

Acts Lesson #17

BSF Scripture Reading:

FIRST DAY:

1. **Read the lesson notes and References**

SECOND DAY:

Read Acts 15:36-16:10

Disagreement Between Paul and Barnabas

[36] Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.” [37] Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, [38] but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. [39] They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, [40] but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. [41] He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Acts 16

Timothy Joins Paul and Silas

[16:1] He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek. [2] The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. [3] Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. [4] As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. [5] So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

Paul's Vision of the Man of Macedonia

[6] Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by

the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. [7] When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. [8] So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. [9] During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” [10] After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Question 4

Acts 15:1-35;

The Council at Jerusalem

[15:1] Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.” [2] This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. [3] The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the brothers very glad. [4] When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.

[5] Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, “The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses.”

[6] The apostles and elders met to consider this question. [7] After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: “Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. [8] God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. [9] He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. [10] Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? [11] No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”

Acts Lesson #17

[12] The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. [13] When they finished, James spoke up: “Brothers, listen to me. [14] Simon has described to us how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself. [15] The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:

[16] ““After this I will return and rebuild David’s fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it,

[17] that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things’ [18] that have been known for ages.

[19] “It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. [20] Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. [21] For Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath.”

The Council’s Letter to Gentile Believers

[22] Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, two men who were leaders among the brothers. [23] With them they sent the following letter: The apostles and elders, your brothers, To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia:

Greetings.

[24] We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. [25] So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul— [26] men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. [27] Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. [28] It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: [29] You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of

strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell.

[30] The men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. [31] The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message. [32] Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers. [33] After spending some time there, they were sent off by the brothers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them. [35] But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.

THIRD DAY

Read Acts 16:11-40

Lydia’s Conversion in Philippi

[11] From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day on to Neapolis. [12] From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

[13] On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. [14] One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message. [15] When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. “If you consider me a believer in the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my house.” And she persuaded us.

Paul and Silas in Prison

[16] Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. [17] This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.”

Acts Lesson #17

[18] She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” At that moment the spirit left her.

[19] When the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. [20] They brought them before the magistrates and said, “These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar [21] by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.”

[22] The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten. [23] After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. [24] Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

[25] About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. [26] Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose. [27] The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. [28] But Paul shouted, “Don't harm yourself! We are all here!”

[29] The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. [30] He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

[31] They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” [32] Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. [33] At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. [34] The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family.

[35] When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: “Release those men.” [36] The jailer told Paul, “The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace.”

[37] But Paul said to the officers: “They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out.”

[38] The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. [39] They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. [40] After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and encouraged them. Then they left.

FOURTH DAY

Read Acts 17

In Thessalonica

[17:1] When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. [2] As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, [3] explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ,” he said. [4] Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.

[5] But the Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. [6] But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials, shouting: “These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, [7] and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's

Acts Lesson #17

decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus.” [8] When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. [9] Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.

In Berea

[10] As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. [11] Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. [12] Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.

[13] When the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, they went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up.

[14] The brothers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. [15] The men who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

In Athens

[16] While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. [17] So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. [18] A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to dispute with him. Some of them asked, “What is this babbling trying to say?” Others remarked, “He seems to be advocating foreign gods.” They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.

[19] Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? [20] You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we want to know what they mean.” [21] (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

[22] Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. [23] For as I

walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.

[24] “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. [25] And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. [26] From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. [27] God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. [28] ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

[29] “Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by man's design and skill. [30] In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. [31] For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.”

[32] When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.” [33] At that, Paul left the Council. [34] A few men became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

FIFTH DAY:

Read Acts 18:1-22

In Corinth

[18:1] After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. [2] There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy

Acts Lesson #17

with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, [3] and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. [4] Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

[5] When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.

[6] But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”

[7] Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God.

[8] Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.

[9] One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent.

[10] For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.” [11] So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

[12] While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him into court. [13] “This man,” they charged, “is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law.”

[14] Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, “If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanor or serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you. [15] But since it involves questions about words and names and your own law—settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things.” [16] So he had them ejected from the court. [17] Then they all turned on Sosthenes the synagogue ruler and beat him in front of the court. But Gallio showed no concern whatever.

Priscilla, Aquila and Apollos

[18] Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the brothers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. Before he

sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cenchrea because of a vow he had taken. [19] They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.

[20] When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined. [21] But as he left, he promised, “I will come back if it is God’s will.” Then he set sail from Ephesus. [22] When he landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church and then went down to Antioch.

Question 12

1 Corinthians 2:1-4: [2:1] When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. [2] For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. [3] I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. [4] My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power,

SIXTH DAY:

Read Acts 15:36-18:22

See above verses: