

## Sha'ul of Tarsus & His Letters ~ Part 22

### Sha'ul's Letter to the Galatians ~ Part 7

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 3:5 with **Sha'ul** describing the **Law & Faith**. In this post, he continues to explain his **Doctrine of Justification**.

#### Avraham's Faith

*<sup>6</sup> It was the same with Avraham: "He trusted in God and was faithful to him, and that was credited to his account as righteousness." <sup>7</sup> Be assured, then, that it is those who live by trusting and being faithful who are really children of Avraham. <sup>8</sup> Also, the Tanakh, foreseeing that God would consider the Gentiles righteous when they live by trusting and being faithful, told the Good News to Avraham in advance by saying, "In connection with you, all the Goyim will be blessed." <sup>9</sup> So then, those who rely on trusting and being faithful are blessed along with Avraham, who trusted and was faithful.*

In Galatians 3:6–9, Sha'ul appeals to Avraham's trust in God as scriptural support for his gospel of justification by faith. Then, in the following passage, he interprets Yeshua's death as a curse in light of Deut 27:26. To demonstrate the primacy of justification by faith over law-keeping, Sha'ul draws attention to the chronology of the Tanakh narrative in Genesis 3:15-18. He argues that since the promise to Avraham (Gen 12:2–3; 15:5; 17:8; 22:17–18) was made 430 years *before* the law was given (Exod 12:40), the Avrahamic promise - that the Gentiles would be included as part of God's people - transcends the law and its requirements.

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Lexham Research Commentary ~ Galatians

#### Yeshua Saves, Not Our Works

*<sup>10</sup> For everyone who depends on legalistic observance of Torah commands lives under a curse since it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not keep on doing everything written in the Scroll of the Torah."*

The key to this paragraph is in sorting out when the Greek word "**nomos**" means God's **Torah** and when it means legalistic perversion of it, as discussed in 2:16b and 2:19. Most translations fail to make this essential distinction, are not **"rightly dividing the word of truth"** (2 Timothy 2:15, KJV), and thus both misrepresent **Sha'ul** and foster **antisemitism**.

*<sup>11</sup> Now, it is evident that no one comes to be declared righteous by God through legalism since "The person who is righteous will attain life by trusting and being faithful." <sup>12</sup> Furthermore, legalism is not based on trusting and being faithful but on [a misuse of] the text that says, "Anyone who does these things will attain life through them."*

**Sha'ul** added Habakuk 2:4 to the example of **Avraham** being declared righteous ... by faith. Negatively, he quoted Leviticus 18:5 to show that since **Scripture** says righteousness is **by trusting and being faithful**, it is impossible to be righteous by keeping the law.

*<sup>13</sup> The Messiah redeemed us from the curse pronounced in the Torah by becoming cursed on our behalf, for the Tanakh says, "Everyone who hangs from a stake comes under a curse." <sup>14</sup> Yeshua the Messiah did this so that in union with him, the Gentiles might receive the blessing announced to Avraham so that through trusting and being faithful, we might receive what was promised, namely, the Spirit. <sup>1</sup>*

Since **Sha'ul's** readers were trying to be justified by the "works of the law" (2:16), they were already under its curse. Fortunately, **Yeshua** had redeemed those under such a curse by His crucifixion. **Sha'ul** quoted Deuteronomy 21:23 to show that **Yeshua** was cursed in our place by His being hung on a tree (the cross). The **Gentiles** receive the blessing of **Avraham** through faith in **Yeshua**. This places them in a position to receive the promised **Ruach**.

In our next post, we will continue to explore **Sha'ul's Doctrine of Justification**, starting in chapter 3:15.

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<sup>1</sup> Galatians 3:6–14.