**BARNABAS** (PERSON) [Gk **Barnaba"]. An apostle, an associate of Paul, prominent in the church of Antioch-on-the-Orontes in Syria, and an early leader in the mission to gentiles. According to Acts, his name was Joseph, but he was called Barnabas by the apostles. Luke, the author of Acts, translates Barnabas to mean “son of encouragement, ” (from Aram **) but it may simply mean “son of (the god) Nebo, ” or something similar. Acts reports that Barnabas was a Levite whose family came from Cyprus; hence he was a Diaspora Jew. He is first mentioned as a man who sold some land and donated the proceeds to the apostles in Jerusalem (4:36–37). Thus in vivid contrast to Ananias and Sapphira, who withheld a portion of their property (5:1–11), Barnabas is shown to typify the spirit of communal sharing which Luke emphasizes in the earliest Jerusalem community.

**A. Association with Paul**

In Acts, Barnabas receives extensive mention in connection with Saul (later to be known as Paul) and with the emergence of a mission to gentiles. When the disciples in Jerusalem were afraid to meet with Saul after his call, Barnabas brought him to them and gave him a favorable introduction (9:27). Later, when the Jerusalem church received reports that believers from Cyprus and Cyrene were making converts of Greeks in Antioch (11:20–22), Barnabas was sent to investigate. He encouraged them in this missionary activity, then brought Saul with him from Tarsus to Antioch, where they taught together (11:25–26). As leaders in the Antioch community, Barnabas and Saul were sent to deliver a contribution for famine relief to the community in Jerusalem (11:27–30). Collecting contributions of gentile communities for “the poor” in Jerusalem was evidently an arrangement agreed upon between the missionaries to gentiles—Paul and Barnabas, and the leaders of the Jerusalem community (Gal 2:9–10). Such contributions continued to be of great concern in Paul’s later work (Rom 15:25–28; 1 Cor 16:1–4; 2 Cor 8–9).

Next, Acts recounts that Barnabas and Saul were commissioned by the Antioch community for a missionary journey to Cyprus, bringing as an assistant John Mark, who had joined them in Jerusalem (12:25–13:3). That Barnabas was Paul’s senior partner in the relationship is evident from the fact that Barnabas’ name is mentioned before Paul’s name in all Acts accounts thus far. But while recounting their stay in Paphos, Luke shifts to the name Paul for Saul just as he performs a miracle to effect the conversion of the Roman proconsul Sergius Paulus (13:8-12). At this point Luke begins to give Paul greater prominence than Barnabas in the mission narrative, calling their party “Paul and his company” (13:13) and mentioning Paul’s name several times before that of Barnabas (13:43, 46, 50). Upon leaving Cyprus, Paul and Barnabas traveled without John Mark through the southern regions of central Asia Minor, visiting the cities of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Perga, and Attalia. Acts reports that they conducted their mission through preaching in synagogues and performance of miracles. In Lystra Paul’s miraculous healing of a crippled man led the crowd to call Barnabas “Zeus” and Paul “Hermes” (14:8–18). Despite threats from Jews and gentiles (14:5) and physical violence against Paul at the hands of some Jews (14:19), Acts states that the mission of Paul and Barnabas met with success in several cities among Jews, recent converts to Judaism (13:43), gentiles (13:48), and Greeks (14:1). But the summary of their activity reported to the church at Antioch makes it clear that the success of Barnabas’ and Paul’s pioneering work among gentiles is what Luke wishes most to stress (14:27).

However in Antioch the question of how a gentile mission ought to be conducted came to be hotly debated. According to Acts “some” from Judea were teaching there that circumcision according to the custom of Moses was a prerequisite for salvation. Paul and Barnabas argued against requiring circumcision for gentiles and were appointed to a delegation which brought the question before apostles and elders in Jerusalem (15:1–3). During the debate at this Jerusalem Council, Barnabas and Paul reported on their success among gentiles (15:12), and the council eventually adopted a position which must have been largely favorable to them, since it did not require gentile circumcision. Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch together with delegates appointed from Jerusalem who carried a letter detailing the decision of the Council (15:22–32).

**B. Separation from Paul**

After resolution of the question of required gentile circumcision, Paul and Barnabas made plans in Antioch to revisit the cities of their previous mission together, but there arose between them what Luke terms a “sharp disagreement.” According to Acts, Barnabas wished to bring John Mark along, but Paul did not (15:37). Consequently Paul left without Barnabas, bringing Silas with him through Syria and Cilicia to the cities of Asia Minor; Barnabas took Mark with him to Cyprus (15:38–40). That there was a close association between Barnabas and Mark is corroborated in Col 4:10, where Mark is called Barnabas’ “cousin.”

But the parting of ways between Barnabas and Paul may well have been occasioned by more than the personal disagreement mentioned in Acts. Although Acts hints at no disagreement between Barnabas and Paul on the conduct of a mission to gentiles, Paul’s letter to Galatia indicates that the two did not share identical views on the observance of Jewish dietary laws. Paul writes that at Antioch he was distressed when Peter refrained from eating with gentiles out of deference to representatives from James. Paul objected to Peter’s abrupt withdrawal from his practice of table fellowship and writes that “even Barnabas” sided against Paul (Gal 2:11–13). On this occasion Barnabas, like Peter, took a moderate position between those associated with James, who advocated a strict separation of Jews from gentiles, and Paul, who strongly opposed such separation. Because Paul does not claim to have persuaded Barnabas and the others, it may be inferred that he lost this debate in Antioch and consequently left. Galatians suggests, then, that the split between Barnabas and Paul arose over different views of proper social practice in Christian communities, perhaps due to a theological disagreement about the continuing validity of Jewish laws. It is uncertain how bitter the rift remained because Paul’s reference to Barnabas in 1 Cor 9:6 seems to reflect a sympathetic attitude toward his former mentor. Here Barnabas is mentioned as an apostle who, like Paul, practiced a trade and earned his own living while a missionary. It is possible that they had established this practice as a joint policy during their early mission work together.

**C. Mention of Barnabas in Extra-Canonical Sources**

Concerning Barnabas’ career after separating from Paul and journeying to Cyprus, we have no early information. Later Christian writers make legendary claims about Barnabas: e.g., that he preached in Rome during Jesus’ lifetime and introduced Clement of Rome to Christianity (*Ps.-Clem. Recogn.* 1.7–13), and that he was one of the seventy (Luke 10:1) sent out by Jesus (Clement of Alexandria *Str.* 2.20). The 5th- or 6th-century *Acts of Barnabas* purports to describe his later mission and martyrdom in Cyprus. Barnabas is also named as the author of some early Christian texts. Clement of Alexandria credits him as the author of the *Epistle of Barnabas,* a treatise which was included in some early biblical manuscripts, e.g., Sinaiticus. Some Western traditions regard Barnabas as the author of Hebrews, and he is also listed (in the *Decretum Gelasianum*) as the author of a gospel.

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 Jon B. Daniels

**BARNABAS, EPISTLE OF.** An early Christian writing, the significance of which lies not so much in its later influence as in what it preserves of earlier traditions, both Jewish and Christian. The anonymous Christian teacher who wrote *Barnabas* passed on traditional instruction regarding “spiritual” understandings of the Jewish scriptures and God’s requirements. Many issues concerning *Barnabas* are problematic and must remain unresolved.

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A. Form, Structure, Style

B. Text

C. The Author and His Circle

D. Use of Tradition

E. Thought

1. Gnosis

2. Ethics and Eschatology

3. Israel

4. Christology

5. Interpretation of Scripture

F. Recipients

G. Provenance

H. Date, Occasion, and Significance

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**A. Form, Structure, Style**

Although *Barnabas* has several characteristics of an epistle, it is probably best understood as a tractate in epistolary dress. Its contents may be outlined as follows:

I. Introduction (framework), chap. 1

II. First major section:correct understanding of scripture, 2:1–16:10

A. What the Lord requires:not sacrifice and fasting, 2–3

B. Warnings in a lawless age facing judgment, 4

C. Why the Lord endured suffering in the flesh, 5–6

D. The Lord’s suffering foreshadowed in scapegoat and red heifer, 7–8

E. Circumcised understanding, 9–10

F. Baptism and cross foreshadowed, 11–12

G. Correct understanding of the Covenant and its heirs, 13–14

H. Correct understanding of the Sabbath, 15

I. Correct understanding of the Temple, 16

III. Transition (framework), 17:1–18:1a

IV. Second major section:The “Two Ways” tradition, 18:1b–20:2

A. Introduction, 18:1b–2

B. The Way of Light, 19

C. The Way of Darkness, 20

V. Conclusion (framework), 21

*Barnabas* 17:1–18:1a explicitly divides the tractate into two major sections of teaching. The two sections are set into an epistolary framework (Wengst 1971:5–14; cf. Scorza Barcellona 1975:14–21).

The tractate’s stylistic norms resemble those of Jewish literature. Its rough transitions and awkward arrangement have the benefit of making it easier to isolate its sources.

**B. Text**

The Gk text of *Barnabas* is relatively well preserved. The chief witnesses to the text are Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Hierosolymitanus, a family of late Gk manuscripts, and an OL translation in Codex Corbeiensis. There are also fragments of a Gk papyrus and of a Syr translation, and several quotations by Clement of Alexandria and later church writers. Although there may have been a “first edition” which lacked the Two Ways tradition, the “final form” presumably consisted of chapters 1–21. The critical edition by Prigent and Kraft (1971) provides a carefully researched eclectic text.

**C. The Author and His Circle**

*Barnabas* is anonymous. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Jerome, Serapion of Thmuys, Codex Sinaiticus, and later manuscripts attribute the work to “Barnabas, ” but few contemporary scholars accept this attribution. Most scholars consider it unlikely that the Barnabas described by Paul as participating in a literal observance of Jewish cult (Gal 2:13) could write the anti-cultic polemics of *Barnabas.*

It appears that the work as a whole is produced by one person, a male, and that he primarily uses traditional materials to which he contributes little more than a framework within which he arranges them and makes simple transitions between them. He is a teacher who wants his readers to see him not as a teacher but as a friend and peer (1:4; 1:8; 4:6, 9; 9:9). He describes himself with conventional modesty (4:9; 6:5), but he participates as one “who is wise and understanding, and who loves his Lord, ” in a community which God has allowed to understand secrets (6:10). In the face of the impending final scandals (4:3, 9), he is concerned to pass on some of the traditional teachings of his circle (1:5; 4:9).

Because many of his traditions retain both the style and the substance of Judaism, a significant number of scholars see him as a Jewish Christian (Barnard 1978:54–58; Manns 1981:125–146). In view of *Barnabas* 16:7, it probably makes more sense to see him as a Gentile who had access to Jewish traditions in Gk (Kraft 1965:39; Prigent and Kraft 1971:28; Wengst 1984:119).

It is often quite difficult to distinguish the teacher from his sources, many of which are much older. He does not rise above his tradition as a clearly defined individual creator; he is primarily a spokesman for a living tradition, even if he has shaped it here and there. In the case of “evolved literature” such as this, it may be preferable to focus on the tradition rather than on the individual through whom the tradition speaks. The circle that preserved this tradition was a “school” in the sense that it had teachers who developed and transmitted teaching materials concerned with exegesis and moral instruction (Kraft 1965:19–22; Wengst 1971).

**D. Use of Tradition**

The teacher indicates in 1:5 that he is passing on traditional materials (see 4:9; 19:1; 21:1). Kraft (1961), Prigent (1961), and Wengst (1971) have examined the sources of these materials in detail.

The traditions in *Barnabas* 2–16 are concerned with understanding the (Jewish) scriptures. Analysis of the quotations show that the tradition represented by *Barnabas* did not use the Heb text (Kraft 1961:57; Wengst 1971:69). Apparently the teacher had access to OG translations in a variety of oral and written forms:complete OG scrolls of a few books of scripture (Isaiah; perhaps Psalms, Genesis, and Deuteronomy), individual sayings, independent collections of extracts, free renderings of narratives, and quotations already associated with midrashic commentary (Kraft 1961:69; Wengst 1984:129).

The Two Ways section (chapters 18–20) is the largest block of tradition in *Barnabas.* It presents ethical teachings under the rubrics of the way of light and the way of darkness. *Barnabas* 21:1 shows that the teacher considered the Two Ways teaching an authoritative written form of God’s requirements. This tradition is found in similar forms in other church writings, notably in *Didache* 1–5. Most contemporary scholars agree that the Two Ways sections in *Barnabas* and *Didache* derive directly or indirectly from a common source. Two Ways concepts in the *Manual of Discipline* show that some form of the tradition existed in a Semitic-speaking Jewish environment. After being translated into Gk and passing through various recensions, it is used independently by *Barnabas* and *Didache.* The teacher incorporates the Two Ways tradition into his writing with relatively few changes (Prigent 1961:20; Wengst 1971:66–67).

The themes of the two ways of darkness and light also pervade the whole tractate. Parallels between *Barnabas* 4:9–10 and *Didache* 16:2 suggest that certain forms of the Two Ways tradition may have had an apocalyptic appendix (Kraft 1965:12–16).

**E. Thought**

The teacher and his circle are not systematic thinkers, and their traditions are occasionally in tension. Whether or not *Barnabas* has a central theological perspective, the following concepts characterize the tract (Kraft 1965:22–39; Wengst 1971:71–99).

**1. Gnosis.** One explicit purpose of *Barnabas* is to supplement its readers’ faith with “perfect knowledge” (*Barnabas* 1:5). This knowledge ** is a central concept for *Barnabas.* The circle seems to use the term in an exegetical sense and a related ethical sense. Exegetical gnosis is the insight God gave to Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets, and now gives to believers. This gift enables its recipients to understand the secrets of scripture and of past, present, and future events. Ethical gnosis enables its recipients to understand the conduct required by God (5:4; 21:5).

**2. Ethics and Eschatology.** Ethical concerns pervade *Barnabas,* as do apocalyptic eschatological imagery, expectation, and motivation. Salvation is primarily a future reward for obeying God’s requirements in this lawless age. The day of judgment is near (21:3). At that time, the obedient will be made holy and will receive the promised inheritance:the end of lawlessness and the renewal of the universe (6:13; 15:5–9). Believers should not live as if they were already justified (4:10; 15:7). Instead, they must make use of the evil days before the judgment to perform the will of God, because they will be judged according to their conduct and Satan can use his power to drive them from the Lord’s kingdom (2:1, 10; 4:9–14; 19:10; 21:6, 8).

**3. Israel.** According to *Barnabas,* God promised the patriarchs that he would give a Covenant to “the people” but Israel proved unworthy to receive it (4:6–8; 14:1–4). Instead, Jesus gave it to a “new people” (5:7), made worthy to receive it by his suffering and death (14:4–6). In contrast, an evil angel (9:4) misled Israel into interpreting God’s requirements in a literal, external fashion rather than in the intended spiritual manner. *Barnabas* criticizes major aspects of Jewish ritual observance (sacrifice, fasting, circumcision, food laws, the sabbath rest, and the temple) as resulting from this misunderstanding of scripture. Christians, the true heirs of the Covenant, understand the scriptures in their intended spiritual sense.

There is a tension in the circle’s relation to Judaism. On the one hand, it defines itself in contrast to Israel, who never received the Covenant and who err in their understanding of what God wants. On the other hand, the circle has taken its ethical teachings, its citations of scripture, its hermeneutics, and even its criticisms of Jewish ritual observance *from Jewish sources.*

**4. Christology.** *Barnabas* refers to Jesus as Son of God, the Beloved One, the Beloved Heir, and most frequently, the Lord. Preexistent, he participated in creation (5:5, 10; 6:12). The circle denies that he is a son of David or a son of man (12:10–11), but he suffered in the flesh to purify a once-sinful people (“us” ) for the Covenant and to fill up the measure of “their” sins (5:1–14; 6:7; 7:2; 14:4–5). He will soon come to end this evil age, judge the living and the dead, and recreate the universe (5:7; 7:2; 15:5; 21:3).

*Barnabas* is concerned to interpret the suffering and death of Jesus by means of scripture. Apart from his suffering in the flesh, the circle shows little interest in the earthly Jesus’ words and works as found in written gospel traditions. It looks to scripture rather than to Jesus’ sayings for authority in teaching.

**5. Interpretation of Scripture.** The interpretive method is closely related to what is known of Christian and Jewish schools of Alexandria. The “spiritual” (rationalistic, allegorical) understanding of ritual law appears more radical than that of Philo when it excludes a literal understanding. For example, *Barnabas* 9–10, except for the gematria in 9:8–9, resembles the position of those Philo (*Migr.* 89.92–93) opposed for neglecting the literal meaning of circumcision.

**F. Recipients**

*Barnabas* is addressed to both men and women (1:1; see 10:8). The recipients are Christians, probably uncircumcised but not necessarily from the teacher’s own sect.

*Barnabas* gives clues about their community—or at least about his own circle’s ideals for a community of believers. The teacher admonishes his readers not to live as hermits but to assemble together (4:10) and to share their possessions (19:8). He mentions no church functionaries other than teachers, “those highly placed” (21:2), and those “who proclaim the Lord’s word” (19:9). The community celebrates Sunday, “the eighth day” (15:8–9). They practice baptism (by immersion) as a means of receiving remission of sins and new life (11:1–11). They experience inspired speech (16:9–10).

**G. Provenance**

*Barnabas* does not give enough indications to permit confident identification of either the teacher’s location or the location to which he writes. His thought, hermeneutical methods, and style have many parallels throughout the known Jewish and Christian worlds. Most scholars have located the work’s origin in the area of Alexandria, on the grounds that it has many affinities with Alexandrian Jewish and Christian thought and because its first witnesses are Alexandrian. Recently, Prigent (Prigent and Kraft 1971:20–24), Wengst (1971:114–18), and Scorza Barcellona (1975:62–65) have suggested other origins based on affinities in Palestine, Syria, and Asia Minor. The place of origin must remain an open question, although the Gk -speaking E Mediterranean appears most probable.

**H. Date, Occasion, and Significance**

Since *Barnabas* 16:3 refers to the destruction of the temple, *Barnabas* must be written after 70 c.e. It must be written before its first indisputable use in Clement of Alexandria, ca. 190. Since 16:4 expects the temple to be rebuilt, it was most likely written before Hadrian built a Roman temple on the site ca. 135. Attempts to use 4:4–5 and 16:1–5 to specify the time of origin more exactly have not won wide agreement. It is important to remember that traditions of varying ages have been incorporated into this work.

*Barnabas* does not provide sufficient clues to identify an occasion for its writing. Neither the view that it is a polemic in response to Jewish rivals (Lowy 1960:32) nor the view that it is propaganda to persuade Christian opponents (Wengst 1971:100–105) accounts for its ethical orientation.

The work appears to have had little impact in the West, although it was translated into Latin in N Africa (or possibly Rome), probably during the 3d century. Clement of Alexandria quotes it as the epistle of the apostle Barnabas, and Origen refers to it as the catholic epistle of Barnabas. Its inclusion in Codex Sinaiticus suggests that it was sometimes considered canonical in 4th century Egypt. Other church writers who mention it (e.g., Eusebius, Jerome, Mkhitar) categorize it with disputed writings or apocrypha.

Although *Barnabas* 4:14 appears to quote Matt 22:14, it must remain an open question whether the *Barnabas* circle knew written gospels. Based on Koester’s analysis (1957:125–27, 157), it appears more likely that *Barnabas* stood in the living oral tradition used by the written gospels. For example, the reference to gall and vinegar in *Barnabas* 7:3, 5 seems to preserve an early stage of tradition that influenced the formation of the passion narratives in the *Gospel of Peter* and the synoptic gospels.

*Barnabas* is also significant for preserving early stages of Jewish tradition. It preserves halakhic traditions about atonement and red heifer rituals from a century before the Mishnah was compiled. It contains midrashic material and the Two Ways tradition in forms not greatly removed from their Jewish antecedents. It also quotes fragments of Jewish religious literature otherwise unknown (Kraft 1965:182–84).

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**BARODIS** (PERSON) [Gk **Barwdi"]. A servant of Solomon whose descendants returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel (1 Esdr 5:34). Although 1 Esdras is often assumed to have been compiled from Ezra and Nehemiah, this family does not appear among their lists of returning exiles (cf Ezra 2:57; Neh 7:59). Omissions such as this also raise questions about 1 Esdras being used as a source by Ezra or Nehemiah. Furthermore, problems associated with dating events and identifying persons described in 1 Esdras have cast doubt on the historicity of the text.

 Michael David McGehee

**BARSABBAS** (PERSON) [Gk **Barsabba"]. Name of 2 persons in NT. The name *Barsabbas* most probably represents the Aram *Bar-Shabba,* “son of the sabbath.”

**1.** A surname of Joseph, who also had the Lat surname Justus (Acts 1:23). He was considered, but not chosen, for the place among the twelve disciples left vacant by the treachery of Judas Iscariot. Evidently, he had been a disciple of Jesus, for the one to take Judas’ place was to be a personal witness to the ministry, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus (Acts 1:21–22). Joseph Barsabbas reportedly was one of the seventy disciples (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* 1:12; see Luke 10:1). He allegedly drank snake venom in the name of Jesus without suffering any ill effects (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* 3:39; see Mark 16:18).

**2.** A surname of Judas, one of two leading Christians in the church at Jerusalem who were sent to the churches of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia to convey the church council’s decision on the acceptance of gentile believers (Acts 15:22–33). Judas and Silas, his companion, preached at Antioch for some time until the church dismissed them (v 33). According to v 34, a spurious text, Judas returned to Jerusalem, but Silas remained in Antioch. This verse probably was originally a marginal note that explained how Silas was in Antioch for Paul to choose him as a companion (v 40).

 Virgil R. L. Fry

**BARTACUS** (PERSON) [Gk **Bartako"]. Bartacus, who has the epithet “the Illustrious, ” was referred to once in 1 Esdr 4:29 as the father of Apame, the concubine of Darius. While nothing is known of Bartacus outside of this single reference, names similar to his own appear in other literature. For instance, the name “Artachaeas, ” a high-ranking official in Xerxes’ army, was mentioned by Herodotus (7.22.117). The name of Bartacus’ daughter, “Apame, ” is identical with the name of the Persian princess who married Seleucus I and became the mother of Antiochus I. Apamea, a city in Asia Minor, was established by Seleucus I in honor of his wife by the same name.

There are several ways to interpret the phrase “the Illustrious” *(Tou thaumostou)* appended to Bartacus’ name. The name may have been an epithet, implying that Bartacus was a man of renown or even perhaps a wonder-worker. It is unlikely that the epithet was a second name for Bartacus because the Persians normally used only one name. There is also no evidence that “the Illustrious One” was an official title in the Persian state. The appendage may have been the proper name of his father. The similar Greek name “Thamasios” appears in Herodotus 7.194, and “Themasios” occurs in Josephus *Ant* 11.3.5.

 Scott T. Carroll

**BARTHOLOMEW** (PERSON) [Gk **Barqolomaόo"]. Bartholomew appears in all four lists of the twelve disciples of Jesus (Matt 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13), but he is otherwise unmentioned in the NT. Bartholomew is quite likely an Aram patronymic *[Bar-Talmai]* for “son of Tholami” (cf. LXX Josh 15:14) or “son of Tholomaeus” (cf. Jos. *Ant.* 20.1.1§5), a name found in several forms in the Gk OT and Josephus.

From the 9th century onward Bartholomew generally has been identified with NATHANAEL. This is based on the conjecture that Nathanael is a surname of Bartholomew, so that his full name would have been Nathaneal Bar-Tholami (cf. Simon Bar-Jonah). Several factors point in this direction. (1) Since the synoptic gospels never mention Nathanael, while John never mentions Bartholomew, the juxtaposition of the names Philip and Bartholomew in the synoptic lists of the Twelve (not in the list in Acts) suggests the close relationship between the two depicted in John 1:43–51. Study of the apostolic lists indicates pairing and grouping into fours; this suggests that Bartholomew and Philip were companions in the second group headed by Philip. (2) John’s gospel treats Nathanael as an apostle. All of the companions of Nathanael are apostles (John 1:35–51) and Nathanael appears as a member of a group of apostles (John 21:1–2). Christ’s promise to Nathanael, that he would be a witness to the central role of the Son of Man in God’s revelation to men, suggests an apostolic function (John 1:50–1). (3) Since Bartholomew is quite likely a patronymic, its bearer would be expected to have another name as well.

Arguments have been raised against each of the above factors. (1) The juxtaposition of Philip and Bartholomew in the synoptic lists may be fortuitous, because in the Acts list they are not together. (2) Since there is no mention of Nathanael during Jesus’ ministry, his interaction with Jesus in John 1:43-51 does not necessarily imply a formal call to apostleship. (3) The name “Bartholomew” may stand by itself in the apostolic lists as a proper name. It is not necessarily a patronymic. The patronymic is normally expressed in the lists by the Greek genitive, not by the Aramaic *bar.*

If the identification of Bartholomew with Nathanael is correct; Philip brought Bartholomew (Nathanael), a native of Cana of Galilee (John 21:2), to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah (John 1:45–46). The description of his encounter with Jesus is found in John 1:47–51. A true Israelite, without guile, Nathanael gave a profound declaration of the messianic identity of Jesus. Jesus, in turn, stated that Nathanael would see even greater demonstrations of messianism. If the identification of Bartholomew with Nathanael is incorrect, then we have no NT information about Bartholomew other than the four lists.

Since the identification of Bartholomew with Nathanael is not conclusive, to assume it without question is to go beyond the evidence. Certainty is unattainable with the present evidence, but to reject categorically the identification is likewise unwarranted.

Traditional stories about Bartholomew abound, but few appear to be trustworthy. According to the “Genealogies of the Twelve Apostles, ” Bartholomew was of the house of Naphtali, and his name was formerly John, but Jesus changed it because of John the son of Zebedee, the beloved. Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* 5.10.3) reports that Bartholomew preached the gospel in India and left behind the Gospel of Matthew “in the actual Hebrew characters.” Traditions also claim that Bartholomew ministered in Armenia, Phrygia, Lycaonia, Mesopotamia, and Persia. Several traditions are also associated with his death. One tradition states that Bartholomew brought the Gospel to India and to Greater Armenia, where he was flayed alive and beheaded. The *Martyrdom of Bartholomew* states that he was placed in a sack and cast into the sea.

A few apocryphal works are also traditionally associated with Bartholomew. Jerome, in the preface to his commentary on Matthew, mentions a *Gospel of Bartholomew.* Apart from its condemnation by the Decretum Gelasianum we know little about this work. A later work, “The Questions of Bartholomew, ” extant in five recensions, may be based in part on this earlier work. A Coptic “Book of the Resurrection of Christ by Bartholomew the Apostle” is extant in several fragments. Authentic association of these works with the apostle Bartholomew is highly doubtful.

**MARK, JOHN** (PERSON) [Gk ** jIoanne" Marko"]. An early Jewish Christian who assisted with the 1st-century missionary activities of Paul, Peter, and Barnabas and who is associated by tradition with the gospel of Mark. The name is a combination of two appellations, the Heb ** (“Yahweh has shown grace”; cf. 2 Kgs 25:23) and the Latin “Marcus” (or the Greek *Markos*). Dual names commonly were employed during the period as a common custom within Hellenistic Judaism (see Acts 1:23, Joseph-Justus).

The NT provides scant information about the figure of John Mark. He initially is introduced at Acts 12:12, a scene in which Peter returns from prison to the home of Mary, “the mother of John whose other name was Mark.” Both the house itself and the household of Mary probably were significant for the early Christian community in Jerusalem, since Peter seems to have known that Christians would be gathered there for prayer. Thus the role of John Mark in early Church tradition often is associated with the presumed wealth and prestige of Mary, who was a homeowner with a maidservant (Rhoda) and who could support gatherings of early Christians for worship. The common, though most likely errant, belief that John Mark was the “young man” who escaped capture by the Romans at the arrest of Jesus (Mark 14:51–52) rests upon the assumption that the Garden of Gethsemane was owned and tended by the family of Mary. According to this view, John Mark perhaps would have been stationed at the garden as a guard during the night watch. Another tradition, which maintains that the Last Supper (Mark 14) was held in the home of Mary, assumes that the household was familiar with the work of Jesus and was receptive to his activity. Papias of Hierapolis argues against a close relationship between Jesus and the family, however, since he notes specifically that Mark “had not heard the Lord, nor had he followed him” (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* 3.39.15).

The only clear comment upon the activities of John Mark that is provided in the NT is the observation that he was one of numerous evangelistic missionaries who circulated during the 1st century (one of the 70 missionaries who are mentioned in Luke 10:1?). Accordingly, he is listed as an assistant to Paul and Barnabas during the first Pauline missionary journey (Acts 12:25; 13:5). Though the nature of that assistance is not specified, he may have served as a recorder, catechist, and travel attendant. Because of his status as the son of a prosperous Jewish-Christian family in Jerusalem and as the cousin of the wealthy landowner Barnabas (Col 4:10; Acts 4:36–37), John Mark would have been a natural selection for such a role. He later separated from Paul and Barnabas “in Pamphylia” (along the coast of S Anatolia), perhaps as the result of some unspecified disagreement. Paul thereafter refused to include him in subsequent travels (though Barnabas took him onward to Cyprus; Acts 15:37–39), and the account of Acts records his activities no further.

Apart from the testimony of Acts, his name (now listed only as Mark) reappears throughout the Pauline literary tradition as a reconciled missionary companion of Paul. Here he is remembered as one who labored faithfully for Christianity (2 Tim 4:11 and Philemon 24). The association of Barnabas with John “who is called Mark” in the record of Acts, on the one hand, and of Barnabas who was the “cousin” of Mark in the witness of Colossians, on the other hand, is an “undesigned coincidence” which suggests that the accounts of Acts and the Pauline Epistles in fact make reference to the same person (Taylor 1955: 29).

Though the figure of John Mark became a casualty of disputes within the Pauline missionary thrust, the Petrine tradition soon adopted an association with the name that has stood for centuries in ecclesial history. The initial evidence for this association appears in 1 Pet 5:13 where John Mark (again listed only as Mark) is mentioned by the author of the letter as “my son.” While the name Mark in 1 Peter cannot be identified definitively with the figure of Mark who appears in the Acts narrative, a consistent picture of the role and activities of John Mark would result if such an association can be accepted (Martin *ISBE* 3: 260). From the testimony of Papias (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* 3.39.16) we learn that common ecclesial tradition recognized Mark as the “interpreter” of Peter who recorded the words of the apostle as the foundation for a written gospel (cf. also Iren. *Haer.* 3.1.1). There is no question that Papias here refers to the gospel of Mark as we know it. And again, while the association of Mark (as recorded by Papias) with John Mark of Jerusalem is not above suspicion, this consistent caricature has been preserved by subsequent Christian tradition.

Numerous traditions about the person and activities of Mark soon arose among the Church Fathers. Hippolytus, for example, refers to Mark as “stump-fingered” or “shortened.” The former translation may indicate that the historical figure of Mark possessed some peculiar physical characteristic (as is suggested by the *Anti-Marcionite Prologue* to the gospel from the 2d century). Modern scholars, however, often prefer to use the latter translation as a reference to the abbreviated nature of the gospel text itself (when compared to the other NT gospels) or in support of the manuscript tradition that concludes the gospel at Mark 16:8. Several early Christian traditions suggest that a close association existed between the figure of John Mark and the congregations of Alexandria, based upon the belief that he traveled to Egypt from Rome after the martyrdom of Peter (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* 2.16.1). There is little information about the death of Mark. The claims for the martyrdom of Mark that appear in the *Paschal Chronicle* and in the *Acts of Mark* probably do not predate the 4th century (Swete 1909: xxvii–xxviii). For further discussion see Pesch *Mark* HTKNT.

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 Clayton N. Jefford

**MARK, SECRET GOSPEL OF.** An edition of the gospel of Mark known only from an incomplete letter of Clement of Alexandria discovered at the Greek Orthodox monastery of Mar Saba in the Judean desert. M. Smith has described how he found the hitherto unknown Clementine letter as he was studying and cataloging manuscripts in the monastery library in 1958. The letter was written in cursive Greek, dated to about 1750, on two and a half pages at the back of a printed volume of the letters of Ignatius of Antioch (Isaac Voss, editor, *Epistulae genuinae S. Ignatii Martyris* [Amsterdam: Blaeu, 1646]). In 1973 Smith published both his scholarly and his popular editions of the letter of Clement and the *Secret Gospel of Mark,* and almost at once controversy began to swirl around the text. The controversy has focused upon questions concerning the authenticity, contents, and interpretation of the Mar Saba text. To the present day Smith seems to be the only scholar who has seen the original manuscript, although at least one other scholar (T. Talley) made an unsuccessful attempt to view the text. Nonetheless, as Smith has summarized in his bibliographical essay (1982), most scholars he has reviewed now are willing to attribute the letter to Clement of Alexandria and the letter itself has been included in an addendum to the second edition of O. Stδhlin’s *Clemens Alexandrinus.*

The Mar Saba manuscript opens with a titular phrase that indicates the source of the letter: “From the letters of the most holy Clement, (author) of the *Stromateis*” (lr:1). In the letter Clement commends and supports the recipient, a certain Theodore, for his opposition to the Carpocratians, who were libertine gnostics well known from ancient heresiological reports (Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 3.2–6; Iren. *haer.* I.25; Hippol. *haer.* 7.32; cf. Smith 1973b: 295–350). According to Clement’s letter from Mar Saba, the Carpocratians employed an edition of the gospel of Mark which Carpocrates falsified by “mixing the most shameless lies with the undefiled and holy words” (lv:8–9). In contrast to the Carpocratian edition, Clement recognizes two authoritative editions of the gospel of Mark: (1) a public edition of the gospel, which Mark composed while Peter was in Rome and which seems to be identical or nearly identical with the canonical gospel of Mark; and (2) the *Secret Gospel of Mark,* “a more spiritual gospel for the use of those being perfected,” which also included “the things appropriate for those progressing in knowledge” (lr:20–22). When Mark died, Clement writes, he left the *Secret Gospel* to the care of the Church at Alexandria, “where it even now is very carefully guarded, being read only to those being initiated into the great mysteries” (lv:1–2).

According to the letter of Clement, the *Secret Gospel* contained at least two passages not included in the public gospel of Mark, and Clement cites both of these two passages. The first passage (lv:23–2r:11), to be located immediately after Mark 10:34, recounts the story of the raising of a rich youth (*neaniskos*) of Bethany (cf. themes in Mark 10:17–22 par.). At the request of the sister of the youth, Jesus goes to the tomb, rolls the stone away from the door, and raises the youth from the dead. The youth looks upon Jesus and loves him, and after six days Jesus instructs him. In the evening the youth, “wearing a linen cloth on his naked body” (2r:8; cf. Mark 14:51–52, also perhaps 16:1–8), comes to Jesus, and Jesus teaches him “the mystery of the kingdom of God” (2r:10; cf. Mark 4:11). The second passage (2r:14–16), to be located within Mark 10:46, describes Jesus coming to Jericho and refusing to receive three women, including the sister and the mother of the youth.

Recent studies on the *Secret Gospel of Mark* suggest that the significance of the text may be realized through a redaction-critical study of the *Secret Gospel.* Several scholars (H. Koester, H.-M. Schenke, J. D. Crossan, M. W. Meyer) have proposed interpretations of the *Secret Gospel* that attempt to place the text within the redactional history of the Markan tradition, and in so doing they are unanimous in advocating the priority of *Secret Mark* to canonical Mark. “The basic difference between the two,” Koester has stated, “seems to be that the redactor of canonical Mark eliminated the story of the raising of the youth and the reference to this story in Mark 10:46” (1983: 56). Scholars have also noted that this Markan account of the raising of the youth is remarkably similar to the story of Lazarus in John 11, except that the *Secret Gospel* account may well be more primitive than the Johannine account (the *Secret Gospel* lacks the details—personal names, descriptions of features of the miracle, etc.—and the theological themes of John 11). The presentation of the youth “whom Jesus loved” in *Secret Mark* (2r:15; cf. Mark 10:21) also bears striking resemblance to the BELOVED DISCIPLE in the gospel of John. These observations contribute to the discussion of the relationship between the Markan and Johannine traditions, and the roles of the Johannine Beloved Disciple and the Markan *neaniskos* as paradigms for discipleship.

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Talley, T. 1982. Liturgical Time in the Ancient Church. *StLtg* 14: 34–51.[[1]](#footnote-1) **CYPRUS** (PLACE) [Heb **µTiKi

; Gk **Kupro"]. A Mediterranean island located 43 miles S of Asia Minor, 76 miles W of Syria, and 264 miles N of Egypt.

The Hebrew name probably derives from the city of Kition (Roman Citium), which Phoenicians colonized on the SE coast of the island. It may also have been known as Elishah in the OT (Gen 10:4; 1 Chr 1:7; Ezek 27:7). Most, though not all, agree that this is the similar-sounding place often referred to as Alashia or Asy in texts from the ANE. It appears in connection with copper (for which the island was well known in antiquity) on tablets from Alalakh in the 18th century b.c. and Mari in the 17th century b.c. The name occurs frequently in the 14th century b.c., especially in the correspondence between the Egyptian Pharaoh Akhenaten and the king of Alashia, which also refers to a land that produced copper. In the 11th century b.c., an Egyptian priest, Wenamon, sought refuge in Alashia after suffering shipwreck on his return to Egypt from Byblos. This corroborates the location of Alashia to be in Cyprus rather than in Syria. In the *Iliad* (11.21) and the *Odyssey* (4.83; 8.362; 17.442, 443, 448) as well as the NT (i.e., Acts 4:36; 11:19, 20; 13:4; 15:39), the island is known as *kupros* (Cyprus).

Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean, after Sicily and Sardinia, and only slightly larger than Crete. Its maximum length, E-W, is 138 miles and its maximum width, N-S, is 60 miles, encompassing an area of 3584 square miles. The W half of the island is mountainous, where the Trodos and Kyrenia Mountains reach a height of about 3300 ft and are snow-capped three months out of the year. The E half consists of the Mesaoria Plain and the Karpass Peninsula.

Favorable climate and topography produced a primarily agricultural society on the island throughout its history. However, its most important resources have always been its copper mines and pine forests. These, coupled with a salt industry that undoubtedly flourished in antiquity (from the salt lakes of Limassol and Larnaca), supported the construction of a number of important harbor towns around the island.

The earliest inhabitants of Cyprus, who settled in the SE part of the island and around its central and E coastlines, have been dated by carbon 14 testing to the Pre-Pottery Neolithic period (ca. 7000–6000 b.c.). Circular houses, called *tholoi,* were constructed of mudbrick on stone foundations, and have been found in several settlements around the coastal perimeter of the island (e.g., Khirokitia and Kalavassos-Tenta). They have floors of beaten earth, hearths, platforms built against the walls for sleeping, and posts in the center of the room to support domed ceilings. The inner walls were plastered, and one of them contained a painting of a human figure with uplifted arms. Their dead were interred in the fetal position beneath the floors of their houses or immediately outside. The infant mortality rate was apparently high.

In the Late Neolithic (ca. 4500–3800 b.c.; there are no carbon 14 dates between 6000 and 4500 b.c.), pottery was developed and houses were constructed with greater diversity of forms including wooden structures, stone buildings both circular and rectangular, and partial or total subterranean dwellings like those in Beer-sheba in S Palestine. These people, like those in the PPN, were primarily farmers, but they also hunted wild animals and probably had some domesticated livestock. There was cultural continuity from the Neolithic into the Chalcolithic Period (ca. 3800–2500 b.c.), but settlement patterns shifted to the W side of the island, the central plain, and the Karpass Peninsula.

The EB Age (Early Cypriot, ca. 2500–2000 b.c.) is represented in most of the island except the W half of the Trodos Mountains. Wealthy tomb offerings and beautifully made pottery in a variety of imaginative styles indicate a prosperous culture, supported by an increasing international trade in copper. Tin was imported, probably from Mesopotamia or Asia Minor, evidenced by the production of the many bronze implements which have been found in excavation. Models of sanctuaries show the worship of bulls (after cattle were imported to replace pigs for economic reasons), and testify to a well-developed polytheism.

The MB Age (Middle Cypriot, ca. 2000–1650 b.c.) was brief and continued the basic culture of the earlier period, although the N began to decline when settlement patterns shifted to the SE with the construction of important harbor cities such as Enkomi and Kition. Several forts have been found in the N half of the island, but are completely missing in the S. Apparently hostilities were internal and/or confined to the N, and the S felt no need for such defenses. A clear separation between the E and W is inferred from the differences in pottery produced in each section. The economy of the W was based primarily on copper, while that of the E was based on agriculture.

An abundance of Cypriot pottery from the MB Age has been found in Cilicia, Megiddo, Ras Shamra (Ugarit), and along much of the Syro-Palestinian coast. From this artifactual evidence and later textual evidence (i.e., Tell el-Amarna letters and the library of Boghazkoy), it is clear that trade between Cyprus and countries such as Egypt, Anatolia, and Syria flourished in both the MB and the LB.

A script was developed in Cyprus around 1500 b.c. and was labeled Cypro-Minoan by Sir Arthur Evans. Three forms of the language (Cypro-Minoan 1, 2, and 3) have been found on clay tablets, incised or painted on vases, engraved on votive objects, etc. Whether its roots lie in the west (Crete?) or the east (Ugarit?, etc.) is debatable, but all attempts to decipher the language have been unsuccessful. The fall of Minoan Knossos on Crete to the Mycenaeans, ca. 1380 b.c., brought Mycenaean settlers to Cyprus, (perhaps the “Sea Peoples,” some of whom settled in S Palestine) and with them a new type of pottery which is found extensively in Cyprus and the Syro-Palestinian littoral.

Aegean influence continued in Cyprus well into the Iron Age (Cypro-Geometric Age, ca. 1050–750 b.c.), when the Phoenicians arrived around 850 b.c. and established colonies on the island. These colonists from Tyre and Sidon (cf. Isa 23:1, 12; Ezek 27:6) built temples to Astarte and tried to establish close ties between Cyprus and their homelands. One of the largest temples erected to Astarte in the Phoenician world was constructed in Kition around 850–800 b.c. on the ruins of an LB temple.

In the beginning of the Cypro-Archaic Period (ca. 750–475 b.c.), epigraphic evidence records the submission of Cyprus to Sargon II of Assyria. This event, which occurred in 707 b.c., is recorded both on a stele from Kition and in inscriptions from the Assyrian palace at Khorsabad. Ten cities of Cyprus are named on the prism of the Assyrian king Esarhaddon (613 b.c.), among which are Paphos, Idalion, Kourion, and Salamis. Extraordinary tombs made of ashlar blocks (perhaps royal ones) were found at Salamis, and date to the 8th and 7th centuries b.c. Life under the Assyrians seems to have been good, and Mycenaean culture continued to dominate.

Egyptian influence was felt for a brief time when Egypt took advantage of Assyria’s decline and invaded the island. In 545 b.c. Cyprus submitted to the rising power of Cyrus, king of Persia, helped him in his war against Babylon, and thereby continued to enjoy considerable autonomy (Hdt. 4.162) until 499 b.c., when the island, identifying with its Greek heritage, joined the unsuccessful Ionic revolt against Persian rule. Two hundred years of slavery followed.

Cyprus suffered often during the early part of the Cypro-Classical Period (475–325 b.c.), when Greeks, who considered Cyprus to be part of the Greek world, attempted repeatedly and unsuccessfully to free the island from Persian control. Greek influence was strong on the W part of the island, while Phoenician and Persian influence continued in the E part. Stasikypros, king of the city of Idalion, repulsed efforts by the Persians and Phoenicians to conquer his city. Archaeologists have recently identified his palace in excavations at Idalion (Stager and Walker 1989). The most influential Cypriot of the period was Euagoras I of Salamis, who introduced the Greek alphabet on the island through his coins. He tried, without success, to unify all Greeks and make Salamis the Athens of the East. He was responsible for spreading the Hellenization at Cyprus into the E Mediterranean world.

Cyprus assisted Alexander the Great in his conquest of Tyre (332 b.c.) and subsequently became a part of his empire, enjoying considerable favor from the conqueror. After Alexander’s death and throughout the Hellenistic Period (ca. 325–50 b.c.), Cyprus was controlled by the Ptolemies of Egypt. Hellenistic culture was dominant during this time, manifesting itself especially in the sculpture of Cyprus. Excellent examples found in excavations include a 3d century b.c. limestone head of a woman from Arsos and a 2d century b.c. marble statue of Artemis. Greek trends are also seen in the production of jewelry, pottery, and terra-cottas.

With the rise of Roman power, Cyprus was made a province after 67 b.c. and, nine years later, was added to the province of Cilicia. After the civil wars ended, Octavian assumed the title of Augustus and controlled most of the area from Britain to Mesopotamia. He combined Cyprus and Cilicia with the province of Syria. After 23 b.c., Cyprus was made a senatorial province and placed under proconsuls. Many of the proconsuls of Cyprus are known for the Roman period (50 b.c.–250 a.d.), although no Cypriot evidence yet exists to attest the proconsulship of Sergius Paulus (Mitford 1979: 1301), who is said to have been one (Acts 13:7) when Paul visited the island in about 47 a.d.

Peace and prosperity existed throughout the early part of the empire, supported by a flourishing trade in wine, copper, shipbuilding, and agriculture. The chief cities of the time were Salamis, Paphos, Lapithos, and Amathus. The Roman way of life is evidenced by the presence of theaters at Paphos, Salamis, Curium, Soli, and Citium, the last attested only epigraphically. Those at Salamis and Soloi are beautifully restored. Further evidence is seen in the presence of gymnasiums preserved at Salamis and Paphos. Others are attested epigraphically for Citium, Curium, Chytri, Lapethus, and Carpasia. There was an amphitheater at Salamis and an odeion at Paphos. A large Roman bath has been found beside the theater and gymnasium at Salamis, and one is also known for Curium.

Roman roads were built around the island, evidenced by numerous milestones and a map drawn up sometime between the 2d and 4th centuries. Inscriptions show that the roads were maintained until the 4th century. Temples of civic gods such as Apollo at Hyle, Aphrodite at Paphos, and Zeus at Salamis, along with floor mosaics such as those in the houses of Paphos testify to the prominence of polytheism. None of these seem to have survived the more immediate appeal of the deified Severan emperors. No evidence exists that any of them outlived the reign of Caracalla (211–17 a.d.). The spiritual vacuum thus created was filled by Christianity, whose presence is seen in the remains of basilical church buildings such as the one at Salamis.

The New Testament mentions two Christians from Cyprus. One was Barnabas, the traveling companion of Paul (Acts 4:36) and the other was Mnason, who lived in Jerusalem and hosted Paul on one occasion (Acts 21:16). Men from Cyprus shared in the evangelizing of the Greek population of Antioch of Syria (Acts 11:19–20). Barnabas and John Mark visited Cyprus following a dispute with Paul (Acts 15:39).

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 John McRay

**CYRENE** (PLACE) [Gk **Kurhnh]. CYRENIANS. The capital of the Roman province of Cyrenaica (Libya) in North Africa. Its name stems from the nature goddess (Kyrana), whose name was given to a perennial spring nearby. The city was founded by Greek colonists from the island of Thera near the end of the 7th century b.c. (Herodotus 4.150–58; *SEG* 9.3). The leader of the expedition, Battus, became its king, and thus instituted a dynasty that lasted nearly two centuries (until ca. 440 b.c.). For the next century it was a republic and subsequently came under the control of Ptolemy I, heir to the North African portion of Alexander the Great’s empire, who gave it a constitution (*SEG* 11.1; copy in the museum at Cyrene) establishing a liberal oligarchy, an extensive citizenry, two councils, and a popular court. Under the Ptolemies, the city became an important intellectual center with a celebrated medical school, a classical academy, and a school of philosophers (the “Cyrenaics” ) who pioneered what came to be known as Epicureanism. Eratosthenes (276–ca. 194 b.c.), a geographer who calculated the circumference of the earth within 50 miles of the presently accepted figure, and Callimachus (ca. 310–240 b.c.), a poet who had a great impact upon the development of Latin poetry, especially that of Catullus and Ovid, were among its famous sons. Both moved to Alexandria, which tended to dominate Cyrene culturally. By the will of Ptolemy Apion (d. 96 b.c.), the city and its territories became Roman; and in 67 b.c. it was united with Crete to form the senatorial province of Cyrenaica. Following a Jewish revolt during the reign of Trajan and its brutal suppression (a.d. 115; see Dio Cassius 68.32), the city embarked on a period of economic and intellectual decline. Its history ended with the Arab conquest in a.d. 642.

Throughout most of its history, Cyrene was very prosperous. Located in the midst of very fertile countryside, it was rich in grain, wool, olive oil, and especially silphium, a spice that was much prized for both culinary and medicinal purposes. According to Herodotus (4.199), the city’s climate provided it with three harvest seasons annually. From the time of Ptolemy I, Jews were an important part of its population (Josephus, *AgAp* 2.4; *Ant* 14.114; cf. 1 Macc 15:23; 2 Macc 2:23), which, of course, is why the city is mentioned in the Bible. The noted Jewish writer, Jason (2 Macc 2:19–23), one book of whose five-volume history of the Jewish wars of liberation was abridged in 2 Maccabees, and Ezekiel the Tragedian came from Cyrene.

A citizen of Cyrene by the name of Simon, perhaps a pilgrim to the Passover festival in Jerusalem, is identified in the passion narrative as having been compelled by the Roman soldiers to carry Jesus’ cross (Matt. 27:32 = Mark 15:21 = Luke 23:26). Jews from Cyrene are included in the list of those who witnessed the remarkable events resulting from the coming of the Spirit upon the earliest Jerusalem church on the day of Pentecost (Act 2:10). Acts 6:9 suggests that those Jews who “returned home” to Jerusalem from Cyrene and Alexandria were numerous enough to have their own synagogue. Some from this group were active in debate with Stephen and (presumably) the other “Hellenists” and were possibly involved in his lynching; the same group was also numbered among those early Jewish-Christian believers who began to bear witness to gentiles in Syrian Antioch (Acts 11:19–20), the third city of the empire, which was to become so important in the missionary development of the early Christian community. One of the prominent prophets and teachers from the earliest days of the church in Antioch was Lucius of Cyrene (Acts 13:1). With so many Jews moving back and forth between Jerusalem and Cyrene, and between Antioch and Cyrene, it is likely that there was a church established there at a very early date. The ancient site of Cyrene has been extensively excavated during the present century by Italian, British, and Libyan archaeologists. It has provided a wealth of information concerning ancient Greco-Roman art and architecture, civic and social life, numismatics, and epigraphy. Among the many monuments are a Greek theater; a Roman theater; temples of Zeus, Apollo, and Isis; the agora (marketplace); Roman forum; baths; magnificent houses; a circus (for chariot races); and two early churches (6th century). Two modern museums, one of them devoted primarily to sculpture, house some of the more important artifacts.

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