

Titus Part 9: Jesus Combines Gentiles to Jews; The Three Biblical Covenants (4/1/2017)

The following text is based on a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph.

***Portions of this sermon message have been edited to better transcribe the message. All the Scripture verses are from the New King James Version unless otherwise noted and are in red. Therefore, it is recommended that this document be printed in color.**

Last week we really began to dig into Titus 2:14. We are going to reread this to bring it afresh in our minds. This is what we read in Titus 2:14—**who gave Himself for us**. The “who” is Yeshua, but also notice the “us.” It is plural; this is a Jew speaking to a Gentile. Continuing—**that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works**. Saying this in the first century is absolutely radical; it is completely outrageous. Here you have a Jew, Paul, speaking to a Gentile, Titus, telling him these things. But not just that, he has actually gone back to the Torah and grabbed the passage, Deuteronomy 26:18, that is explicitly about Israel, and he is projecting it upon the Gentiles. How in the world does he get away with that, and why would Paul do that? The answer to that question is that he understood exactly what the Lord was doing. Was it mysterious? Absolutely. Was it controversial? Absolutely. No question about it.

I want to draw your attention to something about this passage. This is not just one of those special passages that really doesn't exist anywhere else in Scripture so that you can't build on it. That is not the case here. We could say that is too outrageous that Paul would take something that is explicitly about Israel and apply it to the Gentiles. However, if you read the New Testament letters from Paul, you will find that this is consistent; this is what he does time and time again.

I want to open up today with a few examples in order to set the stage. Going to Romans 9:23-24—²³ **and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory,** ²⁴ **even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?** So obviously Paul is talking about the expectation of mercy on Israel. There is no mystery about this. Go read the Tanakh and you will find that this is exactly what it says, and this is exactly what the Jewish people have always expected. God told them, “you're my people; expect mercy.” But now it's been extended to the Gentiles. We see that at the end of the verse.

Here is what I love: when we continue, Paul is going to offer scriptural proof to support this radical and outrageous statement of what he is saying in regard to God also showing mercy to the Gentiles. Listen to what Paul says in Romans 9:25 and see if it sounds very familiar to what we read last week—²⁵ **As He says also in Hosea: "I will call them My people, who were not My people, and her beloved, who was not beloved."** Let me be very clear, the passage from Hosea that Paul quotes is explicitly about Israel. This is no argument. And here Paul is taking a passage explicitly about Israel, and he is now applying it to the Gentiles which makes a lot of sense in this passage because of what Paul is saying to the gentiles. Paul is stating that “you are not the people of God. You're totally cut off. You had nothing; there was no hope.” But now he's bringing to their attention the fact that “you are the people [Gentiles] who are not a people [Israel], but now you're being called the people of God.”

This is absolutely breathtaking. What is happening is that the Gentiles were not beloved, but now they are beloved. This is incredible! And it continues as we move into verse 26 of Romans 9—²⁶ "And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' there they shall be called sons of the living God." Paul is revealing a deep mystery here, because the Gentiles have come to faith in the Messiah Yeshua, the front door has opened into the house of Israel, and the Gentiles are starting to come into that house to be one (*echad*) with Israel.

Let me give you another example from 2 Corinthians 6:14-16. Again, this is a Gentile audience being addressed by Paul who is a Jew. And this is what he says—¹⁴ "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?" ¹⁵ "And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?" Belial actually derives from the Hebrew and is an epithet of Satan. It ultimately really means without profit. Now when we look at the context of those verses, we understand that the Gospel just recently came to Corinth, and Paul is doing what he does so well: he is shepherding and protecting. He knows these are newcomers to the faith, and they need protection, education, and they need to be taught.

The problem in Corinth is that they are mixing with the world. Paul is bringing to their attention that they are not to take their call to righteousness and mix it with lawlessness. Righteousness and lawlessness are not to know each other; there is to be total separation.

In dealing with this matter, Paul goes on to say in 2 Corinthians 6:16 —¹⁶ "And what agreement has the temple of God with idols?" Paul uses a rhetorical question. I love the Jewish mentality of teaching—one rhetorical question after another. He poses these questions because the Corinthians should be able to answer them. Paul continues the verse—**For you are the temple of the living God.**

Let's get a little bit of context here in regard to that statement. First, to a Jew the end all be all was ultimately the temple. And what do I mean by that statement, "The end all be all"? The most revered thing in all of Israel was the temple of the Living God. Why was that? Because we find written in Exodus 25:8 the command of the Lord to Israel that they make Him a sanctuary—**that I may dwell among [tavek] them.** *Tavek* can mean within. The temple was the very symbol of identity for Israel. It was their very symbol and house of intimacy.

This is what made them Israel. They had their God dwelling with them, and people would go up to the temple to pray. They sought God. The blood sacrifice was shed and applied to the altar. There was all of this blood everywhere allowing the intimacy to happen. That was the purpose of the sacrifices. So you can understand how the Jews of the first century revered the holy temple of the Living God. The temple was pure holiness to them, and now you have Paul, a Jew, going to a Gentile and saying—**you are the temple of the Living God.** You need to understand that he did not take that statement lightly; he did not make that statement flippantly. This was serious, and there was no possible way you could outdo that statement. For a Jew in the first century to go to the Gentiles and say—**you are the temple of the Living God**—it could not possibly get more intense. The temple was pure holiness.

I want you to think about this: these were Gentiles. The very thought of a Jew saying this in the first century was anathema to the Jew. Prior to Yeshua coming, you would never find Jews running around saying to Gentiles—**you are the temple of the Living God.** It would never happen; it didn't happen for a reason. But now Paul says—**you are the Temple of the Living God.**

Paul goes on to support this with Scripture—I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people (2 Corinthians 6:16). Now here's the interesting thing: he's drawing from Ezekiel 37. That passage is all about the New Covenant. It is explicitly Israel.

I want you to hone in on the last statement in 2 Corinthians 6:16—I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Again I tell you, this is the banner that makes Israel—Israel. The very last statement—I will be their God, and they shall be My people—is their identity. Their identity rests on this statement. That's why they are Israel. If you take that statement away, Israel is gone. But as we know, Israel will never be removed because God is their God, and they are His people. But you need to understand that we are establishing identity here. Israel's identity explicitly hangs on this statement.

Now, as you look at this, is something like this going to be controversial in the first century? Absolutely. In fact, if you look specifically at the book of Acts, what was happening? We find arguments interrupting, accusations literally bouncing off the walls, and you have controversy going forth all because Gentiles are coming into the faith.

The Jewish people were not expecting or looking for Gentiles to come into the faith. They were looking for the Mashiach of Israel. They were not worried about Gentiles coming into the faith; this was not even on the map. This was not on the radar. Imagine how much controversy it caused. Go read through the book of Acts and you will find out exactly how much controversy there was about this topic.

Moving on to 2 Corinthians 6:17 where we find Paul bringing the prophet Isaiah into his supporting documents—¹⁷ Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate. Again, go to Isaiah 52 and read the passage. It is explicitly about Israel, but now it's being applied to the Gentiles—Come out from among them and be separate. Let me ask you a question: what was Israel called to do in regard to establishing their identity as Israel? They were called to come out; they were called to be separate. Look at what Leviticus 20:26 says—And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine.

Do you understand the context of identity of why Israel is Israel? God took them away from the world; He separated them because they needed to be holy. Why? Because God is holy. And if He is going to call them "My people," the expectation was that they were going to have to be holy like God. So God's expectation is, "You are my people. I'm a holy God. You need to be my holy people."

Isn't this interesting because this is exactly what Paul is commanding the Gentiles to do. He commands them to—Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean...(2 Corinthians 6:17).

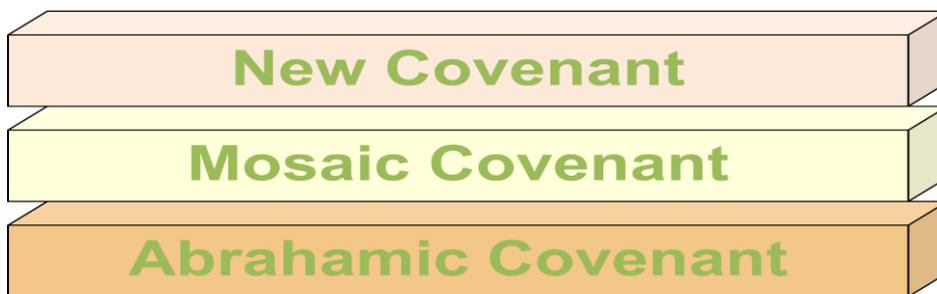
He goes on in this prophecy in Isaiah 52:11—Do not touch what is unclean. I love this. What does that imply? It implies that these Gentiles who are coming to faith in the Messiah Yeshua will make the distinction between clean and unclean. Amen? I mean how could you possibly say that you are not going to touch what is unclean unless you first make the distinction? A distinction has to be made. But, catch this: the very next thing said in the 2 Corinthians 6:17 verse is—and I will receive you.

Do you understand how the identity of Israel works? It is simple: you must come out, you must be separate, and you must not touch the things that I say are unclean. Don't do the things that are against My commandments; listen to My voice. If you do that, then something happens—I will receive you. That is so powerful! 2 Corinthians 6:18—¹⁸ "I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and

daughters, says the Lord Almighty." Isn't that interesting? This is the identity statement—I will be your God and you shall be my people. So the point here is that Gentiles coming into the faith should have no identity crisis whatsoever. The real problem lies with the fact that they don't understand what is going on; they do not understand what Paul understood and the gravity of the situation.

Let me take this a step further. I want to take you to Ephesians 2:11-12 because there Paul gets into a little bit of detail, as it were, into the reality of this mysterious situation where the door to Israel has been open and Gentiles are being grafted in. In this chapter, he identifies some critical points regarding this whole situation, and I want to look at this. We're going to begin in Ephesians 2:11—¹¹ **Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands.** In other words, Paul is making the distinction clear: there is Israel, and there is everyone else who is not Israel; there is Jew, and there is Gentile. It's very simple; there are two groups. You Gentiles are outside; you are not Israel. You are cast out; you're excluded from being called the circumcision. Continuing on in Ephesians 2:12—¹² **that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel....** The transliteration for the Greek word for commonwealth is *politeia*. It actually refers to citizenship. When you think about being a citizen of a country, this typically affords you a lot of benefits. You are afforded the protection from your country, you have kinsmen, you have patriotic brothers that you bind together with, and together you make up this country. What Paul is saying in the last verse is that the Gentiles had nothing. They had no rights, no benefits, and no promises. You had nothing to do with Israel. Nothing! And then he continues and says—**and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.**

Notice he doesn't say covenant as in singular. He says covenants as in plural. If you go to the Greek on this word, it is plural. What is Paul talking about when he says covenants of promise? When you go to the Tanakh, you will find three primary covenants. I want to show them to you.



You have the Abrahamic Covenant, and I intentionally put this particular illustration up so you can see that these covenants work as layers. As an example, when the Lord commanded Moses to build the tabernacle, and the people were supposed to bring everything needed to build it, there were layers that covered it. The covenants work the exact same way. They are layered, and we're not going to go deep into this because this is a couple month study, but there are layers to this. There is the Abrahamic Covenant that is first and is the foundation, and all the other covenants stem from this covenant. You can't have the Mosaic Covenant without the Abrahamic Covenant. In fact, there are aspects of the Abrahamic Covenant that were tangibly fulfilled in the Mosaic Covenant, and you'll see that in a second. You can't have the New Covenant without the Mosaic Covenant, and you certainly can't have the New Covenant without the Abrahamic Covenant.

Now there is something I want you to know regarding these covenants. There is a statement made with

each and every one of these covenants. It is a statement of identity; it is a statement of promise, and it is going to give you some depth to understand where Paul is coming from and what it really means to be in covenant with the Living God. And so what I want to do is to take you to a passage from each one of these covenants.

Abrahamic Covenant

Let's go to Genesis 17:1—¹ When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. Jumping to verse 7—⁷ And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, **to be God to you and your descendants after you** [emphasis added]. In other words, I will be your God. What is this covenant? He will be your God, and you shall be my people.

That is identity; that is what establishes the covenant. This tagline, this banner of identity, is—I will be your God. This is what makes it valuable. This is the purpose of it all. And this was established right there with the Abrahamic Covenant. It is the very essence of it—to be God to you and your descendants after you.

Now let's look at the aspect of where the descendants come into play. That happens under the Mosaic Covenant.

Mosaic Covenant

So we come to Exodus 19:3-4—³ And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: ⁴ 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. So what happened? What did the Lord do with Israel in Egypt? He took them out; He separated them. This is going back to this understanding, "Be separate; you are my people." Continuing in Exodus 9:5—⁵ Now therefore, **if** you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, **then** you shall be a special treasure to Me [emphasis added]. Please note the words "if" and "then." This reality of conditions exists with every one of those three primary covenants. God told Abraham—walk before me and be blameless (Genesis 17:1), and then He says—I will be your God.

God even put Abraham to the test just like He put the children of Israel to the test after the Mosaic Covenant. Isn't that fascinating? God is willing to enter into a covenant, but then He puts you to the test. Abraham had to sacrifice Isaac. Israel was brought into the wilderness, and they were tested.

We are told something here about these covenants that is vital to understand today. God says—obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me (Exodus 19:5). That is called identity. You have something to say about your identity; the Lord wants you to be in covenant with him. But it's on you. Are you willing to pick up your cross and follow Yeshua?

So He says—a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. ⁶ And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a **holy nation**. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of

Israel (Exodus 19:5-6; emphasis added). God says that He is a holy God; therefore, you should be holy just as He is holy. Israel, the descendants of Abraham, was called as a nation of people to be holy before God.

Here is where I'm going with this. As we get to the book of Jeremiah, we are given commentary on this very event: the Mosaic Covenant. This is what it says in Jeremiah 11:1-4—¹ **The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,** ² **"Hear the words of this covenant, and speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem;** ³ **and say to them, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "Cursed is the man who does not obey the words of this covenant"** ⁴ **which I commanded your fathers in the day I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, 'Obey My voice, and do according to all that I command you; so shall you be My people, and I will be your God [emphasis added]. This is the statement of promise and identity. God is saying that if you come into the covenant with me, if you do what I say, and you partake in this covenant: I will be your God, and you will be my people.**

Let's go to the New Covenant and look at Jeremiah 31:33—**But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people [emphasis added]. This is the same statement that is found in the Abrahamic Covenant and Mosaic Covenant.**

New Covenant

Now we come to the New Covenant, and the same statement of identity and promise is made over and over again. You need to understand something: when God is your God, there is hope, there is a future, there is forgiveness, there is blessing, there is honor, there is promise, there is an inheritance, and there is an identity. There is an identity when God is your God. You become invincible because you realize that if God can't be moved or destroyed, and He is my God, I now become invincible. This is why I say Israel will never be destroyed. Who is going to destroy the God of Israel? That is what you would have to do to destroy Israel. It's laughable. Right?

You see the same pattern of consistency; we have this common denominator through all these covenants of promise, and this gives us a little bit of a backdrop to where Paul is coming from. Going back to Ephesians 2:11-14—¹¹ **Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—**¹² **that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise.** Now if the covenants of promise mean—**I will be your God and you shall be my people**—and if I am a stranger of a covenant, what will that mean? It will mean exactly what he goes on to say—**having no hope and without God in the world.** In other words, you are a Gentile; you have no blessing, you have no promise, and you have no identity. You're completely lost. Amen?

This would make putting your faith in Yeshua a pretty important thing. You want an identity. You want to be His people. That is the only way it's going to happen.

So, Paul lays all this out, and it looks pretty grim. He states that if you are a Gentile, you have no hope. But this is what he says next—¹³ **But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.** ¹⁴ **For He Himself is our peace (Ephesians 2:13-14; emphasis added).** He is

our peace. I highlighted this for a reason. I don't want you to think that Yeshua is just peace on earth and goodwill toward men. This conveys much more than this; this is deep.

Paul bringing this reality that when Yeshua came, He did come to bring peace. However, this peace has multiple layers of prophetic significance. We find the angels did declare Yeshua when they were praising in Luke 2: 8-18. They were singing the truth, and the shepherds heard it—**Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men (Luke 2:14)**. There's another component I want you to understand about this statement, and it explicitly unpacks so much in regard to understanding when the New Covenant was to come into play and what that would mean.

At the end of Ezekiel 37:26, there is explicitly the prophecy of the New Covenant. Now if we go to Jeremiah 31:31, we find mention of the New Covenant which in the transliteration of the Hebrew is *běriyth hadashah*. It literally means New Covenant. However, this is fascinating because Ezekiel calls it by a different name. He calls it the *běriyth shalowm*, the Covenant of Peace.

So you start to put all the pieces of this puzzle together realizing there was prophecy of the Covenant of Peace. When we read Isaiah 9:6, we find that He is the Prince of Peace; when we read Luke 2, we find that He has come. So now you understand where we are at in prophecy. The New Covenant is very much here. Yeshua is our peace, and He has brought the *běriyth shalowm*, the Covenant of Peace.

So, Paul says—¹⁴ **For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation (Ephesians 2:14)**. Yeshua has taken the Jew and the Gentile, and He has made them "one." Remember the illustration we need to draw to mind every time we think of how "one" these groups are. Think of the Lord's prayer found in John 17:11; when we think of a Jew and Gentile coming together, it should mirror the relationship of the Father with the Son. It should be that type of "oneness."

Now with the redemptive work of Yeshua breaking down this middle wall of separation, what do you think the devil is going to do? He is going to try to build it back up, and he's done a really good job of it. In almost a thousand years, he has done an amazing job of rebuilding this wall of separation. I want you to understand that when you go to the Torah or the Tanakh as a whole you will discover there is a massive wall that has been established. Think of it as a fifty foot wide concrete wall literally going into the heavens that separates the Jew and the Gentile.

I'm going to give you some examples so you can appreciate why I'm saying these statements are outrageous and that they would be anathema to a Jew in the first century. You're going to appreciate this a little bit more and feel the weight of this.

We are going to Genesis because we have got to go all the way back to the beginning so you can see this was already established. In Genesis 21:10 we read this—¹⁰ **Therefore [Sarah] she said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman [Hagar] and her son [Ishmael]; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac."** This is fascinating because Ishmael is Abraham's son. He is actually his first son born of a bond woman. And what happens? Sara says, "Get rid of Hagar and Ishmael. They are not to dwell with Isaac."

Take this to step further, there is this very specific text you want to catch in regard to the covenant that was made with Abraham and established in a particular manner. God specifically says, "I will establish my covenant with you Abraham through Isaac." It is like he was the linchpin. And that is fascinating

because he is the typology of the Messiah Yeshua. Abraham took Isaac to go sacrifice him; he is a typology of the Messiah Yeshua. And make no mistake; Yeshua is the linchpin to establishing the Covenant of Peace which is the New Covenant.

Yet we find from the beginning, as demonstrated in the verse we just read in the Torah, there was total separation even among Abraham's other children. Let me take this a step further by showing you Genesis 25:6—⁶ But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east [emphasis added]. This is total separation.

Understand that when you're a Jew, this is what you're reading; this is the truth. The Jews understood that they were to have nothing in common with the Gentiles. They would have understood that even their other ancestors who were actually the circumcised descendants of Abraham were cast out away from Isaac through whom eventually came Jacob—Israel.

Think about this: we read in Deuteronomy 7 how Israel is being given the instructions prior to entering the land, and both Moses and the Lord warn them, that they are not to make covenants with the people of the land. They are not to give their sons or their daughters to the people of the land. They are not allowed to make marriages with these people—this is more separation.

Let me take you to Nehemiah 9:1-2—¹ Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, in sackcloth, and with dust on their heads [they were repenting]. ² Then those of Israelite lineage separated themselves from all foreigners; and they stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. This is a fascinating! When they heard the Torah, they were convicted that they should separate themselves from the Gentiles. They could only be with the physical descendents of Israel. This is habitually what we see in Scripture, and this is proven in verse 13—¹³ So it was, when they had heard the Law, that they separated all the mixed multitude from Israel (Nehemiah 9:13).

We could do this all day. Look at Deuteronomy fifteen. These verses are in regard to the *shēmittah* or the Sabbath year (year of release). What you actually find in those instructions is that during the year of release, the Jewish people were to forgive the debts of their Jewish brethren. However, that doesn't apply to the Gentiles. The gentiles have no forgiveness of debt from the Jewish people. It applies only to Israel.

We can take this a step further by going to Deuteronomy 23:19 and look at interest. Israelis are prohibited, according to Torah, from charging their own brethren interest. But guess what? They can charge the Gentile interest (Deuteronomy 23:20). This is total and utter division. Everywhere you look at it, Torah separates the Jew from the Gentile. Israel is sanctified, holy, and to be totally set apart. And you'll notice the Gentiles don't get any of the benefits, none of the citizenship of Israel, and none of the promises are afforded to them.

Let me give you one of my favorite examples found in Exodus 12:43-45—⁴³ And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "This is the ordinance of the Passover: No foreigner shall eat it [they are totally separated]. ⁴⁴ But every man's servant who is bought for money, when you have circumcised him [meaning now you become Jewish], then he may eat it. ⁴⁵ A sojourner and a hired servant shall not eat it.

I am showing you these things because as you go through the Torah and through the Tanakh, you find this massive wall to the heavens that is impenetrable and separating Israel, all the physical descendants of Abraham, from the rest of the world.

I will tell you that this wall existed in the first century, and the Lord did this mysterious thing of starting to bring Gentiles into the flock. This is something the Jews were not looking for; this is not what they were expecting. They were looking for their Jewish Messiah, and that's all that mattered. But they didn't recognize God was going to do something really bizarre in bringing the Gentiles into the flock—so much to the point that Peter had to literally be given a vision where the sheet drops down three times to get him to go to a Gentile (Acts 10). If another Jew would have gone to Peter and given him the instructions to go to a Gentile, I promise you this would never have happened. Because of the vision God gave to Peter, he ends up going to a Gentile and ends up eating with him.

Well here's the deal. As we come to Acts 11, Peter gets rebuked. Look at Acts 11:2-3—² **And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him, 3 saying, "You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!"** They are ready to stone him: "How dare you associate and eat with the Gentiles! This is against everything that we are as a people, as Israel. We cannot do this."

This gives us a little better understanding of what Paul is actually talking about. And frankly, it's something that the Torah supports, in that, Gentiles were cut off from Israel, from the promises, and from the benefits.

Going back to the passage in Ephesians 2:13-14—¹³ **But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.** I'll tell you that if you really want to appreciate what Yeshua has done for you, go through the Torah and find out how far you are away from Israel. Find out how you're not allowed to be a part of Israel. You will then appreciate the great sacrifice and mercy that has been shown to you. It is awesome!

Continuing in Ephesians 12:14—¹⁴ **For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation.** So now you're appreciating the things that we read about in the Torah and throughout the Tanakh. This wall that was divided to the heavens, Yeshua tore it down. Is it peculiar? Yes. And then he goes on and says this in verse 15—¹⁵ **having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances....**

Now how many times have you heard it preached that this verse is evidence that Yeshua came and abolishing in His flesh the Torah? You want to talk about missing the boat on this one. The whole context of Ephesians chapter two is this middle wall of separation going to the heavens. Ephesians 2:15 is this referring to the middle wall a separation. I will read it again—**the law of commandments contained in ordinances**; this is what has been abolished.

You need to understand that all these places that we just went to in the Torah that showed the commanded separation of the Jew from the gentile, that's what Yeshua took down, He brought that wall down—**so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. ¹⁷ And**

He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ Now, therefore, you [Gentiles] are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God (Ephesians 2:15-19). The Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. All you have to do is go back to the Torah, because it is filled with those terms: “strangers, foreigners, and aliens.” The Scriptures are filled with those statements. You will notice there's separation and division, but it's the division that the Lord has brought down.

Let me take you back to the Torah, because I want to show you something interesting. We actually get a picture of what Paul is talking about here. It is something that is very mysterious; and in a prophetic way, it is telling us what would happen in the future. As you go through the Old Testament, you will notice little glimpses of prophetic significance in regard to what God would do in the future. They are concealed. Hindsight is twenty-twenty. It is easy for us to look at prophecies that have been fulfilled, but during these days you would not have recognized them in this way.

I want to take you back and show you something that's really kind of a marvel. We are going to Exodus 12:45—**A sojourner and a hired servant shall not eat [the Passover] it.** So this is a very clear statement in regard to the middle wall of separation; you're not allowed to do that. But notice what it goes on to say in Exodus 12:48—⁴⁸ **And when a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the Passover to the LORD....** Now this is fascinating to me because it is telling us that there are Gentiles who have a desire in their hearts to celebrate the Passover just like the Jewish people. This goes back to our tag line found in Zechariah 8:23—**Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, “Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.”’** So the Gentiles are grasping on to these commands, and here you see this prophetic foreshadow of what the Gentiles would do, because it would be in their heart. They would desire the Passover.

I want to say this: do you think it's a coincidence that this verse in Exodus 12:48 regarding the Pesach (Passover) is specifically mentioned? You won't find this statement anywhere else in the Torah regarding any other biblical feast. You know that you won't find it in Rosh Hashanah (Yom Teruah). You won't find it in Shavuot. This is fascinating! Pesach is the very first feast because all the other feasts hang from the Pesach (Passover). Pesach happens first and all the other feast are to take place after Pesach.

Pesach (Passover) is critical because of the deliverance and redemption provided by the Pesach lamb. The blood is shed, and you are delivered. This is what the stranger needs to covet; he needs to desire it. Let's go back and look at this again from the beginning of Exodus 12:48—**And when a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land [emphasis added].**

So this stranger who is not Israel and is totally cut off, if he converts through circumcision is literally called a natural born citizen. He is not to be identified as a Gentile any longer. You'll even hear some great modern-day commentaries that have been presented from rabbis. They talk about this, and we may actually get into this in the coming weeks. The rabbis will tell you that when a Gentile goes through

circumcision for conversion, he is no longer a gentile; he is a Jew. All the rights and promises, everything, that are offered to the Jewish people now fall upon him.

The verse continues—**For no uncircumcised person shall eat it (Exodus 12:48)**. So now some of you might be thinking, “Passover is coming; we better get our circumcision booth set up because this is what is said.” But here is the beautiful thing of what Paul understood about the Gentiles coming into the faith. He understood this—**In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ (Colossians’ 2:11)**.

Yes, there is circumcision involved. It is called the circumcision of the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit). When the Ruach HaKodesh falls upon you, you gain citizenship. This is why you are no longer strangers, foreigners, or aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the Saints and members of the household of God, the house of God, and the temple of God. This is powerful!

So this is why when we go back to Titus 2:14 and Paul says—**[Yeshua] who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works**—you can understand it, and it makes a lot of sense. Yes, it might be controversial and outrageous, but it makes a lot of sense. Paul understands that the Gentiles have come in through faith in the Messiah Yeshua; they have been granted the citizenship in Israel to be *echad* (one) with her.

I want to close today by giving you one of these glimpses of these prophetic foreshadows. It is found in the book of Ruth. But first, I will give you just a little backdrop. Ruth's mother-in-law, Naomi, was married to Elimelech, and they had two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. Naomi's husband Elimelech dies, and then her two sons die afterward. So Naomi is left with her two daughters-in-law. Look at what happens here—**¹⁴ Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. ¹⁵ And she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law" (Ruth 1:14-15)**. Here you have a representation of a sheep and a goat.

Orpah kisses Naomi; she shows all this kindness, but she says, “I'm leaving; I'm going back to my people and my Gods.” That's fascinating; however, Ruth refused. She clung to Naomi; she clung to this Jew. Well look at what happens as we continue—**¹⁶ But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Think about that statement—Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God (Ruth 1:16)**.

Now you take this is step further. When you read the Torah, you find that both Ruth and Orpah were Moabites. Moabites were prohibited from coming into the assembly of Israel.

You want to talk about this massive wall that was cut down, this prophetic foreshadow. Ruth was brought into Israel as a Moabite even though this was prohibited in Torah. And she became so “one” with Israel that even the Mashiach came through her lineage; she was married to Boaz. You want to talk about, “My people should be your people, my god your god.” This is what Paul understood in regard to the Gentiles coming who cling to Yeshua. The Gentiles were not coming in to replace Israel; they were

not filled with perverse ideology; and they certainly were not coming in to divide Israel in the context dual-covenant theology.

There are so many glimpses of what was supposed to come to pass. Now, however, it has been fulfilled with the *b'eryth shalowm*, the Covenant of Peace.