

UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIANITY

MODULE 3: NEW TESTAMENT STUDY AIDS

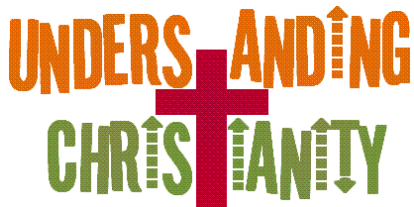
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UNDERSTANDING CHRISTIANITY

TIMELINE OF NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY

Bible record			Rulers and world events	
Date (AD)	Event(s)	Bible Reference(s)	Date (AD)	Event(s)
c.4 BC	Jesus born in Bethlehem	Matthew 1:18-2:23; Luke 1:5-2:40	27BC - 14 AD	Augustus, Roman emperor
			37-4 BC	Herod the Great, king of Judea
			4 BC-39	Herod Antipas, ruler of Galilee
c.29	John the Baptist baptises Jesus	Gospels	14-37	Tiberius, Roman emperor
29-33	Public ministry of Jesus	Gospels	26-36	Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea
33	Crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Day of Pentecost	Gospels; Acts 1:1-11 Acts 2:1-41		
33 or 34	Stephen is stoned Saul is converted	Acts 7:54-60 Acts 9:1-19	37-41 41-44 41-54	Caligula, Roman emperor Herod Agrippa I, king of Judea Claudius, Roman emperor
36	Paul's first visit to Jerusalem	Acts 9:26-28; Galatians 1:18-20		
43 or 44	James the apostle executed	Acts 12:1-2		
46 or 47	Paul's second visit to Jerusalem	Acts 11:27-30; Galatians 2:1-10	45-47	Famine in Judea
47, 48	Paul's first missionary journey	Acts 13-14	49	Claudius expels Jews from Rome
49	Council of Jerusalem Paul begins second missionary journey	Acts 15:1-30 Acts 15:36 onwards		
50-52	Paul in Corinth	Acts 18:1-18a	50-c.93	Herod Agrippa II, ruler of Northern territory
52	Paul returns to Syrian Antioch via Ephesus and Caesarea Paul begins third missionary journey	Acts 18:18b-22 Acts 18:23 onwards	51-52	Gallio, proconsul of Achaia
			52-55	Felix, governor of Judea
53-56	Paul in Macedonia	Acts 20:1b-2a	54-68	Nero, emperor
56-57	Paul spends winter in Corinth	Acts 20:2b-3a		
57	Paul's journey to Jerusalem via Macedonia, Troas and Miletus Paul arrested in Jerusalem Paul tried before Felix	Acts 20:3b-21:17 Acts 21:27-36 Acts 24:1-22		

57-59	Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea	Acts 23:23-24:27		
59	Paul tried before Festus and Agrippa	Acts 25:6-26:32	59-61	Festus, procurator of Judea
59-60	Paul's journey to Rome	Acts 27:1-28:16		
60-62	Paul's imprisonment in Rome	Acts 28:26 onwards		
62	Paul's last missionary journey	(Mentioned in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus)		
64-68	Paul & Peter probably executed in Rome	-	64	Nero begins persecution of Christians
			70	Fall of Jerusalem, Temple destroyed
c. 90-95	John writes Revelation and later dies on Patmos in his 80s	Revelation 1:9	69-79	Vespasian, Roman emperor
			81-96	Domitian, Roman emperor



TIMELINE OF PAUL'S MINISTRY

Preparation (AD 33-47)

33, Damascus – Paul began to teach in the synagogues (Jewish meeting places) that Jesus is the Son of God but, after hearing that some Jews were plotting to kill him, had to be smuggled out of the city (Acts 9:19-25).

33, Arabia – Paul then spent some time alone, presumably thinking through his new faith and listening to God's calling on his life (Galatians 1:17). After this he returned to the city of Damascus.

36, Jerusalem – three years after his conversion, Paul went to Jerusalem to meet Peter. The Christians there were initially suspicious, not believing that he had become Christian. A man called Barnabas trusted him and introduced him to Peter. Paul spent fifteen days in Jerusalem with Peter and preached about Jesus. Some of the Jews again plotted to kill him, so the Christians smuggled him out of the city to the coastal town of Caesarea from where he could take a ship to his home town of Tarsus (Acts 9:26-30, Galatians 1:18-24).

Dates uncertain, Antioch – Paul stayed in Tarsus until Barnabas came there to ask him to join him in working with the church in the city of Antioch. The two men spent one year in Antioch teaching the Christians (Acts 11:19-30), after which they took a gift from that church to the persecuted Christians in Judea.

Missionary Work (Ad 47-64)

47-48, First missionary journey (Acts 13-14) – the Holy Spirit told the Christians in Antioch to send Paul and Barnabas on a missionary trip, and so Paul embarked on the first of three missionary journeys. He visited many cities, and in each place he preached the message about Jesus and founded new churches.

49 AD, The Council in Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-35; Galatians 2:1-10) – the apostles and local leaders in the church in Jerusalem agreed that Gentiles could become Christians without being circumcised or following the Law of Moses. Paul shared at the Council. After the council, Paul returned to Antioch to teach the Christians.

49-52, Second missionary journey (Acts 15:36-18:22) – this journey began and ended in Antioch. Near its start Paul and Barnabas had a disagreement over the suitability of John Mark to join them and parted ways. During this trip Paul crossed over from Asia in Europe in response to a vision God gave him.

52-57, Third missionary journey (Acts 18:23-21:16) – this journey began in Antioch and ended with Paul travelling to Jerusalem in AD 57.

57-59, Jerusalem and Caesarea (Acts 21:17-26:32) – Paul was only in Jerusalem for a short time before he was arrested because of accusations made by some Jews. He appealed to his rights as a Roman citizen and the Romans transferred him to their capital city of Caesarea to keep him safe from his enemies. Paul was tried before Felix (the Roman governor), then imprisoned for two years. In AD 59, Festus replaced Felix as governor, and Paul was brought out of prison and tried again before Festus, then before King Herod Agrippa. Paul used his right as a Roman citizen to demand that his case should be referred to the Emperor in Rome.

59-60, journey to Rome (Acts 27:1-28:10) – during this journey Paul's ship was wrecked in a storm and he spent some time on the Mediterranean island of Malta.

60-62, prison in Rome (Acts 28:11-31) – Paul spent two years in prison in Rome, during which he continued to preach the gospel to everyone who visited him and wrote several letters (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon).

62-c.64, last missionary journey – Acts does not tell us about this journey after his release from prison, but Paul refers to it in some of his later letters. The details of the journey are unclear.

c. 64, Rome – Paul's life ended in Rome where he was imprisoned again around AD 64. During this period in prison he wrote his three last letters (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus). By then the Roman Empire had become very hostile to Christianity because it had gained so many followers. The Emperor Nero started the first state sponsored persecution of Christians by the empire and almost certainly had Paul executed in Rome.



BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Book	Author and recipients	Date (AD approx.)	Theme(s)
Gospels – records of the life and teachings of Jesus			
Matthew	Matthew, one of the Twelve	61-64	Jesus is the Son of David, the promised King
Mark	John Mark, a relative of Peter	58-60	Jesus is the promised Suffering Servant
Luke	Luke, a doctor and associate of Paul, to Theophilus	61-64	Jesus is the perfect man who came to seek and save the lost
John	John, one of the Twelve	85	Jesus is the Son of God who gives eternal life
Historical Record			
Acts (of the apostles)	Luke, a doctor and associate of Paul, to Theophilus	62-68	History of the spread of Christianity until around AD 60
Epistles – letters to individuals or churches			
Romans	Paul to the church in Rome	56-57	The gospel that unites Jews and Gentiles in Christ
1 Corinthians	Paul to the church in Corinth	55-56	Correcting errors causing division in the church
2 Corinthians	Paul to the church in Corinth	57	Paul's authority as an apostle and Christian living
Galatians	Paul to the churches in Galatia	49 or 52	Salvation comes by God's grace not by observing the Old Testament Law
Ephesians	Paul to the church in Ephesus	60	Christ's unsearchable riches shared with the Church
Philippians	Paul to the church in Philippi	60-61	Joy through Christ and unity in spreading the gospel
Colossians	Paul to the church in Colosse	60	Christ's pre-eminence and our completeness in Him
1 Thessalonians	Paul to the church in Thessalonica	51	The future return of Christ
2 Thessalonians	Paul to the church in Thessalonica	51-52	The coming Day of the Lord
1 Timothy	Paul to Timothy	63-64	Advice to a younger Christian leader about how to serve God faithfully in the church
2 Timothy	Paul to Timothy	64-65	Holding to the truth with boldness
Titus	Paul to Titus	64	Advice to a younger Christian leader about how to carry out his ministry in the church
Philemon	Paul to Philemon	60	Love exemplified by Paul and Philemon encouraged to forgive a runaway slave
Hebrews	Unknown to Jewish converts to Christianity	68-70	A letter to new Jewish converts explaining why the New Covenant in Jesus is superior to the Old
James	James, half-brother of Jesus, to Jewish converts	45-50	Practical Christian living – faith expressed through actions
1 Peter	Peter to Jewish converts in modern Turkey	64-65	Suffering and glory – the true grace of God
2 Peter	Peter to unknown Christians	66	Living in light of the last days
1 John	John the apostle to unknown Christians	85-90	Loving relationship with God brings eternal life – how to be sure of our salvation
2 John	John to an unknown church	85-90	Christ's command – walking in the truth
3 John	John to Gaius	85-90	Walking in truth
Jude	Jude, half-brother of Jesus, to unknown Christians	65	Authority and rebellion
Prophecy			
Revelation	John the apostle to seven churches in Asia	90-95	Vivid and dramatic imagery about the end times and God's ultimate victory through Jesus, the Lamb



KEY DATES IN CHURCH HISTORY

Date	Event	Significance
64	Fire in Rome	This fire was blamed on Christians by Emperor Nero for political reasons. It marked the beginning of the persecution of Christians by the Roman Empire. Peter and Paul both probably died in this persecution.
70	Titus destroys Jerusalem	This event forced the Christians in Jerusalem to flee, helping Christianity to spread and to emerge from its Jewish roots.
156	Martyrdom of Polycarp	Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, who had studied under the apostle Paul, was probably the last living link with the apostles
313	Edict of Milan	Emperor Constantine decriminalised Christianity, leading to an end of persecution but increasing pressure on the Church from secular leaders to compromise its principles.
325	Council of Nicea	In response to the false teachings of Arius this Council confirmed the full deity of Christ (that Jesus was fully God).
380	Edict of Thessalonica	Emperor Theodosius I decreed that Christianity would be the only sanctioned religion within the empire.
405	Vulgate completed	Jerome translated the Bible into Latin (his version is called the Vulgate). This made the Bible available to more people, but fixed Latin as the language of the Western Church for centuries to come.
432	Patrick brings the gospel to Ireland	The spread of the Christian message to Ireland led to the establishment of a vibrant missionary Celtic Church.
451	Council of Chalcedon	This Council affirmed that Christ was fully human as well as fully divine.
590	Gregory I becomes Pope	Gregory achieved much to increase the authority of the Bishop of Rome over the Western Church, leading further towards the modern idea of the Pope.
664	Synod of Whitby	This meeting, at which Celtic Christians and representatives of the Pope debated the proper date for Easter, extended the influence of Rome over Christians in the British Isles.
716	Boniface goes to Germany	Boniface, an Anglo-Saxon missionary from England, helped to establish a strong church in Germany.
732	Battle of Tours	Charles Martel, a senior leader among the Franks, defeated the Islamic army, preventing Islam from spreading further across Europe.
863	Cyril and Methodius evangelise Slavs	These brothers brought Christianity to the Eastern European Slavs.
988	Conversion of Vladimir	The 'conversion' of the Prince of Russia extended Christianity to his territories.
1054	The East-West Schism	The Eastern and Western churches had gradually been drifting apart for several reasons: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Language</i> (the East was Greek-based; the West used mainly Latin); 2. <i>Style of worship</i> (e.g., type of bread used in Lord's Supper, date for Lent); 3. <i>Clergy</i> (Eastern pastors could have beards and marry; in the West they had to be clean-shaven and could not marry); 4. <i>Theology</i> (the Western Church said that Holy Spirit came from the Father and the Son; the East said He came only from the Father). In 1054 this split (or 'schism') became permanent as the Pope and the leader of the Eastern Orthodox church excommunicated each other.
1095	First Crusade	This began a very bloody and dishonourable period as professing 'Christians' fought against Muslims for control of Jerusalem. 'Christian' kings were often concerned with power as much as with the faith.
1173	Waldensians active	This group, named after Peter Waldo who experienced a true conversion to faith in Christ, reacted against many of the false teachings that had entered the Roman Catholic Church. Waldo had the Bible translated into French and sought to practice a more biblical Christianity. His followers were condemned by the Roman Catholic Church because they existed outside its authority.
1215	Fourth Lateran Council	This Council confirmed as official teachings of the Roman Catholic Church unbiblical ideas that had gradually gained influence in the Church. It

		established firmly the power of the Pope as Christ's representative on earth. It also declared that the Roman Catholic Church was the only true Church and that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ at communion, with the result that forgiveness for sins is received through the sacrifice of the mass offered by the priest.
1380	First English Bible translation	John Wycliffe oversaw this translation and sent out evangelists (known as Lollards) throughout England to call people to repentance and faith in Christ.
1415	John Hus burned at the stake	Hus was executed in Prague by the Roman Catholic Church for preaching a more biblical Christianity and speaking against corruption in the priesthood.
1456	Gutenberg prints first Bible	This new technology meant that the Bible could be produced in greater numbers than before and could spread more widely.
1478	Spanish Inquisition established	This reaction against groups that did not teach official Roman Catholic Church teachings or did not accepting its authority led to the persecution of many heretics and true believers alike
1517	Martin Luther posts his 95 theses	This act, intended to spark debate in the Roman Catholic Church in reaction to many false teachings, eventually led to Luther's excommunication and the Protestant reformation. Luther's major legacy was a rediscovery of the Biblical truth that justification is received only by faith not through works.
1523	Zwingli leads Swiss reformation	Zwingli (in Zurich) insisted on teaching biblical truth even when it differed from the official Church position.
1525	Anabaptist movement begins	This group emphasised the biblical doctrine of believer's baptism and pushed for a separation of Church from the State. They believed in simplicity in church government and emphasised evangelism and Biblical teaching. Their aim was to return the Church to the New Testament ideal.
1534	Henry VIII breaks from Rome	The English King rejected the authority of the pope to allow him to divorce his wife, but the result was an English Church not under the direction of Rome.
1536	John Calvin publishes the Institutes	Calvin led the reformed church in Geneva, Switzerland. His writings have had a huge influence in Protestant theology.
1540	Pope approves the Jesuits	The Society of Jesus founded by Ignatius Loyola, was at the forefront of the Counter-Reformation in the Roman Church, which led to removal of some of its worst excesses but also sought to wipe out Protestantism.
1545	Council of Trent begins	This council affirmed Roman Catholic opposition to the rediscoveries of biblical truths by Luther and others. At its heart was the belief that tradition is of equal authority with Scripture in deciding the teaching and practice of the Church. Those who protested against this decision were called 'Protestants'.
1559	John Knox returns to Scotland	Knox, influenced by Calvin, was instrumental in bringing the Reformation to Scotland.
1572	St Bartholomew's Day Massacre	Thousands of Protestants were massacred in France, leading to greater Roman Catholic control over France.
1608-09	First Baptists	The Baptist movement began when John Smyth became convinced of the biblical basis for believers' baptism.
1611	King James Bible published	This translation into English became the accepted standard for over three centuries and made the Bible more accessible to the common people.
1648	Quaker's emerge	The Society of Friends (popularly known as Quakers) was founded by George Fox. They neglected many truths about the Church including the Lord's Supper and baptism, but were very active in social reform.
1727	Moravian Brethren launched	John Hus's teaching continued to be followed in the modern Czech Republic. A group of adherents that came to live in Herrnhut in Saxony (part of modern Germany) experienced a revival in 1727 and became a major missionary force.
1735	Great Awakening	A great revival occurred in America, largely influenced by the teaching of Jonathan Edwards
1738	John Wesley's conversion	John and Charles Wesley preached to thousands across Britain, Ireland and America, leading to a huge revival. The strong emphasis on evangelism and the authority of the Bible that marked this revival became the basis for a movement known as Evangelicalism that crossed various denominations. Some of Wesley's followers eventually broke from the Anglican church after his death to become Methodists.
1793	William Carey goes to India	The modern Protestant missionary movement began with this shoemaker who wrote about the need to spread the gospel across the world to peoples who had not heard of Jesus and went himself to India.

1807	Slave trade abolished by Britain	William Wilberforce and other Christians campaigned to end slavery in Britain and its empire, finally succeeding in ending the slave trade in 1807, although it was not until 1833 that slavery was abolished entirely.
1830	Plymouth Brethren begin	This group began in Dublin and England around the same time and sought to return local church practice to a New Testament ideal. The movement generally has no clergy and emphasises evangelism and biblical teaching with simplicity of local church government and no denominational structures.
1854	Hudson Taylor goes to China	Taylor initiated the missionary movement today known as OMF, which has had a huge impact in China and other East Asian countries.
1854	CH Spurgeon in London	This man's preaching had a huge impact on Victorian Britain.
1855	DL Moody converted	This preacher had a huge impact in the USA and beyond.
1865	Salvation Army founded	This group was founded by William Booth as a response to immense social needs in Victorian Britain. It has a healthy emphasis on social action and evangelism but has neglected New Testament teaching on the Church.
1906	Pentecostalism begins	This movement teaches that the baptism of the Holy Spirit must be received separately from conversion.
1948	World Council of Churches formed	This group is the spearhead of the Ecumenical movement, which seeks to bring together all Christians into one through organisational cooperation between denominations.
1949	Billy Graham's Los Angeles Crusade	This marked the beginning of the career of Billy Graham, the 20 th Century's most famous evangelist who died in 2018.
1960	Charismatic Movement begins	This movement, which spans many denominations, emphasises the work of the Holy Spirit and the expectation of spiritual gifts like speaking in tongues and miracles in the present.
1962	Second Vatican Council begins	This Council made modernising changes to practices in the Roman Catholic Church, including allowing its members to read the Bible and changing services into the local language instead of Latin, but did not change any of its core teachings.