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📍 January 24, 2019 - Steve Morris

📍 Barnabas



Originally named Joseph, this native of Cyprus would eventually be called Barnabas, the Greek name meaning “son of encouragement.” Imagine yourself being so known for any trait that your actual name is forgotten, and everyone begins to refer to you by that trait. You would certainly want it to be a positive trait. Everything we know of Barnabas is found in the Acts and the Pauline letters. We know him to be generous, having sold a field and laid the money “at the apostle’s feet” for their use in caring for the needy. Paul tells us he supported himself in ministry by his own efforts, not by the churches he served.

After Paul’s conversion Barnabas, at great risk to himself, vouched for Paul to the fearful church leaders in Jerusalem. At this critical, decisive time, Barnabas was faithful to his name- encourager. Without his influence would Paul have gained the support of early church leaders? Would he have become a missionary? Would he have written a large portion of the New Testament?

Barnabas not only recommended Paul, he went on to serve alongside Paul in their first missionary journey where churches were planted across Asia Minor (Turkey). On this trip the young John Mark dropped out early and returned home for reasons unknown. Paul was not inclined to give second chances, refusing to take Mark along on a later missionary journey. True to his name, Barnabas would not give up on Mark. He split with Paul and took Mark on a separate mission to his native Cyprus and presumably other places, thereby expanding the outreach of the church.

Barnabas is noted for mediating conflict between Jews and Gentiles, an ever-present issue in the early church. Paul and Mark were eventually reconciled, though it is unknown what role Barnabas may have had in this. We know this because of a letter to Timothy written by Paul shortly before his death. Paul asked Timothy to come to Rome and bring Mark because he was very useful to him.

Though not one of the original apostles, not a prominent Biblical hero, nor an author of epistle or gospel, Barnabas was faithful to his calling. His nature of peace and reconciliation were made available to the Lord at a pivotal moment in the early church. As we make ourselves available, our intellects, efforts, resources, or influence can likewise be used by the almighty God to accomplish whatsoever He may choose.



*Journey On*

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