

# Timeline of Paul's Ministry

Missionary Activity	Writing Ministry
<p><b>I. Paul's early ministry</b></p> <p>A. Conversion and early activities (AD 33-46)</p> <p>B. First missionary journey (AD 46-47), Acts 13:1-14:28</p> <p>C. Jerusalem council (AD 48), Acts 15:1-35, Gal 2:1-10</p>	<p style="color: red;">Galatians, AD 47 (South Galatian Theory) (From Antioch)</p>
<p><b>II. Paul's middle period of ministry</b></p> <p>A. The second missionary journey (ca. AD 48-51), Acts 15:36-18:22</p>	<p><b>I. Paul's Early Writing Ministry</b></p> <p>Galatians, AD 49* (South Galatian Theory) (From Macedonia)</p> <p>1 Thessalonians AD 50 (From Athens)</p> <p>2 Thessalonians AD 51 (From Corinth)</p>
<p>B. The third missionary journey (ca AD 52-57), Acts 18:23-21:16</p>	<p><b>II. Paul's Middle Period Writing Ministry</b></p> <p>1 Corinthians, AD 54-55 (From Ephesus) <span style="color: red;">(Possibly the Prison Letters from Ephesus)</span></p> <p>2 Corinthians, AD 56 (From Macedonia)</p> <p>Romans, AD 57 (From Corinth)</p> <p style="color: red;">Galatians, AD 57 (North Galatian Theory) (From Corinth)</p>
<p><b>III. Paul's final period of ministry</b></p> <p>A. Arrest in Jerusalem (AD 57), Acts 21:17-23:22</p>	<p><b>Prison Letters,</b></p> <p>Colossians, AD 57-60 (From Caesarea)</p> <p>Ephesians (From Caesarea)</p> <p>Philemon (From Caesarea)</p> <p style="color: red;">(Possibly Philippians also)</p>
<p>B. Imprisonment in Caesarea (AD 57-60), Acts 23:23-26:32</p>	<p>Philippians, AD 61-62 (From Rome)</p> <p style="color: red;">(Possibly the above prison letters also)</p>
<p>C. The Voyage to Rome (AD 60), Acts 27:1-28:13</p>	<p></p>
<p>D. House Arrest in Rome (AD 61-62), Acts 28:14-31; Eph. 3:1, 4:1, 6:18-22; Phil. 1:12-26; 2:19-30; 4:1-3, 10-19; Col 4:7-18; Philm 22-24.</p>	<p></p>

<p>E. Release from Imprisonment and Resumption of Ministry (AD 63-64), 1 Tim. 1:3-4; Titus 1:5, 3:12-13.</p> <p>F. Subsequent Arrest and Execution in Rome (AD 64), 2 Tim. 1:8, 15-18; 4:7-21.</p>	<p>Pastoral Letters, 1 Timothy, AD 63-64 (From Macedonia) Titus, AD 63-64 (From Nicopolis)</p> <p>2 Timothy, AD 64 (From Rome)</p>
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Notes:

This chronological schema depends upon a combination of traditional understanding and modern scholarly insights. It represents but one projection of possible temporal connections between Paul's work as a missionary and his ministry in letter writing.

What is not included here is the much more complex relationship with the Christian community at Corinth. For a reconstruction of that, see my "Paul's Relation to the Church at Corinth" at <http://cranfordville.com/paul-cor.htm>.

Also complex is the internal connection of the four Prison Letters. Clearly Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon have a close connection. But the connection of Philippians to these three letters is less clear. I see the first three as arising from Paul's lengthy imprisonment at Caesarea after his arrest in Jerusalem, while Philippians comes later during his house arrest as he awaits his first trial before the Roman emperor Nero in the early 60s. The possibility of an Ephesian origin for either three or all four of these letters certainly exists, but the evidence for it is scanty and thus such an early date for the origin of these letters during the third missionary journey is very subjective. For more details, see my "Relationships among the Prison Letters" at <http://cranfordville.com/paul-pris.htm>.

Lastly but far from least is the issue of the Pastoral Letters. Since the F.C. Baur Tübingen School of the 1800s in Germany, much of modern scholarship has been convinced that these letters, 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus, are pseudo-pauline letters, and should be dated anywhere from the late first century to well into the second century AD. As I have studied the issue over the past forty years while living both in the US and in Germany, I have become less and less convinced by the arguments put forth in defense of this position. At the same time, increasingly convincing arguments have been set forth both in critique of the Baur position, as well as in defense of the Pauline connection to these letters. Thus I tend toward the traditional view that Paul did dictate these letters to a writing secretary toward the end of his life and that they were authorized by the apostle himself before his death, contra the view of P.N. Harrison who sees pauline fragments in a deutero-pauline view. But the evidence is clearly not a black/white matter. In the traditional view, one must assume some significant developments in the apostle's thinking about some issues of the Christian belief system. Yet, in his 60s, I would expect Paul's thinking to be somewhat different than it was in his early 30s, when he first began ministry as a apostle. I certainly hope my thinking has changed and developed over the past forty plus years of Christian ministry. When I preached my first sermon in March of 1958, I understood very little about Christianity. Hopefully I understand much more now, in May of 2005.

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