

The Chronology of Acts

The "We" Sections (Acts 16:10-17, 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16)

Sermons by Paul (Acts 17:16-34 and 20:16-38)

While an exact Chronology²¹ from the book of Acts is difficult to establish (because of insufficient data) some dates can be ascertained. For example, it is known that Herod's death (Acts 12:23) was in 44 A D. The book also indicates that Paul's arrival in Jerusalem was about the time that Herod killed James (11:30-12:2) Further, Paul's departure from Jerusalem immediately after the death of Herod (12:23, 25) appears to be the visit referred to by Galatians 2:1, which was "14 years" after Saul's conversion. Note: the Hebrews would count parts of years at the beginning and end of a period as complete years, so "14 years" may more accurately have been only 12-13 years, which places Saul's conversion around 31 or 32 A D. So, with 30 A D as a probable starting point, and 60 AD as the known date of Festus' appointment as Governor at Caesarea (Acts 24:27) the following dates may be regarded as approximately correct.

Note that the following table charts the entire book of Acts and focuses on Paul's life and travels. As we continue studying the Letters of Paul (Romans, Corinthians, and so on), we'll update the table and cross-reference it.

Event	Reference	Comments
Formation of Church in Jerusalem, chapter 2.	30 A D	Chapters 1-15 assumed to be based on two accounts: the Jerusalem Council and church in Syria. ²²
Stoning of Stephen, Dispersion of Church, chapters 7,8	31 or 32 AD.	
Saul looks on as Stephen is stoned, gives approval, and guards clothes of those killing Stephen	Acts 7:60 Acts 22:20	
Saul seeks to destroy the church, going house to house dragging men & women off to prison	Acts 8:3	
Saul obtains letters from High priest to synagogues in Damascus	Acts 9:1-2	Letters allow Saul to bring followers of the Way to Jerusalem as prisoners.
Conversion of Saul, chapter 9	31 or 32 A D.	First telling of conversion by author of Acts (Luke)
Paul's trip to Arabia	Galatians 1:15-18	Didn't go first to Jerusalem
Paul preaches in city of Damascus in the	Acts 9:20-25	His followers lowered Saul

²¹ This chronology was based initially on *Halley's Bible Handbook* (Zondervan Publishing House, Minneapolis, MN 1962, page 457) with additional notes and modifications added. Events that are not otherwise footnoted (or with a reference from Acts or other New Testament books) are from Halley's chronology.

²² *Studies in Acts Volume 2* by Frances Easter, Herald Publishing House, Independence, MO 1986, page 20.

synagogues but the Jews conspire to kill him		in a basket to escape the city
Paul's First Visit to Jerusalem after Conversion. Tried to join disciples but they were afraid of him until Barnabas speaks on his behalf. Stayed with Peter 15 days	34 or 35 A D. Acts 9:26-27 Galatians 1:18	
Debates Grecian Jews in Jerusalem and they try to kill Saul	Acts 9:28-29	
Brothers take Saul down to Caesarea and send him to Tarsus	Acts 9:30	Saul was from Tarsus
Conversion of Cornelius, the Gentile, chapter 10-11	Between 35 and 40 A D.	
Reception of Gentiles at Antioch ²³ , chapter 11	About 42 A D.	
Barnabas ²⁴ goes to Tarsus to get Saul and bring him to Antioch	Acts 11:25-26	Disciples first called Christians at Antioch
Paul's Second Visit to Jerusalem, 11:27-30	44 A.D. ²⁵ Acts 11:29-30	Disciples send famine help to brothers in Jerusalem with Barnabas & Saul
Barnabas & Saul finish their mission (to Jerusalem) and return to Antioch(?) accompanied by John (Mark) ²⁶	Acts 12:25	
Saul set aside with Barnabas by Holy Spirit doe special work	Acts 13:2-3	Church at Antioch has prophets & teachers
Paul's First Missionary Journey , Galatia, chapters 13,14	45-48 A D.	
Barnabas & Saul go down to Seleucia ²⁷ & sail for Cyprus, arrive at Salamis ²⁸ to preach in Jewish Synagogues	47 A.D. ²⁹ Acts 13:4-5	John is their helper
Travel through whole island, arrive at Paphos & convert Sergius Paulus	Acts 13:6-12	Saul first referred to as Paul (verse 9), perhaps in honor of his first convert Paulus
John leaves Paul & Barnabas at Perga in Pamphylia	Acts 13:13	Paul and John (Mark) disagree?
Paul travels to Pisidian Antioch and preach in the synagogue	Acts 13:14-41	Major sermon by Paul, invited to preach again next Sabbath. ³⁰
Jews reject Paul's message so he offers message to Gentiles	August – October 47 AD ³¹ Acts 13:44-49	

²³ Third largest city in Roman Empire, *Life and Letters of Paul*, by Alfred H. Yale, Herald Publishing House, Independence, MO, 1959, page 58.

²⁴ Ibid, page 59. Barnabas was from Cyprus, a Levite or more liberal Jew.

²⁵ Based on date of death of Herod Agrippa I.

²⁶ Ibid, page 59. John, called Mark, was Barnabas' sister's son (see Colossians 4:10 also).

²⁷ Ibid, page 63. From Seleucia to Cyprus is a 5-8 hour journey. Seleucia was west & south of Antioch, a seaport & fortress at the foot of Mount Amanus.

²⁸ Ibid, page 63. Capital of Cyprus under Greeks.

²⁹ Ibid, page 67.

³⁰ Ibid, page 73. Jews met Monday, Thursday and Saturday in synagogues.

³¹ Ibid, page 74.

Jealous Jews expel Paul & Barnabas from region	Acts 13:50-52	
Paul & Barnabas go to Iconium	November AD 47 to Summer 48 AD ³² Acts 13:51, 14:1-5	City becomes divided between supporters of Jews and apostles
Plot to stone Paul, leaves for Lycaonian cities: Lystra ³³ & Derbe	Acts 14:6-18	Paul heals cripple, Barnabas called Zeus(NRSV ³⁴ & NIV ³⁵) or Jupiter (KJV ³⁶) and Paul called Hermes (NRSV & NIV) or Mercurius (KJV); that is, "gods" by Lycaonians
Jews come from Antioch & Iconium, stir up trouble and have Paul stoned, left for dead.	Acts 14:19-20	"...once was I stoned." (II Corinthians 11:25)
Paul & Barnabas leave for Derbe, preach and convert many	Acts 14:20-21	
Return to Lystra, Iconium & Antioch to strengthen disciples.	Acts 14:21-23	
Go through Pisidia, Pamphylia, Perga, and then Attalia	49 A.D. ³⁷ Acts 14:24	
Sailed back to Antioch and stayed there a long time with disciples	Mid-summer 49 A.D. ³⁸ Acts 14:26-28	
Men from Judea come to Antioch and raise the issue of required circumcision for Gentile converts	Acts 15:1-2	
Paul & Barnabas go to Jerusalem to resolve issue, travel through Phoenicia & Samaria	Acts 15:2-3	
Council at Jerusalem, chapter 15	About 50 A.D. Acts 15:4-21	James, The brother of Jesus, serves as moderator (Acts 15:13)
Letter sent by Jerusalem Church to Antioch Church	Acts 15:23-35	Judas and Silas go as witnesses from Jerusalem Church
Paul wants to revisit churches. Barnabas wants to take John but Paul doesn't. ³⁹ They split and travel separately.	Acts 15:36-41	Barnabas takes Mark and sails for Cyprus, Paul takes Silas and went to Syria and Cilicia
Paul's Second Missionary Journey,	50-53 A D.	Chapters 16-28 seem to

³² Ibid, page 76.

³³ Ibid, page 76. Located at base of Black Mountain.

³⁴ New Revised Standard Version

³⁵ New International Version

³⁶ King James Version

³⁷ Ibid, page 79.

³⁸ Ibid, page 79.

³⁹ Paul and John Mark must reconcile because Paul recommends him to Aristarchus in Colossians 4:10 and wants him near during his last imprisonment in II Timothy 4:11.

Greece, chapter 16,17,18	Acts 16:10-17, the first “we” section.	come from a single source, Luke’s eyewitness account. ⁴⁰ Luke seems to have traveled with Paul beginning at Troas ^{41 42}
Paul goes to Derbe, then Lystra where meets Timothy, who joins him on his journey	Acts 16:1-5	Timothy, whose father was Greek and mother was a believer & Jewess is circumcised by Paul before they travel together.
Paul travels throughout Phrygia and Galatia, comes to border of Mysia, tries to enter Bithynia but turned away by Spirit of Jesus, passed by Mysia and travels to Troas. Has vision to travel to Macedonia	Acts 16:9-10	
From Troas sails for Samothrace, next day to Neapolis, then to Philippi, a Roman colony and leading city of that district of Macedonia.	Acts 16:11	
Lydia converted and Paul invited to her home in Thyatira.	Acts 16:13-15	
Paul casts out demon in prophesying slave girl, throw in prison.	Acts 16:16-40	
Traveled by Amphipolis and Apollonia and came to Thessalonica	Acts 17:1	Paul preaches three Sabbath’s in synagogue (Acts 17:2-4)
Jews go to city officials declaring Paul & companions to be troublemakers.	Acts 17:6-9	
Sail for Berea and convert many	Acts 17:10	
Jews from Thessalonica come to Berea and stir up trouble for Paul.	Acts 17:13	
Paul sent by brothers to Athens but Silas and Timothy stay in Berea for a time	Acts 17:14-15	
Paul speaks in meeting of the Areopagus regarding the “Unknown God.”	Acts 17:16-34	Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, and a woman called Damaris become followers.
Paul leaves Athens and goes to Corinth, meets Aquila and Priscilla.	Acts 18:1-4	Jews ordered out of Rome by Claudius.
Silas & Timothy join Paul, coming from Macedonia. Paul preaches primarily to Jews but when they reject him, he turns to the Gentiles. Stays for a year & a half.	Acts 18:5-11	Crispus is synagogue ruler, and believer.
Gallio refuses to hear case brought by Jews against Paul.	Acts 18:12-17	Gallio is proconsul of Achaia. Synagogue ruler, Sosthenes, beaten by Jews.

⁴⁰ Op. cit., Easter, page 20.

⁴¹ All “we” sections in the Book of Acts are tied to sea travel by Paul.

⁴² Luke is believed to be the Luke of Colossians 4:14 “Our dear friend Luke, the doctor....”

Paul sails for Syria with Priscilla & Aquila. Arrives in Ephesus, after preaching, declines to stay, but promises to return, sails to Caesarea.	Acts 18:18-22	Paul shaves his hair to fulfill Nazirite vow. ^{43 44}
Goes down to Antioch then travels through Galatia and Phrygia.	Acts 18:22-23	
Apollos, a Jew from Alexandria, arrives at Ephesus. Taught by Priscilla & Aquila, goes to Achaia and refutes Jews in public debate.	Acts 18:24-28	Apollos know only of Christ through John the Baptist but learns of Jesus from Priscilla & Aquila.
Paul's Third Missionary Journey , Ephesus, chapter 19, 20	54-57 A D.	
Paul Reached Ephesus, chapter 19	54 AD	
Paul Left Ephesus In June, I Corinthians 16:8	57 A D.	
While Apollos at Corinth, Paul travels to Ephesus. Preaches in synagogue for 3 months.	Acts 19:1-9	Has discussion about baptism by John vs. baptism after Jesus Christ.
After opposition, Paul moves teaching to lecture hall at Tyrannus. Stays 2 years in Asia.	Acts 19:9-20	Healings, and demons cast out.
Paul decides to go to Jerusalem passing through Macedonia and Achaia and also to Rome.	Acts 19:21-22	Timothy & Erastus sent ahead to Macedonia while Paul stays in Asia a while longer.
Disturbance in city of Ephesus initiated by Demetrius, the silversmith.	Acts 19:23-41	Silversmith and related trades threatened by Paul's assertion that there are no man-made gods. Demetrius makes silver shrines of Artemis
Paul in Macedonia, Summer and Fall, I Corinthians 16:5-8	57 A D.	
Paul in Corinth Three Months, Winter, Acts 20:2-3	57-58 A D.	
Because of plot against Paul, he goes back through Macedonia rather than sailing to Syria.	Acts 20:3	Accompanied by Sopater, son of Pyrrhus of Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica, Gaius of Derbe, Timothy, Tychicus & Trophimus of Asia.
Paul Left Philippi in April, Acts 20:6	58 AD. Acts 20:5-15 another "we" section.	Left Philippi after Feast of Unleavened Bread, 5 days later joined group at Troas and stayed 7 days
Eutychus raised from dead by Paul after	Acts 20:7-12	Eutychus fell asleep during

⁴³ *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, by Craig S. Keener, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 1993, page 377.

⁴⁴ *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster Inc., Publishers, 1986, page 789, "Nazirite or Nazarite, from Hebrew meaning consecrated: A Jew of biblical times consecrated to God by a vow to avoid drinking wine, cutting the hair, and being defiled by the presence of a corpse." See also <http://www.britannica.com/seo/n/nazirite/>.

falling from 3 rd floor window (in Troas)		Paul's; preaching
Paul's companions sail to Assos but he walks there. They all then sail to Mitylene, then to Kios, to Samos, and then arrived at Miletus.	Acts 20:13-16	Paul in a hurry to reach Jerusalem before Pentecost.
Sends for elders of church in Ephesus. Gives farewell address to them. Paul left Miletus after goodbye to elders from Ephesus ⁴⁵	Acts 20:13-38	Tells elders, he will not see them again.
Paul sails to Cos, then Rhodes, then Patara. Boards ship to Phoenicia, sight Cyprus (passing it on the south) and sail for Syria. Land at Tyre and meet with disciples..	Acts 21:1-6	
Travel from Tyre to Ptolemais, leave next day for Caesarea, stay at home of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven.	Acts 21:7-9	Philip has four unmarried daughters who prophesy.
Agabus prophesies that Paul will be bound over by Jews to the Gentiles in Jerusalem. Paul heads for Jerusalem and stays at home of Mnason.	Acts 21:10-16	Mnason is from Cyprus and an early disciple.
Paul Reached Jerusalem in June, Acts 20:16	58 A D. Acts 21:17-18	Sees James & all the brothers
	Acts 21:23-26	The purification rite included shaving of heads to complete the Nazirite vows. One shaved their head on the 7 th day and offered a temple sacrifice on the 8 th day (Numbers 6:1-21) ⁴⁶
After speaking in the temple for 7 days, Paul seized and beaten by crowd. Roman commander has troops seize Paul.	Acts 21:26-39	
With commanders permission, speaks to crowd	Acts 21:39-40, 22:1-21	Second telling of Paul's conversion experience.
Commander of Roman troops seizes Paul and then discovers Paul is a Roman citizen by birth	Acts 22:23-29	Commander bought his citizenship, while Paul was born a Roman citizen.
Paul before the chief priests and Sanhedrin.	Acts 22:30, 23:1-9	Paul is a Pharisee, who believes in resurrection of dead, which causes uproar between Pharisees and Sadducees.
Commander removes Paul from assembly to protect him, brings Paul to barracks.	Acts 23:10-11	Has vision of Lord, told he will testify in Rome of Christ
Plot to kill Paul	Acts 23:12-22	Word carried to Paul by his Sister's Son
Commander has soldiers transfer Paul to Caesarea accompanied by a letter.	Acts 23:23-30	A detachment of 200 soldiers, 70 horsemen, and

⁴⁵ Op. cit., Easter, page 19.

⁴⁶ Op. cit, Keener, page 387.

		200 spearman accompany Paul. Some versions list commander as Lysias.
Soldiers take Paul to Antipatris. Only cavalry accompany Paul to Caesarea. Governor reads letter and keeps Paul under guard in Herod's palace until accusers arrive.	Acts 23:31-35	
Paul in Caesarea, chapters 24,25,26	Summer 58 A D to Fall 60 A D.	
High Priest Ananias, elders, and lawyer Tertullus bring charges against Paul to Governor Felix.	Acts 24:1-21	Paul offers his defense.
Felix is familiar with the Way, adjourns proceedings. For next several days, Felix and his wife Drusilla, meet with Paul to discuss Christ Jesus. Felix looks for bribe from Paul.	Acts 24:24-26	
After 2 years Felix succeeded by Porcius Festus. Leaves Paul in jail.	Acts 24:27	
Festus holds court and listens to Paul's accusers. Paul appeals to Caesar for judgment in his case.	Acts 25:1-12	
King Agrippa and Bernice arrive in Caesarea to pay respects to Festus. Festus tells the King Paul's story. Next day Paul brought before Festus and King. Paul given permission to tell his own story.	Acts 25:13-27	
Paul tells his conversion experience to King Agrippa and Festus	Acts 26:1-23	Third telling of Paul's conversion experience
Paul & Festus talk, Festus & King Agrippa agree that if Paul had not appealed to Caesar, he could have been set free.	Acts 26:24-32	
Paul's Voyage to Rome, chapters 27,28	Winter 60-61 A D. Acts 27:1-28:16 is another "we" section ⁴⁷	
Paul handed over to centurion named Julius. Set sail from Adramyttium, sailed along ports on coast of Asia.	Acts 27:1-2	Accompanied by Luke (?) and Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica.
Landed at Sidon, sailed to lee ⁴⁸ of Cyprus, across open sea off coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, landed at Myra in Lycia.	Acts 27:3-5	
Boarded Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy, rough weather on way to Cnidus, sailed to	Acts 27:6-8	

⁴⁷ Op. cit., Easter, page 19.

⁴⁸ Op. cit, Webster's , page 682: "the side (as of a ship) that is sheltered from the wind."

lee of Crete opposite Salmone. Came to place called Fair Havens near town of Lasea.		
Paul warns of disastrous voyage, but the centurion ignores advice. Sail for Phoenix to spend winter, with harbor in Crete facing SW and NW.	Acts 27:9-12	Sailing difficult, lost time, it's past the Fast (Day of Atonement; that is, Yom Kippur).
Gentle winds blow, so ship sail along shore of Crete, hurricane (northeaster) strikes and ship struggles, passes along lee of small island Cauda, fear grounding on sandbars of Syrtis.	Acts 27:13-20	Crew dumps cargo , fears the worst.
Paul tells of an angel visit: Crew will be safe, but ship will be lost.	Acts 27:21-26	
Paul's counsel to eat and stay with ship rather than abandon and take lifeboats. The shipwreck follows and all arrive on land safely.	Acts 27:27-44	
Land on Malta, greeted and cared for by islanders. Viper attaches itself to Paul's arm as he gathers wood. Islanders expect Paul to die but he suffers no ill effects, so they think he's a god.	Acts 28-1-6	
Publius, chief island official, welcomes Paul to his home. Paul heals Publius' Father and others on island.	Acts 28:7-10	
After 3 months on Malta, group sails on an Alexandrian ship to Syracuse, then to Rhegium and on to Puteoli. Paul spends a week with "brothers" in the faith and then finally arrives in Rome.	Acts 28:11-16	Once in Rome Paul guarded by a soldier but allowed to live by himself.
Paul meets with Jews in Rome and tells his story, including why he's in Rome and what his view are on issues from the Law of Moses to Jesus Christ. The Jews are split over what Paul preaches.	Acts 28:17-25	
Paul quotes Isaiah (6:9-10) and indicates that salvation has been sent to the Gentiles.	Acts 28:26-29	
Paul In Rome 2 years	61-63 A D. Acts 28:30-31	Stayed in a rented house and boldly preached "the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ."