

Sha'ul of Tarsus & His Letters ~ Part 105

2 Corinthians ~ Part 12

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 examine a new topic **Regarding Collection for the Brethren in Judea**, which covers 2 Corinthians 8:1 to 9:15.

Men to Convey Gift

Sha'ul is aware that the purity of **charitable work** can be clouded by the misappropriation of funds and high administrative costs. He forestalls such criticism by entrusting these matters to a committee of three with credentials (vv. 16–19, 22–23) and **conduct** that are **above reproach** (vv. 20–21). But he does not let go of his primary purpose, that the **Corinthians** respond appropriately (v. 24).

¹⁶ Now I thank God for making Titus as devoted to you as we are; ¹⁷ for he not only responded to our urging but, being so devoted, he is coming to you on his own initiative. ¹⁸ And with him, we are sending the brother whose work for the Good News is praised in all the congregations;

Titus had volunteered to return to the Corinthians to oversee the collection. **He is coming to you** to refer to **Titus's** role as the letter carrier for 2 Corinthians. The **brother** is not named, but it may have been **Luke**.

¹⁹ not only that, he has also been appointed by the congregations to travel with us so that the way we administer this charitable work will bring honor to the Lord and show our eagerness to help.

Congregations are to be involved in leadership decisions. Acts 20:4 lists all the **Keilah** messengers that would **travel** with **Sha'ul** with this **gift**, with **Luke** included in Acts 20:5 by the word "we" or "us."

²⁰ Our aim in this is to show that our conduct in dealing with these substantial sums is above reproach; ²¹ for we take pains to do what is right not only in the sight of God but also in the sight of other people.

From the beginning of our faith, an ethical concern for integrity in dealing with money has been crucial. **Other people** imply public accountability.

²² With these two, we are sending another brother of ours, one whose diligence we have tested many times in many ways but who is now all the more diligent because of his great confidence in you. ²³ As for Titus, he is my partner who works with me on your behalf, and the other brothers with him are emissaries of the congregations and bring honor to the Messiah. ²⁴ So the love you show these men will justify our pride in you to them, and through them to the congregations that sent them.

Like the **brother** of verse 18, this one is also unnamed but praised. The **emissaries of the congregations** were literally "**apostles**." Only those selected by the churches (v. 19) could adequately fulfill this function. Just as the **Gospel** displays **Yeshua's** splendor, so do lives transformed by the **Gospel**. Verse 24 is another appeal for the **Corinthian Believers** to complete the offering.

Readiness of Gift

This section explains that **Sha'ul** wanted to spare the **Corinthians** the embarrassment that would happen if their pledge went unfulfilled and others learned about it.

9¹ There is really no need for me to write you about this offering for God's people—² I know how eager you are, and I boast about you to the Macedonians. I tell them, "Achaia has been ready since last year," and it was your zeal that stirred up most of them.

The **Macedonians** lived in the province north of **Achaia**, where **Corinth** was located. What **Sha'ul** had written in 1 Corinthians 16:1–4 had met with an enthusiastic pledge from the **Corinthians**. He had learned about this and boasted of the **Corinthians' zeal** to the **Macedonian Kehilahs**. This had become a factor in the generous offering for **Yerushalayim** that **Sha'ul** had already received from **Macedonia** (8:1–4).

3 But now I am sending the brothers so that our boast about you in this regard will not prove hollow so that you will be ready, as I said you would be. 4 For if some Macedonians were to come with me and find you unprepared, we would be humiliated at having been so confident—to say nothing of how you would feel. 5 So I thought it necessary to urge these brothers to go on to you ahead of me and prepare your promised gift in plenty of time; this way, it will be ready when I come and will be a genuine gift, not something extracted by pressure.¹

Sha'ul appealed to the **Corinthians'** sense of integrity to keep their promise of a generous gift. **Sha'ul** intended to arrive in **Corinth** after **Titus** and the two **brothers** arrived, by which time the collection would be **ready** for him to take to **Yerushalayim**. This is what happened, as Romans 15:25–27 (written from **Corinth**) noted. The phrase ***a genuine gift, not something extracted by pressure***, may be translated literally as ***"a blessing and not a [matter of] greed."*** In other words, the giving was to be done because this would benefit others, without the givers thinking of getting back something material in return.

Busy schedules often hinder people from giving their time and resources to their church. Make a conscious effort to schedule regular volunteer hours and financially contribute, even when it may seem inconvenient.

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 8:16-9:5.