

I. THE DECISION

- A. The matter of works for salvation is heard in its entirety
 - 1. Things were done decently and in order!
 - a. 1 COR. 14:31 – “For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.”
 - b. Meetings of a church(es) should NEVER get out of control!
 - c. MATT. 7:20 – “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”
 - d. GAL. 5:22-23 – “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (23) meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”
 - 2. And James gives his opinion (Peter is the Pastor at Jerusalem)
 - a. He gives HIS sentence (vs. 19)
 - i. It’s okay to have an opinion
 - ii. BASED UPON SCRIPTURE AND REASON
 - iii. If you base it on emotion, you WILL go wrong!
 - b. SO many people want to have their emotions heard
 - c. SO many people want to tell their side of the story
 - d. Maybe the answer is to stop and listen rather than speaking
 - 3. PSA. 46:10 – “Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.”
 - 4. MATT. 6:7 – “But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.”
- B. Four preachers speak at the council
 - 1. And yet SOMEHOW an agreement was reached!
 - a. Peter, Paul, Barnabas, and James
 - b. Each gave a Gospel MESSAGE!
 - i. Peter preaches about God’s work among them (vs. 7)
 - ii. Paul and Barnabas about the mission field (vs. 12)
 - iii. James about answered prophecy (vs. 15)
 - c. Each PERTAINED to the exact discussion at hand!
 - 2. Testimony meetings can be wonderful but also a little dangerous
 - a. You never know what someone will end up saying
 - b. Bro. Shepherd’s Hurricane Thank You Dinner
 - c. It was about the HURRICANE!
 - d. But some guy stood up (no one knew) stands up
 - i. And tells a long and involved story
 - ii. That seemed a little questionable
 - iii. And (it turned out) happened YEARS ago!!!
 - iv. Don’t be that guy!

3. Don't relitigate the troubles of the past, tell what God is doing TODAY
4. Be a blessing not an attention seeker
- C. James recommends that they TROUBLE NOT the Gentile believers
 1. First, it is CONFIRMED once again that works cannot buy Salvation
 - a. ISA. 64:6 – “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”
 - b. EPH. 2:8 – “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:”
 - i. By the way, the GIFT there is GRACE, not faith!
 - ii. Don't listen to the Calvinist error
 - iii. It's simple sentence structure, what is the SUBJECT?
 - c. Salvation is by the FINISHED WORK of Jesus Christ EXCLUSIVELY
 2. James says REMOVE and ABSTAIN from heathen practices (vs. 29)
 - a. Get away from idols
 - b. Keep separated from the death-cults and blood pagans
 - c. Abhor Satanic sacrifices (God used blood, strangled is opposite)
 - d. Separate from immoral sexuality and fornication
 - e. These rules still apply to us TODAY
 3. That is NOT LEGALISM!
 - a. Legalism is not even in this ballpark!
 - b. Legalism is trying to purchase Salvation by following the Law
 - c. This is SANCTIFICATION, trying to live a separated life
 - d. Not for Salvation but because OF Salvation
 - e. A life that is pleasing to Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior!

II. THE DOCUMENTS

- A. The recommendation is approved by the Church at Jerusalem (vs. 22)
 1. And they send out an official letter owning the problems
 - a. There's a lot of wrong thinking about this passage
 - b. That the “Apostles” created a new doctrine here and sent it out
 - c. This was one church DISAVOWING error to all the others! (vs. 24)
 2. The Judaizers purported themselves to be sent out from Jerusalem
 3. And therefore, the Church at Jerusalem took responsibility and fixed it!
- B. They chose FAITHFUL men to carry the letters
 1. Not just hirelings, not just a few members around the periphery
 2. These were mature pillars of the church – actually, PREACHERS (vs. 32)
 - a. Proven men of God
 - b. Christians with unmistakable character
 - c. Not novices or anyone with more zeal than knowledge
 3. They wanted to make sure the letters were received in full authenticity
- C. The letter contained a many elements
 1. A greeting and exhortation in the faith (vs. 23)

2. An admission of the problem and the source (vs. 24)
 3. A direct unanimous decision to make the truth known (vs. 25)
 4. A list of credentials for the men being sent (vs. 26 & 27)
 5. God's message that they all agreed upon and supported (vs. 28)
- D. Judas and Silas preached and witnessed to this fact (vs. 32)

III. THE DEPARTURE

- A. Judas went back to Jerusalem (or onward with the letters)
1. But Silas stayed in Antioch to preach and work with them (vs. 34)
 2. Paul and Barnabas stayed there too and preached
 - a. Perhaps they were still undoing the damage done by bad doctrine
 - b. Remember, they were shocked to hear the error in vs. 2
 - c. Missionaries come home to report all the time and are surprised
 3. That should NEVER happen!
 - a. Endeavor to be a church that can be flexible with the times
 - b. But unchanging and SOLID in doctrine and practice!
- B. Finally, Paul starts to get a longing for the mission field again
1. He was called of God after all!
 2. ROM. 11:29 – “For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”
 3. Christians who will not obey what God tells them are MISERABLE
- C. Paul tells Barnabas, we need to get back out there and see how they do
1. Let's go see what God has done among His people
 - a. Do they need help? Are they following the Word of God
 - b. Maybe more churches need to be organized out there
 - c. Mission works become churches that should start more churches
 2. Visit “our brethren” in every city (vs. 36)
 - a. There was once a man named “Saul” who wouldn't have said that
 - b. Certainly not about Gentiles!
 - c. What a WONDERFUL change in Paul's life has been wrought!
 3. This was the guy who would haul Christian's to jail and death
 4. Now he's concerned about how their doing in the faith!

IV. THE DIVISION

- A. But things don't always go well – sometimes personalities get into the picture
1. Between these GODLY men came a dispute over John Mark (vs. 37)
 - a. They had probably planned and discussed their route
 - b. They probably ordered a shipping container full of John/Romans
 - c. They purchased their plane tickets
 - d. But then Barnabas said, “Oh, I bought a ticket for Mark”
 - e. And Paul wouldn't have it (thought it “not good” – vs. 38)
 2. John Mark had been with them on the field – ACTS 13:5
 - a. He was there to help them but then he left – ACTS 13:13

- b. It happened to Paul more than once, but he learned patience
- c. And he learned forgiveness
- d. 2 TIM. 4:10 – “For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.”
- e. And then the very next verse is key!
- f. 2 TIM. 4:11 – “Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.”
- 3. Older folks, just because young people sometimes make mistakes
 - a. Don’t give up on them!
 - b. Young people, just because you made a mistake
 - c. Don’t give up on yourself, get back and try again!
- B. Barnabas, the encourager, was ready to give John Mark another chance
 - 1. And praise God Barnabas did!
 - 2. While we never hear about Barnabas again (vs. 39)
 - 3. We wouldn’t have 2 TIM. 4:11 without the encouragement of Barnabas!
- C. God’s Word still profited despite our human frailties
 - 1. ROM. 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.”
 - 2. Now there are not one, but TWO missionary teams sent out of Antioch!
 - 3. God still got the glory!

V. THE DEVOTION

- A. What was it all about?
 - 1. They loved the present world (Demas and Mark leaving the mission field)
 - 2. They refused to give up their religiosity (Judaizers)
 - 3. They dabbled in paganism (Gentiles)
- B. God wants your heart, not part of it but all of it
 - 1. If you are Saved, get rid of all the worldly things in your life!
 - 2. If it is an idol, it must go! If it is a false god, it must go!
 - 3. If it takes you away from church, it must go!
 - 4. If it keeps you from reading your Bible, it must go!
- C. If you aren’t Saved, then you don’t have a relationship with God
 - 1. But you can!
 - 2. Turn your back on yourself and your sin and this present world
 - 3. And turn to Him
 - 4. Be Saved Today!