

Luke's Omissions, Paul's Admissions, Pastor Bob's Submissions

A harmonization of Acts and the Pauline Epistles with noted and repeated information gleaned from statements made by Paul but completely unrevealed by Luke. These statements come from Paul's epistles as well as Paul's discourses recorded by Luke in Acts. The intra-Acts disharmonies are most interesting because Luke records the Pauline statement having previously not recorded the prior narrative.

Example One

Saul of Tarsus Damascus Road Experience Summer 35AD. In the narrative of Acts 9:1-22 Luke does not reveal Paul's departure for Arabia and return to Damascus (Gal. 1:12,16-18). Luke also does not reveal Paul's escape from Aretas via window basket (2nd Cor. 11:32,33).

Example Two

Saul of Tarsus Tarsus Ministry Autumn 37AD. In the narrative of Acts 9:30 Luke does not reveal Paul's personal rapture and return with the thorn in the flesh (2nd Cor. 12:1-10).

Example Three

Considerable Crowds Called Christians 41AD. In the narrative of Acts 11:25,26 Luke records not a missionary journey but the founding of a missionary logistical base from which multiple missionary journeys will subsequently be launched.

Example Four

Agabus' Antioch Apocalypse (Barnabas & Saul financial couriers). In the narrative of Acts 11:27-30 Luke records not a missionary journey but a financial ministry from one local church to another. Luke does not reveal Titus' participation (Gal. 2:1-10) but he does mention the addition of John-Mark (Acts 12:25). Luke also does not record Peter's visit to Antioch and the face to face opposition Paul presented there (Gal. 2:11-21).

Example Five

"First" Missionary Journey Acts 13:1-14:28 Spring 48 to Autumn 49AD (Barnabas & Saul Cyprus tour + Paul & Barnabas Galatians tour) Luke is ambiguous regarding the departure of John-Mark (Acts 13:13). Luke also fails to explain the Saul/Paul name change and the second-billing status Barnabas is given thereafter. Both Luke and Paul choose to omit any correlation between Acts 14:28 with Gal. 1:1&2 for the writing of **Galatians**.

Example Six

Jerusalem Apostles and Elders Conference Acts 15:1-35 (Paul & Barnabas Phoenicia and Samaria tour). Enroute to the conference (Acts 15:3) Paul & Barnabas were Passing-through & Bringing Joy in what could be called a PB&J ministry. This chapter spotlights the transitional church leadership tandem of Apostles & Elders.

Example Seven

Paul-Barnabas Disagreement Acts 15:36-39. John-Mark is the focus of the disagreement. Later references to John-Mark are noteworthy (Col. 4:10,11; 2nd Tim. 4:11; Philem 24; 1st Pet. 5:13).

Example Eight

“Second” Missionary Journey (Paul & Silvanus + Timothy tour) Spring 50AD. Acts 15:40,41; 16:1-18:22. Luke switches between “we” narrative and “they” narrative without explanation. ([we] Acts 16:10–17; 20:5–15; 21:1–18; 27:1–28:16). “We” = Paul & Luke. 1st recorded imprisonment for Paul, in Philippi. 18 months in Corinth and the writing of **1st & 2nd Thessalonians** Summer 51AD. Luke omits Paul’s details of weakness in fear and much trembling (1st Cor. 2:3), as well as any explanation for Paul’s vow (Acts 18:18). Luke also omits Timothy’s mission to Thessalonica (1st Thess. 3:1-6 || Acts 17:14,15; 18:5).

Example Nine

“Third” Missionary Journey (Paul & Timothy relocated their headquarters from Antioch to Ephesus) Spring 53AD (Acts 18:23; 19:1). Ephesus becomes a great missionary logistical base and ministry training center. Acts 18:23; 19:1-21:17 (traditional range).

Settled Ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-41). Luke’s narrative includes the following:

- three months of synagogue reasoning and persuading (Acts 19:8)
- Jewish public hostility (Acts 19:9a)
- two years of daily reasoning in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9b,10).
- Many miracles by Paul (Acts 19:11), or via his clothing (Acts 19:12), plus attempted exorcism in the name of Paul (Acts 19:13-17).
- Tremendous success and fame is credited during this time (Acts 19:17-20).
- Designed departure (Acts 19:21-22), followed by no small disturbance (Acts 19:23-41).

That seems like quite a bit, until we learn what Luke’s narrative omitted. Notably, Luke himself records Paul’s message in recounting this time (Acts 20:18-21,25-27,31,33-35). Luke omits the following:

- Wrote **1st Corinthians**. Condemned to death*, spectacle, hungry, thirsty, poorly clothed, roughly treated, homeless, scum of the world, dregs of all things (1st Cor. 4:8-13 cf. 2nd Cor. 1:8-11).
- In danger every hour, dying daily*, fought with wild beasts* at Ephesus (1st Cor. 15:30-32). Priscilla & Aquila risked their necks on Paul’s behalf as well (Rom. 16:3-5).
- The Collection for the Saints in Jerusalem (1st Cor. 16:1-4; 2nd Cor. 8:1-9:15; Rom. 15:22-29).
- Many adversaries (1st Cor. 16:9; Acts 20:19,20).
- Visits from Chloe’s people (1st Cor. 1:11), plus Stephanus, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (1st Cor. 16:17-18).
- Sorrowful visit to Corinth (2nd Cor. 1:23; 2:1; 12:14; 13:1,2).

Ephesian Ejection (Acts 20:1,2). Luke narrates the briefest of sketches for Paul’s departure from Ephesus, his second visit to Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea?), along with “those districts” and “much exhortation.” Paul adds details to Luke’s account concerning Troas (2nd Cor. 2:12,13) and Illyricum (Rom. 15:19). Luke omitted Paul’s writing of **2nd Corinthians** from Macedonia on the way to his third visit to Corinth, along with every mention of Titus (9x in 2nd Cor.).

The Asian hardship references (2nd Cor. 1:8-11) and persecution catalog (2nd Cor. 11:23-29) are the most critical omissions, admissions, and submissions any NT student needs to thoroughly examine to rightly establish the background to the Prison Epistles and Pastoral Epistles of Paul. “Far more imprisonments” cannot include Caesarean or Roman imprisonments and certainly could harmonize with condemned to death, dying daily, fought with wild beasts expressions already seen.

Luke’s narrative is even sketchier for Paul’s three months in Greece (Athens, Corinth, Cenchrea?) and the Jewish plots he faced there (Acts 20:3). Luke omitted the writing of **Romans** from Corinth, but thankfully he included a helpful team roster (Acts 20:4) which can be compared and contrasted with the longest (and contemporary) greetings passage Paul ever wrote (Rom. 16:3-15,21-23).

Example Ten

The journey from Philippi to Jerusalem is Paul’s 3rd recorded visit to Philippi and begins the penultimate “we” segment of Acts (Acts 20:5-21:18). How many of the 7 companions named in Acts 20:3 remained all the way to Jerusalem? Only Trophimus is mentioned by name in Acts 21. Paul’s 5 defenses (Acts 22-26) have no named companions. When the “we” language resumes, only Aristarchus is specifically named (Acts 27:1-2) as boarding ship to accompany Paul & Luke (but does not disembark in Rome, likely changing ship at Myra Acts 27:5). What happened to Sopater, Secundus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus and Trophimus between Troas and Jerusalem?

What happened to Luke? Paul’s 5 defenses spanned a 2 year imprisonment in Caesarea 57-59AD (Acts 24:27). Perhaps Luke used that time to research and write the **Gospel of Luke**? (Lk. 1:3). What did Paul do during his two years in prison? Did he write a Prison Epistle? Or two or three or four?

Example Eleven

Paul’s appeal to Caesar resulted in a two year house arrest in Rome 60-62AD (Acts 28:16-31). Luke records that Paul spend his time preaching and teaching, with no reference to writing. Tradition holds this to be the Prison from which **Philippians**, **Philemon**, **Colossians**, and **Ephesians** were all written. The abrupt ending to **Acts** likely points to its authorship at this time as well.

Example Twelve

The Pastoral Epistles contain numerous names, locations, and travel plans familiar to Acts and the earlier Pauline Epistles yet unreconcilable with them. The best harmony is a disharmony and a reconstructed “fourth” missionary journey¹ for Paul after Acts 28. During this time in the mid 60s AD Paul wrote **1st Timothy**, **Titus**, & **2nd Timothy**.

First Clement records Paul’s successful ministry to Spain (1 Clement 5.5 cf. Rom. 15:24-28).

¹ Utley, Robert James. *Paul’s Fourth Missionary Journey: I Timothy, Titus, II Timothy*. Vol. Volume 9. Study Guide Commentary Series. Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International, 2000.

Chapter Titles for Acts

1. Ascension of Jesus, Selection of Mathias
2. Day of Pentecost
3. Silver & Gold Have I None
4. Uneducated & Untrained
5. Ananias and Sapphira
6. The First Deacons
7. The First Martyr
8. Samaritan Magician and Ethiopian Eunuch.
9. The Damascus Road
10. Peter and Cornelius
11. Peter defends Gentile Ministry; Foundation of Antioch.
12. James Killed, Peter Jailed
- 13-14. 1st Missionary Journey
15. Jerusalem Council
- 16-18. 2nd Missionary Journey
- 19-20. 3rd Missionary Journey
21. Paul Arrives at Jerusalem
22. Paul's Defense Before the Multitudes
23. Defense Before Sanhedrin
24. Before Felix
25. Before Festus
26. Before King Agrippa
27. Shipwreck
28. Rome