

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan**ACTS 16****Acts 16**

After the Jerusalem Council, Paul, Barnabas, Silas, and Judas returned to Antioch to share the results of the conference with those in the great church in Antioch. The men shared the words of the council and the letter from the beloved James, half-brother of the Lord Jesus. The people were glad. Silas and Judas continued for a period of time encouraging the brethren there, then Judas went back to the church in Jerusalem, while Silas stayed behind in Antioch with Paul and Barnabas.

"After some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord and see how they are." Then Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also. But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. But Paul chose Silas and left, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. And he was traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches." (Acts 15:36-41)

Paul and Barnabas were still friends, but they had a different mission to different people, with different companions than their first journey together. This is a lesson to all that good men, yes, great men, differ many times on who they associate with and where they serve. Which one of these great men of God was right? The answer is both! Paul had a purpose in mind, and it did not involve John Mark. Barnabas had a purpose in

mind that did involve John Mark. They both were used by God in a great way. If you check, you will see that in Paul's last letter before he died by beheading in Rome, he asked Timothy to come to his prison cell and bring things with him that the aged Apostle needed to finish his ministry well. One of those necessities was none other than John Mark! (See II Timothy 4:9-11)

Barnabas had been the encourager and did not drop John Mark and give up on him after his failure. Praise God for Barnabas and those like him. Paul, on the other hand, was used as no other in the New Testament to spread the gospel of Jesus and to write most of the New Testament. Paul, in his time, came to see the usefulness of Mark. This tells us that even the Apostle Paul was not so proud that he could not receive one that he had earlier rejected from working within the ministry. Both were right, and God used both men. Aren't you and I glad God uses all kinds of people? Even those who fail can be redeemed and used for the glory of God. Mark went on to write the second gospel, which I believe is the gospel according to Peter. Mark perhaps also served Peter to write the first epistle of Peter. From the difference in the style of Peter's two letters, I believe there is evidence- grammatical, stylistic, and historical evidence that someone other than Peter wrote down the first letter which he would have dictated; much as Paul would have with Luke. More than likely, Peter wrote the second letter. God be praised! When some men give up on us, others are sent by the Lord to encourage us. But even when all men give up on us and count us out, the Lord is with us, and repentance makes all the difference.

Prayer and Action Steps

Father, thank You for seeing everything from the beginning to the end and beyond. Thank You for using us, even when we give up and turn back for a time. Thank You for men like Barnabas, whom You send to help us find our way back to You and to usefulness in Your kingdom's work. Amen