

Building Your Faith: Exploring Scripture with the Pastors

August 29, 2021 - 9:45 and 11:15 A.M.

Acts 15:22-35

Dr. Clay Brown - Adult Discipleship Pastor

OUTLINE

1. Greet one another, begin with prayer, and read Acts 15:22-35.

2. Remind the class of the discussion from Acts 15:1-21.

3. Discuss the letter written to Gentile Christian communities in Acts 15:22-29.

- Task force delegated to go to Antioch of Syria: Judas, Silas, Paul, and Barnabas
- Given full authority to communicate as representatives of the Jerusalem community
- Letter addresses the confusion: we didn't authorize the erroneous teaching!
- Describes the compromise reached in the meeting
- The letter takes great pains to disavow any connection with the "must be Jewish to be a Christian" movement. Is this more than covering one's behind? If so, why?*
- What is significant about the people chosen to represent "headquarters" to the Gentile Christians? Why do you think they were selected?*
- What do you think about the efforts thus far to repair the relationships between Jew and Gentile? How might these efforts apply to other relationships in need of repair today?*

4. Discuss the reception of the letter in Acts 15:30-33a.

- An immediate trip to Antioch beckons
- A meeting of all the Christians there (not just the movers and shakers)
- Letter delivered and read, and then elaborated upon by Judas and Silas
- Paul and Barnabas there as well: lend credibility to the entire effort
- "They stayed a while" (v. 33a): the importance of relationship and community
- Instead of ordering representatives from Antioch to come to Jerusalem, Jerusalem sends representatives directly to Antioch. Do you think this was wise? If so, why?*
- In the absence of social media (!), the Jerusalem representatives address a large gathering of Gentile Christians for a long time. Why do you think Jerusalem chose to do it this way?*
- What can we learn from the Jerusalem response as a whole for our contentious issues?*

5. Discuss the response offered in Acts 15:33b-35.

- Antioch Christians respond with affirmation; Jerusalem delegation returns home
- But Paul and Barnabas stay to disciple the Christians more
- Verse 34 is missing in most modern translations: says that Silas stays too
- Why is Antioch's affirmation important to the growth of the Christian movement?*
- What is significant about Paul and Barnabas (and maybe Silas) staying behind?*

6. Close in prayer.

SCRIPTURE - Acts 15:22-35

English Standard Version

22 Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brothers, **23** with the following letter:

"The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the brothers[a] who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings. **24** Since we have heard that some persons have gone out from us and troubled you[b] with words, unsettling your minds, although we gave them no instructions, **25** it

has seemed good to us, having come to one accord, to choose men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, **26** men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. **27** We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. **28** For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: **29** that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.”

30 So when they were sent off, they went down to Antioch, and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. **31** And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement. **32** And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words. **33** And after they had spent some time, they were sent off in peace by the brothers to those who had sent them.[c] **35** But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

Footnotes

Acts 15:23 Or *brothers and sisters*; also verses 32, 33, 36

Acts 15:24 Some manuscripts *some persons from us have troubled you*

Acts 15:33 Some manuscripts insert verse 34: *But it seemed good to Silas to remain there*

New Living Translation

22 Then the apostles and elders together with the whole church in Jerusalem chose delegates, and they sent them to Antioch of Syria with Paul and Barnabas to report on this decision. The men chosen were two of the church leaders[a]—Judas (also called Barsabbas) and Silas. **23** This is the letter they took with them:

“This letter is from the apostles and elders, your brothers in Jerusalem. It is written to the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. Greetings! **24** “We understand that some men from here have troubled you and upset you with their teaching, but we did not send them! **25** So we decided, having come to complete agreement, to send you official representatives, along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, **26** who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. **27** We are sending Judas and Silas to confirm what we have decided concerning your question. **28** “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay no greater burden on you than these few requirements: **29** You must abstain from eating food offered to idols, from consuming blood or the meat of strangled animals, and from sexual immorality. If you do this, you will do well. Farewell.”

30 The messengers went at once to Antioch, where they called a general meeting of the believers and delivered the letter. **31** And there was great joy throughout the church that day as they read this encouraging message.

32 Then Judas and Silas, both being prophets, spoke at length to the believers, encouraging and strengthening their faith. **33** They stayed for a while, and then the believers sent them back to the church in Jerusalem with a blessing of peace.[b] **35** Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch. They and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord there.

Footnotes

15:22 Greek *were leaders among the brothers*.

15:33 Some manuscripts add verse 34, *But Silas decided to stay there*.