

Paul And Barnabas Sent Out



Foundations (Day 262)
by Derek Prince

Yesterday I argued that the book of the prophet Joel shows how important it is that leaders in a congregation take the lead in joint prayer and fasting.

Clearly the leaders of the church at Antioch understood this, for "they ministered to the Lord and fasted" (Acts 13:2).

The outcome of their waiting upon God with fasting was guidance from the Holy Spirit.

> "The Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'" (Acts 13:2)

One reward which they received was that the Holy Spirit spoke directly to them and in this way revealed to them the mind and purpose of God for the extension of His work through them. The phrase "the Holy Spirit said" indicates that the words following, "separate to Me Barnabas and Saul...," are the actual words spoken by the Holy Spirit.

In the light of other New Testament teaching on the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, it is reasonable and scriptural to suppose that the Holy Spirit spoke on this occasion through a human instrument, either by the gift of prophecy or by the gifts of tongues and interpretation.

It is important to notice the exact words used by the Holy Spirit:

> "Separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." (Acts 13:2)

The verb phrase "I have called" is in the perfect tense. This indicates that God had already spoken privately and individually to Paul and Barnabas about the work that He wanted them to do before He spoke publicly concerning them and their work to all the leaders of the church.

Thus the words spoken by the Holy Spirit publicly to the group of leaders were both a revelation and a confirmation of the call which Paul and Barnabas had already received

privately from God. Since Paul and Barnabas were both mentioned by name in the public utterance of the Holy Spirit, it is plain that this utterance was not given through either of them, but through one of the other men present.

How did these men react to this supernatural revelation of God's will?

> "Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away." (Acts 13:3)

Notice that they did not immediately send Paul and Barnabas off on their God-appointed mission. First they set aside further time for fasting and prayer. This was the second time they had fasted and prayed together. Through their first period of prayer and fasting they received the super- natural revelation of God's plan. In their second period of prayer and fasting it is reasonable to suppose that they united together to claim on behalf of Paul and Barnabas the divine grace and power which they would need for the accomplishment of God's plan.

Thereafter, the sending forth of Paul and Barnabas from the church at Antioch was consummated by one further ordinance. The other leaders of the church laid their hands upon Paul and Barnabas and so sent them forth.

Devotional

Transcript: WD-B052-262-ENG
Last Updated: 04 Feb 2025
Website: derekprince.com

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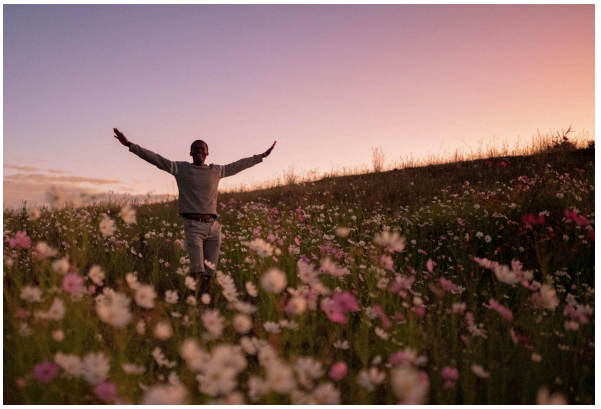

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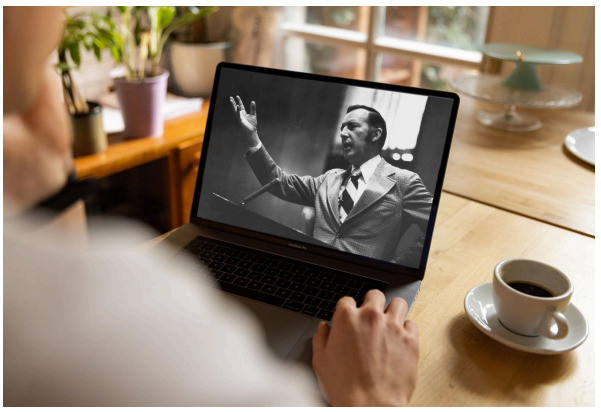

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