

Covenant Relationships Part 2

In the Body of Messiah

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The Need for Covenant Faithfulness In Congregations and Communities

In order to do this we need to understand what a Covenant is.

Definition of Covenant

A Covenant is the agreement between two parties to be committed to their relationship. Covenant is the commitment that lies behind any successful relationship. Covenant comprises the principles of integrity that guarantee a relationship will be preserved.

In congregational affairs, membership is a solemn agreement between the members of a congregation, that they will walk together according to the precepts of the gospel, in brotherly affection.

COVENANT, v.i. To enter into a formal agreement; to stipulate; to bind one's self by contract.

A life of Covenant Honor

In the ancient biblical frame of mind, **every action a man takes reflects his character**. Every interaction between men is a reflection of the relationship between them.

Belonging to a local Congregation is a form of Covenant loyalty. Sadly, in the day we are living in people are quick to desert the leadership that serves them.

As Congregation Shepherds and Rabbis, we have experienced time and time again, people swearing their loyalty to serve and be a part of community, only to get offended at the drop of a hat and walk away leaving the leadership hurt and rejected. Or thinking that another Congregation has more to “offer them”, instead of having the attitude what do I have to offer this Congregation.

We have had people come through our doors time and time again swearing their loyalty to the Community only to turn around and leave without even saying goodbye.

Yes, leaders go through hurt rejection and pain from those they serve as well. I have seen many people posting on Facebook how they were hurt by a Pastor or leader, however have they ever thought how many people have hurt Pastors and Leaders in return time and time again?

We bare the scars of leadership and just when it seems like healing has begun, another of the flock decides to go searching for greener pastures. The sad thing is, is that these people never find a place to settle, because they continue to jump from place to place seeking their own will and not the will of the Father. They have no understanding of Covenant loyalty and putting down roots.

Do you wonder why leaders are not quick to trust people until they have seen their willingness to enter into covenant with the Community and prove their faithfulness?

Today people do not understand or respect the covenant relationship. Marriage is supposed to be a sacred covenant between a man and a woman, yet the divorce rate is soaring, even among believers! People choose to live together, and yes even people who call themselves believers are falling for this arrangement as well. Why? Because it is easy to walk away when there is not commitment and no covenant relationship.

Respect Is Important In Covenant Relationships

It is very sad the lack of respect people have in the Messianic “movement” for leadership, especially

those who are Rabbis and who have laid down our lives to serve others and have done without too keep their Congregations going. People have no idea the personal sacrifices, hurt, rejection and pain that go into being a Rabbi or leader of a Congregation. We will continue to lay down our lives for the sheep because this is what God called us to do. The problem is people always think the grass is greener somewhere else and are quick to desert those who have served them. There is a spiritual law of sowing and reaping, the way you treat others is the way you will be treated in return. Why is respect for leadership important? Because we should respect the office and the men that God has placed in that position in the Community.

Whether people like it or not there is a hierarchy in Gods Kingdom and Divine Order and leadership, it is all through the Bible. The Tabernacle is a perfect picture of Divine Order and respect for authority. Yeshua is the one who placed the leadership in the Body, The Apostle, The Prophet, The Evangelist, The Pastor/Rabbi and Teachers for the training of God's people to do the work of the ministry. Eph. 4:11FF.

Covenant breaking is very serious in God's eyes.

In the ancient near east covenants were taken very seriously and not entered into lightly.

In particular, it has recently been observed by G. E. Mendenhall¹ that the literary pattern which was used by the Hittites in their suzerainty treaties may be discerned in the Tenach passages dealing with the covenant between Yahweh and Israel. Thus the brief pericope in Exodus 19: 3-8 may be set out as follows:

Preamble: Moses went up unto God, and Yahweh called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel (verse 3).

Historical prologue: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself (verse 4).

Statement of general principles: Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant (verse 5a).

Blessings: Then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me from among all peoples . . . and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation (verse 5b, 6a). Then Moses came and called for the elders of the people and set before them all these words which Yahweh commanded him. And all the people answered together and said :

Oath: All that Yahweh hath spoken we will do (verse 8). Again, in Exodus 20: 1-17 we may discern the following elements: Preamble: I am Yahweh thy God (verse 2a). Historical prologue : Which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage (verse 2b). General principles: Thou shalt have none other gods before me (verse 3).

Specific stipulations: The Decalogue, listed in verses 4-17; although the fundamental principle of verse 3 normally appears as the first of the commandments. **Curses:** I Yahweh thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me (verse 5b). Yahweh will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain (verse 7b). **Blessings:** Showing mercy unto thousands, of them that love me and keep my commandments (verse 6). That thy days may be long upon the land which Yahweh thy God giveth thee (verse 12b). ¹When Exodus 24: 3-8 is analyzed in a similar way it is possible to discover a reference to covenant stipulations (verse 3), the covenant document (verse 4), the oath (verse 7), and the religious ceremony of ratification in which sacrifices were offered (verses 4-6, 8). Indeed, a combination of the details in the three passages Exodus 19: 3-8, 20: 1-17 and 24: 3-8 gives a remarkably complete picture of a typical Near Eastern treaty ceremony.

¹ G. E. Mendenhall, op. cit.; cf. J. Muilenburg, V.T., IX, 1959, pp. 347-365; W. Beyerlin, Herkunft und Geschichte der c'iltesten

Sinaitraditionen, 1961; K. Baltzer, Das Bundesformular, 1960. 22 THE ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TREATIES AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

There is good reason to read these three passages together as part of one whole. A particularly striking example of the literary pattern we are considering occurs in Joshua 24. This may be schematized as follows:

Preamble: Verse 2a.

Historical introduction: Verses 2b-r3. General principles: Verse 14.

Specific stipulations: Verse 25. Oath: Verses r6, 2r, 24.

Witnesses: Verses 22, 27.

Covenant document: Verse 26. The book of Deuteronomy provides an illustration on a large scale of the way in which this literary pattern occurs, not merely in short passages, but in the book as a whole.² Thus Deuteronomy 1-4 is a historical introduction, 5-11 a statement of general principles, 12-26 a statement of specific stipulations, 27-30 a presentation of the curses and blessings, and 31-34 a setting forth of the provisions for the recognition of Moses' successor and for the continuity of the covenant after his death. But the Near Eastern treaty pattern occurs in many other passages besides these. Sometimes only certain aspects of the pattern occur, as in Leviticus 26 with its list of curses and blessings, or in Joshua 8 : 30-35 with its reference to the law, the altar and sacrifices, the curses and the blessings, and the covenant document.

We see this a similar pattern in the marriage contract or what is called a “Ketubah”.

A ketubah is a Jewish marriage contract that is signed just prior to the wedding ceremony.

Traditionally, the ketubah has been written in Aramaic, with specific language outlining the groom's financial obligations to the bride, and is then signed, in the groom's presence, by two male witnesses. While different versions of Jewish wedding contracts date back to biblical times, the ketubah text was codified in the first century CE, and

an entire book, or tractate, of the Talmud — Ketubot — describes its purpose and requirements.

In Israel today, the ketubah, whose name derives from the Aramaic and Hebrew root “katav,” which means “to write,” is binding under civil, as well as religious, law. Elsewhere, the ketubah is binding only under religious law and must be accompanied by civil wedding documents.²

Romans 1:31

A Covenant breaker is listed in Romans chapter 1 as a characteristic of an ungodly person.

Rom 1:31 Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: KJV

Rom 1:31 they are brainless, faithless, heartless and ruthless. CJB

Covenant breaking and Faithlessness.

G802

ἀσύνθετος

asunthetos

Thayer Definition:

- 1) uncompounded, simple
- 2) covenant breaking, faithless

Part of Speech: adjective

A Related Word by Thayer's/Strong's Number: from G1 (as a negative particle) and a derivative of G4934

So a person who is a covenant breaker is the same as being a faithless person. They are people who cannot be trusted. This is why when a person abruptly leaves a Congregation, a Pastor/Shepherd/Rabbi is reluctant to let them return because they have proven that they are people who cannot be depended on or trusted, they have shown themselves to be covenant breakers. Also many times these people will cause splits and divisions within a Community in order to draw people to

² <http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-ketubah-or-marriage-contract/>

themselves.

Our God is a Jealous God.

Exodus 20: 5-6

Exo 20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me;

Exo 20:6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Deuteronomy 5:9-10

Deu 5:9 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me,

Deu 5:10 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

God expects His people to be covenant keepers, especially when it comes to obeying His word and commandments.

Exodus 34

Exo 34:1 And the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon *these* tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou broke.

Exo 34:2 And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the top of the mount.

Exo 34:3 And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount.

Exo 34:4 And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone.

Exo 34:5 And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.

Exo 34:6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

Exo 34:7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth *generation*.

Being jealous in scripture means that one has a fiery concern to protect the intimacy of the covenant.

If we are faithful to our covenant relationships then there is no need to be jealous. However, if someone enters in who threatens that covenant relationship jealousy will enter in because of the covenant relationship being threatened by an outsider who is not a part of that intimate covenant relationship.

Shepherds are very protective of their flocks, and yes the term jealous could be used as well and they will protect the flock from wolves in sheep's clothing who would try to destroy or threaten a covenant relationship in the Congregation.

Waters of Jealousy

Numbers 5 – 'water of jealousy'

Num 5:11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num 5:12 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him,

Num 5:13 And a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept close, and she be defiled, and *there be* no witness against her, neither she be taken *with the manner*;

Num 5:14 And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled: or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled:

Num 5:15 Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth *part* of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour

no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it *is* an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance.

Num 5:16 And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the LORD:

Num 5:17 And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel; and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and put *it* into the water:

Num 5:18 And the priest shall set the woman before the LORD, and uncover the woman's head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which *is* the jealousy offering: and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse:

Num 5:19 And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness *with another* instead of thy husband, be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse:

Num 5:20 But if thou hast gone aside *to another* instead of thy husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man have lain with thee beside thine husband:

Num 5:21 Then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman, The LORD make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when the LORD doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell;

Num 5:22 And this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make *thy* belly to swell, and *thy* thigh to rot: And the woman shall say, Amen, amen.

Num 5:23 And the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot *them* out with the bitter water:

Num 5:24 And he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causeth the curse: and the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, *and become* bitter.

Num 5:25 Then the priest shall take the jealousy offering out of the woman's hand, and shall wave the offering before the LORD, and offer it upon the altar:

Num 5:26 And the priest shall take an handful of the offering, *even* the memorial thereof, and burn *it* upon the altar, and afterward shall cause the woman to drink the water.

Num 5:27 And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass, *that*, if she be defiled, and have done trespass against her husband, that the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, *and become* bitter, and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall rot: and the woman shall be a curse among her people.

Num 5:28 And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean; then she shall be free, and shall conceive seed.

Num 5:29 This *is* the law of jealousies, when a wife goeth aside *to another* instead of her husband, and is defiled;

Num 5:30 Or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him, and he be jealous over his wife, and shall set the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law.

Num 5:31 Then shall the man be guiltless from iniquity, and this woman shall bear her iniquity.

The law is there to present extreme sanctions against covenant betrayal. It is intended to guarantee the faithfulness of the people toward God as their spiritual husband. The strong indictments of the law are measures to protect and guarantee the faithfulness of our covenant.

Blessings for keeping Covenant and Curses for breaking Covenant.

Deu 28:2 And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, **if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.**

Deu 28:15 But it shall come to pass, **if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God**, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:

The curses and punishments in the torah are protective measures to guard the security of the people so they will not break covenant with God or each other.

Faithfulness to Covenant

Means...preserving integrity; to hold to a covenant without breaking it.

As Congregational leaders and members we are to preserve the integrity of the Community by keeping covenant with God and with one another.

Proverbs 20:6

Pro 20:6 Most men will proclaim everyone his own goodness: **but a faithful man who can find?**

Luke 18:7-8

Luk 18:7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

Luke 18:8 I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. **Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?**

In other words, will Yeshua find Covenant faithfulness when He returns?

At His coming Yeshua will exercise covenantal vengeance against all who have betrayed the trust of the spiritual relationship that God has set up between Him and His people.

The Torah/Teachings and Instructions of YHWH is a set of standards that provide safeguards against further covenant breaking. Had there been no sin, there would be no need for law.

YHVH is a covenant keeping God

Hebrews 6:13-19

Heb 6:13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, **he sware by himself,**

Heb 6:14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

Heb 6:15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

Heb 6:16 For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation *is* to them an end of all strife.

Heb 6:17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath:

Heb 6:18 That by two immutable things, in which *it was impossible for God to lie*, we might have a

strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

Heb 6:19 Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

Heb 6:20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, *even* Yeshua, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

God always keeps His covenants.

Yeshua Kept the Covenant Perfectly and is our example of Covenant Faithfulness.

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

Joh 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

Joh 1:5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

God has offered us an eternal renewed covenant through Yeshua. He has promised to keep that covenant with those who put faith in His Name and walk in covenant faithfulness to the Word of God.

Maybe it is time to take more seriously our Covenant relationship with God, Yeshua and each other.