



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Leadership Strengthened in the Mission Church

JUNE 14-16, 2017

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Acts 15:30-35 *“So, when they were sent away, they went down to Antioch; and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. 31) And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement. 32) And Judas and Silas, also being prophets themselves, encouraged and strengthened the brethren with a lengthy message. 33) And after they had spent time there, they were sent away from the brethren in peace to those who had sent them out. 34) [* But it seemed good to Silas to remain there.] 35) But Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch, teaching and preaching, with many others also, the word of the Lord.” (NASB *Many manuscripts do not contain this verse)*

“IN VIEW OF THE LEADERSHIP TALENT IN THE ANTIOCHEAN CHURCH, WE MUST SAY THAT ANTIOCH, NOT JERUSALEM, GRADUALLY BECAME THE CENTER FOR ECCLESIASTICAL GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT, AND MISSIONARY OUTREACH.”
SIMON KISTEMAKER

What was the relationship of the Antioch church and the Jerusalem Church? Was one under the authority of another or was there a careful correction of damage done by those from one church to another? Why was the first response to this letter immediate rejoicing? Was this somewhat like a second council? How did Judas and Silas make a difference as prophets? Is there any justification for long sermons? Did the Antioch church have a celebration send-off? Were other new leaders trained by Paul and Barnabas?

FOCUS ON FUTURE SATELLITE BIBLE STUDIES:

- > JUNE 21-23: ACTS 15:36-41 *THE FIRST DIVISION AMONG CHURCH LEADERS*
- > JUNE 28-30: ACTS 16:1-5 *LEADERSHIP THAT REPRODUCES ITSELF*

The leadership of both Paul and Barnabas had been questioned by the Pharisees who had come from the Jerusalem church to Antioch and had taught the false doctrine that required works, particularly circumcision, for salvation. Paul and Barnabas knew that salvation could never be earned or added to by any work that we can do, but it comes to us as a gift from God by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. The letter along with two leaders of the Jerusalem church had arrived to correct as much as possible the severe damage done by the false doctrine of the believing Pharisees. Would the truth be accepted by these false teachers or would they find another way to impose their detrimental leadership upon the Gentiles at the flagship mission church?

“SEEING THERE WENT A FALSE REPORT ABOUT, THAT ALL THE APOSTLES WERE AGAINST PAUL AND BARNABAS, THIS SAME HAD SHAKEN SOME WHO WERE TOO LIGHT OF BELIEF, MANY DID STAND IN DOUBT; THE WICKED ABUSED THIS OCCASION TO SPEAK EVIL; OTHERS SOME WERE PRICKED FORWARD WITH LOVE OF NOVELTY AND WITH CURIOSITY, AND ONE WAS SET AGAINST ANOTHER.”
JOHN CALVIN

I. LEADERSHIP STRENGTHENED DOCTRINALLY 15:30-31

Ever since the Pharisees from Jerusalem had arrived and had taught that the Gentiles needed to be circumcised and keep the Old Testament Law in order to be saved, they had become fearful of not being saved and felt plundered and spiritually bankrupt, wondering if they were truly accepted by God by placing their faith in Jesus Christ. Paul and Barnabas, when they arrived from their mission trip, had sought to console them with the truth, but the false teachers seemed to have greater validity because they claimed to be sent by the Jerusalem church and their arguments pointed to the long standing tradition of the Jews from Scripture all the way back to Abraham. The Gentiles anxiously waited to hear what the

BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 7:30AM –BIBLE STUDY – FREDERICKSBURG – BOB EVANS ON RT. 3 & 12:00 NOON – WOODBRIDGE – BOB EVANS, 14490 SMOKETOWN RD.

THURSDAY @ 7:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – CHESTER – SHONEY’S AT RT. 10 (IRON BRIDGE ROAD) & 301(12531 JEFFERSON DAVIS HIGHWAY)

FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – NORFOLK – GOLDEN CORRAL, 6103 N. MILITARY HWY, NEAR THE NORFOLK AIRPORT

Virginia

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Jerusalem church really taught regarding salvation and hoped that their pastors, recently re-named “Paul” and Barnabas, were right. Now, not only had Paul and Barnabas returned, but even leaders from the Jerusalem church with them, in order to read the letter documenting the doctrine of salvation decided upon by the Jerusalem church. The Gentiles who were Christians had most likely already turned from their idolatry and all that was associated with it. So, when the letter was read by Judas and Silas, everyone, and particularly these Gentiles, “*rejoiced because of its encouragement.*”

“THE DECISION IS CIRCULATED. THE GOSPEL'S INTEGRITY IS UPHELD, THE MINISTRY TO THE GENTILES IS VALIDATED AND THE CIRCUMCISION PARTY IS REPUDIATED.”

DAVID COOK

II. LEADERSHIP STRENGTHENED DELIBERATELY 15:32-33

The Apostles and elders in the Jerusalem church clearly understood the spiritual storm caused by the false teachers who had left their assembly which had devastated the hearts and souls of the Gentiles at Antioch. It is probable that only Paul and Barnabas had opposed them because they are the ones who defend the truth at the Jerusalem council. Either way, there would have suddenly become a strong division in the church between Jews and Gentiles. Such division had already been overcome immediately earlier through the teaching of Paul and Barnabas to focus on Christ and boldly bear the name “*Christian*” in their capital. Thus, “*the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch*” (11:26). Now, both Judas Barsabbas and Silas, who were “*prophets*” or pastors in the Jerusalem church, had come to deliberately overthrow the confusion and harm caused by the Jerusalem Pharisees. As prophets, their focus on teaching and preaching brought again the same results in the unity of the church when they literally “*through much speech, exhorted and confirmed the brothers.*” It was through lengthy

messages that the truth regarding salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone found lodging in the hearts of the believers and overthrew the false teaching of the Pharisees. Thus, the leadership of their missionary pastors, Paul and Barnabas, was clearly validated. Having accomplished their work, with celebration the Jerusalem pastors were “*sent away from the brethren with peace to those who had sent them.*” The church once again had peace and Gentiles rejoiced to be called “*brethren*” twice.

“THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH THUS SURVIVED THE GREATEST CHALLENGE IT HAD YET FACED AND ESTABLISHED THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION BY GRACE. SATAN'S ATTEMPT TO INJECT HERETICAL TEACHING WAS THWARTED. SO ALSO WAS HIS ATTEMPT TO SPLIT THE CHURCH ALONG RACIAL AND CULTURAL LINES. WITH THE VITALLY IMPORTANT TRUTH ABOUT SALVATION SAFEGUARDED, THE CHURCH EXPERIENCED GREATER DAYS OF MINISTRY THAN EVER BEFORE.”

JOHN MACARTHUR

III. LEADERSHIP STRENGTHENED DIDACTICALLY 15:34-35

Now that peace prevailed in this lighthouse church, Paul and Barnabas did what they had always done to shepherd the church, “*teaching and preaching.*” Both are in the present tense, meaning that it was their continual focus. The word for “*preaching*” emphasizes evangelism or proclaiming the good news of the Gospel. It was through this faithful ministry of the Word of God that numerous other teachers and preachers were called by God and trained by the pastors for the same careful shepherding of the flock. Thus, the Antioch church ministry multiplied as “*Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch, teaching and preaching, with many others also, the word of the Lord.*” Unfortunately, the help of the Jerusalem council did not stop the false teachers who again persuaded the Jews against the Gentiles (Galatians 2:11-21).

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Are you trusting God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone for your salvation or trying to earn heaven?
- 2) Is your leadership a deliberate encouragement to those who are ministering the truth of the Scriptures?
- 3) Are you ministering the Word of God in such a way that others are being trained to do the same?