

## Sha'ul of Tarsus & His Letters ~ Part 30

### Shaul's Letter to the Galatians ~ Part 15

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

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

In our last post, we left off in Chapter 5:12 with **Sha'ul** describing **Circumcision: A Matter of Law ~ Part 2**. In this post, we continue to explore his **Doctrine on Messianic Liberty**.

#### Law Fulfilled in Love

***<sup>13</sup> For, brothers, you were called to be free. Only do not let that freedom become an excuse for allowing your old nature to have its way. Instead, serve one another in love.***

Until now, **Sha'ul** has been preaching freedom, but here he issues a necessary caution against *antinomianism*, defined as abusing freedom by turning it into license.

The Church of our day has soft-pedaled the doctrine of obedience, either neglecting it altogether or mentioning it only apologetically and without urgency. This results from a fundamental confusion of obedience with works in the minds of preacher and people. To escape the error of salvation by works we have fallen into the opposite error of salvation without obedience. In our eagerness to get rid of the legalistic doctrine of works we have thrown out the baby with the bath and gotten rid of obedience as well.

A. W. Tozer

***<sup>14</sup> For the whole of the Torah is summed up in this one sentence: "Love your neighbor as yourself:"***

The whole of the **Torah** is summed up in one sentence, Leviticus 19:18, which **Sha'ul** also used in Romans 13:8–10; compare Ya'akov 1:27.

***<sup>15</sup> but if you go on snapping at each other and tearing each other to pieces, watch out, or you will be destroyed by each other!***

Factionalism (arguments or disputes) is a significant threat to the communal life of **God's** people; compare v. 26 (below); Yochanan 17:21; 1 Corinthians 1:10–12, 3:1–3.

#### Flesh and Spirit

***<sup>16</sup> What I am saying is this: run your lives by the Spirit. Then you will not do what your old nature wants. <sup>17</sup> For the old nature wants what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit wants what is contrary to the old nature. These oppose each other so that you find yourselves unable to carry out your good intentions.***

This is essentially the same advice as in Romans 8:4–13. The term **old nature** renders the Greek **sarx** as *"flesh."*

***<sup>18</sup> But if you are led by the Spirit, then you are not in subjection to the system that results from perverting the Torah into legalism. <sup>19</sup> And it is perfectly evident what the old nature does. It expresses itself in sexual immorality, impurity, and indecency; <sup>20</sup> involvement with the occult and with drugs; in feuding, fighting,***

*becoming jealous, and getting angry; in selfish ambition, factionalism, intrigue<sup>21</sup> and envy; in drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you now, as I have warned you before: those who do such things will have no share in the Kingdom of God!*

Some **Believers** do not take these verses seriously and think they can continue in adultery, fornication, pharmakeia (a Greek word which gives us our word "pharmacy" but combines the ideas of sorcery and drug use), and the other sins enumerated here without having to pay the price. They suppose that a loving **God** will accept them regardless of their sins or that having once long ago professed their faith guarantees them entry to heaven. **Shaul's** response is brief and severe: ***I warn you now, as I have warned you before, those who do such things will have no share in the Kingdom of God!*** The phrase *those who do such things* is the Greek word *prassontes* ("practicing"). It is not those who fall short of perfection who are excluded from the Kingdom, for that would exclude everyone. Still, those who willfully continue to practice their sins instead of turning from them sincerely to seek **God's** forgiveness (1 Yochanan 1:9). While some listed sins can be performed alone, note how many involve abuse of other people and breakdown in human relationships.

<sup>22</sup> ***But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,***  
<sup>23</sup> ***humility, self-control. Nothing in the Torah stands against such things.***

***Fruit*** does not come from efforts (of legalistic rule-following) but grows naturally (out of trust). ***"A tree is judged by its fruit,"*** said **Yeshua** (Mattityahu 12:33–37). Arguments for the objective truth of the **Gospel** are necessary, yet the most convincing form of evidence is the **fruit of the Holy Spirit** in the lives of believers. In some **Christian** circles, an unseemly argument arises in which **the fruit of the Spirit** is set over against **the gifts of the Spirit** (see 1 Corinthians 12:8–10), as if the one were better or more important than the other. The balanced **Believer** will want both ***the fruit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit*** operating in their life so that they can better serve **God** and their fellow human beings. Nothing in the **Torah** stands against such things. Or, ***"Against these things, there is no law,"*** in the sense that even legalism does not oppose them.

<sup>24</sup> ***Moreover, those who belong to the Messiah Yeshua have put their old nature to death on the stake, along with their passions and desires.*** <sup>25</sup> ***Since it is through the Spirit that we have Life, let it also be through the Spirit that we order our lives day by day.*** <sup>26</sup> ***Let us not become conceited, provoking, and envying each other.*** <sup>1</sup>

In contrast with ***the fruit of the Holy Spirit***, the fruit of legalism and the **Judaizers'** teaching is "feuding, fighting, becoming jealous and getting angry; selfish ambition, factionalism, intrigue, and envy" (vv. 20–21 above).

In our next post, we will continue to explore **Shaul's Doctrine on Messianic Liberty**, starting in chapter 6:1.

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<sup>1</sup> Galatians 5:13-26.