

Question:

There have been many questions as it pertains to Adonai's covenants so the next few weeks of Ask The Rabbi will be used to clarify and thus answer many questions.

Tonight we will be focusing on the Avrahamic Covenant.

Response:

To review:

Universal Covenants

Adonai made universal covenants that whether you are Jewish or not, directly affect you. The impact of these covenants are still felt today. They are for all of mankind, His creation. For the purpose of this article there are two Universal covenants:

1. The Adamic Covenant
2. The Noahic Covenant

Many, believe there is a third universal covenant, the Edenic Covenant. My reasoning for not having this same view is provided below.

These Universal covenants were made with all mankind, all nations prior to their establishment. They predated the covenants that Adonai would make with Israel.

Non-Universal Covenants

In contrast to a universal covenant that Adonai made with everyone and affecting everyone, Adonai made a non-universal covenant with one man, Avraham. From Avraham would come the nation of Israel and the Jewish people with whom this one Covenant would be reaffirmed and expanded. In order of their establishment we will look at:

1. The Avrahamic Covenant
2. The Mosheaic Covenant
3. The Davidic Covenant
4. The Brit Hadoshah (New Covenant)

As we progress through our examination of these exclusive covenants that Adonai made with Avraham and Israel, you will also notice that provisions have been made for the people outside of the Jewish nation. Although these covenants are made exclusively with the Jewish people, the impact of these covenants will be (are) felt by the nations outside of Israel, the non-Jewish person.

What were Adonai's intentions for making a covenant with one person?

We will answer that question and others as we expand upon each covenant.

Avrahamic Covenant

We first read of a man named Avram in Genesis 11:31

["Terach took his son Avram, his son Haran's son Lot, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Avram's wife; and they left Ur of the Kasdim to go to the land of Kena'an. But when they came to Haran, they stayed there."](#)

The son of Terach, Avram, must have found favor with Adonai in a similar manner as Noach did. Although there is very little written about Avram, prior to his encounter with Adonai, we will find in the verses to come that Avram found favor with Adonai.

The first mention of the covenant that Adonai would enter in with Avram is found in Genesis 12:1 - 3. It is the first of three parts

that comprise the entire Avrahamic Covenant.

This covenant that Adonai is making with Avram is a one sided covenant. One sided, in that it is Adonai establishing it and it is Adonai telling Avram what He will do. At this point, the only responsibility from Avram's perspective would be to leave his family and go where Adonai tells him to go.

"Now Adonai said to Avram, "Get yourself out of your country, away from your kinsmen and away from your father's house, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, I will bless you, and I will make your name great; and you are to be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, but I will curse anyone who curses you; and by you all the families of the earth will be blessed." Genesis 12:1 - 3

- Adonai will make Avram a great nation.
- Adonai will bless Avram and make his name great. In doing so, Avram will be a blessing.
- Adonai will bless those who bless Avram and curse anyone who curses Avram.
- Adonai will bless all the families of the earth, through Avram.

The blessings would come through the Jewish people. More on that later.

In order for the initial promise of Avram becoming a great nation to become a reality, there needed to be an heir who would continue the lineage of Avram.

"Some time later the word of Adonai came to Avram in a vision: "Don't be afraid, Avram. I am your protector; your reward will be very great." Avram replied, "Adonai, God, what good will your gifts be to me if I continue childless; and Eli'ezer from Dammesek inherits my possessions? You haven't given me a child," Avram continued, "so someone born in my house will be my heir." But the word of Adonai came to him: "This man will not be your heir. No, your heir will be a child from your own body." Then he brought him outside and said, "Look up at the sky, and count the stars if you can count them! Your descendants will be that many!" He believed in Adonai, and he credited it to him as righteousness. Then he said to him, "I am Adonai, who brought you out from Ur-Kasdim to give you this land as your possession." He replied, "Adonai, God, how am I to know that I will possess it?" Genesis 15:4 - 8

The promise of an heir reaffirms Adonai's covenant promise with Avram.

The second part of the covenant Adonai makes with Avram involves the promise of land. The first mention of land is when Avram, Sarai and Lot leave Haran and continue on the original journey to Kena'an:

"Adonai appeared to Avram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to Adonai, who had appeared to him." Genesis 12:7

The promise of land expands upon the covenant relationship Adonai has made with Avram. Have you ever heard of any nation, whether great or not, that didn't reside somewhere on earth? We see the "where" further defined in verses that follow:

"Only in the fourth generation will your descendants come back here, because only then will the Emori be ripe for punishment." After the sun had set and there was thick darkness, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch appeared, which passed between these animal parts. That day Adonai made a covenant with Avram: "I have given this land to your descendants from the Vadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates River the territory of the Keni, the K'nizi, the Kadmoni, the Hitti, the P'rizi, the Refa'im, the Emori, the Kena'ani, the Girkashi and the Y'vusi." " Genesis 15:16 - 21

The third installment of Adonai's covenant with Avram, expands further upon the impact Avram will have through his heirs towards the nations of the world. A small nation that will struggle to curtail the worldly pagan influences of the nations, ultimately infecting Israel with the diseases of idolatry and disobedience. The intent and purpose of this covenant is to create a people, a nation, set apart for Adonai. A nation that would adhere to and follow the creator of the universe and of mankind.

"When Avram was 99 years old Adonai appeared to Avram and said to him, "I am El Shaddai [God Almighty]. Walk in my presence and be pure-hearted. I will make my covenant between me and you, and I will increase your numbers greatly." Avram fell on his face, and God continued speaking with him: "As for me, this is my covenant with you: you will be the father of many nations. Your name will no longer be Avram [exalted father], but your name will be Avraham [father of many], because I have made you the father of many nations. I will cause you to be very fruitful. I will make nations of you, kings will descend from you. "I am establishing my covenant between me and you, along with your descendants after you, generation after generation, as an everlasting covenant, to be God for you and for your descendants after you. I will give you and your descendants after you the land in which you are now foreigners, all the land of Kena'an, as a permanent possession; and I will be their God." God said to Avraham, "As for you, you are to keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you, generation after generation. Here is my covenant, which you are to keep, between me and you, along with your descendants after you: every male among you is to be circumcised. You are to be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; this will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. Generation after generation, every male among you who is eight days old is to be circumcised, including slaves born within your household and those bought from a foreigner not descended from you. The slave born in your house and the person bought with your money must be circumcised; thus my covenant will be in your flesh as an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who will not let

himself be circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin that person will be cut off from his people, because he has broken my covenant." Genesis 17:1 - 14

Many nations would come forth through Avram. Adonai expands, not just nations but leadership, kings will descend from him.

This is the first time we witness that the covenant Adonai is making (now Avraham) will be an everlasting covenant, from generation to generation. The simplest definition of everlasting is something that will last for ever. How long is forever? A LONG TIME. At this point in time as I am writing, forever hasn't ended yet, meaning that this covenant is still valid today.

This third installment, reaffirms the provision of land and that it will be an everlasting possession. We need not go into detail again with regards to everlasting, but if it applies to Adonai's relationship and mentions the land, then the land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people, because of this covenant promise.

In this passage, we are now made known the sign of Adonai's covenant with Avraham - circumcision.

God said to Avraham, "As for you, you are to keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you, generation after generation. Here is my covenant, which you are to keep, between me and you, along with your descendants after you: every male among you is to be circumcised. You are to be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; this will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. Generation after generation, every male among you who is eight days old is to be circumcised, including slaves born within your household and those bought from a foreigner not descended from you. The slave born in your house and the person bought with your money must be circumcised; thus my covenant will be in your flesh as an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who will not let himself be circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin that person will be cut off from his people, because he has broken my covenant." Genesis 17:11 - 14

If you remember, the initial part of the covenant was one sided - what Adonai would do. We now read what Adonai is requiring of Avraham and his decedents. Adonai is requiring circumcision of every male. Every male refers to Avraham's direct descendants. From birth, they are to be circumcised on the eighth day. This instruction also includes the "ger", Hebrew for foreigner who is not of the lineage of Avraham but is part of the community. We are not talking about someone passing through, but a permanent resident. This covenant also includes anyone who is residing in the community and produces offspring.

Not being circumcised is a violation of the covenant. As a result of their disobedience, they would be cut off, separated, expelled from the community. Adonai was serious about this relationship. If the sign of the covenant is broken, the covenant itself is broken. Circumcision marks Israel as the unique recipients of the Avrahamic Covenant.

In each instance, Adonai reaffirms His promises to Avraham...He will be their God and they will be His people.

Through Avraham's child with Sarah - Yitz'chak, Adonai's covenant is reaffirmed:

"Stay in this land, and I will be with you and bless you, because I will give all these lands to you and to your descendants. I will fulfill the oath which I swore to Avraham your father, I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky, I will give all these lands to your descendants, and by your descendants all the nations of the earth will bless themselves. All this is because Avraham heeded what I said and did what I told him to do, he followed my mitzvot, my regulations and my teachings." Genesis 26:3 - 5

and later with Ya'akov (Yitz'chak's son) on two separate occasions:

"Then suddenly Adonai was standing there next to him; and he said, "I am Adonai, the God of Avraham your [grand] father and the God of Yitz'chak. The land on which you are lying I will give to you and to your descendants. Your descendants will be as numerous as the grains of dust on the earth. You will expand to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. By you and your descendants all the families of the earth will be blessed. Look, I am with you. I will guard you wherever you go, and I will bring you back into this land, because I won't leave you until I have done what I have promised you." Ya'akov awoke from his sleep and said, "Truly, Adonai is in this place and I didn't know it!" Genesis 28:13 - 16

"After Ya'akov arrived from Paddan-Aram, God appeared to him again and blessed him. God said to him, "Your name is Ya'akov, but you will be called Ya'akov no longer; your name will be Isra'el." Thus he named him Isra'el. God further said to him, "I am El Shaddai. Be fruitful and multiply. A nation, indeed a group of nations, will come from you; kings will be descended from you. Moreover, the land which I gave to Avraham and Yitz'chak I will give to you, and I will give the land to your descendants after you." Genesis 35:9 - 12

From generation to generation the covenant Adonai made with Avraham is still relevant today. Just as then, today, circumcision marks Israel as the unique recipients of this covenant. We are a people set apart with an enormous responsibility given by Adonai, to be a light and example to the world. This will become more evident as we progress through the covenants Adonai makes with the Jewish people.

Out of this covenant with Avraham, the other covenants would come forth. Without Avraham, there is no Israel and no covenants in that Adonai made it specifically with Avraham for ever. Adonai would reaffirm this covenant with the descendants of Avraham, Yitz'chak, and Ya'akov as we witnessed earlier and will witness moving forward.

