

Sha'ul of Tarsus & His Letters ~ Part 194

Philippians – Part 4

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

Various Exhortations ~ Part 3

Timothy to Come Soon

Feeling alienated in public settings due to differing beliefs can be challenging. Use **Sha'ul's** example in Philippians 2:19-21 to relate to others, even those across the aisle in discourse. Look to build bridges—participate in interfaith dialogues or community service projects where you engage with others who hold different beliefs. This demonstrates a willingness to listen and understand, rather than to divide, creating spaces for **Yeshua**-like love to emerge amid differences. **Sha'ul**, in this section, expressed his hope to visit someday, but he planned to send **Timothy** and **Epaphroditus** to the **Philippians** immediately.

2¹⁹ But I hope in the Lord Yeshua to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I too may be cheered by knowing how you are doing.

The **Philippians** sent **Epaphroditus** to care for **Sha'ul** during his imprisonment (v. 25). Now, **Sha'ul** is preparing to send **Timothy** to care for the **Philippians**.

20 I have no one who compares with him, who will care so sincerely for your welfare—²¹ people all put their own interests ahead of the Messiah Yeshua's. ²² But you know his character, that like a child with his father, he slaved with me to advance the Good News. ²³ So I hope to send him just as soon as I see how things will go with me, ²⁴ and I am confident in the Lord that before long I myself will come too.

People all put their own interests... In contrast to these others, **Timothy** is presented as an example of someone who puts **Yeshua** and others ahead of himself. ***You know his character, Timothy***, apparently was no stranger to the **Philippians**. Although he does not appear in Acts 16:11–40, the surrounding passages suggest that he was with **Sha'ul** and **Silas** when they first visited Philippi (see Acts 16:1–3; 17:14–15). Through serving the gospel with **Sha'ul**, **Timothy** came to share **Sha'ul's** concerns and values. ***I myself will come too, expressing*** hope that he will be released from prison.

Commendation of Epaphroditus

25 Also, I considered it necessary to send you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow-worker, and fellow-soldier, the emissary whom you sent to take care of my needs;

The **Philippians** had sent **Epaphroditus** to deliver gifts for **Sha'ul** and look after him in prison. Now, due to the **Philippians'** alarm over news that **Epaphroditus** had taken ill, **Sha'ul** is sending him back to **Philippi** (with this letter).

26 since he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard he was ill.

27 Indeed, he was ill, close to death; but God had mercy on him—and not only on him, but also on me—otherwise I would have had sorrow piled on sorrow.

Sha'ul was already confronting the grief of imprisonment. If **Epaphroditus** had died, **Sha'ul's** suffering would have been compounded, especially because **Epaphroditus** put his life on the line to care for him.

28 Therefore, I am all the more eager to send him, so that you may rejoice when you see him again; and I, for my part, may be less sad. 29 So give him a joyful welcome in the Lord; honor such people. 30 For he risked his life and nearly died working for the Messiah, in order to give me the help you were not in a position to give.

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Believers Should Be Joyful

3¹ In conclusion, my brothers: rejoice in union with the Lord. It is no trouble for me to repeat what I have written you before, and for you it will be a safeguard.

Sha'ul probably is referring to the warning and teaching that follows, which he might have delivered to the **Philippians** in person or an earlier letter. Repeating this teaching is for their good.

Various Warnings ~ Part 1

Overconfidence In Heritage

2 beware of the dogs, those evildoers, the Mutilated!

All three warnings in this verse point to one group—most likely to people who taught that all **Gentile Believers** had to follow the **Jewish** law. In those days, **Jews** hated **dogs**. This word was often used of **Gentiles**, but in this context it refers to overly zealous **Jewish** teachers who were ravenous like scavengers. These **evildoers** attempted to gain salvation by keeping the law. **Mutilated** refers to their “**circumcision**.”

3 For it is we who are the Circumcised, we who worship by the Spirit of God and make our boast in the Messiah Yeshua! We do not put confidence in human qualifications, 4 even though I certainly have grounds for putting confidence in such things.

Sha'ul's Jewish Heritage

If anyone else thinks he has grounds for putting confidence in human qualifications, I have better grounds: 5 b'rit-milah on the eighth day, by birth belonging to the people of Isra'el, from the tribe of Binyamin, a Hebrew-speaker, with Hebrew-speaking parents, in regard to the Torah, a Parush, 6 in regard to zeal, a persecutor of the Messianic Community, in regard to the righteousness demanded by legalism, blameless. 1

Sha'ul's fleshly confidence included heredity and accomplishments. A **Hebrew** born of **Hebrews** means he had impeccable credentials. This countered those who may have assumed otherwise because **Paul** was from **Tarsus**, a **Roman** citizen.

¹ Philippians 2:19-3:6