

## Sha'ul of Tarsus & His Letters ~ Part 119

### Romans ~ Part 7

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

As I've emphasized in my previous post, we're on a journey to understand the profound significance of **Sha'ul's Letter to the Romans**, a crucial cornerstone of our faith. This significance isn't something to be taken lightly but to be deeply understood and appreciated. Your active engagement in grasping the depth of its meaning and its impact on our spiritual journey is not just important; it's crucial. It's a responsibility that you, as a seeker of faith, must actively embrace, for it holds the key to our spiritual growth and understanding. Your role in this journey is integral, and your understanding is vital.

### Judgment of God ~ Part 4

Reviewing Romans 2:12-24 reminds you of the importance of living out your faith authentically in all areas of your life. Take time each day to reflect on your actions and attitudes, asking **God** to reveal areas where your behavior may not align with your beliefs.

### Those Without the Law

***<sup>12</sup> All who have sinned outside the framework of the Torah will die outside the framework of the Torah, and all who have sinned within the framework of the Torah will be judged by the Torah.***

***<sup>13</sup> For it is not merely the hearers of the Torah whom God considers righteous; rather, it is the doers of what the Torah says who will be made righteous in God's sight.***

**Jews** may be **hearers of the Torah** (rather than "readers," because scrolls were rare and **Torah** knowledge came from hearing them read aloud and memorizing them), but if they don't do what it says, they are sinners who will die; Ya'akov 1:22 expresses the same thought.

***<sup>14</sup> For whenever Gentiles, who have no Torah, do naturally what the Torah requires, then these, even though they don't have Torah, for themselves are Torah! <sup>15</sup> For their lives show that the conduct the Torah dictates is written in their hearts. Their consciences also bear witness to this, for their conflicting thoughts sometimes accuse them and sometimes defend them <sup>16</sup> on a day when God passes judgment on people's innermost secrets. (According to the Good News as I proclaim it, He does this through the Messiah Yeshua.) <sup>1</sup>***

To stress the priority of deeds over head-knowledge of the **Torah** or status as a **Jew**, **Sha'ul** pointedly speaks of **Gentiles, who don't have Torah** but **do naturally what the Torah requires**, as being **for themselves** already **Torah** because **their lives show that the conduct the Torah dictates is written in their hearts**. The quotation from Jeremiah 31:33 speaks of the "**new covenant**" that **Adonai** is to make with **Isra'el** when he says, "I will put my **Torah** in their inward parts and write it in their hearts" (see Messianic Jews 8:8–12).

That non-**Jews** know the eternal moral law of **God** outlined in the **Torah** is further proved when they come to explicit and conscious faith in **God**—**on a day when God passes judgment on people's innermost secrets**, which, **according to the Good News as Sha'ul proclaims it** and as **Yeshua** Himself proclaimed it (Yochanan 5:22–29), **he does ... through the Messiah Yeshua**. On the day people come to faith, they admit that **God** is right and they are wrong. Some of their behavior may prove not blameworthy so that their

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 2:12-16

**consciences ... sometimes defend them**, but they will then perceive some behavior as falling short of **God's** standard, and their consciences will **accuse them**.

Just below the surface of these verses is the question of whether a person can be saved without explicitly having put his faith in **God** through the **Messiah Yeshua**. For vv. 14–15 speak of doing what the **Torah** requires and having the conduct the **Torah** dictates written in one's heart, and it sounds very much as if such a person would be trusting and loving **God** with all his heart and soul and strength (Deuteronomy 6:5, Mattityahu 22:37). Skeptics sometimes ask, *"How can **God** be so unfair as to condemn to hell some 'primitive tribesman' who hasn't even heard of the Bible?"* They often raise the issue not out of concern for the *"pitiful lost heathen"* but as a dodge to justify their unbelief; the very form of the question assumes that **God** is unjust and not worthy of their trust, that the *"primitive tribesman"* is an innocent *"noble savage"* and **God** the guilty party.

**Sha'ul** carefully skirts, answering conclusively. On the one hand, the **Brit Hadashah** explicitly states, **"Whoever trusts and is immersed will be saved; whoever does not trust will be condemned"** (Mark 16:16); this can be understood to mean that anyone who does not explicitly acknowledge **Yeshua** will be condemned and not saved, including all "primitive tribesmen." Such a reading strengthens the motivation to evangelize.

On the other hand, the present verses suggest this line of reasoning: if **non-Jews**, without the **Torah**, live up to the light they have, obeying whatever of the **Torah God** has written in their hearts, then their consciences will sometimes defend them, and sometimes accuse them. When their consciences accuse them, they will admit their sin, ask forgiveness from **God** and the people they sinned against, make restitution where possible, and throw themselves on **God's** mercy. If they keep doing that, *"Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"* (Genesis 18:25), even if these people have never heard of **Yeshua**? He will, although they will have no **assurance** of their salvation since they will not know that **Yeshua** has made a final atonement for their sins. This reassurance of **God's** fairness in judgment should make you feel secure in your faith journey.

I will not pursue the matter further except for this one caution: no one reading the above can be in the condition of the person just described and therefore excused from trusting **God** and His **Messiah Yeshua**. Anyone reading the **Brit Hadashah**, and this commentary is being presented with the Gospel, and he cannot evade responsibility for deciding what to do with it. If they reject it, any reading of Mark 16:16 blames the eternal consequences on their shoulders alone.

In our next post, we will back pick up in Romans 12:17.