

1-11-25 Message to Roeh Israel Abilene - *VaY'chi* (and [Jacob] lived)
Torah Portion: Gen 47:28 – 50:26
Haftarah: 1 Kings 2:1-12
Suggested Acheron K'tuvim: Luke 22:19-20

Under the Law Part 26 – New Covenant Part 3 - The Gospels

Central question: Do you understand the progression of entering into the various levels of a covenant relationship with G-d?

Today we are in parasha *Vay'chi*, which means “and lived.” It takes its name from the first four words of the passage in English, and the first word in the original Hebrew.

Gen 47:28-30

28 And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; so the length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty-seven years. 29 When the time for Israel to die drew near, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "Please, if I have found favor in your sight, place now your hand under my thigh and deal with me in kindness and faithfulness. Please do not bury me in Egypt, 30 but when I lie down with my fathers, you shall

carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place. "And he said," I will do as you have said."

וַיְהִי	שָׁנָה	שִׁבְעַת	מִצְרַיִם	בְּאֶרֶץ	יַעֲקֹב	וַיֵּחִי	28
the	so was	years:	seventeen	Egypt	in the land of	Jacob	And lived
9999	1961	8141	6240 7651	4714	776	3290	2421
וְיָמֵי-	יַעֲקֹב	שְׁנֵי	חַיָּו	שִׁבְעַת	שָׁנִים	וְאַרְבָּעִים	וּמֵאָה
whole	Jacob	age of	seven	years.	forty and	an hundred	
3117	3290	8141	2416	7651	8141	3967	8141
וַיִּקְרָבוּ	יָמָיו	יִשְׂרָאֵל	לְמוֹת	וַיִּקְרָא	לְבָנוֹ	לְיוֹסֵף	29
And drew nigh	the time	Israel	that must die:	and he called	his son	Joseph,	
7126	3117	3478	4191	7121	1121	3130	
וַיֹּאמֶר	לוֹ	אִם-	נָא	מָצָאתִי	חַן	בְּעֵינֶיךָ	שִׁים-
and said	unto him,	If	now	I have found	grace	in thy sight,	put,
559	3807a	518	4994	4672	2580	5869	7760
יָדְךָ	תַּחַת	יָרְכִי	וְעָשִׂיתָ	עִמָּדִי	חֲסֵד	וְאִמְתָּ	אֶל-
thy hand	under	my thigh,	and deal	with me;	kindly	and truly	not,
3027	8478	3409	6213	5978	2617	571	408
תִּקְבְּרֵנִי	בְּמִצְרַיִם:						
bury me	in Egypt:						
6912	4714						
וְשָׁכַבְתִּי	עִם-	אֲבֹתִי	וְנִשְׂאתָנִי	מִמִּצְרַיִם	וַיִּקְבְּרֵנִי		30
But I will lie	with	my fathers,	and thou shalt carry me	out of Egypt,	and bury me		
7901	5973	1	5375	4714	6912		
בְּקִבְרָתָם	וַיֹּאמֶר	אֲנֹכִי	אֶעֱשֶׂה	כְּדִבְרְךָ:			
in their buryingplace.	And he said,	I	will do	as thou hast said.			
6900	559	595	6213	1697			

We are continuing with the subseries regarding covenants, and we are still discussing the concepts of the “New Covenant.”

Last week we discovered the one and only place in the Tanach where the term “New Covenant” is found, is in Jeremiah chapter 31.

We discovered that the context of the entire passage of prophecy recorded by Jeremiah makes it clear that this is better described as a “renewed covenant” because it is a renewal and reaffirmation of the previous covenantal promises that G-d made with Israel.

We also saw that the context of the entire prophecy which began in chapter 30 is that G-d is renewing this covenant relationship only with the Jewish people (including those fully grafted-in).

We know that G-d cannot violate His covenant with us. But we can violate our side of the covenant and make it void.¹ What made this covenant “renewed” is the new heart of Israel, upon which G-d’s commandments are now engraved so deeply, and this time this covenant will not be broken by Israel due to the heightened holiness.

And we know that when we keep G-d’s instructions in Torah, blessings follow not only to us, but also to the Land.² And that is what we find in connection with the renewed covenant described there.

¹ Ezek 44:7

² Lev 26:3-13

And one of the most striking things that we see in Jeremiah's prophecy is the clear picture that this renewal of the covenant won't happen until Israel is gathered once again, fully restored to all of the Land, and all the enemies surrounding Israel have been crushed and are no longer a threat. Given the last many decades of history in the Middle East, we see that this condition has not yet occurred – and today it seems it still is quite a way off on the horizon.

We saw how the normative church has seen fit to collapse this prophetic passage down into a couple of verses, misapplying one of them, and using this to attempt to justify their “New Covenant” theology. Their taking of this passage out of context and reinterpreting G-d's word does not support their theology, and it does violence to the clear intent of the prophecy.

The only way that the normative church of today can adapt this prophecy to apply to the church today is to first declare that G-d is done with Israel, and He has replaced Israel with the normative church. And since that theological position cannot be sustained by Scripture, the church's “New Covenant” theology is not properly supported by Jeremiah's prophecy.

Given that, we can examine what the gospels have to say regarding the concept of “New Covenant” and see how that squares with the “New Covenant” [actually, “renewed”] spoken of by Jeremiah.

We need to begin by recognizing that when the gospels were written, there was no such body of writing which eventually became known as the “New Covenant” or “New Testament.” When those gospel authors referred to “Scripture” they spoke only of Torah³ and the Neveim.⁴ The C’tovim⁵ was added to the canon of Hebrew Scripture later, and most likely around 37-100 CE.

In the gospels, there is only one mention of the term “new covenant,” and that is found only in the gospel according to Luke, as he described (from information given to him by others⁶) what has become known to the normative church as “The Last Supper” but which was in fact Passover.

Luke 22:19-20

19 And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 20 And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the **new covenant** in My blood.

³ First five books of Scripture, also called the “Books of Moses” or sometimes simply, “Moses.”

⁴ The “Prophets.” The assembled books of prophets.

⁵ The “Writings.” These are all the other books of history, poetry, wisdom, and such.

⁶ Luke 1:1-4

Interestingly, none of the other accounts of this meal include that language. Matthew and Mark, who were both at the table and saw this event with their own eyes, report that Yeshua referred only to “the covenant.”

Matt 26:26-29

26 And while they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is My blood of **the covenant**, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.

Mark 14:22-24

22 And while they were eating, He took some bread, and after a blessing He broke it; and gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is My body." 23 And when He had taken a cup, and given thanks, He gave it to them; and they all drank from it. 24 And He said to them, "This is My blood of **the covenant**, which is poured out for many.

The gospel according to John does not report anything regarding the Passover meal at all, but skips from the prayer by Yeshua regarding His followers, right to the arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane⁷, across the Kidron valley.

The timing during the Passover meal for the taking of the cup that Yeshua was speaking about is important. There are four cups taken during Passover by the leader, and the blessing is said over each of them. Each cup has a different meaning, and each is associated with one of the successive “I will” promises given by G-d regarding the Hebrews and their redemption from slavery in Egypt. And each of those “I will” promises is associated with the covenant of G-d with Israel.

Ex 6:2-9

2 God spoke further to Moses and said to him, "I am the Lord; 3 and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, Lord, I did not make Myself known to them. 4 And **I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan**, the land in which they sojourned. 5 And furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them

⁷ In Hebrew, *Gat Shmonim*, meaning the place of the olive presses.

in bondage; and **I have remembered My covenant.** 6 Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, 'I am the Lord, and [1st cup] **I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians,** and [2nd cup] **I will deliver you from their bondage.** [3rd cup] **I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.** 7 'Then [4th cup] **I will take you for My people, and I will be your God;** and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8 'And I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession; I am the Lord.'"

So, the four cups of Passover are:

1. I will bring you out from under the burden of the Egyptians.
2. I will deliver you from bondage and enslavement
3. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm [Yeshua]⁸
4. I will take you for My people and I will be your G-d.⁹

Passover has a certain order of celebration, and that order has persisted until the present day in general fashion, along with a number of additions which have been added over the centuries by our people.

⁸ Messiah is described as "the arm of the L-rd" in Isaiah 53.

⁹ The language of the singular covenant relationship with G-d.

That order places the cups of Passover in certain locations in the Seder of service for the Passover celebration:

1. Cup of Sanctification – part of the ceremonial separation of Passover from the ordinary days of the week. This is the “Kiddush Cup” of separation at the beginning of the meal. The Afikomen is taken from the middle matzoh in the Echad, and is hidden away [buried].
2. Cup of Deliverance/Rescue – ends the ceremony of the retelling of the exodus account and how G-d “snatched us away” from slavery when we were powerless to deliver ourselves. It is spilled, not consumed.¹⁰ The Passover meal is served and eaten following this cup. After the meal is finished, and after the Afikomen¹¹ is retrieved and delivered to the head of the Passover, that person purchases it [lit. redeems it] from the one who delivered it. He then divides that special matzoh and distributes it to those at the table, and after the proper blessing, the consume it together.¹²

¹⁰ One drop of wine (symbolizing blood) is spilled onto the plate as each of the first nine plagues are recited, and the remainder of the cup is completely poured-out upon the declaration of the final plague, “killing of the first-born.”

¹¹ “Afikomen” is a Yiddish word which means “I have come.”

¹² This piece of matzoh has come to be one of the “elements” which the normative church now calls “communion.” However, some churches insist upon using a leavened loaf of bread rather than unleavened matzoh, as is required.

3. Cup of Redemption – After the Afikomen is consumed, the leader blesses the third cup, and all partake of this cup together.¹³
4. Cup of Renewed Covenant.¹⁴ This is the final cup of the Passover Seder. The Orthodox call it the “fourth cup” and others call it the “cup of hope.”¹⁵ Why I give it this name will be explained below. It is associated with the reading of the Hallel Psalms¹⁶ [Psalms of praise] after the meal is concluded.

The symbolic nature of the fourth cup has been the genesis of considerable discussion. At this time, I find the comments of Tim Hegg to be excellent. In his article *Four Cups and their Meaning in the Passover Seder*, he says:

What is more, the history of Israel shows that from the time of our exodus out of Egypt, never has the nation as a whole willingly worshiped God as He desires. Early in our trek to the Promised Land we demonstrated that we were not free of our idolatry. And our history, illustrious as it may be at times,

¹³ This cup has come to be one of the “elements” of the normative church’s “communion.” However, some in the church have substituted grape juice for kosher wine as is required for a more authentic and historically accurate part of this ceremony. In our Passover, we also use this cup as the wedding cup, where we accept the proposal of marriage from Yeshua, and commit to remain faithful to Him until He returns to take us to where He is.

¹⁴ I have fashioned this name for the 4th cup, because it fits perfectly with how Yeshua interpreted it.

¹⁵ *Four Cups and their Meaning in the Passover Seder*, by Tim Hegg. <https://torahresource.com/article/four-cups-and-their-meaning-in-the-passover-seder/>

¹⁶ Ps. 113-118.

is strewn with waywardness and rebellion. We have not wholeheartedly, as a nation, fulfilled the words of this Fourth Cup, “I will take you for My people, and I will be your God.” While this has certainly been true of individuals in every generation who have made up a believing remnant, the nation as a whole has never been characterized by genuine worship of God. It is to this that Jeremiah points in his “new covenant” prophesy. For there is coming a time when all of Israel, from the least to the greatest, will “know God,” terminology which must mean “have genuine covenant relationship with God,” not merely have intellectual knowledge about Him.

This Fourth Cup, then, envisions the time when true Israel and all those who have attached themselves to her via faith, will worship God in truth, and will be known in every way as His people. This final cup reminds us that our redemption is not fully realized yet, and though we enjoy the realities of it in the present, the future still holds our full and final redemption.

I find his analysis of the meaning of the fourth cup to be perfectly consistent with the comments of Yeshua during the Passover, as recorded

in the gospels. Let's revisit the gospel account by Matthew [Mark uses the same language] and note something else in context.

Matt 26:26-29

26 And while they were eating, Jesus took some bread,
and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples,
and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." **27 And when He**
had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them,
saying, "Drink from it, all of you; **28 for this is My blood of**
the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness
of sins. **29 "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit**
of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it
new with you in My Father's kingdom."

The timing of this event is now clear. The bread that He took was the Afikomen, and he said that symbolized His body being broken, buried, and resurrected.

The cup He took was the third cup, the Cup of Redemption, for that is the only cup that is taken "while they were eating" the Passover meal. It is taken at the last part of the meal, immediately following the Afikomen.

He identified that cup with His blood, which He would soon pour out upon the ground (and spiritually upon the Ark of the Covenant which is in the Heavenly Temple).

Heb 9:11-13

11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; 12 and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

So, you see that even the author of Hebrews understands that the symbolism of the third cup, the Cup of Redemption, represented the blood of Yeshua. And he spoke of the spiritual significance of that cup, and the greater extent of that redemption granted by that blood.

Now we can see that it is the fourth cup – the cup of the Renewed Covenant - that Yeshua did not drink. He did that because its prophetic fulfillment was yet to come. Yeshua did tell us He would join us in drinking that cup – but only after His kingdom on earth was established in fullness.

So, we still must deal with the phraseology used by Luke in his account of the gospel. He seems to identify the third cup with the “new covenant.” That does seem to fit. Yeshua’s blood being spilled for us indeed paid for our sinful failings, and it did so as a replacement for the atonement blood of bulls and goats.

Whether it be technically the third cup or the fourth cup which represents the “renewed covenant” we are certain that Yeshua’s blood sealed the redemption that ushers-in the “renewed covenant” in the end of days.

You might have noticed that there are actually five “I will” statements found in Exodus chapter 6. The fifth is:

8 'And **I will bring you to the land** which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession; I am the Lord.'"

Moses ben Maimon (1138 – 1204), who was also known as Maimonides or Rambam, was one of the most prolific and influential scholars of the Middle Ages. His works are studied even today for their wisdom and insight.

He added a fifth cup to the Seder of Passover, and tied it to the verse above. He declared it was a required cup for the celebration.¹⁷ He said this verse applied to the regathering of Israel, and the building of the final Temple in Jerusalem. That makes sense to us today, because never since that promise was given to Moses has Israel occupied all the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Thus, not only do the gospel accounts tie the concept of the “renewed covenant” to the future “Kingdom of G-d” on earth, but so does one of our honored Sages, on the basis of the final “I will” found in Exodus chapter 6.

Although neither in the Tanach, nor in the gospels, can we find the phrase “New Covenant” applied to something that has already happened, I wish to be very clear that the blood of Yeshua, shed as a payment for our sins, is completely effective every day of our lives to redeem us from the curse which accompanies our failures to keep G-d’s instructions with a good heart. It is. That is maybe the biggest miracle of all. Let us rejoice in that.

Next, we will look elsewhere in Scriptures for support of the normative church’s idea that a “New Covenant” has already come.

¹⁷ Laws of Hametz and Matzah, 8:10, as noted in Israel Ariel, *The Temple Haggadah* (Temple Institute, 1996)