

Sha'ul of Tarsus & His Letters ~ Part 66

1 Corinthians ~ Part 6

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

As I mentioned in my last post, we continue to explore **Sha'ul's Letters to the Corinthians**.

Regarding Divisions within the Congregation ~ Part 5

Divisions Prevent Growth

Many of the **Corinthians** were immature in the **Lord**. They could not receive solid food (advanced teaching) because they were **worldly people**, which marked them **as babies** in **Yeshua** who needed milk (fundamental **Messianic** instruction) rather than adult fare.

3¹ As for me, brothers, I couldn't talk to you as spiritual people but as worldly people, as babies, so far as experience with the Messiah is concerned. ² I gave you milk, not solid food because you were not yet ready for it. But you aren't ready for it now either! ³ For you are still worldly! Isn't it obvious from all the jealousy and quarreling among you that you are worldly and living by merely human standards? ⁴ For when one says, "I follow Sha'ul" and another, "I follow Apollos," aren't you being merely human?

In a second analogy borrowed from slavery, **Sha'ul** observed that the **Corinthian Believers** were **worldly people** following human masters in a slavish, partisan manner. This must be one of the most stinging indictments a **Believer** can ever hear. This meaning is supported by the humble cries **Sha'ul** attributed to the **Corinthian Believers**: **I follow Sha'ul**, and **I follow Apollos**.

The unsaved lead lives that are totally void of spiritual life and ability. A believer, then, who gives in to his sinful nature is acting like the unsaved (cf. 1 Cor. 3:3).

~ John A. Witmer

Ministers Are Servants

5 After all, what is Apollos? What is Sha'ul? Only servants through whom you came to trust. Indeed, it was the Lord who brought you to trust through one of us or through another.

Sha'ul now changes the image from that of a family to that of a field; he portrays the **servants** as farmers working in the field. The seed is the **Word of God**, and the people's hearts are the different kinds of soil. The local congregation is a "spiritual garden" where the pastor acts as the gardener.

6 I planted the seed, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow.

Sha'ul made the **Corinthian Believers** aware that both he and **Apollos**, the founding evangelists of the **Corinthian congregation**, were dispatched **servants** through whom they **believed** the gospel's message. Most scholars understand **planted** to reference **Sha'ul's** founding of the **congregation** and **watered** to refer to **Apollos's** later ministry after **Sha'ul** left **Corinth**.

7 So neither the planter nor the waterer is anything, only God who makes things grow –

The **Lord** was to receive all the credit for the growth; therefore, the **servants** were nothing. The reputation of the owner-grower was everything. No **servant** need establish his reputation to the detriment of **God, who makes things grow** –

*⁸ planter and waterer are the same. However, each will be rewarded according to his work. ⁹ For we are God's co-workers; you are God's field, God's building.*¹

Sha'ul and **Apollos** were equal **servants** in the **Gospel** work, and each would receive commendation for his labor among the **Corinthian Believers** when the **Lord** returned (as we will discover in 4:4–5). **Sha'ul** and **Apollos** were **God's co-workers** who worked in His field (the **Corinthian** congregation).

In our next post, we will continue to explore **Sha'ul's Letters to the Corinthians** beginning in 1 **Corinthians** 3:10.

¹ 1 Corinthians 3:1-9