

Sha'ul of Tarsus & His Letters ~ Part 116

Romans ~ Part 4

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 embark on a journey to understand 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. It's a responsibility that you, as a seeker of faith, have a duty to actively engage in.

Judgment of God ~ Part 1

Gentiles Rejected God

¹⁸ What is revealed is God's anger from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people who, in their wickedness, keep suppressing the truth;

It is not popular these days to point out that **God** is a **God** of wrath. People would instead quote 1 Yochanan 4:8 - **God is love** - and look no further. But in the context of God's holiness, His hatred for sin, and His justice, His dispensing the punishment that sin brings on itself, His love, mercy, and grace become so precious. The paradox of how **God** can be both just and merciful is a theme that should fill us with wonder and awe, reminding us of the unfathomable nature of God. *"If you want the world to endure, there can be no absolute justice, while if you want absolute justice, the world cannot endure"* (Genesis Rabbah 39:6). The solution to the paradox is **Yeshua's** atoning death, as summed up in Romans 3:19–26 and Yochanan 3:16.

¹⁹ because what is known about God is plain to them since God has made it plain to them. ²⁰ For ever since the creation of the universe, His invisible qualities—both His eternal power and His divine nature—have been clearly seen because they can be understood from what He has made. Therefore, they have no excuse;

If you do not know **God**, it is not **God's** fault but yours. The characteristics of **God** that make His existence self-evident, **eternal power and divine nature are known to you** because **God has made it plain** to you. These characteristics should serve as a source of reassurance and confidence in your faith journey. It's your responsibility, as a seeker of faith, to actively seek and understand these characteristics, empowering you to engage more deeply in your faith.

***"The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.
"Each day utters speech,
and each night expresses knowledge."
(Psalm 19:1–2)***

Therefore, only ***"The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'"*** (Psalms 14:1, 53:1) - meaning not *"No God exists,"* but *"No God exists who actively concerns himself with people's thoughts and deeds and judges them."*

This is as close as the Scripture comes to ***"proving the existence of God,"*** for there is no reason why it ***should*** prove it. Instead, it takes effort for sinners to ignore **God**; defense mechanisms require active energy for their maintenance by ***people who, in their wickedness, keep suppressing the truth***. Or, as the prophet **Yasha'yahu** put it centuries earlier, ***"Your iniquities have made a separation between you***

and your God” (Isaiah 59:2). In sum since you already know enough to trust **God** and obey Him, you *have no excuse* for not doing so.

²¹ because, although they know who God is, they do not glorify him as God or thank him. On the contrary, they have become futile in their thinking; and their undiscerning hearts have become darkened. ²² Claiming to be wise, they have become fools! ²³ In fact, they have exchanged the glory of the immortal God for mere images, like a mortal human being or like birds, animals, or reptiles!

Whether you acknowledge **God’s** existence is not the question. Even demons believe in **God**, but their “belief” makes them tremble (Ya’akov 2:19) because they know they cannot avoid His punishment for their evil deeds and thoughts. So it is taken as axiomatic that you **know who God is** (vv. 18–20) and know His existence. The issue is that you **do not glorify Him as God or thank Him**; you do not relate to Him personally as who He is. It is this initial failing that produces the long downhill slide. Once God is no longer in your **thinking**, everything becomes **futile** or “vain.” Your **heart** becomes spiritually **undiscerning**, lacking **God’s** light (Yochanan 8:12); it can only be **darkened**.

The next stage of downfall consists, as in Orwell’s novel *1984*, in asserting as truth its opposite—darkness is light, futility is wisdom. **Claiming to be wise**, though perhaps masking your pride with false humility, you **have become a fool**. ¹

Amidst the busyness and distractions of daily life, take intentional time to marvel at the wonders of God's creation. Whether it's stargazing at night, taking a walk in the park, or simply noticing the intricate details of a butterfly, use these moments to reflect on the evidence of God's existence all around you. By cultivating a habit of awe and gratitude for the natural world, you can strengthen your faith and deepen your relationship with the Creator.

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

¹ Romans 1:18–22.