

How to Function as a Qualified Minister of the New Covenant

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: Acts 9.

B. Paul found a new base for operation—the New Covenant that gives life as opposed to the Old Covenant that kills.

II. How Paul came to his conclusions about the New Covenant.

A. Paul's life was a model to people of what God can do and how hard it is for Him to do it.

B. The conversion of Paul was a supernatural transformation of his inner life.

C. As soon as Paul began to understand who Jesus was, he immediately began to preach what he knew.

D. Paul knit together from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. (Galatians 1:15-17)

1. Paul put this together during his time in Arabia.

2. It must have confused and puzzled him greatly at the time.

3. Paul likely spent his time in Arabia searching the Old Testament concerning Jesus.

III. The Jews planned to kill Paul in response to his new zealousness for Jesus.

IV. Paul goes to other Christians but is rejected there as well until he encounters Barnabus, but the Hellenists still try to kill him. (Galatians 1:18-19)

A. This is the Damascus experience all over again.

B. People are continually against Paul.

C. Paul's mission to the Gentiles was denied. (Acts 22)

D. Paul is sent to Tarsus so that the church would be at peace—an entirely different Paul returned broken and dependent upon God.

1. He learned that only when he looked to God instead of his own efforts would he see any results to his work.

2. Paul had to become a basket case in order to learn what God wanted him to know—blessed are the poor in spirit. (II Corinthians 11)

3. It was not as though Paul never exerted his efforts—he just needed to depend on God for results. (Psalm 127)

Application questions:

1. How was Paul's time in Arabia critical for his theological development? Have you had a time in "Arabia"?

2. What is the New Covenant that Paul learned? How does this work itself out practically?

3. In what ways do you find yourself relying upon your own efforts against God's will? How does the New Covenant give us freedom from this?
