

Acts 15:22-16:5

EMC Wednesday Night Bible Study - 5-10-17

Context

IV. The Apostle to the Gentiles (12:25-21:17)

A. The first missionary journey (12:25-14:28)

B. The Council of Jerusalem (15:1-16:5)

C. Mission in Macedonia (16:6-17:15)

D. Paul in Athens (17:16-34)

E. Corinth and Ephesus (18:1-19:41)

F. More about Ephesus (20:1-21:17)

The Council's Letter (15:22-29)

V. 22 - unanimous agreement among the church in Jerusalem

- A wise policy promoting mutual _____ and _____.
- Personal communication

The Letter

- "A masterpiece of tact and delicacy"
- V. 23 - Begins in a distinctly _____ manner → conciliatory spirit
- 3 important points:
 - _____ from the circumcision party (v. 24)
 - From _____, but not on _____
 - The present delegation is _____ and _____ (vv. 25-26)
 - "Of one mind"
 - Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas (v. 22 - "leading men among the brethren")
 - V. 27 - No misunderstandings!
 - Detailed their _____ decision (vv. 28-29)
 - Made by whom?
 - V. 28 - "the Holy Spirit and to us" - same cooperation as when the church in Antioch selected and sent Paul and Barnabas on their first journey.
 - 2-fold message (cf. above)

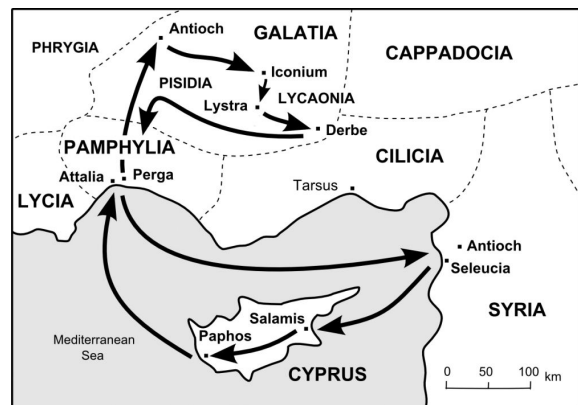
The Council's Judgement is Spread (15:30-16:5)

Antioch receives the letter (15:30-35)

- Similar to a previous meeting (14:27) - Gentile _____ + _____
- V. 32 - Judas and Silas encourage and strengthen the church
 - V. 33 - "sent away" (conflict w/ v. 40?)
- V. 35 - Paul and Barnabas stay

Syria and Cilicia receive the letter (15:36-41)

- V. 23 - Other churches (cf. 9:30)
- A sad story of separation
- Agreement (v. 36) then disagreement (v. 37)



- Vv. 39-40 - Result
 - Victory for God's _____ ≠ excuse for _____

Galatia receives the letter (16:1-5)

- V. 1 - "Derbe and Lystra" first?
- Timothy
 - Son of Eunice (II Tim. 1:5), a Jewish convert to Christianity (cf. I Cor. 4:17)
 - Son of a Greek father presumably dead (v. 3 - "was" = imperfect tense)
 - V. 3 - _____ by Paul. Reasons:
 - V. 2 - _____
 - To _____ Mark (Barnabas → Silas)
 - Strategic advantage: _____
 - V. 3 - circumcised him to make his ministry acceptable to the Jews
 - Interesting in light of: Council, journey, and letter to Galatians
 - Timing: issue was settled, now time for _____
 - Principle: NOT a matter of requirement for salvation, but for a minister to not pose a stumbling block to the brothers.
 - _____ for the ministry (cf. I Tim 4:14; II Tim. 1:6)
- V. 4 - went to all the villages delivering the decrees contained in the letter
- V. 5 - same effect everywhere: Antioch (15:32 - "encouraged and strengthened"), Syria/Cilicia (15:41 - "strengthening"), and Galatia (16:5 - "strengthened" and "increasing")

Application

Concerning the _____ of salvation

- Gospel of God's _____ grace - by faith alone!
- Gospel of God's _____ grace - faith is enough!
- It is not a supplement (Judaism), nor does it need supplementing (law)
- No "Jesus + _____," but Gal. 5:6 - "For when we place our faith in Christ Jesus, there is no benefit in being circumcised or being uncircumcised. What is important is faith expressing itself in love."

Concerning the _____ of the church

- Danger theological factions: James (?) vs. Paul vs. Peter
- There is only 1 gospel
- Securing the gospel from corruption vs. preserve the church from fragmentation
 - Paul unwilling to compromise on "the truth of the gospel" (Gal. 2:14)
 - Paul anxious to maintain the Jewish-Gentile solidarity
- **Solution:** Secure the _____, then adjust the practical _____.
- "Strong" vs. "weak" - limiting liberty for the sake of another (Rom. 14; I Cor. 8; I Cor. 9:19-20)
- Double victory:
 - Victory of _____ in the confirming of the gospel of grace
 - Victory of _____ in preserving the fellowship
- John Newton: Paul = "a reed in non-essentials, an iron pillar in essentials."