

# WHO IS GOD'S COVENANT WITH?

*Written by Rabbi Mordecai. Posted in Articles*

Genesis 6:18: But I will establish My covenant with you, and you shall enter the Ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. (cf. 9:19-17).[1]

I think that an interesting observation concerning the word bow[2] is that it is used mostly as a reference point in describing an archer. I think this is interesting because the word that is the root of the Hebrew word Torah is 'yarah,' which means to shoot straight to the mark as in a target. The beauty of the Hebrew language as it is used in Scripture is the underlying and connected meanings of the various words and terminology. God does not use one word in His Scripture that does not have significance. He does not waste a word.

As we begin our search of who God made His covenant with we see a word that will be used over and over again: covenant. A covenant is an agreement between two or more parties on an issue. This was something that was used in ancient times to seal something and usually involved the killing of an animal or the shedding of blood. In these opening passages from Genesis we see God establishing His covenant between Noah, His creation and Himself. In the truest sense of a covenant we do not see an offering being made to seal this covenant but what we do see is the death of all of mankind and the animal kingdom except for those chosen by God to go on board the ark. Inside the ark are the representatives of God's covenant. We have Noah and his family and those who are going to carry on the animal kingdom as well as those animals that God allowed to be sacrificed to seal His covenant.

In some ways I think the ark and what it contained was a forerunner of the Ark of the Covenant, which would come later. In the first ark were living symbols of the life that God was preserving, while in the second Ark were the symbols of His covenant through which He would give us life everlasting.

Genesis 15:18: On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants have I given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates River.

This covenant was called “The Covenant of the Pieces,” and it was God Himself who walked between the pieces in a figure eight pattern, thereby establishing that this covenant was an eternal covenant, because the number eight denotes eternity and since it was God who made the covenant, it would never be broken, because, God never, and I repeat never, breaks or annuls His covenants.

This covenant established Abraham and his descendants as the heirs of God’s promises of land and progeny (cf. Genesis 17:2,4,7,9-11,13-14,19,21).

God declared physical circumcision to be a requirement for the males called to be His covenant keeping people. This would make them unique from among the other nations or peoples of the earth. This would make them a peculiar people different from all others. For, no others circumcised the flesh of their foreskin which is a foreshadowing of the covenant to come where God would circumcise the flesh of our hearts.

Now many will say this is a requirement for the Jewish people alone because that is their sign between them and their God, and, as Christians, we are not required to do that anymore. What we are not required to do is to circumcise our flesh before we understand the nature of the covenant that we are entering into. This was a result of binding and loosing, that term that is so misunderstood by the majority of Christianity today. The Biblical and Jewish concept of binding and loosing is the interpretation of Torah and what is allowed and not allowed within Torah framework. What the Acts 15 Council was doing was binding and loosing the requirement for circumcision as laid down by Torah. Instead of performing the act of circumcision before learning Torah, they were to learn Torah first, and then, when they understood Torah, they would enter into the covenant that would seal them to Israel, not to the Jewish people. Why not the Jewish people? Because Abraham was not a Jew he was a Hebrew. Some will ask what is the difference between a Hebrew, Israelite and a Jew? Nothing and everything!

A Jew can be a Hebrew and an Israelite. And, a Hebrew and Israelite can be a Jew. But not all Hebrews and Israelites are Jewish.

Abraham was not Jewish, nor were Isaac or Jacob. Jacob was the first Israelite. This happened when his name was changed from Jacob to Israel. The first Jew was his son, Judah. Later, that identification of “Jewish” came to include Benjamin and Levi. The remainder of the tribes were called Ephraim/Jacob/Joseph/Israel. So, biblically speaking,

Judah was never known as Israel, but always as Judah, or part of Israel. The name “Israel” was given to the northern house or kingdom of Ephraim. Thus, the truest sense of a covenant, we do not see an offering being made to seal this covenant.

Exodus 2:24-25: 24 God heard their moaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 God saw the Children of Israel; and God knew.[3]

God knew or acknowledged not the Jewish people, despite what some in Judah would tell you. But He knew or acknowledged or took notice of the Children of Israel! The people God took notice of in the Egyptian captivity were the Children of Israel, meaning, spiritual as well as physical sons and daughters of Jacob/Israel and his sons after him, who were the fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel.

This is an important concept or idea to grasp. Because, when you begin to understand who are the people or the children of Israel, you realize that God made His covenant with you, not just the Jewish people.

Now, I will stand accused by my Jewish brethren and those from among the nations who have chosen to join themselves to Judah, that I betray the Jewish people by saying this. But, the truth is that I betray God when I live the lie that Judah has perpetrated all of this time in laying sole claim to the identity of Israel.

Likewise, I stand before my Christian brethren and say that they too have lived a lie, in that they have attempted to take away from Judah and Israel its inheritance, when they call themselves the “new Israel” or the “spiritual Israel.” (And mean that they have replaced Judah.)

This is a lie straight from the mouth of the deceiver himself—Satan. He twists the truth and leaves just enough of the truth intact to make it seem like it could just be possible that this lie could be true. No way!

God established His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and with Jacob, and they were not Jewish! (Exodus 6:2-5) They were Hebrews. The meaning from a biblical perspective is a “boundary crosser.” Abraham and his family crossed over the boundary of the Jordan river and the residents of the land of Canaan who saw them named them Hebrew or Hebrews.[4]

Now I am not being anti-semitic when I say this. I am Jewish by birth and upbringing, and I follow the traditions and customs of the Jewish people. But I have to share the truth of what the Bible has to say. I am not taking the Jewish side or the Christian side but the Biblical side, as God gives it in His Word: Judah and Ephraim are both His children. And, those children, He called Israel!

Exodus 19:3-5: 3 Moses ascended to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "So shall you say to the House of Jacob and relate to the Children of Israel. 4 'You have seen what I did to Egypt, and that I have borne you on the wings of eagles and brought you to Me. 5 And now, if you hearken well to Me and observe My covenant, you shall be to Me the most beloved treasure of all peoples, for Mine is the entire world.

Who is God referring to in this conversation with Moses about His covenant? He is referring to the Children of Israel, a distinct group of people who are made up of all the tribes of Israel descended from the twelve sons of Jacob, plus those who choose to join themselves to Israel. We are all part of that people or nation that God called Israel. The covenant that was theirs is ours. The covenant that God made with Noah, who was not a Hebrew, Israelite or Jew, is ours because we are descended from Noah and his children.

Now some would say the non-Jew is to follow the covenant that is known as the "seven laws of Noah." But if that were true then in the strictest interpretation of the Noahide Covenant, we, Jews included, are all bound to the Noahide Covenant, because we are all descended from Noah and his sons. The Semitic people, of whom Judah is a part, are descended from Shem, the son of Noah. But that would also mean all Semitic people, and that includes most who live in the Middle East.

Yes, even the Arab people are Semites! But what separates us from our Semetic brothers and sisters?

Exodus 23:32: 32 You shall not seal a covenant with them or their gods.

Is the god the Arabs worship the same God that we worship? Think about that very carefully before you make any hasty decisions. The Arab people claim their right to the land comes from the fact that they now identify themselves with the peoples who lived in the Land of Canaan before the Israelites, the Israeli's or Judah. If true, then in the strictest sense of the biblical rendering they would have to be killed, because that is what God commanded to the Israelites to do when they took the land.

Why?

Because of the gods that they worshipped. So, do the people of Islam worship the same gods of their ancestors? Why then is their enmity between brothers? If the Arab people of today are descended from the Canaanites and the other peoples that lived in the land prior to the Israelites, then they have no biblical claim to the land, because God had ordered that no covenant and not one of these peoples were to be left alive.

If they are, as they also claim, to be the children of Ishmael, a son of Abraham, not of Sarah but of Hagar; then they also are not entitled to reside in the land that God gave to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. That is who the land was given to, not Abraham and Ishmael. The covenant was with "Israel." (Exodus 24:7-8).

No other people on the face of the earth have the Torah. It has been carried through the ages by God's people from the beginning. Scripture tells us that Abraham had the Torah. So the father of the faithful had the Torah before it was handed on down to the children of Israel as a people. Today the Torah has been kept intact by the Jewish people or the House of Judah. They have been entrusted with the responsibility to keep the oracles or Torah of God safe and to teach them to all the nations of the world as the truth of the One True God of all the universe as given through His Son Yeshua the Messiah.

This is the covenant we have entered into. And when we enter into this covenant with our God, we enter into many signs that go along with this covenant.

Exodus 31:16-17: 16 "The Children of Israel shall observe the Sabbath, to make the Sabbath an eternal covenant for their generations. 17 Between Me and the Children of Israel it is a sign forever that in a six-day period the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed."

It is a sign forever! What other people on the face of the earth have a sign that lasts forever? The living representatives of that people are called Jewish, yet there is also a remnant called Ephraim, whom some believe to be Christians who are descended from those early Believers in the Messiah Yeshua when it was still part of Judaism. Many Christians are being called out of the Church today as they hunger to return to their Hebrew Roots. Part of those roots and that heritage is a return to the sign of the covenant and that sign is the seventh day Sabbath.

That covenant was made by God, with Israel! (Exodus 34:10, 12, 15, 27-28).

The Torah of God was given to Moses to bring down to the children of Israel to establish them as the covenant people of God. Within the children of Israel are the house of Judah and the house of Ephraim. Together they make up the people of God, the children of Israel. Israel is the covenant people of God. Israel is comprised of those who stood there that day at Mount Sinai and entered into the covenant with God and as Moses later reaffirmed that covenant with the people before his death, he said that all those that were there that day and all of those who were not there that day.

We were not there that day so long ago, and yet, it is as if we are there when we willingly enter into the covenant God made with Israel and their fathers.

Leviticus 24:8: Each and every Sabbath he shall arrange them before Yahweh continually, from the Children of Israel as an eternal covenant.

The covenant God made with the children of Israel is an eternal covenant! Eternal means forever! That does not imply in any way, shape or form that it is only temporary and that God has done away with it.[5]

The Hebrew is very explicit in that eternal or forever means just that, forever! So God has not changed His mind and withdrawn that which He gave for all time to the children of Israel. He has not changed His mind about who His covenant people are. He has not thrown away one group of people, as some claim, and replaced them with another people, because He decided that He had made a mistake with the people He originally chose to be unique to Him. Israel was and has always been His choice for His people. Yes, they have made mistakes along the way, but so have we all. He took our imperfections into account before we were created.

Leviticus 26:9: I will turn My attention to you, I will make you fruitful and increase you; and I will establish My covenant with you.

Once again this is an affirmation of the covenant and promise God made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and even to Adam and Chavah. It is part of His covenant with man, if they will accept His Torah and His Messiah, Yeshua.

This is a package deal that God made with us. We are included in Israel if we are not born into Israel we become a part of Israel when we accept Torah and Yeshua. Yes, most of Judah does not accept Yeshua as Messiah. But Yahweh is the One who blinded them to this truth and He will be the One who removes the blindness when His time has come. In the meantime He allows a little bit more of Judah to see the truth. It is not only Judah that needs to see the truth of Yeshua but they also need to return to Torah as much as Ephraim does. Both Judah and Ephraim have idols in their midst and they must be removed so that both houses can have a clear view of Yeshua and His covenant given in the Torah. I think the reality is that the covenant God gave is Yeshua!

Leviticus 26:15: If you consider My decrees loathsome, and if your being rejects My ordinances, so as not to perform all My commandments, so that you annul My covenant.

How much clearer can He be? It is not God that annuls the covenant but us. It is our refusal to follow His ordinances, decrees and commandments that annuls the covenant He made with our forefathers. He does not withdraw His covenant we bring it to naught through our actions. (Leviticus 26:42, 44-45).

Remember, God brought the Children of Israel up out of the land of Egypt for a purpose. Do you really think that after all He endured at the hands of the Israelites that He would abandon them when He said He would not? Despite Israel acting the part of a harlot and being unfaithful, still, He remained faithful to them. Yes, He punished them, but in the final scheme of things He remained their husband and bound Himself to them forever (Deuteronomy 4:13, 23, 31).

Once again God does not forget His covenant. If He does not forget His covenant then how can we dare say that He has changed His mind and chosen another people to be Israel? This does not make any sense at all. Yes most of Judah rejected Yeshua, but the early Believers in Yeshua were Jewish, or converts to Judaism, or God-fearers, who chose the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They were not the Christians that we know today. They were "Jewish." They were part of Israel. It has been God's plan all along to reunite Israel through Yeshua. It has not been His plan to choose a new Israel. This is categorically wrong and unbiblical.

If you know that the Lord is God, then you know that it is He who guards the covenant for those who love Him and observe His commandments (Deuteronomy 7:9). This is a

two part command here, not just one sided where all we have to do is love Yeshua. That's not it according to God. He says that you must know Him and love Him and keep His commandments. This is repeated by Yeshua in the Apostolic Scriptures, when He says that "if you love me you will keep My commands." What commands do you think He is talking about? It is the Torah! Plain and simple. There is no other way. If you love God you will keep His commandments. And, by doing this you will show others your relationship to your Creator.

The covenant God made with the Children of Israel, the covenant He made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is the same covenant He makes with us because we are Israel! (Deuteronomy 7:12; 29:9-14). There is no need for Him to choose a new people, because His covenant is everlasting and stands from the day He made it to now and forevermore. He made His covenant not only with the children of Israel who stood there that day before God, but, He made it with each and everyone of us who came after. We know and understand the conditions of that covenant. He did not make it too difficult to follow. He laid it out for us to see and He gave us blessings for following it and curses if we do not. How simple can that be? But God knew the hearts of His people and He told us what we would do and we have done these things time and time again despite knowing the consequences for our actions (Deuteronomy 31:16, 20, 26).

God knew what we would do after the time of Moses and Joshua and the elders of Israel. He knew that His people would sin and follow after other gods and betray Him. They would play the part of the harlot to the hilt and for that sin of betrayal He would punish His people by exiling them from the Land of Israel for various periods of time.

He has allowed Judah to return to the Land and the day is coming when He will allow Ephraim to return once again. When that happens, the day of the return of the Messiah Yeshua will be close by. Are you beginning to see the evidence based on the Word of God that He has never annulled His covenant with Israel? He adds to Israel as some of Israel are removed due to unbelief. But in doing that He is not making a new Israel as some claim. He is bringing new life to His Israel, the children of the covenant. He showed us His covenant long ago and He has never changed His word. If He did then He would not be God. He would be like us, man, in that when men make a covenant the tendency is to break it. When God makes a covenant He keeps it to the end. If we choose to follow His requirements for staying in that covenant we will remain. If we choose to



not follow His conditions set down for the covenant then we will be removed. We cannot have our cake and eat it too! (Joshua 8:33-35).

The rabbis like to say that only the men of Israel received the Torah. But Scripture clearly states that the men, women and children and Gerim received the Torah. The Torah is binding upon all of Israel, and Israel is made up of the native born Israelite, the women, the children and those who were foreigners who came and resided among the children of Israel and became part of Israel. That is you and me! Though I am a native born son of Judah and therefore part of Israel I had to be grafted back into the tree that was Israel, whose root is Yeshua. In my unbelief I could not be a part of Israel that had belief in Yeshua and followed His Torah. So like the Ger who sojourned among Israel and accepted the God of Israel and His Torah I came to be grafted back into the tree of Israel along with Ephraim and the companions of Judah and Ephraim. In that tree we are now one people joined together and nourished by the root that is not Judaism but is Yeshua the Messiah.

I have chosen to partake of the blessings that God promised as part of His covenant. I realize that I will undergo trials and tribulations because of my faith in Yeshua and adherence to His covenant of Torah. But I choose to be a part of the promise to those who remain faithful to Him in that I will have everlasting life. That promise alone is more than man and satan can give to me.

Each and everyone of you, should by now, realize that His covenant is everlasting from the beginning and was given to all of us who abide in faith in Yeshua and follow His Torah (Joshua 23:16).

This is the same covenant He gave to our forefathers. He has made some adjustments along the way, but it is still basically the same covenant that He promised eons ago. He did not give one covenant to the Israelite and one covenant to the non-Israelite. It is the same covenant for all of us. He has not cast off or rejected Israel to have them replaced by another people that are called Christian and believe themselves to be the spiritual Israel.

Why spiritual Israel? Because when the physical return of the Jewish people to their Land happened in 1948 Christianity could no longer lay claim to the title of physical Israel so they became spiritual Israel. There is a physical and spiritual Israel and they are one

people. They are those who maintain the covenant of Torah as God gave it to His people, all of His people, and to those who have faith in Yeshua as the Messiah of Israel.

By now you should see very clearly just who Israel is. If you don't or don't think that it matters that much then you are settling for a lie that will mislead you or you are satisfied with the inequality that the present belief system affords in Messianic Judaism and the lack of spiritual depth and refusal of Torah that Christianity teaches. One does not need to become Jewish or a Christian to be part of God's people. Belief in Yeshua is not incompatible with Jewish customs and teachings if they are based on the Tanach (Hebrew Scriptures). Following the Torah does not put you under the "law" as Christianity teaches. It brings you into God's covenant. But more on this in the next issue. Be blessed!

### *NOTES*

[1] 0282.0 hrb (brh) II. Assumed root of the following.

[2] 7198 tXq, qesheth {keh'-sheth} 1) bow 1a) bow (for hunting, battle) 1b) bowmen, archers 1c) bow (fig. of might) 1d) rainbow.

[3] 3045 [dy yada` {yaw-dah'} 1) to know 1a) (Qal) 1a1) to know 1a1a) to know, learn to know 1a1b) to perceive 1a1c) to perceive and see, find out and discern 1a1d) to discriminate, distinguish 1a1e) to know by experience 1a1f) to recognise, admit, acknowledge, confess 1a1g) to consider 1a2) to know, be acquainted with 1a3) to know (a person carnally) 1a4) to know how, be skilful in 1a5) to have knowledge, be wise 1b) (Niphal) 1b1) to be made known, be or become known, be revealed 1b2) to make oneself known 1b3) to be perceived 1b4) to be instructed 1c) (Piel) to cause to know 1d) (Poal) to cause to know 1e) (Pual) 1e1) to be known 1e2) known, one known, acquaintance (participle) 1f) (Hiphil) to make known, declare 1g) (Hophal) to be made known 1h) (Hithpael) to make oneself known, reveal oneself.

[4] 5680 yrb[i `Ibriy {ib-ree'} Hebrew = "one from beyond" 1) a designation of the patriarchs and the Israelites.

[5] 5769 ~lw [ `owlam {o-lawm'} or ~l[ `olam {o-lawm'} 1) long duration, antiquity, futurity, for ever, ever, everlasting, evermore, perpetual, old, ancient, world 1a) ancient time, long time (of past) 1b) (of future) 1b1) for ever, always 1b2) continuous existence, perpetual 1b3) everlasting, indefinite or unending future, eternity.

