

Are You Breaking the Covenant?

This weeks reading for Chol Ha'moed Pesach (*Shemot / Exodus 33:12-34:26*) is taken from Parashat Ki Tisa (*Shemot / Exodus 30:11-34:35*). In the Torah narrative, Israel had just committed a great sin before the Lord, manufacturing an idol of gold, and bowing down before the idol at the foot of the mountain of Sinai. Moshe returns to the top of Sinai and speaks to the Lord God requesting that His presence come with the Children of Israel (*33:12-17*). Moshe attempts to gain forgiveness for Israel and in the process receives a glimpse of God's Glory (*33:18*). The Lord tells Moshe that He will show him His glory. The Lord declares that He is merciful, gracious, slow to anger, loving, and having grace forgiving the iniquity, transgression, and sin for thousands (*34:6-7*). All of these things come at the heels of Chet Ha'Egel, Israel's sin, and the Lord forgiving Israel for their idolatry. In last week's study, we looked at *Joshua 7:1* which states, *But the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully in regard to the things under the ban, for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, took some of the things under the ban, therefore the anger of the Lord burned against the sons of Israel.* There was unknown (hidden) sin amongst the people and it effected all of Israel. The hidden sin was due to one man violating the covenant of God. Have you ever considered whether you are knowingly or unknowingly breaking the covenant of God? Do we really need to worry about breaking the covenant in Yeshua the Messiah? How does one break the covenant as a believer in Yeshua? Can breaking the covenant effect our lives today? These are very good questions. Let's study the topic of "*breaking the covenant*" within the context of Yeshua the Messiah, and see what we can learn.

In Parashat Ki Tisa, the Lord revealed to Moshe His glory. According to the Apostolic Writings, the Lord revealed His glory in His Son in the covenant He made with us in Yeshua the Messiah. (*Hebrews 1:1-3*).

Hebrews 1:1-3

1:1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 1:2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

1:3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

The Apostolic Writings tell us about Yeshua the Messiah, and the Lord renewing His covenant with us (*Jeremiah 31*) in Him. Based upon these Scriptures and others, we are in a covenant relationship with God, just like what we read from the Torah portion in *Shemot / Exodus 34:10-12*.

ספר שמות פרק לד *Shemot / Exodus 34:10-12*

י וַיֹּאמֶר ה' הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי כֹרֵת בְּרִית
נֶגְדְךָ כָּל-עַמֶּךָ אֲעֲשֶׂה נִפְלְאוֹת אֲשֶׁר
לֹא-נִבְרְאוּ בְּכָל-הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל-
הַגּוֹיִם וְרָאָה כָּל-הָעַם אֲשֶׁר-אִתָּה
בְּקִרְבּוֹ אֶת-מַעֲשֵׂה יְהוָה כִּי-נֹרָא
הוּא אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה עִמָּךְ: יא
שָׁמֵר-לְךָ אֵת אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה
הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה גֵרֶשׁ מִפְּנֵיךָ אֶת-
הָאֱמֹרִי וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַחִתִּי וְהַפְּרִזִּי
וְהַיְבוּסִי: יב הַשָּׁמֵר לְךָ
פֶּן-תִּכְרַת בְּרִית לְיוֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ
אֲשֶׁר אִתָּה בָּא עֲלֶיךָ פֶּן-יִהְיֶה
לְמוֹקֵשׁ בְּקִרְבְּךָ:

34:10 And he said, "Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the Lord, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you. 34:11 "Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 34:12 Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst. (NASB)

The question to consider is how does one break the covenant of God being saved in Yeshua the Messiah? To begin to understand what it means to break the covenant, we need to understand the relevancy of the commandments in the Torah. In order to do this, we need to first look at the gospel of John, chapter 10 and 14.

John 10:27-30

10:27 'My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 10:28 and I give eternal life to them, and

they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 10:29 'My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 10:30 'I and the Father are one.' (NASB)

John 14:6-18

14:6 Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. 14:7 'If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.' 14:8 Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.' 14:9 Jesus said to him, 'Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 14:10 'Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. 14:11 'Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves. 14:12 'Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. 14:13 'Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14:14 'If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. 14:15 'If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. 14:16 'I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 14:17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. 14:18 'I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. (NASB)

According to the gospel of John, the Scriptures say that Yeshua and the father are one and are in 100% agreement with one another. Accord-

ing to John, the words Yeshua spoke during his ministry here on earth, all of them were from His Father in heaven. In the narrative, Philip asks Yeshua to show him the Father, and he responds saying, you have seen and known the Father by seeing and knowing Me. In addition, Yeshua says that the works that he does are the works of the Father, and that the Father is glorified in the name of Yeshua. This is evident in the miracles of the healing of the lepers, and in the calming of the storm in *Mark 4*. Yeshua also says, *14:15 'If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. (NASB)* Based upon this context, the commandments of Yeshua, are one and the same with the commandments of our Father in heaven. What Yeshua is doing here, he is drawing us back to a Torah context, he is drawing a picture of the mitzvot in the Torah for his followers. Take for example the calming of the storm, Yeshua is demonstrating the power of God as it is compared to the Exodus and the Lord's mighty hand that delivered Israel and brought the plagues upon Egypt. God has the power of the wind and the sea. Therefore, to understand the meaning of breaking the covenant, we need to look at the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings.

Studying the Hebrew word for “*break*,” (שבַּר) the word occurs 41 times in the Tanach. It is used in connection to breaking a covenant, breaking the commandments, breaking plans and breaking advice. Before we begin the discussion on what it means to break the covenant of God, understand that the particular mitzvah that a person may break, does not mean that the Torah no longer stands as a whole, complete, and valid. Even though the Torah is broken, it remains in force. This is the way the Apostle Paul describes the Torah in his letter to the *Romans 6-7*. The same is true with respect to the covenant. For example, Judaism teaches that apostasy does not relieve a person from the responsibility of sin in this respect. The Talmud teaches, “*Once a Jew, always a Jew*,” citing *Joshua 7:11*, “*Israel hath sinned*” interestingly enough regarding the same Scriptures we studied last week, a man who sins and breaks the covenant does not invalidate who he is and his responsibility before God. Rabbi Abba son of Zabdai spoke these words in the Talmud to prove that though he (Achan) “*sinned*,” he remains an Israelite (*Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 43b*).

The term “*break*” refers to a violation of a mitzvah that results in a transgression of the covenant. From the Talmudic perspective, the apostate, or the heathen, is still responsible before God for living in either righteousness or in unrighteousness on this earth. Dispensationalism has done

a great disservice to the Christian understanding of the covenant presupposing that the Torah was for a former time, whereby in this age of grace, we do not have to be concerned with breaking the covenant. The Scriptures actually teach a different message. God's covenant in the Messiah, based upon Yeshua's words in *John 10* and *14*, suggest we are held to the same requirements as detailed in the Torah. Nothing has changed. This is why a large percentage of the Scripture speaks so often of the breaking of the covenant on the part of Israel in the Tanach, and our needing to remain or abide in the Messiah in the NT. The sad fact of the matter is greater Christianity believes and teaches that it was only under the covenant of Moshe that one could break the covenant of God by not observing or keeping Torah, whereas today, we are under grace and consequentially breaking the Mosaic covenant is a non-sequitur issue.

According to the Tanach, the verb *"to break"* (שבר) is connected with God's commandments. In *Bamidbar / Numbers 15:31*, the word that is used is הִפָּר from the root פָּרַר meaning *"be crumbed, crumbled, shattered, collapsed,"* being translated as *"despising the command"* לֹא כִּי: *15:31 דָּבַר-יְהוָה בְּנֹחַ וְאֶת-מִצְוֹתוֹ הִפָּר הַפָּרִת | תִּפְרֹת הַנֶּפֶשׁ הֵהוּא עֲוֹנָה בָּהּ: 'Because he has despised the word of the Lord and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt will be on him.'* (NASB) *Tehillim / Psalms 119:126*, states, קָבוּ עֵת לַעֲשׂוֹת לַיהוָה, *119:126 It is time for the Lord to act, For they have broken Your law. (NASB)* saying the Lord will act when one despises the command, or causes the command to crumble or be shattered, to break. The Lord will take action because his Torah has been broken. Ezra says in *Ezra 9:14*, יָד הַנְּשׁוּב לְהִפָּר מִצְוֹתַיָּהּ וּלְהִתְחַתֵּן בְּעַמֵּי הַתַּעֲבוֹת הָאֵלֶּה הֲלוֹא, *9:14 shall we again break Your commandments and intermarry with the peoples who commit these abominations? Would You not be angry with us to the point of destruction, until there is no remnant nor any who escape?* (NASB) In each case, the mitzvot are violated (transgressed) or broken, yet the command stands and remains valid.

לְדָ וְאִם-הָעִיר תֵּשׁוּב וְאִמְרַתָּ לְאַבְשָׁלוֹם, *2 Samuel 15:34*, עֲבַדְדָּהּ אֲנִי הַמְּלֶכֶת אֶהְיֶה עֲבַד אָבִיךָ וְאֲנִי מֵאֲז וְעַתָּה וְאֲנִי עֲבַדְדָּהּ וְהִפְרַתָּה לִּי אֵת עֲצַת: *15:34 'But if you return to the city, and say to Absalom, 'I will be*

your servant, O king; as I have been your father's servant in time past, so I will now be your servant,' then you can thwart the counsel of Ahithophel for me. (NASB) Here the counsel of Ahithophel is broken (וְהִפְרָתָהּ). In addition, *2 Samuel 17:14* we also read, יָד וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲבִישָׁלוֹם וְכָל-אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל, טוֹבָה עֲצַת חוּשִׁי הָאֲרָכִי מֵעֲצַת אַחִיתֹפֶל וַיְהִי כֵן וַיִּהְיֶה לְהִפְרֹת אֶת-עֲצַת אַחִיתֹפֶל: *17:14 Then Absalom and all the men of Israel said, 'The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel.' For the Lord had ordained to thwart the good counsel of Ahithophel, so that the Lord might bring calamity on Absalom. (NASB)* Here the Lord commanded that the counsel of Ahithophel be broken (לְהִפְרֹת). Here the Lord commanded (עֲצָה) the counsel of man to be broken. It was broken and not followed up. Corresponding to this, *Isaiah 14:26-27* states, כֹּו זֹאת הָעֲצָה הַיְעוּצָה עַל-כָּל-הָאָרֶץ וְזֹאת הַיָּד הַנְּטוּיָה עַל- *14:26 'This is the plan devised against the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out against all the nations. 14:27 'For the Lord of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?'* (NASB) Nobody can break (יִפְרֹת) the plans of the Lord. Nobody can annul them or destroy them so that they are of none effect.

In addition, *Isaiah 44:25, Job 5:12, Ezra 4:5, and Nehemiah 4:9-15* all state that the Lord breaks the signs of liars and diviners. In *Job 40*, the Lord speaks asking Job, will you deny, will you annul and destroy, My rights? The Lord's word remains valid regardless of whether men breaks them or keeps them.

The breaking of the covenant, according to *1 Kings 15:19* (see also *2 Chronicles 16:3*), Asa, king of Judah, requests Behadad, the king of Syria to break his covenant with Baasha, the king of Israel, and to make a covenant with him, king Asa. The breaking of the covenant here is between peoples. *Isaiah 33:8* also speaks of the breaking of the covenant between peoples saying the situation of the people and the land is wretched. *Ezekiel 17:15-18* speaks of the king of Judah and the king of Babylon making a covenant under oath, where Judah broke the covenant by turning to Egypt for help. Within the context of the covenant between two people, these Scriptures suggest that the breaking of the covenant is not simply a matter of transgression or violation of a command, it is also connected to

the destroying of the covenant relationship. The covenant relationship is severed, done away with, and doesn't exist any longer. Note that breaking the covenant is to nullify and destroy, that is coupled to the transgressing or violation of the agreement. The question before us then is, *“Do you know the requirements of the covenant relationship that you have with the Lord God in heaven in Yeshua the Messiah?”* What are the stipulations of the covenant you have with God in Christ?

In addition to this, the Torah states according to *Vayikra / Leviticus 26:44-45*, מִדּוֹ וְאִף גַּם-זֹאת בְּהִיּוֹתָם בְּאֶרֶץ אֹיְבֵיהֶם לֹא-מֵאַסְתִּים וְלֹא-גַעַלְתִּים, לְכַלְתֶּם לְהַפֵּר בְּרִיתִי אִתְּם כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: מֵה וְנִכְרַתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית רֵא-שָׁנִים אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי-אֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְעֵינֵי הַגּוֹיִם לְהִיּוֹת לָהֶם לְאֱלֹהִים אֲנִי יְהוָה: 26:44 *‘Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God. 26:45 ‘But I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am the Lord.’* (NASB) These Scriptures tell us that the Lord will not utterly forsake His people, He will not break His covenant with them and utterly destroy them. Clearly, if the Lord broke His covenant, he would totally annul (destroy) the covenant and His people would be utterly destroyed.

The point of studying the breaking of the covenant is that man is fully capable of breaking the covenant by violating the commands of God. The violation of the covenant takes away from the covenant relationship and causes it to no longer work. In *Vayikra / Leviticus 26:15* we read, *“if you spurn My statutes, and if your soul abhors my ordinances, so that you will not do all My commandments, but break My covenant,”* the Lord will punish you. Note that not keeping the commandment results in one breaking the covenant with God. In Parashat Haazinu, *Devarim / Deuteronomy 31:16-20*, it is written that in the future, Israel will serve other gods and forsake and despise the Lord by *“breaking”* the covenant with Him. The connection between transgressing the commandments, violating the statutes of the Lord, and the breaking of the covenant is also found elsewhere in *Isaiah 24:5, Jeremiah 11:10, and Ezekiel 16:59, 44:8*, etc.

Christian theology at times can be a very strange thing. In dispensationalism, the idea of breaking the covenant of God, all of a sudden,

the meaning of the word “*break*” has changed in the Messiah Yeshua. The change occurs but one of two ways, (i) when the people “*break*” the covenant that the Lord made with them, the verb can only mean, violate or transgress, and has nothing to do with ones relationship because that is secured in Christ. And, (ii) one is not able to break the covenant because “*once saved always saved,*” this leads back to point (i) and the relationship being secured in Christ. When Israel served other gods and was not keeping God’s mitzvot, Israel broke the commands and in doing so, severed their covenant relationship with God. From this context, in the process of sinning, a person is in the process of annulling the covenant. With the relationship severed, the function of the Lord working in one’s life stops, outside of the Lord drawing the person towards repentance and turning from their evil ways, and returning to God’s Ways. Paul spoke at length on why the church was so sick, dead, and dying (*1 Corinthians 11:30*) and the reason being, the people were breaking the covenant and disregarding the faith by living in gluttony and drunkenness. Is there any wonder why today there are so many who are sick in the church when it is taught one is not able to break the covenant by their evil deeds?

What we can conclude from this study on “*breaking*” the covenant? Based upon this study of Yeshua and God’s Torah, we know based upon the Scriptures, that God’s Law can not be annulled or destroyed so that it no longer has any power or effect. This is what we read in *Isaiah 14:26-27* that God’s plans can not be destroyed. The thing about the commands is that we walk in God’s ways so that we can know Him better. The commands place God and His Word upon the throne of our lives. This is what John meant saying if you “*say*” that you are “*in Him,*” then you ought to walk in His ways (*1 John 2:6*). The reason is, the commands of God come into our lives, into the lives of the people of the covenant in a very intimate way. We are confronted with the commands to live in righteousness, holiness, and justice. So the question is, what will you do with this? Will you disregard the command (the Torah), and make it powerless in your life, or destroy it such that the command has no effect in your life? Israel did this throughout the Tanach. The church did this on issues of morality, gluttony, and drunkenness according to the Corinthians. In the transgression of the command, one breaks it to pieces, this is the root meaning of the word פָּרַר meaning to “*be crumbed, crumbled, shattered, collapsed.*”

The breaking of the covenant means to sever the covenant relationship between men, and between God and men. The important point to remember is that nobody is perfect and we all fail at one time or another to obey the Lord. This is why we seek the Lord for help in our lives to overcome sin, and to live repentant and humble lives before God.

The Lord said in *Shemot / Exodus 34:10* *And he said, "Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation. (NASB)* He said to all of Israel, and to you and I today, *"I am the LORD your God. I have redeemed you."* He promised all of Israel entry into the promised land and why did they not enter? They did not enter Because of their unbelief. Their unbelief in the promises of God and their lack of trusting in Him. The covenant that God made with His people included everyone, down to the individual members. Though the Lord maintains His covenant with His people, like we have in the Messiah Yeshua, it is also possible for the individual member to live a life in violation of the covenantal agreement. One can in fact sever his or her relationship with God by living in sin and then reap the consequences of their sins. (*1 Corinthians 11:30*) All of Scripture bears this out and most importantly of those who place their faith in Yeshua the Messiah. Yeshua said in *John 14:15* *'If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. (NASB)* Do you love the Lord enough to keep His commands? One of His commands is to observe and remember the Pesach Festival. In the Passover, we remember the Power of God to deliver us from bondage and the glory of God to redeem us in His Son Yeshua the Messiah. In the Passover we look for inspiration in the events of the past, to remember God's power (Resurrection) and His mighty hand (deliverance), coupled with the eternal hope for the future, not only of salvation from this worlds circumstances, but Salvation in the world to come, in His Messiah, Savior, and King, Yeshua!



