

Sha'ul of Tarsus & His Letters ~ Part 4

Sha'ul Faces a Plot to Kill Him

We pick up the story of **Sha'ul** after his encounter with **Yeshua** in Acts 9:23.

²³ Quite some time later, the non-believing Jews gathered together and made plans to kill him (Sha'ul); ²⁴ but their plot became known to Sha'ul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to do away with him; ²⁵ but under cover of night, his talmidim took him and let him down over the city wall, lowering him in a large basket. ¹

Quite some time later, pictures **Sha'ul** dutifully preaching **Yeshua** as **Messiah** for long enough to become the uppermost enemy of unbelieving **Jews** in **Dammeseek**. He had come to help their struggle against the growing **Messianic** movement, but now he had become the chief cause of its growth. Thus, they conspired to kill him. Unable to leave via the city gates, **Sha'ul** escaped in a most undignified but effective manner: he was placed in a large basket and shoved through an opening in the wall (lit. "through the wall").

Bible history is the record of God using small things. When God wanted to set the plan of salvation in motion, He started with a little baby named Isa'ac (Gen. 21). When He wanted to overthrow Egypt and set His people free, He used a baby's tears (Ex. 2:1-10). He used a shepherd boy and a sling to defeat a giant (1 Sam. 17) and a little lad's lunch to feed a multitude (John 6). He delivered the Apostle Paul from death by using a basket and a rope (Acts 9:23-25). Never despise the day of small things, for God is glorified in small things and uses them to accomplish great things.

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²⁶ On reaching Yerushalayim, he tried to join the talmidim; but they were all afraid of him - they didn't believe he was a talmid.

Among **Believers** in **Yerushalayim**, **Sha'ul's** reputation as a persecutor of the church was unchanged. Either news had not come from **Dammeseek**, or else the disciples in **Yerushalayim** took a "wait and see" attitude. Perhaps they even suspected his conversion was just a ruse to infiltrate the fledgling **Messianic** movement and destroy it from within.

²⁷ However, Bar-Nabba got hold of him and took him to the emissaries. He told them how Sha'ul had seen the Lord while traveling, that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Dammeseek, Sha'ul had spoken out boldly in the name of Yeshua.

Bar-Nabba (Barnabas) was convinced of the genuineness of **Sha'ul's** conversion, apparently because he had talked to him. **Bar-Nabba** ("son of encouragement") was the nickname that the apostles gave to **Joseph**, a prominent member of the early church (Acts 4:36). **Bar-Nabba** was a companion of the **Sha'ul** in the early years of his ministry. The background information known about **Bar-Nabba** comes from Acts 4:36-37: **Luke** reports that the apostles gave the name **Bar-Nabba** to a man named Joseph. **Bar-Nabba** was from the tribe of **Levi** and was born on the island of **Cyprus**. He was also a man of some means since he "owned a tract of land" (Acts 4:37) - but he was generous, for he sold his land and gave the money to the **Emissaries**. ²

²⁸ So he remained with them and went all over Yerushalayim, continuing to speak out boldly in the name of the Lord. ²⁹ He talked and debated with the Greek-speaking Jews, but they began

¹ Acts 9:23-25.

² Lexham Bible Dictionary.

making attempts to kill him. ³⁰ When the brothers learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus. ³

Sha'ul talked and debated with the Greek-speaking Jews, some of whom may have been involved with him in Stephen's stoning (7:57–60). A **Greek-speaking Jew** himself, **Sha'ul** spoke Greek as his primary language. Seeing one of their own, a former persecutor of the **Messianic** community no less, argue on behalf of **Yeshua** was more than they could bear. They attempted to kill **Sha'ul**, with the result that he was whisked away to his hometown. ⁴

³¹ Then, the Messianic community throughout Y'hudah, the Galil, and Shomron enjoyed the peace and was built up. They lived in the fear of the Lord, with the counsel of the Ruach HaKodesh, and their numbers kept multiplying. ⁵

In our next post, **Sha'ul** heads to **Antioch**.

³ Acts 9:26–30.

⁴ Holman Illustrated Bible Commentary.

⁵ Acts 9:31.