

Epistles Attributed to Paul

by Mary Fairchild

The Epistles are letters written to the fledgling churches and individual believers in the earliest days of Christianity. The [Apostle Paul](#) wrote the first 13 of these letters, each addressing a specific situation or problem. In terms of volume, Paul's writings constitute about one-fourth of the entire New Testament.

Four of Paul's letters, the Prison Epistles, were composed while he was confined in prison. Three letters called the Pastoral Epistles were directed toward church leaders, Timothy and Titus, and discuss ministerial matters.

The Epistles to Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Thessalonica

- [Romans](#)—The book of Romans, the Apostle Paul's inspirational masterpiece, explains God's plan of salvation by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.
- [1 Corinthians](#)—Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to confront and correct the young church in Corinth as it was struggling with matters of disunity, immorality, and immaturity.
- [2 Corinthians](#)—This epistle is a deeply personal letter from Paul to the church in Corinth, giving great transparency into Paul's heart.
- [Galatians](#)—The book of Galatians warns that we are not saved by obeying the Law but by faith in Jesus Christ, teaching us how to be free from the burden of the Law.
- [1 Thessalonians](#)—Paul's first letter to the church in Thessalonica encourages new believers to stand firm in the face of strong persecution.
- [2 Thessalonians](#)—Paul's second letter to the church in Thessalonica was written to clear up confusion about end times and the second coming of Christ.

The Prison Epistles

Between 60 and 62 CE, the Apostle Paul was under house arrest in Rome, one of several of his incarcerations recorded in the Bible. The four known letters in the Canon from that period include three to the churches at Ephesus, Colosse, and Philippi; and a personal letter to his friend Philemon.

- [Ephesians \(Prison Epistle\)](#)—The book of Ephesians gives practical, encouraging advice on living a life that honors God, which is why it's still relevant in a conflict-ridden world.
- [Philippians](#) (Prison Epistle)—Philippians is one of Paul's most personal letters, written to the church in Philippi. In it, we learn the secret to Paul's contentment.
- [Colossians](#) (Prison Epistle)—The book of Colossians warns believers against the dangers which threaten them.
- [Philemon](#) (Prison Epistle)—Philemon, one of the shortest books in the Bible, teaches an important lesson on forgiveness as Paul deals with the issue of a runaway slave.

The Pastoral Epistles

The pastoral epistles include three letters which were sent to [Timothy](#), the first-century Christian bishop of Ephesus, and Titus, a Christian missionary and church leader based on the island of Crete. Second Timothy is the only one that scholars agree was likely written by Paul himself; the others may have been written after Paul died, between 80–100 CE.

- [1 Timothy](#)—The book of 1 Timothy describes Christ-centered living in the Christian church, directed to both leaders and members.
- [2 Timothy](#)—Written by Paul just before his death, 2 Timothy is a moving letter, teaching us how we can be confident even during hardship.
- [Titus](#)—The book of Titus is about choosing competent church leaders, a topic especially relevant in today's immoral, materialistic society.

from: <https://www.learnreligions.com/epistles-of-the-bible-700271>

See next page for a possible chronology of the letters.

A Possible Chronology

Taken from: Marshall, Travis & Paul (2002) Exploring the New Testament Volume 2: The Letters and Revelation (London SPCK).

A POSSIBLE CHRONOLOGY

The most recent detailed study by Riesner gives the basis for the following outline. Events dated by Riesner are in lower case type; events in Paul's life that can be fitted into this framework are in upper case type. Possible periods for the composition of the letters have been included in this table, but in several cases these are very uncertain.

- 30 Crucifixion of Jesus
- 31–2 Death of Stephen and conversion of Paul
PAUL IN ARABIA AND TARSUS
PAUL IN ANTIOCH
- 45 Visit to Jerusalem to bring famine relief
FIRST MISSIONARY CAMPAIGN IN GALATIA
Galatians
CHURCH COUNCIL IN JERUSALEM
SECOND MISSIONARY CAMPAIGN IN MACEDONIA AND ACHAIA
- 50 Paul's arrival in Corinth (for upwards of 18 months)
1 and 2 Thessalonians
RETURN TO ANTIOCH
THIRD MISSIONARY CAMPAIGN IN ASIA
1 and 2 Corinthians
- 55 Paul's departure from Ephesus
VISIT TO MACEDONIA AND ACHAIA
Romans
RETURN TO JERUSALEM
ARREST AND IMPRISONMENTS IN JERUSALEM AND CAESAREA
- 59 Paul's departure for Rome
- 60 Paul's arrival in Rome
TWO YEARS UNDER HOUSE ARREST IN ROME
Philippians
Philemon, Colossians
Ephesians
1 and 2 Timothy, Titus