

Sha'ul of Tarsus & His Letters ~ Part 175

Colossians ~ Part 3

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

Before moving on, I want to go back to our last post and share some further insight on verse 1:29: "***It is for this that I toil, striving with all the energy that He stirs up in me so mightily.***"

Paul certainly gave everything in him – when he wasn't teaching the church, evangelizing the lost, and defending against false teachers, he was plying his trade as a tentmaker. Yet he found the spiritual equilibrium that is required for sound Christian living. So, how did he continue without faltering? Paul did all he could, but he never viewed his ventures as an individual undertaking. He recognized that undergirding everything he did, was the great power of God, supernaturally enabling him.

~ Dr. Charles Stanely
Trusting God with Today

Colossians teaches us about being rooted in **The Messiah**. If you find yourself feeling spiritually empty or distant, it might be time to simplify your life. Evaluate your schedule for activities that are draining rather than enriching. Choose one event or responsibility to let go of for a season. Replace that time with reading the **Word** or engaging in prayer, inviting the **Ruach** to fill that space in a way that prioritizes your connection to **The Messiah**.

Concern for Their Faith

2¹ For I want you to know how hard I work for you, for those in Laodicea, and for the rest of those who have not met me personally.

This seems to refer to **Sha'ul's** deep concern for the **Believers**. He also might be referring to his intense effort in prayer. **Laodicea** was a city about 11 miles from **Colossae**.

2² My purpose is that they may be encouraged, that they may be joined together in love, and that they may have all the riches derived from being assured of understanding and fully knowing God's secret truth, which is—the Messiah! 3 It is in him that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden.

The Messiah is the only source required for **understanding** and **knowledge**; the **Colossians** did not need to look to any other philosophy. **Hidden** does not mean secretive (**Colossians 1:26**) but plays on the word **treasures**. **Jewish** writers often used this imagery to encourage seekers to dig deep when looking for truth.

⁴ I say this so that no one will fool you with plausible but specious arguments. ⁵ For although I am away from you physically, I am with you in spirit, rejoicing as I see the disciplined and resolute firmness of your trust in the Messiah.

For the first time in the **Colossians**, **Sha'ul** directly stated his opposition to the false teaching. The words **fool** and **specious arguments** imply the use of misleading or faulty reasoning, which is contrasted with the truth of the **Gospel** (see note at 1:5–6). **Sha'ul** affirmed, **I am with you in spirit** (cp. 1 Corinthians 5:3–5), which may refer to the unity of the body of **The Messiah** made possible by the **Ruach** (Ephesians 4:3).

Warning Against False Teaching

⁶ Therefore, just as you received the Messiah Yeshua as Lord, keep living your life united with him. ⁷ Remain deeply rooted in him; continue being built up in him and confirmed in your trust, the way you were taught, so that you overflow in thanksgiving.

Sha'ul's primary concern was that **Believers** would grow in spiritual maturity. The basis of their conduct is **The Messiah's** lordship (1:15–20) and indwelling (1:27). The command to **walk in Him**, as in 1:10, is followed by expressions of what this involved: (1) being **rooted** (denoting firmness; cp. Eph 3:17); (2) **built up**; (3) **established in the faith** (a legal term meaning "confirmed"); and (4) **overflowing with gratitude** (cp. 1:3, 12; 3:15–17; 4:2).

*⁸ Watch out so that no one will take you captive by means of philosophy and empty deceit, following human tradition, which accords with the elemental spirits of the world but does not accord with the Messiah.*¹

Philosophy. Here, the word stands for the heretical **Gnostic** or **pre-Gnostic** alternative to the proper understanding of who the **Messiah** is. **Human tradition** here is a pagan tradition because it goes along with **the elemental spirits of the world**. Contrast it with **Jewish** tradition (including the Oral **Torah**; Mattiyahu 15:2–6, Mark 7:3–13, Galatians 1:14) and with **Messianic** tradition (Romans 6:17; 1 Corinthians 11:2, 23; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6).

In our next post, we examine **Sha'ul's Letters to the Saints**, continuing in **Colossians**.

¹ Colossians 2:1-8.