

Acts: Jerusalem Council

 *Aug 9*

**INTRODUCTION:**  The issue of salvation and covenant identity, being both Jew and Gentile who believed the Gospel and were baptized, was defended by Peter and reaffirmed by James who proposed a solution. This solution was affirmed by the Council and expressed in the letter and messengers. Its receptions in Antioch greatly blessed the church there.

**KEY POINT:** unity/disunity, Mark, multiplication, reception

**A.M. SERMON RECAP** (2 Ti 3:14–17, Purpose of Scripture)

* How does Scripture teach of salvation?
* How does Scripture equip for every good deed?
* Other takeaways…

**P.M. SERMON RECAP** (Acts 15:22–35, The Letter)

* What is the tone of the Letter?
* What are the hallmarks of the Letter? What cultural matters did it recommend?
* What was the initial reception of the letter?

**READ:** Acts 15:36–41

**QUESTIONS:**

1. *V. 36a- “After some days…”The Letter had strengthened the Antiochian Church, but what about the other new churches that had been founded? Following the principle of 14:22–23, and desiring that the churches that had been troubled by false teachers might receive the same encouragement, Paul made his suggestion to Barnabas.*
2. **Are there times that fellow believers/leaders/churches need encouragement, fellowship and support?**
3. **Are there Christians we’ve not seen for a while that we might check in on by text, phone, letter or visit?**
4. *From what follows Barnabas seems to have thought this was a great idea!*
5. However, Barnabas made a suggestion that lead to a “sharp disagreement” (v. 39): John Mark.
6. This was the disagreement and what it produced.

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| Figure | Barnabas | Paul |
| Thought | Take Mark (probably as a second chance). He was a relative. | Not take Mark (he had deserted, 13:13). *Withdrawn is the same root as apostasy.*  |
| Outcome | Barnabas took Mark to Cyprus (where they hadn’t had the opportunity to revisit in the 1st journey).  | Paul took Silas and pressed toward Galatia through regions close to Antioch that he had earlier minister in (9:30). |

1. **Consider both men’s perspectives. Who would you have followed? What principle—grace or truth—would you have employed? Was there a third way?**
2. *V. Sharp disagreement (litt. a sharp edge + alongside, a jab that provokes).*
3. *If Barnabas and Paul were not immune we aren’t either. Sharp divisions between believers, leaders, churches, denominations, etc, can be painful and tarnish our witness.* **Can you share an example?**
4. *This is a good instance of ‘clarify commitment before the test of circumstances.’* **What Christian principle sought we to resolve to follow to minimize the negative impact of division?**
5. *Mark redeemed himself and restored past breaches for later in the NT he is deemed by Peter and Paul as useful (Col 4:10; 2 Ti 4:11; Phil 24; 1 Pe 5:13, authoring ‘Mark’s Gospel’).*
6. *Though Christian division cannot be condoned it is used—mercifully—in God’s providence for good.* H**ow was the ministry and discipleship of leaders (Mark and Silas, then Timothy) multiplied? Have you ever seen this?**
7. *V. 41- the 2nd of three statements that show how the Letter strengthened and encouraged the churches (c.f. 15:31, 16:5).*

**NEXT:** Aug 16- Acts 16:6–10, The Macedonian Call