

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

### Acts: The Continuing Earthly Ministry Of Our Lord Jesus Christ

#### Part VI: The Ministry Of The Universal Church In Its Spread To The Ends Of The Earth, Acts 8:26-28:31

##### D. Christ's Directing Missionary Outreach To The World From Local Church Leaders

(Acts 13:1-3)

###### I. Introduction

- A. Many Bible-believing churches like ours prayerfully and financially support missionaries who have gone out to the ends of the earth to disciple the nations. At times, questions arise as to the Biblical basis for a local church's involvement with missionaries, questions deserving an answer.
- B. Acts 13:1-4a reveals the Biblical basis for missionary outreach especially in relations to local churches:

###### II. Christ's Directing Missionary Outreach To The World From Local Church Leaders, Acts 13:1-3.

- A. The **LOCAL** Church at Antioch of Syria had developed from its initial birth as a multiethnic, Jewish and Gentile Church into a strong ministry under the leadership of Barnabas and Saul, Acts 11:19-26.
- B. Consequently, that body had become staffed by leaders who ministered as prophets and teachers of the Word in a reflection of vast diversity of ethnicity and background, Acts 13:1:
  - 1. Barnabas was the primary leader of the Antioch Church, being named first in the list of leaders (Acts 13:1), and he was a Hebrew Levite who had hailed from the country of Cyprus, Acts 4:36.
  - 2. Simeon might have been a Jew, or a Jewish proselyte since "Simeon" is a Jewish name, but he also bore the "Latin nickname Niger" to indicate he had a dark complexion and moved in Roman circles in striking contrast to Barnabas' heritage and background, cf. Bible Knowledge Commentary, N. T., p. 387. The name "Niger" can indicate he was a native of the Niger River area in West Africa!
  - 3. Lucius of Cyrene was from North Africa, a man with a Latin name, Ibid.; G. Campbell Morgan, The Acts of the Apostles, 1924, p. 308.
  - 4. Manaen had been reared with Herod the tetrarch, the Herod Antipas who beheaded John the Baptist and who had shamefully mistreated Jesus at His trial, Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T. One man of the group had grown up opposed to God's messengers while the other had become a leader for Christ!
  - 5. Finally, and last in oversight since he was named last, was Saul. He had been a member of Israel's Sanhedrin, and had been saved from trying to destroy the Church to be its great promoter! (Acts 7-9)
- C. Regardless of their great ethnic and background diversity, these men unitedly ministered to God, 13:2a!
- D. In the process of this service, the Holy Spirit revealed to Simeon Niger, Lucius of Cyrene and Manaen that they should separate Barnabas and Saul for the work unto which the Lord had called them, Acts 13:2b.
- E. This direction established a great order for missionary outreach in relation to the local church (as follows):
  - 1. Saul was called to be an Apostle, the highest office in the Universal Church, Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 12:28.
  - 2. Christ had also predicted his ministry to the nations, to Israel and to kings of the earth, Acts 9:11-16.
  - 3. Then, it was Barnabas with Saul under him who had organized the new Church at Antioch, giving it order and direction for its ministry as the initial leaders of the group, Acts 11:19-26.
  - 4. The Church then sent Barnabas and Saul up to Jerusalem as their representatives, bearing their financial famine relief support to the Jerusalem believers, Acts 11:28-30.
  - 5. However, the Holy Spirit directed the **local** church leaders Simeon Niger, Lucius of Cyrene and Manaen to **direct** their **original** leaders, Barnabas and Saul, to the outreach ministry to which He had called them, **giving great authority to the LOCAL church relative to missionary outreach**, 13:2b.
- F. Accordingly, these local church leaders fasted and prayed, then laid their hands on the heads of Barnabas and Saul to indicate the association of the ministries of these men to the local church, and sent them out as an **extension** of their **local** church at Antioch, Acts 13:3; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Acts 6:6.

***Lesson:*** God (1) established the **WIDE ethnic and cultural mix of leaders at the LOCAL Church in Antioch of Syria**, (2) and then **AUTHORIZED** and (3) **SENT the missionary apostles, Barnabas and Saul, to the missionary work of God's assignment as an authorized extension of that LOCAL church.**

***Application:*** God's **WORLD MISSIONARY program of discipling the nations is AUTHORIZED by and is thus to be SUBJECT TO His WORKING in the LOCAL church leaders whom He ESTABLISHES.**