



## Covenants

### I. Introduction

- a. Review—the Scriptures
  - i. Challenged previous understanding of the nature of Scripture
    - 1. Old Testament vs. New Testament
    - 2. Hebrew thought vs. Greek (Western) mindset
  - ii. Scripture is authoritative (it has authority in our lives)
  - iii. Scripture is valid for application to our lives as disciples of Messiah
- b. The context of Scripture: Covenants
- c. Will not be covering: every Scriptural covenant, “covenant theologies”

### II. What Is a Covenant? (General)

- a. ברית, b'riyt
- b. Characteristics of a covenant

Characteristics of a covenant	Modern Example: Marriage
- Alliance or contract between two or more parties	- Man and woman
- Binding agreement to terms or conditions	- “for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health...”
- Promise to fulfill the agreement	- “I do.”
- Sealed with a sign or pledge	- “With this ring...”
- Blessings/provisions for keeping the covenant	- “To have and to hold... ‘til death to us part”
- Penalty or punishment (curses) for violating the covenant	- NONE! (Maybe this is why divorce is so acceptable?)

### III. Scriptural Covenants (Universal)

- a. Genesis 6:18 - first use of ברית, b'riyt
- b. Universal = made with all humankind
  - i. Edenic (Covenant in Eden)
    - 1. Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-17
    - 2. Be fruitful, rule the earth
  - ii. Adamic (Covenant with Adam)
    - 1. Genesis 3:16-19
    - 2. Provisions
      - a. Consequences of eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil:
      - b. Pain in childbirth, hard work to produce food from the land

- iii. Noahic (first literal covenant, made with Noah and all living creatures)
  - 1. Genesis 6:18, 8:21-9:17, 24-27
  - 2. Provisions
    - a. God promises not to destroy the earth with a flood
    - b. Renewal of the Edenic covenant (be fruitful, etc.)
    - c. All living things (i.e. all animals) and green plants as food (includes prohibition against eating blood)
    - d. Curse of Canaan
    - e. Blessing of Shem
  - 3. Sign: rainbow
- c. These affect all humankind (precede dispersion of the nations and calling out of the nation of Israel)
- d. The covenants made exclusively with Israel are the context for fully understanding Yeshua's life, death, resurrection and intercession

#### IV. Overview of Scriptural Covenants Made Exclusively with Israel

- a. Av'rahamic (Covenant with Av'raham, Isaac and Jacob)
- b. Mosaic (Covenant with Moshe, aka Torah)
- c. Davidic (Covenant with David)
  - i. 2Samuel 7:12-16
  - ii. Promises the enduring kingdom of David
  - iii. Fulfilling in King Yeshua
- d. New Covenant (בְּרִית הַדָּשָׁה, *b'riyt 'chadashah*)

#### V. Covenant with Av'raham

- a. PART ONE
  - i. **Genesis 12:1-3**, *"Now Adonai said to Av'ram, 'Go forth from your country and from your relatives and from your father's house to the land which I will show you...."*
  - ii. TERMS (one-sided covenant)
    - 1. *And I will make you a great nation*
    - 2. *And I will bless you and make your name great*
  - iii. PROVISIONS/PROMISES
    - 1. *And so you shall be a blessing*
    - 2. *And I will bless those who bless you*
    - 3. *And the one who despises you I will curse*
    - 4. *And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."*
- b. PART TWO
  - i. **Genesis 15:18**
  - ii. *"On that day Adonai made a covenant with Av'ram, saying, 'To your descendents I have given this land..."*
- c. PART THREE
  - i. **Genesis 17:1-14**, *"Now... Adonai appeared to Av'ram and said..."*
  - ii. New Promise - *I will establish my covenant between Me and you*
  - iii. Renewal and expansion of promises
    - 1. *And I will multiply you exceedingly... (x2)*
    - 2. *And you will be the father of a multitude of nations... (x2)*
    - 3. *I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you*

- iv. Explicit inclusion of Av'raham's descendants
  - 1. *I will establish my covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.*
  - 2. *I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession (renewal of provision from Part Two)*
- v. Terms of Agreement
  - 1. *And I will be their God*
  - 2. *Now as for you, you will keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations*
- vi. Sign or pledge of allegiance
  - 1. *This is my covenant... every male among you shall be circumcised... in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and You...*
  - 2. *... every male among you who is eight days old... a [slave] born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."*
- d. Renewed with Isaac (Genesis 26:3-5)
- e. Renewed with Jacob (Genesis 28:13-15, 35:9-12)
- f. Av'rahamic Covenant - consists primarily of what Adonai would do (one-sided); things expected of Av'raham
  - i. Av'raham has to "go forth"—faith
  - ii. Circumcision—a covenant in itself
- g. The Jewish people (descendant of Av'raham) are the unique recipients of the Av'rahamic covenant

## VI. Covenant With Moshe

- a. Exodus 6:1-8, *"Then Adonai said to Moshe... 'I am Adonai; and I appeared to Av'raham, Yitz'chak and Ya'akov... I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they sojourned. Furthermore, I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered my covenant. Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, 'I am Adonai, and I will bring you out... I will deliver you... I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm... Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God... I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Av'raham, Yitz'chak and Ya'akov, and I will give it to you for a possession; I am Adonai.'"*
- b. Context of the giving of the Torah: so that Israel could live out the blessings of the Av'rahamic Covenant
- c. Conditional covenant, requires obedience (if/then statement)
  - i. Exodus 19:5-6
  - ii. *"Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the people, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."*

- d. Covenant Provisions
  - i. Laws, rules, statutes and judgments of Torah—terms of the covenant, not the covenant itself
  - ii. Torah renews the covenant with Av'raham ("I will be their God") and provides blessings and curses for Israel to keep her side of the Av'rahamic covenant ("you will keep my covenant")
  - iii. Torah is full of blessings, but also curses for disobedience
    - 1. Deuteronomy 28:1-2, *"Now it shall be, if you diligently obey Adonai your God, being careful to do all His commandments... [then] all these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you obey Adonai your God..."*
    - 2. Deuteronomy 28:15, *"But it shall come about, if you do not obey Adonai your God, to observe to do all His commandments... [then] all these curses will come upon you and overtake you..."*
- e. Sign/pledge of allegiance
  - i. Shabbat
  - ii. Exodus 31:16-17, *"So the sons of Israel shall observe the Shabbat, to celebrate the Shabbat throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever..."*
- f. Torah was given so that Israel would follow Adonai wholeheartedly and dwell in peace in the Land. Torah is Adonai's provision to the Jewish people so that we would live out the fullness of the promises made to our father, Av'raham.

## VII. The New Covenant (ברית חדשה, b'riyt 'chadashah)

- a. If Torah was designed for Israel to live out the promises to Av'raham, why did Adonai give Israel a new covenant?
  - i. Hebrews 8:7, *"For if that first [covenant] had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second."*
    - 1. The word "covenant" is not in the Greek
    - 2. The passage is speaking about "a second" something, not a "new" something
    - 3. Hebrews primary context: the passing away of the priestly service and sacrificial system because they are fulfilled in Yeshua
  - ii. Hebrews 8:8, *"For finding fault with them, He says,"* and then quotes Jeremiah 31
    - 1. With whom has fault been found?
    - 2. "Them"—the people of Israel, represented by the priesthood.
    - 3. Speaking to Israel's "weakness" as human beings (Hebrews 7:28)—reference to man's inability to atone for sin
  - iii. Torah given so that Israel could live out the terms of the Av'rahamic Covenant; New Covenant given so that Israel could live out the terms of the Torah *and* the Av'rahamic Covenant
    - 1. Problem was not with the Torah
    - 2. Problem was with the people who needed once-and-for-all atonement for their sins

- iv. Hebrews 8:6 (CJB), “But now the work Yeshua has been given to do is far superior to theirs (the priests), just as the covenant he mediates is better. For this covenant has been given as Torah on the basis of better promises.”
  - 1. New Covenant given as Torah (not to annul it, but to fulfill it; remember Yeshua’s words about Torah)
  - 2. What are the better promises? Let’s find out...
- b. Jeremiah 31:31-34, “‘Behold, days are coming,’ declares Adonai,
  - i. “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,
  - ii. “not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them...
  - iii. “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares Adonai.
    - 1. New Provisions
      - a. I will put my Torah within them
      - b. And on their heart I will write it
    - 2. Renewed Terms (Exodus 6:7)
      - a. And I will be their God
      - b. And they shall be My people.
    - 3. “They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know Adonai,’ for they will all know Me (desire stated in Exodus 6:7), from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares Adonai.
    - 4. New Terms
      - a. For I will forgive their iniquity
      - b. And their sin I will remember no more
- iv. Sign/pledge of allegiance
  - 1. Made on our behalf by Messiah Himself
  - 2. Luke 22:20, “And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, ‘This cup which is poured out for you is the New Covenant in My blood.’”
- c. cf. Ezekiel 36:22-28—new heart and new spirit to cause Israel to walk in His statutes
- d. None of the changes of the later covenants nullifies or conflicts with the terms, conditions, provisions, promises or expectations of the previous covenants! The covenants just keep getting better!

### VIII. With Whom Were All Scriptural (Non-Universal) Covenants Made?

- a. Covenant Parties Summary
  - i. Av’rahamic
    - 1. Made with Av’raham, renewed with Isaac then Jacob/Israel
    - 2. Includes provisions for the blessings of the nations
  - ii. Mosaic
    - 1. Made with the sons of Israel
    - 2. Includes provisions for the foreigner, temporary resident, and sojourner
  - iii. Davidic
    - 1. Made with David, King of Judah
    - 2. Promises King Yeshua

- iv. New Covenant
  - 1. Made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah
  - 2. Fulfills the provisions for the nations made in the Av'rahamic covenant through the blood of Messiah
- b. All non-universal Scriptural covenants made between Adonai and Israel (covenanted parties); though each contains provisions that would affect the nations
  - i. Romans 11:17 (CJB), "But if some of the branches [Jews] were broken off, and you [Gentiles]—a wild olive—were grafted in among them and have become equal sharers in the rich root of the olive tree, then don't boast as if you were better than the branches! However, if you do boast, remember that you are not supporting the root, the root is supporting you."
    - 1. It's a Jewish root
    - 2. Gentiles become equal sharers, but that does not take the Jew out of the equation
  - ii. Ephesians 2:11-15 (CJB) *"...remember your former state: you Gentiles by birth... at that time had no Messiah. You were estranged from the national life of Isra'el, You were foreigners to the covenants embodying God's promise. You were in this world without hope and without God. But now, you who were once far off have been brought near through the shedding of Messiah's blood. For he himself is our shalom—he has made us both one and has broken down the m'chitzah (separating wall) which divided us..."*
    - 1. Brought near to what? The covenants and the people of Israel!
    - 2. This accomplishes all the purposes of God from the beginning—through Yeshua, Israel blesses all the families of the earth

## IX. Conclusion

- a. The Good News
  - i. The nations scattered, Israel called and set apart from the nations to be a blessing
  - ii. Blessings and promises given to Israel in the context of a covenant (Av'raham). Israel's required response: faith.
  - iii. Adonai gave another covenant (Torah) so that Israel would be able to inherit the Land (fulfilling Av'raham's covenant). Israel's required response: obedience.
  - iv. Israel disobeyed, so Adonai gave her a New Covenant to restore her. Adonai promised new hearts, new spirits, and the forgiveness of sin, so that Israel would know Adonai and follow His ways alone.
  - v. Adonai sent Yeshua to mediate this New Covenant in His blood. The nations would no longer be estranged from God, Israel and Israel's covenants, but brought near. The nations become equal sharers with Messianic Jews in the household of God, beginning the fulfillment of Israel's destiny to be a blessing to all the families of the earth.
- b. Purpose of understanding Scriptural covenants: there is no way to bypass the Jewish people to appropriate the blessings and promises