

Our Covenant Relationships

Covenant Sign

General

- background
 - key Heb phrase translated “make covenant” is *karath berith*
 - *karath*: to cut off, sever, cut or make
 - *berith*: covenant
 - *karath berith*: literally means “to cut covenant”
 - usually, people cutting covenant would cut their bodies, mix blood, produce a scar
- why mix blood?
 - most cultures believe life is in the blood, so mingling blood represents giving or sharing of life
 - Lev 17:11, “For the life of a creature is in the blood.”
 - Lev 17:24, “You must not eat the blood of any creature, because the life of every creature is its blood.”
 - in many cultures, each partner pressed his incision against the other’s so their blood mingled
 - in some cultures, they mixed a small amount of blood with another liquid & drank from a common cup
 - in a few cases, they mixed the blood and sprinkled on the two partners
 - this is based on the belief that blood is the life
 - from that moment, the two are considered one
- why produce scar?
 - scar is sign of unity, proof of covenant
 - after mixing their blood, covenant partners would rub something into the wound to produce a visible scar

God’s Covenant with Adam & Eve

- no scriptural reference to cutting flesh, mixing blood, producing scar

God’s Covenant with Noah

- no scriptural reference to cutting flesh, mixing blood, producing scar

God’s Covenant with Abraham

- Gen 17:10-11 “This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the

covenant between me and you.”

- “covenant” is *berith*
- What was the sign of this covenant?
- Acts 7:8, “Then he gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision. And Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him eight days after his birth.”
 - What title does this verse give to the covenant?

God’s First Covenant with Israel

- Ex 12:44, 48, at the original Passover in Egypt, any slave or alien living among the Jews must be circumcised before he could celebrate Passover
- Ex 24:8 (after animal sacrifice), “Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, ‘This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.’”
 - What’s the significance of the phrase, “blood of the covenant”?
- Lev 12:3, “On the eighth day the boy is to be circumcised.”
 - How does this relate to the covenant?

God’s Second Covenant with Israel

- Deut 10:16, “Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer.”
 - What does “circumcise your hearts” mean?
- Isa 49:15-16

Can a mother forget the baby at her breast
and have no compassion on the child she has
borne?
Though she may forget,
I will not forget you!
See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands;
your walls are ever before me.

 - Who is speaking in this verse?
 - What sign of the covenant does this verse describe and what does it suggest?

David and Jonathan’s Covenant

- 1 Sam 18:3, “And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.”
 - “made a covenant” (Heb *karath berith*)
 - What does *karath berith* mean?
- 1 Sam 20:16, “So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, ‘May the Lord call David’s enemies to account.’”
 - “made a covenant” (Heb *karath*), cut

God's Covenant with David

- no scriptural reference to cutting flesh, mixing blood, producing scar

God's Covenant with Christians

- At Jesus' crucifixion, in what ways was he cut or blood drawn from his body?
- Jn 20:27, "Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.'"
 - How does this relate to scars as signs of a covenant?
- What was cut and scar of Abraham's covenant with God?
- Rom 2:29, "... circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code."
 - Context: whether Christians must be circumcised to be saved
 - Where have we seen "circumcision of the heart" and what was its significance?
 - According to Romans 2:29, how is circumcision of the heart done?
 - Does this verse refer to the human spirit, Holy Spirit, or both?
- Col 2:11 "In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ."
 - "sinful nature" (Gk: *sarx*): figuratively (Larry's defn), a mindset focused on worldly existence, on behavior compatible with the world system which is dominated by sin
 - What does it mean for us to be circumcised, to put off the flesh?
 - According to this verse, who performs this circumcision?
 - How did he do that?
 - Is this something Christ does unilaterally?
 - What was the predominant characteristic of your former sinful nature, which you retained when you became a Christian?
 - What specific steps must you take to "circumcise your heart," to "put off your flesh"?
- Jn 14:20 "On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you."

God's New Covenant with Israel

- no scriptural reference to cutting flesh, mixing blood, producing scar

Marriage Covenant

- Gen 1:24, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”
 - quoted in Mt 19:5; Mk 10:7-8; 1 Co 6:16; Eph 5:31
 - in NT, “flesh” is Gk *sarx*
- What does it mean for husband and wife to become one flesh?

Blessing

- May you become profoundly aware that, as a result of our covenant, God is *in* you and you are *in* God.