

29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: 30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

In ROMANS 15:25 & 26 Paul writes: *But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. 26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.* 2 CORINTHIANS 8 and 9 further explain how this collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem took place, which you can read and study on your own. Again in 1 CORINTHIANS 16:1-3 we read: *Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. 3 And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.*

In ACTS 24:17 Paul makes note of one of the reasons he came to Jerusalem during the time frame of his last visit there. ACTS 24:17 *Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.*

So we see as a result of this meeting at Jerusalem during the time frame of ACTS 15 that the Apostle Paul took up a collection for the poor Saints at Jerusalem, as had been privately suggested by James, Peter in John in GALATIANS 2:10 *Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.* The bringing of this collection to the Saints at Jerusalem was an underlying reason why the Apostle Paul endeavored to return there.

Paul and company return to Antioch

ACTS 15:30 *So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: 31 Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation. 32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them. 33 And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles. 34 Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still. 35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.*

These six verses cover a several months time span. Let's examine these verses a little closer.

In ACTS 15:30 we find the word "dismissed." "Dismissed" carries with it the thought of being set free from bondage, and given liberty. The Apostle Paul was set forever free from the bondage of sin on the road to Damascus. Having grown up a strict observer of the law, Paul never realized until the day he was saved how much bondage the law put him under. And how thankful Paul was for being set free from the bondage of sin, and how he enjoyed the liberty, this new found freedom that he had in Christ Jesus. For that very reason no other author in scripture writes as much about bondage and liberty as the Apostle Paul. The very purpose of this conference at Jerusalem was to point out that Jesus came into this world *...to preach deliverance to the captives...*, and *...to set at liberty them that are bruised...* LUKE 4:18 tells us. And this being set free from bondage, and given liberty wasn't exclusive just to the Jew, but also was a gift freely given unto the Gentiles also. This feeling of bondage was brought upon the Gentiles in Antioch by *...false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage...* GALATIANS 2:4 tells us. This conference at Jerusalem forever settled the question between the bondage of sin and the law, and the liberty that all Christians have in Christ Jesus. This became the main subject of Paul's epistle unto the GALATIANS, to whom he wrote in GALATIANS 5:1 *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*

It is with this renewed sense of freedom and liberty that Paul and Barnabas and company leave Jerusalem, and come once again unto Antioch. ACTS 15:30 *So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: 31 Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the*

consolation. I imagine that Barnabas himself may have first read this letter unto those of Antioch. Barnabas was the one of this company who had spent the most time in Antioch. Recall from way back in ACTS 4:36 that Barnabas was first introduced to us as being associated with the Apostles, and known as ...*The son of consolation...* . In ACTS 11:22-25 Barnabas was sent first by the church in Jerusalem unto Antioch, where in ACTS 11:23 we read of the kind of consolation that Barnabas first offered to those Saints in Antioch: *Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.* No doubt Paul and Silas and Judas surnamed Barsabas stood right along side Barnabas as he read this letter of consolation. These were indeed words of comfort and consolation to the ears of those Saints at Antioch, ...*And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.* {ACTS 15:32}.

Some time passes, how much we are not told. Probably a couple of weeks at least, for the journey from Jerusalem to Antioch was a long one, the distance being about 320 miles. We read in ACTS 15:33 *And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles.* Judas and Silas were given God speed to return unto the Apostles in Jerusalem. However ACTS 15:34 tells us: *Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.* Obviously Silas felt the love of God in Antioch, and wished to continue his fellowship there. Paul and Barnabas also ...*continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others...* ACTS 15:35 tells us.

Again more time passes and Paul and Barnabas are still found in Antioch. No doubt Judas, surnamed Barsabas, has returned to Jerusalem and given a glowing report from Antioch by this time. Some from Jerusalem then went to Antioch to pay a visit to the Saints in Antioch. GALATIANS 2:11 tells us that Peter himself visited Antioch. GALATIANS 2:12 further tells us that some time later others came from Jerusalem unto Antioch. All of these visitors from Jerusalem were well aquatinted with Barnabas GALATIANS 2:13 indicates. Let's read these verses. GALATIANS 2:11 *But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.*

Now Paul had to deal with Peter about his display of legality there in Antioch. I know that the Apostle Paul dealt with Peter in firmness and in love. Imagine how hard it would be in the natural to point out to the famous Apostle Peter that he was in error and acting like a hypocrite, but that is just what the Apostle Paul did. GALATIANS 2:14-21 records: *But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? 15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. 17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. 18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. 19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. 20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. 21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.*

How did Peter, and how did Barnabas receive this correction? Peter later writes in 2 PETER 3 these words: *14 ...be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. 15 And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood,...* . Note that Peter acknowledges that the Apostle Paul is a beloved brother in the Lord, who has given him wisdom concerning some things that are hard to be understood. Obviously Peter accepted what Paul had to say, even though it may have been hard for him to fully understand all that Paul had to say.

As for Barnabas ACTS 15:36 tells us: *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.* Obviously Paul and Barnabas got along famously. The differences they had in GALATIANS 2:13 had been resolved. Remember that Paul and Barnabas had been preaching together for several years now. Coneybeare and Howson have Paul and Barnabas being together constantly for six years at this point in time.

The Separation of Paul and Barnabas

Let's quickly review what we have learned about Paul and Barnabas. Had it not been for Barnabas we know nothing of the Apostle Paul. It was Barnabas who first heard Paul preach in Damascus. When Paul as a Christian first came back to Jerusalem it was Barnabas who took him in and introduced him to the Apostles in Jerusalem ACTS 9:27 tells us. It was Barnabas who later sought out Paul in Tarsus, and introduced him to the Saints at Antioch ACTS 11:25 & 26 tell us. It was Barnabas who journeyed back to Jerusalem with Paul, and then return with him and John Mark unto Antioch. It was Barnabas who was chosen of the Holy Ghost to travel with Paul on his first missionary journey ACTS 13:2 tells us. It was Barnabas and Titus who went with Paul back to Jerusalem to have the conference of ACTS 15. It was Barnabas, and a few others with Paul, who returned after this conference back to Antioch. Barnabas has been very patient with Paul. Now six years of constantly being together have come and gone. In the meanwhile Paul has taught Barnabas Paul's gospel. Indeed Barnabas got to learn Paul's gospel first hand from the very mouth of Paul himself. The two men seemed inseparable. That was about to change.

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.* 37 *And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.* 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.* 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;* 40 *And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.* 41 *And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.*

In ACTS 15:36 we find that Paul was wanting to do a second missionary journey with Barnabas, and pay a return visit to the brethren they had left on their first missionary journey, and see how they were doing, and also pass the information along from the epistle that was written at this conference in Jerusalem. Barnabas too was willing to make this trip again, however this time once again Barnabas was determined to take John Mark along. Recall when Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem from Antioch in ACTS 11:27-29, that when they returned to Antioch in ACTS 12:25 they had taken John Mark with them. COLOSSIANS 4:10 tells us that John Mark was Barnabas' sisters son. ACTS 12:12 tells us that John Mark's mothers name was Mary. It was to John Mark's Mothers house that Peter had come to after escaping Herod's prison. After leaving Jerusalem in ACTS 12:25, Barnabas and Paul take John Mark with them, and John Mark also tags along on Paul and Barnabas' first missionary journey for a while. However we read in ACTS 13:13 that John Mark didn't last long on that first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas, but rather when the going got tough John Mark left the Apostles and returned to Jerusalem. Since this visit back to Jerusalem in ACTS 15, John Mark has returned to Antioch with his uncle Barnabas even though no real mention has been made of this fact up until ACTS 15:37, where we again read: *And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.*

We see here that Paul was beginning to have some trouble with Barnabas. First of all Barnabas had been carried away with Peter's dissimulation (hypocrisy) there at Antioch, as noted in GALATIANS 2:13. No doubt, Paul had words with Barnabas over this situation, but had resolved the matter. Now right on the heels of this event Barnabas insists upon taking John Mark on this second missionary journey. ACTS 15:38 records Paul's thinking on this subject: *But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who*