

BE A BARNABAS

By: Clay Barnes

Barnabas was a Levite from Cyprus. His heritage in the priestly tribe of Levi gave him preeminence among the Jews, but he readily embraced Christianity from the beginning. Obviously, he wanted to find God and serve him.

Barnabas gave Himself to the Lord. When those first Christians, who had come from every nation under heaven and perhaps stayed longer than they had planned, had need (Acts 2:5), the members who had property began selling it to supply others' needs. Barnabas is the only person who is specifically mentioned as having such a compassionate heart (Acts 4: 36-37).

Barnabas was given a new name by the apostles because of his spirituality. Until that time, he had been called Joses (Joseph), but he was given a new name. From that time on he was called Barnabas, which means “son of encouragement.” The church was in its infancy, but Barnabas was such an

encourager to others, he was given a new name.

Barnabas was responsible for the flourishing of the church in Antioch. When the church in Jerusalem learned of the establishment of the church in Antioch, they sent Barnabas, “The Encourager,” to help. God described him as “a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.” When he arrived “...a great many people were added to the Lord” (Acts 11:24)

Barnabas was responsible for helping Saul of Tarsus (we know him as Paul) find his place in the kingdom to serve the Lord. Those early Christians were afraid of Paul and were hesitant to accept him. “They were hearing only, 'He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy'” (Gal. 1:22-23). It was “The Encourager” who came to rescue Paul. E went from Antioch to Paul, who had returned to his home city of Tarsus, and brought him to work with the church in Antioch (Acts 11: 26).

Barnabas was responsible for Mark finding his place of service in the church. Mark was his nephew and traveled with Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey. Paul was disappointed in what

Mark did, but “The Encourager” stood up for this young Christian. Barnabas stood up against the great apostle. Had he not done this, we would be missing one of the books of the Bible, the gospel of Mark. Think about it. What name would your brethren give to you? Discourager? Complainer? Lazy? Undependable? God help us all to become like “The Encourager”!

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