

THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Doctrine and Duty for Disciples Series

Acts of the Apostles

"The Message Is Delivered"

Acts 15:22-41

[22] Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren. [23] They wrote this letter by them: The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings. [24] Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "You must be circumcised and keep the law" -to whom we gave no such commandment- [25] it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, [26] men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. [27] We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. [28] For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: [29] that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell. [30] So when they were sent off, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the letter. [31] When they had read it, they rejoiced over its encouragement. [32] Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words. [33] And after they had stayed there for a time, they were sent back with greetings from the brethren to the apostles. [34] However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there. [35] Paul and Barnabas also remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also. [36] 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 from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to 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.

Discussion Questions:

1. What was the final decision made regarding the dispute and how were they able to come to a decision?
2. What does it mean when it mentions, "*For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us*"? What does this show in their relationship with the Holy Spirit? How is this a good model in deciding over a matter?
3. What are the differences in the disputes in 15:2, 15:7 and 15:39?
4. Was Paul's reason to exclude John Mark justified?
5. What do you think were factors in Barnabas wanting to include John Mark?
6. Where either of them right? Do you think the Holy Spirit was included in this decision? Why or why not?
7. Although this was not a peaceful split between Paul and Barnabas, how does that show that God is sovereign and how was He glorified? How could they have resolved this dispute in a God honoring manner before going separate ways?