



# BROAD STREET

## BANNER

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*From Where I Sit . . .*

### **“The Ministry of the Encourager”**

In Biblical times names did more than simply distinguish one person from another. They had meaning, they stood for something—sometimes for the very essence of the people who wore them. Often people were given fitting names from their birth, and on occasion those names were changed by God to signify a new relationship.

#### **Consider some examples:**

- a. **Abram** (in Hebrew meant “exalted father”) was changed to **Abraham** (father of a multitude) when God sealed the covenant with him in **Gen. 17: 4-6**.
- b. **Jacob**, (“he supplanteth, supplanter” “heel grabber”) was changed to **Israel** (he striveth with God) the name given to Jacob when he was returning from Mesopotamia and just about to cross the Jabbok where he expected to meet Esau (which incidentally meant “hairy”). Jacob strove with the angel of the Lord through the night to secure a blessing from God.
- c. **Peter**, (Greek Petros, Aramaic Cephas) means “rock.” At first he was called **Simon** which merely meant “hearing”
- d. **Saul of Tarsus** was named after Israel’s warlike King and meant “asked of God.” His name was changed to **Paul** – Greek, Paulos which means “little.” Saul of Tarsus, named after the fierce war-like king of Israel was stripped of his ancestral pride in coming to the Lord, and became known as “little one” – Paul.

Of special interest in this writing is the name of a man who gets little attention from readers of the Bible, but whose name signifies a wonderful attribute in his life that we should learn from. This man’s name originally was **“Joseph” or “Joses”** which is an honorable name in Israel, yet because of a certain graciousness about him the apostles gave him the nickname of **“Barnabas.”** This is the name that we love him by and need to learn from today. We first meet him in **Acts 4:36-37**.

**“Barnabas” means “son of encouragement.” or “son of consolation.”** What a great name! Barnabas was known for his willingness to seek out those who were struggling and encourage them along in the work of the Lord. There are so many ways the ministry of the encouragers can bless the church today? Some of these we can see from the life of Barnabas:

**Getting People into the Church** – Encouraging others to place membership as well as becoming Christians. Barnabas helped Paul find acceptance by the church in Jerusalem (**Acts 9:26-30**). The church still needs sons and daughters of encouragement to stand at her open doors today

**Keeping People in the Church:** Barnabas encouraged John Mark in a way that may have saved him for meaningful service (**Acts 15:36-40**). The church needs the ministry of evangelists, of elders, of deacons, of teachers and a host of other functions. But equally needed is the ministry of the encouragers—people who will be quick to catch the faltering and call home the lost. Will you be an encourager in the Lord’s work?

**. . . . Terry Broome**