

## **SETTLING MATTERS FACE TO FACE!!** **ACTS CH15:22-41**

### **INTRODUCTION!**

We live in an era, where daily communication is no longer just face to face or on landlines! We now use mobile phones more than ever, we have texts, emails, face-book, twitter, zoom, face-time and no doubt several other ways of communicating through using technology! Is it always such a good thing? How much of our awake time do we give to such technologies? Are they idols? Time will no doubt tell! Whilst our culture seemingly embraces these new ways of communicating, are we missing out, when we choose to use technology, rather than choose to meet face to face, when it is possible?

### **THE LETTER SENT! V22-29**

You see the Church in Jerusalem could just use, in my words, the “newish technology of the day”, a letter! Okay, not that new, but hopefully you catch my drift! The Church, along with the letter, also choose to meet face to face!

The phrase “it seemed good to us” occurs 3 times (v22, v25 and v28) in 8 verses, showing the complete unity of the apostles, the elders, the Church and most importantly God the Holy Spirit! ***Unity amongst believers is so precious!*** The context here is the letter from the Jerusalem Church being sent to the Church in Antioch, and by using the phrase “it seemed good to us”, 3 clear points are made:

1. The men that initially came to them Ch15:1, had no authority whatsoever from the Jerusalem Church v24.
2. The men that they were now sending namely Judas and Silas, came with the authority to speak to them on behalf of the Jerusalem Church v25!
3. They did not have to be circumcised, but were required to show real cultural sensitivity to their Jewish brother and sisters by abstaining from 4 things v29!

By sending delegates, reassurances can be given if necessary, correct interpretations of the text can be made and ensuring the letter's acceptance can be secured! Although being free in Christ, it was important that certain sensitivities were shown in relation to Jewish culture:

1. Abstention from food sacrificed to idols! v20+29
2. Abstention from drinking blood! v20+29
3. Abstention from eating meat from animals that had been strangled! v20+29
4. Abstention from sexual immorality! v20+29

Although verse 20 + 29 have a different ordering, ***the main thing is keeping the main thing, the main thing***, abstention from these 4 things, and in doing so, showing that cultural sensitivity, which was so vital to reaching the lost and enjoying peace with fellow brothers and sisters in Christ! The application for us, is the principle in allowing our love for others to be paramount, rather than our freedom bought by Christ!

### **THE LETTER ARRIVES! V30-35**

Barnabas, Paul, Judas and Silas, along with the letter, arrive at the Church in Antioch.

What is known about the men?

- V22 – chosen by the Church!
- V22 – They are leading men within the Church!

- V27 – They are trusted to repeat word for word what was decided by the Church!
- V32 – They were prophets!
- V32 – They encouraged and strengthened the Church at Antioch!
- V33 – They stayed a while!
- V40 – Silas would be chosen by Paul to later be his “*amanuensis*” - gifted in dictation and copying manuscripts!

### ***A colossal challenge to us as men!***

#### **THE LETTER TO THEO (Ch1:1) AND US! V36-41**

People verses Mission!!

What does Luke record for Theo and for us, when Christians, especially high profile Christians, have “sharp disagreements”? Well, he's honest about it and leaves it to his readers to analyse the so called “rights and wrongs” about it. So, before we analyse anything, let's consider some facts:

#### ***What do we know about Barnabas?***

- Ch4:36 – His name means – son of encouragement, a Levite, a native of Cyprus!
- Ch4:37 – He sold a field and laid the money at the feet of the apostles!
- Ch9:27 – Stuck up for Paul in front of the early Church! (Galatians Ch1:18)
- Ch11:24 – A good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith!
- Ch11:25-26 – Found Paul and took him to Antioch!
- Ch13:1-6 – Sent out by the Antioch Church!
- Ch13:46 – Speaking boldly with Paul!
- Ch14:4+14 – He has apostolic gifting!
- Ch15:36-39 – Had a huge disagreement with the apostle Paul over John Mark!
- Colossians Ch4:10 – A cousin of John Mark!
- 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians Ch9:6 – Like Paul, never took the rights of an apostle!
- Galatians Ch2:9-14 – Gentile missionary work, but easily misled! Whenever the apostle Paul mentions Barnabas, it is always with words of sympathy and respect!
- ***What an example!***

#### ***What do we know about John Mark?***

- Presumably the author of the Gospel of Mark, the man who ran away naked in Mark Ch14:51-52
- Who later joined Paul and Barnabas in Acts Ch12:25
- Went on mission with them in Acts Ch13:5
- Abandoned the same mission in Acts Ch13:13
- Was the root cause of a huge “bust up” between Paul and Barnabas in Acts Ch15:37-41.
- Colossians Ch4:10, identified as the cousin of Barnabas,
- Being reinstated in 2 Timothy Ch4:11, he is also mentioned in Philemon 24 as a fellow worker and 1 Peter Ch5:13 as Paul's spiritual son!
- ***What an example!***

#### ***What do we know about Silas?***

- Ch15:22 – Chosen by the Church in Jerusalem!
- Ch15:22 – He was a model within the Church!
- Ch15:32 – He was a prophet!

- Known as “Silvanus” in 2 Cor Ch1:19; 1 Thess Ch1:1; 2 Thess Ch1:1; 1 Peter Ch5:12!
- Acts Ch16:37 – He was a Roman citizen!
- Acts Ch16:16-40 – Arrested and mistreated with Paul!
- **What an example!**

### **What do we know about Paul?**

A.D. 5-10?	Born in Tarsus as an Israelite from the tribe of Benjamin and a Roman Citizen (Acts Ch22:3; 28; Rom Ch11:1; Phil Ch3:5) raised in either Jerusalem (Acts Ch22:37) or Tarsus
15-20?	Trained as a Pharisee by Gamaliel 1 (Acts Ch22:3; 26:5; Gal Ch1:14; Phil Ch3:5-6)
30/33*	Death, resurrection of Christ
31-34	Present at Stephen's stoning, persecuted Christians (Acts Ch7:58, 8:1; 22:4a; 26:9-11; 1 <sup>st</sup> Cor Ch15:9; Gal 1:13)
33/34*	<b>Converted, called and commissioned on the way to Damascus</b> (Acts Ch9:1-19; 22:6-11; 26:12-18; Gal 1:15-16)
33/34-36/37	Stays in Damascus a short time (Acts Ch9:19b); leaves for “Arabia” (i.e., Nabataean Kingdom; 2 <sup>nd</sup> Cor Ch11:32; Gal Ch1:17); returns to Damascus (Gal 1:17; Acts 9:20-22?); Jews and the governor under King Aretas try to arrest and kill him, Paul escapes through the City wall (Acts 9:23-24; 2 <sup>nd</sup> Cor 11:32-22).
36/37*	<b>Meets with Peter (and sees James) in Jerusalem</b> (Acts Ch9:26-30; Gal 1:18; Hellenists seek to kill him and he flees to Tarsus (Acts 9:28-30; Gal 1:21)
37-45	Ministers in Syria/Cilicia (2 <sup>nd</sup> Cor Ch11:22-27?)
42-44	Receives his “thorn in the flesh” (2 <sup>nd</sup> Cor Ch12:7-9)
44	Herod Agrippa dies (Acts Ch12:20-23)
44-47*	Spends a year ministering with Barnabas in Antioch (Acts Ch11:25-26) <b>Second visit to Jerusalem</b> ; Time of famine (Acts Ch11:27-30; Gal 2:1-10)
46-47	<b>First Missionary Journey</b> (Acts Ch13:4-14:26) 1.5 years?
48*	Paul and Barnabas spend “no little time” in Antioch (Acts Ch14:28;cf. Gal 2:11-14); Paul; writes letter to the <b>Galatians</b>
48-49*	<b>Returns to the Jerusalem for the Apostolic Council</b> (Acts CH15); Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch (Acts Ch15:30-33), but a dispute over John Mark causes them to part ways (Acts Ch15:36-41)
48/49-51*	<b>Second Missionary Journey</b> (Acts Ch15:36 – Ch18:22): 2.5 years?
49	Edict of Claudius (Acts Ch18:2). Paul and Silas travel to southern Galatia through Asia Minor, on to Macedonia (notably Philippi - 1 <sup>st</sup> Thess Ch2:2; Thessalonica - 1 <sup>st</sup> Thess Ch2:2; Phil 4:15-16; Berea – Acts Ch17:10-15, Achaia notably Athens - 1 <sup>st</sup> Thess Ch3:1 and Corinth - 2 <sup>nd</sup> Cor Ch11:7-9)
49-51*	Spends 1.5 years in Corinth (Acts Ch18:11); Appears before Gallio (Acts Ch18:12-17); Writes <b>1+2 Thessalonians</b>
51	Returns to Jerusalem? (Acts Ch18:22)

52-57*	<b>Third Missionary Journey</b> (Acts Ch18:23-Ch21:17); 5 years?
52	Travels to Antioch, where he spends “some time”; then travels through Galatia and Phrygia (Acts Ch18:23)
52-55	Arrives in Ephesus (Acts Ch19:1; 1 <sup>st</sup> Cor Ch16:8); ministers there for 3 years (Acts Ch20:31) and writes <b>1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians</b> in the spring, near the end of his ministry there; makes brief, “painful visit” to Corinth (2 <sup>nd</sup> Cor Ch2:1), then returns to Ephesus and writes “tearful, severe letter” (now lost) to Corinth (2 <sup>nd</sup> Cor Ch2:3-4; Ch7:8-16)
55-56*	Travels North to Macedonia, where he meets Titus (Acts Ch20:1; Cf 2 <sup>nd</sup> Cor Ch2:12-13); writes <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians</b>
57*	Winters in Corinth (Acts Ch20:2-3; Cf 2 <sup>nd</sup> Cor Ch9:4), writes letter to the <b>Romans</b> from Corinth; travels to Jerusalem and is arrested (Acts Ch21:27-36)
57-59	Imprisonment transferred to Caesarea, where he stays for 2 years (Acts Ch24:27)
60*	Voyage to Rome; shipwrecked for 3 months on the Island of Malta (Acts Ch28:11); finally arrives in Rome
62*	Under house-arrest in Rome (Acts Ch28:30-31), writes <b>Ephesians, Philipians, Colossians, Philemon</b>
62-67	Released from house-arrest in Rome, extends his mission (Spain?), writes <b>1<sup>st</sup> Timothy</b> (from Macedonia?) and <b>Titus</b> (from Nicopolis): is re-arrested, writes <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy</b> from Rome shortly before his execution
64-67*	Martyred in Rome

#### **According to 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians Ch11:23-28**

- Flogged more severely!
- Flogged on 5 separate occasions!
- Flogged a total of 195 times!
- Three times beaten with rods!
- Almost stoned to death!
- Shipwrecked three times!
- 24 hrs in the sea!
- Danger from rivers, bandits, his own countrymen, from false brothers!
- **What an example!**

**V41 - There are now two missional teams, and not one! And both teams are commissioned by the Church! We can glean from 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians Ch9:6 – Like Paul, Barnabas never took the rights of an apostle, that the friendship was secure!).**

#### **APPLICATION**

God continues to work through the mess that Christians make! It doesn't mean that Christians can continue to deliberately make mess, but should be comforted and encouraged, that when we do create mess and/or mess up, God continues to be faithful and help us work through the mess!