

Sha'ul of Tarsus & His Letters ~ Part 131

Romans ~ Part 19

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

As I've stressed in my previous post, our journey to comprehend the profound significance of **Sha'ul's Letter to the Romans** is not just a study but a crucial cornerstone of our faith.

Freedom from the Law ~ Part 2

If you struggle with **sin** daily, as **Sha'ul** describes in Romans 7, try keeping a **sin journal**. At the end of each day, write down moments where you felt tempted or failed. Reflect on these entries weekly. This practice can help you identify patterns in your struggles and remind you of **God's** grace. Celebrate small victories over sin and invite a trusted friend to pray with you about these issues, reinforcing accountability and support in your **Messianic** walk.

Law Did Not Cause Sin

¹³ Then did something good become for me the source of death? Heaven forbid! Rather, it was sin working death in me through something good, so that sin might be clearly exposed as sin, so that sin through the commandment might come to be experienced as sinful beyond measure.

Did the **good** law cause **death**? The correct understanding is that **sin** used something good to bring human death. **God** used the **law** to accomplish His purpose, clarifying and overcoming **sin**.

¹⁴ For we know that the Torah is of the Spirit; but as for me, I am bound to the old nature, sold to sin as a slave.

Verses 14-25 are probably the most challenging and controversial passages in the letter to the **Romans**. For the most part, the **Eastern Church** has interpreted it as referring to an unregenerate person (e.g., **Sha'ul** before his conversion). The **Western Church** followed Augustine, Luther, and Calvin in thinking it refers to a regenerated person (**Sha'ul** after his conversion). Some suggest a mediating position. One such view interprets the subject as a **Tanakh Believer** who loves the law (Psalm 1; 119) but struggles to perform it. Living before **Yeshua** and **Pentecost**, this person does not have the permanent and empowering gift of the Holy Spirit, as do new covenant **Believers**. Another view holds that the subject is almost converted to **Yeshua** and is now under conviction of sin by the law.

The view that the subject of 14–25 is a regenerate person is sometimes modified in the following ways: (1) The subject is saved but has not had "**baptism**" in the **Pentecostal** sense or a second work of grace (as held in some types of **Wesleyan** theology). (2) The subject is an immature **Believer**, not yet equipped for warfare with his fleshly desires. (3) The subject is a **Believer** trying to become sanctified by **legalism**.

The view outlined here assumes that the subject is a regenerated **Believer**, most obviously **Sha'ul** himself but generically every **Believer**. **Sha'ul** describes the new man in relation to the law of **God** and looks at only one aspect of the person. The new man will be considered in relation to the **Holy Spirit** in the next section, where the **Holy Spirit** is mentioned 21 times. The main reason for the position offered here is to consider this man's problem. In verse 14, he is said to be **made out of flesh**. As a **Believer** in **Yeshua**, **Sha'ul** longed to be delivered from the fallen human body, which still has indwelling sin.

Law Is Good; Man Is Sinful

¹⁵ I don't understand my own behavior—I don't do what I want to do; instead, I do the very thing I hate!

The law is from **God** and, therefore, **spiritual**. Still, **Sha'ul** is **made out of flesh** (a symbolic reference to spiritual fallenness) and thus finds himself conflicted with the heavenly law of **God**.

¹⁶ Now if I am doing what I don't want to do, I am agreeing that the Torah is good. ¹⁷ But now it is no longer "the real me" doing it, but the sin housed inside me.

Sha'ul agreed with the law and its goodness, but sin is an alien power that has residence within him and causes him to do things he hates.

¹⁸ For I know that there is nothing good housed inside me—that is, inside my old nature. I can want what is good, but I can't do it! ¹⁹ For I don't do the good I want; instead, the evil that I don't want is what I do!

Even after conversion, no part of a person is sinless, no place without sin's presence, and the **Believer** cannot keep the whole law. The only **good** in a **Believer** is the presence of the **Holy Spirit**.

²⁰ But if I am doing what "the real me" doesn't want, it is no longer "the real me" doing it but the sin housed inside me.

In his inner self, in his deepest recesses, the **Believer** delights in **God's** law, but he finds this alien power living within, waging war with him and taking him **prisoner to the law of sin**.

The sin of pride is a sin of comparison, comparing our strength to another's weakness. Any time our ire rises at someone else's sin, a sin is revealed in us, often the same sin. As we learned in Romans 3:10, "There is no one righteous, not even one! No one understands."

~ Patrick M. Morley
Walking with Christ in the Details of Life

Flesh and Spirit Struggle

²¹ So I find it to be the rule, a kind of perverse "Torah," that although I want to do what is good, evil is right there with me! ²² For in my inner self I completely agree with God's Torah; ²³ but in my various parts, I see a different "Torah," one that battles with the Torah in my mind and makes me a prisoner of sin's "Torah," which is operating in my various parts. ²⁴ What a miserable creature I am! Who will rescue me from this body bound for death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God [, he will]!—through Yeshua the Messiah, our Lord! To sum up, in my mind, I am a slave of God's Torah, but with my old nature, I am a slave of sin's "Torah." ¹

Many modern commentators and translators try to reorder these verses, but the order makes sense if the above interpretation is followed. In verse 24, the subject cries out for deliverance from the fallen human condition. A cry of thanksgiving is then offered to **God** because the subject knows that **Yeshua** will deliver him from his body. The **Believer** recognizes that in his mind, he wants to serve **God's** law since it is holy, just, good, and spiritual, but at the same time, his fallen nature is in the service of this alien power—sin.

In our next post, we begin to examine the theme: **Freedom from Death**.

¹ Romans 7:13–25.