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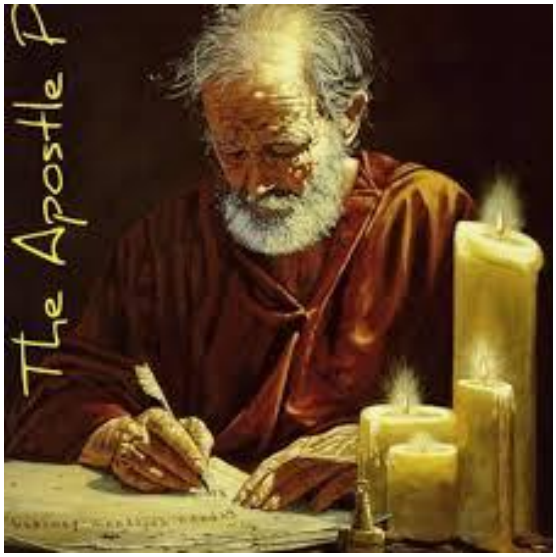
Sha'ul's Greeting
1: 1-2

Sha'ul's greeting DIG: Who was Sha'ul, what was his background, and where did he come from? Who did he study under? As an apostle, who was he sent to minister to? Why is that important to understand? What does "hagios" mean? What was the city of Ephesus like?

REFLECT: What does the word shalom mean? To whom would you like to give that message? Why does Sha'ul address his readers as "the people of God?" Explain. Is it helpful to think of yourself as a "hagios?" Why or why not? When were you justified for all time?

Sha'ul was a Jewish follower of Yeshua, or in modern terms, a Messianic Jew.

All **Sha'ul's** letters begin in a similar way. Following the style of the letter-writing of the day, **he** mentions first the writer, then the readers, and then comes to the greeting. But the conventional manner of the time is lifted to a higher level. Writer and reader are described from the standpoint of their relationship to **Messiah Yeshua**; and the conventional greeting became a blessing for all believers.[47] There are **seven** important points in **Sha'ul's** greeting. **From: Sha'ul, by God's will an apostle of the Messiah Yeshua. To: God's people living in Ephesus, that is, those who are trusting in the Messiah Yeshua: Grace to you and shalom from God our Father and the Lord Yeshua the Messiah.**



1. Sha'ul: This is the Hebrew name of the writer commonly called **Paul**. **He** was born to a traditional Jewish family outside of **Isra'el** in the city of Tarsus in Asia Minor (modern Turkey). As a young rabbinical student, **he** was invited to study in Jerusalem with the top Pharisaic Rabbi of the day, Gal'liel **(Acts 22:1-3)**. **He** must have been a promising and charismatic leader, as **he** was on the forefront of opposing the new **Yeshua** movement within the Jewish community **(Acts 9:1-2)**. **Sha'ul** comes to personal faith in **Yeshua** as **the Messiah** through a dramatic encounter on a journey to Damascus (see the commentary on **Acts, to see link click Bc – Sha'ul Turns from Murder to the Messiah**). From there, **he** received **his** new calling to be a leader in the **Yeshua** movement, not only among **his** Jewish brothers, but he would be especially instrumental in taking that message of **the Messiah** to the Gentile world of the first century.

As with any Jew of his time (and still today), **Sha'ul** received two names at birth: a Hebrew name plus a name of the common language of **his** community. **Sha'ul** was clearly his given Hebrew name that he would have used in the Jewish community, especially in Jerusalem. Some commentators believe in **Acts 13:9** that **Sha'ul** took the name of **Paul** (Greek *Paulos*) to prove his "conversion" to a new religion and as a rejection of his previous Jewish life. Nothing could be further from the truth. **Sha'ul** did not look up **his** Messianic faith as a conversion to a new religion, but as a fulfillment of the Jewish hope in **the Messiah**. In **Acts 23:6**, **Sha'ul** proclaims (in the present tense): **I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead." He** thus affirmed that **he** still lived as a traditional Jew even with **his** new faith perspective. Simply put, **Sha'ul** was a Jewish follower of **Yeshua**, or in modern terms, a Messianic Jew. It is important to note that

the switch of names in **Acts 13** from **Sha'ul** to **Paul** is therefore not a statement of conversion, but simply reflects the use of the Greek name as **he** is embarking on **his** First Missionary Journey (see **Acts Bm – Paul's First Missionary Journey**) among the Gentiles.

2. An apostle: The Greek word used here is *apostolos*, meaning, *one sent out for a particular purpose*. In **Sha'ul's** case, **he** was designated as *one sent out* to share the message of **Yeshua** as **the Messiah**. However, the foundational Hebrew word, *shaliach*, has a stronger emphasis. A *shaliach* is a person sent out, **but is considered "equal to the sender himself" (Tractate Berachot 34).** It is an amazing statement of **Sha'ul** that **he** considered **himself** called to directly represent **Yeshua Himself**. **Yeshua**, having ascended to **the Father**, delegated **His** Kingdom work to **His** hand-chosen sh'lichim (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Mo – The Great Commission**). The allusion to **his apostleship** was for the purpose of giving the letter an official character. **Sha'ul** was chosen a bit later to help fulfill this Messianic mission **(First Timothy 2:7)**. By using the word **apostle** to describe **his** calling, **Sha'ul** was also emphasizing that **he** spoke the very words that **Yeshua** had given **him**. There are those today who believe that the words of **Yeshua** are truth and that somehow **Sha'ul** deviated away from **His** message. Many times people compare the teachings of **Yeshua** to some apparently contrary teachings of **Sha'ul**. But these questions are resolved when one remembers the original context of the writers. **Yeshua's** focus was on the Jewish community of **Isra'el**, while **Sha'ul's** focus was on the Gentile communities abroad. A careful study of both **Yeshua** and **Sha'ul** will confirm that **they** are in complete agreement on the message of the Good News and the broader B'rit Chadashah. **Sha'ul's** claim to be **an apostle** underscores this perspective.

3. Messiah Yeshua: Both of these words are key to a Jewish understanding of **Sha'ul's** writings. The original Hebrew, **Mashiach**, or Aramaic, **Messiah**, was translated by the Greeks as *Christos*. That is why the English word **Christ** often seems foreign or confusing to the average Jew. It seems to speak of a Greek religion or even a foreign god. By using the Anglicized term **Messiah**, we are putting the world back closer to the original understanding of all that is implied to the Jewish reader. Certainly, the phrase **Messiah Yeshua** would hold special significance to **Sha'ul** as a traditional Jew who embraced **Yeshua** as **the Promised One**.

The second term, **Yeshua**, is the Hebrew personal name for **Jesus** and means *salvation.* This was the original name given to **Him**, as Hebrew names in biblical times were considered descriptive or even prophetic. This **One** is to be called

Yeshua because of **His** mission to **His** people and ultimately the entire world **(Matthew 1:21)**. As the message of **Yeshua** went international, it is to be expected that the name would be translated into various languages. The name **Yeshua** became **Yesus** in Greek primarily because the Greek language has no shin/sh sound, but only a sigma/s. Also European languages often wrote their "y" sound with a "j" that ultimately led to the spelling **"Jesus"** in English. All these transliterations are acceptable, as **ADONAI** is certainly multi-lingual! Yet, while it is acceptable, it is preferable that **His** original Hebrew name be used as a witness to the Jewish people who hear the name **"Yeshua"** in their synagogue prayers. Also, the name **Jesus** has negative connotations to Jews because of the persecution they have endured in that name.[48]

4. God's people: **Paul** addresses his letter to **God's people**. The Greek word is *hagios*. He took it right out of the terminology of the pagan Greek religions. He had to. There were no other terms that **he** could have used in the Greek language. There it meant *devoted to the gods*. The term was also used for persons who were devoted to the service of a god. This is the genius of the Greek word that many Bibles translate as "saints" in the B'rit Chadashah. The parallel words in the TaNaKh are "the kedoshim" and "the righteous of the TaNakh" meaning *holy ones*. Here, the Complete Jewish Bible translates *hagios* as **God's people**.

The words "saint, sanctify, sanctification, hallow, holy, and holiness in the B'rit Chadashah are all translations of the same Greek root *hagi*. The verb means *to set apart for God,* and refers to the act of **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** setting apart for **ADONAI** the sinner who has been adopted in the family of **God** to salvation, taking him out of **the first Adam** and placing him in **the Last Adam** (see **Ao – Chosen in Messiah**). This is where the new believer is justified, an act performed once for all time at the moment the sinner places his faith in the **Lord Yeshua Messiah** as his **Savior**. This is followed by progressive sanctification, a process that goes on all through the earthly life of the believer, in which that person is being gradually conformed into the image of **Messiah**. That person is called a *hagios*.[49]

5. In Ephesus: **The city** was a thriving harbor of Asia Minor (modern Turkey). Being far from **Isra'el**, both in distance and in religious lifestyle, **Ephesus** was primarily a pagan city (see **Ah – The Church at Ephesus**). It even boasted one of the wonders of the ancient world: the Temple of Diana. While that pagan influence was very observable in the biblical accounts, many forget that the earliest followers of the **Yeshua** movement were from the significant Jewish community of the city. We are told that **Sha'ul** visited the local synagogue there for one week as his

introduction to **the city (Acts 18)**. Subsequently, he was invited to spend three months in the Jewish community teaching in the synagogue. As a byproduct, the Gentile community was up in arms, as this religious rival was bad for their pagan businesses (see **Ag – Idol-Makers Start a Riot in Ephesus**).

But **Sha'ul** was encouraged by the open doors at **Ephesus** and later spent three full years teaching and mentoring those growing **Yeshua** followers **(Acts 20)**. It is ironic that as **Sha'ul** made **his** pilgrimage to Jerusalem, it was some of the Jewish community of **Ephesus** who would stir up a riot leading to **his** arrest (see **Acts Co – Paul's Arrest in Jerusalem**). It seemed to be poetic justice, as **Sha'ul,** serving out **his** prison sentence in Rome, wrote this letter to the **Yeshua** followers in **Ephesus**.[50]

6. Grace: Now we come to one of the most important words in this letter, and indeed in the entire B'rit Chadashah – **grace** (Greek: *charis*). In short, **grace** means *getting what we don't deserve*, opposed to mercy, meaning *not getting what we do deserve*. Both **Luke**, in **Luke 19:9**, and **Sha'ul** in **Romans 6:17** and **Second Corinthians 8:16** use **grace** in its classical meaning of *thankfulness*. But how this purely classical meaning of the word describes the crucifixion (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ls – Then They Brought Jesus to Golgotha, the Place of the Skull**). All the human race could expect in view of its sin, was the righteous wrath of a holy **God**, that and eternal banishment from **His** glorious presence. But instead, that holy **God** stepped down from **His** judgment seat and took upon Himself the guilt and penalty of human sin, thus satisfying **His** justice and making possible to bestow **His grace** to all who would believe in **Him**.

Thus, the word *charis* comes to its highest and most exalted meaning in the B'rit Chadashah. It means that there is no room for good works on the part of the sinner as a means of obtaining his salvation. **Sha'ul** sets **grace** over works as things directly in opposition to one another so far as the means to salvation is concerned (see the commentary on **Romans Bd – Justification in the TaNaKh**). But **Sha'ul** is very careful to make plain that good works naturally flow from **grace (Titus 2:11-12)**. Furthermore, **he** shows that this **grace** is unlimited in its resources. In **Romans 5:20 he** says: **Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.** The word **increased** is from a different Greek word than that which is translated **abounded**. It is a compound word made up of a verb which means *to exist in superabundance,* and a prefixed preposition which means *above.* Therefore, the translation could read: **Where sin increased, grace existed in superabundance, and then more grace was added to this superabundance.**

7. Shalom: The word is, of course, a common greeting among Jews, but it is more than that. The root word *shalem* means *wholeness, health, well-being, and tranquility*. The Greek noun is *eirene* the verb *eiro*. The latter means *to join.* That is, when things are disjointed, there is a lack of harmony and well-being. But when they are joined together, there is both. Our **Lord made shalom through the blood of His cross (Colossians 1:20)** in that **He**, by **His** death, satisfied the demands of the Torah, which we broke, thus making it possible for a righteous and holy **God** to bestow mercy upon the believing sinner and to do so without violating **His** justice. **ADONAI** thus bound together against the believing sinner and **YHVH**, thus making **shalom**. There is therefore, a state of untroubled and undisturbed well being for the sinner who places his faith in **the Savior**. The Torah of **God** has nothing against him, and he can look to **the Father** unafraid and unashamed. This is justifying **shalo**m.

But **Sha'ul**, in writing to the **Ephesian** believers, was writing to those who were already enjoying this kind of **shalom**. Therefore, the **shalom** he is speaking about is sanctifying **shalom**, that state of untroubled, undisturbed tranquility and wellbeing produced in the heart of the yielded believer by **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** (see the commentary on **Galatians Bv – Walk by the Ruach, and Not the Desires of the Flesh**). We have this **shalom** to the extent that we are yielded to **the Spirit** and are conscious of, and dependent on, **His** ministry for us. [51] **Sha'ul** wishes **his** readers the **shalom** that can only come from **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh, God the Father,** and **Yeshua, the Prince of Peace** (see the commentary on **Isaiah Ck – He Will Be Called the Prince of Peace**).

*Dear Heavenly Father, **Your** grace is absolutely fantastic! Praise and worship from the depths of our hearts for **Your** gracious offer of adoption as **Your** sons/redemption thru the blood of **Messiah Yeshua (Ephesian 1:4-7)** and your purpose to unite all things **"in Messiah" (Ephesians 1:10). Your** Great Grace and Mercy causes me to humbly bow and lift up my heart to worship **You** with all we have! We praise **You** for being **Holy (Isaiah 6:3), Almighty** – Red Sea crossing for **Isra'el** while Egyptians drown (**Exodus 14:21-30), All-Powerful – You** helped young David defeat the giant Goliath **(First Samuel 17:33;51), All wise** – **God** knowing how to get **Jonah** to serve **You** when he ran away. **Your** children delight in praising **You** for **Your** marvelous grace and for how wonderful **You** are always! In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*