

Exegetical Notes, Acts 15:36-41

**“Another Fight”**

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**Acts 15:36-41**

**Verse 15:36**

***Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.”***

- After some time, Paul suggested to Barnabas that they return to the cities where they had preached before to see how the new Christians there were doing.

**Verses 37-38**

***Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them,<sup>38</sup> but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work.***

- Barnabas agreed with the plan and suggested that they invite John Mark to go with them on the journey.
- Paul objected to taking John Mark along because, on their previous trip, John Mark had left them at Perga and returned home to Jerusalem. (See Acts 13:13) Though scholars speculate as to John Mark’s reason for returning home, the Scripture does not enlighten us. So, for whatever reason, John Mark left Paul and Barnabas and went home.
- To Paul, John Mark’s decision to go home is a “desertion.” It is personal for Paul. John Mark left he and Barnabas without the assistance they needed in doing their work for the Lord. It is theological for Paul. They had been called to this ministry together. John Mark had accepted his call. But he decided to abandon his call for reasons which were peculiar to him. Whatever the hardship John Mark faced, Paul regarded it as wrong to put those concerns above God’s calling.

### **Verse 39a**

***They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company.***

- Paul and Barnabas had previously been devoted to one another! When no one else in the Church was willing to trust Paul, Barnabas had taken the risk and brought Paul into the Church (See Acts 9:27.) Barnabas had brought Paul into the ministry. (See Acts 11:25-26.) Paul wanted to continue working with Barnabas in this new venture (See verse 36).
- But this issue threw them into sharp disagreement. They mutually decided that they could not continue to work together in ministry. They decided to separate.

### **Verses 39b-41**

***Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus,<sup>40</sup> but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord.<sup>41</sup> He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.***

- Barnabas was so devoted to John Mark that he formed a new missionary team with him. They went to Cyprus and from there, according to the traditions of the Church, took the word of God to Africa.
- Paul chose Silas (See Acts 15:22) to become his new companion. They returned to the churches established by Paul and Barnabas, as Paul had suggested, to strengthen the new believers in those places.

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