



Parasha Emor

May 17, 2025

Torah: Leviticus 21:1-24:3

See message notes beitshalom.us for parasha-specific messages

Haftarah: Ezekiel 44:15-31

Ketuvim Shlichim: Ephesians 2:1-22

Specific to today's messa

Disciples of Yeshua 27

(Content added for clarity and an error 05/18/25)

Shabbat shalom Mishpacha! The omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent Creator of the universe, who is all-powerful, all-knowing, and present everywhere, is our G-d. Even these words are a pitiful description of the majesty and wonder of ADONAI. And the creator of an infinite universe also created this tiny planet and us, His creatures. He designed us as male and female to allow for the reproduction of our own kind. We, lacking any notion of where this relationship might lead, were presented by ADONAI with the concept of family, where the male is the husband and father, and the female is the wife and mother. We didn't understand that until ADONAI revealed Himself to us as our Father. He set the pattern for the human family. If we human fathers grieve for our sons and daughters who reject a relationship with the living G-d, how much more does our heavenly father mourn for those who reject Him. His desire to have everyone come to Him is so great that He sent His own Son to die, that we might live. Such is the greatness of the love shown us by our Heavenly Father and His Son, Yeshua. As His Word indicates, He wants everyone to come to Him (2 Peter 3:9 TLV), freely, and of their own will. The giving of His Son is the greatest expression of His love, and His New Covenant provides the way for us to become a part of their family, to be able to say, our Father, Abba!

Sha'ul, the emissary to the Gentiles, once again explains the elements of the covenant. He wrote: *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). *Sha'ul* refers to the Ephesians as Gentiles, a term derived from the Latin “gentilis”, which signifies a race, a nation, or “the nations.” The Greek word is *ethne*, from *ethnos*, meaning nations. The way he refers to Gentiles is important because many Gentiles today believe that followers of Jesus become spiritual Jews and that the Church is spiritual Israel, having replaced the Jews. We don't believe that “Replacement Theology” accurately represents the scriptures. Gentiles remain Gentiles and are grafted into the Jewish body, which is Israel. *Sha'ul* confirmed this in his letter to the Romans. To Gentiles who had been grafted into the Jewish olive tree, he wrote: *13 But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles.* (Romans 11:13a TLV). Even though they were followers of Yeshua, they remained Gentiles. Gentile is not a negative term, just a description of racial background. But the spiritual body continues to be Israel, a body initially made up of Jews who have trusted in Yeshua. The Gentile followers of Yeshua within both the Church and the Messianic

Jewish community represent a portion of the spiritual nation of Israel. But ADONAI made the New Covenant with Israel, and it remains a Jewish covenant. (Jeremiah 31:30; 32).

Sha'ul continues: 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. (Ephesians 2:12-13 TLV). By trusting in Yeshua, some Gentiles have been brought near the Covenants of Promise. *Sha'ul* said covenants, plural. His words were directed to the Gentile Ephesians (and us). He is thought to have written this letter around 60-62 CE when in prison in Rome. Acts chapter 19 tells that he spent more than two and a half years in Ephesus preaching, teaching, and debating. His initial contacts were with Jews. In Ephesus, he first met twelve Jewish disciples of Yeshua who had only experienced the immersion of *Yochanan*, John, an immersion of repentance. He immersed them in Yeshua, and when he laid his hands on them, they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. *Sha'ul* entered the synagogue and commenced his teachings. After approximately three months, the Jews began to harden their hearts and speak ill of The Way, Yeshua's movement, prompting *Sha'ul* to take his disciples and leave. From the synagogue, he went into Tyrannus's school and continued speaking and debating there for about two years. The congregation at Ephesus is not mentioned in the Book of Acts, but it consisted of both Jews and Gentiles. *Sha'ul* later had contact with them through letters and traveling disciples.

Writing to the Gentiles in Ephesus, *Sha'ul* said: *12 At that time you (Gentiles) were separate from Messiah, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise,...* (Ephesians 2:12a TLV). The Greek word translated as "commonwealth" is *politeias* (pol-ee-tae-ee-as), from *politeia* (pol-ee-ti'-ah), meaning citizenship. Great Britain is the best modern example of a commonwealth. At one time, the kings and queens of England ruled over other nation-states such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and others, with the people of those nations being citizens of Great Britain. So, the term "commonwealth" aligns very well with ADONAI's reign. He is the king of Israel, a commonwealth today composed of two groups. At one time, His kingdom only contained the 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 comprised of Jews who have not trusted Yeshua as Messiah. They are in covenant with ADONAI through His covenant with Abraham and are heirs to His promise as inheritors of the Land of Israel. A second group is made up of Jews and Gentiles who have trusted in Yeshua, and they are in covenant with ADONAI through the New Covenant, which is ADONAI's active redemptive covenant. The Jews in the New Covenant are also members of the Abrahamic Covenant. All individuals within these two groups are citizens of spiritual Israel.

The Ephesian Gentiles who were formerly separate from the Messiah were "strangers to the covenants of Israel" (Ephesians 2:12), simply meaning not a part of the covenants. The Tree of Life Version refers to these covenants as "the covenants of promise," but the Greek text of Ephesians 2:12 reveals something else. It states: *kai xenoì tōn diathēkōn 'tēn' epangelias*, "strangers to the covenants of 'the' promise." That's quite a bit different. The definite article *tēn*, meaning "the," comes before "promise," rendering this as "the promise." To determine what "the covenants of the promise" are, we must first decide which covenants are covenants of promise.

For our discussion, we will restrict the covenants of promise to covenants with Abraham's descendants, the Jews. There are four. They are: 1. the Abrahamic Covenant, the covenant of the land of Israel made with Abraham and his descendants. 2. The Mosaic Covenant, the covenant made with Abraham's descendants at Mount Sinai. 3. The Davidic Covenant, the covenant ADONAI made with King David. And 4. The New Covenant, the covenant ADONAI made with Abraham's descendants mediated by His Son, Yeshua. 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 find 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 (Genesis 17:10-12) is a sub-covenant of the Abrahamic Covenant and determines the sign of that covenant.

The Davidic covenant is made with David and his descendants: *16 So your house and your kingship will be secure forever before you; your throne will be established forever.*" (2 Samuel 7:16 TLV). ADONAI made this unconditional covenant with David, and it honors his relationship with ADONAI while also preparing for His descendant Yeshua to sit on David's throne as King Messiah. ADONAI established this unconditional covenant with David, which acknowledges David's relationship with ADONAI and simultaneously prepares for his immediate descendants, culminating in His descendant Yeshua who will reign as King Messiah on David's throne.

Different people classify the covenants in slightly different ways. I view the Mosaic Covenant as a conditional 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 commandments, His *mitzvot*, and they replied "with one voice," yes. (Exodus 19:8). Even though this covenant was conditional, there were still promises. Some 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. The *Torah* 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. From these promises, we understand 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 final covenant is different from all the others. The New Covenant is unconditional in promise, but conditional in acceptance. The scriptures clearly state that what ADONAI promised to do is unconditional. He gave this covenant without any action required of Israel. Speaking through Isaiah, He said: *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 prophesies the coming of Yeshua, calling Him “the root of Jesse.” ADONAI also spoke through Ezekiel, saying: *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 also 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 remainder of Isaiah chapter 53 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. The reason was that Israel committed repeated violations of the covenant, failing to uphold their part of the agreement. However, this new covenant of promise, prophesied by Jeremiah, represents an unconditional promise. ADONAI said that He would make a new covenant, and He has established the New Covenant. The covenant is unconditional, but entrance into it is conditional, based upon an individual’s free choice.

This New Covenant with Israel is considerably different from the Mosaic 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 originally inscribed on stone in the Mosaic Covenant, is now etched on the hearts of members of the New Covenant. This takes place when a person, Jew or Gentile, trusts in Yeshua, believing that His death was a sacrifice for their sins. Yeshua, by His death, cut the New Covenant with His blood, and the person who trusts in Him becomes a covenant member. When they trust, the *Ruach Kodesh*, the Holy Spirit, indwells their hearts, their spirits. But the *Ruach* also writes ADONAI’s Torah upon their heart. ADONAI said, “I will write my Laws on their heart.” As the Scripture says, “G-d is not a man that He would lie.” (Numbers 23:19). I believe that if He said He would do it for those who entered His New Covenant, He did. Deep in the spirit of every follower of Yeshua is the desire to obey the Father, but the person’s own desires may mute it. Even as our hearts were circumcised, they were also inscribed with ADONAI’s Torah, His righteous laws.

ADONAI continued: *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). This part of the promise has not been fulfilled, but soon will be. “*For they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest*” is ADONAI’s promise of the salvation of “all Israel,” as prophesied in Ezekiel 36 and Romans 11. We are eagerly waiting for that to happen. Under this covenant of promise, the New Covenant, 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 freely given this covenant, cutting it with the blood of His Son. But the New Covenant is individually conditional, in that each person must accept the conditions of the covenant to receive the benefits of the covenant. The requirement is that we trust in Yeshua as the sacrifice for our sins. As we will see, the New Covenant is one

of the “covenants of the promise,” the fulfillment of the foreshadowing of the Davidic Covenant.

Sha’ul’s letter to the Ephesians continues: *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 2:14-16 TLV). These verses present a serious problem of understanding. We’ll come back to the “one new man” in a moment. Right now, our question is: what are “the middle wall of separation and the law code of mitzvot in regulations?”

Sha’ul wrote to the Ephesians that the Gentiles in their unredeemed state were: “strangers to the covenants of ‘the’ promise.” The covenants of promise are the Abrahamic, the Mosaic, the Davidic, and the New Covenant. But as we have seen, there is another word in the Greek text that most Bible versions don’t include. It is *tēs*, meaning “the,” which renders this as “the promise.” The Greek words are *tēs* (teis) *epangelias* (ep-ang-el-ee'-as), “the promise.” Being strangers to “the covenants of promise” without the ‘the’ can mean strangers to the Abrahamic, the Mosaic, the Davidic, and the New. The word “covenants” is plural, so there must be more than one covenant of promise. One is the Davidic Covenant. This is the promise: *12 ..., I will raise up your seed, who will come forth from you after you, and I will establish his kingdom.” 16 So your house and your kingship will be secure forever before you; your throne will be established forever.* (2 Samuel 7:12b and 7:16 TLV). This is ADONAI’s promise to David, His assurance that his descendant would sit on Israel’s throne, the commitment of a king who will rule forever and establish a lasting kingdom. This covenant anticipates the second “covenant of the promise,” the New Covenant, which is the realization foretold by the Davidic Covenant.

The pagan Gentiles in Ephesus were separate from citizenship in Israel because they were not a part of Israel. But those Gentiles who trusted were brought near by the blood of Yeshua, just as we 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, but they are not New Covenant members unless they commit to Yeshua. Gentiles are made citizens 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.

What is the wall? This is another difficult question. *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). The Greek text reads: *mesotoichon tou phragmou*, “the barrier of the fence,” with barrier an interpretation of *phragmou*, “middle wall” or “dividing wall.” From this, we understand that Yeshua has made Jew and Gentile into one body through the New Covenant by breaking down this barrier. The “barrier of the fence” and “the middle wall of separation” are cryptic phrases that lead to various interpretations. The Complete Jewish Bible uses the word *mechitzah* to interpret this phrase, the Hebrew word for division or partition. In orthodox synagogues, this refers to the divider that separates men and women. The Complete Jewish Bible also proposes that *mechitzah* refers to the *חיל* *cheil* (chay-il), the low stone wall topped by a wooden fence called the *סורג* *soreg*, which stood about 15 feet from the Temple walls. In the 1st century, this was the dividing

line, the line beyond which no unclean Jew or a Gentile could go. Is this the barrier between Jew and Gentile that Yeshua broke down?

We also must decode the “law code” which *Sha’ul* speaks of. 14 *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 2:14b-15 TLV). Verse 15 infers that “the middle wall of separation” is the “law code of *mitzvot* contained in regulations,” commands of some kind. We can rule out the *Torah* as being something that divides us. In our prior discussions, we have established that ADONAI’s *Torah* does not separate us from either traditional or Messianic Jews. Messiah Yeshua did not abolish the *Torah* by His death? But the question remains. What are the Law commands, the instrument of hostility that erected a dividing wall between Jew and Gentile? Many people believe that it is the *Torah*, but as we have shown many times, the scriptures are not antinomian, and neither Yeshua nor *Sha’ul* are antinomian. There is another answer.

If you search for theological opinions on this topic, you will find several. In my opinion, Tim Hegg has the best explanation of these verses. (<https://torahresource.com/dividing-wall-ephesians-214/>). According to Hegg, *Sha’ul* could not have been talking about the dividing fence outside the Temple because it was “not broken down.” At the time of Yeshua’s death, and the time *Sha’ul* wrote this letter, some thirty to thirty-two years later, this dividing fence still stood and was not broken down until the Romans destroyed the Temple in 70 CE, eight or ten years after *Sha’ul* wrote. We have Yeshua’s testimony about the written *Torah*, and this lets us know that the *Torah* was not the “middle wall.” Yeshua said that not one jot or tittle of *Torah* would pass away before heaven and earth pass away, and then went on to condemn those who would break the least of these commands. (Matthew 5:18-19). Yeshua was not against following the *Torah*.

If “the middle dividing wall” was not the physical wall around the Temple and not the written *Torah*, then what was it? By examining the Greek text, Hegg finds the most likely answer. *Phragmos* is the Greek word translated as “fence” in Ephesians 2:14. He notes that: “The Greek term *fragmos* was used in the 1st Century to identify the oral *Torah* as a “wall” or a “fence” around the written *Torah*, and the Pharisees were described as ‘builders of the wall.’ Even today, traditional Jews continue to put fences around the *Torah*, additional commands “in the oral *Torah*” serving to prevent accidentally breaking one of ADONAI’s *mitzvot*. Not mixing milk and meat in a meal is an example, and is meant to avoid cooking an animal in its mother’s milk. (Exodus 23:19; 34:26). I agree with Tim Hegg. It was a “law code of commands, but not the written *Torah* and its *mitzvot*. It was the oral *Torah* that laid the foundation for a strict separation between Jew and non-Jew, which continues today. The dividing wall that Messiah Yeshua abolished was the oral *Torah*. It is those Pharisaic laws that, for them, became equal in authority to the written scriptures that caused the separation between Jew and Gentile, and not 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 given to the native born.

It was not the *Torah* that divided. The Bible is not antinomian. It upholds ADONAI’s righteous Laws. The oral *Torah* is something that the Pharisees created after Israel’s return from Babylon. At the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, *Shimon Kefa* addressed this question: 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). This yoke is not the written *Torah*, the Laws which ADONAI has written on our hearts? I believe that Kefa's "yoke" and Sha'ul's "middle wall of separation" are the same, the oral *Torah*.

Now, Jew and Gentile are unified through Yeshua. 15 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 2:15b-16 TLV). Jew and Gentile, now one in Messiah Yeshua, are "one new man." This "one new humanity" is made up of all those who have taken advantage of the foretold "covenants of the promise" and become covenant members of the New Covenant. (Correction, this statement made during the livestream talk is not true: We are "one" in Messiah, with "one" being the Hebrew *echad*, the same oneness that is between the Father, Yeshua, and the *Ruach Kodesh*. The Greek *kathos*, meaning as or like, does not represent the Hebrew *echad*.) Yeshua prayed: 11 "I am no longer in the world; but they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name that You have given Me, so that they may be one just as We are." (John 17:11 TLV). He wishes us to have the same type of unity that He and the Father have. Yeshua has removed the *mechitzah*, the "dividing" oral *Torah*, the barrier that separated us. The oral *Torah* is not a part of our theology. Our sacred belief is based only on the *Torah Shebiktav*, the written Bible, Genesis to Revelation, and not the *Torah She'ba'al Peh*, the *Torah* of the Mouth. What can we rely upon as ADONAI's truth? Not oral *Torah*, *Talmud*, Jewish *Midrash*, or any tradition of man. We can only rely upon the *Torah Shebiktav*, made up of the *Torah*, the *Nevi'im* (the Prophets), and the *Ketuvim* (the Writings), of the *Tanakh* (the Hebrew Bible), and the *Ketuvim Shlichim* (the writings of Yeshua's disciples), Matthew through Revelation.

While ADONAI, as the Creator, is the Father of every human being, He uses the term 'Father' only about those in covenant with Him. He has given us the choice, a decision we must make. But I know that He wants all to come to Him, not only our backslidden brothers and sisters in the New Covenant, but also those who are outside it. The day is coming when all the children of Abraham will trust in Yeshua and become covenant members of the New Covenant. (Ezekiel 36:24-27; Romans 11:26-27). We pray that it will be soon. We also pray for our own sons and daughters, both physical and spiritual, who are outside of the protective love and grace of our Father. He wants no one to be lost! *Shabbat shalom!*