

## What About Barnabas .... The Son of Consolation?

'Mid-Acts-ers' don't make much of Paul's companion, Barnabas. I can't remember even hearing them mention him. When we study his ministry, we will see why **Barnabas** is over-looked, or ignored, by the 'mid-Acts-ers'.

Getting the context for the introduction of **Barnabas** .... Peter and John had been preaching the resurrection from the dead through Jesus (Acts 4:2). They were set before the high priest and his relatives, with the rulers, elders, and scribes because Peter had healed a man .... and Peter preached salvation in none other name than Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Whom they crucified, Whom God raised from the dead (Acts 4:10-12):

**Acts 4:13** Now when they saw the **boldness** of Peter and John, and perceived that they were **unlearned** and **ignorant** men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

They did not want the message to spread further, so they threatened them:

**Acts 4:18-20** And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

Peter and John were further threatened (Acts 4:21), but then released:

**Acts 4:23** And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

They quoted Psalm 2, and prayed for boldness to speak God's word (Acts 4:24-29). It was in this setting that **Barnabas** was first mentioned:

**Acts 4:31-37** And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

(Acts 4:) 32-a And the multitude of them that believed were **of one heart and of one soul**:

Hold your place here, and while we reference where Jesus had prayed  
.... not just for His chosen disciples .... but for ALL His believers to be 'one':

**John 17:20-21** Neither pray I for these alone, but **for them also which shall believe on me through their word**;

21 **That they all may be one**; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, **that they also may be one in us**:

that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

Go back to Acts 4:32:

(Acts 4:) 32-b neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. **Jesus taught His followers not to be concerned with worldly issues, but to sell what they had and lay up treasure in heaven (Luke 12:22-34).**

To be preaching the resurrection of Jesus, His death was a given.

Notice they had 'GREAT GRACE' on all of them ALREADY!

They did not have to wait until PAUL .... for God's grace to be dispensed:

33 And **with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus**:  
**and great grace was upon them all.**

34 Neither was there any among them that lacked:

for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them,  
and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet:

and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

**Barnabas was among those believers who sold their property and turned the price over to the apostles for common disbursement among the saints:**

36 And **Joses**, who by the apostles was **surnamed Barnabas**,  
(which is, being interpreted, **The son of consolation**),

**a Levite**, and of the country of Cyprus,

37 Having land, sold it, and brought the money,  
and laid it at the apostles' feet.

God surnamed Jacob .... Israel:

**Isa 45:4** For **Jacob** my servant's sake, and **Israel** mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

We are familiar with Simon, who Jesus called Peter:

**Mark 3:16** And **Simon** he surnamed **Peter**;  
17 And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he **surnamed** them Boanerges, which is, **The sons of thunder**:

A surname is another name put on someone. It is generally a family name, or last name, as distinguished from a given name. It is also a name that is added to a person's given name. A surname can be like a 'tag' for personality, character trait, or physical characteristic. **Barnabas** was of the priestly tribe, Levi. He was called by his new name because of his solace, that which affords refreshment, nearness of help, comfort, exhortation.

The next time **Barnabas** appeared in scripture, was when he assured the disciples of the Lord not to fear Saul, who had been their PERSECUTOR, because now **Saul was one of them!** The Jews planned to kill Saul, and he had to run for his life. He fled to Jerusalem, where **Barnabas** spoke up for Saul and defended his courageous preaching, so they would accept him:

**Acts 9:26-27** And when **Saul** was come to Jerusalem, he assayed (tried) to join himself to the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that **he was a disciple**.  
27 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**.

Saul was a disciple like them -- NOT the 1st member in a **different** church!

'Mid-Acts-ers' say Saul (Paul) had '**a NEW message of GRACE**' ---- right from the start. But **the scriptures** do not teach that! So 'mid-Acts-ers' teach not to get doctrine out of the book of ACTS and say you'll break your spiritual neck there! That is heresy, according to 2 Tim 3:16 ("All scripture .... is profitable for doctrine ...."). What will REALLY break is their **FALSE** doctrine and paradigm!

What was 'the message' that Saul had been preaching .... in Jesus' name? Saul preached that Jesus was the very Messiah, the long-awaited Anointed One from God .... in fact, the very SON of God:

**Acts 9:20-22** And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. (FYI, Messiah in Hebrew = Christ in Greek)  
 21 But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?  
 22 But **Saul** increased the more in strength, and confounded (**confused**) the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, **proving that this is very Christ.**

**Barnabas** was a 'first responder'. The Jerusalem church sent him on the scene to help the great number of new Grecian Gentiles believers who had heard the preaching of the Lord Jesus, experienced the **grace** of God (also see John 1:17), turned unto the Lord, and joined the Antioch church:

**Acts 11:22-26** 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.  
 23 Who, when he came, and had seen **the grace of God**, (**Saul had not even been there yet, but God's grace already was!**) was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.  
 24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith:  
 and much people was added unto the Lord.

(Acts 11:) 25 Then departed **Barnabas** to Tarsus, for to seek **Saul**:  
 26 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**. (The title of 'Christian' found only here, Acts 26:28, and 1 Peter 4:16, .... is typically shunned by 'mid-Acts-ers'.)

'Mid-Acts-ers' teach that no one could get saved .... after Acts 9 .... except through what-they-call "Paul's gospel" .... because, they say, that God would not operate "2 different salvation programs" at the same time. They say that the 12 apostles were "not preaching SALVATION .... but only just MINISTERING to the 'little flock' that was already saved". However, we already read that "great grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:33) BEFORE Saul was even saved .... and Barnabas saw "the grace of God" on the believers in Antioch (Acts 11:22) BEFORE Saul ever even got there! No wonder 'mid-Acts-ers' want you to tip-toe through Acts. It destroys their balancing act!

When prophets from Jerusalem came to Antioch, one of them said there would be great famine throughout all the world, so **Barnabas** was called on again for assistance. Notice **Barnabas** was accompanied by Saul:

**Acts 11:29-30** Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:  
 30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of **Barnabas and Saul**.

Later they came back to the church at Antioch and brought John Mark with them. He had a **surname**, too. **Barnabas and Saul were BOTH identified as prophets and teachers**. They were not yet called 'apostles':

**Acts 12:25** And **Barnabas and Saul** returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose **surname** was Mark.

**Acts 13:1-3** Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 'Mid-Acts-ers' fail to give ANY recognition at all to

**Barnabas .... even though he was INCLUDED by the Holy Ghost in the commission with Saul. Since Barnabas was saved BEFORE Paul ....**

'mid-Acts-ers' assigned him in a different program. So God called him to work in a salvation program in which he had no part? That's ridiculous:

2 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.**

3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

**Barnabas and Saul** travelled and preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews (Acts 13:5). Then they were summoned by a Gentile:

**Acts 13:6-12** And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus:

7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

**Here is where the scripture changed Saul's name to Paul:**

9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

Whereas the first 4 times, we read **Barnabas'** name before Saul .... after his name change, the Holy Spirit listed **Paul** in the front 3 times. Also notice that **Paul and Barnabas** were still going in Jewish synagogues .... and that lots of Jews and Gentile proselytes tagged along after them. 'Mid-Acts-ers' classify those people as being in 'Israel's previous program' .... so how could **Paul and Barnabas** influence and convince them to **stay** in the **grace** of God .... if they were not even in the 'program of grace'?

**Acts 13:42-52** And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.

43 Now when the congregation was broken up, **many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.**

44 And the next **sabbath day** came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. **Why the sabbath if God started something new with Paul?**

45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by **Paul**, contradicting and blaspheming. **Barnabas was called and separated with Paul (when he was still Saul) and they were linked together in ministry:**

46 Then **Paul and Barnabas** waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, **we** turn to the Gentiles. **Paul referenced and paraphrased OLD testament scriptures and applied them to the ministry Barnabas and he were fulfilling:**

47 For so hath the Lord commanded **us**, saying, I have set **thee** to be a light of the Gentiles, that **thou** shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. **(also see Isa 49:6)**

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against **Paul and Barnabas**, and expelled them out of their coasts.

51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.

52 And **the disciples** were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

In the next passage, **Barnabas** was named first, but **the scripture** identified **Paul** as the one who did most of the talking. Paul healed a man, and the people said, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men"

**Acts 14:12** And they called **Barnabas**, Jupiter; and **Paul**, Mercurius, **because he was the chief speaker.**

The next verse is where Barnabas and Paul are identified as apostles:

**Acts 14:14** Which when **the apostles, Barnabas and Paul**, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

After the speech, the Jews tried to kill Paul .... and thought they had succeeded .... but Paul later revived, and left town with Barnabas:

**Acts 14:19-20** And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having **stoned Paul**, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and **the next day he departed with Barnabas** to Derbe.

When certain men came down from Judaea teaching the brethren they could not be saved unless they were circumcised, **Paul and Barnabas** got into a big argument with them. So a group of men went to Jerusalem to consider and establish the matter with the whole church:

**Acts 15:2** 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.

After much disputing, Peter gave his experience with Gentiles in Cornelius' house. Next **Barnabas and Paul** told what God wrought among Gentiles. Then James made the decision not to trouble the Gentiles to circumcise.

So they chose men to go with **Paul and Barnabas** to Antioch, and they wrote letters explaining how to handle the issues of circumcision and keeping the law .... by giving no such commandment.

After a while, a rift came between **Paul and Barnabas** over John Mark. He left them during a previous trip, and Paul evidently thought of him as a quitter. So **he and Barnabas** split up and went separate ways to check on the churches:

**Acts 15:35-41** **Paul** also and **Barnabas** continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

36 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.

37 And **Barnabas** determined to take with them John, whose **surname** was Mark.

38 But **Paul** thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

39 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;

40 And **Paul** chose Silas, and departed,  
 being recommended by the brethren unto **the grace of God.**

41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

**Paul** told the churches of Galatia about going up to Jerusalem, and how the apostles recognized the work **he and Barnabas** did among the Gentiles.

**They shook hands and AGREED on whom they would focus their ministries:**

**Gal 2:9** 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.

Paul also told the Galatians how he had defended the Gentiles ....

when Peter caved in under pressure from the Jews. Peter's actions effected others, and even influenced Barnabas to move apart from them:

**Gal 2:11** But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, **he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.**

13 **And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.**

Paul openly corrected Peter before them all and set the record straight to repair the situation. Though Peter and Barnabas did wonderful work for God, they still had pitfalls .... but they did not stay down:

**Psa 37:23-24** The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.

24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.

The Bible does not hide the sins or frailties of men of God ....  
but He gives mercy and grace through them:

**Psa 103:13-14** Like as a father pitieth his children,  
so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

May we remember that, too.

Thank you, Lord, for your salvation.

*This is David Dowell, saying, "Think about it!"*