

## COVENANT MAKING

From historical information the following 8 steps were commonly used in ancient covenant ceremonies. But not every covenant included all of them.

1. Pre-Ceremony actions
2. The Selection of the Covenant Representative and the Cutting of the Covenant Sacrifice (blood)
3. The Exchange of Robes, Belts and Weapons
4. The “Walk unto Death”
5. The Pronouncement of Blessings and Curses – Obedience and Disobedience
6. The Seal of the Covenant Mark
7. The Exchange of Names
8. The Covenant Meal

NOTE: The important point for us is that when God chose these same steps to enter into covenant with man, what He used in the past still applies to His people today.

### **PRECEREMONY ACTIONS**

“Cost Counting” – The covenant parties involved discuss in detail the terms, conditions, promises of the blessing and the warnings of curses related to the agreement. It’s an assessment of the personal sacrifice demanded by the pact they are making.

### HOW IT APPLIES TO US TODAY

1. When God initiated a covenant with Abraham, there was a period of time preceding the actual covenant ceremony that was recorded in Genesis 15. (Genesis 12:1-8)
2. Pre-ceremony actions were also a part of establishing the New Covenant. Yeshua came to the earth in human flesh as a man and spent 3 years of His public ministry specifying the terms, conditions, and promises of the New Covenant.
3. Example of “Cost Counting” – Luke 9:23-24; 14:25-33
4. Yeshua has invited all mankind to be saved; to enter into a covenant with God through Him
5. We live in a day of cheap grace and seeker-sensitive churches- the New Covenant is much different. It’s not an invitation to believe, but an invitation that calls us into a covenant life of faith and surrender.

### **SELECTION OF THE COVENANT REPRESENTATIVE AND THE CUTTING OF THE COVENANT SACRIFICE**

A Covenant Representative was chosen on behalf of each group engaged in the pact and entered the covenant on behalf of everyone in their group. They would make the covenant that would bind the entire group to the expectation of the covenant agreement.

The representative would then take the animal sacrifice, cut it down the middle from the head to the tail. The two pieces are laid open with the bloody side up. Since the animal was usually quite large, a significant amount of blood would flow toward the center of the two pieces. The representative would stand near the sacrifice.

### HOW IT APPLIES TO US TODAY

1. In the covenant with Abram, the two representatives were the LORD and Abram (name not changed yet). The LORD taking the form of a smoking oven and a flaming torch, passed through the cut pieces of the sacrifice. (Genesis 15:17)
2. Abraham was the covenant representative God chose on behalf of mankind. God and Abraham entered into a covenant for the entire human race.
3. Yeshua is the representative of the Father in the cutting of the New Covenant (Phil. 2:5-8). He was chosen by the Father to cut covenant on behalf of heaven.
4. An important distinction of the New Covenant is that Yeshua is also the Covenant Representative on behalf of mankind (Hebrews 2:17-18) before the Father. He is also the Covenant sacrifice (John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7). And the mediator of the New Covenant (Hebrews 8:6). He did it all!

### **THE EXCHANGE OF ROBES, BELTS AND WEAPONS**

Robes, Belts, Weapons or some other token would be exchanged as a symbol of their desire to no longer live their lives independently, but as one.

The robe exchange symbolized the putting on of the identities of each other. I give you all I have, and you give me all that you are.

The belt was part of the armor and held the weapons in place – symbolic of a man's strength. It represented the giving of your strength to your covenant partner and taking on their weaknesses.

Weapons are used to defeat enemies and symbolize the responsibility and power to defeat the covenant partners enemies.

### HOW IT APPLIES TO US TODAY

1. As God, Yeshua took off His robe of glory and clothed Himself in the likeness of humanity (Phil. 2:5-7). By doing so He made the wonderful royal robe of righteousness available to us. By His work on the cross, Yeshua took upon Himself our robe of filthy rags, defiled by sin and independent living. (Isa. 64:6; Luke 15:12-13, 22; Gal. 3:27; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rev. 7:13-14)
2. In the New Covenant God takes our weaknesses and gives us His strength. (Phil. 4:13; 2 Cor. 12:9-10)
3. Yeshua has defeated every enemy that has or will come against the purposes of God. Col. 2:11-15 (past); Hebrews 7:25 (present); 2 Thess. 1:3-10 (future).

Behold I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy and nothing will injure you. Luke 10:19

### **THE "WALK UNTO DEATH"**

To express how seriously each party of the covenant viewed their part of the agreement, they would participate in a "Walk unto Death" by walking around the pieces of the sacrificed animal, probably in a figure 8 pattern.

As the two representatives walked between the sacrifice pieces, facing each other they would look towards heaven and say, "Do so to me as has been done to this animal if I break this Covenant.

If I fail to keep this covenant; may I die as this animal has died.” A vow to the death in order to fulfill their part of the pact.

#### HOW IT APPLIES TO US TODAY

1. Two great Old Testament examples of this death walk are found in Genesis 15:17 – Abraham questioned God – How would he know that God would fulfill His promise? God gave him the greatest pledge possible. And in Jeremiah 34:18 God is reminding His covenant people Israel that they are breaking the vow they had pledged to Him.
2. Yeshua the sacrifice and mediator of the New Covenant took the “Walk unto Death” as He humbly made His way up Golgotha to be crucified. He had taken His vow unto death when He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.” Matthew 26:39 He was saying – I will cut the Covenant. I will take the “Walk unto Death”. I will be the Covenant sacrifice. I will be the Mediator of the New Covenant.
3. New Covenant living is not just believing set facts about Yeshua. It involves so much more than believing that He is God, He died on the cross and rose from the dead on the third day. It’s also trusting His “Walk unto Death” for us and then taking our own “Walk unto Death”, which involves surrendering our hearts and lives to His Lordship; vowing to live in faith lives honoring God.

#### **THE PRONOUNCEMENT OF BLESSINGS AND CURSES**

While the partners stood in the middle of the animal sacrifice, each would pronounce aloud the terms of the covenant.

They would declare the blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. The blessings would include: abundant harvests, prosperity, good health, and numerous children. Curses would often include retaliation by the injured party: destruction, disease, poverty, calamity, famine, and defeat at the hands of their enemies.

#### HOW IT APPLIES TO US TODAY

1. Deuteronomy chapters 27-32 is a crystal-clear Old Testament example of the Covenant blessings and curses. Just before entering the Promised Land God reminded the Israelites of them again. Once in the Land, 6 of the tribes of Israel stood on Mt. Gerizim to declare the blessings to the people and 6 tribes on Mt. Ebal declared the curses for breaking the Covenant they had agreed to with God.
2. After deciding at Gethsemane to die for mankind Yeshua the Mediator and Representative of the New Covenant took the “Walk unto Death” as He made His way to be crucified. While He hung on the cross, He spoke 7 sayings:
  - a. “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” Luke 23:34 – Forgiveness
  - b. “Amen, I tell you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.” Luke 23:43 – Eternal Life
  - c. “Woman, behold your son!” Then He tells the disciple, “Behold your Mother!” John 19:26-27 – New Family in The Body of Yeshua
  - d. “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Matthew 27:46 – Redemption from the Curse of Sin
  - e. “I am thirsty.” John 19:28 – Establishment of the Kingdom of God
  - f. “It is finished!” John 19:30 – Grace
  - g. “Father, into Your hands I entrust My spirit.” Luke 23:46 – Blessings Secured

3. As Yeshua made these statements, He pronounced the blessings of the New Covenant to all mankind – such as forgiveness of sins, eternal life, God’s Torah written on hearts of flesh, the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Messiah liberated us from Torah’s curse, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree “(Deut. 21:23)). Galatians 3:13

### **THE SEAL OF THE COVENANT MARK**

After the animal sacrifice, the “Walk unto Death” completed, the Blessings and Curses stated, the covenant parties would seal the agreement with a special sign or token.

- If the agreement was a blood covenant, then the mark would involve the shedding of blood by the covenant partners. Pagan partners would often seal the covenant by drinking wine comingles with some of their own blood (unity).
- Jewish Law prohibits drinking blood, so Biblical covenants were sealed with drinking wine, which symbolized blood. Then they would take a dark substance and rub it into the flesh cut to cause a permanent scar or mark as a reminder.

### HOW IT APPLIES TO US TODAY

1. Genesis 17:10-13 depicts the Covenant Mark involved in the pact between God and Abraham when circumcision was used as a sign of the Covenant between them. The shedding of Abraham’s blood sealed the Covenant.
2. As the Covenant sacrifice, Yeshua shed His blood on the cross. After He rose from the dead, He showed doubting Thomas His Covenant Marks, and He still bore the Marks when He entered heaven, as He does to this day.
  - a. And in the midst of the throne and the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, I saw a Lamb standing, as having been slain-having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Revelation 5:6
3. As followers of Yeshua, our Covenant Mark is a circumcised heart, proving we have entered into the New Covenant through the blood of the Lamb, Yeshua.
  - a. In Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision done not by hand, in the stripping away of the body of the flesh through the circumcision of Messiah. You were buried along with Him in immersion, through which you also were raised with Him by trusting in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. When you were dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with Him when He pardoned our transgressions. Colossians 2:11-13 (Romans 2:28-29)
4. Just as drinking wine co-mingled with covenant partners blood was used in Covenant rituals; so Yeshua said that we cannot be a partaker with Him unless we “drink His blood”. (John 6:47-59) We do this by accepting His blood sacrifice as the only thing that will cleanse us from sin and give us eternal life, bringing us nearer to God.

## THE EXCHANGE OF NAMES

It implied the exchange of personality, character, reputation, essence, and authority; symbolizing the 2 have become 1.

Pagan covenant involved combining their name with the name of their deity. Daniel 1:6-7 is an example of this. Nebuchadnezzar was claiming them for his own gods, when he changed the names of Daniel and his friends (who had names honoring Adonai).

### HOW IT APPLIES TO US TODAY

1. We see this in the Covenant God made with Abram by changing his name to Abraham and Sarai to Sarah in Genesis 17:5, 15. He added the "heth" sound; the sound of His name YHWH.
2. The New Covenant also points to the exchange of names. Yeshua used the name of the Father throughout His earthly ministry. "I have made Your name known to the men of this world that You gave Me. (John 17:6)
3. Have this attitude in yourselves, which also was in Messiah Yeshua, Who, though existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal to God a thing to be grasped. But emptied Himself- taking on the form of a slave, becoming the likeness of men and being found in appearance as a man. He humbled Himself- becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason, God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Yeshua every knee should bow, in heaven and on the earth, and every tongue profess that Yeshua the Messiah is Lord- to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:5-11
4. To the one who overcomes I will give some of the hidden Manna, and I will give him a white stone and written on the stone a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it. Revelation 2 17b

## THE COVENANT MEAL

The celebration of the Covenant and its sealing. The meal included bread and wine (represented the body and blood of the covenant partners). By this meal they declare they will live as one and express their vows just made to each other in the covenant.

### HOW IT APPLIES TO US TODAY

1. In the covenant God initiated with Abraham we see the covenant meal celebrated between God's representatives Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 18:5-10.
2. When God made covenant with Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and the 70 elders, they ate and drank together in Ex. 24:11.
3. In Luke 22:14-20 Yeshua said the cup of wine he held at their Seder meal (Zikkaron) represented the blood of the New Covenant. He fulfilled the prophesy of Jeremiah 31:30-36.
4. 2 Corinthians chapter 3 explains A New Covenant on Hearts of Flesh

✚ Behold I stand at the door (of your heart) and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will dine with him, and he with Me. Revelation 3:20

## COVENANT RELATIONSHIP