

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
Red Bud, Illinois
Men's Bible Study
"Great Men of the Bible: Barnabas"

I. Acts 4:32-37

Verse 32: In what practical way did the early Church display its unity in "heart and mind"?

How do we do this today? _____

Does this happen if we give an offering only if "it is used the way I want it used?"

Verse 33: What was the "job" of the apostles in the early church? _____

Verses 34-35: Why was there no "needy person" among them? _____

**Verse 36: We are introduced to a new character in the early church. What four things do we learn of him in this verse? Name: _____ Heritage: _____ Homeland: _____
Nickname: _____ (Meaning: _____)**

The giving of a name in that time and culture indicated having authority over someone. Jesus gave Simon the name "Peter." He called James and John "The Sons of Thunder." The apostles display their authority over Joseph by giving him a new name that stuck with him in the early church.

Did/Do you have a nickname? Who gave it to you? Why? Did it stick?

Verse 37: What do we learn about Joseph/Barnabas in this verse? _____

What two things does he do? _____

We do not know if this land that he sold was on the island of Cyprus or in the land of Israel. That he was a landowner put him in the socially elite class. Here he turns money over to be used by a group composed mostly of fishermen (lower class).

II. Acts 9:26-28

Saul was a Jewish Pharisee who had been pursuing, persecuting and imprisoning followers of Jesus (Acts 7:58; 8:1, 3; 9:1-2). He returns to Jerusalem from a trip to Damascus on which he had planned to arrest those "who belonged to the Way" and bring them as prisoners to Jerusalem. But instead of bringing back followers of Jesus in chains, he comes back claiming to be one of them.

Verse 26: What does Saul try to do? _____

What is the reaction of the disciples? _____

What were they (what would us have been) afraid of? _____

(Would we trust Osama bin Laden to bring a dish to a church potluck luncheon wanting to join our congregation?)

Verse 27: Who is it that vouches for Saul before the apostles? _____

What three things does Barnabas say on Saul's behalf? _____

Verse 28: What is the result of Barnabas standing up for Saul's genuine faith in Jesus?

III. Acts 11:19-30

Verses 19-21: Who had begun the “persecution in connection with Stephen” (Acts 7:57-8:3)? _____

How had this become a good thing for the early church? _____

The Gospel message was taken to Cyprus and from Cyprus to Antioch. This is on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea in Syria north of Israel. It became one of the five major churches of the early church.

Whom have we heard is from Cyprus? _____

What new thing happened with the Christian message in Antioch? _____

What is the result of the Gospel being proclaimed to Greeks (non-Jews)? _____

Verses 22-24: The news of this reaches the church in Jerusalem. Whom did they send to Antioch investigate what was happening? _____ What does this say about their confidence in him?

What does Barnabas see in the church of Antioch? _____

What does Barnabas do? _____

Notice how Barnabas’ actions display the meaning of the nickname that the apostles had given him.

In what three ways is Barnabas described in v. 24? _____ (only person called this in Acts)

What is the result of Christian ministry in Antioch? _____

Verses 25-26: When the church in Antioch is in need of an “associate pastor” whom does Barnabas choose? _____ (Saul has been in his hometown of Tarsus since Acts 9:31 being prepared for Christian missionary ministry)

What is the ministry of Barnabas and Saul in Antioch? _____

What other new thing happens to the believers in Antioch? _____

This name or title that we bear proudly is only used in the Bible of believers by people outside of the faith. It very likely was meant as a pejorative, or negative term.

Verses 27-30: More people visit the Antioch church from Jerusalem.

What is the Spirit-inspired message that Agabus proclaims in Antioch? _____

The Roman emperor Claudius reigned from AD 41-54.

What do the disciples in Antioch decide to do? _____

How are they expected to provide this help? _____ (2 Corinthians 8:9)

Does this tell us anything about our own giving? _____

Christians in Jerusalem have historically been poor. This is just as true today as it was then. They are a small minority living, and trying to make a living, between the two much larger majorities of Israeli Jews and Palestinian Muslims.

Whom do they entrust with their gift for the believers in Jerusalem? _____

This trip likely took place in AD 46 and is described by Paul in Galatians 2:1. Titus was also with them.

IV. Acts 13:1-12

Antioch is north of Palestine in what is now Syria on the eastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea. It was here that Jewish Christians started to speak about Jesus to Gentiles (Acts 11:20) and also here that believers

were first called “Christians” (Acts 11:26). For a year Barnabas and Saul had served this congregation as its pastors (Acts 11:26).

Verse 1: What titles are given to Barnabas and the other men listed in the church at Antioch? _____

Verse 2: What message was the congregation in worship given by the Holy Spirit? _____

Verse 3: What outward sign did the church give Barnabas and Saul of their special mission? _____

When does this same sign happen in the church today? _____

The congregation in Antioch gave Barnabas and Saul a release from their ministry there so that they can begin a new missionary ministry.

Verse 4: The date may be March 10, 47 AD. This was the beginning of the sailing season that year.

Who is the power behind this missionary journey of Barnabas and Saul? _____

Knowing what we do about Barnabas, why might they have gone to the island of Cyprus first? _____

What insight might this give us to our own personal missionary work? _____

We get the word “copper” from the island of Cyprus. It was an important source of this metal in the ancient world.

Verse 5: Which places did they go first? _____ **Who was with them?** _____

In Acts 12:12 we are introduced to John Mark, whose mother was named Mary. The early Christians met at their house in Jerusalem. It is supposed that this house also was the location of the Last Supper. It also is supposed that John Mark is the young man who ran naked from the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus was arrested which is recorded only in Mark’s Gospel (Mark 14:51-52). We will find out later that Mark is a cousin to Barnabas. They traveled the island from the east to the west until they came to the capital city Paphos.

Verses 6-7: Whom did Barnabas and Saul come across on this journey? _____

Sergius Paulus was the Roman in charge of the island of Cyprus. He was directly responsible to the Roman senate. He wants to give a hearing to these two men and their new teaching. They were being opposed by this sorcerer named Bar-Jesus or Elymas.

Verse 9: What do we learn about Saul here? _____ (probably his Greek name)

From this point on Paul takes the lead in the missionary journey. He will be mentioned before Barnabas from now on. The change to using his Greek name reflects the change in emphasis in his missionary work, reaching out primarily to the Gentiles.

Verses 10-11a: How kind, compassionate, and politically correct is Paul in his speech? _____

Who else had to become blind for awhile so that he could truly “see”? _____

Verses 11b-12: What happened to the false prophet Bar-Jesus/Elymas? _____

How did the Roman proconsul react to this? _____

Archaeological evidence indicates that the family of this man later became prominent in Christian circles in Asia Minor.

Verse 13: As they continue their journey north to the mainland of Asia Minor who is the only one named? _____

What happens when they reach Perga? _____

Why do you think John Mark may have left the group? _____

V. Acts 13:42-52

Paul takes the lead in speaking to the people gathered in the Jewish synagogue of Pisidian Antioch (the interior of Asia Minor). His sermon is a quick review of the Old Testament, the ministry of John the Baptist, and the death and resurrection of Jesus (four times, verses 30, 33, 34, and 37).

Verses 42-43: What happens to Paul and Barnabas after this service is over? _____

Verses 44-45: What was the reaction on the next Sabbath day? _____

Why would the Jews speak against what Paul was saying? _____

Verses 46-48: What will be the cause of the hearers' "condemnation"? _____

What becomes Paul and Barnabas' missionary pattern? _____

What is the cause of the Gentiles' "salvation"? _____

Romans 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes, first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

Verses 49-52: Who is the source of the opposition to Paul and Barnabas? _____

What happens to Paul and Barnabas? _____

Luke 9:5 (Jesus said) "If people do not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave their town, as a testimony against them."

VI. Acts 14:1-7

Paul and Barnabas go down the road about eighty miles southeast to the city of Iconium. It was a center of communications and a Roman military town. They still are in the Roman province of Galatia.

Verses 1-2: What two things result from Paul and Barnabas' visit to the Jewish synagogue?

Verse 3: What did God enable Paul and Barnabas to do along with their preaching? _____

Verse 4: What results from a bold preaching of Jesus? _____

Matthew 10:32-34 (Jesus said) "Whoever acknowledges Me before men, I will also acknowledge him before My Father in heaven. But whoever disowns Me before men, I will disown him before My Father in heaven. Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword."

For the first time in the book of Acts Paul and Barnabas are called "apostles." This word means "ones sent with a mission." It is used in the New Testament of the Twelve who had been with Jesus during His ministry and had seen Him risen from the dead. Had Barnabas seen the resurrected Jesus? Could he have been among the 500 who saw Jesus alive (1 Corinthians 15:6). Some scholars speculate that Barnabas was one of the two Jesus spoke with along the road to Emmaus on the day of His resurrection (Luke 24).

Verse 5: How strong was the feeling and opposition against Paul and Barnabas? _____

Verses 6-7: What two things did Paul and Barnabas do in face of this violent opposition?

What example does this give to modern-day missionaries who are in harm's way?

Matthew 10:23 (Jesus said) "When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another."

VII. Acts 14:8-20 Paul and Barnabas in Lystra

Verses 8-10: What two things does Paul do here (as Jesus did in His ministry)?

"he had faith to be made well" What does this mean? _____

Verses 11-13: How does the crowd react to what Paul did? _____

The people of this area linked Zeus, the chief of the Greek gods, with Hermes, the messenger god, in their worship. A story retold by the Roman poet Ovid (who lived from 43 BC to AD 17) tells how these two gods (Roman names were Jupiter and Mercury) supposedly had visited this area in human form and were denied lodging by the local people. Finally an old couple named Philemon and Baucis welcomed them into their humble dwelling. These gods then rewarded this couple by turning their house into a temple and making them the priests in this temple. They died together and became two trees growing together with a double trunk. The people of Lystra are not going to let this oversight happen again.

Why might they think that Barnabas is Zeus (chief god)? _____

Why do they think that Paul is Hermes (messenger god)? _____

What do the people want to do to Paul and Barnabas? _____

Why is it that the people could make these preparations without Paul and Barnabas realizing what was happening at first? _____

Verses 14-18: How do Paul and Barnabas prevent the crowd from worshipping them?

Matthew 26:65 Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy."

How do Paul and Barnabas describe God? _____

In our personal witnessing to others we are to point others away from ourselves to the goodness of God. Notice what Paul says of God is confined to what we call First Article of the Creed items (as he does in Acts 17 when he is on the Areopagus in Athens).

Verses 19-20: What happens to turn the crowd against Paul and Barnabas? _____

What does the crowd do to Paul? (what about Barnabas?) _____

2 Corinthians 11:25 Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea.

What do Paul and Barnabas do the next day? _____

Verses 21-25: What is Paul and Barnabas' message to these new Christians as they retrace their steps through the towns they had been? _____
(no health/wealth preaching here)

What do Paul and Barnabas do for each church? _____

Verses 26-28: What is Paul and Barnabas' report to the congregation in Antioch?

VIII. Acts 15 The Council in Jerusalem

Verses 1-4: What is the teaching that causes a debate among the believers in Antioch?

We have an example of this with the Franconian German Lutherans in the Saginaw Valley of Michigan in the 1840s who wanted to teach the Small Catechism to the Indians but believed that the Indians needed to learn the German language before they could hear the Christian faith. It was not successful at all.

Do we feel threaten when new people come into the congregation? We don't recognize their names, don't know where they come from or to whom they are related. What's worse, we are suspicious if they get active and try to change things from the way they always have been.

Why do the Antioch church send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem? _____

What do Paul and Barnabas report along their trip to Jerusalem? _____

Verse 12: What do Barnabas and Paul add to this discussion? _____

Notice the order now, Barnabas is 1st and then Paul; Barnabas takes the lead here because of his importance and familiarity among the believers in Jerusalem. The Christians' memory of Paul is as the Pharisee Saul.

Verse 22: Who takes the convention's report back to Antioch? _____

_____ (don't know any more about him, brother of Joseph in Acts 1:23?)

Verse 35: What do Paul and Barnabas do in Antioch? _____

With this controversy that could have torn the early church apart resolved, the congregation's could get back to their mission of learning and spreading the good news of Jesus. A growing church needs many involved in teaching God's Word.

IX. Acts 15:36-41 The Separation

What does Paul propose to do? _____

What does Barnabas want to do? _____

Why is Paul opposed to what Barnabas wants to do? _____

How serious does this disagreement become? _____

What do Barnabas and Mark go? _____ **Why there?** _____

What positive thing comes from this split? _____

This is similar to early in chapter eight where the persecution of Saul the Pharisee against the Christians in Jerusalem forces them to leave the city and take the message of Jesus into the surrounding area.

X. Galatians 2 Fellowship With the Gentiles

Paul writes to churches in the Roman province of Galatia. These were congregations that he and Barnabas founded on their first missionary journey. After they left the area, Christian missionaries with a Jewish emphasis came and tried to undo Paul and Barnabas' work there. They said that Paul was a "second-string" apostle and that the message he proclaimed wasn't all they had to hear. These Judaizers told the Galatians that they had to be circumcised and obey Jewish food laws in order to be "true and full" Christians.

When Paul heard of this he fired off a letter to the Galatians that had smoke coming out of his pen. In the first two chapters he defends his apostolic position and preaching because it was at the same time a defense of the gospel of Jesus Christ. What Paul had proclaimed to the Galatians about full and free forgiveness in Jesus and the life liberty that we have in His name is God's good news. The Galatians do not need to put themselves back under the law and do things to earn their salvation.

Yet this temptation to observe and obey works of law is so strong that even otherwise solid Christian witnesses such as Peter and Barnabas were drawn in by it. Under pressure from Judaizers they, too, for a time rejected Gospel freedom, spurned Gentile believers, and went back to following Jewish food laws. Their actions so jeopardized the Christian ministry in Antioch that Paul felt the need to rebuke them in front of the congregation.

Verses 1-3 Who accompanied Paul on this trip to Jerusalem? _____

"Fourteen years later" is either after Paul's first visit to Jerusalem three years following his conversion or fourteen years after his conversion itself.

Acts 11:27-30; 12:25 During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) 29The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. 30This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul....When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark.

Many Bible scholars identify the trip of Acts 11:30 with the visit to Jerusalem Paul speaks of in Galatians 2. The "revelation" Paul speaks of in Gal. 2:2 then would be the famine prophecy that Agabus made. Some want to say that the Galatians 2 events happened in Acts 15 when Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem for a conference with the Christian leaders there.

What did Paul (and likely Barnabas) discuss with the leaders of the Jerusalem church?

What is Paul's example of gospel freedom that was recognized by those leaders at the time?

Verses 8-10 To whom did Peter preach the gospel? _____

To whom did Paul preach the gospel? _____

In practice, these did not become rigid rules. Paul continued to seek out Jews in each of the towns he visited and Peter wrote a letter whose readers included Gentiles.

How did James, Peter and John show their acceptance of Paul and Barnabas' ministry?

(The Greek word is koinonia, the same word that lies behind our fellowship in the Lord's Supper.)

While these apostles focused on different groups of people for their preaching, what were they to share in common in their ministry? _____

(Examples of Paul's concern for the poor, especially Jewish believers in Jerusalem, is well-documented in Romans 15:24-28; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9.)

Verses 11-14 This event would have happened after Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch from their first missionary journey. It is not recorded in the book of Acts. The nature of Paul's reference to Barnabas here shows that he must have been known by the people who are reading this letter. The James mentioned here is the half-brother of Jesus who became leader of the Jerusalem congregation after Peter's departure (Acts 12:17).

Whom must Paul oppose before the congregation in Antioch? _____

What had Peter been doing? _____

What happened after Jewish Christians came from Jerusalem? _____

Who was included among those who joined Peter in this hypocrisy? _____

Why did Paul have to rebuke these people for their behavior? _____

Have you ever changed your behavior based upon the people that were around you? If so, why?
