

# FINDING COMFORT IN A TIME OF TROUBLE

## Colossians 4:10,11

**NKJ** <sup>10</sup> Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), <sup>11</sup> and Jesus who is called Justus. These *are my* only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me.

**BGT** <sup>10</sup> Ἀσπάζεταιται ὑμᾶς Ἀρίσταρχος ὁ συναιχμάλωτός μου καὶ Μάρκος ὁ ἀνεψιὸς Βαρναβᾶ (περὶ οὗ ἐλάβετε ἐντολάς, ἐὰν ἔλθῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς, δεξασθε αὐτόν) <sup>11</sup> καὶ Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Ἰουστὸς, οἱ ὄντες ἐκ περιτομῆς, οὗτοι μόνου συνεργοὶ εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, οἵτινες ἐγενήθησάν μοι παρηγορία.

In verses 7-9, Paul wrote of two Gentiles who were beloved and faithful “brothers” and helpers to him.

Next, Paul writes of three Jewish believers Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus, who are with him in prison.

### I. ARISTARCHUS, “my fellow prisoner,” IS THERE        IN TIMES OF TROUBLE       .

Aristarchus means “best -ruler       ,” which was a title applied to Zeus. Aristarchus was from Thessalonica (**Acts 20:4**) and possibly grew up under a heavy pagan influence.

Though Paul refers to Aristarchus as his “fellow prisoner,” the only “chain” on him appears to be Love, the bond of perfection:

**Col 3:14** “But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.”

ARISTARCHUS STICKS BESIDE PAUL THROUGH THICK AND THIN.

**A.** He is there in the thick of it when the angry mob rises up at Ephesus.

**Acts 19:28,29** “Now when they heard *this*, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, ‘Great is Diana of the Ephesians!’ <sup>29</sup>So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul’s travel companions.”

**B.** He is there when the Jews plot against Paul.

**Acts 20:3,4** “and stayed three months. And when the Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia -- also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.”

**C.** He is there when Paul is shipped        off to Caesar.

**Acts 27:1,2** “And when it was decided that we [Luke, the author of Acts, is there as well] should sail to Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to *one* named Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment. <sup>2</sup> So, entering a ship of Adramyttium, we put to sea, meaning to sail along the coasts of Asia. Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, was with us.”

**D.** And he is there in Rome, right beside Paul in prison.

### ARE YOU LIKE ARISTARCHUS? ARE YOU A FRIEND IN HARD TIMES AS WELL AS GOOD?

**Prov 17:17** “A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity.”

**Prov 18:24** “A man who has friends must himself be friendly, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”

### II. MARK, “my fellow worker,” RETURNS AT THE TIME OF TROUBLE.

Mark means “border, boundary       .” He always seemed to be hanging around on the edges of the early church. Though Paul turned his back on Mark before the second missionary journey, Paul found him useful at the end.

MARK COMES BACK TO PAUL IN THE END.

**A.** MARK WAS PART OF THE “FAMILY       ” OF THE EARLY CHURCH.

**1.)** His home was a gathering place for early Christians—a Prayer meeting for imprisoned Peter took place in his home.

**Acts 12:12** “So, when he had considered *this*, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying.”

2.) He was presumably led to the Lord by Peter, because he calls him his “son.”

**1 Peter 5:13** “She who is in Babylon, elect together with *you*, greets you; and *so does* Mark my son.”

3.) He was a cousin to Barnabas, “the son of encouragement” of the early church (**Col 4:10**).

**Acts 4:36,37** “And *Joses*, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, <sup>37</sup> having land, sold *it*, and brought the money and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.”

#### B. MARK TRAVELED WITH BARNABAS AND PAUL ON THEIR 1ST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

1.) He was chosen by Barnabas and Paul after they brought relief money to the church in Jerusalem.

**Acts 12:25** “And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled *their* ministry, and they also took with them John whose surname was Mark.”

2.) He was possibly their Scripture reader in the synagogues on the trip.

**Acts 13:5** “And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as *their* assistant.”

3.) But he ran back home to Jerusalem and didn't finish the journey.

**Acts 13:13** “Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.”

a.) The reason for his departing is not given.

b.) But, he did run away once before.

**Mark 14:51-52** “Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around *his* naked *body*. And the young men laid hold of him, <sup>52</sup> and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.”

#### C. MARK WAS REJECTED BY PAUL FOR THE 2ND JOURNEY

**Acts 15:38** “But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work.”

#### D. BUT MARK WAS REQUESTED BY PAUL WHEN HE WAS IN PRISON.

**2 Tim 4:11** “Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.”

**ARE YOU LIKE MARK? DESPITE EARLY FAILURES, RUNNING AWAY FROM GOD, CAN YOU PROVE YOURSELF USEFUL AND A COMFORT IN TIMES OF TROUBLE?**

**2 Chron 15:2** “The LORD *is* with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.”

**Zech 1:3** “Therefore say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Return to Me,” says the LORD of hosts, “and I will return to you,” says the LORD of hosts.’”

### III. PAUL FINDS COMFORT IN THE TIME OF TROUBLE.

Picture yourself in prison, in chains. Dirty, dismal, depressing. Have you ever been in a place where you were inconsolable? Yet, Paul declares that these three “proved to be a comfort to” him.

The word for “comfort” *παρηγορία* *paragoria*, is not the common word for “comfort,” and occurs only here in Scripture. The word means “to speak alongside.”

PAUL LISTENS TO HIS COMFORTERS.

What words of comfort do you think these “fellow workers for the kingdom of God” would have spoken to Paul? They would have reminded Paul that:

1.) GOD IS IN CONTROL (JESUS HAS OVERCOME THE WORLD).

2.) THAT THIS, EVEN THIS, MAY BE USED TO FURTHER HIS KINGDOM.

3.) IT'S NOT REALLY ABOUT PAUL, AFTER ALL.

**John 16:33** “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”