

Sha'ul of Tarsus & His Letters ~ Part 143

Romans ~ Part 31

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.

Regarding the Jewish Experience ~ Part 9

In your circle of friends, you may face times of division, whether due to politics, social issues, or personal beliefs. Romans 11:36 calls us to recognize that everything comes from **God** and is sustained by Him. Challenge yourself to be a peacemaker, reflecting **God's** love and patience. Host a dinner where everyone can share perspectives, reminding each other of our shared created identity in **Yeshua**. This can help to heal divides and foster understanding rooted in the common ground of **God's** grace.

Grace Extends to All

²⁵ For, brothers, I want you to understand this truth which God formerly concealed but has now revealed so that you won't imagine you know more than you actually do. It is that stoniness, to a degree, has come upon Isra'el until the Gentile world enters in its fullness; ²⁶ and that it is in this way that all Isra'el will be saved. As the Tanakh says,

***"Out of Tziyon will come the Redeemer;
He will turn away ungodliness from Ya'akov
²⁷ and this will be My covenant with them, ...
when I take away their sins."*** (Isaiah 59:20–21, 27:9)

God has revealed a mystery: (1) A partial hardening has come to **Isra'el**; (2) this will continue ***until the Gentile world enters in its fullness***; and (3) then ***all Isra'el will be saved***. **Isra'el** is the name for the Jewish people. It is used 70 times in the **Brit Hadashah** of **Jews**, **Hebrews**, or **Isra'elites**. It is not used as a title for the church. Galatians 6:16 is not an exception; it refers to saved or **Godly Jews** as ***"the Isra'el of God."*** In verse 26, **all Isra'el** means is that the Hebrew nation will be converted. It does not mean that every single **Jew** living will be saved. **Salvation** is defined in verses 26–27 as the new **covenant** that the **Messiah** will inaugurate.

²⁸ With respect to the Good News, they are hated for your sake. But with respect to being chosen, they are loved for the Patriarchs' sake, ²⁹ for God's free gifts, and His calling are irrevocable.

Why are **God's** people permanently loved? Without thinking, a Christian might answer, *"Because **God** is love (1 Yochanan 4:8), it simply flows out of **God's** essential nature to love His people."* **Sha'ul's** answer may come as a surprise and seem "unspiritual" ***for the patriarchs' sake***. **God** made promises to the **Patriarchs: Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov**, which he is honor-bound to keep. Protecting His honor is also an essential attribute of **God**.

While it is true that good deeds yield ongoing good consequences, **Sha'ul** does not say that the Patriarchs earned God's favor by their meritorious actions, neither for themselves nor their descendants. Instead, he is speaking of the **Patriarchs** not as doers of meritorious works but as receivers of **God's** gracious promises. **God** made terrific promises to them concerning their descendants, the people of **Isra'el**. He must keep those promises to vindicate His righteousness (Romans 3:25–26) and faithfulness (Romans 3:3). **For**, given that

God is forever righteous and faithful, *God's free gifts*, those promises and indeed all the gifts mentioned in Romans 9:4–5, *and his calling* the **Jews** to be a people dedicated to **God**, a holy nation (Exodus 19:6), a light to the **Gentiles** (Isaiah 42:6, 49:6), **are irrevocable**; because **God** cannot deny His eternal nature as a faithful fulfiller of promises.

In the light of chapters 9–11 in general and these verses in particular, any Christian theology that teaches that **God** no longer loves the **Jews** or that the **Jewish** people will not receive all the good things **God** has promised them contradicts the express teaching of the New Testament (see 9:1–11:36). Furthermore, such teaching necessarily portrays **God** as unfaithful and thus less than **God**, unworthy of being trusted by anyone, **Jew, Christian** or “other.”

³⁰ Just as you yourselves were disobedient to God before but have received mercy now because of Isra'el's disobedience; ³¹ so also Isra'el has been disobedient now, so that by your showing them the same mercy that God has shown you, they too may now receive God's mercy. ³² For God has shut up all mankind together in disobedience, in order that he might show mercy to all.

Sha'ul restates his theme, **Isra'el's** salvation in history, this time in terms of **God's** mercy. These three verses look back to Romans 9:15–18, where **God's** mercy was presented as an aspect of His sovereignty, and forward to Romans 12:1, where His mercies (plural, to **Jews** and **Gentiles**, as seen in these verses) are made the basis and motivation for right action, as prescribed in the following four chapters.

Song Of Praise

***³³ O the depth of the riches
and the wisdom and knowledge of God!
How inscrutable are His judgments!
How unsearchable are His ways!***

***³⁴ For, 'Who has known the mind of Adonai
Who has been His counselor?' (Isaiah 40:13)***

***³⁵ Or, 'Who has given Him anything
and made Him pay it back?' (Job 41:3(11))***

***³⁶ For from Him and through Him
and to Him are all things.
To Him be the glory forever!
Amen. ¹***

The greatness of **God's** sovereignty, mercy, faithfulness, and ordering of history, so that not one of His promises will go unfulfilled, causes **Sha'ul** to burst into song. He—and we—have caught a glimpse of the working of **God's** mind and are overwhelmed. Only a hymn of praise to **God** can escape our lips; it is a fitting climax to chapters 9–11 in particular and the first eleven chapters.

In our next post, we start a new theme, **Believer Life and Conduct**.

¹ Romans 11:25–36.