

The Decree is Brought to Antioch

Text: Acts 15:30-35

Introduction:

Having been sent to Antioch, by the Jerusalem church, Paul, Barnabas, Silas and Judas (Barsabas) now arrive there, with the letter, containing the Jerusalem Decree.

I. Back at Antioch

"So when they were sent off, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the letter" (vs. 30).

Again, unlike the group, which had formerly come to Antioch, troubling the Gentiles, with dangerous teachings concerning the Law of Moses, these four men, were sent by, and on behalf of, the church. I don't want to beat that drum again, but the significance of the matter, concerning authorized and unauthorized ministry, is worth noting, in this context.

And so, they arrive, and after gathering the people together, they give them the letter, which contains the findings of the Jerusalem Counsel, concerning the matter of whether or not the Gentiles must keep the Mosaic Ceremonial laws...etc.

"When they had read it, they rejoiced over its encouragement" (vs. 31).

Question #1: Why would the content of this letter have made the people rejoice? Was it just the relief of not having to undergo the surgical procedure of circumcision? If anything were added to the Gospel, as a means of securing or maintaining one's salvation, what would this do to the grace of God, and what would this do to the joy of the believer?

"Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words" (vs. 32).

Question #2: Beyond affirming the content of the letter, especially concerning the agreed upon decree, what role did Judas (Barsabas) and Silas play in Antioch? How would *their* specific

exhortation and encouragement, have added to the overall rejoicing of the brethren at Antioch? In what significant way were Judas and Silas like the Apostles, though they themselves were not Apostles?

"And after they had stayed there for a time, they were sent back with greetings from the brethren to the apostles. *However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there" (vs. 33-34).

Again, just note that Judas and Silas were "sent" by the brethren at Antioch, to carry "Greetings" to the Apostles at Jerusalem. Once again, we see the church's involvement in their being "sent." That said, Silas, decided to stay, for some reason, of which we are not told. But, from the standpoint of God, the Apostle Paul will soon need a new partner, to accompany him on the mission field. [*Vs. 34 is not in the NU or Majority Text manuscripts]

"Paul and Barnabas also remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the Word of the Lord, with many others also" (vs. 35).

Paul and Barnabas continued to remain at Antioch for a time, before any decision to go back onto the mission field was set. And, we are also told that many others preached the Word there as well. Antioch continued to be a growing and thriving church, with many gifted men, serving there. What might have happened, if at this "hub to the Gentiles," the gross error of the Judaizers had penetrated their ranks?

Amen!