

## New Testament Timeline

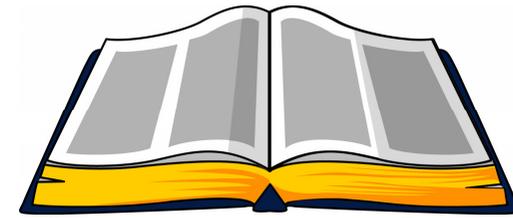
Date Written (A.D.)	New Testament Book(s)	Author
35	Matthew	Matthew
40 to 41	James	James
42	Mark	Mark
42	John	John
50	1Thessalonians	Paul
51	2Thessalonians	Paul
53 (Spring)	Galatians	Paul
56 (Late Winter)	1Corinthians	Paul
57 (Late Summer)	2Corinthians	Paul
57 (Winter)	Romans	Paul
59	Luke	Luke
61 to 63	Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, Hebrews	Paul
63	Acts	Luke
63	1Timothy, Titus	Paul
63 to 64	1John, 2John, 3John	John
64 to 65	1Peter	Peter
65 to 66	2Peter	Peter
66 to 67	Jude	Jude
67	2Timothy	Paul
95	Revelation	John

### But Paul hates women...

Well – when you first read some of what Paul writes women seem to get a pretty raw deal – not leaders, quiet in church (!), heads covered, submitted to husband. BUT, when you read the rest of what Paul writes you have a context to understand what Paul is teaching. He talks about us ALL being equal, the leadership debate is believed to have been about one church in particular with other problems, same with women being quiet in church and not gossiping all the time... nuff said! As for the submission to the husband the very next verse says “Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave up his life for her” then “Submit to one another...” Paul was not a chauvinist – compared to the other writers at that time he was very nearly a feminist!

### Is this what they wrote?

When it comes to the great philosophers such as Plato, Socrates, or historians such as Tacitus or Livy, or even names like Caesar, the earliest copies we have of those documents are from nearly 1,000 years after they were first written and we have 5-10 copies to work from. With the New Testament we have copies of documents dating from just 30 years after they were first written and there are over 5,000 copies to work from. No historian I’ve met has doubts that “Caesar’s Gallic War” is genuine. Why do people doubt the authenticity of the New Testament?



## A YEAR WITH THE BIBLE

Part  
**9**

## PAUL AND LETTERS

The stories of the Acts of the Apostles bring to an end the “narrative” books of the Bible. The remainder of the New Testament (with one notable exception) is a series of letters written by the apostles to various Christian churches. The most prolific writer is St Paul, but others are included, Peter, James and John and a few more. It is important to understand the historical context in order to see how important these letters are.

Firstly, travel is not easy. Paul’s missionary journeys were incredible adventures – helped by the “Pax Romana” – the peace established by the Roman Empire, but even so, mammoth journeys. These days a senior international church leader can hop on a plane and visit their churches – Paul couldn’t – so he wrote letters. One of the main factors in this is that he spent a lot of time in prison or under house arrest. If this hadn’t happened Paul would have made many more journeys, I am sure – but then we wouldn’t have this rich resource of theology and encouragement.

Secondly, there is no printing press, paper as we know it does not exist, Paul cannot Blog or Tweet or post on Facebook. The effort of writing these letters is huge, especially when the evidence from four of the letters is that Paul had to have someone to write for him – why we are not sure, but it may have something to do with the “thorn in the flesh” which he talks about in 2 Corinthians

The letters deal with a wide range of themes – some talk about Jesus; who he was, what he did, how we respond to him. Some talk about “the church”; how we should behave, how we should live our lives, how we organise our worship. Some are more personal, directed to one or two individuals; some are general – Ephesians is often assumed to have been a round-robin letter sent to several churches in the region.

What we have from Romans to 3 John is an absolute gold mine of truth and encouragement. Without the letters of the New Testament (often called Epistles) our understanding of Christian faith and practice would be greatly diminished. What we have is a first hand account of the thinking that shaped the early church – of the ideas and understanding of who Jesus was, and what the Holy Spirit was doing. These are key documents – inspired by God, yet written by men of faith trying to grasp “how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love, that surpasses knowledge” (Ephesians 3: 18-19)

The Good News shows how God makes people right with himself—that it begins and ends with faith. As the Scripture says, "But those who are right with God will live by faith." 1:17

To:  
**Rome**  
Key Word:  
**Grace**

One thing I always do. Forgetting the past and straining toward what is ahead, I keep trying to reach the goal and get the prize for which God called me through Christ to the life above. 3:13-14

To:  
**Philippi**  
Key Word:  
**Run**

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for showing people what is wrong in their lives, for correcting faults, and for teaching how to live right. 3:16

To:  
**Timothy 2**  
Key Word:  
**Finishing**

You are a chosen people, royal priests, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession. You were chosen to tell about the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 2:9

From:  
**Peter**  
Key Word:  
**Suffering**

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. 13:13

To:  
**Corinth**  
Key Word:  
**Love**

You have begun to live the new life, in which you are being made new and are becoming like the One who made you. This new life brings you the true knowledge of God. 3:10

To:  
**Colossae**  
Key Word:  
**Focus**

We should live like that while we wait for our great hope and the coming of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. 2:13

To:  
**Titus**  
Key Word:  
**Hope**

Jesus has the power of God, by which he has given us everything we need to live and to serve God. We have these things because we know him. Jesus called us by his glory and goodness. 1:3

From:  
**Peter 2**  
Key Word:  
**Do it!**

So we do not give up. Our physical body is becoming older and weaker, but our spirit inside us is made new every day 4:16

To:  
**Corinth 2**  
Key Word:  
**Persevere**

Jesus died for us so that we can live together with him, whether we are alive or dead when he comes. So encourage each other and give each other strength, just as you are doing now. 5: 10-11

To:  
**Thessalonica**  
Key Word:  
**Return**

Onesimus is no longer a slave, but better than a slave, a loved brother. I love him very much, but you will love him even more, both as a person and as a believer in the Lord. 16

To:  
**Philemon**  
Key Word:  
**Equality**

But if we live in the light, as God is in the light, we can share fellowship with each other. Then the blood of Jesus, God's Son, cleanses us from every sin. 1:7

From:  
**John**  
Key Word:  
**Light**

When we are in Christ Jesus, it is not important if we are circumcised or not. The important thing is faith—the kind of faith that works through love. 5:6

To:  
**Galatia**  
Key Word:  
**Fruit**

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father encourage you and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say. God loved us, and through his grace he gave us a good hope and encouragement that continues forever. 2:16

To:  
**Thessalonica 2**  
Key Word:  
**Justice**

Faith means being sure of the things we hope for and knowing that something is real even if we do not see it. 11:1

To:  
**Hebrews**  
Key Word:  
**Faith**

And love means living the way God commanded us to live. Live a life of love. 2:6 Nothing gives me greater joy than to hear that my children are following the way of truth. 3:4

From:  
**John 2&3**  
Key Word:  
**Truth**

There is one body and one Spirit, and God called you to have one hope. There is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. There is one God and Father of everything. 4:4-6a

To:  
**Ephesus**  
Key Word:  
**Unity**

Be careful in your life and in your teaching. If you continue to live and teach rightly, you will save both yourself and those who listen to you. 4:16

To:  
**Timothy**  
Key Word:  
**Living**

My brothers and sisters, if people say they have faith, but do nothing, their faith is worth nothing. Can faith like that save them? 2:14

From:  
**James**  
Key Word:  
**Actions**

Dear friends, use your most holy faith to build yourselves up, praying in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the Lord Jesus Christ with his mercy to give you life forever. 20-21

From:  
**Jude**  
Key Word:  
**Godliness**