

Sha'ul of Tarsus & His Letters ~ Part 115

Romans ~ Part 3

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

As I have emphasized in my previous post, we begin delving into the profound significance of **Sha'ul's Letter to the Romans**, a crucial cornerstone of our faith. This significance is not to be taken lightly but deeply understood and appreciated. Your active engagement in grasping the depth of its meaning and impact on our spiritual journey is not just crucial. Still, it also shows your responsibility to understand the importance of this text in our faith.

Desire to Be With the Romans

⁸ First, I thank my God through Yeshua the Messiah for all of you because the report of your trust is spreading throughout the whole world.

It was common in ancient letters, to begin with a prayer. **Sha'ul** adopted the form, but his prayers were never just formal. As joy is among the angels at the conversion of one sinner (Lk 15:10), **Sha'ul** rejoiced that there were house churches in the capital city of the **Roman Empire**. He was thankful for the spread of the **faith**.

⁹ For God, whom I serve in my spirit by spreading the Good News about his Son, is my witness that I regularly remember you ¹⁰ in my prayers; and I always pray that somehow, now or in the future, I might, by God's will, succeed in coming to visit you.

Sha'ul continually prayed for the Roman Christians in his **spirit**. Though too often perceived as otherwise, prayer is just as necessary as teaching or preaching in Christian ministry. **Sha'ul** had wanted to come to Rome, but God was in control of all his circumstances. The believer must seek God's will in his activities (Jas 4:13–17).

¹¹ For I long to see you, so that I might share with you some spiritual gift that can make you stronger—¹² or, to put it another way, so that by my being with you, we might, through the faith we share, encourage one another.

Sha'ul was confident he would bring certain benefits or blessings as he taught among the house churches of Rome. The **spiritual gift** mentioned here was not the special gift(s) in 1 Co 12–14, which were given by God (1 Co 12:11), but gifts that Christians gave to one another. **Sha'ul** was confident that the Roman Christians would minister to him since every part of the body of Christ has useful functions in relation to other parts (1 Co 12:12–27).

¹³ Brothers, I want you to know that although I have been prevented from visiting you until now, I have often planned to do so, in order that I might have some fruit among you, just as I have among the other Gentiles.

Sha'ul wanted to complete his ministry in the eastern part of the Roman Empire before heading west (compare 15:22). At times, **Sha'ul** reports that Satan hindered his missionary efforts (see 1 Thess 2:18 and note) or forbidden by the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:6). **Fruit** refers to the positive outcome of **Sha'ul's** ministry among non-Jewish people. **Sha'ul** hoped to enjoy the harvest of his ministry labor among the Roman believers, even though he did not plant the church in Rome (see 1 Cor 3:6–8; 2 Cor 10:13, 15).

¹⁴ I owe a debt to both civilized Greeks and uncivilized people, to both the educated and the ignorant; ¹⁵ therefore, I am eager to proclaim the Good News also to you who live in Rome.

Because he was appointed an apostle (Rom 1:1), **Sha'ul** felt obligated to preach the gospel to all people, regardless of ethnicity. The Greek text's reference to barbarians (sometimes translated as "non-Greeks") likely refers to native tribes that had not assimilated into Graeco-Roman culture. **To proclaim the gospel** expresses **Sha'ul's** understanding of his whole ministry in terms of preaching the **Gospel**. This statement also reflects **Sha'ul's** hope to help the **Romans** mature in the faith.

The Theme of the Gospel

Do you ever struggle with feeling ashamed of sharing your faith with others? Be encouraged by **Romans** 1:16-17, reminding you that the **Gospel** is the **Power of God** for salvation to everyone who believes. When you feel hesitant or embarrassed to talk about your faith, pray for boldness and trust that **God's** message can change lives. Remember that the **Greek** word for power is *dunamis* from which we get our English word for dynamite. Now that's power!

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the Good News, since it is God's powerful means of bringing salvation to everyone who keeps on trusting, to the Jew especially, but equally to the Gentile. ¹⁷ For in it is revealed how God makes people righteous in his sight; and from beginning to end it is through trust—as the Tanakh puts it, "But the person who is righteous will live his life by trust." (Habakkuk 2:4) ¹

In this passage, we have the theme of the letter: the **Gospel of Yeshua** reveals **God's** righteousness, a righteousness based on faith and not works and available to all, not just the **Jews**. **Sha'ul** explains in **Romans** how God can be both "just and justifier," making sinners righteous and still upholding His holy law.

In our next post, we continue to examine **Sha'ul's Letter to the Romans**.

¹ Romans 1:8-17.