

The Apostle Paul in “The Acts of the Apostles”

by Derek Thompson

www.5icm.org.au

Introduction

Nearly everything we know about the Apostle Paul's life is derived from the book of Acts and the collection of Paul's letters. Sometimes these two sources are difficult to harmonise. This has led some scholars to give lower priority to the historicity of the book of Acts than Paul's account, which they take as being more likely to be correct.¹ Scholars who hold a “higher” view of the inspiration of Scripture seek solutions that allow them to accept both as true. Although, due to the paucity of information, it is not possible to prove conclusively any particular solution, this essay will present a credible solution that accepts the integrity of both Paul's letters and the book of Acts.

Authorship of Acts

The authorship of Acts has a bearing on the reliability of its portrayal of Paul. The author of Acts was the same person as the author of the Gospel of Luke as is clear from their prefaces (Lk 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1). Traditionally Luke, a travelling companion of Paul, has been credited with the authorship of both documents.²

There are a number of sections in Acts where the narrative includes the author by the use of the personal pronoun, “we”. The author of the “we” sections of Acts appears to be the same as that for the whole work as far as vocabulary and style are concerned (Morris, 1974, p. 17). It is unlikely that the author was using the travel diary of someone else because he would not have retained the use of the pronoun. Paul's travelling companions that were in Rome and mentioned in Paul's epistles were Titus, Demas, Crescens, Jesus Justus, Epaphras, Epaphroditus, and Luke (Phil 4:18; Col 4:11-14; 2Tim 4:10-11; Philemon 23-24).³ Paul speaks of Luke as “the beloved physician” (Col 4:14)⁴ indicating that Luke was more than an acquaintance. Only Luke remained with Paul at Rome (2Tim 4:11).⁵

Some scholars have questioned Luke's authorship of Acts because of concerns over the historical accuracy of Acts and the fact that there is no mention of Paul's letters. Some scholars think that Luke was at least familiar with Paul's letters because of similarities in terminology and concepts. Acts omits any controversy over Paul's apostleship in avoiding the term altogether. Acts affirms Paul's legitimacy to the church, and this would elicit the acceptance of his letters (Walker, 1985,

1 Paul Achtemeier and John Knox take Paul's letters as having priority over Acts (Gaventa, 1990, p. 150).

2 The fact that Luke was not someone of prominence, like an apostle or church leader, is also reason to believe that his name's early association with the work was not by chance (Morris, 1974, p. 15).

3 Blaisdell suggested that Epaphras might be the same person as Epaphroditus and if so, he would be a likely candidate as the diarist of the “we” sections used by Luke in Acts (Blaisdell, 1920, pp. 148-149).

4 The language of Luke's Gospel and Acts do not provide strong evidence that the author had a medical background, although the omission of the comment about the woman with the haemorrhage that “She had endured much under many physicians” (Mk 5:26) would be consistent with a sympathetic view of physicians (cf. Lk 8:43). Loveday Alexander wrote a monograph on Lk 1:1-4 arguing that Luke-Acts is consistent with the author having had a “scientific” education, so that he could easily have been a physician. Many years ago H J Cadbury demolished W K Hobart's argument that the language of Luke-Acts showed the author was a physician, but Alexander's work pioneered a revival in support for the traditional view.

5 Enslin said he could not find any evidence of a long personal relationship between Luke and Paul in Acts (Enslin, 1938, p. 83). On the other hand, Watson has shown that the way Luke records Paul's speeches in Acts shows a good knowledge of how Paul speaks as displayed in his epistles (Watson 2000, p. 212).

pp. 14-17). Steve Watson says that Luke demonstrated personal knowledge of Paul's language patterns as evidenced in similarities between Paul's farewell speech to the Ephesians (Acts 20:18-35) and 1 Thessalonians (Watson, 2000, p. 212)⁶. If Luke had not known Paul well, why would he make him the central figure in Acts (Morris, 1974, p. 21)?

The Historicity of Acts

Luke's purpose in writing determined the material he included and the manner in which he presented the narrative. Although there is much about this early period of church history that is unknown to us, archaeological discoveries have tended to confirm Luke's accuracy rather than discredit it.

The following reasons have been given for doubting Luke's accuracy as a historian.

1. Luke describes the conversion of Paul three times (Acts 18:6; 22:21; 26:17). The differences in the accounts have led some to think this is the work of an editor using pre-existing documents. However, the differences are in minor details that do not necessarily contradict each other, and such differences are consistent with relating the story in different situations.
2. In Acts 5:36-37 Gamaliel mentions Theudas. Josephus says that Theudas rebelled 10 years later. Possibly there was another Theudas or Josephus was incorrect (JoshuaCrooch, 2011, December 1).
3. In Acts 7:16 Stephen mentions that Abraham purchased a tomb at Shechem, but there is no record of this in Scripture, although Joshua 24:32 says that Jacob purchased a tomb there. Possibly Stephen had another source of information (JoshuaCrooch, 2011, December 1) or Stephen got it wrong, and Luke faithfully recorded the fact.
4. Mather says that the issues raised in Acts are not Pauline, but from a generation later, e.g. the persecution of Christians and the conflict with Jewish sects (Mather, 1985, pp. 38-39). In varying degrees, these were problems for Christians from the beginning.
5. Burkett raised issues of what he sees as inconsistencies in Acts (Burkett, 2002, p. 273). The description of Jesus' ascension in Lk 24:36-53 differs from that in Acts 1:1-9, and Jesus' command to preach the gospel to the Gentiles (Lk 24:47) does not appear to be known early in Acts. These are apparent inconsistencies between the narratives, rather than historical problems.
6. Some scholars have difficulty accepting the miraculous in Acts (Burkett, 2002, p. 274), but this may be a case of refusing to accept something outside of one's own experience.⁷
7. Paul's visits to Jerusalem in Acts are different to those listed by Paul in Galatians (discussed below).

6 Borgen (1969) has suggested that Luke might have used Romans 9-11 & 15 (pp. 170-178) and 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 (pp. 179-182) and that he portrays Paul in a manner consistent with Paul's letters (p. 176).

7 I have personally been involved in many healing miracles and have witnessed the removal of demons, so this argument carries no weight with me.

The Text of Acts

A difficulty arises because there two texts of Acts. The “Western” text is 10% longer than the “standard” or “Alexandrian” text (Achtemeier et al., 2001, p. 267). It appears that the longer Western text has had some later editorial explanatory glosses added. The two texts also differ on the presentation of the decrees of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15). The Western text appears to revise the decrees to give them a continuing relevance (Mount, 2002, p. 25), whereas the standard text portrays the decrees as requirements to enable Jews and Gentiles to share table fellowship without offending Jewish consciences. Hence, the decrees were not originally moral requirements but ceremonial concessions (Stott, 1991, pp. 249-250).⁸

Character and Life of Paul as Portrayed in Acts

Paul was born a Roman citizen (Acts 22:28) and he used his citizenship to his advantage a number of times (Acts 16:37; 22:25-29; 24:27). Paul was a Jew (his Jewish name was Saul – Acts 13:9), born in Tarsus (Acts 21:39), an educational centre of the Roman Empire (McRay, 2003, p.23). He was a “tentmaker” (a leather-worker) by trade (Acts 18:3). Paul, in his letters, adds that he was of the tribe of Benjamin (Rom 11:1; Phil 3:5). He was not like the Hellenistic Jews who had adopted Greek culture, he even argued with them (Acts 9:29). However he did speak Greek, and certainly would have considerable Hellenistic enculturation. He trained under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3) as a Pharisee (Acts 23:6; 26:5; Phil 3:5).

Paul's participation in the stoning of Stephen and persecution of Christians reveals his fanatical dedication to Judaism (Acts 7:58). Paul's conversion transformed the character of his zeal into that of a servant and witness of Jesus (Mather, 1985, pp. 23-24). Both Luke and Paul write about Paul's escape from Damascus by being lowered in a basket through an opening in the wall (Acts 9:25; 2Cor 11:32), floggings (Acts 16:23; 2Cor 11:23-24), beatings (Acts 21:32; 2Cor 11:25), a stoning (Acts 14:19; 2 Cor 11:25), imprisonments (Acts 16:23; 24:23; Phil 1:7, 13), and shipwreck (Acts 27:40-44; 2Cor 11:25). In 2Cor 11:16-27, Paul wrote that there were even more incidents than those recounted (presumably by both Paul and Luke).

The Mission of Paul

Luke portrays Paul's mission as taking the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; 21:19). Paul, himself, says in his letters that he was called to preach the gospel to the Gentiles (Rom 1:5 & 13; Gal 1:16; 2:2, 7-9; Eph 3:1; Col 1:27; 1 Thes 2:16; 1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 4:17). Paul's mission to the Gentiles was to bring him into conflict with Peter (Gal 2:9), who also thought God had chosen him to take the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 15:7). Some have suggested that Paul no longer obeyed the Torah and only reluctantly accepted the Council of Jerusalem decrees, but this was not the case (Olson, 2012, p. 365). Paul observed Jewish rituals, e.g. when he circumcised Timothy (Acts 16:3), and shaved his head for a vow (Acts 21:24). However, he would not have supported a Jewish food law being imposed on Gentiles (Guthrie, 1970, pp. 356-357).⁹

8 F. F. Bruce said the western text implying the decrees are Noahic precepts is a later revision when the original issue was no longer critical. The decrees did not impose the Law on Gentiles but were necessary for social relations (Bruce, 1969, pp. 287-288). Alan Cole thought that Peter's action could have been a temporary concession for the sake of the Judaiser's consciences (Cole, 1989, p. 49).

9 Paul himself taught Christians to be considerate of the ritual sensitivities of their weaker brothers and sisters (Gal 5:13; Rom 14). Possibly Peter was doing this at Antioch, and this is why Barnabas sided with Peter. The problem at Antioch was that both the Judaisers and the new Gentile Christians could be viewed as being weak in faith. Paul saw his calling to the Gentiles, but Peter would have felt pastoral responsibility for both groups.

Difficulties in Comparison with Paul's letters

The portrayal of Paul by Luke shows a different perspective on Paul's life to that obtained from Paul in his letters.¹⁰ Some have thought that Paul is Luke's hero. However, Luke has not refrained from relating the dispute with Barnabas over Paul's refusal to take Mark on the second missionary journey (Acts 15:37-40).¹¹ The theological perspective of Acts differs from that of Paul's writing in that Luke relates the general teaching of the church while Paul writes polemically to protect the church from false teaching, especially regarding law and grace (Borgen, 1969, p. 182).¹² More serious is the difficulty in matching the historical events of Acts with Paul's account in Galatians. Some scholars think the inconsistencies are a reason not to trust Luke's historical reliability (Bacon, 1907, p. 469).

Paul's visits to Jerusalem

From a cursory reading of Acts and Galatians, it might appear that Paul went to Jerusalem 4 or 5 times between his conversion and the Jerusalem Council.¹³ The task of harmonising the Acts visits with those mentioned in Galatians is complex. Talbert lists seven alternative solutions (Talbert, 1967, p.26). An important factor is that neither Luke nor Paul included everything that happened. Both authors selected occurrences that were relevant to what they wanted to say. Paul was concerned to defend his source of revelation and the content of his gospel (Witherington, 1994, p.225) while Luke is giving an account of the spread of the gospel. Even historians have to be selective. It would only be unreliable history if Luke deliberately said things that were untruthful or inaccurate or omitted details that undermined his view. Omitting irrelevant details is perfectly valid.

Another issue is the subjective nature of much of the reasoning. For instance, if the Jerusalem Council had taken place before the time of writing of Galatians, one would expect Paul to have mentioned it.¹⁴ The argument from silence cannot be conclusive.¹⁵ The tables below list the events as depicted by Luke and Paul respectively.¹⁶

10 Witherington said that we need both Paul's letters and Luke's account, but we need to remember that they are different types of literature (Witherington, 1994, p. 220).

11 Udo Schnell (2005, p. 138) and F. F. Bruce (1982, p. 132) think that the disagreement at Antioch was an important factor in Barnabas's separation from Paul over Mark. John Mark might have been at the early stage a supporter of the "circumcision party" which is why he is said to be *ek peritomēs* "of the circumcision" in Col 4:11, along with Aristarchus and Jesus Justus. It could be argued that the phrase *ek peritomēs* "of the circumcision" in Paul means "of the circumcision party" not merely a circumcised person.

12 Borgen goes on to point out that Luke's account in Acts 13:38-39 is in harmony with Paul's teaching about justification by faith in his letters (Borgen, 1969, p. 182).

13 It is possible to read Acts 11:30 and 12:25 to indicate two visits, but since 11:30 talks about taking the famine relief to Jerusalem and 12:25 talks about returning *from* Jerusalem, they appear to be talking about the one visit, although the matter is confused by some ancient manuscripts that have "returned *to* Jerusalem" in 12:25.

14 Similarly, Zandt argues that the famine relief visit of Acts 11:30 must have occurred before the writing of Galatians, otherwise Paul would have mentioned it (Zandt, 1914, p. 318).

15 For example, Talbert argues the opposite, that Gal 1:11-2:16 presupposes Acts 15 (Talbert, 1967, p. 39).

16 The chronology follows that proposed by John McRay (2003, p. 73-79) but with the Galatians and Acts material extracted and placed side by side to aid comparison.

Jerusalem Visits according to Acts

Visit	Acts Ref.	Comment
	9:1-19	Conversion of Paul ~34 CE
1	9:27-30; 26:20	First Jerusalem visit – late 37 CE.
	12:3-19	Peter imprisoned and escaped to Caesarea – Passover 43 or 44 CE.
2	11:30; 12:25	Paul and Barnabas took famine relief to Jerusalem elders and returned to Antioch – 47 CE.
3	-	[Not mentioned – possibly because this visit was not relevant to Luke's narrative.]
	-	[Not mentioned – The visit of Peter and “certain people from James” to Antioch.]
	13:3- 14:26	First Missionary Journey – late 47 to mid 48 CE.
	14:26- 15:40	Paul in Antioch – mid 48 to mid 49 CE.
	15:1-2	Judaisers from Jerusalem visited Antioch – either in 47 CE or late 48 to early 49 CE.
4	15:2-30	Paul attended Jerusalem Council – early 49 CE.

Jerusalem Visits according to Galatians.

Visit	Gal Ref.	Comment
	1:15-16	Conversion of Paul ~34 CE
1	1:18-22	First Jerusalem visit – late 37 CE (3rd year visit).
	-	[Not mentioned]
2	-	[Not mentioned – possibly because Paul did not see the Apostles it was not relevant to Paul's argument.]
3	2:1-10	Jerusalem visit, late 47 CE (14th year visit) – a private meeting.
	2:11-14	Paul confronted Peter at Antioch – 47 CE when “certain people from James” caused him to draw back from eating with Gentiles.
	1:8 & 11; 3:1	Paul referred to his First Missionary Journey preaching in Galatia.
	1:1-2	Paul might have written to the churches of Galatia – 2nd half 48 CE. ¹⁷
	-	[Not mentioned – The Judaisers insisted that Gentile Christians be circumcised.]
4	-	[Not mentioned]

17 The arguments for the early date of Galatians involve the arguments for the destination of Galatians being the southern area of the Roman province of Galatia. These are
 (1) Only the southern Galatia churches knew Barnabas from the first missionary journey;
 (2) Paul did not mention the Jerusalem Council decrees in support of his argument;
 (3) the confrontation between Paul and Peter could not have reasonably occurred after the Council;
 (4) Paul is surprised that the problem in Galatia arose so soon after he was there;
 (5) an early dating places the writing of Galatians at a time when the church was wrestling with the issue of Jewish-Gentile relationships (Tenney, 1950, pp. 59-60). If Gal 4:13 implies that there was a former visit to the Galatians, this would be in accord with Acts 14:21-23 which records two visits.

Visit	Acts Ref.	Comment
5	18:22	Paul greeted the church at Jerusalem on the way from Caesarea to Antioch – July 51 CE.
6	21:15-23:31	Paul arrested in Jerusalem – 54 CE.

Visit	Gal Ref.	Comment
5	-	[Not mentioned]
6	-	[Not mentioned]

Luke's mentions all six of Paul's Jerusalem visits with the exception of the third. Paul in Galatians describes the third visit as a private meeting with the apostles where Paul proposed that he would dedicate his ministry to outreach amongst the Gentiles. In the Acts narrative, this fact had already been included in Paul's call (Acts 9:15).

In Paul's account of events in Galatians, he mentions only the first and third Jerusalem visits. The second Jerusalem visit was to take famine relief to the elders and this was irrelevant to Paul's argument that he did not get his authority from the Jerusalem church leaders, but directly from Jesus. Paul did not mention the fourth Jerusalem visit to the Church Council meeting of Acts 15 or later visits, so many scholars take this as evidence for the earlier writing of Galatians. If the Council had already occurred, Paul could have used the outcome to support his case.

Conclusion

The picture we get of Paul in Acts is very similar to that revealed in his letters. Luke's historical reliability has been confirmed in many details and the inconsistencies that have been raised are inconclusive. As such, a reasonable attitude to take to the problem of harmonising Acts with Paul's letter to the Galatians is to look for a way of accepting both accounts as true. I have described one such harmonisation. We may conclude then that Acts is very valuable in adding to our knowledge of Paul and in providing a historical framework for his life. Although we cannot verify many of the details at this point in time, it is better not to accuse Luke of being incorrect when he lived close to the events and "...decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account..." (Luke 1:3).

References

- Achtemeier, P. J., Green, J. B., & Thompson, M. M. (2001) *Introducing the New Testament: Its literature and theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Bacon, B. W. (1907). Acts versus Galatians: The crux of apostolic history. *The American Journal of Theology*, 11(3), 454-474.
- Blaisdell, J. (1920). The authorship of the “we” sections of the Book of Acts. *Harvard Theological Review*, 13(2), 136-159.
- Bruce, F. F. (1969). *New testament history*. (1980 Ed.) Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., Inc.
- Bruce, F. F. (1982). *The epistle to the Galatians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Burkett, D. (2002) *An introduction to the new testament and the origins of Christianity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cole, R. A. (1989). *The letter of Paul to the Galatians: An introduction and commentary*. (2nd ed.). Leicester, England: IVP.
- Enslin, M. S. (1938). “Luke” and Paul. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 58(1), 81-91.
- Gaventa, B. (1990). [Review of book *The quest for unity in the new testament church: A study in Paul and Acts*, by P. J. Achtemeier]. *Journal Of Biblical Literature*, 109(1), 149-151.
- Goulder, M. D. (1986). Did Luke know any of the Pauline letters? *Perspectives In Religious Studies*, 13(2), 97-112.
- Guthrie, D. (1970). *New testament introduction*. (3rd ed.). London: IVP.
- Hedrick, C. W. (1981). Paul's conversion/call: a comparative analysis of the three reports in Acts. *Journal Of Biblical Literature*, 100(3), 415.
- JoshuaCrooch. (2011, December 1). B1 601 New Testament Studies: Lecture 12 [video file]. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GaUjN7zv0k&feature=relmfu>
- JoshuaCrooch. (2011, December 6). B1 601 New Testament Studies: Lecture 22 [video file]. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XS6kerZzAAY&feature=bf_prev&list=PLF5C27FC26F8538B2
- Lasker, D. J. (2004) The date of the death of Jesus: Further reflections. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 124(1), 95-99.
- Mather, P. (1985). Paul in Acts as “servant” and “witness”. *Biblical Research*, 30, 23-44.
- McRay, J. (2003). *Paul: His life and teaching*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic
- Morris, L. (1974). *The gospel according to St. Luke*. London: IVP.
- Mount, C. (2002). *Pauline Christianity: Luke-Acts and the legacy of Paul*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill
- NRSV** New Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible.
- Olson, J. C. (2012). The Jerusalem decree, Paul, and the gentile analogy to homosexual persons. *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 40(2), 360-384.
- Rowlingson, D. T. (1952). The Jerusalem conference and Jesus' Nazareth visit: a study in Pauline chronology. *Journal Of Biblical Literature*, 71(2), 69-74.

- Schnell, U. (2005). *Apostle Paul: His life and theology*. (M. E. Boring, Trans.). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic. (Original work published 2003).
- SG** Charles Sturt University “Introduction to New Testament Studies” Study Guide
- Slingerland, D. (1991). Acts 18:1-18, the Gallio inscription, and absolute Pauline chronology. *Journal Of Biblical Literature*, 110(3), 439.
- Stott, J. R. W. (1991). *The message of Acts: To the ends of the earth* (2nd ed.). London: IVP
- Talbot, C. H. (1967). Again: Paul's visits to Jerusalem. *Novum Testamentum*, 9(1), 26-40.
- Tenney, M. C. (1950). *Galatians: The charter of Christian liberty*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
- Walker Jr., W. O. (1985). Acts and the Pauline corpus reconsidered. *Journal For The Study Of The New Testament*, (24), 3-23.
- Walker Jr., W. O. (1992). Why Paul went to Jerusalem: The interpretation of Galatians 2:1-5. *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 54(3), 503.
- Walton, S. (2000). *Leadership and lifestyle: the portrait of Paul in the Miletus speech*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Witherington, B. III (1994). *Paul's narrative thought world: the tapestry of tragedy and triumph*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press.
- Zandt, D. B. (1914). Some suggestions as to the date of the letter to the Galatians. *The Biblical World*, 44(5), 317-325.

Other Works Consulted

- Archer, G. L. (1982). *Encyclopedia of bible difficulties*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Askwith, E. H. (1899). *The epistle to the Galatians: An essay on its destination and date*. London: MacMillan
- Bacon, B. W. (1921). The chronological scheme of Acts. *The Harvard Theological Review*, 14(2), 137-166.
- Borgen, P. (1969). From Paul to Luke: observations toward clarification of the theology of Luke-Acts. *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 31(2), 168-182.
- Camille, A. (2010). Were we at the same meeting? *U.S. Catholic*, 75(5), 44-46.
- Koenig, J. (1982). Occasions of grace in Paul, Luke and first century Judaism. *Anglican Theological Review*, 64(4), 562-576.
- Mattill, A. (1975). Jesus-Paul parallels and the purpose of Luke-Acts: H. H. Evans reconsidered. *Novum Testamentum*, 17(1), 15-46.
- Moessner, D. P. (1986). “The Christ must suffer”: new light on the Jesus - Peter, Stephen, Paul parallels in Luke-Acts. *Novum Testamentum*, 28(3), 220-256.
- PersonalArchive1. (2012, August 22). Lecture 5 - the new testament as history [video file]. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Irk37Bq9sCU>

Appendix

Some Chronologies of Paul's life.

Event	Dates according to Schnell (2005, p. 56)	Dates according to McRay (2003, p. 73-79)	(SG, p. 37)	Outside dates
Death of Jesus	7th April 30	6th April 30		29-35 ¹⁸
Conversion of Paul	33	34	early (32 or 33)	31-36 ¹⁹
Paul's escape from Damascus ²⁰		late 37		35 – 38
First visit to Jerusalem (3rd year visit)	35	late 37	~ 37 – 38	35 – 45
Paul in Cilicia	~ 36 – 42	37 – 43		36 – 43
Paul in Antioch	~ 42	43 – 47		42 – 47
Paul's first missionary journey	~ 45 – 47	late 47 – mid 48		45 – 48
Apostolic Council	48 (spring)	early 49	48 – 49	48 – 52 ²¹
Incident in Antioch	48 (summer)	47	48 – 49	47 – 49
Second missionary journey	48 (late summer) – 51/52	summer 49 – summer 51	49 – 52	48 – 52
Paul in Corinth	50/51	Dec. 49 – June 51		47 – 54 ²²
Gallio in Corinth	51 – 52	May/June 51		51 – 52
Trip to Antioch	51/52	51		51 – 53
Third missionary journey (14th year)	52 – 55/56	Aug. 51 – May 54	53 – 56/57	51 – 57
Stay in Ephesus	52 – 54/55	Oct. 51 – 53	53 – 55	51 – 55

18 Lasker favours 18th March, 29 CE (Lasker, 2004, p. 99). Many favour Friday 3 April 33 CE on astronomical grounds, and noting that Pontius Pilate was procurator of Judea from 26-36 CE.

19 Tenney dates Paul's conversion at 31 CE (Tenney, 1950, p. 107) while Rowlingson favours 35 (1952, p. 73).

20 Paul mentions in 2 Cor 11:32 that the king was Aretas when he escaped from Damascus. Aretas died in 40 CE.

21 A late date for the Conference depends on it occurring during the Jerusalem visit of Acts 18:22-23, Paul's conversion being in 35 CE, and the "three years" being additional to the "fourteen years" of Gal 1 & 2 (Rowlingson, 1952, pp. 73-74).

22 The Gallio inscription from Delphi relates to Acts 18:1-18 and indicates that Gallio was proconsul from May, 51 to April 52 CE. However, the time Paul was in Corinth is still indeterminate since on this basis alone Paul could have arrived in Corinth between 47 and 54 CE (Slingerland, 1991, p. 449).

Event	Dates according to Schnell (2005, p. 56)	Dates according to McRay (2003, p. 73-79)	(SG, p. 37)	Outside dates
Paul in Macedonia	55	53	55 – 56	53 – 56
Last stay in Corinth	early 56	54		54 – 56
Arrival in Jerusalem	56 (early summer)	May 31 (Pentecost), 54	56/57	54 – 57
Imprisonment in Caesarea	56-58	June 53 – May 56	56/57 – 58/59	53 – 59
Change of office, Felix/Festus	58	May 56		56 – 56
Arrival in Rome	59	March 57 – ~ Feb. 59	~ 59 – 61	57 – 61
Paul's later travels		59 – 67		
Death of Paul	64	67 – 68		64 – 68 ²³

23 Tradition says that Paul was beheaded on Nero's orders. Nero died in 68 CE.