

The Bible and Barnabas

1. Barnabas (bar'na-bas; Gk. from Aram. barne-bu'a, "son of prophecy," especially as it is manifested in exhortation and comfort) was the name given by the apostles to a man named Joseph, probably on account of his eminence as a Christian teacher.
 - *Acts 4:36 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.*
2. A native of the island of Cyprus from the tribe of Levi, Barnabas was a landowner who disposed of his land for the sake of the gospel.
 - *Acts 4:36-37 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.*
3. Barnabas is intimately associated with Paul. When Paul made his first appearance in Jerusalem as a new convert to Christ, the church was suspicious. However, Barnabas found Saul and brought him to the apostles and gave a good report as to Saul's new sincerity for the Saviour.
 - *Acts 9:27 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.*
4. Because he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit, and faith, Barnabas was sent to bring a report about a revival in Antioch. The work was found to be genuine as souls were coming to the Saviour.
 - *Acts 11:24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.*
5. Along with Saul, Barnabas labored in Antioch for a whole year (11:19-26).
6. When a famine was predicted by Agabus, the Christians at Antioch made a contribution for their poor brethren at Jerusalem and sent it by the hands of Barnabas and Saul (11:27-30). The year was AD 44.
7. However, after delivering the money, Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch being accompanied by a young man named John Mark, a nephew of the former (12:25).
8. By divine direction (Acts 13:2) Barnabas and Saul were singled out and separated to the office of missionaries.
 - *Acts 13:2 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.*

9. Their First Missionary Journey would take them to Cyprus and some of the principal cities in Asia Minor (13:14).
10. At Lystra, because of a miracle performed by Paul, they were taken for gods, the people calling Barnabas Zeus (14:8-12).
 - *Acts 14:8-12 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: [9] The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, [10] Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. [11] And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. [12] And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.*
11. Returning to Antioch, they found the peace of the church disturbed by a certain sect from Judea, who insisted upon the Gentile converts being circumcised.
12. Paul and Barnabas, with others, were sent to Jerusalem to consult with the apostles and elders. They returned to communicate the result of the conference, accompanied by Judas and Silas (15:1-32).
13. As preparations were being made for a Second Missionary journey, a dispute arose between Paul and Barnabas on account of John Mark.
14. Barnabas determined to take Mark with them; Paul was not sure that they should. Apparently John Mark had deserted them during the first journey and that made Paul angry.
15. The contention became so sharp that they separated, Barnabas with Mark going to Cyprus, while Paul and Silas went through Syria and Cilicia (Acts 15:36-41).
16. At this point Barnabas disappears from the record of the Acts. Several times he is mentioned in the writings of Paul, but nothing special is noted save that Barnabas was at one time led away by Judaizing zealots.
 - *Galatians 2:13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.*
17. The last reference to Barnabas in the Bible is found in Colossians 4:10 where it is revealed that John Mark was his nephew.
18. Unfortunately, in religious zeal the name of Barnabas has become associated with some fraudulent religious writings of the Church. One such document is called *The Gospel of Barnabas*. Another is called *The Epistle of Barnabas*. It is to *The Gospel of Barnabas* that modern Arabs appeal to validate some of their religious beliefs.