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NEW ZEALAND BIBLE CLASS

PREACHING THE RISEN CHRIST

Speaker: Bro. Roger Lewis

Study #5: The beginning of Saul's preaching work

Reading: Acts 9:19-30

Well, brother chairman, thank you, and my dear brethren and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ and my dear young people.

Well, Acts 9, and you'll recall that in our last study, that we got to that episode in the life circumstances of Paul, his Damascus road experience, whereby he was confronted by the risen Christ. He really saw him, b&s, and his life was turned upside down and would never be the same. From that period of 3 days in the blackness of darkness, he, as it were, arises to newness of life in Acts 9 verse 18, as we read it last time, 'immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and was baptized'. So begins the life, of the most remarkable, in a sense, of all the apostles that would spring forth in this particular book. Because, from this time forth, this man would truly be Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, and he would in the course of preaching that message, turn the then known world upside down, as he preached his risen Lord.

So verse 19, where we take up the record tonight says as follows, 'That when he had received meat he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus'. Now one of the things, b&s, that we have to work out in the record of Acts 9, is that there is another journey that has to be fitted somewhere into this record. I'd like you to hold your hand in Acts 9 just for a moment and come to Galatians 1, and we're just briefly going to refer in the first instance, because there's a matter of another journey that needs to be fitted somewhere into the context of Acts 9, and we need to try and decide when that might be! You see, Acts 9 says that he was at Damascus when he was baptized, but in Galatians 1 we're told in the 17th verse that he didn't go up to Jerusalem to start with, but he says, 'I went to Arabia and returned again to Damascus'. Now Acts 9, b&s, doesn't mention the visit of Paul to Arabia, so we're left to try and sort out for ourselves, when exactly that visit might be in the context of Acts 9. There are 4 possibilities of when it might fit into the chapter; so what I'm going to suggest you do now, is if you want to take a note concerning this, it might be better to take it on a separate piece of paper, because I think this would make an excellent summary box at the bottom of Acts 9. The summary box might be entitled, **The visit to Arabia**, because there's a tremendous lesson that's going to emerge from this particular episode in the apostle's life, one I think of great exhortation and power.

The Visit to Arabia

So let's find out first of all when that visit might be! Well, here's the possibilities:

1. It could happen in the middle of verse 19, so that when it says in Acts 9, 'when he had received meat, he was strengthened (full stop) and that at that moment of time, he went immediately to Arabia. So that's the first possibility, it could be then.

2. The second possibility is at the end of verse 19, 'then was Saul certain days with the disciples who were at Damascus' and then he made a journey to Arabia at that point of time.

3. The third possibility is at the end of verse 22 when it says, 'After proving in Damascus the Messiahship of Christ', then it was possible that he could have gone to Arabia at the end of that verse.

4. The last possibility is at the end of verse 25, 'Then the disciples took him by night; let him down by a wall in a basket', but before he went to Jerusalem in verse 26 he, in fact, went to Arabia in the first instance.

So there's at least 4 possibilities, as to when it is in Acts 9, that we might be able to fit the apostle Paul's visit to Arabia that's recorded in Galatians 1 verse 17. So when was it? Well, we can only make a conjecture, but I think we can make a reasonable one, and it is my personal belief that the apostle Paul went to Arabia right at the middle of verse 19. So when it says, 'he received meat and he was strengthened (full stop)' then at that moment of time he went to Arabia at that precise moment. Now there are 2 or 3 reasons for believing that: the first is this, if you just hold your hands in Acts and come back to Galatians again, in case you've lost it, notice the force of what Galatians says. He says this in Galatians 1 verse 15, and I want you to notice these words, because they're going to be important in the next couple of verses in the book of Acts. In Galatians 1 verse 15 it says, 'But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; **immediately** I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but **I went into Arabia**'. I think that the force of the word 'immediately' in verse 16 suggests that the very first thing that the apostle did consequent on his baptism, was to not confer with anyone, not other disciples, not other brethren, not flesh and blood at all but, in fact, go into a period of isolation and seclusion, and to do that he went into the area of Arabia, at the very beginning of his ministry. Immediately, he says, so the phrase 'conferred not with flesh and blood in Galatians 1, is the equivalent of verse 17, 'rather I went into Arabia'.

So what did he do in Arabia? Well, he went into isolation, he went into seclusion, he went into privacy. Now why did he do that, b&s? Well, I believe that the apostle Paul felt

there was a desperate need for him now, to gather his thoughts together, as to what his understanding of the bible was all about! and in particular, he needed to go back to the Old Testament and to see all over again, the scriptures concerning Christ, that he might see that this was Jesus of Nazareth, and he needed time to do that. He needed time to prepare himself, he needed time for study, he needed time for prayer as I think he withdrew, that he might prepare himself for the greatness of the work that would lie ahead! He says, 'I went into Arabia! straightway, immediately, the moment I was baptized!' Now where might Arabia be? Well, we're not told in Galatians 1 where Arabia might be, but you know, it's interesting that the word 'Arabia' is only found in one other place in the whole of the New Testament record, and it's only two chapters later in the book of Galatians; these are the only two places where the word 'Arabia' occurs in the New Testament record. Here, the apostle says 'I went to Arabia' without saying where that might be or why it might be that he had gone, but in Galatians 4 we're told this by the apostle Paul in speaking of the allegory of Hagar and Sarah, he says in Galatians 4 verse 24, 'Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Hagar. For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia'. So the only other occasion in the entire New Testament record where the word 'Arabia' occurs is in the context of mount Sinai; mount Sinai is in Arabia, says the apostle Paul; and the suggestion is therefore, that when it says in Galatians 1 verse 17 that he withdrew for a period of private seclusion in **Arabia**, what we're really being told is that he went to **Sinai**.

Now why might he go to Sinai, b&s? because there, his great mentors had gone at earlier times. There the great champions that the apostle Paul would follow, had withdrawn for periods of study and seclusion: Moses and Elijah, and they had both gone into that particular area that they might receive a divine theophany, a divine communication from God concerning the commission that lay ahead of them. Do you know something interesting about these 3 men, b&s? they were all going to lead **an exodus**. Moses was going to lead the exodus of Israel out of the land of Egypt; Elijah is going to lead the second exodus of Israel out of the wilderness of the peoples; but the apostle Paul was going to lead the exodus of the Gentiles out of heathen paganism into the light of the truth. He was going to be the leader of an exodus, and these were his two champions. I think he went to the same place that he might be inspired as he began his work, so he went to Mount Sinai, b&s.

Now let me just show you a couple of interesting thoughts in connection with that! If you come back to Acts 9 firstly, let's just set the scene then in terms of that moment of time. Now do you notice what Acts 9 verse 19 says? it says that 'he was strengthened (full stop). Then was Saul certain days with the disciples'; then was Saul certain days with the disciples, now do you see that word 'then', that word is normally translated in the New Testament and it's the equivalent of a classic Hebrew expression, which normally is translated '**it came to pass**'. Now let me just give you a couple of references for that, in chapter 4 verse 5, we're told there, 'it came to pass on the morrow'; again in this chapter 9 we're told in verse 32, 'it came to pass, as Peter passed through all quarters'; another one is Acts 16 verse 16 which says, 'it came to pass as we went to prayer', and

the force of that expression, both the Greek and the Hebrew, is that of the beginning of a new event after some interval of time has elapsed. It doesn't matter how long the interval is, but the force of the expression is that here is a new beginning after an interval of time. So we could read verse 19, 'he received meat, he was strengthened, and it came to pass that Saul was certain days with the disciples', and we believe that the full of that expression 'it came to pass', **is the moment that he had slipped away into Arabia** down to mount Sinai. Now hold your hands in Acts 9 and come back to Elijah in mount Sinai, because in 1 Kings 19 we have the record of Elijah at mount Sinai; there's a couple of interesting things just to notice by way of connection with the apostle Paul here. In 1 Kings 19 we're told this, we're told that Elijah went down to mount Sinai that he might reason with God and that he might receive information concerning his work and his commission. In fact, we're told in verse 9 of 1 Kings 19, 'that when he came hither, he came unto a cave and lodged there'. Do you know that in the Hebrew, it shouldn't be translated 'a cave', it should be translated 'the cave', the definite article is there, he came thither unto the cave; now what cave, b&s, might that be? and the answer is, we believe, or we suggest, Exodus 33 verse 22, and of course, Exodus 33 takes us back to Moses and moreover to Moses on mount Sinai. What do we have there? in Exodus 33 we're told reading from verse 21 for connection, 'Yahweh said, behold there is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock and it shall come to pass while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock', and there into the cave, b&s, went Moses as the glory of God passed by him, whilst he was on mount Sinai. We suggest that it was into that very cave that Elijah came, in 1 Kings 19 verse 9, that he also might receive a divine manifestation of glory and have the truth communicated to him concerning the mission he was about to accomplish. I like to think, b&s, that the apostle came to the same cave, that he might receive a commission concerning the great exodus that he was about to lead.

Now in Acts 9, (but don't lose 1 Kings 19), let me just show you this, in terms of a clue that when we suggest that the apostle Paul when travelling to Arabia, really went to mount Sinai, just have a look at this. In 1 Kings 19 it says in verse 7, 'the angel of Yahweh touched him', verse 8, 'he gave him meat and he went in the strength of that meat 40 days'. In Acts 9 verse 17, Ananias touches Paul, in verse 19 he's given meat, and says the record, 'he was strengthened'; he was touched, he was given meat, and he was strengthened, that's straight out of the story of Elijah travelling to Horeb, b&s, and I think there's a clue there in the way that Luke writes the story of Acts 9, that it was mount Sinai to whence Paul was travelling on this occasion.

Interesting by the way, because if you come back to Acts 9, now hold your hand in Acts 9, when did Paul go there? the moment he was baptized, he felt that need straightaway, that he might go into seclusion. Keep hold of Acts 9 and come back to Mark 1, because here's another parallel, because you see, in Mark 1 we're told that this occurred at the time of the baptism of Christ. Verse 12 says, 'that after the baptism of Christ, **immediately the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness and He was there 40 days**'. Now can you associate the period of 40 days with Elijah travelling to mount Sinai in 1 Kings 19? yes, you can! because it's mentioned. Can we also associate Moses with

a period of 40 days on mount Sinai? yes we can because it's mentioned; and can we associate the Lord Jesus Christ withdrawn into the wilderness for 40 days? yes we can! because Mark 1 says that He did. Therefore, maybe it was that the apostle Paul travelled after his baptism all the way down to Sinai, and for 40 days he wrestled with the truth concerning the Messiahship of Christ, and maybe he received divine communication on those matters. Who would have spoken to Moses at mount Sinai? why, the angel Michael! who would have spoken to Elijah at mount Sinai? why, the angel Michael! who would have spoken to Christ in the wilderness, if there was a voice to come to Him? why, the angel Gabriel! who might have spoken to Paul to prepare him for his great work in Acts 9? well, I'll leave that for you to think about as to who it might have been, but I think he received a divine communication just as his great predecessors had. For 40 days he was in that place before his labours began.

So, just come back to Acts 9 in the one hand, and Galatians 1 again, and let's just have a look at Galatians 1 now, and read that again and we see now the full force of what Galatians says. So Galatians 1 says in verse 15, 'when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach Him; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Nether went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia **and returned again** to Damascus'. So when the period of preparation was finished, when that period of study was over, he came back that he might do what? Verse 16, 'reveal God's Son in him'. Now come and have a look at Acts 9 and see what he does, the moment he arrives back in Damascus in Acts 9 verse 19, 'Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus, and **straightway** he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God'. That's exactly what Galatians says, that God separated me that He might reveal His Son in me, and he comes straight back to Damascus from that Sinai experience, b&s, and he testifies that Christ is the Son of God.

Do you know what that means, by the way, what does it mean when it says that Paul testified that to the Jews in Damascus? Well, you see, the phrase **Son of God** here is equivalent to the Old Testament concept of **Messiah**. Do you remember 2 Samuel 7 verse 14, 'that I will say of Him, that I am His Father, and He shall be My Son'. Psalm 2 verse 7, 'Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee'; Psalm 89 verse 26 and 27, 'I will make Him My firstborn, He will call Me, Father'. So the Messiah of the Old Testament was seen to be the Son of God. Shall I just give you those quotations again, 2 Samuel 7 verse 14, Psalm 2 verse 7 and Psalm 89 verse 26 and 27. This was the Old Testament concept of who Messiah was, He was the Son of God. Do you know, b&s, in the New Testament in John 1, when Jesus first met Nathanael, Nathanael says to Him, 'Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, John 1 verse 49, that's what the Jews believed, that's what the Jews thought. In fact, in Mark 14 verse 61 when Jesus was confronted by the rulers, verse 61 tells us, 'Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?' That's who Messiah was, the Son of God, the Son of the Blessed, so when Paul preaches that Christ is the Son of God in verse 20, what he's preaching is the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth; that He was the fulfilment of those Old

Testament prophecies; He was the One, He is the One, He is the risen Christ!

Verse 21 of Acts 9 says, 'But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?' And you can imagine how that must have happened, b&s, because all of Damascus had heard about this one who was coming up from Jerusalem, that he might lay waste to the believers; and he arrives in Damascus, he disappears and no one sees him, he disappears into the house that he might be baptized, the moment he's baptized he disappears off into the wilderness. No one in Damascus knows where he is; all of a sudden out of the blue, poof! he's back there in Damascus and what's he doing? oh, no, he's not coming to lay hold on the believers, he's coming to support them! he's coming to preach that Christ is the Son of God! No wonder verse 21 says 'they were amazed', because this is the man who came to destroy the believers and now, what's he doing? what's he saying?

Verse 22 says, 'But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt in Damascus, **proving that this is very Christ**'. Now you see that word 'proving' in verse 22, it's a lovely word, b&s, it's the same word translated in Ephesians 4 verse 16 'compact together' (4822), and it's the same word translated in Colossians 2 verse 2 as 'knit together', and that's the real meaning of the word, **'to put together' or to 'knit together'**. So when it says in verse 22 that he confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ, what it means, b&s, is he **knitted quotations together**, he stuck them together one by one; he had these fantastically powerful scriptural arguments and he absolutely trounced the Jews. Do you know where he got all those arguments from, b&s? do you know how he was able to knit together passage after passage into an unbreakable garment that they could not destroy? He learnt all that in Arabia, didn't he? these are the fruits of the apostle's time of seclusion at mount Sinai. He learned how to knit those quotations together, so that nobody could defeat him concerning the Messiahship of Christ. There's a tremendous lesson here, isn't there? marvellous lesson when you think about!

You see, this is a great man, but for all his greatness, b&s, in order for him to perform his work in the truth that God had marked out for him to do, he needed time for preparation. So he went away and did just that! Great things in the truth, b&s, are only accomplished by great preparation. If we want to be fruitful in our Master's service, then we need to prepare ourselves because the apostle did; for all his greatness and for all his knowledge, he needed to bow before Christ at mount Sinai and learn to knit those quotations together like he'd never seen them before. So there's a marvellous lesson here, isn't there? So how's our preparation going on for our labours in the truth? Maybe this is a special exhortation to young people in the truth, and the young baptized ones in the truth, or even the ones that aren't baptized; you know, in this place because of the blessing of God, we're at least thinking, we haven't said that it's going to happen, but we're at least thinking about the possibility of another ecclesia; if that ever happens, b&s, it will be by the grace of God and so that the truth can flourish in more than one place in this city. It will be a great blessing should it ever happen that the truth might

prosper. But if it ever happens, there's going to be Sunday school teachers needed, and young sisters are going to have to present the story of Esther, or the story of Sarai, or the story of Hannah which such power that little kids never forget that story again in their lives! So have you prepared for that story? can you give that Sunday school class? Young men also are going to have to stand up and talk but the Trinity in such a way that nobody can gainsay the way they knitted those quotes together, so powerfully, so have you prepared that lecture on the Trinity yet? because it's going to be needed. So the lesson of this story, b&s, is for all of us, we've got to withdraw to mount Sinai! We've got to make our way down there, somehow, we've got to get down to mount Sinai and find that time of privacy and seclusion, that we might prepare ourselves for the labours of the truth, because we'll never accomplish them any other way! It needs time, it needs preparation! you've got to find your mount Sinai. I've got to find my mount Sinai, so that we might prepare for the labours, for whatever it is, that God asks us to perform in our work of the truth. The apostle knew this, the apostle had to do it, and so did his Lord, and so did Moses and so did Elijah, so of course, we have to! b&s, don't we? We've got to get down to mount Sinai and there in the isolated vastness of the cave, we've got to hear the voice of God speaking to us and learn how to knit those quotations together so that we also can prove that this One is indeed, the very Christ!

Now don't you think that makes a fantastic box at the bottom of Acts 9? the story of the visit to Arabia? you see, that's worthwhile putting some effort together; it might take a wee while, you need to write it up separately but then you need to get it down in Acts 9, because it's not there! it's actually not in the story of Acts 9 and yet it really happened. We need to piece together that story from Galatians, but when we do, there's a marvellous lesson emerges!

Well, verse 23 says, 'After that **many days** were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him'. Now how many days might '**many days**' be? Well, Galatians 1 said, 'after 3 years, I went up to Jerusalem', and we believe that the 3 years of Galatians 1 verse 18, answers to the phrase 'many days' of Acts 9 verse 23. In fact, if you just come back to 1 Kings 2 for a moment, it's quite interesting actually that Acts says it was many days, Galatians says, well actually it was 3 years and it's interesting that in 1 Kings 2 those two expressions are, in fact, found side by side as being equivalent. In 1 Kings 2 verse 38 it says, 'And Shimei said unto the king, The saying is good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem **many days** (Acts 9). And it came to pass at the end of **three years**' (Galatians 1). So 'many days' equals 'three years' in this particular case, anyway, 1 Kings 2 verses 38 and 39. Certainly that's the period of time, we believe, that Acts 9 verse 23 is talking about, so after that 3 year period of, first of all, time in Sinai, and the preaching work in Damascus.

Well, verse 23 says, 'the Jews took counsel to kill him', they couldn't answer his arguments, they couldn't handle his scriptural debate, and so the best thing to do was to simply resort to violence and so verse 24 says, 'their laying await was known of Saul. They watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket'. Now it's interesting actually, the word 'basket'

is an interesting word; there are 2 Greek words for basket. You remember in the feeding of the 5,000 and the feeding of the 4,000, there were baskets of fragments taken up and there's one particular Greek word used for the baskets of the feeding of the 5,000 that was a **Jewish** multitude (2894), and there's one particular Greek word used for the basket associated with the feeding of the 4,000, that's a **Gentile** multitude (4711); just by a strange coincidence, which basket do you think it might be that the apostle Paul was let down in on this occasion? the basket of the feeding of the 5,000? or the basket of the feeding of the 4,000? of course, the answer is the feeding of the 4,000, because the feeding of the 4,000 was a miracle to a Gentile multitude, and this man is going to break the bread of life to the Gentiles, so he's let down in that particular basket, the cross reference, by the way, is Mark 8 verse 20. Now again, hold your hands in Acts 9, because this moment of flight from Damascus is quoted by the apostle Paul, this moment when he was let down in a basket by the wall, it's quoted by the apostle Paul as **the beginning of all the sufferings that he would ever endure**. It all began on the day he says, I was let down a wall in a basket. Do you know that? he quotes that! He quotes this very episode, he says, 'that's when all my troubles began.

In 2 Corinthians 11 he puts it this way; and you'll remember that 2 Corinthians 11 is, in fact, a recital of the sufferings that Paul endured in his work of the truth. He says, verse 23, 'Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft', and he then proceeds to catalogue the string of all the perils, and of all distresses that he had ever endured up to that time in his work of preaching the truth. Then, he says this at the end of 2 Corinthians 11 in verse 31, 'The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not. In Damascus, he said, in Damascus, the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: and through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands'. Paul records this as an ignominious moment in his life, a moment of absolute humility in his life, that **began with his conversion**. So he says, 'there where my ministry in the truth began, in Damascus where my work began, there my sufferings began!' and the persecutor became the persecuted from that moment forth, he would always be persecuted for the rest of his life. Paul never forgot that! He said, 'that's when all my sufferings started. I lie not, I was let down through a window in a basket, you can almost sense the apostle's humiliation; he was so humiliated by the embarrassment of that moment! his whole life of suffering was marked by the day that he came down the wall in a basket, because there was a king trying to catch him!

That's interesting, isn't it? there was a king trying to catch him. Now come back to the Old Testament; hold your hands in Acts 9 and have a look at these two references, because here's a couple of crackers! So in Joshua 2 we're told this, you see, the apostle Paul was actually in very, very good company, it might have been a shameful episode in his life, but really there was a wonderful story, behind the day that he was let down in a basket by the wall. For in Joshua 2 we're told this in verse 15, 'Then Rahab let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and

she dwelt upon the wall'. So here are two men who are let down the wall through a window, why? verse 3, 'the king is watching for them' and they escape down the wall by a rope, and do you know what those men went on to, b&s? they went on to the victory of the ultimate overthrow of Jericho on behalf of Israel. In 1 Samuel 19 we read these words concerning the life of David in verse 12, 'So Michal let David down through a window: and he went, and fled, and escaped'. Do you know why, b&s? because there was a king hunting for him, king Saul! and he was let down by a cord through the window; and do you know what happened to David, b&s? after being let down by a cord through the window? he went on to victory! Now the apostle is let down by a cord through a window, but if he thought about the story of Joshua 2 and the story of 1 Samuel 19, he would have been encouraged by the thought that on both those previous occasions, the king never caught the man of God, and the man of God went on to ultimate victory as the apostle Paul would himself in his labours. A shameful episode it might have been, but he was in good company, b&s, and in the very story of the episode of coming down the wall at nighttime, laid the seeds of his ultimate triumph.

So Acts 9 verse 26 says, ' When Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples, but they were all afraid of him and believed not that he was a disciple. Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and how He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus'. You can imagine the concern of the disciples, by the way, because this had been their most powerful persecutor; this was their greatest enemy, he was the greatest opponent of the ecclesia, and for him now to suddenly turn up in Jerusalem; and, maybe, by the way, the message hadn't got back from Damascus yet. Depending on how long he's been in Arabia and how recently he had returned to Damascus, it may be that those of Jerusalem, didn't know; and now all of a sudden, the very man that caused the Jerusalem ecclesia to scatter in Acts 8, is back there trying to join himself to the disciples. Oh yes, I think they'd be afraid alright and it took Barnabas, that friendly and helpful disciple in verse 27, to declare to the apostles, of which, by the way, there were only two at the time, because Galatians 1 tells us that he only met with Peter and James the Lord's brother, they were the only apostles he met on this particular journey, but they accepted him. We know that because Galatians tells us that he dwelt in Peter's house, he stayed with Peter for the time that he was there.

Verse 28 says, 'He was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem', and of course, that phrase **'coming in and going out'** is taken straight from the Old Testament and the work and language of the shepherd of the flock; because he who came out and went in, was the leader or the shepherd of the flock. In Numbers 27 verse 17, when Moses knew that he was going to die, he says to God, 'oh that Yahweh might appoint a man over the congregation which may go in and come out before them. What Moses wanted was the appointment of a shepherd for the flock; now this is the word here being used to describe Paul; he's only just arrived at Jerusalem, he only just been introduced to the apostles and yet already he has a prominent place of influence amongst the Jerusalem disciples. He was going to be, b&s, such a powerful person in

the work of the truth. So his influence there was immediate, it was immediately felt.

Verse 29 says, 'He spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians, but they went about to slay him'. Now it's interesting because again, if you hold your hands in Acts 9 and come back to Acts 6 for a moment; now you know who the Grecians were, the Grecians were Greek speaking Jews, they were Hellenists and in Acts 6 verse 1, the controversy of Acts 6 was a dispute between the Grecians (the Greek speaking Jews) and the Hebrews (the Aramaic speaking Jews); it's a controversy between Jew and Jew, but the Grecians are Greek speaking Jews or Hellenists, and we believe that it was the Hellenists that Stephen debated with. So in verse 9 when it says, 'There arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake'. Stephen's work of preaching was amongst the Greek-speaking Jews, he debated with them! and when the apostle Paul comes to Jerusalem, b&s, I believe that he disputed with exactly the same people. Do you know why he did that? in fact, do you see that word 'disputed' in Acts 6 verse 9 that they disputed with Stephen, that's the same word in Acts 9 verse 29 when it says that Paul came and '**disputed**'(4802) against the Grecians. Not only is it the same word, b&s, it's the only two times that word is found, the day when Stephen disputed with them and the day that Paul disputed with them. I think we're being told that Paul took up the work of Stephen. He went back to Jerusalem and he had to lay his own ghosts to rest, as it were, he had to put behind him the terror and the horror of the fact that he stood by at the time of the death of Stephen. So what he did was, he took up Stephen's own work, in fact, I think he probably went back to the very same synagogue; and he disputed with them concerning the name of the Lord Jesus, just as Stephen had done. Just as they slew Stephen, so they sought to slay now, the apostle Paul at the end of verse 29.

Verse 30, 'Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus'. You'll notice this, it wasn't when Paul knew that he was about to be slain, that he went down to Caesarea, it's **when the brethren knew**, did you notice that? You'll find that now that the life of Paul has begun (tape turned) certainly not the threat of death. Go back to verse 25, do you see what happened there? when the Jews took counsel to kill him in Damascus, who actually removed him? verse 25, '**the disciples** took him by night and let him down in a basket. Now the Grecians are about to try and slay Paul in verse 29, who does something about it? 'which when **the brethren** knew, verse 30, they brought him down to Caesarea'. Come and have a look at chapter 17, in Acts 17 and verse 10, trouble at Thessalonica! what happens because of the trouble? verse 10, 'and **the brethren** immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea; and then there was trouble, the Jews of Thessalonica, verse 13, came and stirred them up at Berea, so what happens? verse 14, 'immediately **the brethren** sent away Paul to go, as it were, to the sea'. Paul wasn't moved by the threat of death, b&s, Paul would never have gone if it was just for himself, it was the brethren who took the initiative to try and move him on this occasion.

So given that on most occasions Paul wasn't moved by these sorts of things, why was it that he allowed the brethren to take him down to Caesarea and send him forth to Tarsus on this occasion? Well I think, b&s, that the apostle Paul allowed it because the Lord Jesus Christ told him to go, because if you come to Acts 22 we're told that Paul received a specific visitation by Christ, telling him to leave on this occasion. So although the brethren were the ones who initiated his transfer to Caesarea, the apostle agreed with it, because Christ Himself had asked him to leave. So we're told this in Acts 22 verse 17, 'It came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; And saw Him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem for they will not receive thy testimony concerning Me' And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on Thee: And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by and consenting unto his death; and kept the raiment of them that slew him'. You see, he could never forget that moment, b&s, and Jesus said to him, verse 21, 'Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles', and if you just come back to Acts 9 for a moment, when it says in verse 30, that the brethren brought him down to Caesarea and sent him forth to Tarsus, the word 'sent forth' in verse 30, is the very word out of the mouth of Christ, in Acts 22 verse 21, 'I will **send thee far hence**', so the apostle consented to this transfer because he believed it was the very wish of Christ concerning him. Hitherto, he had preached to the Jews, now he was to go forth to Tarsus, and the moment he reached Tarsus, he would start to prepare for his labours now, his greater labours that would take the truth to the Gentiles themselves; the great work of the exodus was about to begin!

So from Acts 9 verse 30, the apostle Paul now is going to disappear, until Acts 11 verse 25. He won't turn up again until Acts 11 verse 25, but when he reappears he will do so in the context of speaking the truth to those who are Gentiles in another place and his work of exodus was going to commence. The world would never be the same, b&s, it would be turned upside down by this latter day Moses, this latter day Elijah, who had prepared himself so furiously, so intensely, and was now ready to knit those passages together, that he might preach to all the world that this, indeed, is very Christ. This was the spirit of the apostle Paul, b&s, as he began his work in the truth!

'Awake my soul, and with the sun,
The daily stage of duty run;
Shake off dull sloth, and joyful rise
To pay thy morning sacrifice.

Redeem thy misspent time that's past,
And live this day as if thy last,
Improve thy talent with due care
For the great day, thyself prepare.