

# Saint Barnabas

All we know of Barnabas is to be found in the New Testament. A Jew, born in Cyprus and named Joseph, he sold his property, gave the proceeds to the Apostles, who gave him the name Barnabas, and lived in common with the earliest converts to Christianity in Jerusalem.



He persuaded the community there to accept Paul as a disciple, was sent to Antioch, Syria, to look into the community there, and brought Paul there from Tarsus.

With Paul he brought Antioch's donation to the Jerusalem community during a famine, and returned to Antioch with John Mark, his cousin. The three went on a missionary journey to Cyprus, Perga (when John Mark went to Jerusalem), and Antioch in Pisidia, where they were so violently opposed by the Jews that they decided to preach to the pagans. Then they went on to Iconium and Lystra in Lycaonia, where they were first acclaimed gods and then stoned out of the city, and then returned to Antioch in Syria.

When a dispute arose regarding the observance of the Jewish rites, Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem, where, at a council, it was decided that pagans did not have to be circumcised to be baptized. On their return to Antioch, Barnabas wanted to take John Mark on another visitation to the cities where they had preached, but Paul objected because of John Mark's desertion of them in Perga.

Paul and Barnabas parted, and Barnabas returned to Cyprus with Mark; nothing further is heard of him, though it is believed his rift with Paul was ultimately healed.

To St. Paul and certain of the Twelve, Barnabas appears to have been the most esteemed man of the first Christian

generation. St. Luke, breaking his habit of reserve, speaks of him with affection, "for he was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of Faith". His title to glory comes not only from his kindness of heart, his personal sanctity, and his missionary labours, but also from his readiness to lay aside his Jewish prejudices, in this anticipating certain of the Twelve; from his large-hearted welcome of the Gentiles, and from his early perception of Paul's worth, to which the Christian Church is indebted, in large part at least, for its great Apostle.

His tenderness towards John Mark seems to have had its reward in the valuable services later rendered by him to the Church.

Tradition has Barnabas preaching in Alexandria and Rome, the founder of the Cypriote Church, he was stoned to death at Salamis about the year 61, at the time of his death he was carrying a copy of the Gospel of Saint Matthew he'd copied by hand.

The feast of St. Barnabas is celebrated on 11 June.

Shield of Saint Barnabas.

Tradition says he was especially successful as a preacher, hence the Gospel in the symbol.



*Meaning of the name*

son of encouragement; son of consolation

*Patron*

against hailstorms, Antioch, Cyprus,  
invoked as peacemaker

*Symbolic Representation*

ax; lance; middle-aged bearded apostle, often bearing a book or olive branch; standing on or near a pile of stones while holding a book.