WBW | Unpacking Acts | pt.2 - "The Timeline of The First Church"

The purpose of this study is to illustrate how the young Church advanced amidst seasons of struggle and growth - during the first Century. We'll set our scope on the period between Jesus' ascension and John the Apostle's death. Acts provides an outline for the first 30 years; we'll lean on early church and Roman historians to fill in the next 40 years. We'll also attempt to date the NT books, the deaths of the 12 Apostles (the disciples minus Judas, plus Paul), and key events occurring in the Roman Empire that would've affected the Church.

I. THE SEASON OF GATHERING				
YEAR	CHURCH EVENT	ROMAN EMP.		
30	 ACTS 1 Jesus Death, Resurrection, Ascension ACTS 2 Pentecost: the 120 are "baptized" in the Holy Spirit; 3,000 believe Believers live Spirit-full lives; God added to their number daily 	Tiberius is Emperor of Rome		
	Roman Empire Asia Pontus Phrygia Cappadocia Phrygia Mesopotamia Parthian Empire Media Elam Pentecost in Jerusalem 30 AD Acts 2:5-12 "Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven." Roman Pontus Phrygia Cappadocia Phrygia Cappadocia Parthian Empire Media Elam Egypt Arabia			
31	 ACTS 3-4:31 Peter heals a crippled man in Temple, draws a crowd Peter & John arrested by Sanhedrin, released with warning 			
32-33	 "The number of men who believed grew to about 5,000" ACTS 4:32-5:42 Joseph (Barnabas) sells a field and gives full price to the church Ananias and Sapphira lie to the Holy Spirit and die The Jerusalem church meets regularly in Solomon's Colonnade Apostles perform many miracles "More and more" believed and were "added to their number" Apostles arrested, but released by an angel Arrested again, flogged & released with threat Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news" 			
33-34	 ACTS 6:1-7 The number of disciples was increasing Seven men, who were "full of the Spirit", chosen as Deacons The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased A large number of Jewish priests believed 			

^{• 7} times, Luke emphasizes the growth during this initial season; but it's all still "in Jerusalem".

YEAR CHURCH EVENT ROMAN I ACTS 6:8-8:40 Saul arrives in Jerusalem Stephen debates Jews; tried by Sanhedrin and stoned Saul unleashes persecution; all except the apostles scatter Forced to "scatter" by persecution, the church "scatters" seeds of the Gospel everywhere they go: new places and new people.	EMP.
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Philip (of Acts 6, not the Disciple) evangelizes Samaria	
Peter & John go to Samaria to check out converts	
The expanding of the church perpetually forced the Jewish Christians to	
adopt a new paradigm for just how big the scope of this Gospel really was.	
 Samaritans "received the Holy Spirit" (transfer & sign H.S. motifs) Philip leads Ethiopian to faith (seed of the Gospel to Africa) 	
35 ACTS 9:1-19 • Saul converted on road to Damascus	
Saul is "filled with" the Holy Spirit (transfer & vocation H.S. motifs)	
Saul goes to Arabia for three years (see Galatians 1:17)	
37 Caligula become	es Emperor
38 ACTS 9:20-30	
Saul returns to preach in Damascus; Jews plot to kill him	
Saul escapes to Jerusalem; Barnabas introduces him to disciples	
Saul stays with Peter 15 days (see Gal. 1:18-19)	
Saul debates Grecian Jews; life is threatened; flees to Tarsus	
39 ACTS 9:31-43	
Saul preaches throughout Cilicia & Syria (see Gal.1:21) Responsition store in Releating for "a time" shurch ingresses in number.	
 Persecution stops in Palestine for "a time"; church increases in number Peter in Judea; heals Aeneas in Lydda; raises Tabitha in Joppa 	
	atue of himaelf
40 ACTS 10:1-48 • Peter's vision to "not call anything impure God has made clean" Caligula orders a state to be erected in the	
Peter called to Caesarea to preach to Cornelius, a Gentile Jerusalem; Herod Agentile Jerusalem; Herod Agentile	grippa delays to
Cornelius' household believes; Spirit "came upon" them all (sign H.S. motif) prevent re	evolt
41 ACTS 11:1-18 Caligula assassina	nted; Claudius
Peter defends entering a Gentile house to Church leaders in Jerusalem becomes Er	
42 ACTS 11:19-24	
Missionaries (scattered during Jer. persecution) reach Antioch; preach to	
Greeks; a great number of people believe The "mixed" church of Antioch is born (law & Gentile)	
 The "mixed" church of Antioch is born (Jew & Gentile) Barnabas sent by the Jerusalem church to visit Antioch church 	
	s Britain
43 ACTS 11:25-30 Rome invade: • Barnabas goes to Tarsus to get Saul; brings him back to Antioch	o =mail
Believers are first called "Christians" in Antioch	
Agabus, a prophet, prophecies to Antioch of coming famine in Jer.	
Antioch church sends Saul & Barnabas to Jerusalem with offering	
44 ACTS 12:1-24 Judaea is annexed	
James (John's brother) is killed by Herod Agrippa (first Apostle martyred) province after the d provinc	
Peter is arrested; an angel releases him Agripp Roman/Jewish tens	
• Herod Agrippa dies (an anger of the Lord struck film down)	moreasing
"The word of God continued to spread and flourish"	

YEAR	CHURCH EVENT	NT BOOK	ROMAN EMP.
45	ACTS 12:25 Saul and Barnabas return to Antioch from "mercy mission" to Jerusalem; bring Mark with them		Widespread famine across Empire (2 yrs)
46	ACTS 13:1-12 Saul, Barnabas, Mark leave for "Paul's First Missionary Journey"		
	Paul, 46-48 AD First Missionary Journey Acts 13:4—14:28		
	GALATIA LYCAONIA A SIA LYCAONIA CILCIA Tarsus Perga Perga Derbe Seleucia CYPRUS Salamis Paphos Attalia Paphos CAPPADOCIA CILCIA Tarsus Seleucia Syria		
	 Antioch> Selucia> Cyprus> Salamis> Paphos Saul, now called Paul (filled w/ the Spirit) rebukes Elymas the sorcerer; Elymas blinded; Proconsul Sergius Paulus believes 		
47	 ACTS 13:13-14:21 Paphos> Perga in Pamphylia Mark leaves; returns to Jerusalem Perga> Antioch in Pisidia Jews oppose Paul; Paul declares "we now turn to Gentiles" Antioch in Pisidia> Iconium Many Jews & Gentiles believe; others oppose; plot to kill Paul Iconium> Lystra (where Lois, Eunice & Timothy lived) people try to sacrifice to Paul & Barnabas; Paul stoned but lives Lystra> Derbe 	James writes James from Jerusalem	
48	 ACTS 14:21-15:35 Paul revisits the cities he had been in; returns to Antioch, Syria Judaizers confuse Antioch church; Peter led astray (see Gal. 2:13) Judaizers present first recorded doctrinal/theological challenge for the church Paul opposes Peter & Judaizers (see Gal. 2:14) Jerusalem Council held to resolve the "circumcision issue" Paul and Barnabas attend; en route they meet Gentiles in Phoenicia & Samaria who had converted The Council (led by James; moved by Peter's speech) determines, "we should not make it difficult for Gentiles turning to God", "it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved" Council drafts a letter "to the Gentile Believers"; sends Silas with Paul & 		

49	ACTS 15:36-16:5 From Antioch, Paul writes to the Galatian church, against the Judaizers (who had gone there and caused problems) Paul and Barnabas argue (over Mark) and separate Barnabas and Mark go to evangelize Cyprus Paul and Silas leaves on "Paul's Second Missionary Journey" Paul, 49-52 AD Second Missionary Journey Acts 15:39 - 18:22 Phrygia Philippi Samothrace Tross (Troy) Galatia Cilician Gales Lystra Derbe Centhrega Sea Antioch Olimbia Delphi Sea Antioch Sea Antioch, Syria> through "Cilician Gates"> Derbe> Lystra In Lystra, Paul meets Timothy, brings him along	Paul writes Galatians from Antioch in Syria	Emperor Claudius "expelled the Jews from Rome since they rioted constantly at the instigation of Chrestus (Christ)" - Suetonius, Roman historian
50	 ACTS 16:6-18:8 Paul travels through the region of Phrygia and Galatia Holy Spirit kept them from preaching in Asia Paul reaches the northern border of Mysia Holy Spirit "would not allow" them to enter Bithynia Paul goes to Troas (ancient Troy) Paul has a vision of a Macedonian man calling for help Luke joins the mission ("we" language starts here) Troas> Samothrace> Macedonia: Neapolis> Philippi In Philippi, Paul starts church; imprisoned; delivered by earthquake Amphipolis> Apollonia> Thessolonica In Thessolonica, Paul preaches, starts churchand a riot Paul flees to Berea Bereans are students of scripture; many Jews & Greeks believe Paul goes to Athens (alone), invited to speak at the Areopagus Paul goes to Corinth (alone); meets Aquila & Priscilla; makes tents Silas, Timothy come from Thessalonica w/ offering & letter for Paul Paul responds to the Thessalonians with First Thessalonians Paul starts Corinthian church, predominantly Gentile 	Paul writes First Thessalonians from Corinth	Rome names the days after the 7 known planets Rome founds the city of Londinium (London) in Britain Gamaliel (Acts 5:34-39) dies
51	ACTS 18:9-17 Paul stays in Corinth a year and a half.	Paul writes Second Thessalonians	
52	 Writes 2nd Thessalonians in response to letter from Thessalonians ACTS 18:18-22 Paul (with Aquila and Priscilla) goes to Ephesus via Cenchreae Paul leaves Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus and returns to Antioch, via Caesarea & Jerusalem (concluding his 2nd Journey) 	THOSE OF THE PARTY	

53	Paul leaves for his "Third Missionary Journey" Amphipolis Philippi Apolicnia Pelala		
	 Antioch in Syria> Galatia and Phrygia (strengthening disciples) Meanwhile in Ephesus, Aquila & Priscilla meet & teach Apollos Apollos goes to Corinth Paul arrives in Ephesus Prays for new believers and "the Holy Spirit came upon them" Taught in synagogue 3 months until Jews became "obstinate" Taught daily in the Greek lecture hall of Tyrannus for two years 		
54	ACTS 19:11-22 Still in Ephesus, God does "extraordinary miracles" through Paul Seven sons of Sceva exposed; revival starts in Ephesus Paul sends Timothy to Macedonia ahead of him; stays in Ephesus Philip (the disciple) martyred by Jews in Phrygia		Nero, age 16, becomes Emperor
55	 Still in Ephesus, Paul writes letter to Corinthian church (lost) (1 Cor 5:9f) A delegation from the Corinthian church arrives in Ephesus with support as well as problems and questions (see 1 Cor 16:17). Paul writes a second letter to Corinth (aka, First Corinthians). Paul follows this letter with a brief visit to Corinth (2 Cor. 2:1) Paul writes a 3rd letter to Corinth (lost); sends w/ Titus (see 2 Cor. 2:3f, 7:8f) who stays to mentor Corinthian church. (7:15) 	Paul writes First Corinthians from Ephesus	
56	ACTS 19:23-20:2 Still in Ephesus, Demetrius opposes Paul, a riot ensues Paul leaves Ephesus, travels thru Macedonia Writes 4th letter to Corinth (2nd Cor.), sends w/ Luke (2 Cor. 2:13; 8:17-18) Paul reaches Corinth by winter	Paul writes Second Corinthians from Macedonia	
57	 ACTS 20:3-21:16 In Corinth, Paul writes to the Roman church (aka, Romans) Paul travels by land back thru Macedonia, sailing from Philippi to Troas Troas > Assos > Mitylene > Chios > Samos > Miletus Paul encourages and says "goodbye" to Ephesian elders Miletus > Kos > Rhodes > Patara > Tyre > Ptolemais > Caesarea In Caesarea, Agabus prophesies Paul's captivity; friends plead with him not to go to Jerusalem but "he would not be dissuaded" 	Paul writes Romans from Corinth	

YEAR	THE SEASON OF CAPTIVITY and PRODUCTIVIT CHURCH EVENT	NT BOOK
57	 ACTS 21:17-24:27 Paul arrives in Jerusalem Meets with James and elders of the Jerusalem church to tell them "what God had done among the Gentiles" When seen in the temple, Paul is seized and beaten by Jews, but rescued and taken into custody by Roman commander Paul presents his testimony to the angry mob, and stands before the Sanhedrin the next day Because Jews plan to kill Paul, he's transferred to Caesarea Paul appears before Governor Felix Remains in prison in Caesarea for two years 	
59	Paul appears before Governor Festus and King Herod Agrippa II Paul "appeals to Caesar" (Nero) so taken to Rome under guard Prison in Caesarea 57-59 AD Trip to Rome & Ship Wreck 59 AD Prison in Rome 60-62 AD Acts 27:1 - 28:16 Rhegium Syracuse Rhegium Syracuse Caesarea > Sidon > Myra > Fair Havens Attempting to reach Phoenix for winter (against Paul's warning) they're taken off course and shipwrecked in Malta	
60	ACTS 28:11-29 • Malta > Syracuse > Rhegium > Puteoli > Rome • In Rome, Paul is allowed to live by himself under house arrest • Andrew (Peter's brother) martyred in Greece	Paul writes Ephesians while under house arrest Jude (a brother of Jesus) writes Jude (alternate date: 65-70AD)
61	 ACTS 28:30-31 For 2 years, Paul received visitors and taught about Jesus "with all boldness and without hindrance!" 	Paul writes Philippians while under house arrest
62	 Peter comes to Rome and writes First Peter Paul is released from Roman imprisonment. Paul visits churches in Greece (Corinth) and Macedonia. In Macedonia, Paul writes a letter to Timothy (aka, First Timothy) who was pastoring in Ephesus. Paul leaves for Spain (?) 	Paul writes Colossians and Philemon while under house arrest Peter writes First Peter from Rome Paul writes First Timothy from Macedonia

Acts takes us to 62AD. After, we must rely on early church historians to fill the gaps. Dating for the Apostle's deaths and NT books is much debated. The order I chose seems to be the majority opinion among those respected in those areas of debate.

V. T	V. THE PERIOD OF MARTYRDOM and THE CHRISTIAN MANIFESTO				
YR	CHURCH EVENT	NT BOOK	ROMAN EMP.		
63	James (the son of Alphaeus) is martyred in Egypt				
64	 Peter writes <u>Second Peter</u> from Rome Peter is martyred in Rome Paul returns from Spain (?); goes to Crete. Paul leaves Titus at Crete (Titus 1:5) Paul goes to Corinth; writes letter to <u>Titus</u> Paul spends winter in Neapolis (Titus 3:12) 	Peter writes Second Peter from Rome Mark writes his gospel Paul writes Titus from Corinth	Rome is burnt; citizens suspect Nero Nero begins Rome's first persecution of Christians Temple in Jerusalem completed (began in 20 BC)		
65	Paul travels through Macedonia and Asia	Luke writes his gospel and Acts			
66	Paul visits Colosse, Ephesus, Miletus	Matthew writes his gospel	Jews revolt against Rome in Judea; led by the Zealots who drive Rome from Jerusalem		
67	 Paul arrested in Troas; taken to Rome Paul writes to Timothy (Second Timothy) Paul martyred in Rome Linus (a disciple of Peter) becomes bishop of church in Rome, in the wake of Peter & Paul's deaths 	Paul writes Second Timothy from Roman Prison (Paul's last preserved letter)	Rome goes to war w/ Judea Galilee conquered; 37,000 Jews taken to stadium in Tiberias		
68			Essenes hide their scrolls in caves near the Dead Sea to save from Rome Nero commits suicide; Galba becomes Emperor		
69	 James (Jesus' brother) is martyred in Jerusalem Ignatius (a disciple of John) becomes bishop of church in Antioch, Syria (until 107AD) 		Year of the Four Emperors: 1. Galba (assassinated) 2. Otho (suicide) 3. Vitellius (killed in battle) 4. Vespasian		
70	 Thomas martyred in India Matthew martyred in Ethiopia Bartholomew martyred in Armenia Simeon, replaces James as bishop of church in Jerusalem (until 107AD) 		General Titus conquerors Jerusalem; Temple is destroyed		
72	Thaddeus martyred in Edessa				
74	Simon the Zealot martyred in Syria				
79	Anacletus (a disciple of Peter) becomes bishop of church in Rome (after Linus' death)	The book of Hebrews written by unknown author from an unknown location (possibly Apollos from Corinth)	Vespasian dies; Titus becomes Emperor Mt. Vesuvius erupts; burying Pompei		

8 of the 12 Apostles (7 disciples + Paul) and James (Jesus' brother & leader of the Jerusalem church) are martyred are in this season. James (John's brother), Philip, and Andrew had been martyred earlier; only John remains.

But the 3 <u>synoptic gospels</u> (forever chronicling the life, death, & resurrection of Jesus), <u>Acts</u> (the story of the early church & announcement of the Age of the Spirit), and <u>Hebrews</u> (a theological Christian treatise) are written in this otherwise dark season.

Historically, Jesus' prophecy of the Temple's destruction is fulfilled; dramatically signaling of God's rejection of the old order.

VI. THE SEASON OF JOHN, the LAST APOSTLE

YR	CHURCH EVENT	NT BOOK	ROMAN EMP.
81			Titus murdered; Domitian becomes Emperor
85		John writes his gospel from Ephesus	
88	<u>Clement</u> (worked w/ Paul, see Phil.4:3) becomes the bishop of church in Rome (until 99AD)		
90		John writes 1 , 2 , 3 John from Ephesus	
93	Polycarp (a disciple of John) becomes bishop of the church in Smyrna (by John's appointment) Ignatius, Clement, and Polycarp are the 3 chief Apostolic Fathers of the early church.		Domitian's "Reign of Terror" begins, widespread persecution of Christians & Jews
94	John exiled to the Isle of Patmos by order of Domitian According to Tertullian, that was after John was plunged into a vat of boiling oil during the Colosseum games - but suffered no injury from it.		
96	 John writes <u>Revelation</u>, sends to the 7 churches of Asia John released from Patmos and returns to Ephesus 	John writes Revelation on Patmos	Domitian assassinated; Nerva becomes emperor; releases Domitian's political enemies
98	John, the last apostle, dies of natural causes in Ephesus		Nerva dies; Tajan becomes Emperor (until 117AD)

- Persecution would come against the church in waves, reaching the peak of it's intensity under <u>Emperor Diocletion</u> in 303-311 AD.
- In 311, Diocletion died and Emperor Galerius issued the "Edict of Toleration"
- In 312, General Constantine "converts" to Christianity while on a military campaign in Italy
- In 322, St. Peter's Church, the first Christian building was built in Rome
- In 325, Emperor Constantine makes Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire