

## Acts Chapter 15 Second Continued

**Acts 15:27 "We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell [you] the same things by mouth."**

We see from this, that the message Peter and James had sent in a letter to these churches about the requirements for the Gentiles was not all they had done. They had also, sent Judas and Silas to tell them their wishes in person.

**Acts 15:28-29 "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;" "That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well."**

(See notes on verse 20).

We see here, that the apostles were guided in their setting of doctrine by the Holy Ghost. These few rules of doctrine, if you carefully examine them, are really a furtherance of what Jesus said when He was asked what commandments were important.

Matthew 22:37-40: "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." "This is the first and great commandment." "And the second [is] like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

You see, the first says we are to have no idols. If we love God with all our heart, we will not have idols. If we love our neighbor as ourselves, we will not commit sin. You see the doctrine of Jesus Christ and the doctrine Peter, James, and all the other church leaders gave through the influence of the Holy Ghost is the same.

**Acts 15:30 "So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:"**

An epistle is a written letter. This message was given to the entire church (followers of Jesus) so that there would be no question about the doctrine of the church.

**Acts 15:31 "[Which] when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation."**

Consolation means comfort. They were all very pleased to have this settled, so that they would no longer be questioning whether they were doing the right thing or not.

**Acts 15:32 "And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed [them]."**

This just simply means that they preached to these people. Being prophets is included to show by what authority they preached. The many words mean, to me, that they preached more than once.

**Acts 15:33 "And after they had tarried [there] a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles."**

This seems like a revival of the believers. It just went on and on, because they were all being refreshed in the Lord. Finally they let them go back to their evangelistic work.

**Acts 15:34 "Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still."**

This verse is not in the best manuscripts.

The other church leaders went back to Jerusalem, or to their mission fields, but Silas decided to stay here and minister in Antioch.

**Acts 15:35 "Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also."**

It seemed like Antioch was a place for the apostles and believers to go, and preach, and get built up, before going out in the field. There is strength in groups of believers. It is like getting fueled up before they go out to minister.

One of the problems with ministers, and especially pastors, is that they are constantly giving out to others, and never going back and getting refreshed themselves. This meeting at Antioch here, seemed to be for the building up of the ministers.

**Acts 15:36 "And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, [and see] how they do."**

"See how they do": In addition to proclaiming the gospel, Paul also recognized his responsibility to mature the new believers in their faith (Matt. 28:19-20; Eph. 4:12-13; Phil. 1:8; 1 Thess. 2:17). So, he planned his second missionary journey to retrace his first one.

Paul and Barnabas had started churches all over Asia Minor. They were in the middle of all kinds of false religions. Paul wanted to go back to each one of them individually, to make sure that they were still worshipping the way he and Barnabas had started them out.

He not only wanted to check up on them, but to encourage them in the Lord as well. They were probably under heavy persecution from the idolatrous people around them and from the strict Jewish people as well.

**Acts 15:37 "And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark."**

“John ... surname was Mark” (see notes on 12:12; 13:13).

This is not John, who wrote the Book of John and was James' brother, but was, in fact, Mark the writer of the Gospel of Mark. Mark and Barnabas were related through Mark's mother. (Colossians 4:10), tells of this relationship.

**Acts 15:38 "But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work."**

The Scripture does not say why Paul was so set on Mark not going with them, but Paul was so set in not taking Mark, that Barnabas and Paul separate over it, as you will see in the next verse.

**Acts 15:39 "And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;"**

“Contention ... Departed asunder”: This was not an amicable parting, they were in sharp disagreement regarding John Mark. The weight of the evidence favors Paul’s decision, especially since he was an apostle of Jesus Christ. That alone should have caused Barnabas to submit to his authority. But they eventually did reconcile (1 Cor. 9:6).

“Cyprus” (See note on 13:4).

We see here, that blood is a little stronger than friendship in this case. The argument seemed to be over Mark. Cyprus was the home of Barnabas and was also, the place Barnabas and Paul had started an early church. Barnabas perhaps, took Mark and went home.

Some writers believe the reason Paul did not want Mark to go was, because he was still caught up in the law, but there is no Scriptural evidence of that. Some believe that Paul's domineering spirit caused the separation, but there is no real evidence of that either. It seems to me, that two friends were separated over a third party and nothing more is told.

**Acts 15:40 "And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God."**

“Silas”: He was perfectly suited to be Paul’s companion, since he was a prophet and could proclaim and teach the Word. Being a Jew gave him access to the synagogues (see note on 6:9).

Because he was a Roman citizen (16:17), he enjoyed the same benefits and protection as Paul. His status as a respected leader in the Jerusalem fellowship helped to reinforce Paul’s teaching that Gentile salvation was by grace alone through faith alone (see note on verse 22).

It appears that Silas had been a successful disciple himself, and the leaders of their group recommended Silas to Paul as someone who would do a good job as helper to Paul. At any rate, Paul took Silas as his new partner.

It is interesting, to me, that they went out two at a time, as the Lord has sent them when He was on earth. Perhaps, this has to do with the Scripture:

Matthew 18:19 "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven,".

**Acts 15:41 "And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches."**

“Syria and Cilicia”: Paul visited congregations he had most likely founded before his connection with the Antioch church (Gal. 1:21). The circumcision question had been raised there also.

We see here, that Paul went back to the same churches he and Barnabas had started and checked on how they were doing. Possibly he preached and taught that they were not under the Mosaic law, but under the grace of Jesus Christ. The above statement would have been a little more accurate to say (they) went, because Silas went with Paul.

### **Acts Chapter 15 Second Continued Questions**

1. Who were two that were sent with Paul and Barnabas to tell the decision of Peter and James?
2. In verse 28, to whom did it seem good to do this?
3. What were the only restrictions these Gentiles were to observe?
4. These rules of doctrine parallel what teaching of Jesus?
5. When they dismissed, where did they come to?
6. When did they deliver the epistle?
7. What is an epistle?
8. Verse 31 says they rejoiced for \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Which two prophets exhorted (preached), the word?
10. Verse 33, seems like what was going on here?
11. Who remained behind when the others went back to Jerusalem?
12. What did Paul and Barnabas do in Antioch?
13. Where did Paul want him and Barnabas to go?
14. Who did Barnabas want to take with them?

15. Barnabas went where without Paul?
16. What are two thoughts on why Paul and Barnabas parted that are not really backed up by Scripture?
17. Why did Barnabas choose to go with him?
18. Through whom was Barnabas related to Mark?
19. Who did Paul choose to go with him?
20. Where did Paul and his helper go?
21. Why had Paul chosen Silas?
22. What was, perhaps, one of the messages Paul taught?