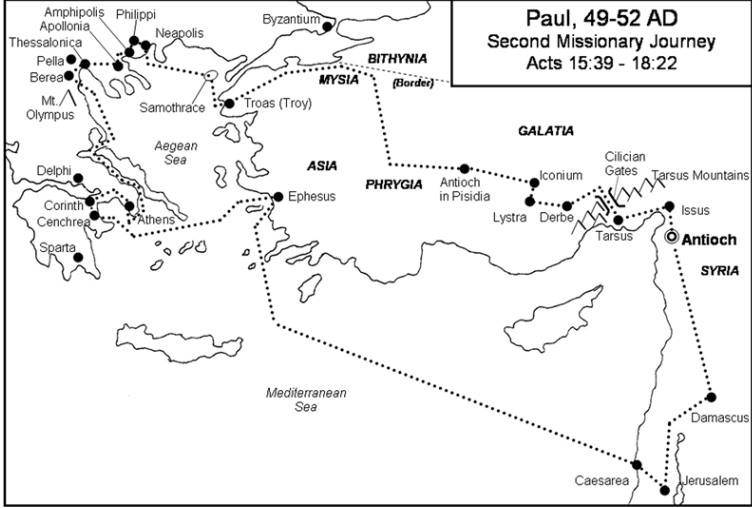
WBW | Unpacking Acts | pt.2 - "The Timeline of The First Church"

The purpose of this study is to illustrate how the young Church advanced amidst seasons of struggle and growth - during the first Century. We'll set our scope on the period between Jesus' ascension and John the Apostle's death. Acts provides an outline for the first 30 years; we'll lean on early church and Roman historians to fill in the next 40 years. We'll also attempt to date the NT books, the deaths of the 12 Apostles (the disciples minus Judas, plus Paul), and key events occurring in the Roman Empire that would've affected the Church.

I. THE SEASON OF GATHERING		
YEAR	CHURCH EVENT	ROMAN EMP.
30	<p>ACTS 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus Death, Resurrection, Ascension <p>ACTS 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pentecost: the 120 are "baptized" in the Holy Spirit; 3,000 believe Believers live Spirit-full lives; God added to their number daily 	Tiberius is Emperor of Rome
31	<p>ACTS 3-4:31</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peter heals a crippled man in Temple, draws a crowd Peter & John arrested by Sanhedrin, released with warning "The number of men who believed grew to about 5,000" 	
32-33	<p>ACTS 4:32-5:42</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joseph (Barnabas) sells a field and gives full price to the church Ananias and Sapphira lie to the Holy Spirit and die The Jerusalem church meets regularly in Solomon's Colonnade Apostles perform many miracles "More and more" believed... and were "added to their number" Apostles arrested, but released by an angel Arrested again, flogged & released with threat Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news..." 	
33-34	<p>ACTS 6:1-7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of disciples was increasing Seven men, who were "full of the Spirit", chosen as Deacons The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased A large number of Jewish priests believed 	

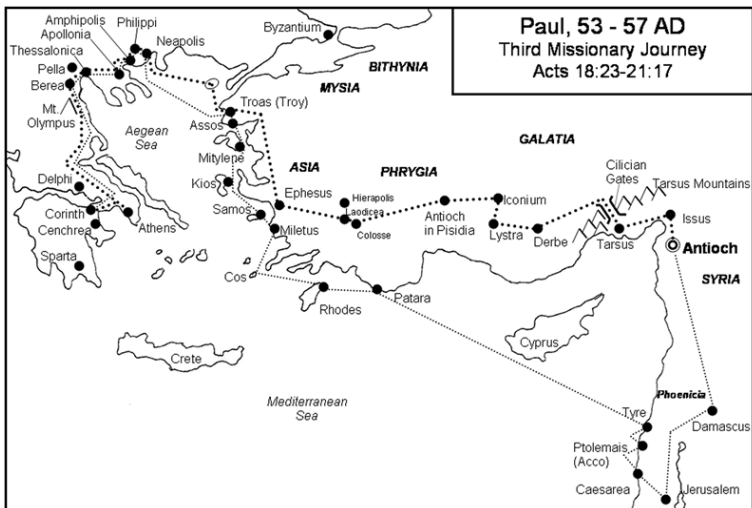
• 7 times, Luke emphasizes the growth during this initial season; but it's all still "in Jerusalem".

II. THE SEASON OF SCATTERING		
YEAR	CHURCH EVENT	ROMAN EMP.
34	<p>ACTS 6:8-8:40</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saul arrives in Jerusalem • Stephen debates Jews; tried by Sanhedrin and stoned • Saul unleashes persecution; all <u>except the apostles</u> scatter <p>Forced to “scatter” by persecution, the church “scatters” seeds of the Gospel everywhere they go: new places and new people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philip (of Acts 6, not the Disciple) evangelizes Samaria • Peter & John go to Samaria to check out converts <p>The expanding of the church perpetually forced the Jewish Christians to adopt a new paradigm for just how big the scope of this Gospel really was.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Samaritans “received the Holy Spirit” (transfer & sign H.S. motifs) • Philip leads Ethiopian to faith (seed of the Gospel to Africa) 	
35	<p>ACTS 9:1-19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saul converted on road to Damascus • Saul is “filled with” the Holy Spirit (transfer & vocation H.S. motifs) • Saul goes to Arabia for three years (see Galatians 1:17) 	
37		Caligula becomes Emperor
38	<p>ACTS 9:20-30</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saul returns to preach in Damascus; Jews plot to kill him • Saul escapes to Jerusalem; Barnabas introduces him to disciples • Saul stays with Peter 15 days (see Gal. 1:18-19) • Saul debates Grecian Jews; life is threatened; flees to Tarsus 	
39	<p>ACTS 9:31-43</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saul preaches throughout Cilicia & Syria (see Gal.1:21) • Persecution stops in Palestine for “a time”; church increases in number • Peter in Judea; heals Aeneas in Lydda; raises Tabitha in Joppa 	
40	<p>ACTS 10:1-48</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter’s vision to “not call anything impure God has made clean” • Peter called to Caesarea to preach to Cornelius, a Gentile • Cornelius’ household believes; Spirit “came upon” them all (sign H.S. motif) 	Caligula orders a statue of himself be erected in the Temple at Jerusalem; Herod Agrippa delays to prevent revolt
41	<p>ACTS 11:1-18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter defends entering a Gentile house to Church leaders in Jerusalem 	Caligula assassinated; Claudius becomes Emperor
42	<p>ACTS 11:19-24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missionaries (scattered during Jer. persecution) reach Antioch; preach to Greeks; a great number of people believe • The “mixed” church of Antioch is born (Jew & Gentile) • Barnabas sent by the Jerusalem church to visit Antioch church 	
43	<p>ACTS 11:25-30</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barnabas goes to Tarsus to get Saul; brings him back to Antioch • Believers are first called “Christians” in Antioch • Agabus, a prophet, prophecies to Antioch of coming famine in Jer. • Antioch church sends Saul & Barnabas to Jerusalem with offering 	Rome invades Britain
44	<p>ACTS 12:1-24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James (John’s brother) is killed by Herod Agrippa (first Apostle martyred) • Peter is arrested; an angel releases him • Herod Agrippa dies (“an angel of the Lord struck him down”) • “The word of God continued to spread and flourish” 	Judaea is annexed as a Roman province after the death of Herod Agrippa Roman/Jewish tension increasing

<p>49</p>	<p>ACTS 15:36-16:5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From Antioch, Paul writes to the <i>Galatian church</i>, against the Judaizers (who had gone there and caused problems) Paul and Barnabas argue (over Mark) and separate Barnabas and Mark go to evangelize Cyprus Paul and Silas leaves on “Paul’s Second Missionary Journey”  <p>Paul, 49-52 AD Second Missionary Journey Acts 15:39 - 18:22</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antioch, Syria ---> through “Cilician Gates” ---> Derbe ---> Lystra In Lystra, Paul meets Timothy, brings him along 	<p>Paul writes Galatians from Antioch in Syria</p>	<p>Emperor Claudius “expelled the Jews from Rome since they rioted constantly at the instigation of Chrestus (Christ)” - Suetonius, Roman historian</p>
<p>50</p>	<p>ACTS 16:6-18:8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paul travels through the region of Phrygia and Galatia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holy Spirit kept them from preaching in Asia Paul reaches the northern border of Mysia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holy Spirit “would not allow” them to enter Bithynia Paul goes to Troas (ancient Troy) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paul has a vision of a Macedonian man calling for help Luke joins the mission (“we” language starts here) Troas ---> Samothrace ---> Macedonia: Neapolis ---> Philippi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Philippi, Paul starts church; imprisoned; delivered by earthquake Amphipolis ---> Apollonia ---> Thessalonica <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Thessalonica, Paul preaches, starts church ...and a riot Paul flees to Berea <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bereans are students of scripture; many Jews & Greeks believe Paul goes to Athens (alone), invited to speak at the Areopagus Paul goes to Corinth (alone); meets <i>Aquila & Priscilla</i>; makes tents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Silas, Timothy come from Thessalonica w/ offering & letter for Paul Paul responds to the Thessalonians with <i>First Thessalonians</i> Paul starts Corinthian church, predominantly Gentile 	<p>Paul writes First Thessalonians from Corinth</p>	<p>Rome names the days after the 7 known planets</p> <p>Rome founds the city of Londinium (London) in Britain</p> <p>Gamaliel (Acts 5:34-39) dies</p>
<p>51</p>	<p>ACTS 18:9-17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paul stays in Corinth a year and a half. Writes <i>2nd Thessalonians</i> in response to letter from Thessalonians 	<p>Paul writes Second Thessalonians</p>	
<p>52</p>	<p>ACTS 18:18-22</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paul (with Aquila and Priscilla) goes to Ephesus via Cenchreae Paul leaves Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus and returns to Antioch, via Caesarea & Jerusalem (concluding his 2nd Journey) 		

20 cities visited (11 new; 9 revisited)


During this 2nd Journey, we meet people who joined Paul in the mission: Silas, Timothy, Luke, Aquilla and Priscilla

<p>53</p>	<p>ACTS 18:23-19:10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paul leaves for his “Third Missionary Journey”  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antioch in Syria ---> Galatia and Phrygia (strengthening disciples) Meanwhile in Ephesus, Aquila & Priscilla meet & teach Apollos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apollos goes to Corinth Paul arrives in Ephesus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prays for new believers and “<i>the Holy Spirit came upon them</i>” Taught in synagogue 3 months until Jews became “obstinate” Taught daily in the Greek lecture hall of Tyrannus for two years 		
<p>54</p>	<p>ACTS 19:11-22</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Still in Ephesus, God does “extraordinary miracles” through Paul Seven sons of Sceva exposed; revival starts in Ephesus Paul sends Timothy to Macedonia ahead of him; stays in Ephesus Philip (the disciple) martyred by Jews in Phrygia 		<p>Nero, age 16, becomes Emperor</p>
<p>55</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Still in Ephesus, Paul writes letter to Corinthian church (lost) (1 Cor 5:9f) A delegation from the Corinthian church arrives in Ephesus with support - as well as <i>problems and questions</i> (see 1 Cor 16:17). Paul writes a second letter to Corinth (aka, First Corinthians). Paul follows this letter with a brief visit to Corinth (2 Cor. 2:1) Paul writes a 3rd letter to Corinth (lost); sends w/ Titus (see 2 Cor. 2:3f, 7:8f) who stays to mentor Corinthian church. (7:15) 	<p>Paul writes First Corinthians from Ephesus</p>	
<p>56</p>	<p>ACTS 19:23-20:2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Still in Ephesus, Demetrius opposes Paul, a riot ensues Paul leaves Ephesus, travels thru Macedonia Writes 4th letter to Corinth (2nd Cor.), sends w/ Luke (2 Cor. 2:13; 8:17-18) Paul reaches Corinth by winter 	<p>Paul writes Second Corinthians from Macedonia</p>	
<p>57</p>	<p>ACTS 20:3-21:16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Corinth, Paul writes to the Roman church (aka, Romans) Paul travels by land back thru Macedonia, sailing from Philippi to Troas Troas > Assos > Mitylene > Chios > Samos > Miletus Paul encourages and says “goodbye” to Ephesian elders Miletus > Kos > Rhodes > Patara > Tyre > Ptolemais > Caesarea In Caesarea, Agabus prophesies Paul’s captivity; friends plead with him not to go to Jerusalem but “he would not be dissuaded” 	<p>Paul writes Romans from Corinth</p>	

30 cities (20 revisits)

Paul’s companions becoming his Apostolic (sent out) **partners**: Aquilla & Priscilla in Ephesus; Timothy to Macedonia; Titus and Luke to Corinth.

IV. THE SEASON OF **CAPTIVITY** and **PRODUCTIVITY**

YEAR	CHURCH EVENT	NT BOOK
57	<p>ACTS 21:17-24:27</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul arrives in Jerusalem • Meets with James and elders of the Jerusalem church to tell them “what God had done among the Gentiles” • When seen in the temple, Paul is seized and beaten by Jews, but rescued and taken into custody by Roman commander • Paul presents his testimony to the angry mob, and stands before the Sanhedrin the next day • Because Jews plan to kill Paul, he’s transferred to Caesarea • Paul appears before Governor Felix • Remains in prison in Caesarea for two years 	
59	<p>ACTS 25-28:10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul appears before Governor Festus and King Herod Agrippa II • Paul “appeals to Caesar” (Nero) so taken to Rome under guard  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caesarea > Sidon > Myra > Fair Havens • Attempting to reach Phoenix for winter (against Paul’s warning) they’re taken off course and shipwrecked in Malta 	
60	<p>ACTS 28:11-29</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malta > Syracuse > Rhegium > Puteoli > Rome • In Rome, Paul is allowed to live by himself under house arrest • Andrew (Peter’s brother) martyred in Greece 	<p>Paul writes Ephesians while under house arrest</p> <p>Jude (a brother of Jesus) writes Jude (alternate date: 65-70AD)</p>
61	<p>ACTS 28:30-31</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For 2 years, Paul received visitors and taught about Jesus “<i>with all boldness and without hindrance!</i>” 	<p>Paul writes Philippians while under house arrest</p>
62	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter comes to Rome and writes <i>First Peter</i> • Paul is released from Roman imprisonment. • Paul visits churches in Greece (Corinth) and Macedonia. • In Macedonia, Paul writes a letter to Timothy (aka, <i>First Timothy</i>) who was pastoring in Ephesus. • Paul leaves for Spain (?) 	<p>Paul writes Colossians and Philemon while under house arrest</p> <p>Peter writes First Peter from Rome</p> <p>Paul writes First Timothy from Macedonia</p>

God used Paul’s captivity to be a season of **productivity** for the church: Paul presented the Gospel before powerful audiences and wrote letters that God preserved to become our scriptures.

Acts takes us to 62AD. After, we must rely on early church historians to fill the gaps. Dating for the Apostle's deaths and NT books is much debated. The order I chose seems to be the majority opinion among those respected in those areas of debate.

V. THE PERIOD OF MARTYRDOM and THE CHRISTIAN MANIFESTO			
YR	CHURCH EVENT	NT BOOK	ROMAN EMP.
63	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James (the son of Alphaeus) is martyred in Egypt 		
64	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter writes <i>Second Peter</i> from Rome • Peter is martyred in Rome • Paul returns from Spain (?); goes to Crete. • Paul leaves Titus at Crete (Titus 1:5) • Paul goes to Corinth; writes letter to <i>Titus</i> • Paul spends winter in Neapolis (Titus 3:12) 	<p>Peter writes Second Peter from Rome</p> <p>Mark writes his gospel</p> <p>Paul writes Titus from Corinth</p>	<p>Rome is burnt; citizens suspect Nero</p> <p>Nero begins Rome's first persecution of Christians</p> <p>Temple in Jerusalem completed (began in 20 BC)</p>
65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul travels through Macedonia and Asia 	<p>Luke writes his gospel and Acts</p>	
66	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul visits Colosse, Ephesus, Miletus 	<p>Matthew writes his gospel</p>	<p>Jews revolt against Rome in Judea; led by the Zealots who drive Rome from Jerusalem</p>
67	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul arrested in Troas; taken to Rome • Paul writes to Timothy (<i>Second Timothy</i>) • Paul martyred in Rome • Linus (a disciple of Peter) becomes bishop of church in Rome, in the wake of Peter & Paul's deaths 	<p>Paul writes Second Timothy from Roman Prison</p> <p>(Paul's last preserved letter)</p>	<p>Rome goes to war w/ Judea</p> <p>Galilee conquered; 37,000 Jews taken to stadium in Tiberias</p>
68			<p>Essenes hide their scrolls in caves near the Dead Sea to save from Rome</p> <p>Nero commits suicide; Galba becomes Emperor</p>
69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James (Jesus' brother) is martyred in Jerusalem • Ignatius (a disciple of John) becomes bishop of church in Antioch, Syria (until 107AD) 		<p>Year of the Four Emperors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Galba (assassinated) 2. Otho (suicide) 3. Vitellius (killed in battle) 4. Vespasian
70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas martyred in India • Matthew martyred in Ethiopia • Bartholomew martyred in Armenia • Simeon, replaces James as bishop of church in Jerusalem (until 107AD) 		<p>General Titus conquers Jerusalem; Temple is destroyed</p>
72	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thaddeus martyred in Edessa 		
74	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simon the Zealot martyred in Syria 		
79	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anacletus (a disciple of Peter) becomes bishop of church in Rome (after Linus' death) 	<p>The book of Hebrews written by unknown author from an unknown location (possibly Apollos from Corinth)</p>	<p>Vespasian dies; Titus becomes Emperor</p> <p>Mt. Vesuvius erupts; burying Pompei</p>

8 of the 12 Apostles (7 disciples + Paul) and James (Jesus' brother & leader of the Jerusalem church) are martyred are in this season. James (John's brother), Philip, and Andrew had been martyred earlier; only John remains.

But the 3 synoptic gospels (forever chronicling the life, death, & resurrection of Jesus), Acts (the story of the early church & announcement of the Age of the Spirit), and Hebrews (a theological Christian treatise) are written in this otherwise dark season.

Historically, Jesus' prophecy of the Temple's destruction is fulfilled; dramatically signaling of God's rejection of the old order.

VI. THE SEASON OF **JOHN**, the **LAST APOSTLE**

YR	CHURCH EVENT	NT BOOK	ROMAN EMP.
81			Titus murdered; Domitian becomes Emperor
85		John writes his gospel from Ephesus	
88	• Clement (worked w/ Paul, see Phil.4:3) becomes the bishop of church in Rome (until 99AD)		
90		John writes 1, 2, 3 John from Ephesus	
93	• Polycarp (a disciple of John) becomes bishop of the church in Smyrna (by John's appointment) Ignatius, Clement, and Polycarp are the 3 chief Apostolic Fathers of the early church.		Domitian's "Reign of Terror" begins, widespread persecution of Christians & Jews
94	• John exiled to the Isle of Patmos by order of Domitian According to Tertullian, that was after John was plunged into a vat of boiling oil during the Colosseum games - but suffered no injury from it.		
96	• John writes <i>Revelation</i> , sends to the 7 churches of Asia • John released from Patmos and returns to Ephesus	John writes Revelation on Patmos	Domitian assassinated; Nerva becomes emperor; releases Domitian's political enemies
98	• John, the last apostle, dies of natural causes in Ephesus		Nerva dies; Tajan becomes Emperor (until 117AD)

- Persecution would come against the church in waves, reaching the peak of it's intensity under [Emperor Diocletian](#) in 303-311 AD.
- In 311, Diocletian died and [Emperor Galerius](#) issued the "Edict of Toleration"
- In 312, [General Constantine](#) "converts" to Christianity while on a military campaign in Italy
- In 322, St. Peter's Church, [the first Christian building](#) was built in Rome
- In 325, [Emperor Constantine](#) makes Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire