

THE EPHESIAN EPISODES

A TALE FOR OUR TIMES

DAVID LYON



THE EPHESIAN EPISODES

TRAILER

In which Paul makes a short first visit.

Acts 18, AD 51

EPISODE 1

In which Apollos makes an impact.

Acts 18, AD 51-52

EPISODE 2

In which Paul lays firm foundations.

Acts 19, AD 52

EPISODE 3

In which the Kingdom is advanced.

Acts 19, AD 53-54

EPISODE 4

In which Paul says farewell.

Acts 20, AD 56

EPISODE 5

In which Paul writes a letter.

Acts 28, Eph, AD 60

EPISODE 6

In which Paul instructs Timothy.

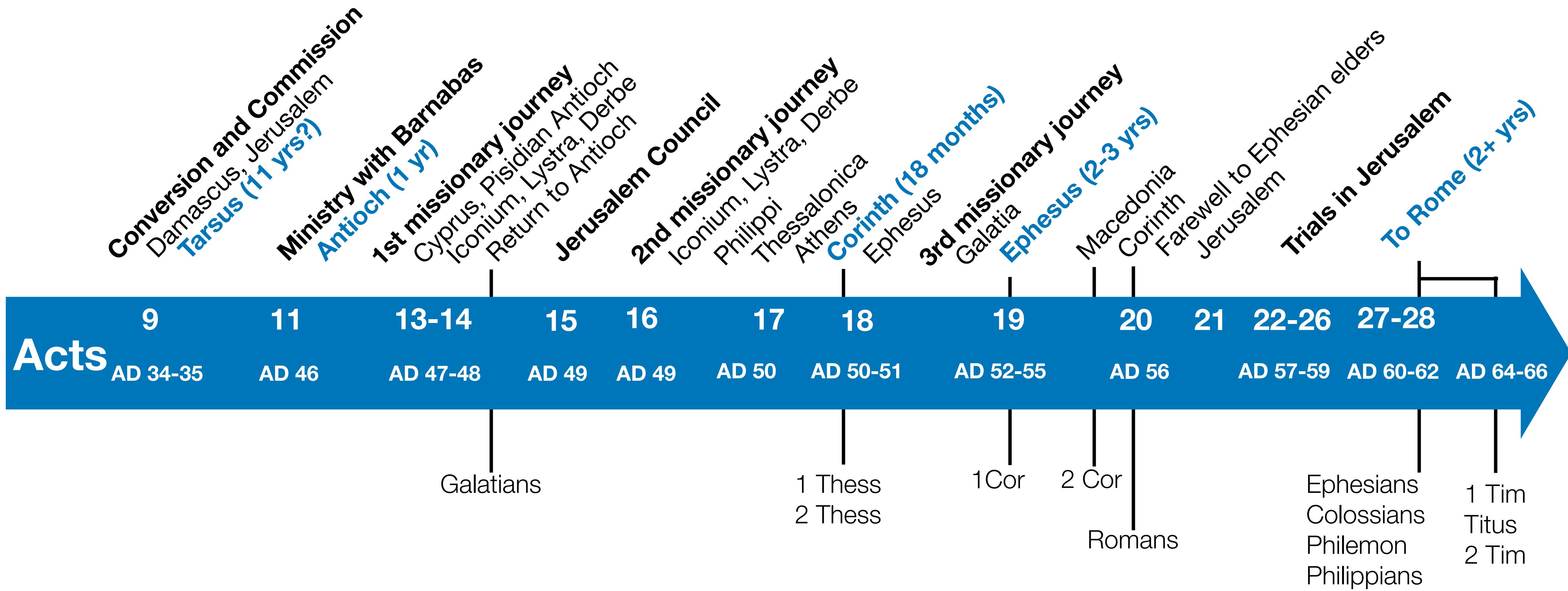
Acts 28+, AD 64

EPISODE 7

In which Jesus writes a letter.

Rev 2, AD 90?

PAUL'S MINISTRY TIMELINE



TRAILER: PAUL'S SHORT VISIT

ACTS 18:18-21, AD 51

- * Discussions in the synagogue (v 19).
- * Winning hearts and minds (v 20).
- * Trusting God's will and word (v 21).

- * Make the most of every opportunity, however brief.
- * Make friends and influence people.
- * Keep the doors open.
- * Have confidence in what God has said.

1: APOLLOS'S IMPACT

ACTS 18:24-28, AD 51-52

- * “Eloquent...powerful in Scriptures...fervent in spirit...taught accurately... spoke boldly” - *and totally teachable!* (v 24-26).
- * “Greatly helped...vigorously refuted...demonstrated through the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah” (v 27-28).

- * Steward your gift really well
- * Find teacher/s, embrace feedback and correction
- * Learn and hone your craft
- * Work hard, be diligent... and get better! (cf 1Ti 4:15-16)

BEHIND THE SCENES: ESSENTIAL COUPLES

- * Meet Aquilla and Priscilla! - a pivotal couple, often behind the scenes but with a task and an influence that shaped the NT church...
- * Willing to relocate to advance the Kingdom - having lived in Rome (Ac 18:2)... they met Paul in Corinth (18:2)...accompanied him to Syria (18:18) and Ephesus (18:19)...where they taught Apollos (18:26)...returned to Rome (Ro 16:3)...and were with Timothy (still in Ephesus?) for Paul's final letter (2Ti 4:19)
- * Hosted a house-church in Ephesus (1Co 16:19) and Rome (Ro 16:3).
- * Risked their lives for Paul (Ro 16:3) and enabled Apollos to fill-out his ministry (Ac 18:24ff). Without *this couple* - and others like them - the early church could not have taken shape in the way it did!...
- * **NEVER underestimate your impact and influence.**

2: PAUL'S FOUNDATIONS

ACTS 19:1-7, AD 52

- * Ensured Acts 2:38 foundations were laid.
- * Focussed on work of the Holy Spirit (v2).
- * Invested in twelve men (v7).

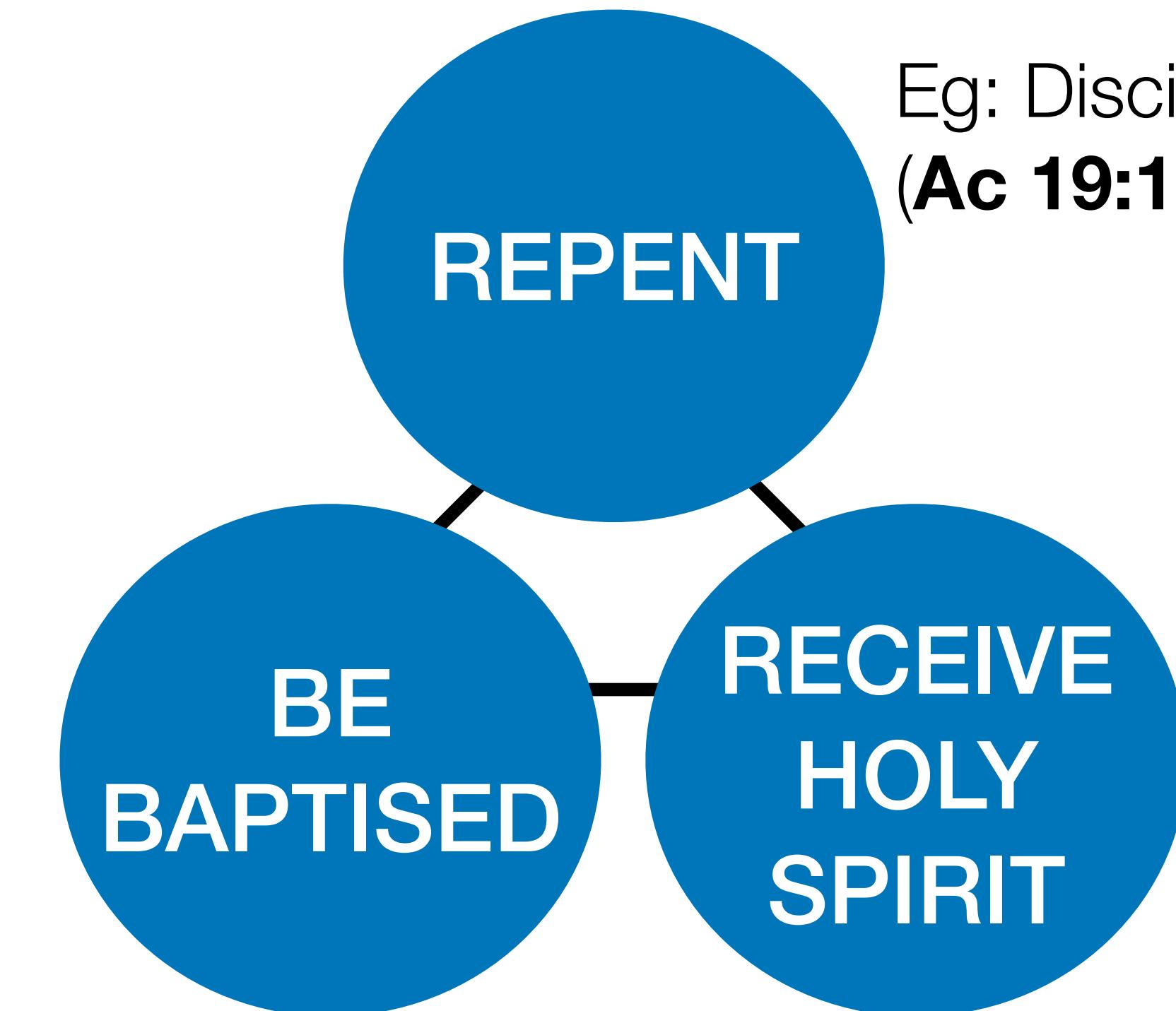
- * Never compromise foundations - insist on what's needed.
- * Know that nothing of substance or longevity can be built without them
- * Look for evidence of the grace of God and the work of the Spirit (Ac 11:23).
- * Steward your current responsibilities and trust God!... (cf Lk 16:10).

BEHIND THE SCENES: ESSENTIAL FOUNDATIONS

“WHAT MUST WE DO?” (ACTS 2:36)

PETER: “REPENT, BE BAPTISED, RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT...” (ACTS 2:38)

APOSTOLIC TASK: ENSURING NO GAPS!...



Eg: Disciples in Ephesus
(Ac 19:14-17)

Eg: Cornelius's household
(Ac 10:47-48); Disciples in Ephesus (Ac 19:14-17)

APOSTLES: LAY FOUNDATIONS UPON WHICH CHURCHES ARE BUILT

AC 2:42, MATT 16:18
EPH 2:20, 3:5, GAL 1:8
1 COR 4:17, 7:17, 11:16, 14:33

Eg: Disciples in Samaria
(Ac 8:14-17); Disciples in Ephesus (Ac 19:14-17)

3: KINGDOM ADVANCE!

ACTS 19:8-20, AD 53-54

- * Focussed on the Kingdom (v 8).
- * Invested over the long-term (v 8,10).
- * Proclaimed and powerfully-demonstrated the Kingdom - Word & Spirit! (v 11-12).
- * Transformed the whole region (v 10, 17-20).

- * Expect to see great things built on firm foundations
- * Celebrate small beginnings; a massive impact *takes time*
- * Preach the Gospel of the Kingdom - God's total answer to man's total need
- * Position yourself for demonstration and “signs following” (Mk 16:17)

4: PAUL'S FAREWELL

ACTS 20:17-38, AD 56

- * 3 yrs in Ephesus: proclaimed everything profitable (v 20), taught publicly and house-to-house (v 20), focussed on foundations (v 21), preached the Kingdom (v 25), never shrank back from declaring the whole plan of God (v 27)...
- * Warning: “savage wolves” from outside and “deviant doctrines” from within (v 29-30).
- * They all wept, embraced and kissed (v 37-38).

- * Know what your group/church needs - milk and solids.
- * Paint the big picture, trusting the Spirit to reveal His Word.
- * Don’t be building-bound or Sunday-centric.
- * Invest time to ensure relationships are filled with affection!

5: PAUL'S LETTER

EPHESIANS, AD 60

- ★ ‘Queen of the Epistles’, ‘high water-mark of Scripture’, ‘Epic of the NT’...
- ★ Written from Rome (Ac 28), like Colossians. Colossians concerns Head and Ephesians concerns Body. The fullness (*pleroma*) of God is in Christ (Col 1:19, 2:9) and the fulness of God-in-Christ is in His church (Eph 1:23, 3:19, 4:13).
- ★ Centred on “the purpose of the ages” - the church making known God’s wisdom to heavenly realms (Eph 3:10-11). Covers: (1) doctrine/principles (chs 1-3) - wealth in Christ, (2) outworked in demonstration/practice (chs 4-6) - walk in Christ.

- ★ Keep the ultimate vision and big picture always before people.
- ★ Don’t neglect to emphasise our identity - who we are and why we’re here.
- ★ Ensure your teaching/preaching has practical application.
- ★ Feast on Ephesians!

6: TIMOTHY'S LEADERSHIP

1 TIMOTHY, AD 64

- * Written from Rome (after Ac 28?) to Timothy (in Ephesus, 1Ti 1:3) - to encourage, support, instruct, and express love. Focus on Truth and Timothy's stewardship of it.
- * His task: "command certain people not to teach other doctrine" (1:3), call-out "teaching of demons" (4:1-6), "command and teach" truth (4:11), devote himself to "public reading, exhortation and teaching" (4:13), be "conscientious about [his] teaching" (4:16), honour elders who "work hard at teaching and preaching" (5:17), "teach and encourage" (6:2), oppose whatever contradicts "sound doctrine" (6:3)...

- * Read the pastoral letters as if *to you*.
- * Recognise your entrustment (6:20) - truth, heritage, people - and guard it!
- * Fulfil your assignment; be conscientious about your gift/ministry (4:15-16).
- * Don't shrink back from teaching truth and calling-out heresy.

BEHIND THE SCENES: SOUND DOCTRINE

- * Paul refers to “sound doctrine” (**hygianousē didaskaliá**) 4 times (**1Ti 1:9-11, 2Ti 4:3, Tit 1:9, Tit 2:1**). The threat in Ephesus and Crete was *false doctrine* and antidote is leaders able to refute it - they must teach, instruct and transmit **sound doctrine**, which is:
- * **Healthy.** It creates health, wellbeing! [*hygianousē* - ‘uncorrupt, well; working well, free from debilitation, incapacity, handicap; functioning holistically, all parts working together’]. The Word is God-breathed, and every breath exhales life and health! Sound doctrine keeps the church in good working order; keeps God’s people free from debilitation, incapacity or handicap. It never corrupts and is never man-centred; it may not always be palatable...but it's always good!
- * **Practical.** It doesn’t stay ‘on the page’. What we believe determines how we behave (“watch your *life* and *doctrine* closely”, 1Ti 4:16). Sound doctrine produces sound behaviour (cf 1Ti 1:10f) - equips people to make good choices and live to please God (Tit 2:7, 2:14, 3:1, 3:8, 3:14).

7: JESUS'S LETTER

REVELATION 2:1-7, AD 90?

- * Jesus knows their works: they've heeded warnings and stayed strong in doctrine (v 2-3)...
- * But "abandoned the love they had at first" (v 4);' put aside' devotion to Jesus, brotherly-love for one another and compassion for lost. "Heresy-hunting had killed love, and orthodoxy had been achieved at the price of fellowship".
- * They must "repent and do [what they] did at first", otherwise Jesus will "remove [their] lampstand (v 5) - a loveless church cannot represent Jesus.

- * Only Christ's assessment/evaluation matters - all comparisons are invalid.
- * Stay sound, without losing your passion - Word and Spirit!
- * Don't let go of the simple things that express agape love.
- * Don't rely on your history - continue strongly and finish really well.

IGNITE REGIONAL IMPACT!

- * Laying Ac 2:38 foundations everywhere.
- * Affection amongst leaders.
- * Getting better in the Word.
- * Staying connected across distances.
- * Investing for the long-term
- * Taking note of open or closed doors.
- * Ensuring vision doesn't diminish.
- * Faithful with your entrustment.
- * On guard against destructive doctrines.
- * Proclaiming and demonstrating.
- * Never, ever losing your first love.

