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A Biographical Study of Barnabas

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Barnabas

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

- I. Sacrificing (Acts 4:36-37)—“Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles’ feet (Acts 4:37).
- II. Sponsoring—“And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus” (Acts 9:26-27).
- III. Shepherding (Acts 11:21-24)—The church at Jerusalem received news concerning a great revival occurring in the city of Antioch.
 - A. Barnabas, the mission for God—“Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch” (Acts 11:22).
 - B. Barnabas, the message from God—“Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord” (Acts 11:23).
 - C. Barnabas, the man of God—“For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and faith: and much people was added unto the Lord” (Acts 11:24).
- IV. Selecting—“Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch” (Acts 11:25-26).
- V. Sowing (Acts 13—14)—Barnabas and Saul were called by the Holy Spirit to conduct the first official missionary journey to the Gentiles in the New Testament. “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus” (Acts 13:2, 4).
 - A. He met Sergius Paulus, governor of the Isle of Cyprus in the capital city of Paphos (Acts 13:7).
 - B. He encouraged Jewish and Gentile converts at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:43).
 - C. He rebuked some troublemaking Jews at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:46).
 - D. He was expelled from Antioch of Pisidia by the unbelieving Jews (Acts 13:50).
 - E. He was mistaken for the pagan god Jupiter at the city of Lystra (Acts 14:12).
 - F. He forbade the natives of Lystra to worship him as a god (Acts 14:14-15).
- VI. Summarizing (Acts 15)—Barnabas and Paul testified before the Jerusalem Council how God’s grace had been poured out upon the Gentiles, as witnessed during their first missionary journey.
 - A. The dissension—“And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other

of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question" (Acts 15:1-2).

B. The declaration — "Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them" (Acts 15:12).

C. The decision

1. That Paul and Barnabas report to the Gentiles — The Jerusalem church selected these men to relate the decision of the council. "It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well" (Acts 15:25-26, 28-29).

2. That Paul and Barnabas return to the Gentiles — "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision" (Gal. 2:9).

VII. Separating — Paul and Barnabas parted company.

A. The reason for their disagreement — "And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the LORD, and see how they do. And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work" (Acts 15:36-38).

B. The results of their disagreement — "And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God" (Acts 15:39-40).

VIII. Sinning — On one occasion Barnabas allowed himself to be briefly corrupted by the legalistic Judaizers (Gal. 2:13).

STATISTICS

First mention: Acts 4:36

Final mention: Colossians 4:10

Meaning of his name: Josès means "increaser"; Barnabas means "son of encouragement."

Frequency of his name: Referred to 30 times

Biblical books mentioning him: Four books (Acts, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians)

Place of birth: The Isle of Cyprus (Acts 4:36)