

Lesson 2 - From Pentecost to Patmos - Part 1 – The Apostolic Church

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I. Church History according to the Book of Acts (covering A.D. 30–60)

A. The Church in Jerusalem (Acts 1–7)

- Between the Resurrection and Pentecost (Acts 1)

Simon Kistemaker: The resurrection, appearances, and ascension of Jesus presumably took place in the spring of A.D.30. Subsequently, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost occurred ten days after Jesus' ascension. (*Acts*, 14)

- Pentecost; apostles receive the Spirit (Acts 2)
- Post-Pentecost preaching, persecution and revival (Acts 3–4)
- Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1–11)
- Apostles on trial again (Acts 5:12–42)
- Deacons chosen; Stephen arrested (Acts 6)
- Stephen preaches and is martyred (Acts 7)
- (All of these events likely take place within the first two years of the church's existence.)

B. The Church Expands to Samaria (Acts 8)

- Saul persecutes the Church (vv. 1–3)
- Philip takes the Gospel to Samaritans who receive the Spirit (vv. 4–25)
- Philip takes the Gospel to an Ethiopian eunuch (vv. 26–40)

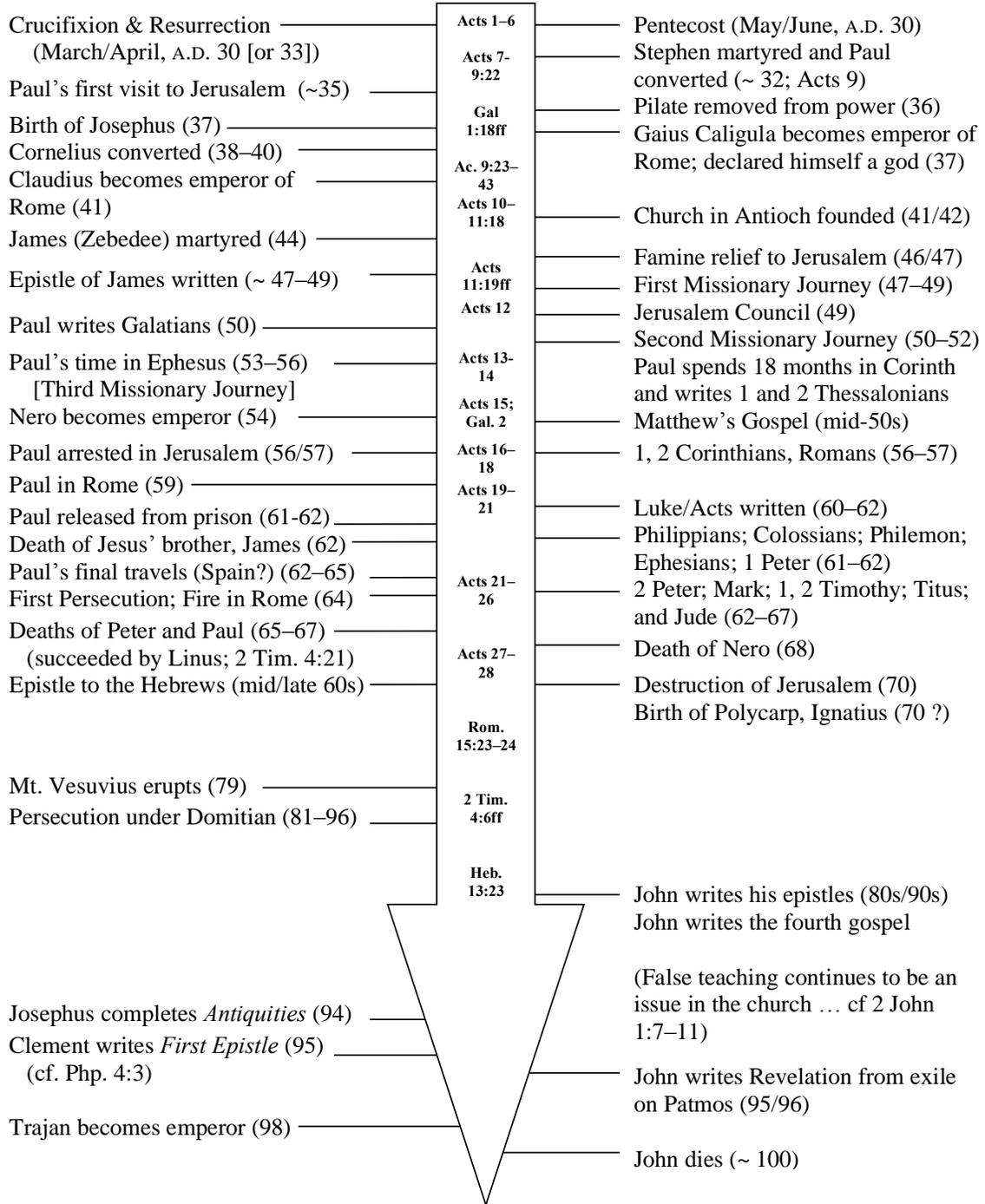
C. The Church Expands to the Gentiles and the Ends of the Earth (Acts 9–28)

- Saul is converted (Acts 9)
 - According to Galatians 2:1, Paul went up (from Syrian Antioch) to the Jerusalem Council 14 years after his first visit to Jerusalem. If the Jerusalem Council took place in A.D. 49 (as is commonly agreed), then Paul's first trip to Jerusalem took place around A.D. 35.
 - After his first (secret) trip to Jerusalem (Gal. 1:19–20), Paul ministered in Damascus and other parts of Syria (cf. Gal. 1:21). After "many days" (Acts 9:23), he escaped from Damascus, probably in A.D. 37.

Simon Kistemaker: Paul's escape over the city walls of Damascus [gives us] tentative chronological evidence ([*Acts*] 9:23-25; II Cor. 11:32-33). Aretas IV, King of the Nabataeans, ruled Damascus for a few years from A.D.37-40 ... This fact seems to suggest that Damascus was ruled by the Nabataeans beginning in A.D.37, consequently, we surmise that Paul escaped from Damascus in that year. (*Acts*, 14)

From Pentecost to Patmos

The Apostolic Age – First Century A.D. (some of these dates are estimates)



Chronological Order of the NT Books
(Adapted from John MacArthur and Robert Thomas)

NT Book	Author	Place Written	Date and Circumstances
James	James (Jesus' half-brother)	Jerusalem	45-48 — following the martyrdom of James the brother of John, but likely before Jerusalem Council
Galatians	Paul	Unknown	49-50 — written shortly after the Jerusalem Council to the churches of Southern Galatia (some scholars take a later date in the mid-50s with the recipients in Northern Galatia)
1 Thessalonians	Paul	Corinth	51 — written during Paul's 2 nd missionary journey, after he planted the church in Thessalonica
2 Thessalonians	Paul	Corinth	51-52 — written several months after his first letter to the Thessalonians
1 Corinthians	Paul	Ephesus	55 — written during Paul's 3 rd missionary journey to the church at Corinth (a response to their questions)
2 Corinthians	Paul	Philippi	55-56 — written several months after 1 Cor. and also after the "severe letter" (2:4)
Romans	Paul	Corinth	56 — written during Paul's 3 rd missionary journey to Christians living in Rome
Matthew	Matthew	Jerusalem (?)	Mid to late 50s — written as an apologetic to the Jews regarding Jesus as the King
Luke	Luke	Rome	60 — written to Theophilus shortly before the book of Acts was written
Ephesians	Paul	Rome	61 — written during Paul's first Roman imprisonment; possibly a circulating letter
Colossians	Paul	Rome	61 — written during Paul's first Roman imprisonment; to those in Colosse
Philemon	Paul	Rome	61 — personal letter written to Philemon about runaway slave Onesimus
Acts	Luke	Rome	61 — follow-up to his Gospel; ends abruptly with Paul's first imprisonment (so likely written then)
Philippians	Paul	Rome	62 — written toward the end of Paul's first Roman imprisonment
1 Timothy	Paul	Macedonia	65 — written during Paul's 4 th missionary journey (cf. 1 Tim. 1:3)
Titus	Paul	While moving	65 — written during Paul's 4 th missionary journey (Titus 1:5)
1 Peter	Peter	Rome (Babylon)	65 — written as Nero's persecution was beginning to break out against Christians
2 Peter	Peter	Rome	67 — written to the same readers as 1 Peter, to warn against false teachers within the church
2 Timothy	Paul	Rome	67-68 — written shortly before Paul's death, during his second imprisonment
Jude	Jude (Jesus' half-brother)	Jerusalem	67-69 — most likely written before destruction of Jerusalem (since not mentioned in the book)
Hebrews	Unknown	Rome	67-69 — written toward the end of Nero's persecution, possibly by Paul
Mark	Mark	Rome	68-69 — written by Mark who recorded the memoirs of Peter regarding the life of Christ
John	John	Ephesus	Late 80s — written as a supplement to the Synoptic Gospels by the Apostle John, brother of James
1-3 John	John	Ephesus	90-95 — written from Ephesus, where John had relocated (from Jerusalem) two decades earlier
Revelation	John	Patmos	95-96 — written toward the end of Domitian's reign from John's exile on the Isle of Patmos

* Adapted from *The MacArthur Study Bible* and from Robert Thomas's New Testament Introduction class notes

- In Galatians 1:18, Paul records that prior to his first (secret) journey to Jerusalem (in A.D. 35), he spent 3 years in Arabia being disciplined by the Risen Christ. This puts Paul's conversion back to around A.D. 32, just a couple years after Pentecost.
- Thus, Stephen's martyrdom and the events of Acts 1–8 must have taken place in the first couple years of church history.
- After Paul escaped from Damascus, he spent some more time in Jerusalem (in A.D. 37–38). This time his appearance was public, not secret (Acts 9:26–29). But the Jews, again, were trying to kill him. So the apostles sent Paul to Caesarea and then to Tarsus.
- Cornelius, a Gentile, is converted and receives the Spirit (Acts 10–11:18)
 - From Caesarea, a Gentile named Cornelius, contacted Peter. (The timing of these events is not explicit in Luke's text, but it may be that Paul's time in Caesarea had something to do with this.)
 - If Luke's record is chronological, the account of Cornelius would have probably taken place in the late 30s. (The account comes between Paul's visit to Jerusalem in Acts 9 [around A.D. 37] and the martyrdom of James in Acts 12 [around A.D. 44].)
- Church at Syrian Antioch is Established (Acts 11:19–26)
 - Luke backs up (chronologically) to give the history of the church at Antioch
 - Christians from Jerusalem were scattered after persecution broke out (led by Paul) following the martyrdom of Stephen (around A.D. 32) (11:18)
 - They went and planted churches (which were primarily Jewish Christian) in places like Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch (11:19)
 - But some of the Christians from Cyprus and also Cyrene (cf. Mark 15:21 w/ Romans 16:13; Acts 2:10) came to Syrian Antioch and were preaching Christ to the Gentiles (11:20) (presumably after the conversion of Cornelius, so probably late 30s and early 40s)
 - A large number of Gentiles were converted (early 40s) (11:21)
 - The news of this got back to Jerusalem, so they sent Barnabas to check things out (11:22) (probably around 42–43)
 - Barnabas was greatly encouraged by the ministry there, and many more Gentiles came to Christ (11:23–24) (mid 40s)
 - So Barnabas went to find Saul (whom he had befriended when Saul visited Jerusalem around A.D. 37) (11:25). Saul was still in Tarsus.
 - Barnabas returns to Antioch with Saul, and the two have a profitable ministry there for an entire year (11:26) (around A.D. 45).

Henry T. Sell: Antioch was the third city in population (500,000) and influence in the Roman Empire, ranking next to Rome and Alexandria. Seleucus Nicator, Alexander's greatest general, built the city in 300 B.C., and gave to it his father's name, Antiochus. It was the capital of Syria, at the time Christianity entered its gates. It was situated about 300 miles north of Jerusalem, on the Orontes River, with Selucia as its seaport at the mouth of the river and sixteen miles distant. It traded with all parts of the world; caravans coming to it even from India and Persia; its ships sailed to every seaport on the Mediterranean Sea. This trade brought great gain to the city. The population was of all kinds and all nationalities, Romans, Greeks, Syrians, Jews, freemen, slaves, the ignorant and the cultured. It was a centre of art and literature. (*Studies in Early Church History*, electronic edition)

John MacArthur: Neither the salvation of the Ethiopian eunuch nor that of Cornelius and his household prepared the Jerusalem believers for the widespread Gentile conversions in Antioch. When the news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, they decided to send a representative to investigate. Accordingly, they sent Barnabas off to Antioch. Barnabas first appeared in chapter 4, when he sold some property to meet the needs of other believers. Through his influence, Paul was finally accepted by the Jerusalem church (Acts 9:27). He was a leading teacher in the church and a loving, gentle, generous man, in keeping with his name, which means "son of encouragement."

The choice of a representative was crucial. Sending a rigidly legalistic individual could have spelled disaster. Barnabas, however, had the qualifications needed for the job. Verse 24 further describes him as a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. He possessed the necessary spiritual qualities for one who was to discern what was happening.

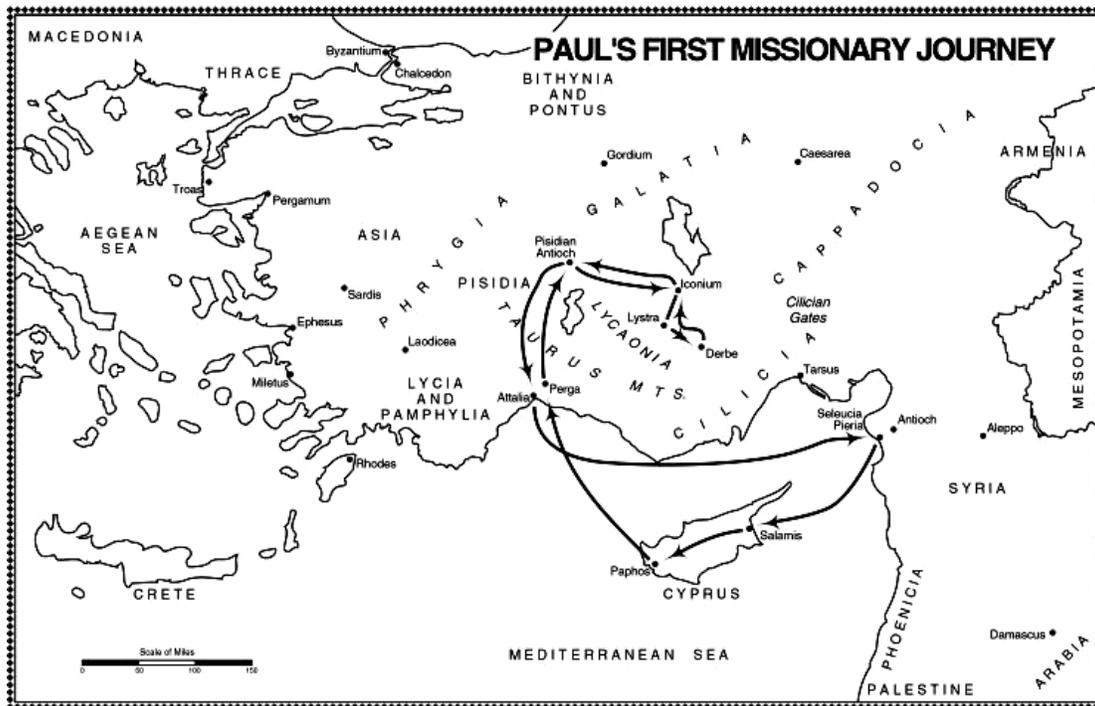
Barnabas was also the right man to send because, like some of the founders of the Antioch church, he was a Cypriot Jew (4:36–37). He would not be perceived as an outsider but as one of them. (*Acts*, MTNC, 1:312)

- Barnabas and Saul are sent out from Antioch to bring famine relief to those in Judea (Acts 11:27–30) (around A.D. 46)

Simon Kistemaker: The information we glean from writers in the first few centuries of the Christian era seems to suggest that the famine took place in the second half of the fifth decade, A.D. 46. In that year, Queen Mother Helena from Adiabene (a state east of the Tigris River in ancient Assyria) and her son, King Izates, both converts to Judaism, came to Jerusalem. When they became aware of a severe famine in that city, they brought grain from Egypt and figs from Cyprus for the famine-stricken people of Jerusalem. Likewise, the Christians in Antioch extended their loving concern to fellow believers of the mother church in Jerusalem by commissioning Barnabas and Saul (Paul) to bring them relief (11:29–30). (*Acts*, 15)

- Brief recap to discuss the martyrdom of James and the imprisonment of Peter; the death of Herod (Acts 12)
- Paul's First Missionary Journey (Acts 13–14) (A.D. 47–49). (*Note: Galatians is written to the churches of Paul's first missionary journey.*)
 1. Cyprus (13:4–12)

2. Psidian Antioch (13:13–52)
3. Iconium (14:1–7)
4. Lystra (14:8–18)
5. Return to Syrian Antioch (14:19–28)



(Map from John B. Polhill, *Acts NAC* [Nashville: Broadman, 1992])

- The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) (A.D. 49/50)
 - The Conflict (vv. 1–5) – Is circumcision (and by extension other aspects of law-keeping) necessary for salvation?

John Polhill: The debate in Jerusalem revolved around the issue of *how* Gentiles were to be accepted into the Christian fellowship. . . . For all intents and purposes, a Gentile proselyte to Judaism *became a Jew*, not only in religious conviction but in life-style as well. That was the question the conservative group of Jewish Christians raised: Should not Gentiles be required to become Jews in order to share in the Christian community? It was a natural question. The first Christians were all Jews. Jesus was a Jew and the Jewish Messiah. God had only one covenant people—the Jews. Christianity was a messianic movement within Judaism. Jews had always demanded of all Gentile converts the requirements of circumcision and rituals of the Torah. . . . These were the two issues that were faced and resolved in Jerusalem: (1) whether Gentile converts should submit to Jewish proselyte requirements, especially to circumcision and (2) how fellowship could be maintained between Jewish and Gentile Christians. (*Acts, NAC*, 321)

- The Witnesses:
 - Peter (vv. 7–11)
 - Paul and Barnabas (v. 12)
 - James, the half-brother of Jesus (vv. 13–21)

- The Decision (vv. 22–29)
 - a. Don't listen to the Judaizers
 - b. BUT be sensitive to the consciences of Jewish believers
- Paul's Second Missionary Journey (Acts 15:36–18:22) (A.D. 50–52)
 1. Division over John Mark; Timothy joins Paul and Silas; travel to Macedonia (15:36–16:10)
 2. Philippi (16:11–40)
 3. Thessalonica (17:1–9)
 4. Berea (17:10–15)
 5. Athens (17:16–34)
 6. Corinth (18:1–17)
 7. Return to Syrian Antioch (18:18–22)



(Map from John B. Polhill, *Acts NAC* [Nashville: Broadman, 1992])

- Paul's Third Missionary Journey (Acts 18:23–21:16) (A.D. 53–56)
 1. Apollos mentioned (Acts 18:24–28)
 2. Paul at Ephesus (Acts 19)
 3. Various places in Macedonia (20:1–6)
 4. Troas (20:7–12)
 5. Miletus; Paul meets with Ephesian elders (20:13–38)
 6. Journey to Jerusalem (21:1–16)



(Map from John B. Polhill, *Acts NAC* [Nashville: Broadman, 1992])

- Paul's Jerusalem and Caesarean Trials (Acts 21:17–26:32) (A.D. 56/57–58)
 1. Paul in Jerusalem (21:17–23:22)
 2. Paul before Felix (23:23–24:27)
 - Two years according to Acts 24:27
 3. Paul before Festus (25:1–12)

John MacArthur: Felix's brutal term in office had culminated in the ruthless subduing of a riot in Caesarea. When the outraged Jews sent a delegation to Rome to protest Felix's actions, Emperor Nero recalled the governor to Rome in disgrace. Festus soon arrived in Judea to replace him. Unlike Felix, who was a former slave, Festus was a member of the Roman nobility. Little is known of his brief term as governor (he died about two years after taking office). Since the first-century Jewish historian Josephus described him as better than his predecessor (Felix) and his successor (Albinus), he appears to have been an able leader. (*Acts*, MTNC, 2:326)

4. Paul before Agrippa (25:13–32)

John MacArthur: The last in the line of Herods who figured prominently in New Testament history, Agrippa II ruled the northern part of Palestine during the Roman occupation. His father, Agrippa I, was the Herod who killed James, arrested Peter, and met an untimely end, being eaten by worms after failing to give God glory (Acts 12:1–23). His great-uncle, Herod Antipas, figured prominently in the gospels (Luke 3:1) as the ruler who executed John the Baptist (Mark 6:14–29), sought Jesus’ life (Luke 13:31–33), and later tried Him (Luke 23:7–12). His great-grandfather was Herod the Great, who ruled at the time of Jesus’ birth (Matt. 2:1–19; Luke 1:5) and murdered the children of Bethlehem in an effort to kill the newborn King. . . . Although he did not rule Judea, Agrippa had been granted control of the temple treasury and the right to appoint the high priest. The Romans considered him an expert on Jewish affairs, as did Paul (26:3). Agrippa tried to prevent the Jewish revolt, but when it broke out in A.D. 66, he sided with the Romans and thus became a traitor to his people. (*Acts*, MNTC, 2:326)

- Paul’s journey to Rome (27:1–28:15) (A.D. 58/59)
- Paul’s first imprisonment in Rome (28:16–31) (A.D. 59/60–62)
 1. Paul describes his own imprisonment (Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; Php. 1:13, 14, 17; Col. 4:8; Philemon 1, 9, 10, 13)
 2. Tychicus ministers to Paul (Eph. 6:21–22; Col. 4:7–8; cf. Acts 20:4)
 3. Onesimus sent back to Philemon (Col. 4:9; Philemon 10)
 4. Archippus ministers to Paul (Col. 4:17; Philemon 2)
 5. Luke is with Paul (Col. 4:14; Philemon 24; cf. Acts 20:7ff)
 6. Timothy is with Paul (Php. 1:1; 2:19; Col. 1:1; Philemon 1)
 7. Those of Caesar’s household (Php. 4:22 with 1:13)
 8. Paul is confident of his future release (Php. 1:19–20)

II. The First-Century Church History after the Book of Acts (A.D. 60–100)

A. The 60s

- Paul writes “Prison Epistles” during his first Roman imprisonment (A.D. 60–62)
- Luke completes the Book of Acts during Paul’s first Roman imprisonment (A.D. 61/62)
- James, the half-brother of Jesus, martyred in Jerusalem around A.D. 62
- Paul’s Fourth Missionary Journey (A.D. 62–66) . . . based on references in the pastorals that do not fit with the Acts account, and on Paul’s anticipation that he would be released from his first imprisonment (Php. 1:19).
 - Ephesus and Macedonia (1 Tim. 1:3)
 - Troas and Miletus (2 Tim. 4:13, 20)

- Crete (Titus 1:5)
 - Spain (Romans 15:23–24); also references from Clement of Rome [A.D. 95] and the Muratorian Fragment [A.D. 180–200])
- Paul writes “Pastoral Epistles” to Timothy (pastor at Ephesus) and Titus (church planter on Crete) (A.D. 62–66)
- Peter writes his epistles to encourage suffering believers and to warn of false teachers in the church; Jude also written around this time (A.D. 62–66)
- Great Fire in Rome (A.D. 64), begins intense persecution under Nero
- Fire started on the night of July 18 to July 19, 64, in a section of the city where there were shops selling flammable goods
 - According to the historian Tacitus (56–117), the fire burned for five days, destroying four of the fourteen Roman districts and causing severe damage to seven
 - The cause of the fire is unknown, though Suetonius and Cassius Dio suggest that Nero himself was behind it (arson). Tacitus suggests that Christians confessed to starting the fire, but such confessions could have been induced by torture. Also, accidental fires were not uncommon. Rome would again burn significantly in 69 (under Vitellius) and in 80 (under Titus)
 - Nero was probably (according to Tacitus) in Antium at the time of the fire (though popular legend claims he was fiddling while watching Rome burn, based on Nero’s love to perform with the lyre)
 - Nero rushed back to Rome after hearing news of the fire and immediately organized relief efforts. After the fire was over, Nero built a beautiful new palace in part of the city that had burned. This was partially what fueled rumors that Nero himself had started the fire.
 - Thus, to deflect the blame, Nero charged the Christians with the fire, and began persecuting them in horrendous ways.
 - According to Tacitus: “Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired” (*Annals* XV.44).

- Early Christian tradition views Nero as responsible for the deaths of both Peter and Paul. Because of his tortuous treatment of them, some early Christians thought Nero was the Antichrist.

Henry T. Sell: The numbers of the Christians in the city [of Rome] at this time must have been considerable even to attract the attention of the emperor and the multitude. Tacitus says that those who confessed (that they were Christians) were first seized and then on their evidence “a huge multitude” were convicted. It is the phrase “huge multitude” which arrests attention at once, but Tacitus is a careful historian and in spite of all attempts to minimize its force by those who declare the Christians could have been but few at this time, it undoubtedly has a large basis of fact. Paul had come to Rome three years before and had dwelt there for two years. When it is recalled what he had done in Ephesus—and in many other cities—in converting so many that the whole city was stirred about the gospel which he preached it is not strange that, though a prisoner, he made his influence felt throughout the city in converting great numbers to Christ. Then, too, Paul shows by his letter to the Romans that there were many Christians in the city before he came, so that their “faith is spoken of throughout the whole world” (Romans 1:8) (*Studies in Early Church History*, electronic edition)

- Paul’s second imprisonment (A.D. 66/67)
- Paul executed under Nero (cf. 2 Tim. 4:6–18) (before Nero’s death in A.D. 68)
- Mark writes down the “memoirs of Peter” (A.D. 62–68)
- Peter executed under Nero (before Nero’s death in A.D. 68)
- Book of Hebrews written (A.D. 68–69), Timothy released from prison (Hebrews 13:23)

B. The Last 30 Years (70–100)

- The destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70)
 - Anti-Roman Zealots had occupied Jerusalem since A.D. 66
 - The Roman army, led by future emperor Titus, besieged the city in 70 and after several skirmishes successfully took the Antonia Fortress, from which the rest of the city was quickly subdued
 - In the process of the fighting the Temple was burned to the ground (probably unintentionally)
 - After fully regaining control of the city (on September 7, 70), the Romans continued to pursue those rebels who had fled
 - Masada, the final Zealot stronghold, fell in 73

Philip Schaff: The Christians of Jerusalem, remembering the Lord's admonition, forsook the doomed city in good time and fled to the town of Pella in the Decapolis, beyond the Jordan, in the north of Peraea, where King Herod Agrippa II., before whom Paul once stood, opened to them a safe asylum. An old tradition says that a divine voice or angel revealed to their leaders the duty of flight. There, in the midst of a population chiefly Gentile, the church of the circumcision was reconstructed. Unfortunately, its history is hidden from us. But it never recovered its former importance. When Jerusalem was rebuilt as a Christian city, its bishop was raised to the dignity of one of the four patriarchs of the East, but it was a patriarchate of honor, not of power, and sank to a mere shadow after the Mohammedan invasion (*History of the Christian Church*, electronic edition).

Henry T. Sell: The year 70 A.D. marked the close of an old and the beginning of a new and sad era for the Jews. In that year Jerusalem and its Temple were destroyed. In the fearful scenes which took place some may have remembered that the Jewish multitude had cried out, when Jesus was before Pilate and he wished to release Him, "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matthew 27:25). Jesus had foretold the ruin of the city (Matthew 23:37–39; 24) and had wept over it (Luke 19:41–44; 23:28–31). With the fall of the Holy City and Temple it was now no longer possible to keep the Jewish law. This was a powerful argument for the Christians which the Jews were unable to answer. But in many respects, while the conflict was practically coming to an end, the hatred of the Jews for the Christians was intensified, henceforth the Christian in the eyes of the Jew was not merely a rival but a traitor, and the Gentile Christian was one who enjoyed the gains of treason at the Jew's expense. (*Studies in Early Church History*, electronic edition).

- The Writings of John (A.D. 80–95)
 - At some point (probably after A.D. 63), John moved from Jerusalem to Ephesus (it would have been after Paul had ministered in Ephesus and written to Timothy about his ministry in Ephesus, since John is not mentioned)
 - It may have been the deaths of Peter and Paul that motivated John to come to Asia Minor and help give oversight to those churches
 - The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 made it impossible for any Christian leaders to stay there, though John may have left before those events

Philip Schaff: If it were not for the writings of John the last thirty years of the first century would be almost an entire blank. They resemble that mysterious period of forty days between the resurrection and the ascension, when the Lord hovered, as it were, between heaven and earth, barely touching the earth beneath, and appearing to the disciples like a spirit from the other world. But the theology of the second and third centuries evidently presupposes the writings of John, and starts from his Christology (*History of the Christian Church*, electronic edition).

- John's letters indicate that sound doctrine (as opposed to false doctrine) continued to be a major concern during this time in the church's development (as insipient forms of Gnosticism were starting to gain influence — cf. 1 John 4:1–3; 2 John 1:7–11)
- John's Gospel provided additional information about Jesus to supplement the Synoptic Gospels
- The first three chapters of Revelation give valuable insights into the state of the church (at least in Asia Minor) in the last decade of the first century

- Persecution under Domitian (A.D. 81–96) had resulted in John’s exile to the Isle of Patmos (in the mid-90s) from Ephesus
- According to church tradition, John died a natural death (back in Ephesus) during the reign of Trajan, sometime after A.D. 98

C. Throughout these decades, faithful men had been raised up to follow in the apostles’ footsteps

- Paul had charged Timothy to entrust the truth to faithful men, who could entrust it to others also (2 Tim. 2:2)
- Church tradition suggests that Linus followed Peter as the pastor in Rome (cf. 2 Tim. 4:21); also Clement, the fourth pastor in Rome, may possibly be mentioned in Philippians 4:3
- Elders and church leaders had been established in all of the churches Paul (and the other apostles) had planted (cf. Titus 1:5); so now those leaders worked to faithfully fulfill the ministry they had inherited from the apostles
- The apostolic era was the foundation age of the church (Eph. 2:20) during which the New Testament was completed, being the teachings of Christ through His Spirit to His authorized representatives (cf. John 14–16; 2 Pet. 3:15).
- Polycarp and others (such as Papias) are referenced as disciples of the apostle John
- Clement of Rome (the fourth pastor of the church at Rome and author of *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*) was an contemporary of the apostle John

D. Not everything that was happening is recorded for us in Scripture

- Church tradition suggests that some of the other apostles were busy preaching the Gospel in other parts of the world
- Andrew and Philip supposedly preached in Greece and Asia Minor; Matthew in Ethiopia, Persia, or Macedonia; Thomas in India; Bartholomew in Armenia; James the son of Alphaeus in Syria; Thaddaeus in Edessa; and Simon the Zealot in Persia, North Africa, or Britain.

Cities with Churches by A.D. 100



(Map from *The MacArthur Study Bible*, note on 1 Thess. 2)

What Happened to the Twelve Disciples in Church History?		
<i>(Parts of this chart adapted from Robert C. Walton, <i>Chronological and Background Charts of Church History</i>)</i>		
Name	Biblical Information	Church Tradition
Peter	Apostolic spokesman for the early church; he is the focus of the first section of the book of Acts; wrote two NT epistles	Was crucified upside down in Rome under the reign of Nero; late tradition suggest he visited Britain and Gaul
Andrew	In Jerusalem at Pentecost	Supposedly preached in Scythia, Asia Minor, and Greece; eventually crucified at Patras in Achaia
James, Son of Zebedee	In Jerusalem at Pentecost, and presumably until his execution by Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12)	
John	Associated with Peter early in Acts (at Temple and in Samaria); exiled to Patmos at the end of his life; wrote a Gospel, three epistles, and the book of Revelation	Relocated from Jerusalem to Ephesus probably in the mid to late 60s; early opponent of Gnosticism; died a natural death in Ephesus around 100
Philip	In Jerusalem at Pentecost; not the same Philip as in Acts 8	Supposedly crucified in Hierapolis in Asia Minor
Matthew	In Jerusalem at Pentecost; wrote a Gospel	Conflicting traditions place him in Macedonia, Persia, Parthia, and Ethiopia
Thomas	In Jerusalem at Pentecost	Is supposed to have preached in Babylon; strong tradition speaks of ministry (and ultimately martyrdom) in India
Bartholomew	In Jerusalem at Pentecost	Accompanied Philip to Hierapolis; martyred after ministry in Armenia
James, Son of Alphaeus	In Jerusalem at Pentecost	Often confused with James the brother of Jesus; possibly ministered in Syria; crucified
Thaddaeus	In Jerusalem at Pentecost	Often confused with Jude, the brother of Jesus; ministered in Edessa
Simon the Zealot	In Jerusalem at Pentecost	Variously connected with Persia, Egypt, Carthage, and Britain
Judas Iscariot	Committed suicide after his betrayal of Jesus	

How much stock should we put in some of these traditions?

Justo Gonzalez: It is certain that some of the apostles—particularly Peter, John, and Paul—did travel proclaiming the Gospel and supervising the churches that had been founded, either by them or by others. Perhaps other apostles, such as Thomas, did likewise. But most of the traditions regarding apostolic travels date from a later period, when it was believed that the apostles divided the world among themselves, and when the church in each country or city sought to claim apostolic origins. In truth, most of the missionary work was not carried out by the apostles, but rather by the countless and nameless Christians who for different reasons—persecution, business, or missionary calling—traveled from place to place taking the news of the Gospel with them. (*The Story of Christianity*, 30)

Eusebius's account of the martyrdom of Peter and Paul under Nero (*Church History*, 2.25):

When the government of Nero was now firmly established, he began to plunge into unholy pursuits, and armed himself even against the religion of the God of the universe. To describe the greatness of his depravity does not lie within the plan of the present work. As there are many indeed that have recorded his history in most accurate narratives, every one may at his pleasure learn from them the coarseness of the man's extraordinary madness, under the influence of which, after he had accomplished the destruction of so many myriads without any reason, he ran into such blood-guiltiness that he did not spare even his nearest relatives and dearest friends, but destroyed his mother and his brothers and his wife, with very many others of his own family as he would private and public enemies, with various kinds of deaths. But with all these things this particular in the catalogue of his crimes was still wanting, that he was the first of the emperors who showed himself an enemy of the divine religion.

The Roman Tertullian is likewise a witness of this. He writes as follows: "Examine your records. There you will find that Nero was the first that persecuted this doctrine, particularly then when after subduing all the east, he exercised his cruelty against all at Rome. We glory in having such a man the leader in our punishment. For whoever knows him can understand that nothing was condemned by Nero unless it was something of great excellence."

Thus publicly announcing himself as the first among God's chief enemies, he was led on to the slaughter of the apostles. It is, therefore, recorded that Paul was beheaded in Rome itself, and that Peter likewise was crucified under Nero. This account of Peter and Paul is substantiated by the fact that their names are preserved in the cemeteries of that place even to the present day. . . .

And that they both suffered martyrdom at the same time is stated by Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, in his epistle to the Romans, in the following words: "You have thus by such an admonition bound together the planting of Peter and of Paul at Rome and Corinth. For both of them planted and likewise taught us in our Corinth. And they taught together in like manner in Italy, and suffered martyrdom at the same time." I have quoted these things in order that the truth of the history might be still more confirmed.

Other Early Christian Leaders in Church Tradition:

John MacArthur: A brief survey of ancient Christian tradition reveals that Peter, Andrew, Philip, and James the son of Alphaeus were all crucified; Bartholomew was whipped to death and then crucified; James the son of Zebedee was beheaded, as was Paul; Thomas was stabbed with spears; Mark was dragged to death through the streets of Alexandria; and James the half-brother of Jesus was stoned by order of the Sanhedrin. Others, including Matthew, Simon the Zealot, Thaddeus, Timothy, and Stephen, were also killed for their unwavering commitment to the Lord. (*John 12–21*, MNTC, 188)

- John Mark (author of the Gospel of Mark)
 - His mother's home was a meeting place for Christians (Acts 12:12 – 17)
 - He accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey, and later was the center of the controversy between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:37–40); he was a cousin of Barnabas (Col. 4:10)
 - Later with Peter in Rome (1 Pet. 5:13); wrote down Peter's memoirs (according to Papias and numerous other church fathers)
 - Reconciled to Paul at some point before Paul's death; sent by Paul to Colosse (Col. 2:4) and later ministered to Paul in Rome (Phm 24; 2 Tim. 4:11)
 - After Paul's death, ministered in the Pentapolis in North Africa and then in Alexandria, Egypt – where Coptic tradition teaches that he founded a church
 - Inhabitants of Alexandria were offended that Mark tried to convert them from following their traditional Egyptian idols; around A.D. 68, he was tied to horses and dragged to death throughout the streets of Alexandria
- Luke (author of the Gospel of Luke)
 - A Greek physician from Antioch (cf. Col. 4:14)
 - Traveled with Paul during parts of Paul's missionary journeys (Acts; Phm. 24)
 - Was with Paul in Rome to the end of Paul's life (2 Tim. 4:11)
 - According to the *Anti-Marcionite Prologue to the Gospel of Luke* (written somewhere between the 2nd and 4th centuries):

Luke, a native of Antioch, by profession a physician. He had become a disciple of the apostles and later followed Paul until his [Paul's] martyrdom. Having served the Lord continuously, unmarried and without children, filled with the Holy Spirit he died at the age of 84 years [in Thebes, the capital of Boeotia].
- Apollos
 - According to Jerome, Apollos left Corinth because of the terrible divisions in the church there, and went to minister in Crete
 - After Paul's letters changed the atmosphere in Corinth, Apollos returned there to be the church's pastor