

פרשת

כי תצא

Parashat Ki Tetze

Devarim / Deuteronomy 21:10-25:19, Isaiah 54:1-10  
Luke 23:1-25

## A Case for Gentile Inclusion from the Torah

In this week's Torah portion, Moshe speaks about those who may enter the congregation of God's people. (*Those who may join themselves with Israel.*) He writes the following, ג לא יבא ממזר בקהל יהוה, גם דור עשירי לא יבא לו בקהל יהוה: ד לא יבא עמוני ומואבי בקהל יהוה גם דור עשירי לא יבא להם בקהל יהוה עד-עולם: 23:3 *'No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the Lord; none of their descendants, even to the tenth generation, shall ever enter the assembly of the Lord, 23:4 because they did not meet you with food and water on the way when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. (NASB),* ז לא תדרש שלמם וטבתם כל-ימיה לעולם: ח לא תתעב 23:7 *'You shall not detest an Edomite, for he is your brother; you shall not detest an Egyptian, because you were an alien in his land. 23:8 'The sons of the third generation who are born to them may enter the assembly of the Lord. (NASB)* These are very interesting comments regarding the Ammonite, the Moabite, the Edomite, and the Egyptian. Note that Ammon and Moab are the sons of Lot's daughters. The reason for the exclusion of Ammon and Moab was due to their behavior towards God's people,

and their lack of hospitality coupled to seeking their complete destruction through sin. Rambam on *Devarim / Deuteronomy 23:5* states “*It seems to me that the verse distances these two brothers [i.e., Ammon and Moab, from the Kahal] because Abraham performed gemilut chasadim on their behalf, in that he saved their parents from captivity, and in Abraham’s merit they were sent from the destruction of Sodom. Thus, they were obligated themselves to act for Israel’s benefit, but instead they acted wickedly.*” Note the reasons why the Lord God had Moshe record these things. They apply to us today! The majority of Church theology today rejects much of the Tanach (Old Testament) as not being relevant saying this is certainly not for the Gentile church. The theological claim is that the Old Testament was under a different dispensation where God acted differently and where He was only concerned with the people of Israel, while Jesus brought in a new dispensation where the church replaces Israel and takes on its role. This theology runs deep within the hearts and minds of God’s people today where most do not concern themselves with the significance of this theological error. A Careful examination of the Scriptures reveal God’s mercy and grace being offered throughout the bible (from cover to cover). However, this method of biblical interpretation and theological position is so extensive in the church today it has become a stumbling block to growing in the Lord. And because of this stumbling block, people fall into false theologies such as the word of faith movement or the hyper grace movement which are so prevalent today. As we study the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings, we follow the people of Israel through history, however, over and over again it becomes clear that the God of Israel is not only concerned with His chosen people, but that He also offers His love to all nations. This appears to be what Moshe is discussing in Parashat Ki Tetze. In *2 Peter 3:9*, a first century interpretation, states the Lord is patient not wanting anyone to perish, but for everyone to come to repentance. This concept is revealed in the eschatological statements from *Isaiah 2*. This lead us to believe the Lord longs for all of His creation to turn to Him, to walk in His ways, and to know their Creator intimately. In addition to this, we are called to advance His kingdom on this earth and prepare to spend all of eternity with Him. The Lord God seeks for all people to choose Him and His ways. This is why Paul wrote in *Romans 15:17 Therefore I glory in*

*Christ Jesus in my service to God. 15:18 I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me “in leading the Gentiles to obey God” by what I have said and done (NASB) and in Romans 16:19 “Everyone has heard about your obedience,” so I rejoice because of you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil. (NASB) Note how this concluding chapter is consistent with what Paul says in Romans 1. And in Romans 16: 25 Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, 16:26 but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that “all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith” (NASB) Paul describes obedience to the Lord as being coupled to the gospel message of the Messiah. This has always been the case, the Lord has not “*changed*” in his methodology or requirements for His people. Modern theologies claim the Judaism of Paul’s time was legalistic, arrogant, and self-righteous. In reality, the Judaism of Paul’s time was focused upon responsible behavior (Torah-observance) undertaken in a spiritual “*attitude of gratitude*” appropriate to the expression of faith for those called by a gracious God to a covenantal relationship. This calling to the covenant relationship is extended to all peoples just as we see here in this week’s Torah portion. Today the Ammonite and the Moabite no longer exist. Even the Edomite and the Egyptian that were coupled to their pagan religious services no longer exist. In light of this, Rashi states, “*The children that are born unto them [may come into the assembly] in their third generation — other nations, however, since they did not sin against you may be admitted immediately if they acknowledge the tenets of Judaism.*” Note how this interpretation is consistent with the Apostle Paul’s approach to gentile inclusion by faith. This is how John was able to describe “*I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb*” (Revelation 7:9) God’s love and mercy goes far beyond our understanding, and He longs for all peoples to come to Him, to know Him and to be a part of His Kingdom. Let’s discuss these things further in this week’s Torah Portion.*

This week we are looking at *Devarim / Deuteronomy 23:1-8*.

**Devarim / Deuteronomy 23:1-8**

23:1 'No one who is emasculated or has his male organ cut off shall enter the assembly of the Lord. 23:2 'No one of illegitimate birth shall enter the assembly of the Lord; none of his descendants, even to the tenth generation, shall enter the assembly of the Lord. 23:3 'No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the Lord; none of their descendants, even to the tenth generation, shall ever enter the assembly of the Lord, 23:4 because they did not meet you with food and water on the way when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. 23:5 'Nevertheless, the Lord your God was not willing to listen to Balaam, but the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you because the Lord your God loves you. 23:6 'You shall never seek their peace or their prosperity all your days. 23:7 'You shall not detest an Edomite, for he is your brother; you shall not detest an Egyptian, because you were an alien in his land. 23:8 'The sons of the third generation who are born to them may enter the assembly of the Lord. (NASB)

א לא-יִקַּח אִישׁ אֶת-אִשְׁתּוֹ אֲבִיו וְלֹא יִגְלֶה כְּנָף אָבִיו: ס ב  
לא-יָבֵא פְצוּעֵ-דָּפָה וּכְרוּת שְׂפָכָה בְּקִהְלֵ יְהוָה: ס ג לא-  
יָבֵא מִמְזֹר בְּקִהְלֵ יְהוָה גַּם דּוֹר עֲשִׂירִי לֹא-יָבֵא לוֹ בְּקִהְלֵ יְהוָה:  
ס ד לא-יָבֵא עֲמוֹנִי וּמוֹאָבִי בְּקִהְלֵ יְהוָה גַּם דּוֹר עֲשִׂירִי  
לא-יָבֵא לָהֶם בְּקִהְלֵ יְהוָה עַד-עוֹלָם: ה על-דִּבְרֵ אֲשֶׁר לֹא-  
קָדְמוּ אֶתְכֶם בְּלָחֶם וּבַמִּים בַּדֶּרֶךְ בְּצֵאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם וְאֲשֶׁר  
שָׁכַר עָלֶיךָ אֶת-בְּלָעַם בֶּן-בְּעוֹר מִפְתּוֹר אֲרָם נִהְרִים לְקַלְלֶךָ: ו  
ולֹא-אָבָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשִׁמְעַ אֶל-בְּלָעַם וַיִּהְפֹּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ  
לָךְ אֶת-הַקְּלָלָה לְבִרְכָה כִּי אֶהְבְּדֶךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: ז לא-תִּדְרֹשׁ  
שְׁלָמָם וְטוֹבָתָם כָּל-יְמֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם: ס [רביעי] ח לא-תִּתְעַב  
אֲדָמִי כִּי אֲחִיךָ הוּא לֹא-תִתְעַב מִצְרִי כִּי-גֵר הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרְצוֹ:

In this week's Torah portion, Moshe say, *לֹא-יָבֹא מִמְזִר בְּקִהְלֵי יְהוָה, גַּם דּוֹר עֲשִׂירֵי לֹא-יָבֹא לוֹ בְּקִהְלֵי יְהוָה: ד לֹא-יָבֹא עֲמוּנֵי וּמוֹאָבִי בְּקִהְלֵי יְהוָה: 23:3 'No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the Lord; none of their descendants, even to the tenth generation, shall ever enter the assembly of the Lord, 23:4 because they did not meet you with food and water on the way when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. (NASB), and לֹא-תִדְרֹשׁ שְׂלֵמָם וְטַבָּתָם כָּל-יְמֵיהֶם לְעוֹלָם: ח לֹא-תִתְעַב לְאֶדְוִמִי כִּי אֶחָיִהּ הוּא לֹא-תִתְעַב מִצְרַיִם כִּי-גֵר הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶצוֹ: 23:7 'You shall not detest an Edomite, for he is your brother; you shall not detest an Egyptian, because you were an alien in his land. 23:8 'The sons of the third generation who are born to them may enter the assembly of the Lord. (NASB)* These statements characterize the unrighteous person. The question this is *"How do you characterize an unrighteous or wicked man?"* What are some of the words that come to mind? Sinner? Evil? Disobedient? Proud? Liar? Blasphemer? Idolaters? Note how these things are defined in the Torah. The unrighteous man does not delight in the Word of God. He does not mediate upon the Word of God and his attitude towards the Word of God causes him to turn from truth. The righteous man on the other hand is wise and avoids the ways (lifestyle) of the wicked, he is firmly planted in the Word and is stable in his life. He produces fruit in both his relationship with God and with others. This is why the Psalm opens saying that the righteous are blessed and content in life. The unrighteous man however will walk in the counsel of the wicked and he will both receive and give bad advice. He does not know how to distinguish between good or evil, and this is why the Scriptures describe the Ammonite, the Moabite, the Edomite, and the Egyptian drawing in their behavior lifestyles toward God and towards His people, both culturally and individually their lack of hospitality and desire for the destruction or enslavement of others. The Word of God is not important to the unrighteous and what he thinks and wants to do runs contrary to what the Word of God dictates. If we think about it, these are the things that plague our modern society today. Everyone does what he thinks is right in his own eyes (moral relativism). This is not new because the people of Israel were doing the very same things thousands of years ago. The results were devastating.

Found within the confines of the mercy of God, we learn of the phrase “*time will tell.*” As the people we read about in history, so it is for us today, if we do not learn from history we are bound to repeat it. This is why we are called to study the Scriptures, to remember what the Lord has done for us, and use the Word of God as a guide for our lives (daily decisions). When we consider the importance of God’s Word in our lives, where does the Word of God rank on your list of daily priorities? When thinking on the manner of life that we are leading, whose life does it reflect; the righteous or the unrighteous? Based upon this week’s Torah portion, there is something about the God of Israel that draws men to Him and His righteous, holy, and just ways.

The rabbis have the following to say concerning the Scriptures we are looking at this week.

***Rabeinu bahyah on Devarim / Deuteronomy 23:8***

לא תתעב אדומי. אעפ”י שראוי לך לתעבו מפני שיצא בחרב לקראתך, והמצרים גם כן אע”פ שהשליכו זכוריהם ליאור, לא תתעב אותם, מפני שהיו לכם אכסניא בשעת הדחק ונמ” לטתם עמהם בימי הרעב בכבוד גדול. ואמר עוד לא תתעב אדומי, שיש להם זכות אבות שהיו מזרע הקדש, והרחיקן שלשה דורות לפי שיצאו בחרב לקראתנו. ואמר בשניהם לא תתעב, אדום שקדמם בחרב, ומצרים שהטביעם במים, אבל עמון ומואב שהחטיאום נתעבו, והזכיר הכתוב בהן לא תדרוש שלומם וטובתם, ומכאן דרשו רז”ל שכל המחטיא חברו קשה לו מן ההורגו, ההורגו טורדו מן העולם הזה והמחטיאו טורדו מן העוה”ז ומן העולם הבא. לא תתעב אדומי, *“Do not abhor the Edomite.” The Torah implies that though we would have reason to abhor this people seeing that they assumed a threatening posture against us (Numbers 20,18) nonetheless we are not to hold this against subsequent generations of Edomites, seeing there is a blood bond between our two nations, both being descendants of our patriarch Yitzchak. Neither must we detest the Egyptians although they drowned our male babies; the fact remains that at a crucial point*

*in our history Egypt offered a home to our people at a time when Yaakov's family was in reduced circumstances (compare Rashi). Seeing that each of these nations had been guilty of grievous sins against the Jewish people only the third generation (after the Exodus) of these people are potential candidates for conversion to Judaism. By that time they may have become more refined. We are to detest Ammon and Moav, by contrast, seeing they seduced the Jewish people into sin, The Torah goes out of its way to prohibit us from seeking the welfare of these nations. These verses gave rise to our sage in Sifri 252 to rule that seducing someone into sin is a more grievous sin than killing him seeing that the murderer robs the victim only of life on this terrestrial sphere whereas the seducer robs him of his eternity.*

Note how Rabeinu Bahyah commentary states the Torah goes out of its way to prohibit us from seeking the welfare of these nations (Ammon and Moav). What is interesting is we are able to see an underlying Torah principle that we are called to seek the welfare of others. The Rabbis discuss holding the sins of the parents upon their children. The conclusion is regardless of what was done in the past (grievous sins), at the third generation, mercy is to be shown and these people are potential candidates for conversion to Judaism (i.e. to enter into the kingdom of God). *Rabeinu bahyah on Devarim / Deuteronomy 23:8* concludes saying the one who seduces another to sin is more grievous than killing him, since sin robs him of both life in the olam hazeh and his place in the olam haba.

The Talmud Bavli Sotah 9a Part 9 states the following:

***Talmud Bavli Sotah 9a:9***

*And if you would say that those ancient Egyptians, have gone, and these later Egyptians are different ones, but isn't it taught in a baraita in the Tosefta (Kiddushin 4:3): Rabbi Yehuda said: Minyamin, an Egyptian convert, was a friend of mine from among the students of Rabbi Akiva, and Minyamin the Egyptian convert said:*

*After I converted I was a first-generation Egyptian convert, and so I married another first-generation Egyptian convert. I will marry off my son, who is a second-generation Egyptian convert, to another second-generation Egyptian convert, in order that my sons son will be permitted to enter into the congregation. The Torah prohibits Egyptian converts before the third generation to enter into the congregation (see Deuteronomy 23:8-9). By Minyamin's observance of this prohibition even during the time of Rabbi Akiva, it indicates that Egypt during the tannaitic period was still viewed as biblical Egypt.*

Note how the Talmud describes the first generation Egyptian as having converted to Judaism and then this person plans for his children's children to enter into the congregation of Israel. Conversion is not restricted to the third generation but is available to all. The righteous person who falls under this stipulation being prohibited from joining Israel, actively seeks to cause his children to have the ability to enter into a relationship with God. He seeks for the welfare of his children's children because his heart has been transformed by God. Notice how these things are occurring for the first generation Egyptian according to the Talmud, indicating the Lord God is working in his heart. The Talmud records the opinion of Rabbi Akiva, that *“Egypt during the tannaitic period was still viewed as biblical Egypt.”*

Rashi comments saying the following:

***Rashi on Devarim / Deuteronomy 23:9***

בנים אשר יולדו להם דור שלישי וגו'. וְשָׂאָר אַמּוֹת מוֹתָרִים מִיָּד, הָא לְמִדַּת שְׁהִמַּחֲטִיא לְאָדָם קִנְיָה לּו מִן הַהוֹרְגוֹ, שְׁהָהוּ רְגוֹ הוֹרְגוֹ בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְהִמַּחֲטִיאוּ מוֹצִיאֵו מִן הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וּמִן הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא, לְפִיכֵךְ אָדוּם שֶׁקָּדְמָם בְּחֶרֶב לֹא נִתְעַב, וְכֵן מִצְּרִים שֶׁטְבָעוּם, וְאֵלּוּ שֶׁהִחֲטִיאוּם נִתְעַבּוּ (ספרי): בנים אשר יולדו להם דור שלישי וגומר ***THE CHILDREN THAT ARE BORN UNTO THEM [MAY COME INTO THE ASSEMBLY] IN THEIR THIRD GENERATION — other nations, however, since they did not sin against you may***



*be admitted immediately if they acknowledge the tenets of Judaism. — Thus you learn that he who causes a man to sin does him greater harm than if he kills him, for he who kills him, kills him only as regards this world (olam hazeh), while he who causes him to sin puts him out of this world and the world to come (olam haba). Therefore Edom, though he met them with the sword was not to be abhorred utterly, and similarly the Egyptians who drowned them (their male children), while those (the Ammonites and Moabites) who caused them to sin were to be utterly abhorred (Sifrei Devarim 252:3).*

Rashi states, “*The children that are born unto them [may come into the assembly] in their third generation — other nations, however, since they did not sin against you may be admitted immediately if they acknowledge the tenets of Judaism.*” Note how this interpretation is consistent with the Apostle Paul’s approach to gentile inclusion by faith. Faith in the Messiah and the basic tenants of Judaism (*God is one, love your neighbor as yourself, and the prohibitions given in Acts 15*) causes them to enter into the covenant agreement with the God of Israel. The reason Ammon and Moab were not permitted to enter into the congregation of Israel was because they determined in their hearts to lead Israel into sin causing them to lose their place in the Olam Haba (World to Come).

Rambam states the following:

***Ramban on Devarim / Deuteronomy 23:5***

*“Because they did not bring you bread and water” [Ramban first explains the apparent contradiction between this verse and Deuteronomy 2:29.] It seems to me that the verse distances these two brothers [i.e., Ammon and Moab, from the Kahal] because Abraham performed gemilut chasadim on their behalf, in that he saved their parents from captivity, and in Abraham’s merit they were sent from the destruction of Sodom. Thus, they were obligated themselves to act for Israel’s benefit, but instead they acted wickedly. Specifically, the Moabites*

*hired Balaam, and the Ammonites did not bring the Israelites food and water when they were close by ... And our Rabbis interpreted this verse to mean “An Ammonite man, but not an Ammonite woman; a Moabite man, but not a Moabite woman,” because it is ordinary for a man to go out [and meet strangers] but it is not ordinary for a woman to bring food [to strangers] outside of the boundaries of her land.*

Rambam says that Ammon and Moab acted wickedly for the purpose of cursing God’s people and planning to cause them to enter into sin and disobedience. Their wickedness involved leading Israel to sin in both sexual immorality and idolatry which led to their utter exclusion from God’s mercy.

What we have been studying here in this week’s Torah portion is a description of the full inclusion of the Gentile nations as equal citizens in God’s kingdom. This is how Paul speaks of Gentiles being “*fellow heirs*” with Israel of the divine promises as a mystery now made known clearly (*Ephesians 3:6*). Note Paul says *Romans 16: 25 Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, 16:26 but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that “all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith” (NASB)* This mystery was hidden but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of God. He is referring to the Tanach (Torah, Neviim, Ketuvim). These comments of the Ammonite, the Moabite, the Edomite, and the Egyptian in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 23:3-8* provide us with a picture of the greatness of God’s love for all of mankind. Various passages throughout the Old Testament tell us that the love God has for His creation moved Him to include people from all nations in His plan of salvation. He placed Israel at the center of the Gentile nations as a light to those outside the covenant with Abraham (*Bereshit / Genesis 10, 12:1-3; Isaiah. 42:6*). Our Lord also promised a day when the kings of the other nations would bring their resources into His kingdom and render Him service (*Isaiah 60:10-14*). This promise alluded implicitly

to the fact that repentant Gentiles would be fellow citizens along with natural-born sons and daughters of Abraham. These promises also imply what Paul speaks of in *Romans 15:17, 16:19, and 16:25-26*, describing obedience to the Lord as being coupled to the gospel message of the Messiah. Both the Jew and Gentile are one in the Messiah. This is consistent with Judaism's interpretation of Torah-observance being undertaken in an attitude appropriate to the expression of faith for those called by a gracious God to a covenantal relationship. We have been called to a covenant relationship with God by faith in the Messiah Yeshua. What does this mean? This means exactly what Paul spoke of, coming to the obedience of faith and living our lives for the glory of God!



