

Silas

Memory Verse: *“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household (Acts 16:31 NIV).*

Background Helps:

Paul’s missionary companion named “Silas” (Greek) in the book of Acts is also referred to as “Silvanus” (Latin) in the King James version of the epistles, although in most modern translations he is called “Silas” throughout. Just as Barnabas was Paul’s primary coworker on his first missionary journey, so Silas (after the falling out between Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15:36-41) became Paul’s primary coworker on his second journey. Like Paul, Silas was a Jewish Christian and a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37).

Lesson Helps:

Throughout the record of Silas’s missionary service, he is cast in a secondary role to Paul. A familiar couplet says,

It takes more grace than I can tell
To play the second fiddle well.

Silas played second fiddle to Paul, and he played it very well. A possible lesson aim: My aim is to teach my students about the secondary role that Silas played in his missionary service with Paul, so that they will be willing to serve Christ well in a secondary role.

After introducing Silas by his role in the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:22-35), trace the course of Silas’s missionary service with Paul in Syria and Cilicia (15:41), Phrygia and Galatia (16:4-5), Philippi (16:9-40), Thessalonica (17:1-9), Berea (17:10-15), and Corinth (18:1-5). (You could actually turn the floor of your classroom into a giant map, taking your students on a tour of the stops on the first missionary journey and pausing along the way to explain the role of Silas at each stop.) See also Paul’s assessment of Silas’s character in 1 Thessalonians 1:1–2:13. Silas also continued to play a secondary role in relation to the apostle Peter (1 Pet. 5:12).

Discuss with your class: What character traits are necessary to play the role of “second fiddle”? What are some “second fiddle” ministry assignments where people can serve today? How could you begin to serve in such a secondary role immediately?

Assignment:

-  Read about Timothy (personalities around Paul).
-  Memorize 1 Timothy 4:12.