

Summary of Covenants in the Bible: Sinai & Beyond

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Keys of the Kingdom: Exploring Biblical Covenants (Part 8)

Main Topic: Coexistence and Structure of Biblical Covenants

- **Review of Previous Episodes:** Recapped the ratification, breaking, and renewal of the Sinai Covenant, emphasizing Israel's lack of obedience and resulting discipline.
- **Multiple Coexisting Covenants:** Explained that several covenants (e.g., Sinai, Levitical/Priesthood) overlap in Yahweh's relationship with Israel. The New Covenant does not abolish prior covenants; they coexist.
- **Marriage Language in Covenants:** Noted that the Sinai Covenant is often described as a marriage covenant (Exodus 19–24), with Yahweh as husband to Israel (e.g., Jeremiah 31, Isaiah 54, Jeremiah 3), and paralleled with the New Covenant's concept of the Bride of Messiah.
- **Suzerain-Vassal Treaty Model:** Introduced the idea that the Sinai Covenant follows the ancient Near Eastern suzerain-vassal treaty structure (notably the Hittite treaties), involving:
 - Preamble (identifying parties)
 - Historical prologue (recounting past relationship)
 - Stipulations (terms of the covenant)
 - Witnesses to the treaty
 - Document clause (written record)
 - Blessings and curses (consequences)
- **Conditional vs. Unconditional Promises:** Unconditional promises (land,

peoplehood) given to Israel (Genesis 15, 22), but the possession of the land and ongoing blessings are conditional on obedience (Exodus 19:4-6, Deuteronomy 7).

- **Role of Obedience:** Emphasized Israel's free will in accepting the covenant and the importance of obedience for blessings. The model community is one of justice, care, and love, as outlined in the commandments.

Key Questions and Answers

- **Does the New Covenant Abolish the Old?:** No; the New Covenant does not nullify previous covenants.
- **How do Gentiles participate?:** Gentiles are grafted in and become citizens of the Kingdom of Israel through faith, without becoming ethnic Jews.
- **Is forgiveness possible without sacrifices?:** Yes; repentance and turning from sin are essential for forgiveness (e.g., Nineveh's repentance, King David).

Decisions & Action Points

- Continue the series with an exploration of Deuteronomy and the completion of the Torah (Book of the Law).
- Next episode: deeper dive into Deuteronomy 29–31 and Paul's discussion in Galatians.

Additional Topic: The Levitical Priesthood and Atonement System

- **Priestly and Levitical Covenants:** The covenant with the Levites (especially the priestly covenant with Phinehas/Pinkhas) is perpetual (Numbers 25, Malachi 2, Jeremiah 33), indicating ongoing priestly roles even in the Messianic era.
- **Atonement and Cleansing:**
 - **Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16):** Highlighted the ritual's purpose—cleansing sacred space and the community, not substitutionary atonement as later doctrine proposed.
 - **Symbolism:** Animal offerings symbolize cleansing (not substitution for personal sin); the blood purifies the space and points to the ultimate work of Yeshua (Jesus).

- **Fulfillment in Yeshua:** The New Testament (e.g., 1 John 1:7-9) connects the cleansing power of Yeshua's blood with the atonement rituals, culminating in the resurrection and eternal life for the faithful.
- **Inclusivity:** Both Israelites and resident Gentiles ("gerim") are included in the atonement and covenant blessings, reinforcing the universal scope of God's redemptive plan.

Key Insights

- The offering system's main goal is cleansing rather than substitutionary atonement.
 - The coexisting priestly covenant supports the enduring role of the Levites.
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Closing and Next Steps

- Encouraged audience participation through comments and sharing.
- Teased the next episode, focusing on the renewal of the covenant with the second generation in Deuteronomy and further exploration of the Torah's role in Paul's writings.

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