

Sha'ul of Tarsus & His Letters ~ Part 100

2 Corinthians ~ Part 7

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**. This significance is not to be taken lightly but to be deeply understood and appreciated, invoking a sense of the weight of this text's importance in our **faith**. We must grasp the depth of its meaning and its impact on our spiritual journey.

We continue to examine the topic **Regarding Sha'ul's Ministry**, which covers 2 Corinthians 2:14 to 9:15.

We may struggle with forgiveness and holding onto past hurts in our personal relationships. Remember the message of 2 Corinthians 5:1-18, where **Sha'ul** talks about reconciliation and being new creations in **Yeshua**. Reflect on your grudges and pray for the strength to forgive others as **Yeshua** has forgiven you.

Longing for the Eternal Dwelling

This section and the following, probably motivated by **Sha'ul's** recent brush with death (2 Corinthians 1:8–9), contains the most extensive teaching in **Scripture** on the "intermediate state," or the condition of **Believers** between the death of the body and its **resurrection**.

5¹ We know that when the tent which houses us here on earth is torn down, we have a permanent building from God, a building not made by human hands, to house us in heaven. ² For in this tent, our earthly body, we groan with desire to have around us the home from heaven that will be ours. ³ With this around us, we will not be found naked. ⁴ Yes, while we are in this body, we groan with the sense of being oppressed: it is not so much that we want to take something off, but rather to put something on over it so that what must die may be swallowed up by the Life. ⁵ Moreover, it is God who has prepared us for this very thing, and as a pledge he has given us his Spirit.

Sha'ul uses a tent metaphor for the human body because tents are, by nature, temporal. He compares a heavenly or **resurrection** body to a building from **God**, an eternal structure. Elsewhere, **Sha'ul** expands even more on the nature of the **resurrection** body (see 1 Corinthians 15:35–58). On **we groan**; see 2 Corinthians 1:8 and 4:8–9 for examples from **Sha'ul's** experience. The **resurrection** will be something like putting on new clothes. The word **naked** is a reference to being disembodied. A human soul or spirit apart from bodily existence—considered a desired state in some religious systems—was never desirable in the **Scriptures**.

Sha'ul shared this view. **Sha'ul's** preference was for the final state of the **resurrection** body rather than the intermediate and bodiless situation of dead **Believers**. Life in the **resurrection** is impossible without the proper preparation. This verse emphasizes **God's** sovereignty. The beginning of salvation is receiving **God's** person (the **Ruach**); the goal of salvation is enjoying **God's** person thoroughly and forever (Rev 22:4).

Courage Facing Death

6 So we are always confident—we know that so long as we are at home in the body, we are away from our home with the Lord; ⁷ for we live by trust, not by what we see. ⁸ We are confident, then, and would much prefer to leave our home in the body and come to our home with the Lord.

Sha'ul states that this faith in the resurrection gives him fortitude in the face of persecution. While **Believers** are here on earth, they are separated from **God**, yet they live by **faith**, not by sight, and so they believe that when they die, they will go to be with **God**. Note that these verses teach that **Believers** who die go immediately to be with **God**, just as **Yeshua** promised the repentant thief on the cross (Luke 23:43; see also Philippians 1:23). The **Believer** desires to be with **God** ultimately.

⁹ Therefore, whether at home or away from home, we try our utmost to please him; ¹⁰ for we must all appear before the Messiah's court of judgment, where everyone will receive the good or bad consequences of what he did while he was in the body.

Sha'ul explains the ramifications of realizing how close one is to being with **God** (5:8). It leads one to perceive **God's** presence and relevance and to live "before God's face" all the time. The believer's goal, whether in heaven or on earth, is to please **God**, "*the one with whom we have to do*" (Hebrews 4:13). The reason that the **Believer** desires to live a life pleasing to **God** is that all will eventually appear before **Yeshua**, who is acting as judge, judging the **Believers'** actions—whether they were good or bad.

Boasting for Their Sake

*¹¹ So it is with the fear of the Lord before us that we try to persuade people. Moreover, God knows us as we really are, and I hope that in your consciences, you too know us as we really are. ¹² We are not recommending ourselves to you again but giving you a reason to be proud of us so that you will be able to answer those who boast about a person's appearance rather than his inner qualities. ¹³ If we are insane, it is for God's sake; and if we are sane, it is for your sake. ¹⁴ For the Messiah's love has hold of us, because we are convinced that one man died on behalf of all mankind (which implies that all mankind was already dead), ¹⁵ and that he died on behalf of all in order that those who live should not live any longer for themselves but for the one who on their behalf died and was raised.*¹

O Christ, cause Your love to absolutely compel me. Help me to be convinced that because One died for all, therefore all died. Help me to realize and fully appreciate the fact that because You died for all, we who live should no longer live for ourselves but for You, who died for us and was raised again.

~ Beth Moore

PRAYING GOD'S WORD DAY by DAY

Building on the statement concerning **Messiah's court of judgment** found in 5:10, **Sha'ul** says his motivation for **Gospel** ministry is the fear of God. He believes in the coming judgment and wants to bring people to **Yeshua** so they can be saved from the wrath to come (Romans 5:9). **Sha'ul** states that he is not commending himself but giving the **Kehillah** in **Corinth** reason to boast in his ministry—that it is not based on physical appearance or any impressive outward display, but on the changed heart. He wants them to be able to answer critics who are judging matters with wrong values. **Sha'ul** refers to how people may view his ministry. Some may think he has a mental illness, and some may think he is in his right mind. **Sha'ul** knows he is in his right mind, but he wants them to know that he lives for **God** and them either way. He wants them to be immune to the corrupt judgments of his critics just as he is immune to them. People have said that **Sha'ul** may be *insane*, so **Sha'ul** explains the principle that guides his life—**Yeshua** guides him with love for **Believers**. He states that **Yeshua** died for all so that those for whom He died would live for **Yeshua**, who was raised from the dead. **Sha'ul** is explaining that the **Gospel of Yeshua** controls his life. He no longer lives for himself but puts **Yeshua's** interests first.

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

¹ 2 Corinthians 5:1–15.