

COVENANT OF MOUNT SINAI

SUMMARY

The children of Israel were slaves in Egypt. The Lord brought them out with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm. He brought them into the desert of Sinai and made them a nation under God, with **the right to occupy and live in the Promised Land, AS TENANTS, subject to obedience to the Law of Moses.** To have the privilege to continue to occupy the Promised Land Israel must keep:

- The ritual law concerning the priesthood and the continual offering of animal sacrifices, etc.
- The civil law concerning rights of citizens, land transactions, execution of justice, etc.
- The moral law: Love your neighbor as yourself
- The heart law: Love the LORD your God and serve him only

In the Law of Moses there were blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. Penalties for disobedience went as far as being shipped back to Egypt as slaves. All who relied on observing the Law of Moses were under a curse. It is written: “**Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law**” (Deut. 27:26).

None of the blessings under the Law of Moses concern eternal life, the heavenly realm, or the forgiveness of sins necessary to stand before God in the life hereafter. The people under the Covenant of Sinai did not even enjoy the privilege of speaking to the Lord face to face. The high priest, who crawled into the Most Holy Place once a year, was required to fill the room with incense so that he would not see the LORD and die. The animal sacrifices offered under the Covenant of Sinai are a refinement of the Covenant of Animal Sacrifice that began in the Garden of Eden. They only cover sin – they do not remove sin. They only cover the sin of the one for whom the sacrifice is offered while he is still alive on the Earth. We invite you to read our paper on the Covenant of Adam, the Covenant of the Serpent, and the Covenant Animal Sacrifice for a full perspective.

The Covenant of Mount Sinai is a conditional covenant put in place because of transgressions.

The LORD had intended to make Israel a wife, with eternal blessings. But when Moses came down the mountain with the marriage contract, the children of Israel were worshipping the golden calf. The stone tablets were broken – the marriage was off. Because of this great transgression Israel only barely survived the wrath of God due to the intercession of Moses. The LORD then cut a covenant with Israel of conditional tenancy to the Promised Land subject to strict requirements with severe penalties in the Law of Moses specified for breaking commands.

The Covenant of Mount Sinai concerns the physical descendants of Israel and the Promised Land.

This covenant does not set aside previous covenants of God, specifically: the covenant of marriage, covenant of animal sacrifice, covenant of Noah, and the covenant of circumcision.

Ownership of the Promised Land belongs to the spiritual descendants of Abram, not the physical descendants of Israel. We invite you to read our paper on the Covenant of Abram.

THE KEY IDEA

A contract is an agreement between identified parties. A contract is a transaction.

A covenant is an agreement that changes the identity of the parties. A covenant is a transformation.

Western thinking has moved to the principle of inalienable human rights from birth regardless of age, gender or station in life. It was not always this way. The foundation of Western civilization is Judeo-Christian belief as taught in the Bible. In the Bible rights and privileges are not the same for all people and vary depending on age, gender, and many other criteria. The Bible shows it is possible to change one's identity through covenant. Changing one's identity changes one's rights, privileges, and station in life.

THE MARRIAGE PROPOSAL TO ISRAEL – THE BETROTHAL

Three months to the day after the Israelites left Egypt Israel camped at the foot of Mount Sinai. Moses went up the mount of God. This is what God said:

“If you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.” (Exodus 19:5-6)¹

Is the offer of the LORD a marriage proposal?

- What is a wife of all a man's possessions? The treasured possession (Proverbs 31:10).
- What is the duty of a wife? To obey her husband.
- How is a kingdom passed on? To the descendants of the king through marriage.
- How is a priesthood passed on? To the descendants of the priest through marriage.

What is the privilege of the wife?

- To know her husband, to eat at his table, to speak to him face to face, to bear his children, to raise his children, to live in his house, to carry his name, to be buried beside him.

In the Jewish custom, there is a party at the betrothal and there is a ceremony at the marriage. Do we see a betrothal party in the events at Mount Sinai? On the third day after the offer was given to Moses:

“Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God and they ate and drank.”
(Exodus 24:9-11)

¹ The gematria of verse 5 is 5185 = 85 x 61. The spiritual number 85 means 'Lord's Supper' and the spiritual number 61 means 'Messiah'. So when the LORD said 'you will be my treasured possession' he was saying the people would be united with him [Messiah] in Holy Communion [as his believers, his bride, his beloved].

Between the betrothal and the marriage there is a time of probation. A betrothal is an agreement to marry, not a marriage. A betrothal can be broken if either partner cancels the agreement.

What were the terms of the Betrothal? On the third day the LORD had called Moses up the Mount and gave him the terms of the Betrothal, which are presented in Exodus 20 to Exodus 23.

The terms of the Betrothal include these stipulations:

- 10 Commandments (e.g. you shall have no other gods before me)
- Sabbath Laws (e.g. for six years you may plough, but on the seventh year let the land rest)
- Social Laws (e.g. do not mistreat an alien or an orphan)
- Property Laws (e.g. if a stolen animal is found in his possession he must pay back double)
- Slavery Laws (e.g. after six years, let a Hebrew slave go free)

Moses came back down the Mount and presented the terms of the betrothal to Israel.

The people and the elders responded together with one voice:

“We will do everything the LORD has said” (Exodus 19:8)

The betrothal was sealed when the elders and the priests joined him to fellowship with the LORD.

For six days the cloud covered the mountain and on the seventh day Moses went back up the mountain and stayed there forty days and forty nights. During this time the LORD gave Moses commandments concerning the construction of the tabernacle and the holy furniture in it. These regulations are presented in Exodus 25 to Exodus 31.

The betrothal was broken when Israel sinned.

“When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said ‘Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses brought us out of Egypt we don’t know what happened to him.’” (Exodus 32:1)

The people gave Aaron their gold and he fashioned a golden calf for them.

“He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then he said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.’” (Exodus 32:4)

Aaron then built an altar and made sacrifices to the idol. The people rose up to make merry.

“When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain.” (Exodus 32:19)



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In other ways the LORD clearly indicated that the betrothal was cancelled:

- “Take off your [betrothal] ornaments and I will decide what to do with you” (Exodus 33:5)
- “I will send an angel to go before you... but I will not go with you” (Exodus 33:2-3)

Moses pleaded with the LORD and Moses found favor with the LORD. And so the LORD agreed to go with them. That did not change the fact the betrothal was cancelled.

The betrothal cancellation meant the nation of Israel would never be the bride of the LORD.

What became of Israel? If they were not the bride, what were they? They became slaves under the Law of Moses. Israel was God’s possession, but not his treasured possession.

“...you will see my back; but my face must not be seen” (Exodus 33:23)

The One who had eaten and drank with the elders and the priests now became a stranger to the stiff-necked Israelites. They would fear him, but not see him. They were duty bound to obey all the Law of Moses, but they would never be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

Israel’s Status as a Slave Woman:

“These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. **One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves:** this is Hagar. Now

² Source of image: doubleportioninheritance.blogspot.com

Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. (Galatians 4:24-25)

Consequences of Israel's Status as a Slave Woman

- They may occupy the Promised Land as tenants only, not as owners (Lev. 25:23)
- They are subject to eviction from the Promised Land if they sin (Deut. 30:18)
- They are subject to eternal punishment for their sin (Exodus 32:33)
- They are under a curse because living under the Law is impossible (Gal. 3:10)
- The Law is powerless to justify or make anyone righteous (Gal. 3:11) (Heb. 7:19)
- They do not share in any inheritance with the bride (Gal. 4:30)

Who would be the bride of the LORD? The Christians are the bride of Christ.

“For you know it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.” (1 Peter 1: 18-19)

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” (1 Peter 2:9)

THE COVENANT OF MOUNT SINAI

The covenant transformation:	<u>From slaves in Egypt to slaves under the Law of Moses</u>
Signs of the covenant:	<u>Blood of the twelve young bulls</u> (Exodus 34:8)
The new authority / role / position:	<u>Slave with no inheritance</u>
The new responsibility:	<u>Obey the Law of Moses;</u>
The new privileges / rights:	<u>Tenancy in the Promised Land; Protection of the Lord</u> (both privileges are conditional on obedience)
The new destiny:	<u>No eternal benefits;</u> <u>Covenant of Mount Sinai destined to perish and be replaced by a better covenant</u> (Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Hebrews 8:13)