

CHRONOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT – Floyd Nolen Jones, Th.D., Ph.D. – 2017	
See my: <i>Analytical Red Letter Chronology of the Life of Christ</i> for a detailed Chronology of the Four Gospels	
Red Years = Historic Fixed dates: Half Red = not fixed but considered reliable; black are approximated	
5 BC	John the Baptist born at Juttah (?) in the hill country of Judah (Luk. 1:39)
4 BC	Birth of Christ Jesus at Bethlehem (Luk. 2:1-7) – year fixed by Herod the Great’s death before a Passover that was just after a lunar eclipse (13 March, 4 BC Gregorian): Jos. <i>Antiq.</i> xvii.9.3 & xvii.6.4. – also Irenaeus (c.AD 180), <i>Against Heresies</i> iii.xxi.3.
9 AD	Jesus age 12 – at the Temple during a Passover (Luk. 2:41-50)
26 AD	Jesus 30 years old – baptized by John in the Jordan River in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar (Mat. 3:13-16; Mar. 1:9-11; Luk. 3:1, 21-23)
30 AD	Crucifixion of Christ, Nisan 14, Thursday April 4 (all dates herein are Gregorian): Resurrected Sunday Nisan 17. As Titus’ destruction of the Temple is firmly fixed at AD 70, Eusebius places our Lord’s death in AD 30 when he writes: “For forty whole years it (i.e., God’s Providence; FNJ) suspended their (the Jews) destruction, after their crime against the Christ” (<i>Ecclesiastical History</i> , Loeb: Vol. 1, Bk. 3, p. 219). For a detailed derivation of the AD 30 crucifixion date, see: Floyd Nolen Jones, <i>The Chronology of the Old Testament</i> : 2018 edition, (Green Forest, AR: Master Books Pub.), pp. 220–240. Also, see comments at 70 AD in this work.
30 AD	Ascension 40 days after Resurrection, Thur. May 16 (Acts 1:9-12; Luk. 24:50-53)
30 AD	Pentecost – Sunday 26 May (Sivan 7th – Acts 2)
30 AD	Lame man from Birth healed in Christ’s name (Acts 3)
30 AD	Peter & John arrested over the Lame man’s healing (Acts 4)
30 AD	Ananias & Sapphira lie to the Holy Sprit and die (Acts 5:1-11)
30 AD	Peter’s shadow heals (Acts 5:12-16)
30 AD	The Apostle’s 2nd arrest: freed by an Angel, & they preach Jesus: Gamaliel’s foolish counsel – wise advice would have been: brothers, let us repent and receive Jesus as Messiah. He ignored the evidence – the healed man whom they knew! (Acts 5:17-42)
31 AD	First 7 deacons chosen – many priests saved (Acts 6:1-7)
32 AD	Stephen arrested, tried and slain after an historical address. (Acts 6:8-15, 7:1-60)
32 AD	Saul of Tarsus wasted the church: he imprisoned men & women (Acts 8:1-3, 22:4-5)
32 AD	Philip converts Samaria (Acts 8:5-25)
32 AD	Philip converts a eunuch, the treasurer of Ethiopia, and baptizes him (Acts 8:26-40)
33 AD	Saul converted on the Damascus road & healed by Ananias (Acts 9:1-21, 26:9-19)
33 AD	Saul leaves Damascus: goes to Arabia for 3 years (to Mt. Sinai, cp. Gal. 4:25)
36 AD	Saul, now increased in strength, returns to Damascus (Gal. 1:17c) and confounded the Jews there by proving that Jesus was the Christ (Messiah). As a result, the Jews sought to kill him but, being let down in a basket through a window on the city wall, Paul escaped by night (Acts 9:22-25; 2 Cor. 11:32-33).
36 AD	Saul then went to Jerusalem to meet Peter, but the disciples were afraid of him until Barnabas brought him to Peter & James (Christ’s half-brother). Barnabas told them of Saul’s bold preaching in Damascus regarding Jesus (Acts 9:26-27, cp. Gal. 1:15-24). Saul remained with Peter for 15 days (Gal. 1:18) during which he boldly disputed with the Grecian Jews in the name of Jesus.

36 AD	<p>While praying at the Temple, Paul fell into a trance. He saw the Lord who told him to leave Jerusalem immediately: as these Jews would not receive Saul's testimony concerning Him, Christ was sending him far away to the Gentiles (Acts 22:17-21).</p> <p>At the same time, the brethren learned these Jews planned to kill Saul. So they brought him c.65 miles to the seaport of Caesarea and sent him to Tarsus, his hometown (Acts 9:29-30; Gal. 1:21-24). Then, for a season, all the churches in Judaea, Galilee, and Samaria had rest and thrived (Acts 9:31).</p>
38 AD	<p>Colophons in the NT <i>Textus Receptus</i> manuscripts of sub-group family 35 (f³⁵) record that the Gospel of Matthew was "published 8 years after the ascension of Christ", rather than the commonly accepted c.50 AD date! (30 + 8 = 38 AD; see pp. 22-23)</p> <p>Colophons are inscriptions, usually placed at the end of a book or manuscript, which normally contain the name of the owner or scribe and an attempt at dating the writing. We add that in his 1917 edition of the <i>Scofield Reference Bible</i>, the venerable C.I. Scofield gave AD 37 as being the "traditional" date for the Gospel of Matthew.</p>
38 AD	<p>Peter came to Lydda (c.11 miles se of Joppa) and healed Aeneas who had been sick of the palsy for eight years. The result was that all in Lydda and Sharon turned to Christ. Peter then went to Joppa, raised Tabitha back to life, and many believed on the Lord. Peter tarried there many days with Simon, a tanner (Acts 9:32:43).</p>
40 AD	<p>The colophons also say that Mark was "published 10 years after the ascension" and 30 + 10 = 40 AD, not c.68 AD as nearly all place it. Now 40 AD for Mark's Gospel is two years <i>after</i> Matthew, not before as most text critics would have it.</p>
41 AD	<p>Cornelius, a Roman centurion, sent to Joppa for Peter who went to Caesarea and preached Christ to Cornelius, his kin & friends. They believed, the Holy Spirit "fell on them", they spoke with tongues, magnified God, <i>then</i> were baptized (Acts 10:1-48).</p> <p>But when Peter returned to Jerusalem, a contention arose between the converted Jews and Peter because he had associated with the uncircumcised and eaten with them. Peter told all that had happened: the presence of the 6 men who had gone with him verified his account, and all glorified God that Gentiles were also being saved (Acts 11:1-18: note, they were saved <i>before</i> being baptized!).</p>
42 AD	<p>Disciples who had scattered due to the persecution that arose over Stephen came to Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch but gave the gospel to only the Jews. Many turned to Christ. The church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch who exhorted the Greeks who had just converted to cleave to the Lord – many more believed (Acts 11:19-24).</p>
43 AD	<p>Barnabas then went to Tarsus to find Saul and brought him to Antioch where they taught the new converts for a whole year (Acts 11:25-26). Agabus, a prophet from Jerusalem, arrived and warned of a coming great famine (Acts 11:27-28a).</p>
44 AD	<p>The famine foretold by Agabus took place in the reign of Claudius Caesar (41-54 AD; in his 4th year, P. Orosius, <i>Seven Books of History</i>, 418 AD: 1936 ed., p. 296). The Christians of Antioch sent relief to Judea by Barnabas & Saul (Acts 11:28b-30).</p>
44 AD	<p>Herod Agrippa I kills the apostle James, & arrests Peter. While prayer is going on for Peter in the house of Mary (mother of John Mark) an angel sets him free. Agrippa blasphemes & dies (historically fixes the year: Jos. <i>Antiq.</i> 19.8.2, Acts 12:1-23).</p>
44 AD	<p>Paul and Barnabas returned from Jerusalem to Antioch with John Mark (Acts 12:25).</p>
45 AD	<p>The church at Antioch is commanded by the Holy Spirit to send Paul & Barnabas out on the 1st missionary journey (Acts 13:1-5). Agrippa's death firmly fixes this year.</p>

45 AD	At the time of this missionary journey, Paul is apparently citing Acts 13:25 from a gospel account about John the Baptist. This strongly implies that at least the Gospel of Matthew was already written. Indeed, colophons in the <i>Textus Receptus</i> sub-group Family 35 record that Luke was “published 15 years after the ascension of Christ” (30 + 15 is 45 AD), long <i>before</i> the commonly accepted date c.60 AD. Accordingly, Agrippa’s death date and the colophons authenticate one another.
45 AD	After God blinded Elymas the sorcerer, Sergius Paulus, the deputy of Cyprus, trusted in Christ. At Perga of Pamphylia, John Mark left the mission field and returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:1-13).
45 AD	Paul and Barnabas then gave a history teaching and followed it with the gospel at the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia of Galatia (Acts 13:14-41). The Gentiles asked Paul to teach them the same things. The following Sabbath the Jews became envious and spoke against Paul’s words because almost the entire city came to hear the word of God. The outcome was that Paul responded in saying: “we turn to the Gentiles”. The word of God spread over the entire region, so the Jews drove them away. Paul and Barnabas shook off the dust of their feet as a testimony against the Jews and came to Iconium of Galatia (Acts 13:42-52).
45 AD	Many Jews and Greeks in Iconium believed, but many others refused and set out to stone them. So Paul & Barnabas fled to Lystra in Lycaonia of Galatia (Acts 14:1-7).
45 AD	In Lystra , Paul healed a man born lame: the populace would have sacrificed to Paul as Mercury and Barnabas as Jupiter, but the two tore their clothes and refused the honor. Unbelieving Jews arriving from Antioch & Iconium aroused the Lystrans. They stoned Paul and drew his body out of the city. As disciples gathered around him, he rose up and came into the city. It is likely that Timothy witnessed Paul’s ministry during this visit to Lystra (Acts 16:1-2). NOTE: It was at this time that Paul was taken into the third heaven, some 14 years before he wrote 2nd Corinthians (59 AD, 2 Cor. 12:2-4). This insight is a major NT chronology key. If it is overlooked, most dates going forward will be too small. This includes the dates assigned to Paul’s epistles. AD 44 is an historically fixed date for Herod Agrippa the First’s death and as the trip to Lystra must contextually fall close to that event, the date for 2nd Corinthians must be at least 14 years later. Thus, today’s popular 56-57 dates for that letter places Paul’s stoning at AD 43; hence, both years are impossible dates. The next day Paul & Barnabas left for Derbe of Galatia where they preached the gospel (Acts 14:8-21a).
46 AD	Paul and Barnabas then returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch (all are in south Galatia), ordained elders in every church, preached in Perga, sailed back to their home church in Antioch of Syria, told that many Gentiles had been saved, and abode there a long time (Acts 14:21b–28).
50 AD	Men from Judea came to Antioch teaching that believers had to be circumcised in order to be saved. Paul and Barnabas stood against them, and all decided to go to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem to settle the issue. Paul went by revelation & took Titus with them (14 years after his 1st visit there in AD 36 (numbered inclusively, Gal. 3:1: this was 3 years after Paul’s conversion)).

<p>50 AD</p>	<p>Before the council meeting, they met privately with Peter, John, and James (the half brother of Jesus' and writer of the Epistle of James). When these apostles saw that just as the gospel to the circumcised was given to Peter, the gospel to the uncircumcised had been committed to Paul, they offered the right hand of fellowship and did not insist that Titus, being a Greek, be circumcised (Gal. 2:1-10).</p> <p>As the Jerusalem Council began, some converted Pharisees insisted that all born again Gentiles had to be circumcised & also keep the Law of Moses (being legalist, Paul called them <i>false brethren</i>, Gal. 2:4). But Peter reminded all present that the Gentiles under his ministry had been saved by faith in Christ and nothing more. Paul & Barnabas gave a similar testimony. Then James used Amos to show that what was happening in the church was foretold by the prophets – that Gentile salvation apart from the Law did not contradict the Old Testament. The council accepted James' words as final and sent Judas & Silas (both prophets) to accompany Paul & Barnabas with letters to the Gentiles in Antioch, the rest of Syria, & Cilicia. These stated that the non-Jewish converts neither needed to be circumcised nor keep the Law (Acts 15:20).</p> <p>Still, so as not to offend their Jewish brothers who had been taught from the Law of Moses in every synagogue every Sabbath, for fellowships sake it was deemed necessary that they abstain from fornication, from meats offered to idols, from eating blood, and things strangled (cp. Gen. 9:4). When this was read in Antioch, the Gentiles rejoiced. After a time Judas returned to Jerusalem, but Silas remained in Antioch of Syria teaching and preaching along with Paul & Barnabas (Acts 15:1-35).</p>
<p>50 AD</p>	<p>Peter came to Antioch. At first he ate with the Gentile converts, but when Jewish brethren came from James, Peter withdrew from the Gentiles. This influenced some of the Jews of the church of Antioch, and even Barnabas, to follow his example. Paul withstood Peter and sharply reproved him before them all (Gal. 2:11-21). As Peter had committed this offense publically, Paul had to correct him before the same.</p>
<p>51 AD</p>	<p>The Second Missionary Journey: Paul asked Barnabas to go with him and visit the churches in every city where they had previously preached the gospel. Barnabas was determined to take John Mark (his sister's son, Col. 4:10), but Paul refused because John had departed from them in Pamphylia on the 1st journey & returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). The contention was so sharp between them that they departed from one another. Barnabas took John Mark and sailed to Cyprus. Paul chose Silas, and went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming those churches (Acts 15:36-41).</p>
<p>51 AD</p>	<p>Paul came to Derbe & Lystra (so. Galatia) where he found Timothy of whom all the brethren at Lystra and Iconium gave a good report. His mother was a believing Jewess (Eunice, 2 Tim. 1:5). Wanting to take Timothy along and as all the Jews in the area knew his father was Greek, Paul circumcised him so as not to place a stumbling block between these Jews and the gospel. As they went through the cities, they passed out letters containing the decision of the Jerusalem Council. The churches were established in the faith and increased in number daily (Acts 16:1-5).</p>
<p>51 AD</p>	<p>Having gone throughout Phrygia & Galatia, Paul, Silas, & Timothy were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the Word in Asia (a province in western Turkey). Coming to Mysia of Asia, they intended to go north into Bithynia, but neither did the Spirit allow this. Leaving Mysia, they came down to Troas where Paul had a vision of a man asking him to come into Macedonia and help them. After seeing the vision, they</p>

	set out for Macedonia. (Acts 16:6-10. The change of the pronoun “they” to “we” at verse 11 indicates that Luke now joined Paul at Troas.)
51 AD	Paul, Silas, Timothy, & Luke sailed from Troas to the island of Samothrace: the next day on to Neapolis and from there to Philippi (chief city of that part of Macedonia and a Roman colony) where they stayed for some days. On the Sabbath they went out of the city by a river and met Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira in the region of Lydia, which was within Asia. She accepted Christ and was baptized, along with her entire household (Acts 16:11-15).
51 AD	<p>Later, they cast out an unclean spirit from a girl possessed with a spirit of divination. For days she followed Paul’s group crying out “These men are the servants of the Most High God, which show unto us <i>the</i> way of salvation” (Acts 16:17, the definite article “the” is missing; so literal Greek = “<i>a</i> way of salvation”). Paul commanded the spirit to come out of her in the name of Jesus. When her masters saw the source of their financial gain was gone, they dragged Paul and Silas into the marketplace before the rulers. These were both beaten and cast into the inner prison, where their feet were placed in stocks. At midnight the two prayed and sang praises unto God.</p> <p>As the prisoners heard them, suddenly there was a great earthquake. All the jail doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed. The jailer awoke, saw the prison doors open and supposing the prisoners had fled; he drew his sword to kill himself. Paul & Silas led the jailer and his household to Christ and then baptized them.</p> <p>When it was day, the magistrates sent to set the two free. But Paul objected that he and Silas were Romans, yet the rulers had publically beaten them and cast them into prison without a trial. And now they wanted them to leave quietly? When the rulers heard that they were Romans, they feared and came in person, freed the missionaries and asked them to depart from the city. They went to Lydia’s home, comforted the brethren who came to them and left the city (Acts 16:16-40).</p>
51 AD	<p>Passing through Amphipolis & Apollonia, “they” came to a synagogue of the Jews in Thessalonica (the main city of Macedonia: the pronoun “they” implies Luke stayed in Philippi, cp. “we” & “us” at 16:10). As was his custom, Paul went in the synagogue for 3 Sabbaths & reasoned with them from the scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah. Some Jews believed as did many religious Greeks and chief women (Acts 17:1-4).</p> <p>Indeed, Paul wrote that, after being shamefully treated by the rulers at Philippi, he gave the gospel boldly at Thessalonica (1 Thes. 2:2). Soon after in that year, Paul also taught them about the future great falling away, the man of sin (the Antichrist), the return of our Lord and our being gathered to Him (2 Thes. 2:1-12).</p> <p>During his stay in Thessalonica, “once and again” the Philippians supplied his needs (Phil. 4:16). This, along with working to support himself while there (1 Thes. 2:9; 2 Thes. 3:8 – tent making? Cp. Acts 18:3), infers a longer stay than only some 21 days: i.e., the 3 Sabbaths of Acts 17:2).</p>
51 AD	The unbelieving Jews stirred up some vile, worthless men and caused an uproar in the city. They dragged Jason and some of the brethren out and accused them, saying that Jason had taken Paul & his companions into his home, yet they were guilty of turning the world upside down by claiming that there was another king, one Jesus. After taking bond from Jason and the others, the rulers of the city let them go (Acts 17:5-9).

51 AD	The brethren of Thessalonica sent Paul & Silas away by night unto Berea . Upon arriving, they went into the synagogue of the Jews and preached Christ to them. These were nobler than the Jews in Thessalonica, for the Bereans searched the scriptures daily to see if that which Paul said was true. As a result, many of them believed; as did many honorable Greek women and men. But when the Jews of Thessalonica learned that Paul had come to Berea, they came and stirred up the people against him. Immediately the brethren sent Paul away, but Silas & Timothy remained in Berea. The brethren brought Paul to Athens . Upon arriving he sent word to Silas and Timothy to quickly join him, and they so did (Acts 17:10-15).
52 AD	Felix became procurator (governor) of Judea (Claudius' 12th year, Jos. <i>Antiq.</i> 20.7.1)
52 AD	While waiting for Silas & Timothy, Paul saw that Athens was completely given over to idolatry. Hence, he disputed with the Jews of the synagogue, with devout men, and every day in the marketplace with all who would listen. Paul also encountered Epicurean & Stoic philosophers on Mars' Hill (the Areopagus, a lower hill on the west side of the Acropolis & consecrated to Ares, the Greek war god = Mars the Roman god). Having seen a nearby altar dedicated To The Unknown God, Paul used it to proclaim that this god, whom Athens ignorantly worshipped, was indeed the true God: that He was nothing like gold, silver, or stone carved by man. Further, God had overlooked such in the past: but now all men were commanded to repent, for the Creator had appointed a day that Christ Jesus, whom he had raised from the dead, would judge the world in righteousness. Upon hearing of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, some said that they would hear him again about it, but others believed – including Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris (Acts 17:16-34).
52 AD	Paul sent Silas and Timothy, who had lately come to him from Berea, back again into Macedonia while he remained alone in Athens. He planned to return to Thessalonica but was hindered by Satan. Therefore, he sent Timothy to establish and comfort the Thessalonians in the faith (1 Thes. 2:17-18, 3:1-2; cp. Acts 18:5)
52 AD	Some time after Paul left Galatia near the beginning of this 2nd missionary journey (began c. AD 51, Acts 16:1 & 6), the Galatians were seduced by false brethren into believing that they had to be justified by the works of the law. When Paul learned of this, he sent them a strongly worded letter to correct this error (c. AD 54, Gal. 1:6-9). NOTE: As Galatians 2:1-10 is about Paul and the council at Jerusalem (c. AD 50, Acts 15), the Galatian letter had to be written <i>after</i> that date. Thus, Paul is writing to Galatians who were converted in the 1st & 2nd missionary journeys (c. AD 45 & 51: Gal. 4:13 - "at the first" implies two visits). The letter was sent from Antioch soon after Paul returned from the 2nd missionary journey (c. AD 54) & shortly before the c. 55 AD 3rd missionary journey began (Acts. 18:22, 23). It was largely written to comfort and reassure the churches in that region of his continuing love, which was especially needed after their receiving his strongly worded corrective epistle.
52 AD	After these things, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth where he found a Jew named Aquila and his wife Priscilla. They had recently come from Italy (Because the Jews constantly made disturbances, Caesar Claudius had expelled them from Rome: Suetonius, Bk. 5.25; Acts 18:2). Paul stayed with them because he and Aquila were both tent makers. Paul reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks (Acts 18:1-5).

	<p>By biblical context, it was at this time that Paul personally baptized the family of Stephanus. As they were the <i>firstfruits</i> of Achaia (1 Cor. 1:16, 16:15), their baptism occurred <i>before</i> that of “Crispus” and Gaius (1 Cor. 1:14-15) and thus before Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia.</p>
52 AD	<p>When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, the Jews withstood Paul’s preaching that Jesus was Christ and blasphemed the Lord. Paul shook his clothes in protest against them and turned to the Gentiles. He went into the house of one surnamed Justus who lived near the synagogue and worshipped God (Acts 18:5-7).</p> <p>Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his family. And when many of the Corinthians heard the gospel they too believed, and were baptized (Acts 18:8). Of these, Paul said he personally only baptized Crispus and Gaius (1 Cor. 1:14-15). Then, after reflecting for a moment, he remembered that he had also personally baptized the family of Stephanus, – the <i>firstfruits</i> of Achaia (1 Cor. 1:16, 16:15). Again, being the firstfruits, Stephanus’ family had to have been baptized at a time in Corinth <i>before</i> the baptisms of Crispus and Gaius.</p> <p>Then God spoke to Paul in a night vision and told him not to be afraid but to speak out for he was under His protection and no one would harm him – for the Lord had many people in Corinth. Paul continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God to them (Acts 18:9-11). During this time, Silas & Timothy assisted him (2 Cor. 1:19).</p>
52 AD	<p>Some time after Timothy’s return from Macedonia to Corinth (Silas being present), Paul wrote the first letter to the Thessalonians (1 Thes. 3:1-2, 6).</p> <p>Almost all conservative scholars believe that 2nd Thessalonians was also written from Corinth because Paul, Silas, & Timothy were all together there (1 Thes. 1:1), and it is the only city that they are said to have so been (Acts 18:5). Further, they are not referred to as being together thereafter.</p>
53 AD	<p>When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews of Corinth rioted and brought Paul before his judgment seat. But Gallio replied to their charge that if the matter was merely a question of Jewish law, such was theirs to settle. With that, he dismissed the case and drove them from the judgment seat. Then all the Greeks there took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him, while Gallio was indifferent and did nothing to stop it (Acts 18:12-17).</p> <p>NOTE: Today, Gallio is variously dated c.51-52 or 52-53 (See: Jack Finegan’s <i>Handbook of Biblical Chronology</i>, 1964, pp. 316-322). Although Finegan uses many qualifying words (seems, evidently, must have, probably, seems to suggest, likely, probable, if, perhaps, appear to, presumably, could have etc. at least 30 times), from a Latin inscription found at Delphi he offers AD 51 as the riot date. In 1978, some fourteen years later, the <i>Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible</i> (Vol. 4, p. 645) said the stone put beyond all doubt that Gallio was proconsul in AD 52. Thus, our study finds the date of Gallio’s proconsulate in Achaia of considerable value in approximating the year in question (Ussher gives 55 AD, but he had no access to the stone).</p>
54 AD	<p>After the riot at Gallio’s tribunal, Paul stayed many days at Corinth before he, with Priscilla & Aquila, sailed for Syria from the port of Cenchrea (Acts 18:18-19). Prior to their departure, Paul had taken a vow and shaved his head (not the Nazarite vow, for it required the hair to be shorn <i>after</i> the completion of the vow: Num. 6:13 & 18).</p>

54 AD	He first arrived at Ephesus , where he entered a synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. When they wanted him to stay longer, he said he could not for he: “must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem.” It seems that it was necessary for Paul to be in Jerusalem in order to complete the vow. But he promised that he would return to them again, if God willed. Leaving Aquila & Priscilla behind, Paul sailed from Ephesus (Acts 18:18-22).
54 AD	Landing at Caesarea on the sea, Paul went to greet the church at Jerusalem and then went on to Antioch (of Syria; Acts 18:23). This ended the 2nd missionary journey.
55 AD	The Third Missionary Journey: After spending some time at Antioch of Syria, he left and crossed over the regions of Galatia & Phrygia to strengthen all the disciples (Acts 18:22-23). As already explained, one of the main reasons for this visit was to comfort and encourage the Galatian church after he had written his earlier strongly worded, corrective letter. The Galatians received him as an angel of God, even as Christ himself. (Gal. 4:14). Among other things, Paul arranged that the collections for the poor saints at Jerusalem should be set aside every Lord’s day (1 Cor. 16:1-2).
55 AD	An Alexandrian Jew by the name of Apollos , an eloquent man and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. He was instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in spirit, he taught diligently the things of the Lord, even though he knew only about the baptism of John. As he began to speak boldly in the synagogue, Aquila and Priscilla heard him, took him aside and explained the way of God to him more fully (i.e., the gospel). When Apollos planned to go into Achaia, the brethren wrote to the disciples there to well receive him. Upon arriving, Apollos helped those who had believed, because he mightily convinced the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus was indeed the Christ (i.e., the Messiah - Acts 18:24-28).
55 AD	When Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper regions of Galatia and Phrygia. Coming to Ephesus , Paul came across twelve disciples who only knew of John’s baptism (Apollos’ converts). As such, they had never heard the gospel and were still old covenant saints; thus, had not yet received the Holy Spirit as their permanent <i>indwelling</i> possession. Paul then reminded them that John had taught they should believe on the one that would come after him: that is, on Christ Jesus. Paul then declared the gospel to them: that Christ had already come, been crucified for mankind’s sin(s), and had risen from the dead on the third day. Upon believing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul laid his hands on them the Holy Spirit came upon them, whereupon they spoke in tongues & prophesied. He then went into the synagogue and, for 3 months , spoke boldly to the Jews about the things concerning the kingdom of God (Acts 19:1-8).
56 AD	But some Jews refused to believe and spoke evil of the gospel and Christ to the multitude. So Paul left them, taking the disciples with him, and daily disputed in the school of Tyrannus for two years . All who lived in Asia, both Jews & Greeks, heard the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 19:9-10). God performed special miracles by the hands of Paul. Pieces of cloth that had touched his body were brought to the sick: they were healed and evil spirits came out of those possessed.
57 AD	Seven exorcists of the Jews, the sons of a chief priest named Sceva, called over those who had evil spirits. They used the name of the Lord Jesus and said, “we adjure you

	<p>by Jesus whom Paul preaches.” But the evil spirit answered, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?” And the man who had the unclean spirit leaped on them, overcame them, and they “fled out of that house naked and wounded.”</p> <p>When this became known to both the Jews and the Greeks who lived at Ephesus, they were all afraid. As a consequence, the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. Many who practiced magic brought their books and publically burned them before everyone. So the word of God grew mightily and prevailed (Acts 19:13-20).</p>
58 AD	<p>After this, the Holy Spirit laid on Paul’s heart that he was soon to pass through Macedonia & Achaia, and then on to Jerusalem – after which he was to go to Rome. Meanwhile, he sent Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia (Acts 19:21-22), but as a great door had been opened for him in Ephesus, Paul decided to remain there until Pentecost (1 Cor. 16:8-9).</p>
58 AD	<p>Upon his arrival at Corinth, Apollos watered the seed that Paul had sown (1 Cor. 3:6). Regrettably, many of the Corinthians became too attached to him, and this sparked a problem.</p> <p>Hence, while Paul was at Ephesus, some of Chloe’s family at Corinth wrote him that a schism had arisen in the church. Some said they followed Paul, some Apollos, some Cephas (Peter), while others said they followed only Christ Himself (1 Cor. 1:11-12, 3:3-4). That such had not been encouraged by Apollos is evident from the manner in which Paul later speaks kindly of him to Titus (Tit. 3:13). In addition, Apollos’ unwillingness to return to Corinth at the time of the writing of First Corinthians bears witness to the same (1 Cor. 16:12).</p> <p>Verse 5:9 indicates Paul had previously written an un-canonical letter to this church that the Corinthians misunderstood (it has been lost, not every letter Paul wrote was inspired, only those which God has seen fit to include in the Holy Bible). So the apostle wrote the 1st Corinthian Epistle to clear matters up. In this letter, Paul also ordered that their church member who was immorally living with his father’s wife, be bound over to Satan; hopefully, to bring him to repentance (1 Cor. 5:9 -6:20).</p> <p>Then, beginning at 7:1 and continuing through most of chapter 16, Paul addressed questions that the church at Corinth had written (e.g., marriage, food offered to idols, the Lord’s Supper, spiritual gifts: and he refuted the error of the Sadducees, who said there was no resurrection – this poison had spread all the way to Corinth, 1 Cor. 15).</p> <p>NOTE: Again, this chronology takes into account that, while on the 1st Missionary Journey, Paul was taken into the third heaven (Paradise) when he was stoned at Lystra. As this was about 14 years before he wrote Second Corinthians (see 2 Cor. 12:2-4), most of the dates going forward in this work will be different from those found in the majority of today’s chronologies. This will include the dates assigned to Paul’s epistles.</p>
58 AD	<p>Demetrius, a silversmith at Ephesus who made silver shrines for Diana, feared that he would lose his livelihood. He convened the other silversmiths and claimed that Paul had persuaded the Ephesians and almost all of Asia that images made by men were not gods, that their craft was in danger of being set at naught, that the temple of the great goddess Diana (whom all Asia and the world worshipped) would be despised and her magnificence destroyed.</p>

	<p>The silversmiths were enraged & shouted, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians.” They seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul’s travelling companions, and hurried them into the theatre. Paul wanted to go in, but some of the disciples (chief men of Asia) and his friends would not allow Paul to do so.</p> <p>The Jews put a certain “Alexander” forward, who beckoned with the hand for quite in hope that he might talk the crowd into calming down (probably to distance Jews of Ephesus from Paul’s message and thus not also become targets of the mob). But when they learned he was a Jew and knowing that Jews did not approve of idols (thus did not honor the fertility goddess Diana – there were about a thousand “priestesses” available at her temple), whereas they believed that the image of their “great goddess” had fallen down from Jupiter – for two hours they again chanted: “Great is Diana of the Ephesians.”</p> <p>At length the town clerk, motivated by political purposes, calmed the tumult and the rioters departed (Acts 19:23-41).</p>
58 AD	<p>After calling the brethren together, Paul embraced them and departed for Macedonia (Acts 20:1). Aquila & Priscilla also left Ephesus & returned to Rome (Rom. 16:3-5). Indeed, since the edict of Claudius (which ordered the expulsion of all Jews) expired after his AD 54 death, Hebrews everywhere returned to Rome (cp. Acts 28:17).</p>
58 AD	<p>On his way to Macedonia from Ephesus, Paul went to Troas, and the door opened for him to preach the gospel. Still, he was troubled because Titus, whom he had earlier sent to the Corinthians, wasn’t there. So Paul sailed over to Macedonia (2 Cor. 2:12-13, 12:18), where upon his arrival, he earnestly exhorted the brethren (Acts 20:2a).</p>
58 AD	<p>In Macedonia, trouble and fear followed Paul everywhere, but God comforted him with the arrival of Titus, who told him the good news about the Corinthian church’s repentance as a direct result of his first letter (2 Cor. 7:5-16). Then, in order to encourage the Macedonians into moving forward with haste in gathering a collection to relieve the poor saints in Jerusalem (caused by a famine), Paul used the Corinthians as an example by telling them that Achaia had been ready to send relief a year earlier (2 Cor. 8:1-5, 9:2).</p>
59 AD	<p>Titus’ heartening report (and the Holy Spirit) concerning his first letter prompted Paul to send the Corinthians a 2nd Epistle (early January, for date, see the detailed red “Note” at AD 58, p. 14 or a smaller red letter explanation at AD 45, p. 3: by context, 1st Corinthians was written shortly before the 2nd letter). In it, Paul told of the great afflictions he had suffered in Asia (2 Cor. 1:8-9a; Acts 19:23-41; 1 Cor. 15:32a) and that he had not come to them, as intended, in order to spare them disciplinary action (2 Cor. 1:15-16, 23). Paul also enjoined them to forgive and welcome back into fellowship the incestuous Corinthian who had repented (2 Cor. 2:5-11).</p> <p>He sent Titus to them again with the second letter, along with another brother who was famous among all the churches for his assertion of the gospel (Luke?). These two were to prepare them, so that they would have their collections ready for relieving the saints in Jerusalem by the time Paul arrived (2 Cor. 8:16-19, 9:3-5).</p>
59 AD	<p>Paul went from Macedonia into Greece & stayed there three months (Acts 20:2b-3). At this time Paul dictated the letter to the Romans from Corinth on his third visit to that city (2 Cor. 13:1; cp. Acts 20:2). It is often conjectured he sent it by Phoebe, a servant of the church of Cenchrea (a harbor c.7 miles east of Corinth on the Saronic</p>

	<p>Gulf; Rom. 16:1-2, 22). This was at the time that Paul planned to go directly from Corinth to Syria and bring the collections from Macedonia and Achaia to Jerusalem (Rom. 15:25-26). But when he learned that the Jews planned to ambush him, Paul decided to return back into Macedonia & from there sail on into Asia (Acts 20:3-4a).</p> <p>NOTE: Paul came to Greece in early <i>January</i>: back up from Nisan 21 (April 20, the last day of unleavened bread, shortly after which Paul left Philippi - Acts 20:6) the 3 months of Acts 20:3 plus the few days for them to go from Corinth to Philippi. At that time, he went to Corinth & received the “love offering” in Achaia for the relief of the saints at Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:3-7; Rom. 15:25-28; 2 Cor. 9:4; Acts 24:17).</p>
59 AD	<p>From Philippi in Macedonia, Paul sent his travelling companions ahead into Asia (Luke had been left at Philippi; cp. “we” and “us” of Acts 16:10 with the “they” who departed from there at 16:40 & 17:1: Luke apparently had remained in Philippi until now, perhaps as the pastor of the new church). Sopater, of Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica, Gaius of Derbe and Timothy, with Tychicus & Trophimus of Asia, were to all wait for Paul at Troas (Acts 20:4-5).</p> <p>These seven are listed because Paul is coming to Jerusalem with the oft referred to relief gift, and they are representatives of the various churches that participated in its collection. One of the reasons Paul devoted so much of his 3rd missionary journey on this present for the Jews in Judea was that Satan was constantly using the legalistic Judaizers in an attempt to divide the early church. They wanted the Gentile converts to live like Jews and follow the Law of Moses (Acts 15). The relief was a practical way for these new converts to say “thank you for sharing the gospel of Jesus with us” and thus strengthen the bond with their Jewish brothers & sisters (Rom. 15:25-27).</p> <p>Meanwhile, Paul, Luke & the rest sailed from Philippi after the last day of unleavened bread (Apr. 20). They came to Troas in 5 days & stayed 7 more (Acts 20:4-6).</p>
59 AD	<p>On the first day of the week, the disciples assembled together to break bread (i.e., the Lord’s Supper). As he was going to leave the next day, Paul preached to them until midnight. Falling asleep in a window on the third loft, young Eutychus fell to his death, but Paul embraced him and his life was restored. After eating, the meeting resumed till dawn (Acts 20:7-12).</p>
59 AD	<p>From Troas, Paul sent Luke and the others by ship to Assos. Travelling some 20 miles on foot, Paul joined them there, and they sailed on to Mitylene (the chief city of the island of Lesbos): then past Chios and arrived at the island of Samos the next day. They stayed at Trogyllium: the next day they came to Miletus, (Acts 20:13-15).</p>
59 AD	<p>Hurrying to be at Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost, Paul bypassed Ephesus, which was 30 miles north of Miletus. Paul sent for the elders of the Ephesian church to come to him. Upon their arrival, he reminded them that for three years (two years and three months puts him into the third year; Acts 19:8 & 10; cp. 20:31) he had warned them to be on guard against wolves and false teachers who would certainly come in among the flock, and he further exhorted them to do their duty. He knelt and prayed with them and they all wept, especially because Paul had said he would never see them again (Acts 20:16-38; cp. vs. 16 with vs. 20:6: from the <i>end</i> of unleavened bread to Pentecost is 45 days, and this may be accounted for by the text).</p>
59 AD	<p>Putting to sea from Miletus, they sailed straight for the island of Cos. The next day they came to Rhodes and from there to the port city Patara of Lycia.</p>

	<p>There, they took a ship which was sailing non-stop for Phoenicia. They sailed north of Cyprus and arrived at Tyre of Syria (Acts 21:1-3).</p>
59 AD	<p>At Tyre, they stayed with some disciples for seven days. These warned Paul through the Holy Spirit that he should not go up to Jerusalem. However, after praying with them, he sailed about 25 miles south to Ptolemais (modern Acre in Israel) where he stayed one day and met with the brethren.</p> <p>The next day they journeyed 30 miles to Caesarea on the plain of Sharon and stayed many days with Philip the evangelist (one of the first 7 deacons, Acts 6:5-6). Philip had 4 virgin daughters with the gift of prophecy.</p> <p>While there, Agabus the prophet (whom Paul had earlier met at Antioch c. 43 AD: Acts 11:27-28) came down from Judea. He took Paul's belt, bound his own hands & feet and foretold that the Jews of Jerusalem would bind Paul and give him over to the Gentiles. All except Agabus tried to persuade Paul not to go; nevertheless, he went up into that city along with his traveling companions & some disciples from Caesarea. They brought Mnason, an old disciple of Cyprus with whom Paul would stay, with them (Acts 21:4-16).</p>
59 AD	<p>The arrival at Jerusalem ended the third missionary journey. The church there welcomed them with great joy. The next day Paul met with James & the elders of Jerusalem and undoubtedly turned the offering he had gathered for the poor over to them at that time (Acts 24:17-18). Paul told the leaders of the work God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry, and they rejoiced.</p> <p>They then informed Paul that many thousands of Jews in the city now believed but were also still zealous of the law. Further, these had heard the false report that he taught Jewish converts to Christianity to forsake the law of Moses. To remove that stigma, they advised Paul to accompany four believing Jews that had made a Nazarite vow to the Temple and purify himself with them. Further, that after the seven days of purification were over, Paul would pay for their costly sacrifices (Num. 6:13-17; apparently all were poor) so that the four could then shave their heads. The believing Jews would hear of all this and realize that the rumors against Paul were unfounded. After all, he had sympathized with these four zealots of the Law (Acts 21:17-26: yet believing gentiles were free except from idols, blood, things strangled & fornication).</p> <p>Paul complied, but to no avail. When unbelieving Jews from the province of Asia who had come to Jerusalem for Pentecost saw Paul in the temple, they stirred up the large multitude that had gathered for the feast (Acts 20:16, cp 20:6) by alleging that he had brought Trophimus (a Gentile of Ephesus) into the Temple – thus profaning it. A riot ensued and as they were about to kill Paul, Claudius Lysias (chief captain of the 1,000 man Roman garrison stationed at the Antonia citadel on the NW corner of the Temple) came with centurions (thus, at least 200 soldiers) and stopped them from beating him. When the soldiers had brought Paul bound in chains to the stairs of the fort, the chief captain allowed Paul to address the people (Acts 21:27-40).</p> <p>Speaking in Hebrew (Aramaic, the <i>lingua franca</i> of all SW Asia: our Lord spoke Galilean Aramaic – Hebrew had become the language of the synagogue and school), the apostle told the crowd of his conduct before his conversion (Acts 22:1-5), of his conversion (Acts 22:6-16), and of his commission to minister (Acts 22:17-21).</p>

59 AD	<p>The Jews listened attentively until Paul said that God had sent him to the Gentiles. At this point they became enraged and cried out to do away with him. Captain Lysias ordered him brought into the Antonia to be scourged in order that he might learn what Paul had done that caused such an uproar. But when Paul revealed that he was a Roman citizen, the flogging was called off. Still wanting to know of what crime the Jews had accused him, the chief captain (a Roman Tribune) ordered the chief priests and all their council (the Sanhedrin) to come together. Lysias then set Paul before them and released him from his bonds (Acts 22:22-30).</p>
59 AD	<p>Looking intently at the council, Paul began to plead his cause by saying that he had always lived in good conscience before God, at which point Ananias the high priest ordered him to be struck on the mouth (although he had been removed from the high priesthood, he still seemed to be the head of the council). Therefore, Paul rebuked him for having him so struck, which was contrary to the law, and called Ananias a whitewashed wall. When reprovved for reviling the high priest, Paul replied that he did not know Ananias was the high priest, else he would not have so done and thereby broken the Law (Exo. 22:28).</p> <p>Upon realizing that some of the council were Sadducees but others Pharisees, Paul exclaimed that he was a Pharisee and that he was being tried because of the hope of the resurrection. This split his judges, for the Sadducees believed in neither angels nor the resurrection, but the Pharisees believed both. As a great dissension arose, the Pharisees declared that they found no fault in Paul. Then chief captain Lysias, being fearful that Paul would be torn to pieces during the fighting, ordered his soldiers to forcibly remove the apostle from them and take him into the fort (Acts 23:1-10).</p> <p>The next night, the Lord appeared to Paul and said: “Be of good cheer, Paul: for as you have testified of me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.” This comforted Paul: it assured him God was not going to let them kill him (Acts 23:11).</p>
59 AD	<p>When it was day, more than 40 Zealous Jews bound themselves by an oath to neither eat nor drink until they had ambushed and killed Paul. Paul’s sister’s son told Paul of this; he informed a centurion of the plot, and he revealed it to the chief captain. When Lysias had confirmed the report by Paul’s young nephew, in the third hour of the night (9 P.M.) he placed Paul on a horse and sent him under the guard of two centurions, 200 soldiers, 70 knights on horseback, and 200 spearmen with orders to bring him safely to Governor Felix at Caesarea on the Sea (the political center for the Roman province of Syria).</p> <p>Claudius Lysias included a letter to Felix explaining the riot, his rescue of Paul, his learning that he was a Roman citizen, that while attempting to find why the Jews were trying to kill him he had brought Paul before their council where he learned that all was merely a question of Jewish law – and therefore Paul had done nothing worthy of death or bonds. Further, upon learning that certain Jews intended to ambush and slay him, he decided to send Paul to him so that the accusers could come to Caesarea and tell the governor what they had against the accused (Acts 23:12-30).</p> <p>During that night, the soldiers took Paul about 30 miles to Antipatris. The next day, the 400 foot soldiers returned to Jerusalem, and the 70 horsemen escorted him the remaining 27 miles to Caesarea, where they delivered the letter and Paul to Felix.</p>

59 AD	<p>The governor read the letter and, upon finding Paul was of Cilicia, said he would hear the case when Paul’s accusers arrived. With that, he commanded that Paul be kept in Herod’s judgment hall (Acts 23:31-35).</p> <p>NOTE: Secular dates for the end of Antonius Felix’s governorship over Judea are most uncertain. They range from 55, 56, 57, 58, 59 and 61 AD. <i>The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible</i> states that the reason for this quandary was that “Tacitus’ dislike for Felix and his brother Pallas betrayed him into carelessness over detail in two vital chapters of his <i>Annals</i> (12:54 and 54)” and that “this raised a problem of dating” which as of 1978 “defies a final solution.” See: <i>Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible</i>, Merrill C. Tenney General Editor, (Grand Rapid, MI: 1978), Vol. 2, p. 526.</p> <p>Unfortunately, although most scholars seem to favor 60, this means the secular date that Porcius Festus succeeded Felix is equally uncertain. However, as already alluded, the Bible gives data regarding Paul’s being stoned at Lystra, which allows the Biblicists to reasonably set the date at which the apostle appeared before Felix as AD 59. This is determined by beginning with Herod Agrippa I’s fixed AD 44 death year and the simple fact that the biblical context for the stoning incident can hardly be more than two years afterward. Connecting the “semi-fixed” stoning date of AD 45 with Paul’s 2 Corinthian 12:2-4 “above 14 years ago” 3rd heaven account, and we arrive at the date for that letter as being written in early January of AD 59 (see following paragraph for January determination).</p> <p>Paul then went from Macedonia into Greece and stayed 3 months (Acts 20:2b-3). Now the last day of unleavened bread in AD 59 was April 20 (Acts 20:6). If from there we back up 3 months plus the few days for him to go from Corinth to Philippi, it puts us in <i>January</i> of AD 59, (see red “Note” on p. 11). The 45 days from the <i>end</i> of unleavened bread (April 20) to Pentecost (June 5, cp. Acts 20:6 with verse 16: these 45 days may be verified by the text) brings us forward to June 5 AD 59. To this we note that only 12 days had passed since Paul arrived at Jerusalem and his trial at Caesarea before Felix (Acts 24:1; cp. vs. 11) – who had then been “for many years...judge” over the nation (AD 52 – 59 = in his 8th year).</p> <p>When two years had passed, Felix was recalled by Nero and replaced with Porcius Festus. At that time, Paul was still a prisoner (Acts 24:27). These two years fix Festus’ governorship as beginning at AD 61.</p>
59 AD	<p>Five days after Paul was delivered to Felix at Caesarea, Ananias and the elders came from Jerusalem and accused the apostle to the governor through Tertullus, an orator. As to the charge of his being a danger to the public, Paul replied that only 12 days had passed since he had been attacked in the temple (Acts 24:1; cp. vs. 11) and that his purpose in so going was to worship, not to arouse a riot.</p> <p>Paul thus cleared himself of their false accusations, and Felix, who had governed the Jews many years and thus had knowledge of “the way” and the things of which Paul spoke (AD 52 was the first year of his government), deferred his sentence to another time. Felix ordered a centurion to keep Paul in custody but that he be allowed some freedom (because he was a Roman citizen, Acts 22:27). All his associates could come and visit with him (Acts 24:1-23).</p>

58 AD	Some days later, Felix and his beautiful Jewish wife Drusilla (the daughter of Herod Agrippa I and sister of King Agrippa II) sent for Paul. Felix trembled as he heard Paul reason about faith in Christ, righteousness, temperance and the judgment to come. He often spoke with Paul and hoped that the apostle would somehow obtain the funds to buy his freedom. As this did not happen, Felix kept Paul in bonds for two entire years so as to please the Jews (Acts 24:24-26).
61 AD	<p>Succeeding Felix in the autumn, Porcius Festus became the Roman procurator of Judea & found that Felix had kept Paul in bonds for two whole years (Acts 24:27).</p> <p>Festus' beginning date generally ranges from 58-61. Ussher (1581–1656, Archbishop of Armagh – the highest position in the Irish Anglican Church) gave 62 AD for Festus & AD 65 for Paul's release from his 1st Roman custody. As 65 is a year <i>after</i> Rome burned, we were forced into early 64 AD. Entering Trinity College at 13, Ussher prepared a detailed Hebrew chronology in Latin at 15 and at 18 received a master's degree. An expert in Semitic languages and history, at 26 he earned a doctorate and became Professor of Divinity at Dublin University. So great was his repute that John Selden characterized Ussher's tolerance, sincerity & amassed learning as "miraculous". (Selden was widely recognized as the finest mind in 17th-century England: John Milton called Selden "the chief of learned men...in this Land". For centuries after his death he was referred to as just "Selden".) Ussher's epitaph at Westminster Abbey reads: "Among scholars he was the most saintly, among saints the most scholarly".</p> <p>About 50% of the 500 f³⁵ Gospel of John manuscripts have "published 32 years after the ascension of Christ" in the colophons. Now 30 + 32 = 62 AD, rather than 85–95!</p>
61 AD	<p>Three days after Festus arrived in the province, he went from Caesarea to Jerusalem. The high priest and the rulers of the Jews accused Paul and, planning to ambush & kill him on the way, asked Festus to have him brought from Caesarea to Jerusalem. Festus refused and ordered Paul's accusers to come to Caesarea. Remaining just above ten more days in Jerusalem, Festus then travelled back down to Caesarea. The next day he listened to the Jews accusing Paul of many grievous acts. To these Paul responded, "Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all (Acts 25:1-8).</p> <p>Wanting to please the Jews, Festus asked Paul if he was willing to have the matter judged before him at Jerusalem. Paul, fearing treachery from the Jews, replied that he was already at Caesar's judgment seat (Caesarea), which was the proper place for him to be further judged. Moreover, that Festus well knew he was not guilty of the Jews accusations, that he had broken no Roman law and thus was not worthy of death. Therefore, it was unlawful for any man to deliver him to the Jews. At which point Paul refused to be judged before the Jews in Jerusalem and, being a Roman citizen, he appealed to appear before Caesar in Rome. After conferring with his council, Festus agreed to send Paul to Caesar (Acts 25:9-12).</p>
61 AD	After some days, King Agrippa II & his sister Bernice came to Caesarea to welcome Festus. During their stay, Festus confided to Agrippa that Felix had left a prisoner named Paul of whom the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem had made many accusations and insisted that he be put to death. Further, when he brought the case to trial, he found the prisoner was not guilty of any crime against the empire. Rather, it was about the Jewish religion and a certain Jesus who had died, but Paul affirmed that he was alive.

<p>61 AD</p>	<p>Festus told of Paul’s refusal to be tried in Jerusalem and of his appeal to go to Caesar. Realizing he could not send Paul to Caesar without a suitable charge (which he did not have) and knowing Agrippa to be a Jew, Festus hoped the king would be able to help in drawing up a suitable charge. Agrippa then offered to hear Paul.</p> <p>The next day a formal hearing was arranged. Agrippa and Bernice, along with the captains and the principal men of the city, arrived with great pomp. The governor summoned Paul to be brought out to them. Festus repeated that he had previously found Paul had done nothing worthy of death but that he had appealed to Augustus (a title = “the Augustus one”, not Octavian – Nero was Caesar at this time).</p> <p>Festus’ dilemma was that, because Paul was a Roman citizen, he was forced to comply with Paul’s appeal to be sent to Nero. Yet, it was unreasonable to send a prisoner to Rome without naming any specific crime against him. Festus said that he was seeking Agrippa’s insight so that he might have something to put in writing to send along with Paul when he came before the emperor (Acts 25:13-27).</p> <p>Agrippa began by telling Paul he could to speak for himself. Paul began his defense by expressing gratitude that he was being allowed to present his case before someone such as the king; for he knew Agrippa was extremely knowledgeable in all the customs of the Jews (courtesy, not flattery). Next, he said he was a Pharisee: that the Jews well knew this. Yet they accused him for his believing the covenant promises that God had made to the OT fathers, especially those concerning the Messiah who was to deliver Israel from her enemies and reign over the earth. But how could God keep these promises when the fathers were long dead. The answer was: by raising them from the dead, thereby linking these promises with the resurrection.</p> <p>Paul then told of his past persecution of the Christians: how he had been struck down on the way to Damascus, saw a light at noonday brighter than the sun which blinded him, that he heard the audible voice of the resurrected Christ Jesus who commissioned him to give the good new to the Gentiles – that forgiveness of sin was possible only by faith in Christ –that this was consistent with that which Moses & the prophets had foretold: namely, that man should repent, turn to God and do works to show their repentance was genuine. Paul closed by stating that Scripture taught Christ should suffer, be the first to rise from the dead, show the way to God unto both Jews and Gentiles – and that Agrippa would know that this mention of the Gentiles was the real reason the Jews had rioted at the Temple and were still trying to kill him.</p> <p>Festus, being unaware of such things, cried that all Paul’s study had left him mad. The apostle replied he was not mad and that Agrippa knew of all this, as it had not been done in a closet. Then the king, being well-versed in Scripture, replied: “Paul you almost persuade me to become a Christian.” The entire council then judged that Paul had done nothing worthy of death or bonds. Festus then confided to Agrippa that Paul might have been set free had he not appealed to Caesar (Acts 26:1-32).</p>
<p>61 AD</p>	<p>The Voyage to Rome: When it was decreed to send Paul to Caesar, he was turned over to Julius, a centurion (the captain of 100 soldiers), along with other prisoners. At Caesarea, Julius put Paul, Aristarchus of Macedonia, Timothy and Luke (Paul’s traveling companions) on a ship. The next day, they ended the 77 mile voyage to Sidon where Julius treated Paul courteously by allowing him visit his friends there.</p>

<p>61 AD</p>	<p>Upon departing and because of unfavorable autumn winds, they sailed on the north side of Cyprus past Cilicia and Pamphylia. Arriving at Myra, a city of Lycia, the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing to Italy, and he put all on board.</p> <p>Due to adverse winds, they sailed slowly for many days and with difficulty sailed past the port of Cnidus (c. 145 miles, located on the extreme SW corner of Asia Minor = Turkey). As the wind was against them, they headed southwest, rounded Cape Salmone on the east side of Crete and sailed along its south side until they came to Fair Havens, a harbor on the south central coast of the island (Acts 27:1-8).</p>
<p>61 AD</p>	<p>As the fast (day of Atonement: the 10th day of the 7th Jewish month = Tishri = 22 September of AD 60) was now already past, sailing had become hazardous. Paul foresaw the danger facing them & advised the centurion to winter at Fair Havens. However, centurion Julius believed the shipmaster and the ships owner more than Paul and, because Fair Haven was an unsuitable harbor in which to winter, they decided to try and winter in another Cretan port, called Phoenix.</p> <p>After a delay at Fair Havens (Acts 27:9), they sailed out under a favorable south wind and remained close to the underside of Crete. However, not long after there arose a tempestuous wind called a Nor'easter, which drove their ship south of the little nearby island of Clauda. Being tossed about by the storm, they undergirded the ship with ropes. The next day they lightened the ship. On the third day, they threw out the ships tackle. The tempest did not subside, and for many days they saw neither sun nor stars. With all hope gone, Paul reproved the leaders for not heeding him and sailing from Crete. He added that an angel had come to him that night and told him he had to be brought before Caesar. Further, the ship would be lost and all would be cast upon a certain island, but God had promised him the safety of all on board.</p> <p>On the fourteenth night of the storm, as they were being driven up and down the Adriatic Sea, the sailors thought that they were near some land (which they later learned was the island of Melita, today's Malta). Fearing crashing into rocks, the sailors tried to abandon the ship under a false pretense, but Paul told the centurion and his soldiers that unless they remained in the ship all would perish. So the shipmen were forced to stay. With day approaching and since they had fasted for fourteen days, Paul persuaded all of the 276 souls on board to eat some meat. At that, Paul took bread, gave thanks to God where all could see, broke it and began to eat. After eating, they again lightened the ship by casting the cargo of wheat into the sea.</p> <p>And when it was day, they saw land and a creek into which they intended to thrust the ship. They took up the anchors, hoisted the mainsail to the wind and ran the ship aground. As the ship was being broken up by the violence of the storm, the soldiers' wanted to kill the prisoners for fear that some might escape and thereby place their lives in danger. But Julius (the centurion), wanting to save Paul, kept them from so doing and commanded those who could swim to cast themselves into the sea and get to land. Of the rest, some came ashore on boards and some on broken pieces of the ship but all escaped safely to land (Acts 27:9-44).</p>
<p>61 AD</p>	<p>After surviving the shipwreck, they were courteously treated by the barbarous people of Melita (Malta) who made a fire for them to warm themselves and dry their clothes. As Paul was putting some wood on the fire, a poisonous viper fastened on his hand.</p>

<p>61 AD</p>	<p>The native islanders saw the venomous serpent so hanging and concluded that Paul was a murderer who had escaped the sea, yet justice had now caught up with him. But Paul shook the snake off into the fire, and when after a long while he did not swell up or die, the islanders were amazed and said he must be a god.</p> <p>Afterward, Paul & company stayed with Publius, the chief man of the island, for three days. It so happened that Publius' father was sick with a fever and a bloody flux. Paul prayed, laid his hands on him, and the man was healed. Upon hearing of this, many others on the island that had diseases came and were also healed (Acts 28:1-9).</p>
<p>62 AD</p>	<p>Paul and his companions were therefore highly honored by the people of Melita who resupplied all their needs so that they could continue on to Italy. After staying there 3 months they departed on a ship from Alexandria, which had wintered at the island, and sailed c. 80 miles to Syracuse of Sicily (add the time for the delay at Fair Havens to their having left that harbor after “the fast” [Acts 27:9] plus the 14 day storm to these 3 months – and it is now early spring). After three days, they left and sailed 70 miles to Rhegium (on the toe of Italy). After one day, a favorable south wind blew, and the next day they came to Puteoli (110 miles from Rome) where they found brethren & stayed with them 7 days: then continued on toward Rome (Acts 28:10-14).</p>
<p>62 AD</p>	<p>Brethren from Rome heard of Paul's arrival, and two different groups set out to meet him. One group traveled 43 miles from Rome to the Appii Forum and the other some 33 miles to Three Taverns. When they came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard but Paul, being a trusted prisoner, was allowed to live in a private home with a soldier who guarded him. This was Paul's first Roman imprisonment (Acts 28:15-16).</p> <p>After three days, Paul called for the leaders of the Jews. He told them that although he had committed nothing wrong against Israel or the customs of the fathers, he was arrested in Jerusalem and sent to the Romans who, when they had examined the matter, would have let him go because they found in him nothing worthy of bonds or death. But as the Jews protested against this finding, he was forced to appeal unto Caesar. Paul closed by saying he wanted to assure them that the real reason he was in Rome as a chained prisoner was that he believed in the hope of Israel (the Messiah and His Kingdom). Moreover, he was not pressing charges against Israel; he only wanted to be acquitted.</p> <p>They replied that they had neither received any negative letters about him from Judea nor any bad reports from any Jews that had come from there. Then they added that wanted to hear his views concerning the Christian sect, since they knew that people everywhere were talking against both it and his message (Acts 28:17-22).</p> <p>When they had set a day, they came to him at his lodging. From morning until evening, Paul expounded Christ from the Law of Moses and the prophets. Some believed, but others did not. So Paul reminded the unbelievers of the Holy Spirits judgment on their forefathers from Isaiah (6:9-10): that their hearts were hard and unfeeling, their ears dull and their eyes blind – and applied it to them. He then announced that the message of God's salvation was therefore being sent unto the Gentiles because, unlike most of them, they would hear it. When he had so said, the Jews departed and “had great reasoning among themselves” (Acts 28:23-29).</p>

62 AD	<p>During Paul's first imprisonment in Rome, the Philippian church sent Epaphroditus to him with some financial aid. He ministered to Paul and became his helper & fellow soldier in the work of Christ (Phil. 2:25-30, 4:10, 14, 18).</p> <p>Although old and in prison, Paul led Onesimus to Christ. He was a servant who had fled from his master Philemon of Colosse (Philem. 1:9, 10, 15; Col. 4:9, 18).</p>
62 AD	<p>Paul sent Tychicus, who had been a traveling companion in Asia (Acts 20:4), back to those of that region, so that the brethren might know his affairs. Tychicus carried with him Paul's letter to the Ephesians (Eph. 6:21-22).</p>
62 AD	<p>Paul wrote a letter to Philemon and sent it to Colosse by Onesimus, Philemon's servant. Paul commended Onesimus to his master: he indicated that he hoped to soon be freed from prison and asked Philemon to prepare a guest room for him.</p> <p>Paul used Onesimus & Tychicus to deliver a letter to the Colossians, whom he had never seen, but who had been instructed in the doctrine of Christ by Epaphras (Col. 1:7-8, 2:1, 4:7-9, 18). Besides Timothy (whose name appears in both these letters), at this time Aristarchus of Thessalonica (a companion in bonds) and Mark (Barnabas' sister's son; Acts 20:4) were with Paul at Rome. A third Jew named Jesus (also called Justus) was also there, as was Luke the beloved physician, Demas & Epaphras (Col. 4:10-14, 17; Phile. 1:23-24). Paul instructed the Colossians to receive Mark, should he come to them.</p>
63 AD	<p>Epaphroditus fell seriously ill, and when news of this reached his home church it created much anxiety. So as soon as his health permitted, Paul sent him back, along with the Epistle to the Philippians. In addition, Paul hoped to soon send Timothy there to find out how they were. He also trusted that God would allow him to come to them before long (Phil. 2:19-30). At that time, Paul's bonds for Christ were well-known throughout the court, and even some of Caesar's palace staff were converted (Phil. 1:12-13, 4:22).</p>
63 AD	<p>Shortly before being set free from his first imprisonment in Rome, Paul wrote the letter to the Hebrews. Timothy had already been released, and Paul promised that if Timothy returned to him soon, they both would come to them. In the meantime, he sent greetings from the brethren in Italy (Heb. 13:23-24).</p>
64 AD	<p>After that, Paul remained in his own hired house for two whole years and received all who came to him (released <i>before</i> the June 18 AD 64 fire). He preached the kingdom of God & taught about the Lord Jesus Christ. No one hindered him (Acts 28:30-31).</p>
64 AD	<p>Nero watched Rome burn (June 18-19 from Mecena's Tower) and was greatly delighted with the beauty of the flames. He sang of the destruction of Troy in his lyre-player's clothes, comparing the present evil to those old ruins (Tacitus, <i>Annals</i>, Bk. 15. ch. 38-40, 5:271-277; Suetonius, <i>Nero</i>, Bk. 6. ch. 38., 2:149,151).</p> <p>To quell the rumor that he had started the fire, Nero falsely accused the Christians and punished them severely with terrible torments. Those who confessed as being Christians were the first to be arrested. Then, based on their information, a great multitude was convicted. They were hated, not so much for allegedly having set the city on fire, for the general hatred that everyone bore against them. These suffered and died most cruelly. Some were covered with beasts' skins and torn by dogs; others were crucified and still other bathed in oil so that when night fell their bodies were lit and turned into torches.</p>

	<p>This was the first persecution raised against the Christians by the Roman emperors.</p> <p>Up until this time, Rome considered Christianity as merely a sect of Judaism – which was a religion recognized and tolerated by the state. But after the burning of Rome and Nero’s false accusation, “the way” became seen as a separate entity.</p> <p>However, because they were not suffering for any wrong or common good but to satisfy one man’s cruelty, the Christians eventually became pitied by much of the populace (Tacitus, <i>Annals</i>, Bk. 15. ch. 44. 5:283 & 285).</p> <p>Timothy, who was being kept as a prisoner with Paul during his first incarceration in Rome, was freed (Heb. 13:23). This would have occurred <i>before</i> the city burned and the persecution of the Christians began, else Nero would have had him killed.</p>
64 AD	<p>Since the 4th century the prevailing opinion has been that after 2 years under house arrest in Rome & after giving the gospel to many (Acts 28:30-31), Paul was freed.</p> <p>Reasons for his release with Nero on the throne: (1) It was God’s plan for Paul’s life, (2) he was a Roman citizen, (3) Julius, the centurion who was in charge of bringing the apostle to Rome and who witnessed the miracles on Malta, undoubtedly gave an excellent account of him upon delivering Paul to Caesar, & (4) the report from Festus, which would have laid no fault whatsoever against Paul concerning the empire. It would have also stated he would have set Paul free had not he, being a Roman citizen, appealed to Caesar because the Jewish leaders wanted to kill him over religious differences (Acts 25:23-27, 26:31-32). From here, a probable course of events is:</p> <p>Upon his release, Paul apparently went to Asia (a province in western Turkey) and stayed for a time with Philemon at Colossae (Phile. 22). It is possible that afterward Paul fulfilled his stated intention and hope of going to Spain (Rom. 15:24 & 28).</p> <p>Indeed, Eusebius (AD 325) did report that it was a common tradition in his day that Paul made his defense at Rome, was released, resumed his journeys, that he was brought back to Rome where he was slain (<i>Ecclesiastical History</i>, Loeb: Vol. 1, Bk. 2, p. 165-167). In addition, Clement of Rome (c. AD 95-96) implied that Paul did go to Spain (as he had intended and so said c. AD 60, cp. Rom. 15:24, 28), when he wrote that in the apostle’s journeys “he reached the limit of the west” (1 Clement 5).</p> <p>However, the most telling factor in favor of two Roman imprisonments with a period of freedom in between is the fact that Scripture demands it. First, Paul’s Pastoral Epistles (1 & 2 Timothy & Titus) allude to events which do not fit within the Book of Acts and mention individuals not found in his missionary journeys.</p> <p>Second, and decisive, is the leaving of Trophimus sick at Miletus (2 Tim. 4:20). This could not have happened during Paul’s last journey to Jerusalem, for Trophimus was not left then (Acts 20:4, 21:29). Nor could it have been on Paul’s journey to appear before Caesar at Rome, for then he sailed past Miletus and did not stopover.</p> <p>Thus, we logically discern that the Pastorals do not fit <i>within</i> the Book of Acts because they are about a period <i>after</i> the end of Acts. Paul must have been released (for lack of evidence), followed by a short interval of ministry and travel, during which he wrote 1 Timothy & Titus.</p> <p>Then Trophimus was left sick at Miletus, Paul’s second incarceration took place, he penned 2nd Timothy, and was executed in AD 67.</p>

65 AD	To Spain or not, Paul came to the isle of Crete , preached the gospel, left Titus behind to set in order the things that were lacking and to ordain elders in every city (Tit. 1:5). Paul went to Ephesus, and when he went on to Macedonia he left Timothy behind to oversee the Ephesian church in his absence (1 Tim. 1:3, 3:14-15). In Macedonia , he would surely have stayed with the Philippians , as he had previously promised (Phil. 1:25-26, 2:24) and probably wrote the first letter to Timothy from that city. Still, some suggest that from Macedonia Paul traveled south into Corinth and perhaps it was from that city he wrote First Timothy. However, they do not give a specific relevant scriptural citation to support such a Corinth visit.
65 AD	Shortly after this, Paul wrote a letter to Titus directing him that when either Artemas or Tychicus were sent to relieve him on Crete, Titus would come to Paul at Nicopolis (on the Adriatic coast of Greece and famous for the 31 BC battle of Actium), for he planned to winter there. (Tit. 3:12-13: apparently Artemas was sent to the isle of Crete for 2 Tim. 4:12 indicates that Tychicus went to Ephesus to replace Timothy)
66 AD	Winter being over, Paul rejoined Timothy and went to Troas . There he left his cloak, books, and parchments behind (2 Tim. 4:13; because he fled to avoid arrest or was arrested there?). Erastus remained at Corinth: he was its city treasurer (Rom. 16:23). Paul left (had already left?) Trophimus sick at Miletus (1 Tim. 3:14; 2 Tim. 4:13, 20).
66 AD	Paul was arrested and brought to Rome for the second time . Unlike the house arrest at his first imprisonment, this time he was placed in a Roman prison, put in chains and treated as a criminal (2 Tim. 2:9). At a preliminary hearing , Paul successfully defended himself “out of the mouth of the lion” but was not released by Nero (2 Tim 4:16-17). He was sent back to prison to await an official trial. He seems not to have believed this would come up until after the coming winter (2 Tim. 4:13 & 21). As he had earlier done during the two years of his first incarceration at Rome, Paul once again seized upon the opportunity and proclaimed the gospel before his Gentile captors (2 Tim. 4:17).
66 AD	While a prisoner in Rome, Onesiphorus very diligently looked for Paul. And when he found Paul, he encouraged him (2 Tim. 1:16-17). But Demas, loving this present world more, left Paul and went to Thessalonica: Crescens went into Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia (Croatia). Only Luke remained in Rome with Paul (2 Tim. 4:10-11).
67 AD	By revelation, the Lord made both Peter and Paul aware that their death was near (2 Pet. 1:14; 2 Tim. 4:6-7).
67 AD	Peter wrote his second letter to the believers who were dispersed throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia (2 Pet. 3:1; 1 Pet. 1:1: 1st letter in AD 65).
67 AD	Paul, by the hand of Tychicus, sent his second letter to Timothy at Ephesus, where the family of Onesiphorus lived. This was after Aquila and Priscilla had left Rome and returned to Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:12 & 19). In this letter, he wanted Timothy to come to him before winter and bring Mark with him as well as his cloak, books, and parchments that he had left behind at Troas (2 Tim 4:9, 11, 13, & 21). It is most doubtful that Timothy arrived in time.
67 AD	On the 29th day of June, Paul was beheaded at Rome , as the records of both the eastern and western church confirm. Chrysostom affirmed that the day of Paul’s death was known with greater certainty than the death of Alexander the Great himself (Chrysostom, II Corinthians, <i>Homily</i> Loeb Classical Library: Book 12, p. 402).

	<p>In a letter to the Romans, Dionysius the bishop of the Corinthians affirmed that Peter also suffered martyrdom the same time as Paul (Eusebius, <i>Ecclesiastical History</i>, Loeb: Vol. 1, Bk. 2, pp. 181 & 183). Origen stated that Peter was crucified at Rome, with his head downward, for he had so requested (Origen, <i>Genesis</i>, tome 3 and cited by Eusebius in <i>Ecclesiastical History</i>, Loeb: Vol. 1, Bk. 3, p. 191). The prediction of Christ, which he had made to Peter, was thereby fulfilled:</p> <p>“When thou art old, thou shalt stretch forth thine hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.” (John 21:18 &19)</p>
<p>70 AD</p>	<p>Jerusalem: taken by Titus of Rome and the Temple was burned. Moreover, the siege of Jerusalem was begun 14 Nisan, AD 70 (Josephus, <i>Wars of the Jews</i>: V.13.7). This was 40 years to the very day from the 14 Nisan AD 30 crucifixion.</p> <p>The Jerusalem (Yoma 43c) and Babylonian (Yoma 39b) Talmuds say that every night for 40 years before the destruction of the Temple, the middle or chief light on the golden candlestick would simply go out and that the great brass Temple-gates which were closed each evening swung open each night of their own accord. Josephus tells us these doors were so massive that it took 20 men to close them (<i>Wars</i>, vi.5.3).</p> <p>Whereas numerology is not a science or trustworthy, it is nevertheless well-known that because of the frequency of the occurrence of the number “forty” and the uniformity of its association with a period of probation or testing, this number has long been recognized as significant within Scripture. Examples of “forties” abound: Israel in the wilderness, Israel under Philistine dominion (Judg. 13:1), Moses in Egypt, Moses in Midian, Moses on Mt. Sinai, Jonah’s preaching of judgment on Nineveh, the span the 12 spies searched out Canaan, Elijah’s fasting while fleeing from Jezebel, the span Goliath challenged Israel for a champion, the period of our Lord’s being tempted by Satan, the length of days He showed himself to the disciples after the resurrection, etc.</p> <p>Thus, it is most reasonable that God gave Israel a 40-year period from the crucifixion to reconsider, repent, and receive the Lord Jesus as their long-awaited Messiah before bringing the judgment under Titus down upon them. Moreover, is it not logical to conclude that our Lord would forever end the efficaciousness of the animal sacrifice system by the willing sacrifice of himself 40 years prior to this historic event?</p> <p>Finally, we offer that the 40 years of Judah’s iniquity and its association to a siege of Jerusalem in Ezekiel 4:4–7 is a double reference prophecy with its second fulfillment being the span from the crucifixion to the ending of the sacrifice system by Titus’ AD 70 destruction of the Temple and its altar.</p> <p>The first fulfillment of the Ezekiel 4:4–7 40-year prophecy began in the 13th year of Josiah (628 BC) when Jeremiah began to prophesy and called on the kingdom of Judah to repent. It ended when the final siege began on the 10th day of the 10th month in the 9th year of Zedekiah (cp. Jer. 25:3, 39:1). The second fulfillment of Ezekiel’s 40-year prophecy began ticking in AD 30 when the Jews rejected God’s provision for sin and slew the lamb of God, Messiah Jesus, on 14 Nisan – Passover day. It ended exactly 40 years later when the final siege of Jerusalem began on the very same day –Nisan 14 of AD 70 (Josephus: <i>Wars</i>, V.13.7). All this should come as no surprise to us. After all, the OT is about Christ Jesus (Luke 24:27, 44–45).</p>

Dates for the Gospels: In 2008, Dr. Wilbur N. Pickering (Th.M. Dallas Theological Seminary in Greek Exegesis, Ph.D. University of Toronto in Linguistics) discovered *colophons* in numerous ancient manuscripts that contained the Gospels. Colophons are inscriptions, usually placed at the end of a book or manuscript, which normally contain the name of the owner (or scribe) and an attempt at dating the writing.

Dr. Pickering states that 16–18% of the 3,000⁺ extant NT manuscripts (c.500) belong to the Byzantine (*Textus Receptus*) sub-group designated as f³⁵ (i.e., family 35: critics subdivide the NT manuscripts into four artificial families: the Alexandrian, Byzantine, Western, and Caesarean). As of 2015, Dr. Pickering has c. 90 manuscripts of the f³⁵ sub-group that contain the four Gospels. Having collated them, he reports that c.95% have colophons. About 1,800 of the extant MSS-mss contain the Gospels (some are fragments), and Dr. Pickering extrapolates that about 50% have colophons.

Thus, approximately 50% of the 500 f³⁵ manuscripts of the **Gospel of John** have “published 32 years after the ascension of Christ” in the colophons. Now $30 + 32 = 62 \text{ AD}$, rather than 85–95! For 50% of the f³⁵ mss to have this information implies that the tradition is ancient, and Pickering has further shown that the f³⁵ sub-family goes back to at least the 3rd century AD. The colophons also record that **Luke** was “published 15 years after the ascension of Christ” ($30 + 15 = 45 \text{ AD}$, not something near 60).

The same sources have **Matthew** “published (or “given out” – the Greek is ἐξέδοθη) eight years after the ascension of Christ” ($30 + 8 = 38 \text{ AD}$, rather than c.50)! The colophons also say that **Mark** was “published 10 years after the ascension” and $30 + 10 = 40 \text{ AD}$, not c.68 AD. Now 40 AD for Mark’s Gospel is two years *after* Matthew, not before as the text critics would have it. Thus, not only were the four authors of the Gospel accounts of Christ Jesus eyewitnesses of the events, many others were still alive when the Gospels appeared. This would include most of the over 500 that actually saw our Lord after His resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:6).

Pickering maintains that the f³⁵ sub-group of the Byzantine family is without equal in the MS tradition – about 500 of all the 3,000⁺ extant manuscripts are f³⁵. Since the f³⁵ mss come from a large, diverse geographic region (Jerusalem, Sinai, Trikala, Mt. Athos, Constantinople, and Rome), the likelihood that they do not represent the main line of transmission is nil. Thus, beyond any reasonable doubt, the f³⁵ Gospel colophons must be seen as valid ancient witnesses and their dates taken as absolutely legitimate. Since they testify that Mark was written two years *after* Matthew, the so-called “Synoptic problem” is forever slain. The critics merely have theories; we have the facts, and facts are stubborn things.