

פרשת
דברים
Parashat Devarim

*Devarim / Deuteronomy 1:1-5:22, Isaiah 1:1-27
Mark 14:1-16*

What is the Essential Requirement for us as His People?

In this week's Torah study on Parashat Devarim, the journey of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land is reiterated and explained in a very short and concise manner. The Lord God of Israel was looking from his people willful obedience. The idea of obedience is the acceptance of something, the surrender of ourselves to the will of God, and our actions being the end result of this fulfilment (surrender). If the outward act is not in opposition to the inward faith, we are said to be right with God. The Lord God of Israel however is not looking for slaves in the sense of unwilling obedience. To have unwilling obedience would be a legal system where the Master does not care about the motivation from which one obeys the command. This however is not the case in relation to the Torah command, since the Torah is a system of instruction for God's people to live free. The commands of God are directly related to our surrender from self to the way of the Spirit in life which is to walk in righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth. This is what the Lord was looking for from His people, to be willful in their desire to serve Him because of their love for Him. The Torah however describes the people in a different way saying, *Devarim / Deuteronomy 1:26* וְלֹא אָבִיתֶם לָעֲלֹת וּתְמָרוּ אֶת-פִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: *1:26 'Yet you were not willing to go up, but rebelled against the command of the Lord*

your God; (NASB) The people rebelled and were unwilling to do as the Lord wanted. The mitzvot found in the Torah presupposes a spirit which is able to respond to its appeal. The Torah was not made for the righteous, but for the unrighteous, therefore the Torah appeals to the motives of our hearts, which produces the correct actions, something that is supposed to line up with our faith in the Lord God in heaven. Notice how coupled with the commands (mitzvot) are the promises of God, the promise of the power and presence in our midst, the assurance that He will be there for us, the giving of the Spirit of God to His people, and His rest that is most sought after that brings true peace to the soul. The manner and nature of the commands is peculiar to God's people, it is the essential character of His people because it is the very nature of God's ways. This is what separates us as God's people from the peoples of the world. This is what makes us distinct from all others, because within the commands is the highest level of truth and moral teaching which becomes an essential part of us as the Lord moves to change us from the inside out. In the Messiah, the One the Lord sent to guide and direct us in His ways, He taught us the truth and imparted a part of Himself into our lives, so that men will not only do (obey) but be the kind of people He wants us to be (willfully loving truth and peace). This is the essential need for us to be changed from the inside out, and why it is impossible to obey God's word without His coming into our lives and our hearts to change us and motivate us to live for Him. This is why the Lord imparts a part of Himself into our lives, giving us His Holy Spirit, to empower us to grow, to live, and to obey His word. On the other hand, the opposite of being willful to love truth and peace is to love deception. According to the Scriptures, deceiving others is strictly forbidden: *"The Holy One, blessed be He, hates a person which says one thing with his mouth and another in his heart."* (*Talmud Bavli Pesahim 113b*) We are not to be double minded. The act of deception is illustrated by one defrauding as the seller overcharging or the buyer underpaying. This is also condemned, this is the example of having unjust scales, where the Mishnah (*Bava Metziah 4:10*) states: *"As there is wronging in buying and selling, there is wronging with words. A man must not ask: 'How much is this thing?' if he has no intention of buying it."* Note how there is something about the person asking for a price when he is not really interested in buying that is related to having

unjust scales. Yeshua said in *Matthew 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged. 7:2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. 7:3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? (KJV)* Here Yeshua suggests that the concept of unjust scales may also be applied to the one who is judging someone else due to their sins. This is consistent with the Lord wanting justice and truth for our lives, the very thing David is seeking the Lord for deliverance from in *Tehillim / Psalms 120:2*. An often quoted rabbinic saying (*Talmud Bavli Shabbat 55a*) states, “*Truth is the seal of the Holy One, blessed be He.*” In Rashi’s explanation, he describes this saying as referring to the Hebrew word for truth, *emet*, which is formed from the first letter of the alphabet, *alef*, the middle letter, *mem*, and the final letter, *tav*. He says the God of truth is found wherever there is truth and His absence is felt wherever there is falsehood. Therefore, we live in truth so that His presence will remain and dwell with us. Let’s discuss these things further in this week’s Torah portion.

This week’s reading is from *Devarim / Deuteronomy 1:19-40*.

Devarim / Deuteronomy 1:19-40

1:19 ‘Then we set out from Horeb, and went through all that great and terrible wilderness which you saw on the way to the hill country of the Amorites, just as the Lord our God had commanded us; and we came to Kadesh-barnea. 1:20 ‘I said to you, ‘You have come to the hill country of the Amorites which the Lord our God is about to give us. 1:21 ‘See, the Lord your God has placed the land before you; go up, take possession, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has spoken to you. Do not fear or be dismayed.’ 1:22 ‘Then all of you approached me and said, ‘Let us send men before us, that they may search out the land for us, and bring back to us word of the way by which we should go up and the cities which we shall enter.’ 1:23 ‘The thing pleased me and I took twelve of your men, one man for each tribe. 1:24 ‘They turned and went up into the hill country, and

came to the valley of Eshcol and spied it out. 1:25 'Then they took some of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought it down to us; and they brought us back a report and said, 'It is a good land which the Lord our God is about to give us.' 1:26 'Yet you were not willing to go up, but rebelled against the command of the Lord your God; 1:27 and you grumbled in your tents and said, 'Because the Lord hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us. 1:28 'Where can we go up? Our brethren have made our hearts melt, saying, 'The people are bigger and taller than we; the cities are large and fortified to heaven. And besides, we saw the sons of the Anakim there.' 1:29 'Then I said to you, 'Do not be shocked, nor fear them. 1:30 'The Lord your God who goes before you will Himself fight on your behalf, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, 1:31 and in the wilderness where you saw how the Lord your God carried you, just as a man carries his son, in all the way which you have walked until you came to this place.' 1:32 'But for all this, you did not trust the Lord your God, 1:33 who goes before you on your way, to seek out a place for you to encamp, in fire by night and cloud by day, to show you the way in which you should go. 1:34 'Then the Lord heard the sound of your words, and He was angry and took an oath, saying, 1:35 'Not one of these men, this evil generation, shall see the good land which I swore to give your fathers, 1:36 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and to his sons I will give the land on which he has set foot, because he has followed the Lord fully.' 1:37 'The Lord was angry with me also on your account, saying, 'Not even you shall enter there. 1:38 'Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall enter there; encourage him, for he will cause Israel to inherit it. 1:39 'Moreover, your little ones who you said would become a prey, and your sons, who this day have no knowledge of good

or evil, shall enter there, and I will give it to them and they shall possess it. 1:40 'But as for you, turn around and set out for the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea.' (NASB)

As we just discussed, the commands of God are directly related to our surrender from self to the way of the Spirit in life which is to walk in righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth. Note how modern theologies today do not describe the commands of God in this way. Dispensationalists describe the commands of God as overbearing, difficult, and a heavy weight that the Lord God places upon man's shoulders to save himself through the temple service. A careful examination of the Scriptures reveals this theology to be false, man was not given the Torah to save himself, but to know how to repent and to turn to God's holy and righteous ways of life. This is what the Lord was looking for from His people, and the reason for His giving us his Torah, to be willful in our desire to serve Him because of our love for Him. The Torah however describes the people in the following way, *Devarim / Deuteronomy 1:26* כו וְלֹא אָבִיתֶם לָעֹלָת וּתְמַרְוּ אֶת-פִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: *1:26 'Yet you were not willing to go up, but rebelled against the command of the Lord your God; (NASB)* The people rebelled and were unwilling to do as the Lord wanted. The mitzvot found in the Torah presupposes a spirit which is able to respond to its appeal. The Torah was not made for the righteous, but for the unrighteous, therefore the Torah appeals to the motives of our hearts, which produces the correct actions, something that is supposed to line up with our faith in the Lord God in heaven. *Job 1:1* אַיֵּשׁ הָיָה בְּאֶרֶץ-עֵיזֵב אִיּוֹב שָׁמוֹ | הָאִישׁ הַהוּא תָם וְיָשָׁר וִירָא אֱלֹהִים וְסָר מִרָע: Job *"was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil."* (וְסָר מִרָע) Here the Masoretic text uses the word וְסָר (Verb Qal Perfect 3rd Mas. Sing.) This word is very important as it speaks of *"turning away from evil,"* because it should challenge each of us. This Hebrew word is an action verb giving us the indication of something Job was doing continually, the action of turning, and actively seeking to turn from sin. Based upon the first verse in the book of Job, we are told he was a righteous man, and what characterized him as being righteous was his making the habit

of turning “*from evil*” (מִרָע). He did not “ *dwell in evil*” constantly, but sought to turn from that way of life. The question for us, “*Do we seek to turn from our evil ways? Are we in the habit of turning away from sin in our lives, or do we dwell in the same sins consistently and not thinking much about it?*” Note in our spiritual life, we are always moving forward in one direction or another. For example, sin may be described as being caught in a river. If we do nothing, we will move along with the current and be taken wherever it leads us. The only way to go in the direction we want to is to be actively working against the current, to forcefully move forward in the direction the Lord God of Israel wants us to move. Remember, this is why He gave us His Torah. This is the description of our dealings with sin in this life, the evil inclination (Yetzer Hara) is always pulling us towards the unnatural way of sin. We must purposefully move away from sin to walk in God’s ways, and this is what is being described here in the book of Job, and what the rabbis are trying to say in regards to the midrash, “*He has delivered the soul of the needy from the hand of evil doers. And when the Holy One blessed be He, delivers the children of Israel, not only will they praise Him, but all men will praise Him.*” If we are not actively “*turning away from sin*” then we will by default be turning towards it. In light of that, ask yourself, “*in which direction am I moving right now?*” and “*Am I being carried along towards sin, or like Job are you actively turning away from evil?*”

The rabbinic commentaries have the following to say concerning the Scripture from *Devarim / Deuteronomy 1:26* in the description of the people being unwilling to obey the word of the Lord.

Rashi on Devarim / Deuteronomy 1:26

— ותמרו. לְשׁוֹן הַתְּרָסָה – הַתְּרָסָתְּם כְּנֶגֶד מֵאֲמָרוֹ: ותמרו —
This is an expression denoting setting oneself in opposition: ye opposed yourselves to His words.

Sforno on Devarim / Deuteronomy 1:26

ולא אביתם לעלות שגליתם רשעכם שלא היה השליחות כדי לבחור מן הארץ איזה צד יותר טוב לכם כאשר חש- בתי וכאשר אמרתם לעשות אבל היתה כוונתכם בשליחות לראות אם תוכלו לכבשה וזה שלא הייתם מאמינים בה’

שיתננה לכם ולכן כשהגידו המרגלים שהעם חזק לא אביתם לעלות, *for at that point you revealed your original sinful approach, i.e. that your motivation had not been to select the best part of the country for yourselves at this time, as I had thought, based on what you had said. Your purpose in the mission had been to determine if it was possible to conquer this land, something that revealed that you did not believe G'd's promise to you. As a result of your lack of belief you accepted what the spies told you when they said that these people are too strong, and you refused to ascend to this land.*

Rashi interprets the text which states, *Devarim / Deuteronomy 1:26*: וְלֹא אָבִיתֶם לָעֹלֹת וַתִּמְרֹוּ אֶת-פִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: *‘Yet you were not willing to go up, but rebelled against the command of the Lord your God; (NASB) saying this is an expression describing the setting of oneself in opposition to God’s Word. Sferno states, the people revealed their own sinful approach, their motivation was to determine whether something was possible without God’s help, suggesting their lack of faith in God and His promises. Their lack of beliefs led to their action of rebellion. The opposite of rebellion is obedience. The Hebraic way of saying this is שמע “to listen” which does imply that we are to listen or hear with our ears, but it also implies obedience. “To obey” is to listen, which is the acceptance of something, the surrender of ourselves to the will of God, and our actions being the end result of the fulfilment of the Torah in our lives. The outward act is not to be in opposition to the inward faith.*

Rashi goes on to say the following:

Rashi on Devarim / Deuteronomy 1:27 Part 1

ותרגנו. לשון הרע, וכן “דברי נרגן” (משלי י”ח) – אדם ותרגנו. המוציא דבה: ותרגנו — *This is an expression denoting slander. Similar is, (Proverbs 18:8) “The words of a נרגן” i.e. of a man who brings a false report (Sifrei Devarim 24:1).*

Part 2

בשנאת ה' אתנו. והוא הִיָּה אוֹהֵב אֶתְכֶם, אָבֵל אֶתֶם שׁוֹנְאִים אותו; מִשָּׁל הַדְּיוּט אוֹמֵר מֶה דְּבַלְבָּךְ עַל רַחֲמֶיךָ מֶה דְּבַלְבָּיָהּ *BECAUSE THE LORD HATETH US — Really, however, He loved you, but you hated Him. A common proverb says: What is in your own mind about your friend, you imagine is what is in his mind about you (Sifrei Devarim 24:3).*

Part 3

בשנאת ה' אתנו הוציאנו מארץ מצרים. הוצאתו לשנאה הִיָּתָה; מִשָּׁל לְמֶלֶךְ בְּשָׂר וְדָם שֶׁהָיוּ לוֹ שְׁנֵי בָנִים וַיֵּשׁ לוֹ שְׁתֵּי שָׂדוֹת, אַחַת שֶׁל שְׂקִיָּא וְאַחַת שֶׁל בַּעַל, לְמִי שֶׁהוּא אוֹהֵב נוֹתֵן שֶׁל שְׂקִיָּא, וְלְמִי שֶׁהוּא שׁוֹנֵא נוֹתֵן לוֹ שֶׁל בַּעַל, אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שֶׁל שְׂקִיָּא הִיא, שְׁנִילוּס עוֹלָה וּמִשְׁקָה אוֹתָהּ, וְאֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן שֶׁל בַּעַל, וְהוֹצִיאָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם לָתֵת לָנוּ אֶת אֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן (במ"ר י"ז): *BECAUSE THE LORD HATETH US HE HATH BROUGHT US FORTH FROM THE LAND OF EGYPT — His bringing us forth was out of hatred. A parable! It may be compared to an earthly king who had two sons, and who had two fields, one well-watered; the other arid (dependent upon rain only). To him whom he loved best of his sons he gave the well-watered field, and to him whom he loved less he gave the arid one. The land of Egypt is a well-watered country, for the Nile rises and irrigates it, whilst the land of Canaan is an arid country — and He brought us forth from well-watered Egypt to give us the arid land of Canaan (Numbers Rabbah 17:3).*

Rashi speaks of the words of a man, his tongue, bringing deception (slander), the people hated the ways of God, but yet the Lord loved His people and kept His promises to deliver them (by their children) into the Promised Land. Rashi speaks of the danger of the tongue. The apostle James wrote in his epistle describing the tongue as “*a fire*” and “*a world of iniquity.*” The tongue as a burning fire is untempered and

it sets others on fire. The tongue described as a world of iniquity was made by God to sing His praises, but men have used it as an instrument of unrighteousness. Though it is the littlest part of the body, it has a world of sin within it because from the heart a man speaks, and we know there is no good thing within a man's heart. This is why Paul wrote what he did in *Romans 7:18* "*For I know that good itself does not dwell in me ...*" (see *Midrash Tehillim 120 Part 4*) Paul describes the desire to do what is good is not within him, there is no ability to do good. It is only by the power of God that he is able. The rabbis say the tongue is called a triple slayer, "*Because it slays three, the one who owns it, the one who listens to it, and the one of whom it speaks.*" In *Midrash Tehillim 120 Part 3*, the rabbis speak of the tongue and the soul, contrasting these by examples of the thief that steals because of hunger, and the man who commits adultery and lacks understanding. Committing adultery is among the עֲשֵׂר־תְּהֵאֲדָרְיִים aseret ha-devarim, "*the ten words, or utterances*" (the ten commandments), which is written along side with murder, where the Scriptures speak clearly on this topic:

Shemot / Exodus 20:14 "*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*" (KJV)

Vayikra / Leviticus 20:10 "*And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.*" (KJV)

Devarim / Deuteronomy 5:18 "*Neither shalt thou commit adultery.*" (KJV)

Jeremiah 7:9 "*Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not;*" (KJV)

Jeremiah 23:14 "*I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all*

of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.” (KJV)

Jeremiah 29:23 *“Because they have committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours’ wives, and have spoken lying words in my name, which I have not commanded them; even I know, and am a witness, saith the LORD.” (KJV)*

Hosea 4:2 *“By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.” (KJV)*

It is clear that the Torah, Prophets, and Writings (Tanach) speaks of adultery as being quite heinous. Found throughout the Apostolic Writings (*NT, see all four Gospels, the Book of Acts, many of the Epistles and the Book of Revelation*), the disciples quote from the Tanach with many passages that condemn adultery. In Galatians adultery is mentioned alongside of many other sins of the flesh which modern culture does not consider to be very heinous. Note how the one who commits adultery with a woman, the one involved in sexual sin, is guilty of stealing another man’s wife. For this he is said to be a man who lacks understanding. The thief steals for his survival, but a man who commits adultery does so out of his own lusts. As a result, he destroys his own soul. Not just in the consequences for his sin, that his life may be forfeit due to the husband wanting to take his life, and the Torah speaking of such a man who does this is to die, but that this man entangles himself into the lust of the flesh, corrupting his soul, his heart, his mind, bringing a great difficulty upon himself. Sexual sin causes a great deception in one’s life which causes one to turn from the way of life to the way of destruction. This corruption and depravity is said to bring eternal destruction. It is in this context that the tongue is paralleled, the midrash states, *“But you, O tongue, what good have you done yourself by your slaying?”* The tongue is paralleled to murder, and the deceitful tongue is paralleled to bringing eternal destruction upon one’s soul capable of forfeiting the world to come (see *Midrash Tehillim 120 Part 4*). The rabbis continue in their discourse saying the following:

I will tell you, O evil tongue, how I am going to act towards you. Even as you have acted towards the world from the beginning, as a serpent you spoke evil to Adam, so will I act towards you. You were also the serpent tongue of the wilderness, when, as it is written, The people spoke against God and against Moshe (Bamidbar / Numbers 21:5). (Midrash Tehillim 120, Part 3)

Examples from the Torah illustrate the significance of the evil tongue, the serpent spoke to deceive, and the people spoke to rebel against the ways of the Lord. The corruption of the heart, the mind, the soul is paralleled to the tongue because as a man speaks, he does so from his heart (*Luke 6:45*)

Midrash Tehillim 120 Part 3 concludes saying, *“And how did the Lord act towards them? The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people. Why serpents? Because it was a serpent that spoke evil, as is said, They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; vipers’ venom is under their lips (Tehillim / Psalms 140:4). And so I made those evil tongues children of Israel into the dust that I had decreed for the serpent, Dust will you eat (Bereshit / Genesis 3:14).”* Note how the tongue has the capacity to bring us down to death, to dust itself. This was the reason the Lord brought serpents upon the people due to their grumbling in their hearts to one another. The midrash parallels the serpent to the evil tongue, the illustration is the people rebelled in their hearts which followed through by their words and their actions. Note how there is a parallel to adultery because there are honest ways for satisfying a man’s desires (righteous ways to obtaining a wife as opposed to taking another man’s wife). The conclusion is the man who takes another man’s wife *“lacks understanding.”* The one who commits adultery (noeph) with a woman, the Hebrew naaph, *“to commit adultery,”* is followed by an accusative lacking wisdom (*Mishley / Proverbs 6:32*), as in *Vay-ikra / Leviticus 20:10* and *Jeremiah 29:23*. The lack of understanding is *“to be devoid of anything,”* or *“to lack something.”* The expression, which occurs in *Mishley / Proverbs 7:7 and 9:4*, refers to the fleshly condition as being stupid, illustrating the point to which lust reduces a man to become. Lust has displaced right reason making the man

devoid of judgment, without intelligence, senseless and stupid. We on the other hand are called to righteousness, holiness, justice, and truth, all of which calls for wisdom on our parts, to turn from sin, and to put a bridle on our tongues and our wicked ways.

The point that we are taking away from this week's Torah study is "*Do we have the right motivations to sanctify the Lord in our lives each day?*" The mitzvot found in the Torah presupposes a spirit which is able to respond to its appeal calling for a humble heart. The Torah was not made for the righteous, but for the unrighteous, therefore the Torah appeals to the motivation of our hearts, which produces the correct actions, something that is supposed to line up with our faith in the Lord God in heaven. Notice how coupled with the commands (mitzvot) are the promises of God. This is because we are called His people being in a covenant relationship with Him. The end result of this covenant relationship is the promise of the power and presence of God in our midst. We are assured that He will be there for us. Due to the nature of the command requiring us to submit our lives to the Lord, He has also promised to give us His Spirit to empower us and to bring us into His rest which brings peace to the soul. The commands of God are peculiar to God's people, it is the essential character of His people because it is the very nature of God's ways. This is what separates us as God's people from the peoples of the world. This is what makes us distinct from all others, because within the commands is the highest level of truth and moral teaching which becomes an essential part of us as the Lord moves to change us from the inside out. The Rabbis in *Midrash Tehillim 120 Part 7* speak of the one who is for peace is a reference to the Messiah who will break down the nations with a rode of iron. The Messiah's response to this claim is "*No, O Master of the Universe. When I speak to the nations, I will begin by speaking of peace. Hence, it is said I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war.*" This seems to suggest that the Messiah's rule being not established by physical force, or maintained by military defenses. The Messiah's kingdom will be peaceful and peace-bringing. This is spoken of in the words from David, Isaiah, and Micah (Compare *Tehillim / Psalm 72:7, Isaiah 2:4, 9:4-7, and Micah 5:10-11*). The Messiah will speak peace unto the heathen. He will extend this peace to all the world, teaching the ungodly to receive his spiritual rule, to compose their differences,

to lay aside their arms, and to live as one united family (Note how Paul interprets the role of the Messiah in *Ephesians 2:17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near NIV*). The midrash continues saying, “*Isaiah said, Peace, peace, to him that is far off and to him that is near, says the Lord, and I will heal him (Isaiah 57:19) that is, the Holy One blessed be He, said I, My hands reach out to the penitent. I turn back no man who gives me his heart in repentance. Hence, Peace, peace, to him that is far off and to him that is near. If any man comes towards Me, I will go towards him, and I will heal him, as is said, I will heal him. But the wicked are like the troubled sea (Isaiah 57:20).*” Note how the midrash connects the one being far off to the one being near, and the repentant man being at peace before the Lord. Note this is in reference to the man who lives in sin (far away) and the one who lives in righteousness (those who are near). See the context here what Paul is trying to say:

Ephesians 2:8-16

2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 2:9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. 2:11 Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called ‘Uncircumcision’ by the so-called ‘Circumcision,’ which is performed in the flesh by human hands 2:12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 2:14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 2:15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, 2:16 and

might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. (NASB)

Paul draws a parallel to the one who lives in sin, being far away, to those who do not know God, the gentiles, and those who walk in righteousness and who do know God, Israel. He states that we were all created for good works (maasim tovim) referring to the Torah as the way of life for the Jew and Gentile, saying the Gentiles were formerly *“in the flesh”* called the uncircumcised, are now called to walk in the Spirit, the circumcised. The Messiah is said to come in the power of God to establish peace and offer peace to the World under the spiritual rule of our Father in heaven. The Messiah is the One the Lord sent to guide and direct us in His ways, He taught us the truth and imparted a part of Himself into our lives, so that men will not only *“listen”* (obey) but be the kind of people He wants us to be (willfully loving truth and peace). This is the essential requirement for us, the Lord is working in our lives to be changed from the inside out. This is also why it is impossible to obey God’s word without His first coming into our lives and our hearts to change us and motivate us to live for Him.

