

Name: _____

Acts of Apostles

30 Point

Figures in the Acts

**You must answer about Barnabas and John Mark, then choose 1 other figure to write about.
Use the resource sheet and your Bible to answer the questions.**

Barnabas:

1. Where was Barnabas from? "Cypriot Jew" _____
2. How does Luke describe him? _____
3. What important person does he work with and introduce in Jerusalem and Antioch? _____
4. How do we know that Barnabas was generous? _____

5. The Apostles chose Barnabas to be the leader of the Christians in which city? _____
6. Who did he choose to help him? _____
7. How did Barnabas and the Church in Antioch help the poor Christians suffering in Jerusalem? _____
8. Barnabas and Paul went on the first Missionary journey together. How many miles was the Journey? _____
9. Who do the people of Lystra think Barnabas is? _____
10. What disagreement caused Barnabas and Paul to split up for the second Missionary journey? _____

John Mark:

11. How old was Mark when Jesus was preaching? _____
12. Who were his friends and companions whom he assisted in spreading the message of Christ? _____
13. Mark's mother Mary was an important follower of Jesus in Jerusalem. Describe some events which are connected to Mark's mother Mary's house.

14. What did Mark decide to do when his cousin Barnabas took him on a missionary journey with Paul in the year 46? This caused a disagreement between Paul and Barnabas.

15. 10 years later, we hear of Mark helping Paul while Paul is where? _____

16. How does Peter refer to Mark in his first letter from Rome? _____

17. What do Papaias and Irenaeus tell us that Mark did? _____

19. Where is it believed that Mark was bishop? (this is in Egypt) _____

20. Where does tradition say the relics of Mark's body are located today? _____

Choose 1 other figure (Aquila & Priscilla can be done together) and give 10 important facts about this individual.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

We next hear of Mark some ten years later, reconciled to Paul, a 'fellow-worker', a comfort to Paul in his imprisonment, and a useful assistant. We hear of a possible visit of Mark to the Church at Colossae (Col. 4:10), but do not know whether it materialized. The final reference to Mark comes in the closing greeting of the first letter of Peter from Rome, who entrusts his letter to the hand of Silvanus and adds the greetings of 'my son Mark', rather as Paul refers to Timothy. It is possible that Mark was the companion and spiritual 'son' of Peter, before and after his attendance on Peter in Rome.

Certainly the key to the origins of the Second Gospel

On a journey that was to cover 1,400 miles, they set off down the Orontes valley to sail from the port of Seleucia for Salamis, the eastern harbour of Cyprus. There were many Jews working in the copper-mines of Cyprus and a number of Hellenized Christians had come to Cyprus after the persecution in Jerusalem in the year 36. Now, ten years later, Barnabas and Paul landed on the island and proceeded to Paphos, seat of the Roman proconsul Sergius Paulus, who may have been a God-fearing attendant at the local synagogue. One of the proconsul's household was a Jewish magician called Elymas Bar-Jesus, who tried to prevent the preaching of the Christian gospel to his master. Paul very quickly and mercilessly exposed him, and the proconsul accepted Paul's teaching about Jesus.

Crossing over to the mainland of Pisidia, on the south coast of Asia Minor, they landed at Attalia and set off inland, climbing the western spurs of the rugged Taurus range, infested with robbers and other hazards. A few miles inland, John Mark (see MARK) left them and returned to Jerusalem. The rest arrived at Antioch, the capital of Pisidia – not of Syria – a hundred miles north from the coast, an important centre with a large Jewish community. In their synagogue, Paul delivered an address (fully recorded in Acts 13) to both Jews and Gentiles. By the following morning, opposition had crystallized and Paul and Barnabas were expelled from the city – but not before Paul had convinced many pagans, who were later to form the core of the Christian community in Pisidian Antioch.

Paul and Barnabas now turned eastwards and after nearly a hundred miles of rough travelling came to Iconium – a city of Lycania now called Konya. Here again their visit followed the same pattern and a Church was formed before – under threat of being stoned – Paul and Barnabas went on to Lystra, 25 miles towards the coast. Here there was no synagogue, so Paul spoke in the open air and healed a cripple. When the crowd realized what had happened, they declared Paul and Barnabas to be gods and attempted to offer them sacrifices.

Barnabas, however kindly, must have had a commanding presence, because in this amusing if (for a Jew) highly embarrassing incident at Lystra, the crowd decided that Barnabas must be Jupiter, lord of the gods, while to the talkative and eloquent Paul they assigned the subordinate role of Mercury. After a most successful journey, the two reported to headquarters in Jerusalem and had to face a barrage of questions about the freedom with which they had admitted pagans into the Church by baptism, without causing them first to be circumcised. In the end it was decided that the free admission of Gentiles to the Church would be allowed, if they would conform with certain particular social customs of the Jews. On the next journey, because Barnabas proposed to take Mark with them, the party split up and Paul chose to go with other companions. Barnabas went to Cyprus with Mark

In any case, the dispute did not end the friendship between Paul and Barnabas. Even on his last journey, when he was writing to the Corinthians, Paul shows that they had kept in touch. He mentions Barnabas as an example, with himself, of apostles who still maintain themselves by working at their old trade and refuse to live on the charity of the Church. It may be said that without the sympathy and encouragement of Barnabas, the vital contributions of Paul and Mark to the Christian faith and the New Testament might never have been made. [Acts 4:36; 11:22; 25; 30; 12:25; 13:1-50; 14:12-20; 15:2-37; 1 Cor. 9:6; Gal. 2:1, 9, 13; Col. 4:10]

MARK or JOHN MARK (Gk. from the Lat. 'large hammer') Mark, a young man in his early teens during the ministry of Jesus, became a friend and companion of the Apostle Paul, and later of the Apostle Peter. After their martyrdom in Rome, Mark wrote his Gospel, which is said to reflect the mind and memory of Peter.

Mark's Jewish name was John and his adopted Roman surname was Marcus – just as the Jew Saul adopted the Roman name of Paulus. Mark is mentioned at least ten times in the New Testament, in three different groups of passages. First he appears as the son of Mary, a leading Christian woman in Jerusalem, at whose house the early Church met for prayer. Here was the natural meeting-place of the apostles and disciples in Jerusalem, and Peter went there on his escape from prison. A tradition links this house with the Upper Room, in which Jesus ate the Last Supper, and regards Mark as the son of the 'good man of the house'. Some have suggested that he was the 'young man' who fled naked from the Garden of Gethsemane at the time of Jesus's arrest. It is possible that Judas, having left the disciples at the Last Supper in the Upper Room, returned there to arrest Jesus, only to find him gone to Gethsemane; and that young Mark heard the knocking at the door and slipped out of bed to go and warn Jesus in Gethsemane.

In about the year 46 Paul and Barnabas took the Palestinian John Mark, then a young man, on their First Journey, from Antioch to Cyprus and Perga in Pamphylia, where Mark 'decided to return home to Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas, an older cousin to Mark, had taken him 'to assist them'; the same word in Luke 4:20 is translated as 'attendant'; no motive is given for his return, and his reasons clearly failed to satisfy Paul. In 49 a violent disagreement took place between Barnabas and Paul as to whether they should take Mark with them on their Second Journey. This resulted in Paul and Barnabas separating, Paul taking Silas overland through Syria and Cilicia on his long journey of three years' duration, while Barnabas sailed with Mark for the island of Cyprus.

Nero, Mark must still have been in his early fifties. Eusebius states that he went to Alexandria and became its first bishop. From there, as a prize of war, his relics were taken to Venice and transferred to the Doges' Chapel, now the Cathedral of St Mark's. The Egyptian Church assigns its principal liturgy to his name, but among the Alexandrian Christian writers both Clement and Origen make no reference to Mark's residence in Egypt.

BARNABAS (Gk. from the Heb. 'son of exhortation', 'son of consolation') This Cypriot Jew, of the tribe of Levi, is described by Luke in Acts as 'a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith', as a result of whose devotion and encouragement a 'large company' was added to the Lord'. Barnabas was instrumental in introducing the newly-converted Paul to the leaders of the Christian Church both in Jerusalem and in Antioch. Together with Paul he conducted a mission to the churches of Galatia, and later with Mark firmly established the Christian Church in the island of Cyprus. When the early Christian community in Judea was setting up a system of stewardship of money and property, Barnabas sold his only piece of land and presented the proceeds to the apostles for distribution to needy members of the congregation. He showed the same generosity in his personal relationships. When Paul arrived in Jerusalem after his conversion, and probably after a period of retirement in the desert to the east of Damascus, the disciples in Jerusalem gave him a cool reception, for they could not believe that Paul, until lately the 'grand inquisitor' and arch-persecutor of the Church, was really a disciple of Jesus. Barnabas, who may indeed have known Paul in Tarsus, trusted and sponsored Paul, taking charge of him and introducing him personally to the leaders of the Church in Jerusalem. Because of the persecution of Hellenized Christians in Judea after the stoning of Stephen, the Gentile Christian community had scattered throughout the Levant as far as Phoenicia and Syria. Whether because of the Hellenized Christians from Cyprus and Jerusalem, or through Paul himself, or by means of both, the Church was firmly established at Antioch, capital of Syria, which was to become the headquarters of Paul's future journeys. The leaders in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to superintend the Church at Antioch, and Barnabas in turn chose Paul as his assistant, collecting him from Tarsus. For a whole year they conducted a teaching mission together. It was at that time that the possibly derisive title of 'Christians' was first given to the members of the Church at Antioch.

In all this success, Barnabas did not forget his old friends in Jerusalem. There the stewardship experiment was breaking down under the strain of poor crops and other difficulties in maintaining regular support. The Antiochene Christians had started a Judean relief fund. Barnabas and Paul were chosen for the happy task of delivering their contributions to Jerusalem, whence they returned to Antioch, bringing with them John Mark. There the spontaneous success of the young Christian Church promoted new enterprise and it was natural that the same pair, Barnabas and Paul, should be sent off on what has now come to be called the First Journey, in the year 45 or 46.

Onesimus (Cont.) →

He gently poses his petition for Onesimus as an old man might for his son. He even implies that he would have wished Philemon to return Onesimus to Rome in order to serve him in prison on behalf of Philemon. 'Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, yet for love's sake

Thus Paul closes his letter, in complete confidence of Philemon's willingness to do even more than he asks. Paul even asks on his own account that Philemon prepare his guest-chamber, as Paul expects shortly to be free to return to Asia. That Philemon preserved this letter and that it has been included in the New Testament surely shows that he granted Paul's request, though whether Onesimus returned to Rome, or Paul ever visited Colossae, we may never know for certain. According to tradition Philemon and his wife Apphia were martyred at Colossae and Onesimus became bishop of Ephesus.

This beautiful letter should surely convince all who accuse Paul of changing the simple message of Jesus into a complicated system of doctrine, that behind all on the Mount.

This letter, too, is a milestone on the road to the emancipation of slaves; the principle that a slave be treated as a brother, that both Christian master and slave were the servants of Christ, and that all men are spiritually equals – this was ultimately and inevitably the basic truth declared in the Sermon on the Mount.

[Letter to Philemon]

The sole purpose of Paul's 'covering letter' is to return Philemon's property with a plea not only for his forgiveness of Onesimus but for his new reception as a brother in Christ Jesus. Paul's letter is amazing in its tact, its tenderness, and its utter charm. It presumes to seek pardon for a slave for the most serious and the most easily identified offences against the common law: theft and flight. Speaking as a Christian apostle to one for whose conversion he is indirectly responsible, he does not begin to dictate, but delicately touches on their mutual obligations. The letter is a priceless memorial to the pastoral skill and affection of the apostle, in a way that his more theological treatises can never be.

Here, in the Greek style, is the opening thanksgiving and prayer addressed to Philemon: 'I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, because I hear of your love and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and all the saints, and I pray that the sharing of your faith may promote the knowledge of all the good that is ours in Christ. For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you.'

Then he gently begins his petition for Onesimus, as a father might for his own son. He even implies that he would have wished Philemon to return Onesimus to Rome in order to serve him in prison on behalf of Philemon. 'Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you – I, Paul, an ambassador and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus – I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become in my imprisonment. (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel; but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own free will.'

Paul then proceeds to his daring request not only for Onesimus's forgiveness, but that he should be welcomed back as a brother, as Paul himself might expect to be received! Paul takes responsibility for whatever sum of money Onesimus owes to his master: taking the pen from his secretary (probably Timothy), Paul himself writes his bond in the required legal terms: 'I, Paul, write this with my own hand, I will repay it ...' but adding, 'To say nothing of your owing me even your own self.'

PHILEMON (Gk. 'loving') This well-established member of the Christian Church at Colossae was the recipient of a personal letter from Paul the Apostle. It is the only surviving letter of Paul's vast personal correspondence, and the only letter in the New Testament addressed to an individual rather than to a community. Philemon was evidently a wealthy man, the owner of slaves, able to entertain the local Christian congregation in his house. Paul's opening sentence to him refers to himself as 'a prisoner for Christ Jesus', and addresses Philemon as 'our beloved fellow worker'. The greeting embraces 'Apphia our sister', probably Philemon's wife, and 'Archippus our fellow soldier', probably Philemon's son. From Paul's reference to Archippus in his letter to the Church at Colossae (Col. 4:7), Archippus was a leader of their congregation. (see COLOSSIANS)

Writing in captivity, Paul had a particular reason and a favour to ask of his friend Philemon at Colosse. He also needed to write a general letter to the Colossian Church to counter certain false teaching, of which he had received reports from Ephaphras, their first evangelist. Both letters were written at the same time and despatched from the same town to the same destination by the same messenger, Tychicus. In both letters Paul links with his own greeting the name of Timothy, his companion during his stay in Ephesus. In both letters he sends also greetings from Epaphras, Luke the physician, Demas, Aristarchus, and Mark the nephew of Barnabas. It is just possible that these letters were written during Paul's brief imprisonment in Ephesus, sometime during the years 54 and 57, but they are more likely to have been written during his long and leisurely period of house-arrest in Rome during the years 61-3.

Advocate for a slave

During his captivity Paul was approached by an escaped slave called Onesimus. The Greek name means 'useful'. He had run away from his master Philemon in Colossae and had made his way to the teeming capital of Rome, a notorious hide-out for fugitive slaves. There, in destitution and danger, the hunted man had sought out the imprisoned Apostle Paul and had attached himself to him as his personal attendant. Paul came to know Onesimus's story, his unsatisfactory record as a slave to Philemon, whom he had robbed as well as deserted and to whom now his very life was forfeit on both accounts. Useless as Onesimus had been to Philemon, he became invaluable to Paul and had apparently matured considerably in Christian commitment, for he was prepared to return, at risk of his life, to his deserted master Philemon.

The sole purpose of Paul's 'covering letter' is to return Philemon's property with a plea not only for his forgiveness of Onesimus but for his reception now in the status of a brother in Christ Jesus. Paul's letter is amazing in its tact, its tenderness, and utter charm. It presumes to seek the pardon of a slave for the most serious and the most easily identified offences against the common law, both theft and escape. Speaking as a Christian apostle to one for whose conversion he is indirectly responsible, he does not begin to dictate, but delicately touches on their mutual obligations.

continues on next sheet

I prefer to appeal to you – I, Paul, an ambassador and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus – I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become in my imprisonment. (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel; but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own free will.'



Paul proceeds next to his daring request not only for Onesimus's forgiveness, but that he should be welcomed back as a brother. Then Paul underwrites whatever sum of money Onesimus owes to his master; taking the pen from his secretary – probably Timothy – Paul himself writes his bond in the required legal terms: 'I, Paul, ... will repay it ...' but adds, 'to say nothing of your owing me even your own self.' [Col. 4:9; Philem. 10]

Aquila and Priscilla

AQUILA (Lat., Gk. 'eagle') Aquila and his wife Priscilla, always called 'Prisca' by Paul, were very close friends of the Apostle Paul. Aquila, originally a Jew from Pontus in Asia Minor, had migrated to Rome. In

the year 49 he had been exiled, with his wife, by the edict of Claudius expelling all Jews from the imperial city. They met Paul, probably in the following year, at Corinth, where they had a business as tentmakers, in which trade Paul also earned a living. Paul went to live with them, probably working under Aquila, either in canvas or leather.

It is not certain whether Aquila and Priscilla were Christians before their expulsion from Rome, or whether they were converted at Corinth. They soon, however, became partners with Paul in Christian evangelism, as well as in the tent trade. In about the year 52, they sailed with Paul from Cenchrae, the Aegean port of Corinth, for Syria; but they seem to have stopped at Ephesus, where they awaited Paul on his return from Antioch. They may well have been opening a branch of their business in Ephesus, for Paul was able to spend the next two years there in a concentrated teaching mission. It was during this time that an Alexandrian Jew called Apollos, who had been baptized after the manner of John the Baptist, but had not experienced the gift of the Holy Spirit, arrived in Ephesus. An eloquent and learned man, Apollos argued powerfully in the Jewish synagogue for the Messiahship of Jesus. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and instructed him more accurately in the Christian faith. Later, Paul gave him charge of the Christian congregation at Corinth.

Whether Aquila and Priscilla were involved in the silversmiths' riots at Ephesus, or in some other dangers there, is unknown. Paul, however, includes in his greetings to the Christian congregation at Rome 'Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I but also all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks'.

Following the death of the Emperor Claudius, the edict of banishment was no longer in force and Aquila and Priscilla probably returned to Rome. On the other hand, they probably retained their business in Ephesus and travelled freely between the two cities. This would explain Paul's greeting to them, at the end of his last letter to Timothy, when he had left Timothy as his representative in Ephesus and was himself writing from prison in Rome.

It is interesting that of the six times that Aquila and his wife are mentioned in the New Testament, four times Priscilla's name is put first – twice by Luke and twice by Paul. This might be taken to imply that she was a more prominent member of the Church than her husband Aquila [Acts 18:2, 18, 26; Rom. 16:3; 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Tim. 4:19]

LYDIA The rich lady from Thyatira who met Paul by

the little River Ganga, outside Philippi, a Roman colony and city founded by Alexander the Great in Macedonia. Lydia's household was the first in Europe known to have been converted and baptized.

Paul found few Jews at Philippi and no synagogue. He probably waited some days until the Sabbath and then went to the river, where he might expect any local Jews to be at prayer. There, he met a few women who gathered regularly for prayer; among these was Lydia, who was in the purple-dye trade and came from the city of Thyatira, 100 miles or more north of Ephesus in Asia Minor. Paul and his companions sat down and talked to the women who had gathered; Lydia listened and opened her heart to what Paul said; she was herself a pagan and only loosely attached to the little Jewish community. She insisted on being baptized by Paul, together with her household, and begged the three visitors, Paul, Timothy, and Silas, to accept hospitality. 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.'

On the way from Lydia's house to the prayer-meeting, a fortune-telling slave-girl called out after Paul and the others, 'These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.' She did this each day, until Paul lost his temper and ordered the fortune-telling spirit to leave the woman. But when her owners realized that they would not make any more money out of her, they seized and dragged Paul and Silas into the market-place, where they charged them before the magistrates with causing a disturbance. The crowd joined in, and the magistrates had them stripped and flogged. After many lashes, they were thrown into prison and committed to the safe-keeping of the gaoler, who put them in the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

That night, while Paul and Silas were praying and singing, there was an earthquake, which opened the cells and released the prisoners. The gaoler, presuming his charges had escaped, was only just prevented by Paul from committing suicide. In gratitude the gaoler took Paul and Silas to his home, where they preached to, converted and baptized his whole family – who, in turn, fed them and washed their wounds.

At daylight, the magistrates sent the order for their release, to which Paul typically replied, 'They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now cast us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out.' (Acts 16:37) The magistrates duly arrived, and begged them to leave the town.

As soon as they left the prison, they went to the house of Lydia to meet and encourage the newly-formed Christian congregation, then left on their way to Thessalonica. It was to this little Christian community at Philippi, based on the house of Lydia, that Paul wrote later, when in prison in Rome or perhaps Ephesus, a letter full of happiness, gratitude, affection and reassurance. Lydia was certainly a key person in the foundation of the Christian Church at Philippi. [Acts 16:14, 40]

