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THE APOSTLE PAUL – LESSON 7

COMMISSIONED AS A MISSIONARY

Barnabas, the overseer of the Antioch church, labored together with Saul for a year establishing the Syrian church as the center of outreach to the gentile world, especially the large region of Asia Minor.

When the Prophet Agabus prophesied of a severe upcoming famine, the Antioch church took up a large offering for their brothers in Judea. This was taken by Barnabas and Saul to Jerusalem to be distributed. Upon returning to Antioch, they brought young Mark (John Mark) with them from Jerusalem. This Mark would become a frequent traveler on Paul's missionary journeys and would later write the gospel bearing his name. This appears to have taken place around 44 to 45 A.D.

Barnabas and his sidekick Saul continued to minister a little while in Antioch. The established prophets in that church were Barnabas, Niger, Agabus, Manaen, and Lucius. As they were fasting and praying (ministering to the Lord), Holy Spirit gave them a clear directive. He said in Acts 13:3, ***“Separate (unto) me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.”*** This was their missionary call.

Upon additional fasting and prayer, the prophets laid hands upon them and commissioned them to go forth from Antioch to the rest of the gentile world.

Barnabas and Saul thus departed, taking along with them John Mark. From this point onward, Saul is now referred to as Paul. This is the onset of Paul's first missionary journey.

Beginning tomorrow, we will follow Paul's missionary journeys and how God used him to expand the church and establish a common doctrine for all believers. This will bring him much opposition, persecution, and afflictions, but it established the common ground upon which we benefit today. During these journeys he authored 13 of the epistles (letters) of our New Testament, or 14 if Hebrews is counted. Without his writings, the church of today could be in great discord and chaos. These “scriptures” were essential to the future of the church.