



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

The First Division among Church Leaders

JUNE 21-23, 2017

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Acts 15:36-41 *“Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing.’ 37) Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. 38) But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. 39) Then the contention became so sharp that they parted one from another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus; 40) but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. 41) And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.” (NKJV)*

Paul owed Barnabas an incredible debt of gratitude for all that he had done for him. Barnabas had introduced him to the Jerusalem church who had refused to trust him because of the terror he had inflicted upon them through his fierce persecution. When Barnabas had been sent to the church at Antioch, after his ministry began to be blessed there, he went to Tarsus to get Saul to help him. Their dynamic pastoral leadership together caused the believers to “*first be called Christians at Antioch.*” On their first mission trip, after Paul had won the king and taken his name, Barnabas gave him the leadership of the mission team. Thus, he became the primary speaker as they visited the synagogues in Pisidian Antioch and Iconium where it seems that over half of these cities are won for Christ. Barnabas stands with Paul against the Judaizers when they defend the Gospel in the Jerusalem Council and Barnabas accompanies Paul back to Antioch to read the official letter. Ever since Barnabas had gone to Tarsus to get his help, the two had been inseparable.

“TO MARK THIS CONTEST WAS EXCEEDING BENEFICIAL. FOR THE AWE INSPIRED BY PAUL CONVERTED HIM WHILE THE KINDNESS OF BARNABAS CAUSED THAT HE WAS NOT LEFT BEHIND.” CHRYSOSTOM

“MINISTERS ARE WELL EMPLOYED, AND OUGHT TO THINK THEMSELVES SO, AND BE SATISFIED, WHEN THEY ARE MADE USE OF IN CONFIRMING THOSE WHO BELIEVE, AS WELL AS CONVERTING THOSE THAT BELIEVE NOT.” MATTHEW HENRY

Did these first missionary evangelists follow-up with their converts to disciple them? Why was Barnabas so determined to take along John Mark? Was John Mark deserving of this second opportunity? For what reasons was Paul so insistent that they not bring him along? Do godly men sometimes disagree? Will these missionaries ever join together again? With whom did the Antioch church agree? Why Silas? Did the Antioch church have a prayer service send-off? Why did both teams go to the specific places where they went?

I. MISSIONARY PASSION

ACTS 15:36

Now that all the conflict over the Gospel by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone had been completely controlled and peace again reigned in the church at Antioch, Paul remembered his calling with Barnabas by the Holy Spirit and planned to solidify and strengthen the believers in all the cities where they had shared the Gospel. They did not just evangelize the lost, they also made it a priority to disciple the young believers in the faith. The plan included “*every city*” where they had “*preached the word of the Lord.*” As a father for their children, these spiritual fathers were concerned to find

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES AND EVENTS:

- JUNE 28-30: ACTS 16:1-5 LEADERSHIP THAT REPRODUCES ITSELF
- SEPTEMBER 8: DELTAVILLE THE LEGISLATIVE INVITATIONAL FISHING TOURNAMENT (LIFT)

BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 7:30AM –BIBLE STUDY – FREDERICKSBURG – BOB EVANS ON RT. 3 & 12:00 NOON – OAKTON – BOB EVANS – 10443 WHITE GRANITE DR.
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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out how these new believers in the capitals were doing. On this plan they both agreed, but Barnabas was also committed to his cousin who had already rejected Paul's leadership earlier and had abandoned the team in Perga.

"CONFIDENCE IN AN UNFAITHFUL MAN IN TIME OF TROUBLE IS LIKE A BROKEN TOOTH AND A FOOT OUT OF JOINT."
PROVERBS 25:19

II. MARKIAN PRIORITY

ACTS 15:37

Though Barnabas agrees with Paul that they need to return to their new churches and strengthen them, he suddenly surprises Paul with an ultimatum. Literally he was *"relentlessly determined (for himself) to take with them also John being called Mark."* This was a serious demand that placed John Mark, his cousin (Phil. 4:10), in priority above Paul, whom Barnabas already knew had been given Apostolic authority (Gal. 1:1). There seems to have been numerous issues in the background driving this sudden demand from one who was otherwise always willing to uphold Paul's leadership. First, both Barnabas and Paul knew that when they first were commissioned to go out from Antioch with John Mark, Barnabas was the leader of the mission team. It was after Paul had miraculously seen God blind Bar-Jesus who had tried to seduce away from the truth the king of Cyprus, Sergius Paulos, and this king had come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, that Barnabas handed the leadership of the mission team to Paul. Thus, when John Mark deserted them in the next capital, Mark's reasons must have included the fact that he had signed up to go on the team while his cousin Barnabas was in charge, and now that Paul had been given the leadership of the team, he was not willing to continue with them. That was certainly the only change and the only reason he could give for his deserting the team. Thus, Mark's departure was an obvious rejection of Paul's leadership and inherently it cast doubt on the wisdom of Barnabas in giving Paul that leadership.

Second, if John Mark was in Antioch with Peter and Barnabas when they were rebuked by Paul for rejecting the fellowship of the Gentiles (Gal. 2:11-13), then he would have joined Peter and Barnabas in rejecting Paul's leadership a second time as one of *"the rest of the Jews"* (13). Third, though Barnabas must have stressed the fact that there was some display of repentance by John Mark in his willingness to go with them again, there most probably was an agreement between them that Barnabas would be the leader of the team again because the verb, *"determined"* is only used by the one in authority. Thus Barnabas is here trying to strong-arm Paul into conceding again to his own authority and there would continue to be an authority issue throughout their journey together.

"PAUL WAS ANIMATED BY HIS CONSUMING ZEAL FOR THE GREAT WORK WHICH HE FELT SHOULD NOT BE IMPERILED OUT OF REGARD FOR INDIVIDUAL FEELINGS OR PREFERENCES." CHARLES ERDMAN

III. MULTIPLICATION PREDESTINED ACTS 15:38-41

Such a departure (from which we get our word apostasy) by John Mark, Paul insisted, rendered him unworthy of sufficient trust to take him again. Thus, the sharp contention and division between those who had been inseparable for so long. Barnabas goes to his homeland of Cyprus, where he may hope Paul will follow according to his plan (15:36), and Paul chooses Silas and goes to both Syria and his homeland of Cilicia as designated in the letter from the Jerusalem Council (15:23). Silas was an ideal team member because of his inclusion in the letter, his Jewish leadership in the Jerusalem church, his Roman citizenship and his unity with Paul. Ultimately God would make it all *"work together for good"* (Rom. 8:28) to multiply the mission team for greater ministry and opportunity to train young men for the future.

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Are you fulfilling the great commission by discipling others and teaching them all things that Christ commanded?
- 2) Have you departed from the truth in apostasy and unwillingness to follow God's Word and God's men?
- 3) Are you ministering the Word of God in such a way that others are being trained to do the same?