

Question:

Did Sha'ul truly live his life and thus instruct even Gentiles according to the foundation of Torah?

Response:

Examples of Sha'ul Instructing According to Torah.

Last week I had introduced you to Sha'ul and who he was. This week I want to share some of the things he shared with believers through his letters. Were they truly based on the foundation of Torah?

Well, let us look at someone else we may better relate to. Someone, who once persecuted believers and is now a leader. I am speaking of Sha'ul.

Many see Sha'ul's writings as doctrinal standards for the church. Sha'ul spoke against Torah and established new ways that were different from the old ways.

This couldn't be further from the truth. When you delve into Sha'ul's letters, we find substantial influence from Tenach:

In looking at his letters to the Messianic community at Corinth, Sha'ul references directly from the Tenach 29 times, citing 46 different passages. Of those 29 times, 9 come directly from Torah.

So let us look at a few of these passages.

Corinth – Las Vegas before Las Vegas was Las Vegas (Situated in Greece) Temple of Aphrodite

Sha'ul's first letter dealt with:

- A spirit of divisiveness
- Sexual misbehavior
- Pagan worship
- Rights of the emissaries
- Food sacrificed to idols
- Issues pertaining to self control and consideration towards others
- Issues pertaining to public worship, including the use of Spiritual gifts in a public setting
- Disbelief in the resurrection

How does he deal with some of these issues?

To say that Sha'ul is creating a new religion or doctrine isn't accurate. When you look at how he addresses issues and his source of authority, it becomes rather clear.

Example 1: 1 Corinthians 5:1 – 13 – Actions and Attitudes

1Co 5:1 It is actually being reported that there is sexual sin among you, and it is sexual sin of a kind that is condemned even by pagans — a man is living with his stepmother!

What is the basis for this? Leviticus 18:8

Lev 18:8 You are not to have sexual relations with your father's wife; that is your father's prerogative.

Sha'ul is applying Torah to this situation. It is even condemned by pagans, so it must be really bad.

What is Sha'ul's remedy for correction:

1Co 5:2 And you stay proud? Shouldn't you rather have felt some sadness that would have led you to remove from your company the man who has done this thing?

1Co 5:3 For I myself, even though I am absent physically, am with you spiritually; and I have already judged the man who has done this as if I were present.

1Co 5:4 In the name of the Lord Yeshua, when you are assembled, with me present spiritually and the power of our Lord Yeshua among us,

1Co 5:5 hand over such a person to the Adversary for his old nature to be destroyed, so that his spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord.

What many would call excommunication or expulsion from within the community is harsh but necessary for two reasons:

1. It is not meant to be a permanent sentence but a time where the offender is isolated to where deprivation of fellowship from amongst the community will lead them to their senses and ultimately to T'shuvah – repentance. The person can then return back into the community.
2. To protect others in the Messianic community from being drawn into the transgression of others.

This is a concept that is found throughout Torah:

1. When infected with Tzara'at, a spiritual condition with a physical manifestation, people are expelled from the community for a period of time so not to affect others – Leviticus 13 & 14
2. Regarding other aspects of transgression, Torah also requires the removal of the transgressor from the community although usually a final solution, Sha'ul speaks otherwise

I want you to focus more on the intent than on the final action which is what Sha'ul is teaching...one example

Deu 13:5 (13:6) and that prophet or dreamer is to be put to death; because he urged rebellion against Adonai your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from a life of slavery; in order to seduce you away from the path Adonai your God ordered you to follow. This is how you are to rid your community of this wickedness.

What is different between then and now?

Prior, there was one nature, meaning

Now, there is a new nature, meaning the Spirit of Adonai residing in believers

Will people always return? No.

Sha'ul continues to address the attitude of the people first mentioned in verse 2:

1Co 5:6 Your boasting is not good. Don't you know the saying, "It takes only a little hametz to leaven a whole batch of dough?"

1Co 5:7 Get rid of the old hametz, so that you can be a new batch of dough, because in reality you are unleavened. For our Pesach lamb, the Messiah, has been sacrificed.

1Co 5:8 So let us celebrate the Seder not with leftover hametz, the hametz of wickedness and evil, but with the matzah of purity and truth.

Many have taught that Sha'ul is speaking figuratively regarding Passover, however, there is no indication that they didn't celebrate Passover. Later on in Sha'ul's letter to Corinth, we see aspects that are derived from the Passover. Sha'ul is correcting them in the manner by which they partake in it, but it is present amongst believers.

Not only is Passover observed and these elements practiced but are also applied to Yeshua, Messiah, further establishing a connection between them.

We find the aspects of Passover throughout Torah and scripture, including the Brith Hadoshah.

- Exodus 12
- Leviticus 23
- Numbers 9
- Deuteronomy 16
- Joshua 5
- 2 Kings 23
- 2 Chronicles 30
- Ezra 6
- Matthew 26
- John 1:29

Joh 1:29 The next day, Yochanan saw Yeshua coming toward him and said, "Look! God's lamb! The one who is taking away the sin of the world!"

The concept of Passover is evident throughout scripture with its promise of redemption, even in the New Covenant.

The issue that Sha'ul is raising isn't amongst non-believers, but believers:

1Co 5:9 In my earlier letter I wrote you not to associate with people who engage in sexual immorality.

1Co 5:10 I didn't mean the sexually immoral people outside your community, or the greedy, or the thieves or the idol-worshippers — for then you would have to leave the world altogether!

1Co 5:11 No, what I wrote you was not to associate with anyone who is supposedly a brother but who also engages in sexual immorality, is greedy, worships idols, is abusive, gets drunk or steals. With such a person you shouldn't even eat!

1Co 5:12 For what business is it of mine to judge outsiders? Isn't it those who are part of the community that you should be judging?

1Co 5:13 God will judge those who are outside. Just expel the evildoer from among yourselves.

This is but one issue raised in his first letter we have record of to the Corinthian community. Sha'ul's method used in addressing these issues was in applying the aspects of Torah to their lives.

Again, Sha'ul closes his second letter to the Messianic community at Corinth by utilizing Torah in order to emphasize his position as emissary of Messiah.

From his previous letter, he recognizes their spiritual immaturity:

1Co 3:2 I gave you milk, not solid food, because you were not yet ready for it. But you aren't ready for it now either!

1Co 3:3 For you are still worldly! Isn't it obvious from all the jealousy and quarreling among you that you are worldly and living by merely human standards?

Therefore, when he closes his second letter, it is that of a stern parent:

2Co 13:1 This will be the third time that I have come to visit you. Any charge must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

Applying the precept found in Deuteronomy 19:15

Deu 19:15 "One witness alone will not be sufficient to convict a person of any offense or sin of any kind; the matter will be established only if there are two or three witnesses testifying against him.

Some have taught the civil laws have been abolished, yet Sha'ul is conveying a standard established in Torah, that is followed by Israel, yet to a non-Jewish community. How relevant in our legal system today is it to have corroborating witnesses.

2Co 13:2 To those who sinned in the past and to the rest I say beforehand while absent the same thing I said when I was with you the second time: if I come again I will not spare you —

2Co 13:3 since you are looking for proof of the Messiah speaking in me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but he is powerful among you.

2Co 13:4 For although he was executed on a stake in weakness, now he lives by God's power. And we too are weak in union with him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by God's power.

2Co 13:5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are living the life of trust. Test yourselves. Don't you realize that Yeshua the Messiah is in you? — unless you fail to pass the test.

But in closing his letter with encouragement and hope, not to condemn

2Co 13:6 But I hope you will realize that we are not failures.

2Co 13:7 And we pray to God that you will do nothing wrong. We are not concerned with our appearing successful, but with your doing what is right, even if we appear to be failures.

2Co 13:8 For we cannot act against the truth, only for it.

2Co 13:9 So we rejoice whenever we are weak and you are strong; indeed, what we pray for is that you become perfect.

2Co 13:10 I write these things while away from you, so that when I am with you I will not have to use my authority to deal sharply with you, for the Lord gave it to me for building up and not for tearing down.

What can we learn from these examples?

- Torah is applicable to our lives as believers in Messiah.
- When first becoming believers, we didn't have all the answers, just as in Corinth, we are to grow in our faith. Part of spiritual maturity is evident in how we live our lives, which is expressed by how we apply Adonai's Word to our lives through our trust in Messiah.