

Matthew

Matthew records Jesus' preparation and proclamation as God's Messiah (Anointed One) to the people of Israel. Opposition to His ministry grows as religious leaders deny His claims, prompting Jesus to turn increasingly to His disciples. Through miracles, parables, and sermons, He prepares them for the climax of His earthly ministry—His sacrificial death, burial, and resurrection. Prior to His ascension, Jesus commissions His disciples to continue the work He has begun.

FOCUS	PREPARATION								PROCLAMATION							
DIVISIONS	Arrival of the Messiah		Teaching by the Messiah		Healing by the Messiah		Reactions to the Messiah		Sermons by the Messiah		Parables of the Messiah		Prophecies by the Messiah		Finished Work of the Messiah	
	1	4	5	7	8	11	12	15	16	19	20	23	24	25	26	28
TOPICS	Teaching All Men								Teaching 12 Men							
	Increasing Acceptance								Increasing Antagonism							
PLACE	Bethlehem/ Nazareth				Galilee				Jerusalem							
TIME	4 B.C.–A.D. 30															

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FOUR GOSPEL GLIMPSES OF Jesus Christ

	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
CHRIST PORTRAYED AS	Prophesied	Obedient Servant	Perfect Man	Son of God
ORIGINAL AUDIENCE	Jews	Romans	Greeks	All People
KEY WORD(S)	"fulfilled"	"immediately"	"Son of God"	"believe"
KEY VERSE	21:5	10:45	19:10	20:31
OUTSTANDING FEATURE	Sermons	Miracles	Parables	Teachings
ARRANGEMENT OF MATERIAL	Topical	Chronological	Chronological	Topical
TO NE	Prophetic	Practical	Historical	Spiritual
PERCENT SPOKEN BY CHRIST	60%	42%	50%	50%
QUOTATIONS FROM OLD TESTAMENT	53	36	25	20
ALLUSIONS TO OLD TESTAMENT	76	27	42	105
UNIQUE MATERIAL	42%	7%	59%	93%
BROAD DIVISION	Synoptic Gospels (Humanity of Christ)			Supplemental Gospel (Deity of Christ)

Mark

Mark's Gospel captures the twofold purpose of Christ's coming to earth: "to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (10:45).

Mark describes Jesus as the Perfect Servant, emphasizing more His actions, and giving a briefer treatment to His teachings. Mark is a book of action, not words, directed to a Roman audience. Jewish customs are explained as the story moves briskly to the completion of Jesus' earthly life and ministry.

FOCUS	SERVANT			SACRIFICE		
DIVISIONS	Servants of the Servant	Service of the Servant	Sayings of the Servant	Sermons of the Servant	Suffering of the Servant	
	1	3 4	7 8	10 11	13 14	16
TOPICS	The Son of Man on the Move			Spiritual Adultery		
	A Living Example			A Dying Savior		
PLACE	Galilee and Perea			Judea and Jerusalem		
TIME	26–30 A.D.					

Luke

Luke did not write his gospel from firsthand acquaintance with Jesus Christ. Rather, he carefully researched Jesus' life and ministry from eyewitness accounts and historical records to confirm and strengthen the faith of his readers. Luke emphasizes Jesus' ability to meet every need of the rich and poor; young and old; men, women, and children. Even after His resurrection, the glorified humanity of Jesus is stressed, showing that He truly came "to seek and to save what was lost" (19:10).

FOCUS	APPEARANCE		ACTIVITY				AFFLICTION	
DIVISIONS	Childhood of the Son of Man	Companions of the Son of Man	Confrontations with the Son of Man	Conduct of the Son of Man	Comparisons by the Son of Man	Counsel from the Son of Man	Conflict Over the Son of Man	Crucifixion of the Son of Man
	1 2 3	6 7 9	10 12	13 15	16 18	19 21	22 24	
TOPICS	Miracles				Parables		Plots	
	Seeking and Teaching						Suffering and Saving	
PLACE	Jerusalem		Galilee		Samaria & Perea		Jerusalem	
TIME	6 B.C.–A.D. 30							

John

Even though the Book of John covers the same basic outline of Jesus' life as the other three Gospels, it displays marked differences in content and viewpoint. John highlights many encounters with the Son of God that are found nowhere else: the miracle of Cana, the visit by Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman at the well, the lame man at the pool at Bethesda, the man born blind, the beloved Lazarus. Why this selectivity? "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ" (20:31).

FOCUS	MINISTRY TO MANY			MINISTRY TO FEW		
DIVISIONS	Manifestation of the Son of God	Ministry to Individuals by God's Son	Ministry to the Multitudes by God's Son	Mounting Anger Toward God's Son	Ministry to the Disciples by God's Son	The Resurrected Son of God
	1	2 3	5 6	8 9	12 13	17 18 21
TOPICS	Signs				Sermons	Sacrifice
	Public Ministry				Private Ministry	Paschal Ministry
PLACE	Galilee & Judea			Jerusalem		
TIME	About 3 1/2 Years			Only a Few Days		

Acts

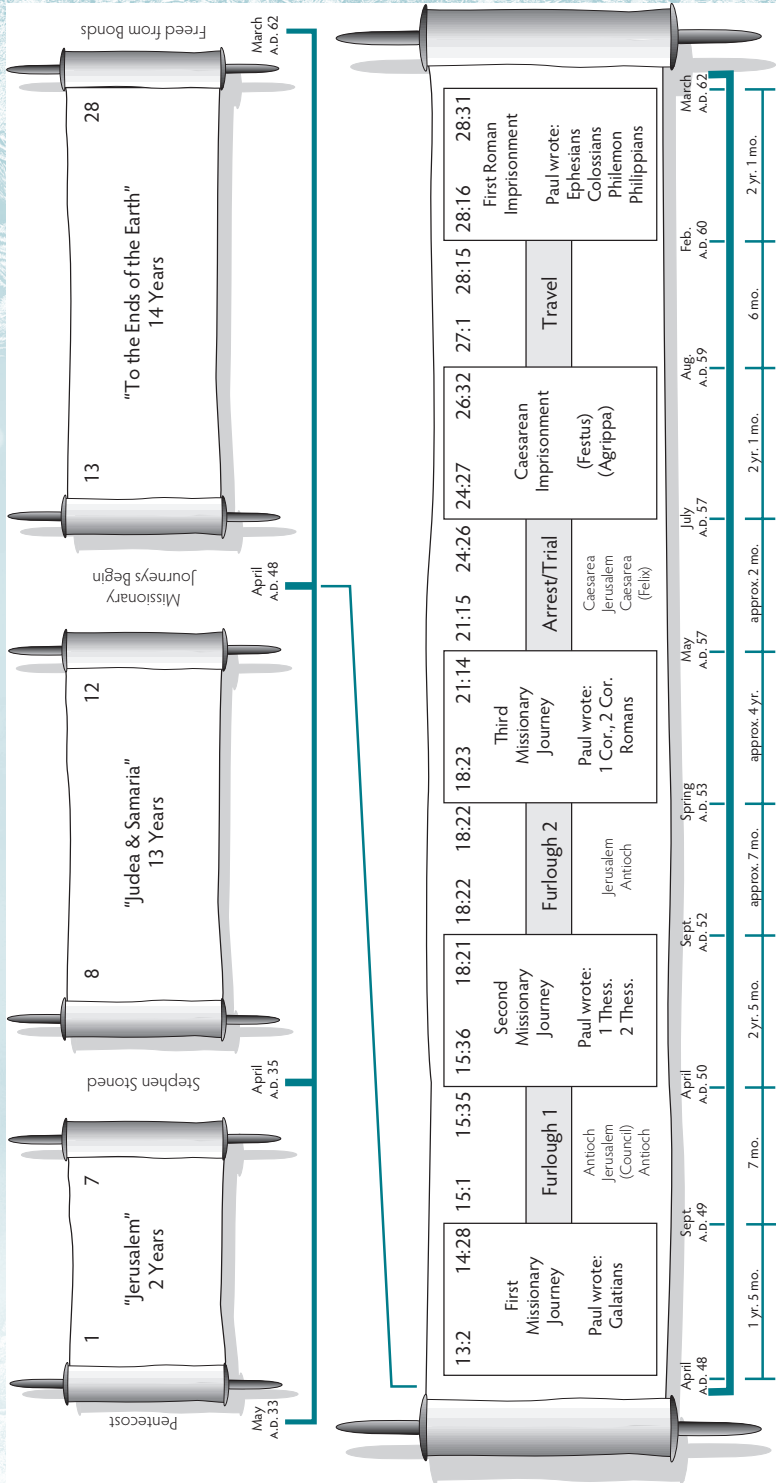
Beginning with a frightened band of disciples in an upper room, Acts traces the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem following the ascension of Christ and the subsequent spread and growth of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire. Written by Luke, Acts records the fulfillment of Jesus' Great Commission as Spirit-transformed disciples carry the gospel to "Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (1:8).

FOCUS	FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH				FOUNDER OF CHURCHES							
DIVISIONS	Spirit of the Church	Growth of the Church	Persecution of the Church	Expansion of the Church	Paul's First Journey	Paul's Second Journey	Paul's Third Journey	Paul's Arrest	Paul's Trials	Paul's Imprisonment		
	1 4 5 7	8 9 10 12	13 15	16 18	19 20	21 23	24 26	27 28				
TOPICS	Peter	Philip	Paul									
	To the Jews	To the Samaritans	To the Gentiles									
PLACE	Jerusalem	Judea & Samaria	Ends of the Earth									
TIME	2 Years (A.D. 33–35)	13 Years (A.D. 35–48)	14 Years (A.D. 48–62)									

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A Chronology of the Book of Acts



Romans

Although Paul had not founded the church in Rome, he had heard of the exemplary faith and service of the Roman believers and intended to visit them. Thus, the letter to the Romans serves to introduce both Paul and his message. Writing perhaps from Corinth on his third missionary journey, Paul sets forth some of the central doctrines of the Christian faith: justification by faith, life in the Spirit, unity in the body, and God's redemptive program for Jew and Gentile alike.

FOCUS	DOCTRINAL				PRACTICAL
DIVISIONS	Problem of Unrighteousness	Provision of Righteousness	Pursuit of Righteousness	Program of Righteousness	Practice of Righteousness
	1	3 4	5 6	8 9	11 12 16
TOPICS	Sin	Salvation	Sanctification	Selection	Service
	Understanding the Gospel				Living the Gospel
PLACE	Probably in Corinth				
TIME	About A.D. 57				

1 Corinthians

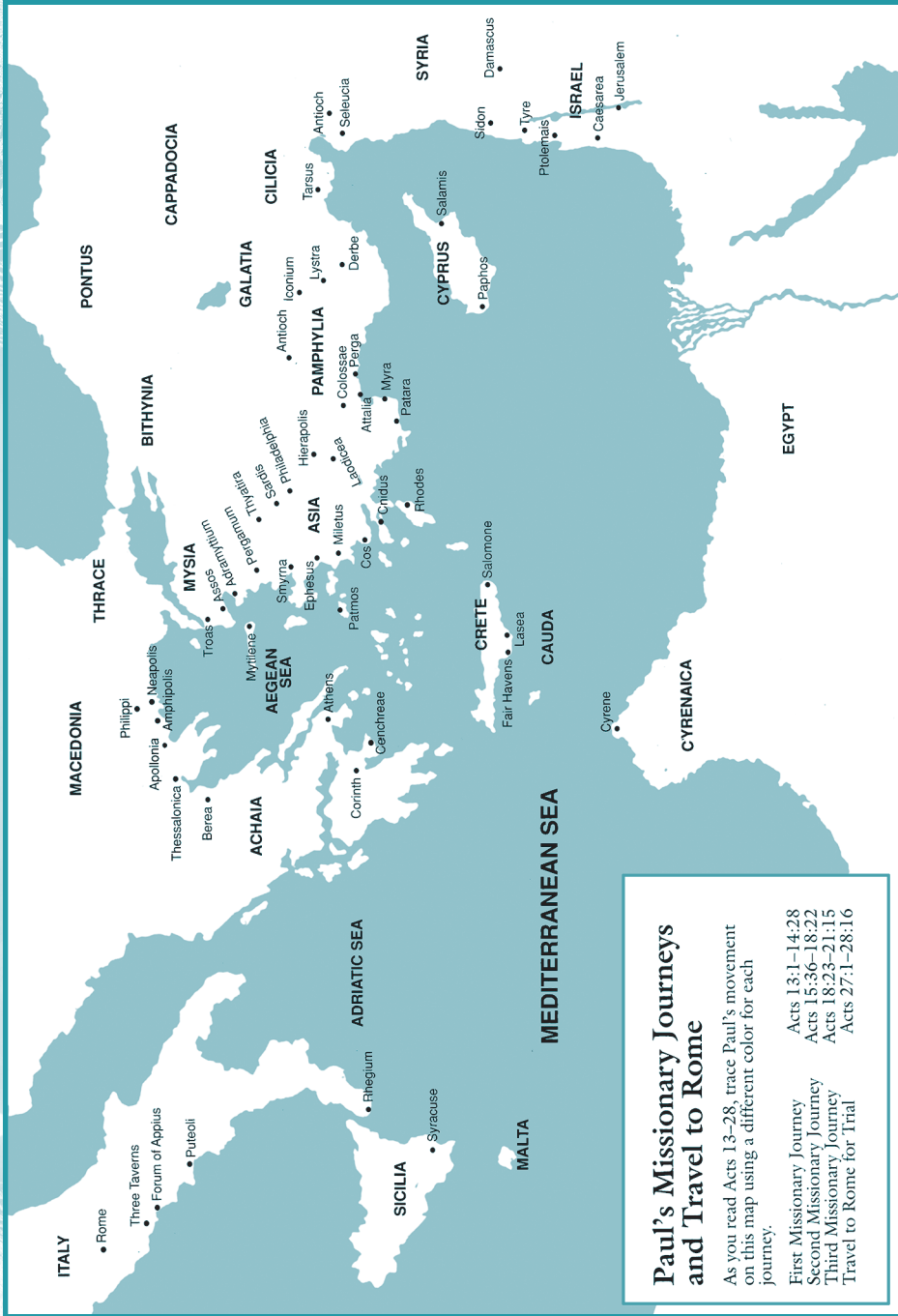
Famous as a commercial center, Corinth was also infamous for immorality and paganism. But despite great obstacles, Paul planted a Christian church there on his missionary journey (Acts 18:1-17). Though gifted and growing, the church was plagued with problems: moral and ethical, doctrinal and practical, corporate and private. Paul wrote this letter to deal with some of the disorders and to answer questions that the Christians at Corinth had raised.

FOCUS	DISRUPTIONS		DEBATES		DOUBTS	
DIVISIONS	Problems with Divisions	Problems with Immorality	Problems with Marriage	Problems with Food and Idols	Problems with Worship and Gifts	Problems with Doctrinal Error
	1	4 5 6	7	8 10	11 14 15	16
TOPICS	In the Body	In the Home		In the Church		
	Responding to Reports			Answering Questions		
PLACE	Written in Ephesus					
TIME	About A.D. 56					

2 Corinthians

Paul's problems with the believers in Corinth did not end with his first letter to that troubled congregation. The ministry and character of Paul himself were under attack. So Paul sends Titus, who returns with heartening news of repentance. Paul then writes this warm autobiographical letter, reminding the church of his commitment, his conduct, and his credentials. Paul's walk has been consistent with his talk—truly a model for Christians in any generation.

FOCUS	DISRUPTIONS	DEBATES	DOUBTS
DIVISIONS	The Gospel's Minister and Ministry	The Gospel's Motivation and Model	The Gospel Minister's Might and Message
	1 5 7	9 10	13
TOPICS	Principles	Practices	Personal Details
	Paul's Commitment	Paul's Conduct	Paul's Credentials
PLACE	Written in Macedonia		
TIME	About A.D. 56		



Paul's Missionary Journeys and Travel to Rome

As you read Acts 13-28, trace Paul's movement on this map using a different color for each journey.

First Missionary Journey Acts 13:1-14:28
 Second Missionary Journey Acts 15:36-18:22
 Third Missionary Journey Acts 18:23-21:15
 Travel to Rome for Trial Acts 27:1-28:16

1 & 2 Thessalonians

Prosperous, prominent, and thoroughly pagan, the seaport city of Thessalonica first heard the gospel on Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 17:1-10). Although Paul only stayed three Sabbaths, he left behind a growing nucleus of believers. Later he sent Timothy back to the church and, in response to Timothy's report, penned these two letters. They express Paul's love for the Thessalonians but also include much-needed instruction about persecution, purity, and diligence.

FOCUS	1 THESSALONIANS					2 THESSALONIANS		
DIVISIONS	A Saving Hope	A Purifying Hope		A Comforting Hope		Strengthening the Stressed	Confirming the Confused	Disciplining the Disorderly
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
TOPICS	Inspiration					Instruction		
	Day of the Lord					Day of Christ		
PLACE	Written in Corinth							
TIME	About A.D. 51							

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Pastoral Epistles

These epistles, addressed to Timothy and Titus, are unique among the writings of Paul in that they were written to individuals rather than to congregations. Timothy and Titus were two young pastors that Paul was training. Paul writes his letters to advise them in matters of pastoral conduct and church administration. To succeed in God's work, it is imperative that they know the proper conduct for a Christian minister and the characteristics of sound doctrine.

FOCUS	1 TIMOTHY			2 TIMOTHY				TITUS			
DIVISIONS	Public Worship		Prophetic Warnings	Protect the Word		Proclaim the Word		Christian Leadership		Christian Fellowship	
	1	3 4		6	1	2 3	4	1	2	3	
TOPICS	Faithful Leaders			Faithful Service				Faultless Ministry			
	"Be on Guard!"			"Be Diligent!"				"Be Careful!"			
PLACE	Macedonia			Rome				Corinth			
TIME	About A.D. 62–63			About A.D. 67				About A.D. 63			

Hebrews

The anonymous writer of Hebrews sent this letter to professing Jewish Christians suffering persecution for their faith in Christ. Many of them were considering renouncing their profession to return to the safety of Judaism (10:38-39). The writer exhorts them to hold fast to their faith and press on to spiritual maturity. The Christian faith is the true worship and service of the living God. Jesus Christ of the new covenant is superior in every way to the Mosaic system.

FOCUS	"JESUS, THE AUTHOR AND PERFECTER OF OUR FAITH" (12:2).				
DIVISIONS	Christ, Superior to the Angels	Christ, Superior to Moses and Joshua	Christ, Superior to Aaron's Priesthood	Christ, Superior to the Mosaic Law	Christ, Supreme Example of Faith
	1 2 3	4 5	7 8	10 11	13
TOPICS	Revelation	Leader	Priest	Sacrifice	Example
	A Better Way				A Living Way
PLACE	Written to Scattered Jewish Christians				
TIME	About A.D. 64–68				

Peter's Epistles

The first-century congregations in Asia Minor constantly faced two threats—persecution and false teaching. In his first letter, Peter comforts his readers and exhorts them to be hopeful in the midst of persecution. He holds up Christ's suffering and imminent return as incentives for Christians living in troubled times. In his second letter, Peter confronts the problem of false teaching, emphasizing that the knowledge of God's truth is the foundation of faith and the antidote for heresy.

FOCUS	1 PETER					2 PETER		
DIVISIONS	Salvation and Sanctification	Submission and Suffering		Steadfastness and Service		Growing in Grace	Growing in Knowledge	Growing in Expectation
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3
TOPICS	Reassurance					Remembrance		
	Suffering from Without (Persecution)					Suffering from Within (False Teachers)		
PLACE	Rome							
TIME	About A.D. 63					About A.D. 64–66		

John's Epistles

It was probably during the final years of his life that John wrote these three short letters. The first is a message of warning to believers facing attacks of false teaching. John writes to encourage them to abide in the faith and to live lives consistent with their Christian calling. The epistles of 2 and 3 John are short, personal "postcards" directed to individuals. Second John is a warning against showing hospitality to false teachers. Third John commands hospitality among believers.

FOCUS	1 JOHN			2 JOHN			3 JOHN					
DIVISIONS	Living in the Light		Living in Love	Living in Truth		Living with Enemies	A Good Word for Gaius		A Hard Word for Diotrephes			
	1	2		3	4		5	1	6	7	13	1
TOPICS	Walking in Light			Walking in Truth			Working with Others					
	Faith			Heresy			Hospitality					
PLACE	Written in Ephesus											
TIME	About A.D. 90											

Revelation

John, while exiled on the island of Patmos (1:9), receives the visions contained in the Book of Revelation. As the first verse states, Jesus Christ is revealing to John and asking him to write “what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later” (1:19). Through a dramatic series of pictures, signs, and symbols, John depicts cataclysmic judgment upon the earth, the final conquest of satanic forces, and the beginning of a new heaven and new earth.

FOCUS	HEAVEN	EARTH						NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH
DIVISIONS	Letters to Seven Churches	Opening the Seven Seals	Blowing the Seven Trumpets	Describing the Seven Signs	Pouring Out the Seven Bowls	Destroying God's Enemies	Making All Things New	
	1 3	4 6 7	9 10 13	14 16	17 19	20	22	
TOPICS	Coming King	Coming Calamity					Coming Kingdom	
	Judge	Judgment					Joy	
PLACE	Aegean Island of Patmos							
TIME	About A.D. 95–96							