



## **Parasha Beha'alotcha**

**June 18, 2022**

*Torah:* Numbers 8:1-12:16

*Haftarah:* Zechariah 2:14-4:7

*Ketuvim Sh'lichim:* Ephesians 2:11-16

*Shabbat Shalom Mishpocha!* Our parasha is *Beha'alotcha*, sometimes pronounced *Beha'alotecha*. At this time, Israel was camped in the Sinai Desert and they had been there for almost a year. While there, they built the Tabernacle and its furniture and consecrated the *Kohanim*. *B'ha'alotcha* means “when you set up,” referring to the *menorah* being placed in the Holy Place in the Tabernacle. In this *parasha*, the Levites were also consecrated for ADONAI's service. Those who were away at *Pesach* on Nisan 14 were given an opportunity to participate in *Pesach Sheni*, the second Passover ceremony, one month later. Also in this *parasha* is a description of the clouds which ADONAI placed over the Tabernacle while they were camped and which lifted when the group was to move on, a cloud by day which appeared as fire at night. Two silver trumpets were made and instruction for their use was given. They would be used to summon the leaders of the tribes or sometimes the whole community and would also signal travel plans, war or festivals. In the second month of the second year, the cloud lifted from the Tabernacle and Israel travelled to the Wilderness of Paran. The people grumbled about the *manna*, mourning for the meat in Egypt. Moses appointed 70 elders to assist in governing the people and ADONAI placed some of Moses' spirit on them. Miriam and Aaron spoke negatively of Moses and Miriam was punished with leprosy. Moses prayed for her healing and ADONAI directed that she live outside the camp for seven days and then return, healed, to the community.

We continue today with our series, “*Sha'ul* the Jew,” and also conclude it with this session. But, his writings will continue to be a major part of our understanding of the *Ketuvim Sh'lichim* in future messages, since his thirteen letters make up about two-thirds of it. Our goal and the goal of any follower of Yeshua should be truth. Many people claim their goal is truth, but are not actively seeking it. I am pleased that some of you are actively studying and discussing among yourselves.

Here is a small bit of my testimony. I was saved in 1950 and baptized in the Holy Spirit in 1972. Nine years later, in 1983, I had an encounter with the Holy Spirit which led me on the path on which I continue today. At that time, I began what I understood to be a study of the Hebrew roots of the Christian faith. One of the first major questions that I faced was “what day is the Sabbath?” My study led me to believe that it is the seventh day and eventually, in 1996, Mary Louise and I began exclusively to worship on *Shabbat*. We were a very small minority of Sabbath keepers then and today in our community, we, yourselves included, are still only a very tiny fraction of Yeshua's followers who practice that belief. During those thirty-nine years, much more truth which I did not have has been revealed to me. And, more truth is available to anyone who seeks it.

As has been stated numerous times in these messages, I am not the judge of what the rest of Yeshua's body does nor have I been called to be their teacher. But, I am concerned that so few are actively studying to “show themselves approved” as *Sha'ul* admonished

Timothy. (2Timothy 2:15). Serious Bible study has been replaced by searching for the latest new Bible version which makes it “easier” to understand. Many of these new bibles were not produced with “truth,” but with hype based upon their maker’s already existing belief. My hope and prayer for Yeshua’s greater body is that they would begin to study with a Hebrew based bible such as the Tree of Life Version or the Complete Jewish Bible. They are not perfect Bibles, but are a good place to start because they put back in the Jewishness of the Scriptures which has almost always been removed. Secular history is very important in the life of a nation. We must know where we came from. The same is true of biblical history and it is also my hope and prayer that the Church would study its history as they also delve into the Scriptures. May ADONAI bring about a revival of the search for truth. That should be a major prayer in our prayer schedules.

Today, we read from Ephesians in our *Torah Service*. *11 Therefore, keep in mind that once you—Gentiles in the flesh—were called “uncircumcision” by those called “circumcision” (which is performed on flesh by hand). 12 At that time you were separate from Messiah, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Messiah Yeshua, you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of the Messiah. 14 For He is our shalom, the One who made the two into one and broke down the middle wall of separation. Within His flesh He made powerless the hostility— 15 the law code of mitzvot contained in regulations. He did this in order to create within Himself one new man from the two groups, making shalom, 16 and to reconcile both to God in one body through the cross—by which He put the hostility to death.* (Ephesians 2:11-16 TLV).

There are some very important thoughts in these verses, one of which is particularly hard to understand. *Sha’ul* is thought to have written this letter around 60-62 CE when he was imprisoned in Rome. We learn from Acts 19 that he spent more than two and a half years in Ephesus preaching, teaching and debating. His initial contacts were with Jews. He first met twelve disciples of Yeshua who had only had the immersion of *Yochanan*, John, an immersion of repentance. He immersed them into Yeshua and when he laid his hands on them they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. *Sha’ul* then went into the local synagogue and began teaching. After about three months, they began to harden and to speak evil about The Way, as Yeshua’s movement was called, and so, he took his disciples and left. From the synagogue, he went, according to the TLV, into “the hall of Tyrannus” and continued speaking and debating there for about two years. Other Bible versions call it “the school of Tyrannus,” but the Complete Jewish Bible refers to it as “Tyrannus’s *yeshiva*,” recognizing it as a Jewish institution rather than Gentile. The actual congregation at Ephesus is not mentioned in the Book of Acts, but it seems clear that it was composed of both Jews and Gentiles and that *Sha’ul* had had contact with them by letter and disciples coming and going.

The Complete Jewish Study Bible points out that the organization of *Sha’ul*’s letter to the Ephesians resembles a typical rabbinic *d’rash*, a discourse laying out specific points. In chapters 1-3, *Sha’ul* gives instructions about who G-d is and how to relate to Him both as individuals and as the collective body of Messiah. The rest of the letter lays out *halacha*, practical ways to live according to the *Torah*. We will concentrate today on several verses in chapter 2.

*11 Therefore, keep in mind that once you—Gentiles in the flesh—were called “uncircumcision” by those called “circumcision” (which is performed on flesh by hand).* (Ephesians 2:11 TLV). It’s important to note that most Bible versions call them Gentiles from

the Latin *gentilis*, meaning a race, a nation or “the nations.” The underlying Greek word is *ethne*, from *ethnos* and meaning the same thing. That *Sha’ul* refers to them in this way is important because many today believe that followers of Jesus become spiritual Jews and that the Church is spiritual Israel. That is not true. Gentiles remain Gentiles and are grafted into the Jewish body. *Sha’ul* also confirms this in Romans by writing: *13 But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles.* (Romans 11:13a TLV). Gentile is not a negative term, just a description of their racial background. But, the spiritual body continues to be Israel in the flesh and not the Church.

*12 At that time you were separate from Messiah, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.* (Ephesians 2:12 TLV). The Greek word which the TLV translates as “commonwealth of Israel” is *politeias* (pol-ee-tae-ee-as), taken from *politeia* (pol-ee-ti'-ah) meaning citizenship. Before trusting in Yeshua, Gentiles were excluded from this citizenship. Britain is the best modern example of a commonwealth of nations. At one time, the sovereign of England ruled over other nation-states such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand. So, “commonwealth” fits very well with G-d’s reign. He is the King over Israel which contains two groups. At one point in time, His kingdom only contained descendants of Abraham, ethnic Jews. But, now with Yeshua as Messiah, there are two groups within Israel with some Jews being members of both groups. One group is those Jews who have not trusted Yeshua as Messiah. They are in covenant with ADONAI through His covenant with Abraham and are heirs to ADONAI’s covenant with him, heirs to the Land of Israel. A second group is made up of both Jews and Gentiles, those who have trusted in Yeshua and they are in covenant with ADONAI through the New Covenant. The Jews in that group are also members of the first group as well.

The Gentiles who were formerly separate from the Messiah, actually pagans at that time, were strangers to the “covenants of Israel;” not a part of them. They were heathens just as we were before we trusted in Yeshua. According to the TLV, *Sha’ul* calls them “the covenants of promise.” In past messages, I have approached this verse exactly as it reads in the TLV, “the covenants of promise,” but also in one past message, I brought out what the Greek translation says. I don’t remember everything that I have taught in past years and usually try to go back and check a new message against an older one. Sometimes, ADONAI gives me a newer and better understanding. But, I am not infallible. I don’t know everything. Let me again exhort you to check out everything that I say. I speak some things confidently, but others sometimes with a bit of question, those words referred to by *Shimon Kefa* when he said that some of the things that *Sha’ul*, said were hard to understand.

The Greek of Ephesians 12:2 states: “strangers to the covenants of the promise.” That’s quite a bit different. For this discussion, we will limit the covenants of promise to covenants made with the Jews, Abraham’s descendants. We identify them as the Abrahamic Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant and the New Covenant. Only two of these covenants, the Abrahamic Covenant and the Davidic Covenant are unconditional. ADONAI will carry them out without any requirement by the covenant recipients. In Genesis 18 we read of the covenant ADONAI made with Abraham: *18 On that day Adonai cut a covenant with Abram, saying, “I give this land to your seed, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates River..”* (Genesis 15:18 TLV). The Covenant of Circumcision is a sub-covenant of the Abrahamic Covenant. Both of these only apply to descendants of Abraham. Regarding the Davidic covenant, 2Samuel 7 says: *16 So your house and your kingship will be secure forever before you; your throne will be established forever.”* (2Samuel 7:16 TLV). ADONAI

made this unconditional covenant with David and is both an honoring of him and the preparation for Yeshua to sit on David's throne as King Messiah.

Different persons classify the covenants slightly differently. In my opinion, there is one conditional covenant, the Mosaic Covenant. But, even though it is conditional, it initially depended upon a response from the individual Israelites. ADONAI asked them if they would accept His *mitzvot* and they replied, yes. But, even though this covenant is conditional, there are still promises. Some of them are: 1) Israel will be ADONAI's prized possession if they obey His voice. (Exodus 19:5). 2) Israel will be a kingdom of priests if they listen closely to ADONAI's voice and keep His covenant. (Exodus 19:6). 3) Israel will be a holy nation if they listen closely to ADONAI's voice and keep His covenant. (Exodus 19:5-6). 4) ADONAI will defend Israel from all her enemies if they listen closely to His voice and do everything He says. (Exodus 23:22). 5) ADONAI will be merciful, gracious and forgiving. Scripture says: *6 Then Adonai passed before him, and proclaimed, "Adonai, Adonai, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth, 7 showing mercy to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, yet by no means leaving the guilty unpunished, but bringing the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, to the third and fourth generation."* (Exodus 34:6-7 TLV). These verses are known as "The Thirteen Attributes of ADONAI" and are also conditional upon Israel keeping the covenant. We understand from these verses that the Mosaic Covenant, the Covenant made at Sinai, is also a covenant of promise, but a covenant of conditional promises. Israel was required to be faithful in order to receive the benefits from ADONAI.

The last covenant that we will speak of is different from all the rest. The New Covenant is unconditional in promise, but conditional in acceptance. By that, I mean that the Scriptures make it clear that what ADONAI promised to do has no conditions on it. He gave this covenant without requirement. He spoke through Isaiah saying: *1 Then a shoot will come forth out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch will bear fruit out of His roots. 2 The Ruach of Adonai will rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and insight, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Adonai.* (Isaiah 11:1-2 TLV). This Messianic promise continues through verse 10 and prophecies Yeshua. ADONAI also spoke through Ezekiel: *27 I will put My Ruach within you. Then I will cause you to walk in My laws, so you will keep My rulings and do them.* (Ezekiel 36:10 TLV). Through Isaiah he said: *10 Yet it pleased Adonai to bruise Him. He caused Him to suffer. If He makes His soul a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the will of Adonai will succeed by His hand. 11 As a result of the anguish of His soul He will see it and be satisfied by His knowledge. The Righteous One, My Servant will make many righteous and He will bear their iniquities.* (Isaiah 53:10-11 TLV). These verses and the rest of this chapter foretell Yeshua's death as our sin sacrifice. ADONAI foretold the actual covenant through Jeremiah: *30 "Behold, days are coming" —it is a declaration of Adonai— "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— 31 not like the covenant I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they broke My covenant, though I was a husband to them." it is a declaration of Adonai.* (Jeremiah 31:30-31 TLV). ADONAI states that He is going to make a new covenant with Israel for a specific reason. It is that Israel continually broke His conditional covenant of promise, the Mosaic Covenant. They didn't hold up their end of the bargain. But, this covenant of promise prophesied by Jeremiah, is an unconditional promise. ADONAI said that He would make a new covenant and He has established the New Covenant. But, this New Covenant with Israel is different from the former covenant: *32 "But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days" —it is a declaration of Adonai— "I will put My Torah within them.*

*Yes, I will write it on their heart. I will be their God and they will be My people.*” (Jeremiah 31:32 TLV). The *Torah* which was initially written on stone is now written on the human heart of the covenant members. This happens when a person, either Jew or Gentile, trusts in Yeshua, believing that His death was a sacrifice for their sins. His death cut the New Covenant with His own blood and the person who trusts in Him becomes a covenant member. When he trusts, the *Ruach Kodesh*, the Holy Spirit, writes ADONAI’s *Torah* upon their heart and the Holy Spirit indwells them. Even as their hearts are circumcised, they are also inscribed with ADONAI’s *Torah*. ADONAI then said: 33 *“No longer will each teach his neighbor or each his brother, saying: ‘Know Adonai,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest.”* it is a declaration of Adonai. *“For I will forgive their iniquity, their sin I will remember no more.”* (Jeremiah 31:33 TLV). *“For they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest”* is ADONAI’s promise of the salvation of “all Israel” which *Sha’ul* prophesied in Romans 11. We are anxiously waiting for that to happen. Under this covenant of promise, the sins of those who trust in Yeshua are forgiven and are remembered no more. The basis of this covenant is unconditional. ADONAI has already cut this covenant with the blood of His Son. He freely gave it. But, it is individually conditional, in that each person must accept the conditions of the covenant in order to receive the benefits of the covenant. That’s the entry requirement; trust in Yeshua as the sacrifice for your sins. ADONAI doesn’t cause us to do it. He gives us free will and we have to make that choice.

These are the covenants of promise- Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic and New. *Sha’ul* wrote to the Ephesians that the Gentiles in their former state were: “strangers to the covenants of the promise.” The Greek text places the word *tēn* meaning “the” before *epangelias*, meaning promise, “the promise.” What is “the promise?” I believe that this is a reference to the Davidic Covenant, the promise of a Davidic king on the throne of Israel and also the New Covenant, the promise of the infilling of the Holy Spirit and the implantation into our hearts of the desire to be faithful to ADONAI and His Son Yeshua. Yeshua is “the promise!” Ethnic Jews who have trusted Yeshua also have these covenants of “the promise” plus the Abrahamic Covenant. The Mosaic Covenant is inactive because there is no longer a Temple or Levitical priesthood. The New Covenant is ADONAI’s primary active covenant. Before they trusted in Yeshua, those Gentiles in Ephesus were separate from citizenship in Israel because they were not a part of Israel. But, they were brought near by the blood of Yeshua just as we today are when we trust in Him. 13 *But now in Messiah Yeshua, you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of the Messiah.* (Ephesians 2:13 TLV). All Jews are already citizens of Israel. Gentiles are made citizens, members of the Commonwealth of Israel, by Yeshua’s blood and are brought near to the covenants of the promise because Yeshua broke down the middle wall of separation.

14 *For He is our shalom, the One who made the two into one and broke down the middle wall of separation. Within His flesh He made powerless the hostility—* (Ephesians 2:14 TLV). Yeshua has made Jew and Gentile into one body through the New Covenant. He broke down the “middle wall of separation” and brought Gentile believers near. The Complete Jewish Bible uses the word *mechitzah* to translate middle wall of separation. This is the Hebrew word for division or partition. This term is generally used in orthodox synagogues to refer to the separation of men and women. The CJB uses it here to refer to the *cheil*, a low stone wall with a low wooden fence called the *soreg* built on it standing about 15 feet away from the walls of the Temple. This was the dividing line, the line beyond which no unclean Jew or any Gentile could go. A Gentile proselyte to Israel was considered a Jew and had the same privileges as any Jew.

14 For He is our shalom, the One who made the two into one and broke down the middle wall of separation. Within His flesh He made powerless the hostility— 15 the law code of mitzvot contained in regulations. He did this in order to create within Himself one new man from the two groups, making shalom,... (Ephesians 2:14-15 TLV). Taken at face value, this appears to say that *Sha'ul* said that Messiah abolished the Mosaic *Torah* by His sacrificial death, and that the *Torah* was the instrument of hostility that erected a dividing wall between Jew and Gentile. Do you believe that? I don't, but even so, this is one of those things that's very difficult to understand. There are a lot of ideas out there about this, but in my opinion, Tim Hegg has the best explanation of these verses. First, *Sha'ul* could not have been referring to the dividing fence outside the Temple because at the time of this letter it was still standing. It had not been broken down. It was also not the written *Torah*. We know that Yeshua said that not one jot or tittle of *Torah* would pass away before heaven and earth pass away (Matthew 5:18) and we've also seen *Sha'ul* uphold it a number of times. So, if it was not the physical wall or the written *Torah*, then it had to be something else. Hegg notes that the Greek term "*fragmos* was used in the 1st Century to identify the oral *Torah* as a 'wall' or 'fence' around the written *Torah*, and the Pharisees were described as 'builders of the wall.'" And, it was actually aspects of the oral *Torah*, not the written *Torah*, which laid the foundation for a strict separation between Jew and non-Jew. Hegg suggests that the dividing wall which was abolished by Messiah was none other than those Rabbinic laws, the oral *Torah*, which had enforced a separation between Jew and Gentile in opposition to the written *Torah*. The *Tanakh*, the Hebrew Bible, gives very clear instructions against erecting barriers to separate Israel from the nations. According to it, the foreigner who desired to worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was to be welcomed into the community and treated with the same respect as was given the native born.

I believe that Hegg is correct regarding "the middle wall of separation and the hostility. It was not the *Torah* that divided. The Bible is not antinomian." It is just the opposite. It upholds ADONAI's righteous laws. It was the commands of the oral *Torah* which divided, something created by the Pharisees after the return from Babylon. At the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, *Kefa*, speaking of the new Gentile believers, said: 7 ...., "*Brothers, you know that in the early days God chose from among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the message of the Good News and believe. 8 And God, who knows the heart, testified to them by giving them the Ruach ha-Kodesh—just as He also did for us. 9 He made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts through faith. 10 Why then do you put God to the test by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples—which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?*" (Acts 15:7b-10 TLV). I believe that *Kefa's* "yoke" and *Sha'ul's* "middle wall of separation" are one and the same, the oral *Torah*.

Now, we are "one new man," Jew and Gentile, one in Messiah Yeshua. This "one new humanity" is made up of all those who have taken advantage of the "covenant of the promise" and become covenant members of the New Covenant. Yeshua has taken away the *mechitzah*, the division separating us, the oral *Torah*. *Mechitzah* is still a good word to use here. It means division. If you haven't read the book, *The Non-Torah: Exposing the Mythology of Divine Oral Torah*, a book written by several IAMCS authors, I encourage you to do so. Not only does it expose the Oral *Torah*, but also the *Talmuds*, both of which are based upon the *Mishnah*, the written form of Oral *Torah*. These sources are not authoritative for us. We only base our theology on ADONAI's holy written *Torah*, the books of Genesis to Revelation.

Why is it that we spend so much of our time trying to understand the difficult words of Scripture, many of them which are found in the writings of Yeshua's *talmidim*? It's because

we realize that our goal is the truth. Yes, there is absolute truth in ADONAI's plan for mankind. And, it is our goal to not only find it, but also to walk in it. We do this for ourselves because we have a thirst for truth and a desire to worship ADONAI in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24).

Yeshua said to the Jews who had trusted Him: 31 ...., *"If you abide in My word, then you are truly My disciples. 32 You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free!"* (John 8:31-32 TLV). We do want to abide, to live, in His word. That's our goal, and in doing that, that Yeshua would recognize us as truly being His disciples. What Yeshua seemed to mean was that if we fully commit our lives to Him and live according to His word, then we will know the truth. It may be progressive truth. We don't learn it all at one time, but when we do learn it, it will set us free. Being set free is open to interpretation, but I believe that it means that we will be free from false teaching and false belief. That's why *Sha'ul* encouraged Timothy to: 15 *Make every effort to present yourself before God as tried and true, as an unashamed worker cutting a straight path with the word of truth.* (2Timothy 2:15 TLV). This is important advice for us. We want to be presented before ADONAI as faithful disciples of Yeshua and not as those who are satisfied with what they know now, the status quo. Even though some don't believe it, there is always more truth available. We want to be unashamed of our lives as Yeshua's disciples and especially with regard to the truth. The Greek word translated as "cutting a straight path" is *orthotomounta*. It means to cut straight which can be interpreted to mean to handle correctly, to teach rightly or to accurately handle the truth. Everyone does not occupy the position of a teacher, but everyone is called to be a witness. You can only witness what you know. We will all stand before Yeshua one day to answer His questions regarding our lives, what we have done either good or bad. (2Corinthians 5:10). We shouldn't be doing these things out of fear of judgment, but out of love, love and our sense of responsibility as His disciples. It's very important that we study to show ourselves approved!

We close with *Sha'ul's* exhortation to the congregation at Ephesus: 1 *Therefore I, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you were called— 2 with complete humility and gentleness, with patience, putting up with one another in love, 3 making every effort to keep the unity of the Ruach in the bond of shalom. 4 There is one body and one Ruach, just as you also were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one immersion; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.* (Ephesians 4:1-6 TLV). As *Yochanan* said, "Little children, the hour is late." (1John 2:18). The day is coming soon which was spoken of in our *haftarah* portion today: 15 *"In that day many nations will join themselves to Adonai and they will be My people and I will dwell among you."* (Zechariah 2:15 TLV). *Shabbat shalom!*