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| 61 AD | When he arrived at Rome, being a trusted prisoner, Paul was allowed to live in a private home along with a soldier who guarded him. (Acts 28:15-16). Shortly after, leaders of the Jews came to him and Paul expounded Christ from the Law of Moses and the prophets. Some believed, but others did not. (Acts 28:23-29). |
| 63 AD | After that, Paul remained in his own hired house for two whole years and received all who came to him (implying he was released in AD 63). He preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ. No one hindered him (Acts 28:30-31). |
| 64 AD | <p>Nero watched Rome burn (June 18-19 from Mecena’s Tower). Greatly delighted with the beauty of the flames, he sang of the destruction of Troy (Tacitus, <i>Annals</i>, Bk. 15. ch. 38-40, 5:271-277; Suetonius, <i>Nero</i>, Bk. 6. ch. 38., 2:149,151).</p> <p>To quell the rumor that he had started the fire, Nero falsely accused the Christians and punished them severely. Some were covered with beasts’ skins and torn by dogs; others were crucified and still other bathed in oil so that when night fell their bodies were lit and turned into torches. This was the first persecution against the Christians by the Roman emperors. Up until this, Rome considered Christianity as merely a sect of Judaism – a religion recognized and tolerated by the state. But after the burning of Rome “the way” was seen as a separate entity. Eventually, the Christians became pitied by much of the populace (Tacitus, <i>Annals</i>, Bk. 15. ch. 44. 5:283 & 285).</p> <p>Timothy, who was being kept as a prisoner with Paul during his first incarceration in Rome, was freed (Heb. 13:23). This would have occurred before the city burned and the persecution of the Christians began, else Nero would have had him killed.</p> |
| 63 AD | During his first imprisonment in Rome, Paul wrote the letter to the Hebrews stating that Timothy had already been released. Paul promised that if Timothy returned to him soon they both would come to them. This indicates he knew he also was about to be freed. He added greetings from the brethren in Italy (Heb. 13:23-24). |
| 63 AD | <p>Since the 4th century the prevailing opinion has been that after 2 years under house arrest in Rome & after giving the gospel to many (Acts 28:30-31), Paul was freed.</p> <p>Reasons for his release with Nero on the throne: (1) It was God’s plan for Paul’s life, (2) he was a Roman citizen, (3) Julius, the centurion who was in charge of bringing the apostle to Rome and who witnessed the miracles on Malta, undoubtedly gave an excellent account of him upon delivering Paul to Caesar, & (4) the report from Festus, which would have laid no fault whatsoever against Paul concerning the empire. It would have also stated he would have set Paul free had not he, being a Roman citizen, appealed to Caesar because the Jewish leaders wanted to kill him over religious differences (Acts 25:23-27, 26:31-32). From here, a probable course of events is:</p> <p>Upon his release, Paul apparently went to Asia (a province in western Turkey) and stayed for a time with Philemon at Colossae (Phile. 22). It is possible that afterward Paul fulfilled his stated intention and hope of going to Spain (Rom. 15:24 & 28).</p> <p>Indeed, Eusebius (AD 325) did report that it was a common tradition in his day that Paul made his defense at Rome, was released, resumed his journeys, that he was brought back to Rome where he was slain (<i>Ecclesiastical History</i>, Loeb: Vol. 1, Bk. 2, p. 165-167). In addition, Clement of Rome (c. AD 95-96) implied that Paul did go to Spain (as he had intended and so said c. AD 60, cp. Rom. 15:24, 28), when he wrote that in the apostle’s journeys “he reached the limit of the west” (1 Clement 5).</p> |

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| | <p>However, the most telling factor in favor of two Roman imprisonments with a period of freedom in between is that Scripture demands it. First, Paul's Pastoral Epistles (1 & 2 Timothy, Titus) allude to events which do not fit within the Book of Acts and mention individuals not found in his missionary journeys. Second, and decisive, is the leaving of Trophimus sick at Miletus (2 Tim. 4:20). This could not have happened during Paul's last journey to Jerusalem, for Trophimus was not left then (Acts 20:4, 21:29). Nor could it have been on Paul's journey to appear before Caesar at Rome, for then he sailed past Miletus and did not stopover.</p> <p>Thus, we logically discern that the Pastorals do not fit <i>within</i> the Book of Acts because they are about a period <i>after</i> the end of Acts. Paul must have been released (for lack of evidence), followed by a short interval of ministry and travel, during which he wrote 1 Timothy & Titus. Then Trophimus was left sick at Miletus, a second incarceration took place, Paul penned 2nd Timothy, and was executed in AD 67.</p> |
| 65 AD | To Spain or not, Paul came to the isle of Crete , preached the gospel, left Titus behind to set things in order and ordain elders in every city (Tit. 1:5). Paul went to Ephesus, and when he went on to Macedonia he left Timothy behind to oversee the Ephesian church (1 Tim. 1:3, 3:14-15). In Macedonia , he would surely have stayed with the Philippians , as he had previously promised (Phil. 1:25-26, 2:24). |
| 65 AD | Shortly after this, Paul wrote to Titus directing him to come to him at Nicopolis (on the Adriatic coast of Greece) for he planned to winter there. (Tit. 3:12-13) |
| 66 AD | Winter being over, Paul rejoined Timothy and went to Troas . There he left his cloak, books, and parchments behind (2 Tim. 4:13; because he fled to avoid arrest or was arrested there?). Paul left Trophimus sick at Miletus (1 Tim. 3:14; 2 Tim. 4:13, 20). |
| 66 AD | Paul was arrested and brought to Rome for the second time . Unlike the house arrest at his first imprisonment, this time he was placed in a Roman prison, chained, and treated as a criminal (2 Tim. 2:9). At a preliminary hearing , Paul successfully defended himself "out of the mouth of the lion" but was not released by Nero (2 Tim 4:16-17). He was sent back to prison to await an official trial. He seems not to have believed this would come up until after the coming winter (2 Tim. 4:13 & 21). |
| 67 AD | By revelation, the Lord made both Peter and Paul aware that their death was near (2 Pet. 1:14; 2 Tim. 4:6-7). Paul sent a 2nd letter to Timothy at Ephesus asking that he come before winter: bring Mark, the parchments, cloak & books, he had left at Troas (2 Tim 4:9, 11, 13, & 21). It is most doubtful that Timothy arrived in time. |
| 67 AD | <p>On the 29th day of June, Paul was beheaded at Rome, as the records of both the eastern and western church confirm. Chrysostom affirmed that the day of Paul's death was known with greater certainty than the death of Alexander the Great himself (Chrysostom, II Corinthians, <i>Homily</i> Loeb Classical Library: Book 12, p. 402).</p> <p>In a letter to the Romans, Dionysius the bishop of the Corinthians affirmed that Peter also suffered martyrdom at the same time as Paul (Eusebius, <i>Ecclesiastical History</i>, Loeb: Vol. 1, Bk. 2, pp. 181 & 183). Origen stated that Peter was crucified at Rome, with his head downward, for he had so requested (Origen, <i>Genesis</i>, tome 3 and cited by Eusebius in <i>Ecclesiastical History</i>, Loeb: Vol. 1, Bk. 3, p. 191). The prediction of Christ, which he had made to Peter, was thereby fulfilled:</p> <p>"When thou art old, thou shalt stretch forth thine hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." (John 21:18 & 19)</p> |