

The background is a complex, abstract composition. It features a dense, swirling pattern of fractal-like shapes, possibly resembling a forest canopy or a microscopic view of a material. The colors are muted, with shades of blue, green, and brown. Overlaid on this pattern are several thin, white circular lines and arcs, some of which are accompanied by small, faint numbers (e.g., 140, 150, 160, 170, 180, 190, 200, 210, 220, 230, 240, 250, 260) and arrows, suggesting a technical or scientific theme.

INTO THE FOREST 3: ACTS 16-28

BLACKBURN DIOCESAN CONFERENCE 2026

LOVEDAY ALEXANDER



INTO THE FOREST 2

ACTS FOUR & FIVE:

CHAPTERS 16-28

THIS BOOK WILL MAKE A TRAVELLER OF THEE

Your character has a problem which they must solve. The story is the journey they go on to sort out the problem presented. On the way they may learn something new about themselves; they'll certainly be faced with a series of obstacles they'll have to overcome; there will likely be a moment near the end when all hope seems lost, and this will almost certainly be followed by a last-minute resurrection of hope, a final battle against the odds, and victory snatched from the jaws of defeat. Y4.



THE FIVE-ACT STRUCTURE (YORKE P.55)

ACT 1

The heroes are introduced in the ordinary world, where they receive the call to adventure.

ACT 2

They are reluctant and/or refuse the call, but are encouraged by a mentor to cross the threshold and enter the special world, where they encounter tests, allies and enemies.

ACT 3

They approach the inmost core, crossing a second threshold, where they endure the supreme ordeal and take possession of their reward.

ACT 4

They are pursued on the road back to the ordinary world, undergoing a spiritual death before ...

ACT 5

they cross the third threshold, experience a resurrection and are transformed. They return with the elixir, a boon or treasure to benefit the ordinary world.

ACT FOUR: THE CRISIS POINT

The “crisis point” — a ‘kind of death’ in which ‘all hope passes away. It’s the point of maximum jeopardy in any script, the moment the viewer should be shouting “Oh no!” at the screen, the moment where it seems impossible for the hero to “get out of that”.’ It is ‘almost always the cliff-hanger before the last commercial break’

(Yorke p.16).

The crisis point of act four is of course the crisis point of the story. For the protagonist it’s the moment they’re confronted with the decision whether to embrace change and triumph, or reject it and fail. This is the “worst point”, the moment when everything could end and failure has won the day. It’s not uncommon for the stench of literal or metaphorical death to cloud the air.

(Yorke pp.100-101).

ACT FIVE: DEATH AND RESURRECTION

- ACT FIVE: they cross the third threshold, experience a resurrection and are transformed. They return with the elixir, a boon or treasure to benefit the ordinary world.
- In other words, the 'sub-goal' of the fifth act is identical to the main — original — goal of the story. They have returned from whence they came with a truth they must deliver to the tribe — and not always a truth the tribe wants to hear. ... Using the knowledge gained at the midpoint and tested through the trials of the fourth act, they are, against all odds, able to defeat their enemies, overcome their flaws and, in doing so become complete.
- The climax: final showdown with the antagonist, a battle in which the hero engages with a dramatic need and overcomes their flaw. The forces of antagonism continue to grow in size, thundering down the mountain until they finally, directly confront the protagonist.
- The resolution: the denouement. Death or marriage, depending on genre. Post-industrial stories are more likely to have an “open ending”.

ACTS IN FIVE ACTS (A)

ACT 1: THE JOURNEY BEGINS chs 1-7

- Pentecost: Jerusalem

ACT 2: INTO A NEW WORLD chs 8-9

- Persecution: Judea, Samaria and Damascus

ACT 3: CONVERSION AND CONVERGENCE chs 10-15

- Caesarea, Antioch, Lycaonia and Jerusalem

ACT 4: THE PERILS OF PAUL chs 16-26

- Paul the missionary: Anatolia, Macedonia. Greece, Asia
- Paul the prisoner: Jerusalem and Caesarea

ACT 5: AND SO WE CAME TO ROME chs 27-28

- Storm and shipwreck
- “And so we came to Rome”.

ACTS IN FIVE ACTS (B)

ACT 1: THE JOURNEY BEGINS chs 1-7

- Pentecost: Jerusalem

ACT 2: INTO A NEW WORLD chs 8-9

- Persecution: Judea, Samaria and Damascus

ACT 3: CONVERSION AND CONVERGENCE chs 10-15

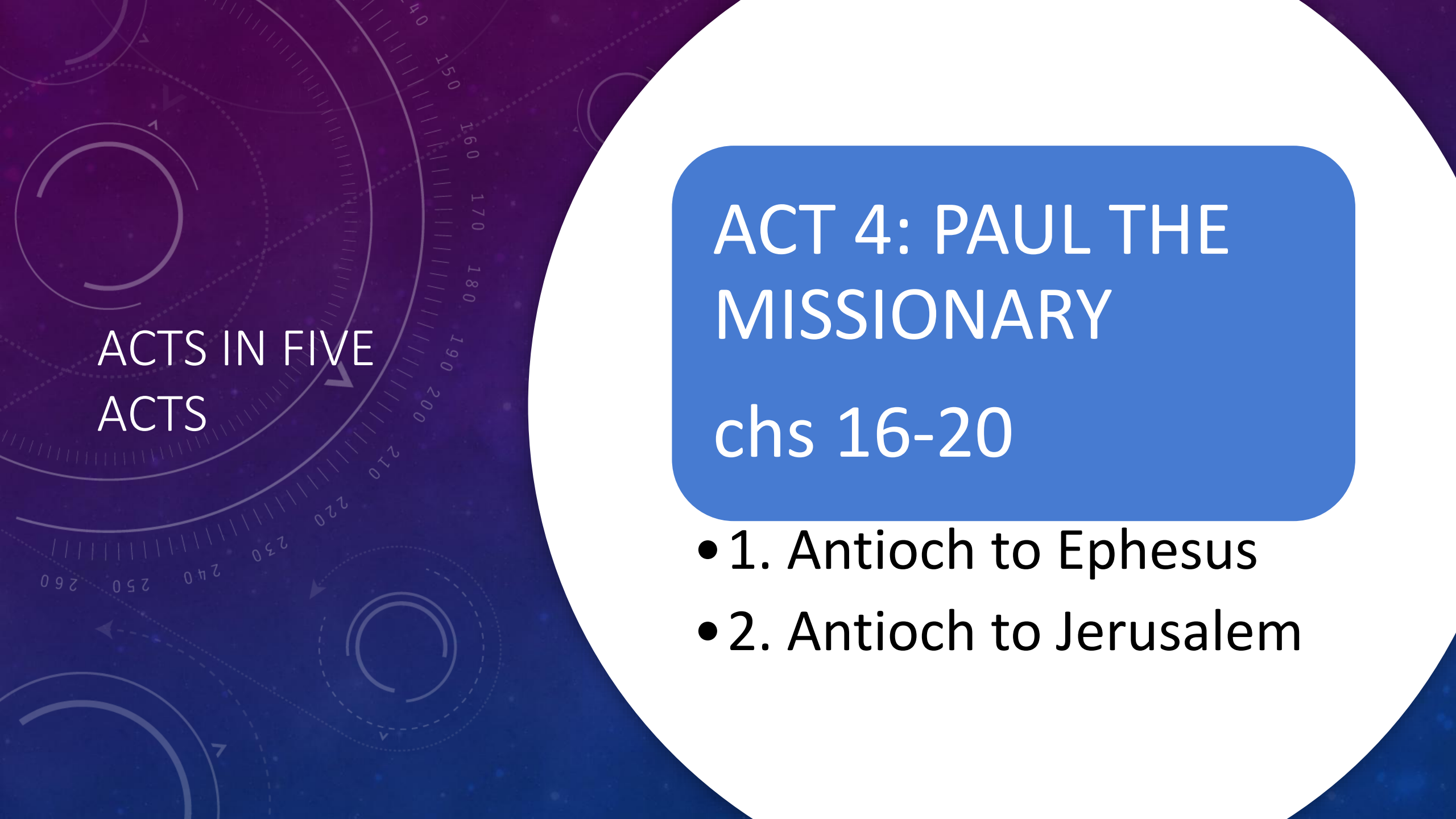
- Caesarea, Antioch, Lycaonia and Jerusalem

ACT 4: PAUL THE MISISONARY chs 16-20

- Anatolia, Macedonia. Greece, Asia
- Paul the prisoner: Jerusalem and Caesarea

ACT 5: PAUL THE PRISONER chs 21-28

- Jerusalem, Caesarea
- Storm and shipwreck
- “And so we came to Rome”.



ACTS IN FIVE
ACTS

ACT 4: PAUL THE MISSIONARY

chs 16-20

- 1. Antioch to Ephesus
- 2. Antioch to Jerusalem

JOURNEYS OF PAUL THE APOSTLE, c.46-63 CE



PAUL THE MISSIONARY

- Journey 2: 15.36-18.23. Galatia & Phrygia, Macedonia, Achaia, Ephesus, Jerusalem.
- Journey 3: 18.24-19.20. Galatia, Ephesus, (Asia).
- 19.21-21.16 home via Achaia, Macedonia, & Troas to Jerusalem



PAUL THE TRAVELLER

- Scene 1: “Second Missionary Journey” (15:36-18:23). Iconium; Philippi; Thessalonica; Athens; Corinth (2 yrs); Ephesus; Jerusalem; Antioch (18.22).
- Scene 2: “Third Missionary Journey” (18:24-19.20): Asia via Galatia & Phrygia; Ephesus (2 years).
- Scene 3: The voyage home (19.21-21.16): Paul resolves in the Spirit to go through Macedonia and Achaia, and then to go back to Jerusalem. “After I have gone there, I must also see Rome.”



MISION ON THE MOVE

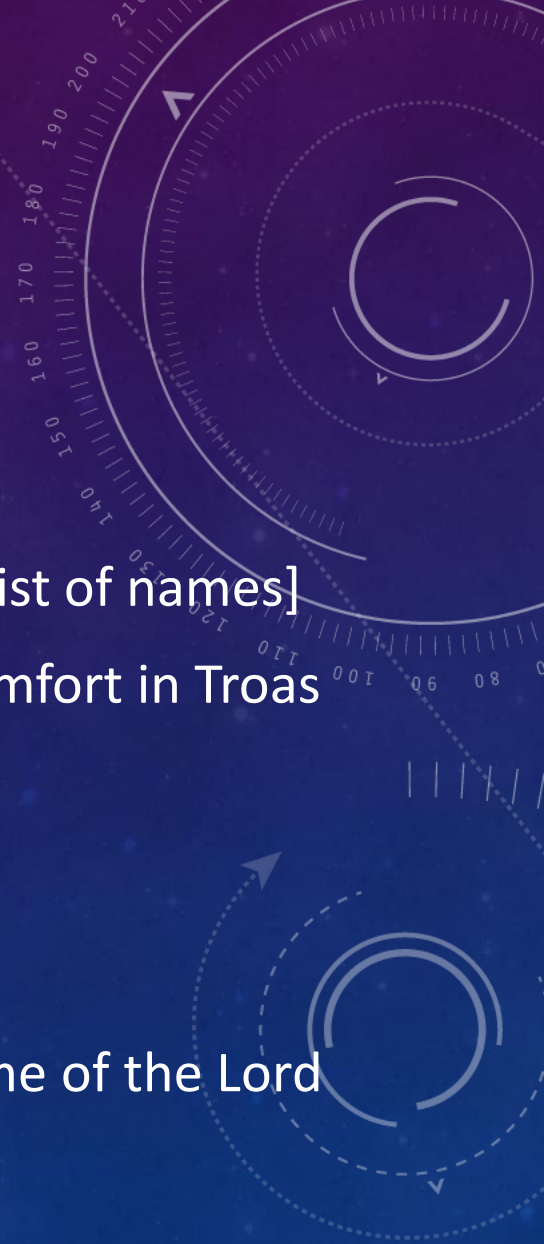
- 16.6-10 The adventure of travel
- 16.15, 34, 18.7 Hospitality
- 17.16-34 Preaching to pagans
- 16.14, 18.1-4 Migrant networks
- 19.1-12 Parallels with Peter
- 16.16-18, 19.11-20 Magic and miracle
- 16.19-40, 19.23-41 Tests, allies and enemies
- 19.20 “The word of the Lord grew mightily”

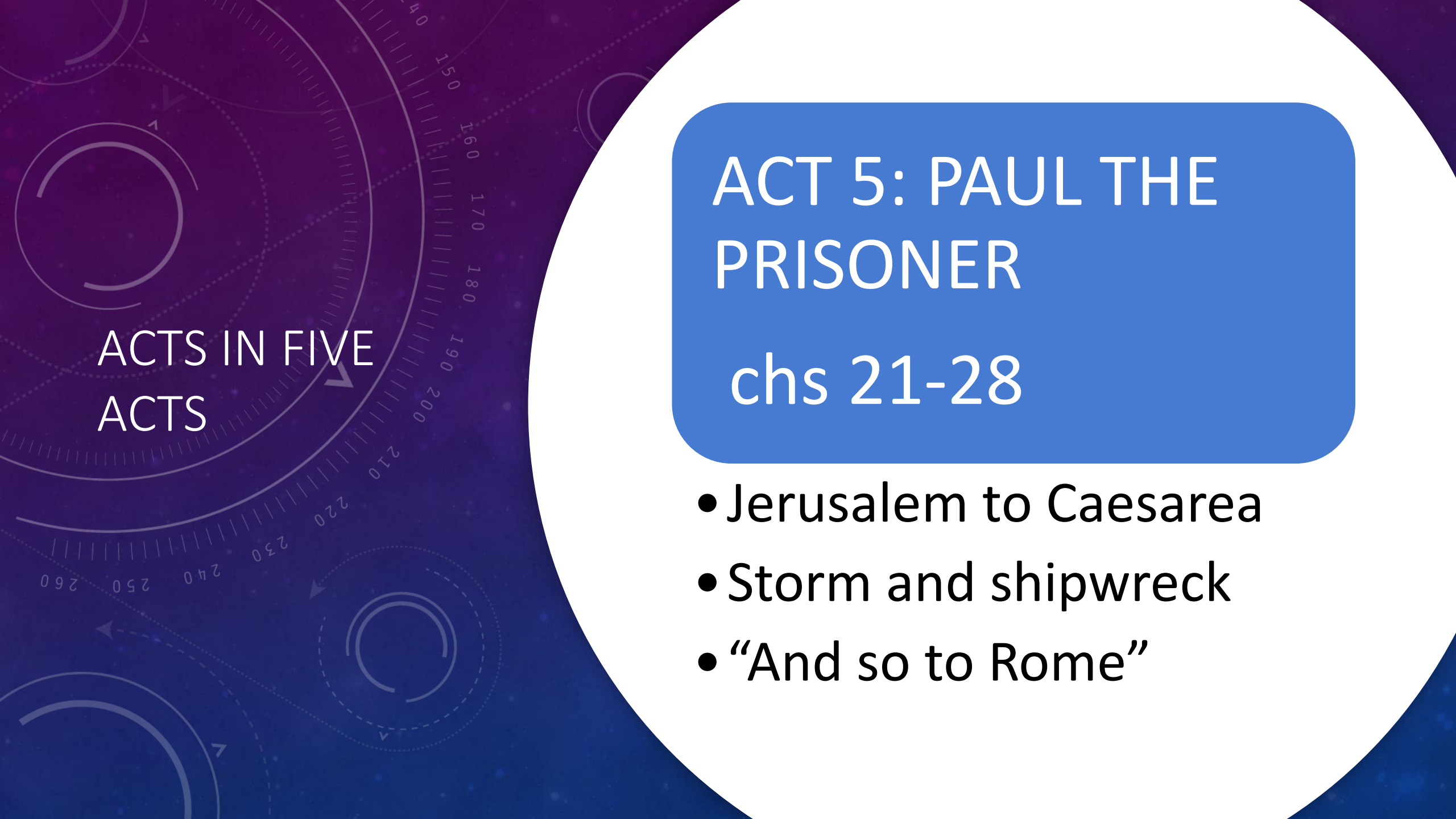




TURNING FOR HOME

- 19.21 "I must also see Rome".
- 20.1: Farewells and encouragement [list of names]
- 20.5 -12 Slowing down the action. Comfort in Troas
- 20.13-16, 21.1-3: Aegean cruise
- 20.17-38 Farewell discourse
- 21.5-6 Farewells on the beach
- 21.7-14 "I am ready to die for the name of the Lord Jesus"





ACTS IN FIVE
ACTS

ACT 5: PAUL THE PRISONER

chs 21-28

- Jerusalem to Caesarea
- Storm and shipwreck
- “And so to Rome”



PAUL THE PRISONER

- Scene 1: Return to Jerusalem. Riot in Temple: speech 1 (ch.22). Speech 2: Sanhedrin (ch.23). Plot to ambush Paul.
- Scene 2: Caesarea. Speech 3: Felix (ch.24). Appeal to Caesar. Speech 4: Festus and Agrippa (ch.26).
- Scene 3: The voyage: storm and shipwreck (chs 27.1-28.14)
- Scene 4: And so to Rome (ch.28.16-31)



BEFORE THE GOVERNOR

More simply, [Act 4] gives an opportunity for *speeches* or what screenwriters refer to as ‘monologuing’ — ‘the moment where Blofeld or Goldfinger tells us the “how” and “why” of his plan or the hero explains their motivation. If dramas are journeys from darkness to light, then this speech can be seen as the final piece in the jigsaw: the moment when we finally truly understand a character’s motives before the final “battle”.’ (Yorke p.101)

DRAMA AS ARGUMENT

- A theory is posited, an argument explored, and a conclusion reached. [Thesis, antithesis, synthesis.] The theme *is* the drama. All dramas are arguments about the nature of the world. Stories work exactly like essays, like lawsuits, and, indeed, like perception itself: they posit an idea, explore it, then come to a conclusion that, if the drama is convincing, is proved true. (Y192)
- “You often hear the term, ‘You should have something to say in a story’. But that doesn’t always mean a message. It means a truth, some value that you yourself as a story-teller believe in, and then through the course of the story are able to debate that truth. Try to prove it wrong. Test it to destruction. (Y194)

THE ARGUMENT OF ACTS

- 17.3 (Thessalonica): Proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead: “This is the Messiah, Jesus”.
- 22.22 (Temple crowd): “Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles”.’ Up to this point they listened to him, but then they shouted, “Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live.”
- 26.24 (Festus): “You are out of your mind, Paul. Too much learning is driving you insane!” “Nothing deserving of death.”
- 26.23: “That the Messiah must suffer ... and rise from the dead ... to proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles”.
- 26.28 (Agrippa): “Are you so quickly persuading me to be a Christian?”

NOT DISOBEDIENT TO THE HEAVENLY VISION

- 9.15-16 (Jesus to Ananias): “Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” NB this is said to Ananias but not explicitly to Saul.
- 22.14: ‘Then [Ananias] said, “The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear his own voice; for you will be witness to all the world of what you have seen and heard.”
- 22.17-22: ‘Praying in the Temple, I saw Jesus saying to me, “Hurry and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.” ... “Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles”.’
- 26.16-18 (Jesus to Saul): “Get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you. I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles — to whom I am sending you to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me. ..”

WITNESS — OR MARTYR?

- 9.15-16 (Jesus to Ananias): “I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.”
- 22.14: ‘Then [Ananias] said, “The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear his own voice; for you will be witness to all the world of what you have seen and heard.”
- 22.18-20 (Saul to Jesus): “Lord, they themselves know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. And while the blood of your witness (*martus*) Stephen was shed, I myself was standing by, keeping the coats of those who killed him.” CF. Acts 7.54-8.1.
- 23.11: That night the Lord stood by Paul and said, “Keep up your courage! For just as you have testified (*diemarturo*) for me in Jerusalem, so you must bear witness (*marturesai*) also in Rome.”
- 26.16-18 (Jesus to Saul): “Get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as *huperetes* and *martus* to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you.”

“WHOSE I AM AND WHOM I SERVE”

- 2 Cor 11.25: 3 shipwrecks, a night and a day adrift at sea
- ‘A writer’s task is to distil the story they’re telling into a comfortable running time by choosing to focus on the most important or significant moments. They will seek out those moments; they will distil and concentrate; they will chisel and hone. Out of less they will attempt to capture a whole and present it — normally in a linked chain of cause and effect — in a manner dependent on the type of tale and genre they wish to employ.’ (Y 90) In so doing they will ‘create a plausible, thrilling, moving work that in portraying a tiny fraction of a life captures the essence of its whole’ (Y91)
- Under divine protection: 27.24
- Not a murderer: 28.1-6
- Brings healing and life: 28.7-10.
- Utopian island life



AND SO WE CAME TO ROME

27.1: A change of direction

28.14: A sense of home-coming

28.17: “No charge to bring against my nation ..”

28.21 “Tell us about this sect.”

28.26-28: Isaiah 6.9-10. Cf. Mark 4.12 // Luke 8.10.

Rom 10.12: “For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call upon him”.

28.31: Unstoppable!



ACTS 28.4: “THIS MAN MUST BE A MURDERER ...”



•Chariton, *Callirhoe*, 3.3-4: “It would have been the most outrageous thing possible for the Syracusans to believe that he alone had been saved because of his piety, when it was his impiety that saved him alone — but it saved him for a worse punishment”.

JONAH AS A SYMBOL OF RESURRECTION





GRAMMAR OF A SHIPWRECK

- Juno (with diadem) and Aeolus (wind-god) create a storm to prevent Aeneas fulfilling his divinely-ordained destiny in Rome: Aeneid 1.64-80

JONAH IN THE CATACOMBS

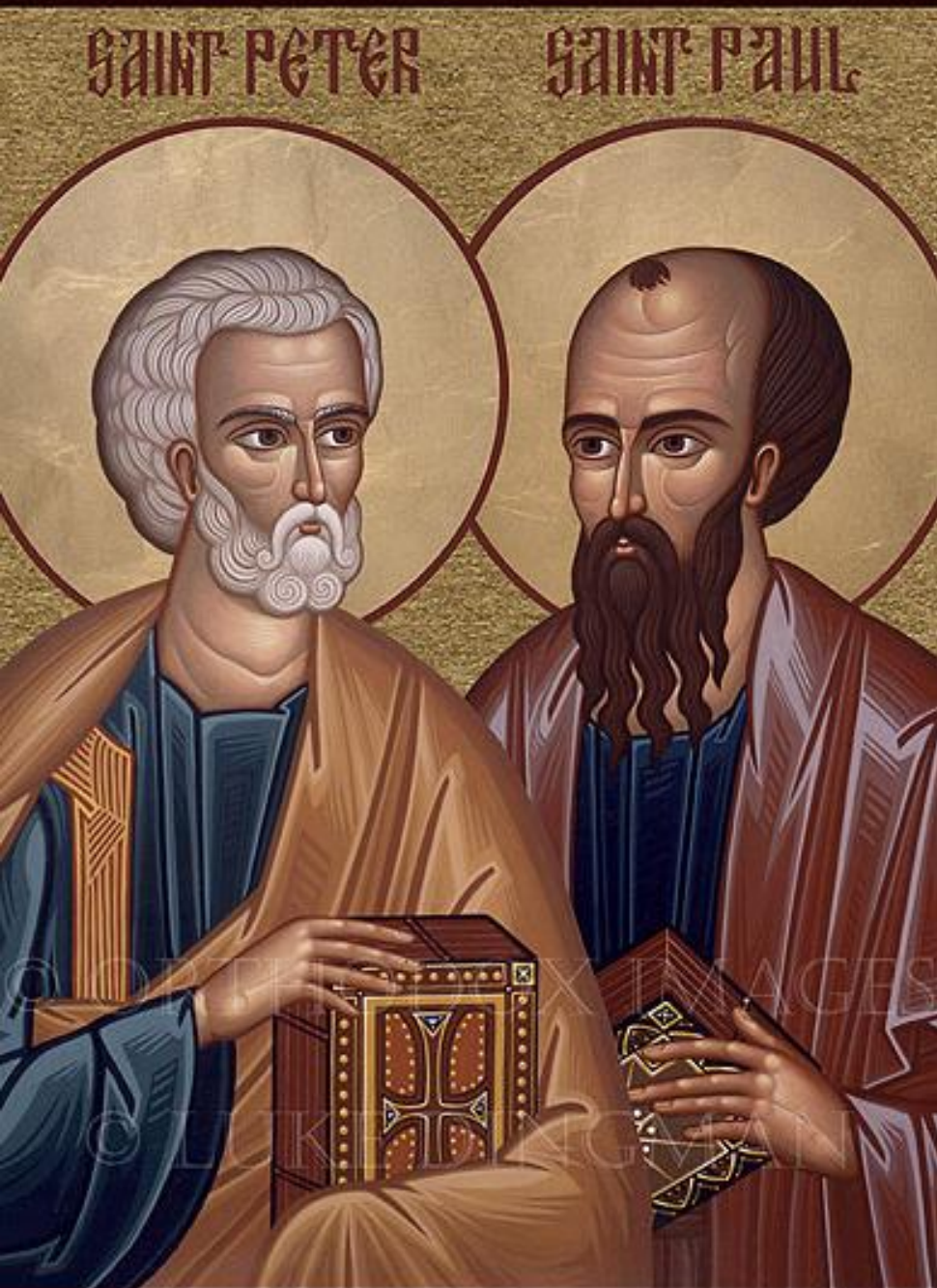


CHANGE AND CHOICE

- “Change and choice is at the heart of the quest. Characters get what they need. Expecting one thing on their quest, they find themselves confronted with another; traditional worldviews aren’t reinforced, prejudices aren’t reaffirmed. Instead, the protagonists’ worldviews — and thus ours too — are realigned. Both literally and figuratively, we are moved. The quest is an integral ingredient of all archetypal stories. Change of some kind is at the heart of this quest, and so too is choice, because finally the protagonist must choose how to change.” (Yorke 14-15)

APOSTOLIC IMAGES

- 1Clem 5:1
But, to pass from the examples of ancient days, let us come to those champions who lived nearest to our time. Let us set before us the noble examples which belong to our generation.
- 1Clem 5:3
Let us set before our eyes the good Apostles.
- 1Clem 5:4
There was Peter who by reason of unrighteous jealousy endured not one but many labours, and thus having borne his testimony went to his appointed place of glory.
- 1Clem 5:5
By reason of jealousy and strife Paul by his example pointed out the prize of patient endurance. After that he had been seven times in bonds, had been driven into exile, had been stoned, had preached in the East and in the West, he won the noble renown which was the reward of his faith,
- 1Clem 5:6
having taught righteousness unto the whole world and having reached the farthest bounds of the West; and when he had borne his testimony before the rulers, so he departed from the world and went unto the holy place, having been found a notable pattern of patient endurance.



COLLECT FOR SS PETER & PAUL

Almighty God,
whose blessed apostles Peter and Paul
glorified you in their death as in their life:
grant that your Church,
inspired by their teaching and example,
and made one by your Spirit,
may ever stand firm upon the one foundation,
Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.