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A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE MINISTRY OF THE TWELVE AND OF PAUL

Unfortunately there is confusion in the doctrine of the churches. This is mainly because they don't distinct the apostle Paul's ministry from the one of the other twelve apostles.

The majority of sincere believers seem not to have asked themselves the question: **Why Paul?** They consider that our Lord in His so-called great commission, had sent the other apostles to *"teach all nations"* (Matthew 28:19). But not that **after** this, He raised up **another** apostle.

They neither consider that the twelve through their leaders, entered into a solemn agreement with this other apostle that he should go to the gentiles, **while they confined their ministry to Israel** (Galatians 2:7-9).

"and when James, Cephas (=Peter), and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they

gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." (Galatians 2:9)

Therefore some years after the 'great commission' to the eleven (made twelve in Acts 1:15-26), Paul could declare: *"FOR I SPEAK TO YOU GENTILES, IN AS MUCH AS I AM THE APOSTLE OF THE GENTILES, I MAGNIFY MINE OFFICE"* (Romans 11:13).

Paul himself constantly emphasizes the distinctiveness of his apostleship and his message.

Three times he speaks of *"my gospel"* (Romans 2:16; 16:25; 2 Timothy 2:8) and repeatedly he uses similar phrases, such as: *"the gospel which I preached"* (1 Corinthians 15:1), *"the gospel which was preached of me"* (Galatians 1:11) and *"that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles"* (Galatians 2:2).

Again and again he makes it plain that his message was *"received of the Lord"* (1 Corinthians 11:23) **by direct revelation** (Galatians 1:12, Ephesians 3:1-3).

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Galatians 1:11,12)

Paul even pronounces a curse on any who would preach to the Gentiles any other gospel than that which **he** had preached (Galatians 1:8). This is why we also find him saying again and again (though in varied phraseology): **Follow me** (1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; Philippians 3:17, 1 Thessalonians 1:6, 2 Thessalonians 3:9).

This means, that the prophetic program, of which the 'great commission' was a part, was interrupted by the dispensation of the grace of God through Paul. Hence the importance of distinguishing Paul's message and ministry from that of the twelve.