

## Sha'ul of Tarsus & His Letters ~ Part 19

### Sha'ul's Letter to the Galatians ~ Part 4

We pause the ongoing story of **Sha'ul** to examine his **Letter to the Galatians**.

**Note: To examine the graphics in this series, click on them for a pop-up version.**

In our last post, we left off in Chapter 1 with **Sha'ul** describing his travels throughout **Asia Minor**. In this post, he recounts going down to **Yerushalayim**.

#### Gentile Evangelism Accepted

*2<sup>1</sup> Then after fourteen years I again went up to Yerushalayim, this time with Bar-Nabba; and I took with me Titus. 2 I went up in obedience to a revelation, and I explained to them the Good News as I proclaim it among the Gentiles - but privately, to the acknowledged leaders. I did this out of concern that my current or previous work might have been in vain.*

**Sha'ul** explained ... the **Good News** he was preaching to the leaders (at least **Ya'akov**, **Kefa**, and **Yochanon**) for helpful discussion. The phrase *might have been in vain*, but it reflects concern over brewing disunity in the **kehilah**.

*3 But they didn't force my Gentile companion Titus to undergo b'rit-milah (circumcision). 4 Indeed, the question came up only because some men who pretended to be brothers had been sneaked in - they came in surreptitiously to spy out the freedom we have in the Messiah Yeshua so that they might enslave us. 5 Not even for a minute did we give in to them so that the truth of the Good News might be preserved for you.*

To make it clear that he had not adjusted his **Gospel** message during this private conference with the **kehilah** leadership in **Yerushalayim**, **Sha'ul** used **Titus** as a test case. Had **Sha'ul** caved into the view that had recently been preached in the **Galatian kehilah's** (that a **Gentile** needed to be circumcised and keep the **Mosaic** law to become a **Believer**; 2:16; 5:2-3), **Titus**, a **Gentile** convert, would have been compelled to be circumcised, but he was not, reflecting the fact that **the recognized community leaders in Yerushalayim accepted Sha'ul's Gospel**.

*6 Moreover, those who were the acknowledged leaders—what they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by outward appearances - these leaders added nothing to me. 7 On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the Good News for the Uncircumcised, just as Kefa had been for the Circumcised; 8 since the One working in Kefa to make him an emissary to the Circumcised had worked in me to make me an emissary to the Gentiles.*

**Sha'ul** was not saying in these verses that there are two different **Gospel** messages. Instead, **God** appointed him as the apostle to the **Gentiles** (Acts 22:21; Romans 11:13), and **Kefa** served as an apostle to the Jews. **God** was at work in each ministry.

*9 So, having perceived what grace had been given to me, Ya'akov, Kefa, and Yochanan, the acknowledged pillars of the community, extended to me and Bar-Nabba the right hand of fellowship; so that we might go to the Gentiles, and they to the Circumcised. 10 Their only request was that we should remember the poor - which very thing I have spared no pains to do.*

See Acts 11:27-30, 12:25, 24:17; Romans 15:25-27; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; and 2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15 for evidence not merely that **Sha'ul** spared no pains to remember the poor of **Yerushalayim**, but that he

regarded it as only just, a matter of principle, for **Gentiles** to give material support to **Jews**. Presumably, this aid benefited both the **Messianic** and the **non-Messianic Jewish** poor; there is no reason to suppose otherwise.

***<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, when Kefa came to Antioch, I opposed him publicly because he was clearly in the wrong.***

Because of the hypocritical behavior of **Kefa** in **Antioch**, **Sha'ul** opposed him to his face (see v. 14 below).

***<sup>12</sup> For prior to the arrival of certain people from [the community headed by] Ya'akov, he had been eating with the Gentile believers, but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself because he was afraid of the faction who favored circumcising Gentile believers. <sup>13</sup> And the other Jewish believers became hypocrites along with him so that even Bar-Nabba was led astray by their hypocrisy.***

**Kefa's** fear-based hypocrisy was even more flagrant because, besides eating with the **Gentiles** in the kehilah at **Syrian Antioch**, he had been previously instructed by a vision to fellowship with **Cornelius**, the **Gentile**. The words of **Ya'akov** at the **Yerushalayim Council** did not reflect that he believed **Gentiles** needed to be circumcised to be **Believers** (cp. Acts 15:1–5 with Acts 15:13–21), but **Ya'akov** did counsel respect by the **Gentiles** for traditional **Jewish** practices (Acts 15:20–21). **Kefa's** hypocrisy swayed the rest of the **Jews** in the kehilah at **Antioch**, including **Bar-Nabba**.

***<sup>14</sup> But when I saw that they were not walking a straight path, keeping in line with the truth of the Good News, I said to Kefa, right in front of everyone, "If you, who are a Jew, live like a Goy and not like a Jew, why are you forcing the Goyim to live like Jews?" <sup>1</sup>***

As soon as **Sha'ul** determined that the truth of the **Gospel** was hanging in the balance, he confronted **Kefa** in front of everyone (i.e., in a **kehilah** meeting). **Kefa's** behavior in eating **Gentile** meals before the group "from **Ya'akov's** letter" arrived in **Antioch** (vv. 11–12) showed he believed it was right to live like a **Gentile** among **Gentiles**. Thus, his later decision to compel the **Gentiles** in the **kehilah** at **Antioch** to live like **Jews** was seen as inconsistent and hypocritical.

In our next post, we will continue to explore **Sha'ul's Letter to the Galatians**, starting in chapter 2:15.

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<sup>1</sup> Galatians 2:1-14.