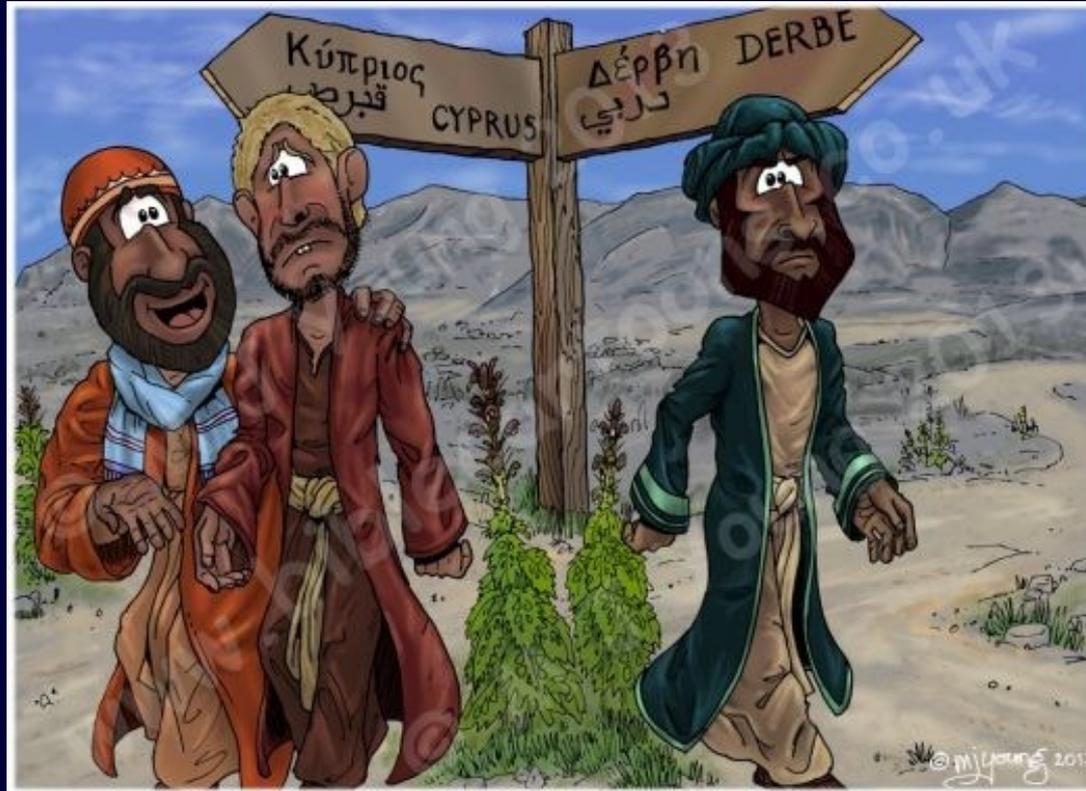


Welcome to the Worship Celebration of



SIMPLY BIBLICAL | FAMILY INTEGRATED

Church – The Beginnings, Part 44
Barnabas and Paul's SPLIT DECISION
When Sharp Disagreements Split Ministries
Acts 15:22-41



Acts

The Jerusalem Decree

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.

Chapter 15

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.

When Sharp Disagreements Split Ministries

Acts 15:22-41

So what started this Argument that led to their SPLITTING?

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.”

After, maybe, around 10 years of doing ministry together, and many years working very closely together, at Antioch and on their First Missionary Trip from Antioch into Syria, Cilicia, Pamphylia, Galatia, and the surrounding region (Acts 13 – 14) ... Paul suggests going back up into that region again and do some ministry follow-up, leadership development and/or training, etc. with those newly planted churches – to strengthen them.

When Sharp Disagreements Split Ministries

Acts 15:22-41

So what started this Argument that led to their SPLITTING?

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; ...

There is NO Mention that God led them to be this way or to do this or to have this Contention. Luke is just recording the Events. Acts is History not a Doctrinal Textbook like Romans, Galatians, etc. are. This happened. There might be some things we can learn from this.

When Sharp Disagreements Split Ministries

So what started this Argument that led to their SPLITTING?

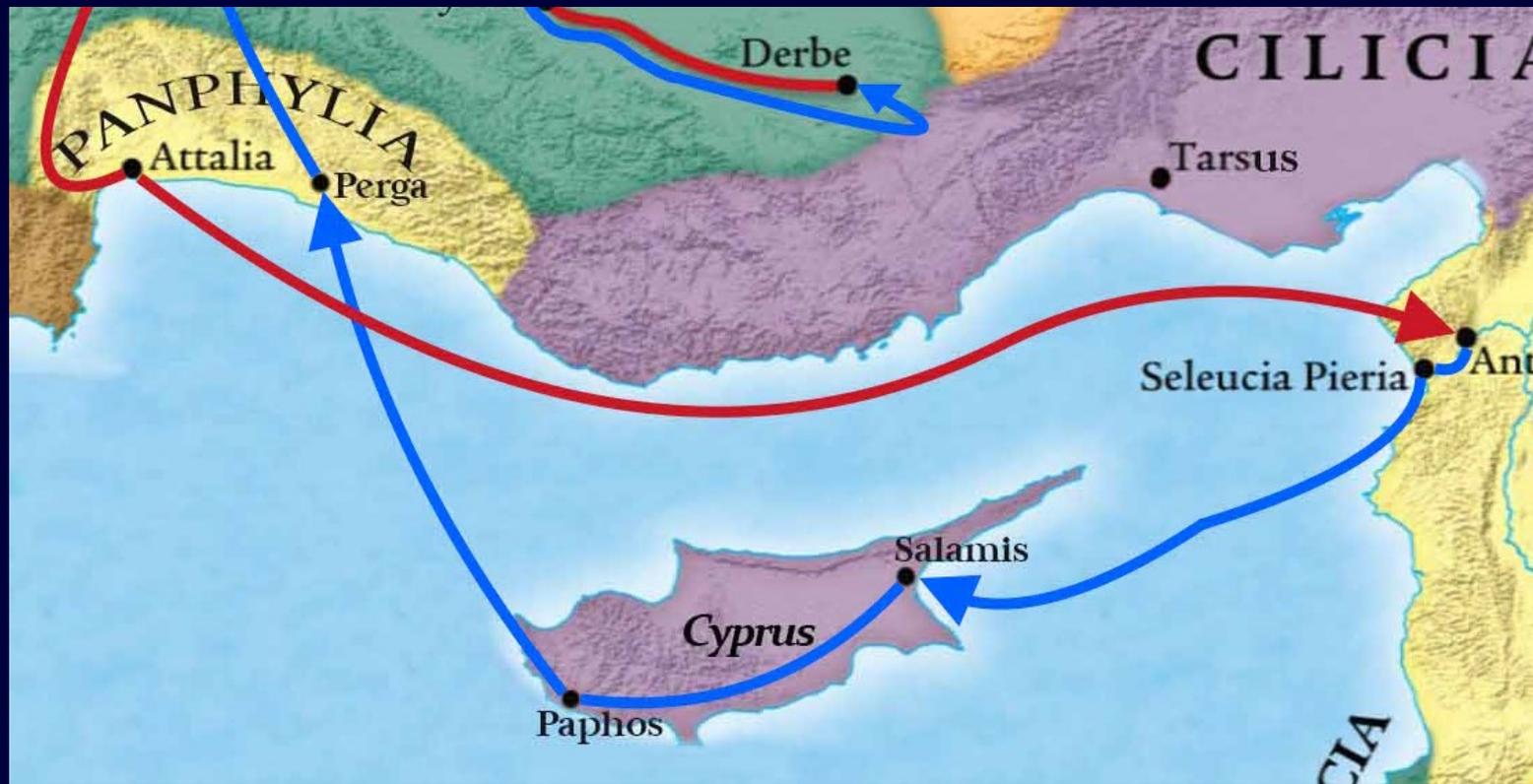
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The Contention Became so Sharp that they parted from one another. After so many years of ministry together... John Mark came between them. Why? Because the consistent behavioral pattern, observed by Paul, about John Mark. John Mark was a quitter, he'd run away when the going gets tough. Missionary Work is tough, very tough.

Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around his naked body. And the young men laid hold of him, ⁵² and he left the linen cloth and FLED from them naked. Mark 14:51-52



Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos [Cyprus], they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John [Mark], DEPARTING from them, returned to Jerusalem. Acts 13:13 → John Mark was a Quitter



What about Barnabas ... well, he was a People-Person ... He was the one Chosen to help out with the New Antioch Church by the Jerusalem Church ... but he was also a Compromiser ... He was REALLY, more of a People-Pleaser and sometimes favored people and being liked OVER and ABOVE God's Truth – in this case Barnabas wanted his Nephew – John Mark to come even though Paul thought that having a known Quitter on the Missionary Team to be a detriment to the Mission. Paul was focused on Christ's Cause, Christ's Mission – Barnabas was focused on people ... or at least that is how it seems.

Let's look at Galatians 2:11-16

(time period – AFTER - The Acts 15 Council decision and letter)

Galatians 2:11-16

(time period – AFTER - The Acts 15 Council decision and letter)

11 Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; **12** for BEFORE certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; BUT when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, FEARING those who were of the circumcision.

13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even BARNABAS was carried away with their HYPOCRISY.

14 But when I saw that they were NOT straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, “If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and NOT as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as 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 faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and NOT by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

What about Barnabas ... well, he was a People-Pleaser and a Hypocrite according to Paul – along with Peter → the incident in Antioch –

Galatians 2

AFTER – the Letter – AFTER the Jerusalem Council's Decision

So, Barnabas and John Mark – at that time – and up to that time – in Paul's eyes – were NOT fit, anymore, for the rest of the Mission.

Barnabas was a compromiser and hypocrite and favored people over the Mission of the Gospel ... And John Mark was a known quitter. They sailed to Barnabas' Home – on Cyprus and we never hear from Barnabas again. (nor do we hear about Peter in Acts, as well).

Paul chose God and Jesus Christ's Gospel Mission over these types of situations... Galatians 2 seems to show this well.

BUT .. .BUT ... I've heard that "IT's ALL ABOUT PEOPLE" ... but Barnabas ... → It is ALL about JESUS CHRIST and OBEYING HIM

Acts 15:36-41

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 [i.e. at Antioch] to the grace of God. ⁴¹ And he [Paul, along with Silas] went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

So, did God pick sides of whom He would support in this SPLIT DECISION? Who did God favor in this decision?

Did God support Barnabas and John Mark in their decision to leave Paul and go their Separate way to Cyprus?

Did God support Paul's decision – he was insisting on NOT taking John Mark on the Follow-up Missionary Trip?

Well, the Answer can be seen by reading the rest of the book of Acts, and see who wrote most of the New Testament.

So, for us, today does God enter into our decisions and Support or NOT support our decisions, just like He did with Paul and Barnabas? YES.

- 1. If our decisions are led by Him, based upon His Word, based upon wanting to please and obey Him ... then we can expect Him to support us. We must TRUST in Him. Motivation is the key. Sometimes we might not choose perfectly, but we are AIMING at His Highest Calling to please Him. Look at Barnabas and Paul in this passage. Who was seeking to please God the best, the most?**

So, for us, today does God enter into our decisions and Support or NOT support our decisions, just like He did with Paul and Barnabas? YES.

2. If our decisions are NOT led by Him, based upon our own interests, based upon pleasing others, based upon what is “expedient”, based upon what is “practical”, based upon “everyone else is doing it”, based upon the fear of what others might think or do to us ... etc. Then we can fully expect GOD to NOT support our decision and be displeased with our decisions. We may even receive some Discipline to help us make better decisions in the future.

So, for us: Seeking to Please God, Love God, Serve God, Trust God, Obey God must be our highest Goal in life.

We can still love people – but we can NEVER love people so much, that we favor them OVER God and His Mission.

When there are Arguments, Sharp Arguments like this ... they are OK ... God says so, as seen here in Acts 15 and 1 Corinthians 11:19:

For there must also be factions among you, that those who are APPROVED may be RECOGNIZED among you.

Seek to be the one APPROVED of God by seeking to Please and Obey HIM

**FYI: Later on – Paul and Peter use John Mark for ministry
(ref. 2 Timothy 4:11)**