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Paul Describes His Apostolic Ministry

4:7 to 7:4



Now **Paul** turns to the paradoxical fact that the glory of the B'rit Chadashah Gospel moves out into the world via **jars of clay**, who are fragile and often suffer as they carry out their ministries (**to see link click Az - Priceless Treasure in Clay Jars**), **Paul** speaks of **the troubles** faced in ministry, but **he** insists that the suffering experienced by **competent shepherds** has a purpose: the advancement of **the Gospel**.

From a human perspective, it might seem that the intensity of suffering faced by **Paul** and **his coworkers** would be devastating. Yet, as **Paul** explains, rather than being destroyed, **true shepherds** experience renewal (**4:16**), and the suffering faced in ministry has a personal outcome: **An everlasting glory whose weight is beyond description**. Finally, **the eternal glory** brings to mind an eternal realm, on which **true shepherds** focus **their** attention (**4:17-18**).

Paul then explains **the hope** that **competent shepherds** have in the face of suffering and **death**. And he uses words such as **house**, **tent**, and **building** to talk about the contrast and relationship between the earthly body of suffering and the heavenly body that will be put on at the resurrection of the dead. Out of this

discussion of death and resurrection, **the apostle** writes openly about **his** longing to be with **Messiah** and **his** desire to be pleasing to **Him (5:1-10)**.¹¹¹

Paul then appeals to **the Corinthians** to be reconciled to **God** and to open **their** hearts to **their apostle**. **He** clears the ground for these appeals by declaring:

- 1. A New Creation - 5:11-17 (Bd)**
- 2. The Ministry of Reconciliation - 5:18-20 (Be)**
- 3. Fifteen Words of Hope - 5:21 (Bf)**
- 4. Living as a Servant - 6:1-10 (Bg)**
- 5. The Characteristics of Love - 6:11-13 and 7:2-4 (Bh)**
- 6. Do Not be Unequally Yoked with Unbelievers - 6:11 to 7:1 (Bi)**