

Even Barnabas

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Everyone has their shortcomings, but Barnabas was a precious jewel among the brethren, exceptional when it came to doing what was right and showing others the God's Will under the New Covenant.

His name was Joseph, Acts 4:36, but the apostles called him Barnabas which translated means Son of Exhortation. He must have been outstanding and successful at confronting men with the Gospel and its demands for a new way of thinking and living under the direction of Jesus Christ. This man also led the way in selling what land he had and bringing the money to the apostles to provide for the poor brethren of the Jerusalem church. His example was so remarkable that obviously the brethren were talking about it and some were motivated to follow his example.

Barnabas shines again when Saul of Tarsus, the leader of the persecutors of the church, was converted to Christ and had become a valiant defender of the Faith. When Saul arrived in Jerusalem, the disciples were afraid to associate with him thinking that it was a trick, but Barnabas took hold of him and brought him to the apostles telling his marvellous story. Barnabas would not succumb to his fears, suspicions, and prejudices following the examples of weak brethren. He knew that Jesus had revealed Himself to Saul in Damascus and that Saul had proclaimed Jesus in the synagogs confounding the Jews and proving that He was the Christ, so much so that now the Jews were trying to kill him. Barnabas loved the Lord so much that he would not let such a great soldier be lost to the cause for which he lived.

When the church in Antioch of Syria began to have great success turning Gentiles to the Lord, it was Barnabas that the apostles sent to help out, a "good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord." Then Barnabas left for Tarsus to look for Saul. With Saul's help the numbers really exploded in Antioch.

It was Barnabas that labored with Saul on his first evangelistic journey where they reached out to God-fearing Gentiles in the cities of Cyprus and in Phrygia and Galatia.

What a shock when Barnabas withdrew and would not eat with Gentiles! (Gal. 2:11-14) Peter was intimidated by the Jerusalem Jews, then the rest fell in line and even Barnabas! Behold the power of fear! We forget who is Lord and whom we should fear. tp