

GOD'S CALLING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Lesson Sixteen

IN ACTS: The Sending Out of Barnabas and Saul

Burden to Impart:

Those whom the Lord would use in His great work must first be prepared by learning to serve faithfully in their own local church.

Memory Verse: "And as they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for Me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (Acts 13:2).

Facts to Teach: [Scripture reading: Acts 11:25-26, 30; 12:25; 13:1-4]

1. Although God had opened the door of the gospel to the Gentiles, the Jewish believers only spoke the gospel to the Jews (Acts 11:19). Some, however, spoke to the Greeks at Antioch and a great number of them believed and turned to the Lord.
2. When the church in Jerusalem heard of this they sent out Barnabas to visit them and encourage them. Needing help to take care of this new church, Barnabas went to Tarsus and found Saul, and brought him back to Antioch. They stayed at Antioch for about one year. The testimony of the disciples was so strong that the people there first called them Christians (Acts 11:19-26).
3. When the Jewish Christians in Judea needed money the church in Antioch helped them, sending money to them with Barnabas and Saul (Acts 11:30). The Lord was making Barnabas and Saul into a team which He could use to serve the churches together.
4. One day as several prophets and teachers in Antioch were praying together and ministering to the Lord, the Holy Spirit told them (through their fellowship together) to set apart Barnabas and Saul for a special work He had called them for. They were to go out together to visit many Gentile lands and preach the gospel (Acts 13:1-4). This was a new beginning for the church, for now the gospel would be fully preached to all the nations, to "the remotest part of the earth," as Jesus had commanded (Acts 1:8).
5. While on this journey Saul changed his name to Paul. In the beginning of their gospel ministry Barnabas, the older brother, took the lead and Paul followed. After a short while the Bible shows us that Paul began to take the lead in their journey and Barnabas followed. There was no jealousy or competition between them to be the leader. They both worked together to serve the Lord in the gospel and allowed the Spirit to lead them in everything (Acts 13:13).