

Silas [Silvanus]

Silas was a leading member of the church at Jerusalem who also had a prophetic gift, [Acts 15:32]. The Greek word translated “prophets” is “*prōphētēs*” which mainly refers to an inspired speaker.

Silas is referred to as Silvanus by Paul and Peter which is the Latinised form of Silas.

In Acts, Silas was sent by the church at Jerusalem with a letter to welcome into fellowship the Gentiles converted through the church of Antioch, [Acts 15:22-35].

When Paul and Barnabas quarrelled about John Mark, Barnabas went off with Mark and Paul took Silas as his companion on his second missionary journey, [Acts 15:36-41], **the fact that Silas had Roman citizenship, [Acts 16:37-39] may have been one of the reasons for the choice, and Silas’ membership of the Jerusalem church would have been helpful to Paul.**

Silas’ role seems to have been to replace Mark rather than Barnabas.

Nowhere is Silas referred to as an apostle, [as Barnabas was in Acts 14:14] and his position seems to be subordinate. Mark was a “*minister*,” that is assistant to the apostles, [Acts 13:5]. This may indicate that he had some function similar to the synagogue attendants, [Luke 4:20] in looking after the scripture and possibly catechetical scrolls later developed into Mark’s gospel.

If the function of Silas was similar we can more readily see how he could have the literary role assigned to him in the epistles.

Silas accompanied Paul through Syria, Asia Minor, Macedonia and Thessalonica, [Acts 16:1-40; Acts 17:1-9].

When Paul left for Athens, Silas and Timothy remained at Berea then they later joined Paul at Athens [Acts 17:10-15] and followed with him to Corinth, [Acts 17:16-34; Acts 18:1-28].

Paul mentions the work of Silas [Silvanus] and Timothy preaching alongside him in Corinth, [1 Corinthians 1:19].

Silas was associated with Paul in the letters written from Corinth, [1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1] and not named again until the reference to him in 1 Peter 5:12. This indicates a literary function with a certain amount of freedom of expression. This could account for some of the resemblances in expression between 1 Peter; 1 and 2 Thessalonians in Silas’ role as stated in Acts 15:22-23.

Lessons we can learn from Silas’ life –

Partnership is a significant part of effective ministry.

Silas used the two gifts that God had given him, inspired speaking and ability to keep records of events as a secretary, to both Paul and Peter.

Silas took advantage of opportunities to serve God and was not discouraged by the setback and opposition he met along the way.

Silas, though not the most famous of the early missionaries in the Church, was certainly a faithful servant worth imitating.

Silas is listed among several others as the author of the Book of Hebrews being linked to Timothy as a “brother,” [**Hebrews 13:23**].