

Acts 15:35-41 The Dispute Among The Missionaries

I. The Missionaries Continue the Work (35-36)

A. Paul and Barnabas Continue Serving In The Antiochian Church (35)

1. They returned from the Jerusalem Council
2. They began once again teaching and discipling in their home church
 - a. Paul and Barnabas weren't just wandering missionaries
 - b. Paul and Barnabas were part of the local church
 - c. They were sent from this church on their first missionary journey
 - d. They were sent from this church to the Jerusalem council
 - e. They returned to this church to preach and teach

B. Paul Desires To Return and Edify The New Churches (36)

1. Paul's heart was to see the church thrive and grow
 - a. He didn't want to preach the gospel and then leave the churches to fend for themselves
 - b. He genuinely loved the people in those church plants and desired to see them grow in Christ
2. Paul would willingly undergo the same trials as before
 - a. This shows the importance of discipleship
 - b. Paul was more than willing to go through all that again just to minister to the new churches
 - i. He and Barnabas were run out of every city they visited
 - ii. There were riots and lynch mobs in almost every city
 - iii. Paul himself was stoned to the point of death during this time

II. The Missionaries Conflict About Their Company (37-39a)

A. Barnabas Desires To Take Mark (37)

1. Mark left their Expedition to the Churches in Acts 13:13
 - a. We are not told why Mark left exactly
 - b. Mark returned to Jerusalem where his mother's house was
2. Mark was Barnabas' Relative (see Col. 4:10)
 - a. Some say cousin, others say nephew
 - b. Perhaps Barnabas wanted his family member given another chance
3. Barnabas was truly a son of encouragement
 - a. Barnabas saw potential in Mark, what he could be
 - b. Barnabas saw the same thing in Paul
 - i. When Saul came preaching the gospel the whole church was terrified of him

- ii. It was Barnabas that took him in and brought him to the Apostle Peter (Acts 9:27)

B. Paul Refuses To Let Mark Go (38)

- 1. Paul is still upset that Mark left them on the first journey
 - a. We aren't told why Mark left, but Paul evidently think it was a good enough reason
 - b. Paul's reasoning is that Mark shouldn't go because he was one... "who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work"
 - c. Maybe the Journey was too Dangerous in Mark's eyes
 - i. They were beaten and persecuted
 - ii. They were close to being killed
 - d. Maybe Mark missed his mom in Jerusalem (probably not, but you never know)
- 2. Paul plainly tells Barnabas that Mark isn't going

C. A Sharp Disagreement Ensues

- 1. This shouldn't be seen as simply a difference of opinion
- 2. Paul and Barnabas have an intense disagreement
 - a. The imperfect tense in the verbs suggests that they disputed this point for a time
 - b. Were they shouting at each other?
- 3. The dispute can be boiled down to the problem of whether to place the interests of the individual over the work as a whole
 - a. Paul believed it would hinder the work
 - b. Barnabas did not

III. The Missionaries Part Company (39b-41)

A. Paul and Barnabas Separate From Each Other (39b)

- 1. The disagreement was so fierce that they split up
- 2. Remember Barnabas and Paul had been together ministering for a long time
- 3. The disagreement was no small matter
- 4. They split up the area of the first missionary Journey went their separate ways

B. Barnabas and Mark Go To Cyprus (39c)

- 1. Barnabas was from Cyprus
- 2. He and mark when to strengthen the churches He and Paul had founded there

C. Paul And Silas Go To Syria and Cilicia (40-41)

- 1. Paul took Silas through the other areas of their journey
- 2. Silas was one of the Jewish men sent back with Paul and Barnabas from the Jerusalem Council
 - a. He had encouraged and strengthened the brothers in Antioch (Acts 15:32)
 - b. He was also a Roman Citizen (see 16:37)
 - c. Paul calls him Silvanus in his letters (See 2 Co. 1:19; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1)

3. Both Paul and Silas were also Roman Citizens
- D. God used their dispute
1. Now instead of one missionary band, there are two
 2. We know that Paul and Barnabas would later reconcile (see 1 Co. 9:6; Col. 4:10)
 3. Paul would come to appreciate John Mark
 - a. Paul asks Timothy to bring Mark with him when Paul was in prison because Mark was “profitable to me for ministry” (2 Ti. 4:11)
 - b. Mark later becomes an assistant to Peter (See 1 Peter 5:13)
 - c. John Mark is the author of the Gospel of Mark, which is the Gospel from Peter’s testimony