

Sha'ul of Tarsus & His Letters ~ Part 95

2 Corinthians ~ Part 52

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

As I emphasized in my previous posts, we are delving into the profound significance of **Sha'ul's Letters to the Corinthians**, a crucial cornerstone of our faith.

Earlier Despair Dissipated

⁸ For, brothers, we want you to know about the trials we have undergone in the province of Asia. The burden laid on us was so far beyond what we could bear that we even despaired of living through it.

Sha'ul's trials in **Asia** were a near-death experience during his **Ephesian** ministry that is not reported in Acts 19. His **despair of living** may have prompted his later reflection on what happens to believers at death (2 Corinthians 5:1–10).

⁹ In our hearts, we felt we were under sentence of death. However, this was to get us to rely not on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead! ¹⁰ He rescued us from such deadly peril, and he will rescue us again! The one in whom we have placed our hope will indeed continue to rescue us.

Sha'ul had not died but had been **rescued**. Yet his true hope was in the permanent remedy—the resurrection.

¹¹ And you must add your help by praying for us; for the more people there are praying, the more people there will be to give thanks when their prayer for us is answered.

A key verse on the effectiveness of prayer.

Hope for A Positive View

¹² For we take pride in this: that our conscience assures us that in our dealings with the world, and especially with you, we have conducted ourselves with frankness and godly pureness of motive—not by worldly wisdom but by God-given grace. ¹³ There are no hidden meanings in our letters other than what you can read and understand; and my hope is that you will understand fully, ¹⁴ as indeed you have already understood us in part; so that on the Day of our Lord Yeshua you can be as proud of us as we are of you.

Those who wished to undermine **Sha'ul's** authority as an **emissary** of the **Messiah** charged him with being insincere, deceptive, exploitative, unreliable, boastful, and weak. He is forced (2 Corinthians 12:11) to defend himself against these charges throughout this letter—always, as he is at pains to stress, for the twin purposes of benefitting the **Corinthians** and upholding God's name, never to puff up himself.

Travel Plans Are Not Whimsical

¹⁵ So sure was I of this that I had planned to come and see you so that you might have the benefit of a second visit. ¹⁶ I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, visit you again on my way back from Macedonia, and then have you send me on my way to Y'hudah.

More specifically, they charged that he had failed to keep his promise to visit them. This subject of visits is taken up intermittently—here, then in 2 Corinthians 2:1–3, 12–13; 7:5–7; 8:16–24; 12:14; 13:1. In this letter, more than in any of his others, he does not progress linearly from one subject to the next as he usually does but constantly moves back and forth in his writing between distance and presence, past and future, advice and praise, comfort and warning, abstraction and detail, theology and practice, reverence and irony, a firm hand

and kid gloves. The effect is to create a many-layered texture of humanness.

¹⁷ Did I make these plans lightly? Or do I make plans the way a worldly man does, ready to say, "Yes, yes," and "No, no," in the same breath? (Compare with Mattityahu 7:7) ¹⁸ As surely as God is trustworthy, we don't say "Yes" when we mean "No." ¹⁹ For the Son of God, the Messiah Yeshua, who was proclaimed among you through us—that is, through me and Silas and Timothy—was not a yes-and-no man; on the contrary, with him, it is always "Yes!" ²⁰ For however many promises God has made, they all find their "Yes" in connection with him; that is why it is through him that we say the "Amen" when we give glory to God.

All God's promises **find their "Yes" in connection with Yeshua**. Sometimes, He fulfills them in His person—"He has become wisdom for us" (1 Corinthians 1:30); He is the last **Adam**, so His resurrection guarantees ours (1 Corinthians 15, Romans 5:12–21). More than that, **God** fulfills all His other promises because He does everything through Him (Yochanan 1:1–5, Colossians 1:16–18, Messianic Jews 1:1–3).

²¹ Moreover, it is God who sets both us and you in firm union with the Messiah; He has anointed us, ²² put His seal on us, and given us His Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee for the future. ¹

Picture being lost in the woods, feeling scared and alone. Then, out of nowhere, a guide appears and leads you to safety. That's the kind of comfort Paul talks about in 2 Corinthians. God will always guide us through our trials and lead us to safety.

~ Anonymous

In our next post, we will continue to dig into **Sha'ul's Second Letter to the Corinthians**. Stay tuned for more insights and revelations.

¹ 2 Corinthians 1:8–22.