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THE APOSTLE PAUL - LESSON 4

HIS MINISTRY PREPARATION

Jesus calls nobody into His fulltime ministry except that He prepares and equips them for that which he has called them to.

The eleven Apostles who walked with Jesus were trained and prepared to spread the gospel's message of salvation and demonstrated with miracles, signs, and wonders. However, they were not expertly trained in the scriptures. They had some knowledge, but not enough to give them sufficient establishment of doctrinal teaching for the new and rapidly growing church. Many who thought themselves to be worthy teachers were actually bringing much false teaching and leading believers into various heresies. Furthermore, the eleven were so locked into their "Jewishness" that they could not see the bigger picture of a gospel for the whole world; they still thought it to be just for Jews.

This is why Jesus chose Paul as he was uniquely suited for the task that was needed for the church to advance in outreach and teaching and doctrine.

What were Paul's natural qualifications?

1. He was a Roman citizen understanding Roman law and rule.
2. He was raised in a Hellenistic (Greek) social and educational environment which made him suitable to reach beyond Judaism to a pagan gentile society.
3. He was highly trained and taught in the Hebrew scriptures by the renowned top Torah teacher Gamaliel, and a Pharisee more highly regarded than any of his Jewish peers (Galatians 1:13).

Holy Spirit would use his great knowledge of scripture to interpret it into the context and understanding that was needed to establish doctrine and uniformity in the new movement of the Followers of the Way. Nobody else was as uniquely equipped as was Saul of Tarsus. But how was this to be brought about? He needed a different kind of preparation for this new calling.

After Ananias had prayed for Saul and anointed him with oil his sight was restored. He then was baptized in Damascus and the Holy Spirit led Saul whom we now shall call Paul, into Arabia. This was a desert type wilderness in the Arabian Peninsula to the far south of Israel. It was there in solitude that Holy Spirit began to personally teach Paul and give him the deep revelations he would need to become the greatest teacher, apologist, and missionary of the new church.

We do not know where exactly in the Arabian Peninsula that Holy Spirit took him to give the “doctrine” (teachings) of the New Testament. However, I find it quite intriguing that it was also in this same Arabian Peninsula where God gave Moses the “law” (teachings) of the Old Testament. It was there at Mount Sinai in the Arabian wilderness which is considered the location of the establishment of the teachings of the Old Covenant.

Paul is now taken to that Arabian wilderness to be equipped for the teachings of the New Covenant. It would not surprise me if it were also at Mt. Sinai, but that is not for us to know.

After this he returned to Damascus and began teaching there in the synagogue before going to Jerusalem. This period of preparation was three years, about the same amount of time Jesus spent preparing the Twelve.

After these three years of preparation from Jesus via the Holy Spirit, Paul was now equipped, taught, and prepared to fulfill his God-given destiny.