

Paul's Epistles (including Hebrews)- The Dates and Places of Writing

1 Thessalonians – written from Corinth by Paul during his first visit to that city. This is evident because Paul indicates that he knows the believers in the Roman province of Achaia (1 Thessalonians 1:7-8) which is the province in which both Athens and Corinth are located. This means he has at least entered Achaia at the time of writing. He also mentions Silas as being with him in Corinth in his greeting (1 Thessalonians 1:1). Since, according to Acts, he had left Silas in Berea in Macedonia (Acts 17:14-15) before he entered Achaia and he didn't see him again until he was established in Corinth (Acts 18:5) it seems clear that Paul must be writing from Corinth during his year and a half stay in that city, particularly since after Paul left Corinth, he was never again with Silas. Both letters to the Thessalonians were written from Corinth, but how do we determine which was first? The first method is that in 1 Thessalonians Paul refers to his recent stay in Athens and his sending Timothy back to the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 3:2). He says that Timothy has just recently returned (1 Thessalonians 3:6). Since Paul's stay in Athens and his sending of Timothy occurred just before Paul's arrival in Corinth, this pretty conclusively establishes this as the first letter of the two. The year and a half period Paul stayed in Corinth (Acts 18:11) occurred during the Governorship of Gallio (Acts 18:12) which we know from historical sources was in 51-52 AD. Paul had just recently visited Thessalonica (Acts 17:1) and established the Church there. He had to leave because of the opposition of the Jews. The carriers of both this letter and 2 Thessalonians are unknown.

1 Thessalonians –written from Corinth in 51 AD.

Galatians is perhaps the most difficult of Paul's letters to place because he doesn't mention any locations or associates. If we consider that the trip to Jerusalem described in Galatians 2:1 was the trip Paul made to the Jerusalem Council described in Acts 15, then Galatians was obviously written some time after this. Ramsey makes a good case that Paul's first visit to the 1st Century Roman province of Galatia occurred on his first missionary trip to Antioch, Derbe and Lystra. Also, the fact that Paul mentions Barnabas, as someone the Galatians should know, in Galatians 2:1 confirms this idea, since Barnabas accompanied Paul on the first Missionary journey, and how could the Galatians have known Barnabas otherwise? However, there is little doubt that Paul's letter to the Galatians was written after his second visit, which was shortly after the Jerusalem Council. Even Ramsey (who thinks that Paul's visit of Galatians 2 was his visit for the poor relief [Acts 11:30, 12:25] of 46 BC) dates Galatians after Paul's second visit to Galatia. That visit occurred just after Paul's trip to Jerusalem Council. In the letter to the Galatians, Paul speaks of the Galatians "so quickly deserting the one who called you." To me this indicates that Paul had just recently visited them. The Epistle to the Galatians was probably written between the time that Paul left Galatia during his 2nd missionary journey and the time he left Corinth at the end of the same journey, about two years later. In Galatians, he deals with the attacks of the Judaizers which had been the cause of the Jerusalem Council. He never indicates where he is located, but because Paul makes no specific mention of any of his associates it seems probable, that there was no one with him who would be familiar to the Galatians. Given the relative uncertainty of the time, it is useful to bracket the time with earliest and latest dates. Since it is a near certainty that the letter was written after the visit to Galatia during the 2nd Missionary journey (Acts 16:6), I think we can safely consider that six months later is the earliest it could have been written (early 51 AD from Macedonia or Achaia). The latest he could have written the letter is at least three months before his third visit (Acts 19:1) on the way from Antioch to Ephesus (the trip would certainly have carried him through Galatia), no later than 53-54 AD.¹ Since the only two places Paul stayed for any length of time during this period were Corinth and Antioch it is certain that Galatians was written from one of the two. On just this evidence, I lean toward Corinth in 51 AD, because of the recentness of Paul's last visit to Galatia, but I must admit Antioch in 53 AD can easily be defended (that is the date and place Ramsey

¹ This date is derived as follows: since we know that Paul spent three years ministering to the Ephesians (Acts 20:31) and we know that he spent some additional time after that traveling through Macedonia (Acts 20:1) and three months in Greece (Acts 20:2-3) and was arrested in the spring of 58 AD it is easy to conclude that winter 54 was the latest possible time and mid 53 AD the earliest.

picked). However, because of the argument presented in the writing disability analysis at the end of this section, I come down firmly on the side of being written from Corinth in 51 AD after the writing of 1 Thessalonians and before 2 Thessalonians.

From the evidence of the letter, it seems clear that Paul had recently received information from Galatia (Galatians 1:6). Consider these facts:

- (1) Because of the familiarity of the Galatians with Titus referenced in Galatians 2:1, it is fair to conclude that Titus was in Galatia with Paul on his 2nd Missionary Journey.
- (2) Titus seems to have been unfamiliar with the Corinthians as late as 2 Corinthians (2 Corinthians 7:13-14)
- (3) Paul was left alone in Athens (1 Thessalonians 3:1) i.e. Titus was not with him.
- (4) We know Paul left Titus behind to nurture a church at least one time, in Crete (Titus 1:4-5).

Because of these facts, I believe it is probably a reasonable conjecture that Paul left Titus in Galatia to care for the church there. He certainly was not with him in Corinth. If so, the possible sequence of events was this:

- (1) Paul left Titus in Galatia to nurture the church.
- (2) The legalizers came to Galatia and presented an opposition to sound teaching that Titus could not overcome being a Greek.
- (3) Titus came to Corinth from Galatia to get written support from Paul.
- (4) Titus got the letter and took it back.

That is possibly why no names are mentioned in Galatians. Neither the party who brought the news of the Galatian apostasy, or the party who was taking the letter back are mentioned. Paul didn't mention it because it was self-evident by the fact that all the Galatians knew that Titus had gone to Corinth for the very purpose of getting Paul's instructions. Another question remains, If the letter was written from Corinth, why didn't Paul refer to Silas and Timothy in his letter? I believe the answer was that at that time Paul had sent them back to Macedonia. We know someone took 1 Thessalonians to Macedonia.

Galatians – written from Corinth in 51 AD

2 Thessalonians – like 1 Thessalonians was written from Corinth during Paul's first visit to that city. The year and a half period Paul stayed in Corinth (Acts 18:11) occurred during the Governorship of Gallio (Acts 18:12) which we know was in 51-52 AD. The Corinthian location is evident because this letter is clearly written after 1 Thessalonians and Paul co-signs the letter with Silas. After Paul left Corinth at that time he was never again associated with Silas (Acts 18:18). As I previously established the fact that 1 Thessalonians was written before 2 Thessalonians, I will refer to that here. Another factor in the dating is found in writing disabilities analysis which is found at the bottom of this section.

2 Thessalonians –written from Corinth in 52 AD.

1 Corinthians - The epistle was clearly written by Paul from Ephesus (1 Corinthians 16:8). The date is established as follows: Paul had arrived in Ephesus sometime after his trip through Galatia about 54 AD and stayed for three years (Acts 20:31). In 1 Corinthians 16 Paul speaks of his plan of staying in Ephesus through Pentecost (May) of the year of writing. He was then to travel through Macedonia and winter in Corinth (December to March). This wintering in Corinth is precisely what he did in Acts 20:2. After that Acts tells us that Paul traveled to Jerusalem. As Ramsey points out, when Paul left Greece (Corinth) at the start of sailing season (March 6) it was probably his intention to sail back to Jerusalem in time for the Feast of Unleavened Bread at Jerusalem. However a plot by the Jews (Acts 20:3), probably to be carried out by some of the many Jewish pilgrims travelling on Paul's ship, caused Paul to take a private boat up the coast of Macedonia to Philippi (Acts 20:6) where they spent the Feast of Unleavened Bread (late March to early April). They then sailed down the coast of Asia to Patara where they transhipped to Phoenicia (Acts 21:1-2). This caused Paul to

arrive in time for Pentecost (late May) of 58 AD. We know that this was 58 AD because subsequent to Paul's arrival he spent two years in prison under Felix which only ended with the governorship of Festus which we know from historical sources to have occurred in 60 AD. Since in 1 Corinthians 4:17 and 1 Corinthians 16:10, Paul speaks of the imminent departure of Timothy on a trip to visit Corinth, it would seem that the start of sailing season (March 6) is close. It seems clear then, that Paul wrote 1 Corinthians sometime before Pentecost of 57 AD, probably late winter.

1 Corinthians –written from Corinth late winter (February - March) 57 AD.

Romans -

The place and date of writing of the epistle to the Romans is established as follow.

Paul is staying in the house of Gaius. (Romans 16:23) A Gaius was one of the prominent believers from Corinth. (1 Corinthians 1:14)

Erastus was a prominent citizen of the town where Paul was writing from. (Romans 16:23) An Erastus later stayed in Corinth when Paul left. (2 Timothy 4:20) The evident bearer of Paul's letter is Phoebe from Cenchrea (Romans 16:1), the seaport of Corinth (Acts 18:18). This pretty well establishes his location as Corinth.

We also know that Paul has not yet been to Rome (Romans 1:9-13), and since Paul only made two visits to Corinth before his first visit to Rome, this must be one of those two. At the time of the writing of Romans, Priscilla and Aquilla live in Rome (Romans 16:3). All the time of the first visit to Corinth Priscilla and Aquilla lived in Corinth (Acts 18:2,18). According to Romans, Paul has just been through Macedonia and Achaia (Romans 15:26) and is on his way to Jerusalem (Romans 15:25). According to the account in Acts of Paul's second visit, he first visited Macedonia, then Achaia (Corinth was the capital of the province of Achaia), then traveled to Jerusalem (Acts 19:21). This pretty well establishes that was written during Paul's second visit to Corinth described in Acts 20:2-3

The date of this visit is fixed by the following.

Paul sailed from Corinth to Jerusalem in a month or two. The beginning of sailing season was March 1 and Paul arrived in Jerusalem in time for Pentecost in May (Acts 20:16). After Paul reached Jerusalem he was arrested within a week to ten days and taken to Caesarea. There he was in prison for two years under the Roman Governor Felix (Acts 24:27). Since we know from historical sources that Festus replaced Felix in 60 AD, the simple subtraction of the two years that Paul was in prison, tells us that he wrote Romans during his three month visit to Corinth from January to March 58 AD.

Romans – written from Corinth early (January - March) 58 AD.

The Prison Epistles

Since Philemon is obviously a letter that was sent at the same time as Colossians, I will deal with Colossians/Philemon as being one issue. Colossians/Philemon, Philippians, and Ephesians, the prison epistles, were written between 61 AD and 63 AD from Rome. We know that these books were sent from Rome during Paul's imprisonment there in which he wore a chain (Acts 28:20), because of the following passages. Colossians - (Colossians 4:2, Philemon 1:13); Philippians – (Philippians 1:12-18); Ephesians – (Ephesians 6:20) All these passages refer to Paul's imprisonment. We know that Paul was sent to Rome within months after the appointment of Festus as Governor in 60 AD. We also know that Paul's ship to Rome was off the coast of Crete after the Day of Atonement (called "the Fast" in Acts 27:9). That was October in 60 AD. After being wrecked in Malta. Paul spent the winter there and took ship for Italy (Acts 28:11) where he arrived in early March 61 AD. All three of the prison epistles were written during the next two years Paul was a prisoner in Rome (Acts 28:30). The question is, in what order were they written? I believe Colossians/Philemon was first for the following reasons. The letters were carried to Colosse by Tychicus (Colossians 4:7-8) who Paul also sent with the letter to the Ephesians (Ephesians 6:21). We can conclude that these two letters were not sent at the same time because at the writing of Colossians Timothy was with Paul (Colossians 1:1). At the writing of Ephesians, Timothy is not mentioned. At the writing of Philippians, Timothy was also with Paul, but Paul was planning to send him soon to Philippi (Philippians 2:19). The key question regarding these facts is when did Timothy arrive

in Rome. If Timothy took ship with Paul, it is clear that Colossians is the first letter. If Timothy arrived later, it is possible that Ephesians was written before he got there and thus Colossians and Philippians would be written next in order, since Timothy was about to leave for Philippi in Philippians. It would also mean that Tychicus, who carried both Ephesians and Colossians traveled to Colosse in the eastern part of the province of Asia and to Ephesus in the western part of the same province twice within one navigational year. The argument that Timothy was not with Paul when he arrived in Rome is usually based on the fact that, in Acts, Luke only mentions himself and Aristarchus (Acts 27:2) as being on the ship with Paul. He doesn't exclude the possibility that other disciples were with them, he just doesn't mention them. In fact Acts tells us that there were 276 people on board Paul's ship that sunk off of Malta (Acts 27:37) so it wasn't a matter of room. However, that very listing of Aristarchus gives us reason to place Colossians first. In Colossians 4:10, Paul lists Aristarchus as his fellow prisoner. He is never mentioned in the other books. Why he is not mentioned in the other books is up to question, he might have been freed and returned to Macedonia, or he might have died, but since he arrived with Paul, it would seem strange that he would not be mentioned in the first letter (if Ephesians was the first letter) and be mentioned in the second or third letter (depending on where you place Colossians). Also, if Luke and Aristarchus were the only people who accompanied Paul to Rome, where did Tychicus come from. By any reckoning he was in Rome in time to carry Paul's first letter, be it Colossians or Ephesians. He was not a resident of Rome, but rather a part of Paul's traveling party that accompanied him to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4) before he was arrested. Doubtless, he stayed by Paul during his two year imprisonment there. Also, if Ephesians was first, and Colossians followed, why did Paul mention Mark in Colossians and not in Ephesians? Let us assume then that Timothy arrived with Paul, and probably also with Mark, and Demas (Colossians 4:10, Colossians 4:14, Philemon 1:24) as well as Luke and Aristarchus. If this is true, then the following seems likely. Colossians was written first in which Paul remarks that Timothy and Mark are in Rome. Paul had learned about the current state of the Colossian church from a fellow Christian and fellow prisoner named Epaphras (Colossians 1:7, 4:12, Philemon 1:23). Since Epaphras is never mentioned as an associate of Paul, it is likely that he was already in Rome when Paul arrived. Colossians was sent to Colosse in the care of Tychicus. Mark left Rome travelling through Colosse (Colossians 4:10) probably on his way to Peter in Babylon (1 Peter 5:13). Timothy remains in Rome. Paul writes Philippians remarking that he is sending Timothy to Philippi soon (Philippians 2:18). Timothy leaves Rome and goes to Philippi. We know that enough time had passed for the Philippians to get word of Paul's location and plight and send Epaphroditus to minister to his needs and for Epaphroditus to get sick, nearly die and recover enough to travel again. (Philippians 2:25-30) Paul then writes Ephesians during the last part of his Roman imprisonment. He sends the letter with Tychicus who has returned from Colosse. Since Tychicus would almost certainly have had to pass through Ephesus on the way back to Rome from Colosse, he was probably the one who brought Paul the news about the faith of Ephesians which Paul speaks about in Ephesians 1:15. Why Paul fails to mention Luke or Demas in either Philippians or Ephesians is open to speculation, although we know they continued to be a part of his team for several more years. (2 Timothy 4:10-11)

My conclusion as to the date and place of the Prison Epistles

Colossians – written from Rome in the middle of 61 AD.

Philemon – was clearly written to an individual who was part of the church at Colosse and the letter was sent with the Epistle to the Colossians therefor it was written from Rome in the middle of 61 AD.

Philippians – written from Rome early in 62 AD.

Ephesians – written from Rome middle of 62 AD

Hebrews – Although the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews is unattributed by the epistle itself, it is my opinion that the book was written by the Apostle Paul just after his first Roman imprisonment in 63 AD and not long after the death of James and the leaders of the Jerusalem church. Hebrews 13:23-24 makes it clear that the author of the book was, or had been in Italy and was an associate of Timothy:

Hebrews 13:23-24 I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he arrives soon, I will come with him to see you. Greet all your leaders and all God's people. Those from Italy send you their greetings.

We know from Acts and the Epistles of Paul that Timothy had been Paul's right hand man for fifteen years. We know from Acts that Paul had been imprisoned in Italy. We know that the bond between the two was never broken until Paul's death in 67 AD (1 Timothy and 2 Timothy). We know the author of this letter expects Timothy to join him, reflecting a subordination of Timothy to him. We can be fairly certain that the proposed visit of Timothy and the author to the Hebrews in Judea, was planned before the outbreak of the Jewish rebellion in 66 AD because the church abandoned Jerusalem in the early part of that year. There is little chance that, before Paul's death, Paul's Timothy would have been associated with anyone but him.

Also, the subject of Hebrews is very similar to Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Like Romans it tries to explain how the Old Covenant, as great as it was, has been superceded by a superior way of life and faith. Like Romans, it has a heavy infusion of quotations from the Old Testament. Romans has 58 quotations from the OT, Hebrews has 40. Near the end of the letter to the Romans (Romans 15:23-32) Paul recorded his determination to go to Jerusalem. With his knowledge of Jewish scripture and his history as a Pharisee who had persecuted the way of Christ, he seemed to feel that he, personally, could turn the Jews away from the course of destruction on which they were bent. He was very passionate about what he would do to save the Jews from their own folly:

Romans 9:1-4a I speak the truth in Christ--I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit-- I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were *under a curse by* (*αναθεμα απο*) Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, the people of Israel.

Although there are many that agree that Paul was the author of Hebrews, most of those that disagree base their opinion on the fact that the literary style of Paul's epistles and the Epistle to the Hebrews was different. Two such widely different styles could not emanate from the same writer, they argue. Granting that there is a noticeably different style in Hebrews from all of Paul's writing, I believe I can offer a plausible explanation why there are two different styles, but one author. I believe Hebrews was originally written in Aramaic, and the differences in the two languages and cultures would militate different styles.² As an example compare the Jewish language of the Old Testament to the Greek of the New Testament. The Old Testament is unquestionably more poetic. Why do I believe that the original was written in Aramaic? I have a hard time believing that a letter written to the Hebrews would not have been written in their own language, just as Matthew was written in Hebrew! It would not have been understandable to many of its recipients if written in Greek. Also, as a last attempt to appeal to the Hebrews before the destruction of the Temple worship, it would have been needlessly offensive. For any advocate of the inerrancy of the autograph of scripture (and I am one) the variance of the Hebrews 1:7 quotation of Psalm 104:4 from the Old Testament original is best accounted for by suggesting that it is a mistranslation of the original Aramaic version of Hebrews.

Why then, you may ask, did Paul not sign the letter? Probably because he knew his name would arouse such controversy among the very people he was trying to enlighten! He didn't want them to tune out before he had made his point! My conclusion is that Hebrews was undoubtedly written by Paul.

We also know that Hebrews was written from Italy because Hebrews 13:24 so indicates, "Those from Italy send you their greetings." Since Paul expresses the liberty to travel (Hebrews 13:23), we have to believe that he was free from prison. We know that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD because Hebrews 8:5 tells us the Temple was still being used. We know that, in fact it had to have been written before 66 AD because the Jewish rebellion started then, and the Church abandoned Judea. The only other time Paul could have been in Italy than on his release from his first imprisonment was just before, or as a consequence of his second and final imprisonment. But in Hebrews, Paul is waiting in Italy for Timothy to arrive after being released from prison somewhere else (probably Philippi). During Paul's second Roman

² I subsequently found this supporting opinion by Theodoretus an early 5th Century Christian, and Bishop of Cyrus from Antioch, Syria. "To be sure, since Paul was writing to Hebrews and was in disrepute among them he may have omitted his name from the salvation on this account. He being a Hebrew wrote Hebrew, that is his own tongue and most fluently while the things which were eloquently written in Hebrew were more eloquently turned into Greek and this is the reason why it seems to differ from other epistles of Paul."

imprisonment Timothy is ministering in Ephesus and is free to travel (2 Timothy 4:11,21). My conclusion is therefore that this was written just at the close of Paul's two year stay in Rome in the spring of 63 AD.

Hebrews – written from Italy in 63 AD probably in the spring.

2 Corinthians – See the separate paper which has been written on this subject.

2 Corinthians – written from Macedonia in early 65 AD.

1 Timothy – could have been written from Macedonia (1 Timothy 1:3) but most likely some place on Paul's subsequent travels, most probably Achaia (Corinth), since that was the normal route of his travels after Macedonia. Written to Timothy in Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3):

1 Timothy 1:3 As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer.

It was clearly written after 2 Corinthians as Timothy was no longer with him. Just as clearly, in the interim since 2 Corinthians, Paul was in Ephesus with Timothy when he told him to "stay there," and before that was in Crete. For the reason that I specify in the article on Titus, I believe the letter was carried from Corinth by Apollos and Zenas when they took Titus his letter, therefor the date and location are the same as Titus.

1 Timothy – from Corinth, August 66.

Titus – from Paul in an undisclosed location to Titus in Crete. Quite possibly written about the same time and place as 1 Timothy and possibly carried by the same messengers. The messengers were Apollos and Zenas (Titus 3:13). If Paul was writing from Corinth, Apollos and Zenas could have quite easily run down to Crete on their way to Ephesus. Apollos had a longstanding association with both Corinth and Ephesus. In fact, the last previous information we have on Apollos in 57 AD, he is pledged to return to Corinth (1 Corinthians 16:12). Paul had evidently gone down to Crete after he wrote 2 Corinthians from Macedonia. When he left Crete, probably with Timothy, on his way to Ephesus, Paul had left Titus in Crete. Paul tells Titus that he expects to meet him in Nicopolis which is a town on the Adriatic at the eastern end of the Gulf of Corinth. It would be a natural stop on the way back to Italy and Rome. Since Paul anticipates wintering in Nicopolis, and he tells Titus to come as soon as possible (Titus 3:12), it probably indicates that Paul is worried about the sailing weather (he well remembers the terrible October storm he encountered off Crete in 60 AD). This in turn indicates that it is drawing close to the end of August, since the most dangerous season for navigation starts on September 11 and lasts till November 14. This would mean that this letter was probably written in August 65 or August 66. The time seems too short for all that has happened since 2 Corinthians to be August 65, so I would chose August 66 as more likely.

Titus – from Corinth, August 66.

2 Timothy – Paul writes to Timothy and instructs him to greet the household of Onesiphorus (2 Timothy 4:19). We know from 2 Timothy 1:16-18 that Onesiphorus was from Ephesus, so we have to conclude that Timothy is in Ephesus, particularly since that was where he was when Paul wrote 1 Timothy. We know that Paul is in chains from 2 Timothy 1:16. We know he is chained like a criminal (2 Timothy 2:9) which is different from how he was chained in during his first Roman imprisonment, when he had his own rented house and was chained to different soldiers (Acts 28:30, Philippians 1:13). This time he was probably chained to a wall in a cell. He had already been to trial once and had been rescued from being thrown to the lions (2 Timothy 4:16-17). Paul expects to die shortly (2 Timothy 4:6-7). Tradition tells us Paul was executed at Rome. Deduction also tells us that since Timothy is at Ephesus and Paul expects him to travel through Troas (2 Timothy 4:13), Paul is to the west of Ephesus in Europe. The places Paul might have been arrested in Europe are the places we know he had been; Macedonia, Achaia (Corinth), Dalmatia (Nicopolis), and Rome. We know the first three are not

the place, because he says one of his follower had gone to Thessalonica (Macedonia), another had stayed in Corinth (Achaia), and another had gone to Dalmatia. Thus wherever Paul is, is not Macedonia, Achaia, or Dalmatia. That leaves Rome, as the only logical place. Furthermore, we have the testimony of Clement of Rome in the early 2nd century that Paul and Peter were martyred in Rome. We don't know how long Paul was in prison, or exactly when he was executed, but we do know from a very strong tradition, that he was executed by Nero, and certainly the history of the time tells us that Rome was probably too busy with its civil war over the succession to Nero, to bother with religious persecution. History tells us that Nero died on June 9, 68 AD, so we can be sure that Paul died before that date. I believe that Paul wintered in Nicopolis (Dalmatia) as he told Titus (Titus 3:12) was his plan. He then traveled to Rome in the spring of 67 AD. He was arrested within a short time and evidently, when he writes this letter he is expecting the onset of winter. If he was expecting Timothy to come earlier than September he would have sailed from Ephesus to Rome. However, after that date he would have had to come by road which would have taken him through Troas. Also, he is expecting to need his cloak which he left there, meaning he expects Timothy to arrive before winter. All these factors lead me to conclude that Paul wrote the letter about mid to late summer 67 AD. Also to be considered is the fact that the Jewish revolt became full blown in August 66 AD, which might have led Nero to change his previous policy toward what he viewed as a Jewish sect.

2 Timothy – from Rome, August 67.

Using Paul's writing disability as a dating factor.

I believe we can learn a lot from the factor of Paul's writing disability that we can use in dating his epistles. First we must assume that Paul's affliction followed the normal course of most afflictions, that is it started to manifest itself, got worse, and continued until it was healed or went away. With that in mind we notice that Paul does not mention his disability at all in 1 Thessalonians, his first epistle. Paul first mentions the disability in Galatians 6:11, where he mentions that he wrote with a "large letter." In 2 Thessalonians, he states that he has only signed the letters, and someone else has written them (2 Thessalonians. 3:17). In the next three letters (1 Corinthians, Romans, and Colossians) Paul says he only signed them (1 Corinthians 16:21, Romans 16:22, Colossians 4:18). No letter after Colossians mentions Paul's writing problem or who was his transcriber. These include, in order, Philemon, Philippians, Ephesians, Hebrews, 2 Corinthians, 1 Timothy, Titus, and 2 Timothy. This presents a logical pattern. The appearance, the worsening, and the disappearance. If this is true, then Galatians is the second letter, written between 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians. It also strengthens my argument that Colossians was the first prison epistle as well as my argument that 2 Corinthians was written after Paul's first Roman imprisonment. It is also possible that Paul had sustained the damage to his eyes in Galatia (Galatians 4:13-15), and had written the first letter to the Thessalonians by another hand without concern. When he learned (2 Thessalonians 2:2) that the Thessalonians had been sent letters purporting to be from Paul, which were not, he determined to write at least a portion of the letters in his own hand. If this was the case, Galatians could have been written after 2 Thessalonians, or before, but still from Corinth, as he says the brothers are still with him (Galatians 1:2a). We know from Acts that he left the brothers in Corinth (Acts 18:18). It is possible that he wrote Galatians when he became aware of the false letters that were being sent out, but found that it was too difficult with his deficiency, and thereafter, only signed his letters.

The Dates and Places of the Peter's Epistles

1 Peter – It is clear that Peter is the author (1 Peter 1:1). He wrote to the churches of what is now known as Asia Minor (Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia). He wrote from Babylon. It is noteworthy that he used only “Peter,” the last part of his full name, in signing this epistle. There are some who claim that Peter was, in fact, writing from Rome and was using “Babylon” as a code word so the Roman authorities wouldn’t find him. To me, that is insulting to God, to think that the Holy Spirit would inspire a sentence that was both dishonest and fearful. Why was Peter in Babylon? Because, outside of Judea, it had the largest concentration of Jews, by far, of any place in the world. Many, if not most of the Jewish people who had been exiled to Babylon in 585 BC had not returned, but had stayed in Babylon. Peter was the apostle to the Jews as Paul was to the Gentiles (Galatians 2:7). He had evidently left Jerusalem before 58 AD (he evidently wasn’t there when Paul was arrested there that year). Possibly, he had left Jerusalem for good after the Jerusalem Council in 51 AD, when he traveled to Antioch (Galatians 2:11-21). After that, where else would he go than to the Jews of the East? So the place of writing is definitely Babylon as Peter states plainly!

Determining the time is more difficult, but I think we can make some reasonable assumptions from the facts we know. These are the facts: Both Mark and Silas are with Peter (1 Peter 5:12-13) in Babylon.

1 Peter 5:12-13 With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it. She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark.

It seems indicated that Silas helped Peter with the writing, possibly with the Greek. Peter’s mention of these two indicates that he believes both Mark and Silas are familiar to his readers in Asia Minor. In fact, we know that Silas was with Paul when he evangelized Galatia (Acts 16:6), and we know that Mark was planning to pass through Colosse (Colossians 4:10), which would have taken him through Asia and Galatia if he was on his way to Peter in the East at that time. As he does not mention any personal names, Peter does not indicate any personal familiarity with the churches to whom he is writing, which are all Gentile churches. I believe Peter probably wrote this epistle on the occasion of the arrival of Silas and Mark, and their communication of the spiritual problems of these churches. I believe that these assumptions make it certain that 1 Peter was written after the middle of 61 AD, when Mark was still in Rome with Paul. Considering the time for the journey, and the time for Mark’s visit to Colosse and probably other churches on the way, I believe 62 AD is the earliest 1 Peter could have been written, and was more likely written in 63 or 64 AD.

1 Peter – Peter writes to the churches of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia from Babylon, about 63-64 AD.

2 Peter – It is clear that Peter is the author. He clearly identifies himself: 1 Peter 1:1a “Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ.” That gives us the author, but how about the time and place? We can infer that from other details. Where was he? We can calculate that by deducing where his travels had carried him since he wrote First Peter.

We get a clue from the way identifies himself. In his greeting he uses both his Aramaic name “Simon,” and his Greek name “Peter.” In contrast to First Peter where he only uses his Greek name, “Peter,” here he uses both names. “Simon” is the name by which Simon was known by his close friends. John, Peter’s closest friend referred to Peter as “Simon Peter” 17 times. He is referred to by that name by Matthew only once, and by Luke only once. The Lord Jesus Christ just called him “Simon.” He is called Simon or Simon Peter throughout the Gospels. It was only beginning with Acts that he became known as just “Peter.” I conclude from the use of “Simon Peter” that his relationship with these same people to whom he wrote 1 Peter has grown more intimate, probably because he has now met them face to face. How do I conclude that this was written to the same people? Because in 2 Peter 3:1 he writes, “Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both

of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking.” Also, along this line, in this letter Peter shows other signs of being more personal. He calls them “dear friends” four times and “my brothers” twice.³

So in tracking down where Peter’s travels had taken him since writing 1 Peter, I believe we can conclude that he had left Babylon and travelled to the mainly Gentile churches of Asia Minor.

That answers where he had been, but where was he when he wrote 2 Peter? We can assume that Peter was no longer in Asia Minor, or he wouldn’t have written, he would have visited. Where might he have been? If we assume that Mark had stayed with Peter since the writing of 1 Peter, then if we locate Mark during this period, we can locate Peter. Since Paul asked Timothy to bring Mark with him (2 Timothy 4:11), we have to conclude that Mark was close to Ephesus, in Asia Minor. We have already indicated that 2 Peter points to Peter having visited Asia Minor, so that jibes with Mark and Peter having stayed together. I believe that at Paul’s invitation to Mark by means of Timothy, not only Mark, but Peter as well, went to Rome. That gives us the place (away from Asia Minor) that Peter wrote from. Certainly, there is an overwhelming tradition that Peter died in Rome. Furthermore, we have the testimony of Clement of Rome in the early 2nd century that both Paul and Peter were martyred in Rome. I believe that Peter arrived in Rome close to the time of Paul’s death. Peter was probably not in prison at this time, but he was soon a wanted man. Peter’s references to his impending death (2 Peter 2:13) which the Lord has revealed to him make us sure that it was near the end of his life. According to a strong tradition he died during the waning days of Nero’s reign which was June 9, 68 AD. I believe Peter, Mark and Timothy arrived before winter in 67 AD as Paul had asked. Peter’s comments about Paul 4 are a tribute to his departed, or soon to be departed, friend. I believe he probably wrote this letter about mid spring 68 AD shortly before he was caught and crucified. In that phase of his career Nero did not trouble with lengthy trials for anyone, much less a non-Roman Jew.

2 Peter – Peter writes to the churches of Asia Minor from Rome about mid spring 68 AD.

3 In 1 Peter, his marks of familiarity are that he calls them “dear friends” twice.

4 2 Peter 3:15 “Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him.”

The Dates and Places of Other Epistles

James – Written by James the Lord’s brother. Some have tried to assert that the James who wrote this epistle and the James who was the leader of the church in Jerusalem was not the Lord’s brother, but James son of Alphaeus, one of the two James’s among the Lord’s twelve disciples (the other was John’s brother). This theory was first advanced by Eusebius as a means of supporting the Ever Virgin Mary doctrine that is such a support for Mariolatry. Eusebius reported that Clopas, the husband of one of the women at the cross (John 19:25), was the brother of Joseph. Then it was asserted that Clopas was the same name as Alphaeus. That meant that James, the son of Alphaeus, was the cousin or relative of the Lord. Since the Catholic Church, about the time of Eusebius, took up the argument that the word “brother” with regard to James, Joseph, Jude, and Simon meant “relative” they could say “See James the bishop of Jerusalem, was James son of Alphaeus/Clopas. He was the cousin of the Lord, yet Paul calls him the Lord’s brother. Therefore brother must mean relative!” I believe that there is no way the James who wrote the Epistle of James is any other than the natural son of Joseph and Mary and the half-brother of Jesus.

James 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.

The next, question is to whom was it written. It seems clear. It says “to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations.” In other words it is addressed to the Jews/Israelites. It doesn’t say saved Jews/Israelites. It doesn’t say unsaved Jews/Israelites. It says “to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations.” See the way the other epistles of the New Testament are addressed in the footnote.⁵ All of the epistles are quite clear. Furthermore, James was not ambivalent in the addressing of the letter sent after the council of Jerusalem. It read: “The apostles and elders, your brothers, To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia.” As I read James, I couldn’t help but remark on the similarity of James’ epistle with the discourses of Jesus, who often in the same story or parable spoke to both the Jewish believers and unbelievers. So the question is, Why was it so addressed to only Jews/Israelites. Was it because there were no Gentile believers at the time of writing? That would make it early indeed. However, I believe it was written to the Jews/Israelites because James knew that judgement was coming on them soon, as the Old Testament had foretold, and the Lord himself had foretold. James speaks of conditions

⁵ **Romans 1:7** To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints

1 Corinthians 1:2 To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ - their Lord and ours:

2 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God in Corinth, together with all the saints throughout Achaia:

Galatians 1:1 Paul, an apostle - sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead-- and all the brothers with me, To the churches in Galatia:

Ephesus 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:

Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

Colossians 1:1-2 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse:

1 Thessalonians 1:1 Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

2 Thessalonians 1:1 Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

1 Timothy 1:1-2 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, To Timothy my true son in the faith:

2 Timothy 1:1-2 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my dear son:

Titus 1:1,4 Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ -- To Titus, my true son in our common faith:

Philemon 1:1-2 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church that meets in your home:

Hebrews 1:12 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son,
1 Peter 1:1-2 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God’s elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood:

2 Peter 1:1 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours:

1 John 2:1 My dear children, I write this to you

2 John 1:1 The elder, To the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in the truth.

3 John 1:1 The elder, To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

Jude 1:1 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ:

Revelation 1:1-4 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near. John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia:

in Judea which were much like what Josephus reported as existing just before James execution. James says: James 5:1 “Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you.” James 5:9 “The Judge is standing at the door!” Because of this I believe that James wrote this letter not long before his death about 62 AD.

James – James writes to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations (i.e. Jews, both believing and unbelieving) from Jerusalem 62 AD.

Jude – First of all, I should get my most controversial theory out of the way. For years, as I read Jude, I couldn’t help to be troubled by the idea, that of all authors of the books of scripture, Jude was the only one who was not recorded in Acts as taking any role in the development of the Church. His book was addressed to the universal church and was accepted in the early church. But why? Just because he was the Lord’s brother? Paul seems to indicate that at least two of the Lord’s brothers traveled in the ministry of the word:

1 Corinthians 9:5 Don’t we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord’s brothers and Cephas?

Why aren’t they mentioned in Acts? I believe they are! I believe Judas is!

Acts 15:22 Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, two men who were leaders among the brothers.

We know that the relatives of Jesus never mentioned their family connection and downplayed it. Witness the fact that James never mentioned it in his epistle, and neither did Jude. Also, the book of Acts never mentions that James the leader of the Jerusalem church was the Lord’s brother, we depend on Paul (Galatians 1:18-19) to tell us that. It is possible they took this name to evade any attempt to glorify them because of their family. It is certain that Jesus’ brother Jude was prominent in the Church. After all, he wrote a book of the Bible! The Jude mentioned in the passage above was sent as an envoy of the Jerusalem church to the Antioch church with the expectation that he would carry some weight. Who better than the Lord’s brother? Barsabbas means “son of peace.” But so far, this is the wildest of speculations. What led me down this path? There is another Barsabbas in Acts. You will find him in Acts 1:23. At the first meeting of the Church Peter proposed that someone must be nominated to take the vacated spot of Judas Iscariot. According to Peter he had to meet the following qualification:

Acts 1:21-22a Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us.

We know from Acts 1:14 that Jesus’ brothers were at that meeting. We also know that any one of them would have been one of the very few who qualified under Peter’s rule. We know that the second oldest brother was named Joseph. In several listings of the Lord’s brothers, only Joseph and James were mentioned at all!

Matthew 27:55-56 Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses (Joseph), and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.

Mark 15:40-41 Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses (Joseph), and Salome.

Mark 15:46-47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses (Joseph) saw where he was laid.

It would not have been unlikely that Joseph would have been picked as a replacement. He, after all, had known the Lord longer than any of the disciples. I believe that it is not an unreasonable speculation that Judas Barsabbas in Acts was the brother of Joseph Barsabbas in Acts. If that is granted, I believe that it is not much more unreasonable to speculate that these two brothers, Joseph and Judas, were in fact the Lord's two brothers of the same names. Therefore, I believe that Judas Barsabbas, was one of the two envoys sent with James letter to Antioch (along with Silas), and was the same Jude/Judas that wrote this letter and also the brother of James, Joseph and Jesus Christ.

There is little in the epistle of Jude to date or place the letter, except the name of the author who was "a brother of James" (Jude 1:1a). The way his brother James is referenced without any further explanation, indicates that that the letter was probably written some time after the death of James, the brother of John, who was one of the top leaders of the church until his death in 44 AD. Any letter written close to or prior to that time could not have been so addressed without causing confusion. I have to believe that, at a minimum, it was sent after the Council of Jerusalem in 50 AD when James would have become familiar to the Church abroad because of his letter to all the Churches, and probably also the time when Jude first became an envoy to the Gentile churches. From the following verse, it was probably some time after the death of most of the Apostles. Notice the past tense of "foretold."

Jude 1:17 But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold.

Also, among the attacks on sound teaching that Jude discusses, there is no mention of the Judaizers. This, and also because of the way the letter is addressed to the universal church ("To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ" Jude 1:1b) I have to believe it was after the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem in 70 AD,

Jude – Jude writes to the universal Church from outside of Jerusalem circa 75 AD to 100 AD.