

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*

departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. So we see that Paul and Barnabas were in disagreement, something that we haven't read of them having in their six years together.

The severity of this disagreement isn't really apparent until we read ACTS 15:39, which states: *And the contention (provocation or incitement) was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other...*

This is a defining moment in the career of the Apostle Paul. My personal opinion of this split between Barnabas and Paul is that Paul made a mistake, or perhaps a error in judgment here. However the Lord never makes a mistake, and knew long before that this separation between Barnabas and Paul was necessary. It was necessary for the spiritual growth of Paul. It was necessary for the spiritual growth of Barnabas. It was necessary for the spiritual growth of John Mark. It more importantly was necessary for the spiritual growth of you and me! Consider this, up until this point in time the Apostle Paul has not written one epistle. It was after this split with Barnabas that the Apostle Paul begins writing his epistles unto the churches from which we have Paul's gospel. Would we have Paul's gospel without this split? I don't know, however the Lord knew from the beginning what He was going to do in the life of the Apostle Paul, and in the life of Barnabas. Consider again what the Lord Jesus Christ Himself told the Apostle Paul on the road to Damascus the day Paul got saved, which is recorded for us in ACTS 26. ACTS 26:16 *But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.* These words were not spoken to Paul and Barnabas, but rather were spoken to Paul. You see the Lord knew that the day would come when Paul and Barnabas would go their separate ways, and this separation was necessary.

No doubt the Apostle Paul thought long and hard after this break up between him and Barnabas of things that could have been handled differently. Was it really necessary for him to have had such a sharp contention with his good friend Barnabas? Who was the overcomer here? Perhaps as Paul thought on these things the genesis of what he later wrote in ROMANS 8:28 came into his mind. ROMANS 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* Perhaps also the 13th chapter of 1 CORINTHIANS began to take place in his thinking on how he could better express himself with words, and in deeds by allowing the love of God to properly flow out of his life. Maybe Paul began to realize the words he later penned in EPHESIANS 4:26 *Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.* Quiet possibly Paul may have begin to fully think more about the unsearchable riches of Christ Jesus that he writes about in EPHESIANS 3:8. Perhaps the Lord began to emphasize in Paul's heart the fact that he needed to be more patient toward all men, which he later wrote about in 1 THESSALONIANS 5:14. And how he should with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbear one another in love as he later wrote about in EPHESIANS 4:2. And how he should be more kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you, which he later penned in EPHESIANS 4:32. Similar words were also later penned in COLOSSIANS 3:13 *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.* And so as not to beat himself up so bad with what was said between Barnabas and himself, perhaps Paul begin to think like he later wrote in PHILIPPIANS 3:13 & 14: *...but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* Paul may have even realized that his speech may have been a little harsh with Barnabas, and if so, he later wrote in COLOSSIANS 4:6 *Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.* Perhaps the Apostle Paul begin to think like he finally wrote in PHILIPPIANS 4:8 *...brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever*

things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

So we read again of Paul and Barnabas having this argument in ACTS 15:39 *And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other...* . Paul and Barnabas have really been a team since ACTS 11:30, a span of six or seven years by this point in time. The two of them have been inseparable. At first they were known as Barnabas and Saul {ACTS 11:30, ACTS 12:25; ACTS 13:2; and ACTS 13:7}. Then they were known as Paul and Barnabas {ACTS 13:34; ACTS 13:46; ACTS 13:50; ACTS 15:2 (twice); and ACTS 15:22}. They have also been called Barnabas and Paul {ACTS 14:14; ACTS 15:12; and ACTS 15:25}. In ACTS 14:12 we learn that between Paul and Barnabas, Paul was the chief speaker. It was Paul the chief speaker between the two of them who suggested a second missionary journey in ACTS 15:36. When Barnabas insists on taking John Mark along on this next journey, *...the contention was so sharp between them, (Paul and Barnabas) that they departed asunder one from the other...* .

Paul, and Apostle, and a man full of the Holy Ghost, and Barnabas himself an Apostle, (see ACTS 14:14) and also full of the Holy Ghost had a sharp contention between themselves, and separated company. This is not exactly a real good testimony, but good things would result because of both of these men having a deep love of God, and wanting God's best in their own lives. Paul was still an Apostle, and Barnabas was still an Apostle. Both of these church Apostles went on future separate missionary journeys as Apostles. The contention was between Paul and Barnabas, and was not between any others of the church. Paul and Barnabas *...departed asunder one from the other*. AMOS 3:3 asks: *Can two walk together, except they be agreed?* Obviously the answer is no. However the Lord still had His way. The gospel was spread by both of these Apostles, and probably at a faster rate than had they stayed together. Had Paul and Barnabas stayed together we may not have left for us any of Paul's gospel! Think about it, Paul has not written one epistle up to this point in time. Paul begins his writing epistles, which are left for us, on his next missionary journey. Barnabas never writes us an epistle, but it is Paul's gospel that we are to follow anyway. (More on this later).

The last part of ACTS 15:39 reads: *...and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus*. This is the last time we read of Barnabas in the book of ACTS. In total we read of Barnabas twenty-nine times in scripture. Twenty-nine we found in our Meaning of the Bible Numbers study is the number having to do with DEPARTURE or GOING AWAY. Barnabas departed from Paul and went away at this same time. We never read of them being together ever again! We see here in ACTS 15:39 that Barnabas once again took with him his nephew Mark, and sailed unto his home country of Cyprus. John Mark it seems spent much time with his uncle Barnabas, and in the process learned Paul's gospel, and heard many great and wonderful stories from his uncle Barnabas on how the Lord had blessed the two of them, and especially how Paul was blessed and gifted with the ministry unto the Gentiles. So we note that Barnabas was being patient with John Mark much like he had been very patient with the Apostle Paul. How do we know this? First because Paul mentions John Mark three times in later writings, and refers to John Mark at that time as being a fellowlabourer with Paul (PHILEMON 1:24), and *...profitable to me for the ministry* (2 TIMOTHY 4:11). No doubt Barnabas patiently taught John Mark the gospel of Paul, then years later, how or when or by what manner we are not told, Paul and John Mark come together again, this time as a team, and working in conjunction with the Holy Ghost, and being profitable to Paul in his later ministry. We can only thank Barnabas, and the Holy Spirit for that. John Mark ironically becomes the connecting link in later years between Barnabas and Paul. Secondly we know that Barnabas was patient with John Mark because we have a gospel record left us from John Mark, entitled The Gospel According to St. Mark, where we find Jesus pictured as the servant, a position in life that John Mark could relate to have been a "servant" in the gospel to both Barnabas and Paul. Interestingly we find John Mark's name mentioned as Mark five (GRACE) times in scripture. Do you suppose he was a "grace" minister? Sure he was, having received the best teaching from the best teachers, which were before him Apostles of Jesus Christ. So, no doubt, uncle Barnabas to John Mark, was a good influence to John Mark. Possibly somewhere along the way Barnabas, as he got older and maybe to old to travel, encouraged John Mark to seek out the Apostle Paul, we don't know because scripture doesn't say. We do know this, Barnabas was known as the man

of encouragement, for that was one of the meanings of his name. Barnabas first encouraged the Apostle Paul in the many years he spent with him, and secondly encouraged John Mark in the many years he also spent with him. Some ministries seem to be more on a one to one basis than on a group basis, and it seems that this was the way it was with Barnabas the majority of the time. So in the end we find that Barnabas too encouraged John Mark to be a follower of the Apostle Paul as Paul was a follower of Jesus Christ. {Study 1 CORINTHIANS 4:16; 11:1; PHILIPPIANS 3:17; and 1 THESSALONIANS 1:6}. Barnabas encouraged both Paul and John Mark to be faithful ministers of the word of God.

Even though we read no more of Barnabas in ACTS, we do read of Barnabas again in scripture. The Apostle Paul makes reference to Barnabas a grace (5) number of times in his future writings. {1 CORINTHIANS 9:6; GALATIANS 2:1; 2:9; 2:13; and COLOSSIANS 4:10}. Not once does Paul ever mention the sharp contention he had with Barnabas over John Mark. In the end Paul, in a round about way, pays a great tribute and compliment to Barnabas when he writes in his last epistle: 2 TIMOTHY 4:11 *Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.* No doubt first of all John Mark had become profitable to Barnabas in the ministry also. Also we find in COLOSSIANS 4:10 & 11 that John Mark was listed as one of the few fellow workers in the ministry of the Apostle Paul who were a comfort unto him. Barnabas in Paul's early ministry had been a comfort to Paul also, so this trait of being a comfort to others that John Mark possessed was no doubt taught and perfected by Barnabas himself.

Back in ACTS 15:36 Paul suggested to Barnabas that they go again unto every city that they visited on their first missionary journey. Here in ACTS 15:39 we find that *...Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus.* In ACTS 13:4-13 we find Paul and Barnabas on the island of Cyprus preaching on their first stop of their previous missionary journey. This was one of the places Paul suggested to Barnabas they visit again in his conversation of ACTS 15:36. We will see in the verses that immediately follow ACTS 15:39 that Paul himself did not visit Cyprus on his second missionary journey. It seems that even though Paul and Barnabas separated ways, that they still were in agreement about visiting every city they had previously visited. Only this time Paul would visit some of the cities, and Barnabas would visit the others, mainly those cities of Cyprus, Barnabas' home country. {Study ACTS 4:36}.

Paul Starts his Second Missionary Journey

ACTS 15:40 *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.* Here we see that while Barnabas went to the afore mentioned country of Cyprus, Paul went to Syria and Cilicia. However recall that these were not exactly the places that Paul and Barnabas had visited on their first missionary journey. Again ACTS 15:36 states: *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.* Every city included all the cities Paul and Barnabas had visited together on their first and only missionary journey, but also in the back of Paul's mind he was intending to visit the places he had preached prior to Barnabas coming to get him in ACTS 11:25. This included portions of Syria, and his home country of Cilicia, where Paul by himself had preached after being sent from Jerusalem back to Tarsus in ACTS 9:30. Recall that we previously noted how Paul had spent about five years preaching in the regions of Syria and Cilicia (GALATIANS 1:21) after ACTS 9:30, and that Conybeare and Howson also noted that a majority of the sufferings of Paul found listed in 2 CORINTHIANS 11:23-33 occurred during these five years. {Review again these notes from the bottom of page 78, and also page 302}. Now here in ACTS 15:40 & 41 we see Paul once again after several years of absence visiting the regions of Syria and Cilicia he by himself had first preached too.

Note in ACTS 15:40 the word "recommended." ACTS 15:40 *And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.* According to Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words "recommended" means: to give or deliver over, or commending, or committing servants of God to Him. This same word is