

Hebrews Corrects Barnabas

By Ed Stevens -- Then and Now Podcast -- Jan. 6, 2013

INTRODUCTION:

A. Indeed, we keep telling everyone over and over again that we don't believe we are on the eve of destruction. That is certainly a relevant song after the Mayan calendar superstition that surrounded us a few weeks ago. This series of podcasts is all about showing how some world, which the Bible identifies as the Old Covenant world, was shaken and removed in the first century. We believe endtime prophecy was fulfilled in the first century when Jerusalem was destroyed. Therefore all modern predictions about a future end of the world are mistaken.

B. Well, here we are in our first podcast of the brand new year of 2013.

(SAY THIS AT THE BEGINNING): I want all of our listeners to know that there is a PDF lesson outline available for this podcast. There is always some extra information and sources listed in it which we do not always cover in the podcast. Most folks have found it helpful to have it open in front of them as they listen. The PDF is not posted on the Covenant Key website, but I would be happy to send it to you if you simply email me and request it. My email address is: <preterist1@preterist.org>

C. Let's ask God for His guidance in our study here --

The Great I AM -- Lord and Maker of Heaven and Earth, whose majesty and glory fills the universe -- we worship Your Holy Name. May Your Kingdom keep on increasing forever and ever. We again humble ourselves and ask for your guidance of this nation who has forsaken You and Your Word. Help us to repent and return to You and seek you once again like our Puritan fathers did when they founded this nation. We ask for your help in getting back into the Bible and studying it like never before. Help us to be a people of the Book, not only knowing what it teaches, but putting it into practice every day in our lives at home and work. Help us to be salt and light in the decadent world around us. Be with us especially now as we study the history of Your first century saints, and how You worked through them to make disciples of every nation in the Roman world, and inspired them to write it all down for us to study. Give us a glimpse of Your mighty acts in history, so we can understand Your Word, apply it to our lives in a godly way, and teach it to our children and grandchildren for all generations to come. It is for Your Glory -- and in the Name of Jesus that we pray. Amen.

D. If you have benefited from these studies, and wish to be partners with us in this teaching ministry, in order to share in all the good fruit that comes from it. Those who contribute to International Preterist Association will receive some of our latest and greatest resources as our gift to you. Simply go to our website and click on the left sidebar button entitled "Make a Donation to IPA" where you can make a one-

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- E. In our study last time, we tried to identify who **the recipients** of the general epistle to the Hebrews might have been. We also explained the reasons why I believe John Mark (the cousin of Barnabas) was **the courier** for the book of Hebrews, and then looked at how he might have **accomplished that courier service** on behalf of the Apostle Paul. To most of us here, including myself, this was a lot of new ideas to think about. But it really makes sense and fits all the historical pieces together in a great way. I pray that you have benefited from it as much as I have.
- F. We are still dealing with the book of Hebrews, which was written while Paul was in prison in Rome, and sent by courier as soon as he was released in AD 63. It is an extremely important book for the Christian faith, for teaching on salvation and eschatology. It ranks right up there at the top of Paul's most important doctrinal works, alongside the book of Romans. It is Paul's last big book that he wrote before his pastoral epistles and his death in the Neronic persecution.
- G. This session we will look more at the traditions surrounding Barnabas and the activity of John Mark in relation to Apostle Paul and the book of Hebrews. We will actually read a few selections from the *Epistle of Barnabas* to get a taste of his **allegorical interpretative methods** and his **anti-Judaistic polemic**. If you would like to read the *Epistle of Barnabas* right along with me, simply send me an email requesting the PDF of that epistle, and I will send it as an attachment for you. The sections that we will be reading are printed in the lesson outline. So, if you get the PDF, you will have those sections that we quote.
- H. We need to remember that **Barnabas** was not an inspired apostle like Paul and Peter were. Nor is his **Epistle** inspired like the writings of our New Testament. It is merely uninspired Christian literature, on the same level as the Old Testament Apocryphal books. As we look at the Epistle of Barnabas, we will notice several statements that are out of sync with the **spirit** and **teaching** of our New Testament. Furthermore, Apostle Paul seems to be **correcting** those deficiencies in his epistles to the Romans and the Hebrews.
- I. By the way, if you spot any errors in the historical narrative I am building here, please email me and let me know. I am always looking for ways to improve it.

Traditions About Barnabas and Mark

We mentioned previously that the book of Hebrews seems to have been written as a corrective, in response to the epistle of Barnabas, and probably sent to the same churches that the epistle of Barnabas was sent, using John Mark as the courier.

I want to drill down deeper into the external **traditions about Barnabas**. We will see why that is important as we compare the Epistle of Barnabas with Paul's epistle to

the Hebrews. There are some significant **connections between these two books** that will become more apparent to us after we get to know Barnabas and the traditions about him a little better.

There are two "received" traditions affirmed devoutly and tenaciously by the Eastern Orthodox church on Cyprus, teaching that Barnabas was killed by the Jews on Cyprus no later than AD 61. According to those traditions, just before his death, Barnabas instructed Mark to go to Paul, to reconcile and join forces with him. Those traditions also relate that Barnabas had a copy of the gospel of Matthew which the apostle had personally copied and given to him. He had Matthew's gospel with him when he went to Cyprus to do his mission work there with Mark in AD 50. That implies a date for the composition of Matthew no later than AD 49, when Barnabas would have received it from Matthew while he was in Jerusalem for the Acts 15 council. Since Barnabas and Mark had a copy of Matthew's gospel with them during the whole decade of their work on Cyprus, it is easy to see how Mark could have composed his gospel which so closely follows the narrative of Matthew. This means that Mark's gospel would have been written sometime between the Jerusalem council (AD 49) and the death of Barnabas (AD 60-61) after which Mark would have left Cyprus and joined Paul in Rome. Mark evidently brought those books with him (including the two gospels of Matthew and Mark, and the Epistle of Barnabas). That gave Luke immediate access to both previous gospels, with which he was able to compose his own gospel account which was addressed primarily to the gentile audience at Rome and in Nero's court.

Furthermore, this would have given Paul access to the Epistle of Barnabas while he was in prison in Rome, at the very time he was writing his epistle to the Hebrews. Having Mark there in Rome at the time Luke was writing his two-volume work was extremely valuable to Luke and Paul both. They would be able to consult with Mark on all the details of his mission work with Barnabas on the island of Cyprus. Mark would have been a great resource person, not only for Luke in writing his two volumes of Luke and Acts, but also for Paul in his work on the epistle to the Hebrews.

It may have been Paul's reading of the Epistle of Barnabas that prompted him to write his epistle to the Hebrews, in order to correct the mis-impressions created by the Epistle of Barnabas. It was no coincidence that Mark came to Rome at this very time, bringing with him the two gospels and Barnabas' epistle. Furthermore, Mark remained there in Rome with Luke and Paul while they were writing Luke, Acts, and Hebrews. Luke most likely consulted with Mark on everything he wrote in his own gospel account.

Furthermore, Mark would have known all the details about the churches to whom Barnabas had addressed his epistle. That would be useful to know, so that Paul could send Mark as the courier back to those same churches that Barnabas had visited and taught. This provides a good reason why Mark was chosen by Paul as the courier for his epistle to the Hebrews. Mark was evidently present with Paul there in Rome the whole time Paul was writing Hebrews (AD 62-63), so that Paul could easily confer with Mark and compose a cogent response to the epistle of Barnabas, which would correct all the anti-Judaic polemic and hyper-allegorical interpretations found in the epistle of Barnabas. Then Paul commissioned Mark to take the Hebrews epistle back to all the same churches that had been affected by the epistle of Barnabas.

Mark was evidently well-known to those churches, since he had probably traveled with Barnabas to visit them. Mark would have been acceptable to those churches where

Barnabas had visited, and to whom he had written his epistle. Furthermore, from what Paul says to the Colossians, it appears that Paul wrote to his own network of churches instructing them to welcome Mark if he passed through their churches on his way to deliver the general epistle of Hebrews to both Paul's and Barnabas' networks of churches, as well as to Peter who would ultimately endorse it for the Jewish churches. Since the epistle of Hebrews corrects the defective theology of not only Barnabas, but the Hellenistic-Gnostic branch of Christendom down in Alexandria as well, there is a good chance that Mark may have worked his way down into Egypt after getting Peter's endorsement for it. He might also have fled to Alexandria when the Neronic persecution broke out.

It is so fascinating to see all the general epistles beginning to pop up during these final four years before the outbreak of the Neronic persecution. Up until the early 60's the gospels were the only general encyclicals. Paul's letters were written to one church or individual. Then when Paul was imprisoned, he begins to write general epistles that would go to either to all the churches in his network, or in the case of Hebrews, to all the churches in Italy, Greece, Macedonia, Turkey, Cyprus, Syria, Palestine, and maybe even Alexandria.

We have to marvel at the way the Holy Spirit was working through Paul, Peter, and Mark to bring all these scattered churches together into one big network. Paul, Peter, and Barnabas had worked independently up until Paul was arrested and sent to Rome. Thereafter, the Holy Spirit begins bringing them into closer contact and interaction. This is exactly what Jesus had prayed for in John 17, and is also what both Paul and Peter, in their general epistles, exhorted the saints to do. Paul's prison epistle (Eph. 4) is a good example of a general encyclical that urged all the Gentile Christians to unite with the Jewish Christians as one body in Christ. Peter urged the Hebrew Christians to unite with the Gentile Christians. And evidently with Mark's help, Paul corrected the defects in Barnabas' theology, so that all the churches in Barnabas' network could be brought into the circle with Paul's and Peter's churches. It is truly inspiring to see how the Holy Spirit brought about that unity within the body of Christ just as Jesus had prayed, and just in the niche of time before the Neronic persecution tore into the church with a vengeance.

Activity of Mark After the Death of Barnabas

When we match up the traditions about Barnabas writing his epistle (AD 57), his death on Cyprus (AD 60-61), and the consequent reconciliation of Mark with Paul in Rome (AD 61-62), together with all of the historical facts we have in Acts and Paul's prison epistles – it is a perfect fit. The traditions about Barnabas and Mark fit the biblical narrative like hand in glove. Furthermore, it makes so much sense out of many inexplicable historical details in the NT historical narrative about Barnabas and Mark. Here is a brief overview of John Mark's activities after the death of Barnabas, as we have reconstructed them so far:

- After Barnabas wrote his Epistle (AD 57), it must have provoked some persecution against him by the Jews, whom he had harshly condemned in his book. Unlike the book of Hebrews which correctly teaches both an Old Covenant and a New Covenant, the epistle of Barnabas claims that there was only one Covenant which

was never given to the Jews originally, but was reserved exclusively for the Christians. Barnabas argued that the Christians were the only intended recipients of the one Covenant, and that when the Jews under Moses worshipped the golden calf, they lost their rights to the Covenant before it was even offered to them. Thus, Barnabas claims that the Jews never received the covenant originally, and that it was reserved for the Christians. Not only did Barnabas exclude (cut off, cast away) the Jews from the Covenant blessings in Christ, but went even further to claim that the Jews had never were a part of the Covenant in the first place! We can easily understand why this one-covenant idea was so radically unacceptable to the Jews. It denied that their circumcision had any covenant validity, and made their life under the first covenant totally meaningless and valueless. This is the idea which both the epistles of Romans and Hebrews challenge and correct. Paul shows that there is indeed value to circumcision, and that the Jews were definitely recipients of the first covenant. What Paul says in Romans, and the way he says it, seems to be counteracting and correcting this very notion of Barnabas, and leads me to think that the epistle of Barnabas was written and already in circulation before Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans in AD 58. There are several other equally-inflammatory statements in the epistle of Barnabas. That kind of anti-Judaic polemic is most likely part of what provoked the Jews on Cyprus to kill Barnabas in AD 60-61.

- Just before his death (according to both of the received traditions), Barnabas instructed Mark to go to Paul (in prison in Rome at the time) and reconcile with him. So, after Barnabas' death, Mark took a copy of Matthew's gospel (either the original that Barnabas had personally received from Matthew, or a copy of it), as well as his own gospel (Mark), and the epistle of Barnabas, and brought them to Paul in prison in Rome (AD 61). Then Luke took the copies of Matthew and Mark and sat down with Mark to compose his two-volume Luke-Acts for the defense of Paul in the Gentile court of Nero in Rome.
- It seems fairly certain that Barnabas died in AD 60 or very early 61, since the book of Acts (11:24) eulogizes him as if he was already dead. *Luke-Acts* was written right after Luke and Paul got to Rome in early 61. Mark came to Rome right after Barnabas died (AD 61) and evidently right after Paul and Luke had arrived. Mark came to Rome in order to be reconciled with Paul, just as Barnabas had instructed. Mark brought the gospels of *Matthew* and *Mark* with him, along with the *Epistle of Barnabas*. That is how Luke gained full access to the gospels of Matthew and Mark, and used them in his composition of his own gospel account of Luke. While there in Rome, Mark would have been a great resource person for information about Barnabas which Luke could use in writing the book of Acts.
- While Luke was writing, or after he was finished, Paul apparently wrote the book of Hebrews as a corrective response to the overly-allegorical and overly-harsh anti-Judaic polemic of the Epistle of Barnabas. This is why so many scholars have noticed similarities and connections between Barnabas and Hebrews, yet were baffled by Barnabas' lack of quotes from Hebrews. They were assuming that Hebrews was written first, then Barnabas later. They have it just backwards! Barnabas wrote first, and then Hebrews later. The reason why Barnabas does not quote Hebrews is because Hebrews was not written yet. And the reason why there are so many similarities and connections between Barnabas and Hebrews is because Paul was

- responding to Barnabas to correct the errors of his Epistle. We know this has to be the case, since it is inconceivable that Barnabas could have been aware of Paul's arguments against his position in the book of Hebrews, and still write what he did in his epistle. This at least presupposes that Hebrews was not available to Barnabas at the time he wrote. However, there are so many similarities and connections between Barnabas and Hebrews that several scholars have been forced to the conclusion that Hebrews must be responding to Barnabas. It is indeed much more reasonable to believe that Barnabas wrote first, with Paul then correcting his errors in the book of Hebrews later. This idea has been advocated by at least three other Barnabas scholars that I know of (Selwyn, Burger, Volter -- who are mentioned on page 215 of James Carleton Paget's book, *The Epistle of Barnabas: Outlook and Background*).
- Because Mark was there with Paul during his composition of Hebrews, Paul did not mention any names or say anything negative against Barnabas in any way, nor even quote any of the epistle of Barnabas in his book of Hebrews. But he did interact with and correct all of the erroneous concepts and inflammatory rhetoric found in the epistle of Barnabas, and composed an epistle (to the Hebrews) that would calm the storm which the epistle of Barnabas had stirred up, at least among the Hebrew Christians who were evidently disturbed by it.
 - The *Epistle of Barnabas* might have not only inflamed the Jews against Barnabas, but also could have implicated Paul and all the apostles in the controversy. The Jewish Christians were probably feeling the heat from it. They did not agree with Barnabas, but they were being persecuted for it anyway. After Paul wrote Hebrews as a corrective to the epistle of Barnabas, he then had Mark take it to all the churches in Paul's and Barnabas' network, to help stabilize the Jewish Christians and send a non-caustic and more conciliatory message to their Jewish persecutors.
 - After Paul wrote the book of Hebrews while Mark was with him there in Rome, then Paul sent Mark on the courier mission with Hebrews to visit all the churches that had been adversely-affected by the epistle of Barnabas, and ultimately delivered the book of Hebrews to Peter in Jerusalem. Peter shows that he had read the book of Hebrews by his comments in 2 Pet. 3:15-16 -- "Paul wrote to you speaking in them of these things" (i.e., the New Heavens and Earth and the New Jerusalem). The book of Hebrews is the only letter of Paul which deals with the New Heavens and Earth and the New Jerusalem in the sense that Peter is referring to it there.
 - All of our study on the location and travels of Mark helps us pinpoint the death of Barnabas at AD 60-61. There is one more mention of Mark in Paul's second epistle to Timothy. Paul is aware of Mark's presence in the area around Ephesus in late 64, which tells us that Mark was still alive at the time of the Neronian persecution when Paul wrote his second epistle to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:11).
 - This is a great example of the many insights we might gain when we re-date the Apostolic Father writings before AD 70. It clarifies a lot of ambiguities and obscurities that we never thought possible. For instance, it was not until I did my research on Barnabas that I began to truly understand HOW and WHEN several of the New Testament writings were produced. Seeing how the traditions about Barnabas and Mark fit hand in glove with our NT historical narrative has helped nail down the dates for **ten of our New Testament books: Matthew, Mark, Romans, Luke, Acts, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians, and Hebrews.**

Why Was the Epistle to the Hebrews Written?

The answer to this question is the most important question to answer first, since it is a significant factor in determining **who** wrote it, **to whom** it was written, as well as **when** and **where** it was written.

When Paul came to Jerusalem with the Gentile contributions at the end of his third missionary journey, he was immediately challenged by "James and all the elders" to defend himself against the accusations of the law-keeping Jewish Christians in Jerusalem who were claiming that "they have been told" (hearsay) that Paul was "teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, nor to walk according to the customs." (Acts 21:17-26)

There were serious consequences for false accusations like this, unless they were supported by significant evidence at the mouth of two or more reliable witnesses. James and the elders would never have entertained the accusation for a minute unless there was some kind of substantial evidence pointing in that direction. But what could that evidence have been? What made the Jewish believers in Jerusalem formulate such an accusation, and what made James and all the elders in Jerusalem take it seriously enough to confront Paul with it?

So, where were these accusations against Paul coming from? The Judaizers would certainly have had enough motives of their own to concoct such a false accusation in order to discredit Paul and his mission to the Gentiles. However, their motives would have made their accusations suspect, unless there was significant evidence to support them. Even though Luke does not tell us what that evidence was, it still might be discovered by taking a look at the *Epistle of Barnabas* which seems to have been written and in circulation by the time Paul went to Jerusalem in AD 58. Notice what the epistle of Barnabas teaches:

- **Barn 9:4–10:10** – "...the **circumcision** in which they have trusted **has been abolished**, for he declared that circumcision was not a matter of the flesh. But they disobeyed, because **an evil angel enlightened them.**"

Here it appears rather clear that Barnabas was teaching the Jews in the Diaspora that **circumcision** was not only abolished in Christ, but that it was never meant to be performed in the flesh in the first place. Barnabas claims that circumcision in the flesh was a "doctrine of demons" taught by "an evil angel." This sounds like what Paul was being accused of by the law-zealous believers in Jerusalem (Acts 21:17ff). Barnabas says that the circumcision commands were meant to be understood in a "spiritual sense." Any law-zealous Jew (believer or otherwise) would be outraged by this assertion that fleshly circumcision was given to them by an evil angel, and that it was never meant to be performed in the flesh. He likewise interprets all the **dietary "customs"** of Moses in a similar "spiritual sense," freeing his fellow Jewish believers from those physical restrictions. Reading his words here, we could easily get the impression that Barnabas was "teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, nor to walk according to the customs" (Acts 21:17-26). And if the law-

zealous believers there in Jerusalem thought Paul agreed with Barnabas, they would have accused Paul of the same thing.

- **Barn 12:9-11** – He paraphrases Exodus 17:14-16, and claims that Joshua prefigured Jesus the Son of God, and that the enemies of Joshua (the Amalekites) prefigured the **enemies of Jesus** (i.e., the unbelieving Jews). This was labeling the unbelieving Jews as being **Amalekites** (the most hated of all their enemies). We will remember that this is the people that Samuel told Saul to utterly wipe out, not even leaving any women, children, or animals alive. Equating the unbelieving Jews with their most hated enemies undoubtedly did not endear Barnabas to the Jews on the island of Cyprus, and wherever else the epistle went.
- **Barn 13:1-6** – He poses the question, "Now let us see whether this people or the former people is **the heir**, and whether **the covenant** is **for us** or **for them**." He answers that question by relating the allegory of Jacob and Esau (two nations in the womb of Rebecca) and how the greater (Esau the firstborn) will serve the lesser (Jacob the younger). He applies the figure of Jacob to the Christians, and Esau to the rest of the Israelites, thereby implying that the unbelieving Jews did not have the birthright and were not heirs, and that the covenant was not for them, but **only for the Christians**. I don't need to tell you how big of an insult and outrage that idea must have been to the Jews.
- **Barn 13:7** – He alludes to the story of Abraham in Gen. 17:4-5 (cf. Rom. 4:11), and paraphrases it this way: "What, then, does he say to **Abraham**, when he alone believed and was **established in righteousness**? *'Behold, I have established you, Abraham, as the father of the nations who believe in God without being circumcised.'*" This was at least diminishing the value of circumcision (if not negating it altogether), and granting uncircumcised believers seemingly superior rights to the covenant over against the circumcised believers. This tended to be divisive. Yet, we can see from the argumentation in Romans that Paul did not agree with this **degradation of circumcision**, but rather gave an equal status to both the circumcised and uncircumcised believers who had Abraham's faith. Paul wanted unity between the circumcised and uncircumcised. Notice the subtle difference: Paul said that Abraham was justified by faith **before** he was circumcised, while Barnabas said that all believers were justified **without** being circumcised. There is a subtle difference. This seems to be another example of how Barnabas disparages circumcision, even for Jewish believers.
- **Barn 14:1-9** (cf. 4:6-8) – Then he asks his readers to "see if [God] has actually given the covenant that he swore to the fathers he would give to the people. He has indeed given it; but they were not worthy to receive it because of their sins ... and [Moses] hurled the tablets from his hands, and the tablets of the Lord's covenant were shattered. So Moses received it, but they were not worthy [i.e., **they never received it**]. ...But how did we [Christians] receive [the covenant]? ...Moses received it as a servant, but the Lord [Jesus] himself gave it to us, so that we might become the people of inheritance, by suffering for us."

These statements are subtle, to be sure, but they nevertheless teach that the Israelites in the wilderness **never received the covenant** because they were not worthy. Instead, God gave the covenant to Moses, evidently to be reserved for a people in the future (Christians) to whom Jesus would give it. In net effect, Barnabas says that the Israelites in the wilderness never received the covenant. By making a golden calf and offering sacrifices to it, **they lost their birthright to it before they even received it**. Thus they never received the covenant in the first place. However, this is NOT what Paul teaches in the book of Romans, nor in Hebrews. Instead, it seems that this may be one of the points in Barnabas to which Paul was responding in his two epistles (Romans and Hebrews), especially in the book of Hebrews.

- **Barn 16:1-10** – In this section Barnabas contrasts the two different temples, the physical one in Jerusalem versus the "**incorruptible temple**" or "**spiritual temple**" in which God Himself dwells. There is an obvious similarity between this section and the book of Hebrews, so much so that one wonders which description of the spiritual temple came first, Barnabas or Paul? It would be easier to believe that **Barnabas wrote first**, so that Paul could expand on it. It does not seem likely that Barnabas would reduce the description of Paul. If we are right in identifying the first temple that was destroyed as a reference to **Solomon's Temple** (and not Herod's), then it appears that Barnabas assigned no credence (validity, credibility, authority, or integrity) whatsoever to the **Herodian temple**. The only other temple he mentions is the "spiritual temple" that was being built in their hearts. This would be offensive to the Herodian temple with its priests and leaders, even though there was another sect of the Jews (i.e., the Essenes) who shared that dim view of the Herodian temple. However, this does not seem to be the view of Jesus or Paul, nor of the Jewish Christians in Judea. The gospels, the book of Acts, and several other books of our New Testament (especially Hebrews) posit a definite, but temporary, **significance to the earthly temple** while the spiritual temple was being built. For instance, in Hebrews 9:9, it states that the earthly temple (Herod's temple) was "a [typological] **symbol for the present time**." Although Barnabas might allow for a typological connection between the two temples, it seems that the only earthly temple that could serve as a type would have been Solomon's Temple (not Herod's). This is a very subtle difference between Paul and Barnabas, but nevertheless significant. Barnabas' antipathy for the whole earthly temple and sacrificial system was obvious, whereas Paul in Acts 21:24-26 obviously had no scruples against participating in the sacrifices at the Herodian Temple. And I believe this was one of the major points at issue in the meeting that Paul had with "James and all the elders" (Acts 21:17-26). Some law-zealous Jewish Christians had accused Paul of "teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses... [and not] to walk according to the customs." They were accusing Paul of teaching the Diaspora Jews not to bring their tithes and offerings to the temple in Jerusalem, as Moses had instructed them to do. This was a false accusation, since not only did Paul himself bring his own tithes to the temple, but also brought the contributions and offerings of the Gentiles, thus fulfilling all of the customs and

requirements of Moses. So, it appears to me that the accusations against Paul were coming from law-zealous believers (perhaps Judaizers) who were aware of Barnabas' view on this and assumed that Paul was in agreement with it. It was therefore not a frivolous or unfounded charge. There was some substance to their suspicions. However Paul quickly set the record straight by completing a vow in the Herodian temple for seven days and paying for the sacrifices of himself and four other men. This is something that I do not think Barnabas would have done at the time he wrote his epistle. This is further evidenced by what Barnabas says against the sacrificial system in such texts as: **Barn 2:4-10; 3:6; and 4:1.**

Judaizers and unbelieving Jews would have been offended and outraged by the kind of statements from Barnabas that we just looked at here. And since Paul had been associated with Barnabas at one time (AD 50), and even defended him recently in his letter to the Corinthians (AD 57), the law-zealous believers in Jerusalem might be forgiven for thinking that Paul took the same approach. However, Paul wasted no time setting the record straight.

This accusation seems to have come from his former connection with Barnabas. The epistle of Barnabas appears to teach this very idea, and Paul may have unwittingly linked himself with that teaching when he seemingly endorsed Barnabas in his first epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 9:6), which was written from Ephesus on his third missionary journey in AD 57, several months before Paul went to Corinth and then onward to Jerusalem. Paul defended the missionary activities of Barnabas (1 Cor. 9:6), implying that he agreed with what Barnabas was doing and teaching.

This seeming endorsement of Barnabas (1 Cor. 9:6) must have been an embarrassment to Paul later in Corinth and Jerusalem (AD 58). His accusers may have been using that endorsement to undergird their accusation. It was like egg on his face. They threw it at him and it stuck!

However, it is not likely that Paul would have endorsed Barnabas like that if he had known what Barnabas was teaching in his epistle. This suggests that the Epistle of Barnabas was not in circulation, or at least not yet available to Paul, at the time he wrote First Corinthians in Ephesus (late 57). It may have been written by that time, but copies of it had not yet reached Paul, since he does not seem to be aware of what the epistle was teaching at the time he wrote First Corinthians from Ephesus.

However, a few months later when he arrived in Corinth, he probably found out what Barnabas was actually teaching, from the Corinthians, whom Barnabas may have recently visited (as is possibly implied in 1 Cor. 9:6). This awareness of the Epistle of Barnabas (or at least its teachings) may be reflected in Paul's epistle to the **Romans**, which was written right there in Corinth, just before Paul took the Gentile contributions to Jerusalem (early 58). **Romans** does indeed teach some things that seem to counteract certain portions of the Epistle of Barnabas. This would date the Epistle of Barnabas in 57, and no later than very early 58. It does not seem possible for it to have been written much earlier than mid-57 when Paul was at Ephesus, otherwise Paul might have taken issue with it in his first letter to the Corinthians. However, it seems to have been in circulation by the time Paul reached Corinth (early 58), and was having impact before Paul reached Jerusalem at Pentecost in 58. Thus, a date sometime in 57 would not be far off.

A question that arises at this point is whether the Corinthian church may have been one of the churches visited by Barnabas. If so, then it was one of the churches to whom Barnabas addressed his epistle. That would explain why Paul seems to counteract the teaching of Barnabas in his epistle to the **Romans** which was written right there at Corinth in 58, just before Paul went to Jerusalem and was arrested. It would also fit the dating scheme that we are building here, and explain a lot more of the circumstances under which the Epistle of Barnabas was written.

Therefore, it seems likely that Paul understood why this accusation was being raised against him in Jerusalem when he went there at the end of his third journey. When he visited Corinth at the end of his third missionary journey, just before going to Jerusalem, he must have discovered what Barnabas was teaching to Diaspora Jews about forsaking Moses and all the customs including circumcision. That is probably what prompted him to write the epistle to the Romans right there at Corinth, in which he clarifies the Jewish Christian's relationship to the Law. So, it would have been no shock to him when he was called on the carpet by his fellow apostles and elders in Jerusalem to explain why he was supposedly teaching Diaspora Jews to forsake Moses. He had an answer to that question, but it was not what they expected.

Anyone who had listened to Paul knew that he did not teach any Jews (Diaspora or Palestinian) to abandon the Mosaic Law and cease circumcising their children, since he himself also "walked orderly, keeping the Law." And, his epistle to the Romans would easily set the record straight on that. However, the book of Romans did not address the sacrificial issues and typological aspects of the Christian faith, so Paul needed to write something like the epistle to the Hebrews to further clarify the relationship of the Jewish Christian to the Temple and sacrificial system. Once he got to Rome and got his defense ready, he could then write the epistle of Hebrews. It was probably the arrival of Mark in Rome which stimulated Paul to begin writing Hebrews. Mark would have brought the *Epistle of Barnabas* with him. Reading that would have provoked Paul to finally set the record straight. All the Hebrew Christians throughout the Roman world would now have a good explanation of their relationship to the Law, circumcision, the Temple, and the sacrificial system. This would clear up the confusion caused by Barnabas' teaching, and answer their unbelieving Jewish critics who were using Barnabas' teaching as an excuse to blaspheme, ridicule, condemn, and persecute the Church.

Paul taught some similar ideas, but it was not the same. And it forced Paul to clear up those differences in his two epistles to the Romans and Hebrews. A copy of Paul's epistle to the Romans may have been sent to Barnabas, which might have given him second thoughts about his views, or at least made him willing to send Mark to reconcile with Paul when he knew he was about to be killed in Cyprus.

After reading those sections from Barnabas, we can now see why I am suggesting that the book of **Hebrews** was probably written as a **response** and **corrective** to the epistle of Barnabas. Hebrews has many statements which correct and **counter-balance** the extreme anti-Judaic polemic and hyper-allegorical hermeneutic of Barnabas. Since Barnabas was written and in circulation (AD 57) several years before Hebrews (AD 63), it would be easy to believe that Hebrews was **correcting the misleading teaching of Barnabas**. I will provide some significant

examples of those connections between Barnabas and Hebrews in my Masters Thesis. We will not take time to do that here. However, I will include some of them in the PDF lesson outline for this podcast, which you can get by simply emailing me and requesting it. My email address is <preterist1@preterist.org>

Late 63 – Something like Codex W assembled by Mark? -- Codex W is an early manuscript collection containing all four gospels in bound book form. It supposedly has authorship, date and place references encoded in its data birds and colophons, which connect its scribal reproduction and codex assembly with Barnabas and Mark. It has not been officially dated yet, but some of the conservative scholars who have closely examined it, think it is a first century compilation of gospels. If and when it is ever dated by the best scientific methods, and found to be a first century codex, then all this study on Barnabas and Mark, and the travels of Mark especially, will help us nail down the date when *Codex W* may have been first assembled by Mark into a complete collection of all four gospels.

Only two of the four gospels (Matthew and Mark) were available at the time Barnabas died (AD 60-61). The other two were evidently not added to Mark's collection until after AD 62. Therefore, Codex W must have been assembled by Mark after Barnabas died. Mark was still alive at the time of the Neronian persecution (late 64) when Paul wrote his second epistle to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:11). When Mark left Cyprus to join Paul in Rome, he only probably only had two gospels (Matthew and Mark). Then in Rome, Luke used those two gospels to produce his gospel, and Mark made a copy of it to add to his collection.

Later, when Mark went to Jerusalem to connect with Peter, he would have found a copy of John's gospel there and put it together with the other three gospels into his Codex, so that he could easily carry all four gospels with him on his courier journeys. Evidently he used that codex as an exemplar (master copy) from which to make other copies on location wherever he traveled. After he visited Peter in Jerusalem in late 63, he evidently took Peter's first epistle with him to revisit the churches in Syria, Cyprus, Turkey, Macedonia, and Greece whom he had just visited on his way to Jerusalem. Evidently he was still on that courier trip somewhere in the vicinity of Ephesus when the Neronian persecution broke out (AD 64). Paul had been arrested and was in prison again, and requested Timothy to bring Mark with him to come to Paul, and bring the books and parchments with him. Mark would be useful to Paul for service of some kind (probably scribal and courier service).

After that reunion with Paul, Luke, and Timothy in Rome, where did Mark go? Alexandria perhaps? It is certainly possible. That might have been one of the few safe places for Mark to hide out during the Neronian persecution, and Codex W certainly has cryptic inscriptions (data birds and colophons) embedded in it, suggesting that it was assembled by someone who was under close scrutiny by persecutors. And if Mark died in Alexandria (in 65), or was raptured (in 66), this would explain how Codex W ended up being found down in Alexandria.

Codex W would thus represent a compilation of the four gospels, some leaves of which may have been written as early as AD 48 (Matthew) and as late as AD 62 (Luke), and fully assembled by Mark as early as AD 63 when he visited Jerusalem to be with Peter. It is quite possible that he used that original collection as exemplars,

and as soon as one of the leaves wore out, or was torn, it was replaced with a fresh copy of that one leaf. That is why some of the leaves in the same gospel in Codex W may vary in date of production.

Another good reason for connecting Barnabas and Mark with Codex W is the tradition that Matthew made a personal copy of his gospel and gave it to Barnabas, which Mark had access to during their ten year mission on Cyprus. Did Matthew inscribe the name of Barnabas on that copy of Matthew's gospel, or did Barnabas write his own name on it? There is also the possibility that Mark used that very copy of Matthew in his collection of gospels that he carried with him to be used as an exemplar. First, it was only Matthew and Mark, then when Mark joined Paul in Rome, he added Luke's gospel to his collection. And finally, when Mark came to Jerusalem in late 63, he found John's gospel there. This completed his collection of all four gospels.

One other small note which pushes in the direction of Mark originally having something to do with the collection and production of Codex W is the order in which the four gospels are placed in Codex W (the two apostles first, then the other two gospels second, with Mark's gospel last) -- i.e., Matthew, John, Luke, Mark. This appears to be the order in which the gospels were placed in all the oldest collections of the four gospels, before Eusebius and others rearranged them in the order of their date of composition (i.e., Matthew, Mark, Luke, John). The original order placed the two apostles' books first (Matthew and John) with the two non-apostolic gospels last (Luke and Mark). That arrangement may go back to Mark or Peter. Since Peter was supposedly the source for some of the unique material in Mark's gospel, there is a double reason for Mark's gospel to be placed last in the collection. It was proper for Christian writers out of humility to place their own writings last, and to give primacy to others. If that principle of humility was at work here in the arrangement of Codex W, it would allow for the possibility that this particular order of arrangement came originally from Peter and Mark. And if Codex W is ever dated to the first century, it would validate this particular arrangement of the four gospels as being the original arrangement by Peter and Mark.

Furthermore, if Mark fled to Alexandria to escape the Neronian persecution, it would be easy to see how this collection of gospels would end up there in Egypt. According to tradition, Mark died in Egypt near Alexandria.

Well, that will do it for this session. Next time we will deal with the activities of Apostle Paul after his release from his first Roman imprisonment.

Thank you so much for listening. May all of you have a very healthy, blessed, and prosperous New Year.

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If any of this material has raised any questions for you, or if you need more information, do not hesitate to email me at: <preterist1@preterist.org>

There are a lot of great supplementary articles posted on our website, plus books and audio/video media for purchase. Go there and browse all you want. Here is the link: <http://preterist.org>

If you would like a couple of great books which detail all of these events, I would recommend **ISRAEL AND THE NATIONS** by F. F. Bruce, which is available for order at our website (www.preterist.org), and **JEWISH BACKGROUNDS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT** by J. Julius Scott, which is available from Amazon.com. Be sure to get a copy of my book, **First Century Events**, which deals with the Roman, Jewish, and Christian events of the first century. We will be using it as a study guide here in our studies of the first century. You can purchase it from our website: www.preterist.org

Some further recommended reading:

Josephus *Antiquities* and *Wars* (sections which deal with the Herodian rulers)