Comparing Paul's Commission with the Twelve's

Introduction:
1. When a person refers to "the great commission" they are inferring that there is one commission from our Lord that stands above all the rest.
2. What does the word "commission" mean? Webster's defines it this way:
   - An authorization or command to act in a prescribed manner or to perform prescribed acts.
   - Authority to act for, in behalf of, or in place of another; a task or matter entrusted to one as an agent for another.
3. It is interesting that the word "commission" is only used one time in God's Word.
   - In **Acts 26:12** Paul had authority and **commission** from the chief priests to go to Damascus and arrest believers in Christ.
   - A commission has to do with the authority to act on behalf of another. The one who grants the authority has the power to detail what he wants the other person to do and where they are to do it.
4. Nowhere in the Bible does God label a set of instructions as "the **great** commission." Mankind has sought to label certain passages of Scripture this way, but God never does.
5. As we study, we find that God's Word is a **series** of "great commissions."
   - John the Baptist received a great commission. **Luke 3:2-4; John 1:23, 33**
   - The twelve received a great commission in **Matthew 10:5-14**.
   - This one differed from the great commissions they received after Christ's resurrection. **Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8**
6. Many Bible teachers assume that Christ's words to the eleven after His resurrection and before His ascension were the final commissions He gave until now.
7. This is grossly incorrect and unscriptural. These were not Christ's **last** words. As we learned last week, Christ spoke, yet again (this time from heaven), and gave a great commission to a different person, the apostle Paul.
8. Was Paul's commission simply a reiteration of the commissions that Christ gave to the twelve? Is Paul's commission identical to the twelve's?
9. When one takes the time to truly examine the words of these commissions, they will find that they differ in many ways. Let's explore these commissions and seek to rightly divide the differences.

The Twelve	**Paul**
Begin at Jerusalem	Leave Jerusalem

1. When Christ commissioned the twelve, God made it very clear where they were to begin their work, Jerusalem. **Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8**
2. This was not a suggestion, but rather a command. It was one the twelve took very seriously and literally, despite great danger. **Acts 8:1**
3. Today, preachers allegorize this clear command by saying that these passages teach that we should always evangelize our hometown first. This is **not** the teaching or intended purpose of these Scriptures. Jerusalem was not their hometown. They were men of Galilee. **Acts 1:11**

4.   How does this compare with Paul's commission? When Paul went to Jerusalem, Christ told him to get out quickly. **Acts 22:18, 21**
5.   So clearly there were geographic differences in these commissions.

The Twelve	**Paul**
Received their commission on earth	Received his commission from heaven

1.   It is only logical the twelve would receive their commission on earth. They had been taught by Christ during His **earthly** ministry for three years. His parting words were spoken to them before He ascended from earth to heaven.
2.   They were given the promise that as Christ left the earth and went to heaven, He would one day return from the heavens to the earth. **Acts 1:9-11**
3.   This of course was a confirmation to them that Christ would, in fact, return and set up an **earthly** kingdom for Israel as promised. **Matthew 19:27-28, 6:10**
4.   Paul received His commission from Christ in the heavens (**Acts 9:3**). Paul called his commission *"the heavenly vision"* (**Acts 26:19**).
5.   Paul's commission involved making known a new heavenly organism called the body of Christ, whose blessings are not earthly, but heavenly. **Ephesians 1:3, 2:6-7**

The Twelve	**Paul**
Go to Gentiles only after witnessing throughout the land of Israel	Go directly to the Gentiles