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Study Guide: Understanding the Covenant from the Biblical/Hebraic Perspective

**This study guide is a quick reference and is not an exhaustive exploration of the subject. Studying the entire Bible is essential for a more complete understanding. This guide is intended only to support your personal study. Due to the depth of this topic, I have selected what I believe are key points to consider before delving deeper. I pray this serves as a blessing.*

The Covenant (*berit*, בְּרִית) is foundational to the relationship between YAH and His people, reflecting an eternal bond of loyalty, obedience, and faithfulness. Through this study guide, we explore the covenant's origins, significance, and application, focusing on the principles, blessings, and consequences of covenant life, as well as the New Covenant promise.

1. Defining the Covenant

The covenant is a sacred, binding relationship between YAH and His people. It signifies YAH's promises, Israel's obligations, and a mutual commitment to holiness.

- **Key Verses:**

- **Genesis 17:7** – “I will establish My covenant as an everlasting covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your Elohim and the Elohim of your descendants after you.”
- **Exodus 19:5-6** – “Now 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.”
- **Deuteronomy 7:9** – “Know therefore that YAH your Elohim is Elohim; He is the faithful Elohim, keeping His covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commandments.”

- **New Covenant Reflection:**

- **Hebrews 8:10** – “This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares YAH. I will put My laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their Elohim, and they will be My people.”
- **Romans 9:8** – ““That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of Yah: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.”

- **Galatians 3:29** – “If you belong to Messiah, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

In these verses, the covenant is a divine commitment that redefines identity, calling YAH’s people to live in holiness, love, and loyalty.

2. Areas of Focus in Covenant Laws

Covenantal laws emphasize the proper worship of YAH and the observance of religious practices, moral conduct, justice, and community, This includes:

- **Worship and Religious Observance:**
- **The Shema:** An affirmation of the oneness of YAH and the command to love Him with all one’s heart, soul, and strength.
 - **Deuteronomy 6:4-5** – “Hear, O Israel: YAH our Elohim, YAH is one. Love YAH your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”
 - **Matthew 22:37-38** – Yahshua replied, “Love YAH your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.”
- **The Ten Commandments:** These laws outline fundamental principles of worship and ethical behavior.
 - **Exodus 20:1-17** – Establishes prohibitions against idolatry, misuse of YAH’s name, and mandates the Sabbath observance.
- **Feasts and Festivals:** Instructions for the celebration of religious festivals, such as Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot, which reinforce community identity and remembrance of YAH’s deliverance.
 - **Leviticus 23** – Details the appointed feasts of YAH and their significance.

- **Ethical and Moral Conduct:**

Covenantal laws provide guidelines for ethical living and moral conduct among individuals and within the community. This includes:

- **Interpersonal Relationships:** Laws regarding how to treat others, including prohibitions against theft, lying, and bearing false witness.
 - **Exodus 20:13-16** – “You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.”
 - **Ephesians 4:25** – “Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.”
 - **James 1:27** – “Religion that YAH our Elohim accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”
- **Social Justice:** Provisions for caring for the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the foreigner, emphasizing the importance of compassion and justice in society.
 - **Leviticus 19:9-10** – “When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am YAH your Elohim.”

- **Holiness and Purity:**

These laws outline the concept of holiness, emphasizing that YAH’s people are to be set apart for Him. This includes:

- **Dietary Laws (Kashrut):** Guidelines on what is permissible to eat, reinforcing the concept of ritual purity.
 - **Leviticus 11** – Lists clean and unclean animals.
- **Purity Laws:** Regulations concerning bodily purity, such as those related to childbirth, menstruation, and disease (e.g., leprosy).
 - **Leviticus 15** – Addresses bodily discharges and purification processes.

- **Holiness Code:** Specific laws that detail how the Israelites should conduct themselves in various aspects of life to reflect YAH's holiness.
 - **Leviticus 19:2** – “Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: ‘Be holy because I, YAH your Elohim, am holy.’”
 - **1 Peter 1:16** – “For it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’”
 - **2 Corinthians 7:1** – “Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for YAH.”

- **Community and Social Structure:**

Covenantal laws also address the structure and organization of the Israelite community. This includes:

- **Leadership and Governance:** Guidelines for the appointment and responsibilities of leaders, judges, and elders.
 - **Exodus 18:21** – Jethro advises Moses to select capable leaders to assist him.

- **Family and Marriage:** Regulations regarding marriage, family relations, and inheritance, emphasizing the sanctity of family life.
 - **Deuteronomy 6:7** – “Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”
 - **Matthew 5:19** – “Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”
 - **Acts 2:44-45** – “All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.”

- Economic and Land Laws

These laws focus on economic justice and stewardship of the land. This includes:

- **Sabbath and Jubilee:** Laws regarding rest for the land and for people, including the Year of Jubilee, which mandates the return of land to its original owners and the freeing of slaves.
 - **Leviticus 25:10** – “Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; each of you is to return to your own family property and to your own clan.”
- **Property Rights and Loans:** Regulations governing property ownership, lending practices, and the treatment of debtors.
 - **Exodus 22:25** – “If you lend money to one of My people among you who is needy, do not be like a moneylender; charge him no interest.”

- Consequences and Accountability

Covenantal laws outline the consequences for disobedience and the importance of accountability within the community. This includes:

- **Blessings and Curses:** Clear stipulations of the blessings that come from obedience and the curses that result from disobedience.
 - **Deuteronomy 28** – Lists blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience.
- **Judicial Procedures:** Guidelines for resolving disputes and maintaining justice, including the roles of witnesses and judges.
 - **Deuteronomy 19:15** – “One witness is not enough to convict anyone accused of a crime or offense they may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.”

3. The Role of Tithes and Offerings in the Covenant

Tithes and offerings express faithfulness, worship, and trust in YAH's provision.

- **Covenant Obligation:**
 - **Leviticus 27:30** – “A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to YAH; it is holy to YAH.”
 - **Matthew 23:23** – “You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill, and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.”
- **Worship and Trust in YAH:**
 - **Malachi 3:10** – “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. Test Me in this,” says YAH Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.”
 - **2 Corinthians 9:6-7** – “Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for YAH loves a cheerful giver.”
- **Community Care:**
 - **Deuteronomy 14:28-29** – “At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes... so that the Levites...and the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows...may come and eat and be satisfied.”
 - **James 1:27** – “Religion that YAH our Elohim accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress.”

4. The Heart of the Covenant Relationship

The covenant is a relational commitment with YAH, described in marital and familial terms, emphasizing His love, loyalty, and faithfulness.

- **Marriage Imagery:**

- **Hosea 2:19-20** – “I will betroth you to Me forever...in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion.”
- **Ephesians 5:25-27** – “Husbands, love your wives, just as Messiah loved the church and gave Himself up for her.”
- **Repentance and Restoration:**
 - **Psalms 23** – “YAH is my shepherd; I lack nothing...He restores my soul.”
 - **1 John 1:9** – “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us.”

5. Imagery of Covenant Faithfulness

Symbols throughout Scripture show the strength and depth of YAH’s covenant with His people.

- **Blood Covenant:**
 - **Exodus 12** – The Passover lamb, a symbol of YAH’s deliverance and covenant.
 - **Hebrews 9:15** – “Messiah is the mediator of a new covenant...now that He has died as a ransom.”
- **Wedding Banquet:**
 - **Revelation 19:7-9** – “For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready.”
- **Oath and Sign:**
 - **Genesis 17:11** – Circumcision as the sign of the covenant with Abraham.
 - **Ephesians 1:13-14** – The Holy Spirit as a seal, a guarantee of our inheritance.

6. Consequences of Breaking the Covenant

Failing to keep the covenant brings separation from YAH, a call to repentance, and a reminder of the gravity of covenant loyalty.

- **Warnings:**

- **Deuteronomy 28:15** – “If you do not obey YAH your Elohim...all these curses will come on you and overtake you.”
- **Jeremiah 31:32** – “It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors... because they broke My covenant.”
- **New Covenant Perspective:**
 - **Hebrews 10:26-27** – “If we deliberately keep on sinning...no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment.”
 - **Romans 11:20-22** – “If YAH did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you either.”

7. The Promise of the New Covenant: Law Written on Hearts

The New Covenant moves the law from only external to internal also, fulfilled through YAH’s Spirit working within believers, enabling them to live out YAH’s commands from a transformed heart.

- **Jeremiah 31:33** – “This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time, declares YAH. I will put My law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their Elohim, and they will be My people.”
- **Ezekiel 36:26-27** – “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit in you and move you to follow My decrees and be careful to keep My laws.”
- **New Covenant Reflection:**
 - **Hebrews 10:16** – “This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says YAH. I will put My laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.”
 - **2 Corinthians 3:3** – “You show that you are a letter from Messiah, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living Elohim, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.”

Reflection Questions

1. **How does the concept of covenant impact your daily walk with Yah?** Are there areas where you can deepen your commitment to Him?
2. **In what ways can you demonstrate covenant faithfulness through generosity and care for others?** How do tithes and offerings fit into your expression of faith?
3. **How is the law written on your heart?** How can you invite the Holy Spirit to help you live out YAH's instructions with joy and willingness?
4. **What steps can you take to align your life with Yah's covenant?** Is there an area in which you sense a call to repentance, renewal, or greater holiness?

Conclusion

This study calls us to see the covenant as a contract and bond that invites us into a relationship with Yah. Through covenantal life, we embrace YAH's holiness, generosity, and justice, reflecting His love for His people. The New Covenant, fulfilled through Yahshua, empowers us with the Holy Spirit, making YAH's law an inward reality. As we uphold the covenant, we find true fulfillment, secure in the promises of YAH, a call to walk in His ways. May our lives be a testament to His faithfulness and a reflection of His holy love.

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