

CHAPTER 2

GOD'S PLAN OF REDEMPTION *The Biblical Roles of Jews and Gentiles*



Understanding Paul (Sha'ul), Israel and the Torah

Torah Defined

- A. The word Torah is derived from the root, Yara, and basically means “teaching/instructions.” The essence of Torah is God’s instructions to Israel and applicable to all the nations. God, motivated by love, reveals to man basic insight into how to live with each other and how to approach, relate and worship God.
- B. The Tanakh includes Torah, Prophets, and the Writings (Torah, Nevaiim, Ketuvim):
1. Commandments
 2. History of the people of Israel
 3. Messages of the prophets of Israel
 4. Wisdom of Proverbs, Psalms, etc.

In summary, the term Torah used by Paul, as a Jew, is the entire revealed will of God.

613 Laws

“Six hundred and thirteen commandments were delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai: three hundred and sixty-five of which are prohibitive laws while the remaining two hundred and forty-eight are affirmative injunctions.

The lesson these numbers were intended to convey was: first, that each day brings its new temptation only to be resisted by a firm “do not,” but on the other hand, the whole man stands in the service of God. Each limb or member of his body is entrusted with the execution of its respective functions.

David came and reduced them (613) to eleven as it said: Lord who shall abide in Your tabernacle? etc. (Psalms [Tehillim] 15). Then Isaiah (Yesha’yahu) came and reduced them to six . . . (Isaiah [Yesha’yahu] 33). Then Micah (Mikhah) came and reduced them to two (Micah [Mikhah] 6:8). While Habakkuk (Havakuk) reduced them to one, as it is said, “But the just shall live by his faith (Habakkuk [Havakuk] 2).

Only one person, Yeshua, was capable of keeping the 613 laws. He summed up the entire Torah in the two commandments: “Rabbi, which of the mitzvot in the Torah is the most

important?" He told him, "You are to love ADONAI your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.' This is the greatest and most important mitzvah. And a second is similar to it, 'You are to love your neighbor as yourself.' All of the Torah and the Prophets are dependent on these two mitzvot." (Matthew [Mattityahu] 22:36-40)

Interpreting Paul (Sha'ul)

It is seldom recognized that much of what Paul (Sha'ul) says about the Torah must be interpreted in the context of his understanding of Jews and Gentiles as equal partners in God's family.

The Greek text of Romans 10:4 is often mistranslated as saying, "For Messiah is the end of the Law . . ." instead "For Messiah is the aim (or goal) of the Torah . . ."

How else can one read Paul's (Sha'ul's) strong affirmation, "Do we then make void the Torah through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the Torah." Either Paul (Sha'ul) is a schizophrenic, or some of his interpreters have neglected key aspects of his statement!

It is important to remember that the original intention of the Torah was not to provide a means of salvation, but a rule of life for those already redeemed. The Torah was a challenge as well as instruction, teaching the redeemed how to walk in the ways of God. This supports the basic definition of Torah: TO TEACH.

Within Judaism in the last two centuries, from before the Messiah through the first century, the Torah was viewed in an absolute sense, independent of the covenant. Fulfillment of the Torah determined covenant relationship with the people of God. Paul (Sha'ul) did not criticize God's Torah; he did not say the Torah was a bad thing, but that it was insufficient to keep a person from judgment. Paul's (Sha'ul's) teachings reject the rabbinical emphasis on justification through works of the Torah.

As Messianic believers, we must not fall back into that trap. We must affirm the original intention of the Torah, which was to be a guide for Godly living.

Understanding Paul (Sha'ul)

II Peter [Simon bar Yonah] 3:15-17 says, "And think of our Lord's patience as deliverance, just as our dear brother Paul (Sha'ul) also wrote you, following the wisdom God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters. Speaking to them of these matters, his letters contain some things that are hard to understand which ignorant and unstable people distort . . ."

Always test Paul's (Sha'ul's) writing with:

1. Who is his audience?
2. What is the issue?
3. What is his point?

Also, his statements should not contradict themselves or the whole of Biblical teaching (Acts 15, Acts 21, Matthew [Mattityahu] 5:17, etc).

CONTEXT! CONTEXT! CONTEXT! **Paul (Sha'ul) and the "Law"**

Paul (Sha'ul) uses the term Torah at least 110 times in the Epistles, but not in a uniform way. The same term "Torah" is used by Paul (Sha'ul) to refer to such things as:

- The Mosaic Law (Galatians 4:21, Romans 7:22, 25; I Corinthians 9:9),
- The Tanakh (Old Covenant — I Corinthians 14:21, Romans 3:19, 21),
- The will of God written in the heart of the Gentiles (Romans 2:14-15),
- The governing principle of conduct (works of faith — Romans 3:27-28),
- Evil inclinations (Romans 7:21), and
- The guidance of the Spirit (Romans 8:2).

Sometimes the term "Torah" is used in a personal way as if it was God Himself, "Whatever the Torah says, it speaks to those who are under the Torah (Romans 3:19)."

Our immediate concern is not to ascertain Paul's (Sha'ul's) various use of the term "Torah," but rather to establish the apostle's view toward the Tanakh in general. Did Messiah abrogate the Torah of Moses (Moshe)?

Paul (Sha'ul): A Double Standard?

Some believe Paul (Sha'ul) has a double concept of the Torah; sometimes saying it is good and has been fulfilled in Messiah, and sometimes saying it is bad and has been abolished in Messiah. For example, in Ephesians 2:13-16, Paul (Sha'ul) speaks of the Torah as having been "abolished" by Messiah. While in Romans 3:31, he explains that justification by faith in Yeshua (Jesus) does not overthrow the Torah, but "establishes" it.

In Romans 10:4, Paul (Sha'ul) writes, "Messiah is the end of the Torah," while in Chapter 8:3-4, he explains that Messiah came "in the likeness of sinful flesh . . . in order that the just requirements of the Torah might be fulfilled in us." In Romans 3:28, he maintains that "a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the Torah," yet in I Corinthians 7:19, he states that "Being circumcised means nothing, and being uncircumcised means nothing; what means something is keeping God's commandments."

In II Corinthians 3:7, Paul (Sha'ul) designates the Torah as “dispensation of death,” while in Romans 3:2, he views it as part of the “oracles of God” entrusted to the Jews.

A Resolution of the Tension

How can Paul (Sha'ul) view the Torah both as “abolished” (Ephesians 2:15) and “established” (Romans 3:31), unnecessary (Romans 3:28) and necessary (I Corinthians 7:19, Ephesians 6:2-3, I Timothy 1:8-10)? The explanation is found in the different contexts in which Paul (Sha'ul) speaks of the Torah. When he speaks of the Torah in the context of salvation (justification — right-standing before God), he clearly affirms that keeping the Torah is of no avail (Romans 3:20). On the other hand, Paul (Sha'ul) speaks of the Torah in the context of believers' conduct (sanctification — right-living before God). Then, he maintains the value and validity of God's Torah (Romans 7:12, 13:8-10, I Corinthians 7:19).

For example: when Paul (Sha'ul) speaks of the various forms of human wickedness in I Timothy 1:8-10, he explicitly affirms “Now we know the Torah is good.”

The sacrifice of Messiah on the Roman cross is central to Paul's (Sha'ul's) understanding of the Torah. From this perspective, he both negates and affirms the Torah. The apostle repudiates the Torah as the basis of justification. “If justification is through the Torah, then Messiah died to no purpose” (Galatians 2:21). Paul (Sha'ul) teaches that the Torah is “spiritual, good, holy, just” (Romans 7:12, 14, 16; I Timothy 1:8) because it exposes sin and reveals God's ethical standards.

The Torah and the Gentiles

A crucial problem among Gentile converts was their right as Gentiles to enjoy full citizenship within the commonwealth of Israel (Ephesians 2 and 3) without becoming members of the covenant community through circumcision (Mosaic).

The Jewish Problem

Basically, the problem for the Jews was in determining what laws in the Torah the Gentiles should observe in order for them to share in the world to come. No clear-cut answer existed in Paul's (Sha'ul's) time. (Acts 15 would later solve this issue in Messianic Jewish community).

Lloyd Gaston perceptually notes, “It was because of this lack of clarity that legalism (performing certain works to win God's favor and be considered righteous) became a Gentile and not a Jewish problem. Salvation was for all who were members of the covenant community. But since the Gentiles were not under the covenant (by birth), many felt the need to establish their own righteousness to gain such an assurance of salvation.” The phrase “works of the Torah” is not found in Jewish texts. It seems that the

adoption of selected Jewish practices by the Gentiles ensures their salvation as part of the covenant people of God, however, recognition of this legalistic Gentile attitude is important in understanding the background of Paul's (Sha'ul's) critical remarks regarding the Torah.

In proclaiming his non-circumcision gospel (for the Gentiles), Paul (Sha'ul) faced a double challenge. On the one hand, he faced the opposition of Jews and Messianic Jews (before Acts 15), because they failed to understand that through Yeshua, God had fulfilled His promises to Abraham regarding the Gentiles. On the other hand, Paul (Sha'ul) had to deal with the Gentiles' misguided efforts to adopt circumcision and other practices to ensure their salvation by becoming members of the covenant community (Galatians 5:2-4). Paul (Sha'ul) was forced to speak critically of the Torah as a document of election. Torah—Law was defined as a revelation of God's electing will manifested in His covenant with Israel. Obviously, this view created a problem for the uncircumcised Gentiles because they felt excluded from the assurance of salvation provided by the covenant of the laws of Noah (Noach) and Moses (Moshe).

For the pagan Gentile who knew nothing of Judaism, an incomplete list of Noachian Laws would be of little benefit! From what was just stated, these rules were set down exclusively for the average Gentile not exposed to Judaism. Lightfoot comments:

“It may with good reason be asked whether these four things were so that converted Gentiles might not give offense to the Jews . . . or whether there might not be something else interwoven, that those converted Gentiles might not relapse into something of their former heathenism; the abstaining from pollutions of idols and from fornication seems to respect this later, as that of abstaining from things strangled and from blood, the former.”¹

For the Gentile heathen, idolatry and incestuous marriages were freely practiced. This was an accepted practice among Gentiles. If Gentiles were to be recognized as a part of the people of God, they immediately had to give up this part of their lifestyle. It can be compared to telling a recovering alcoholic to stay away from bars for fear of stumbling back into alcoholism. The council wanted to prevent possible “relapses” into heathenism!

The other provision would establish a minimum standard for fellowship with Jews, which would be important in disciplining the Gentile convert. The young convert to the religion of Israel had to be protected, and more importantly, taught God's standards. We can better understand this if we look at the modern idea of evangelizing. Preachers are not as concerned with the behavior of new converts in their congregation as with their proclamation of faith in Messiah. Once the sinner turns to the Lord, the minimum standards for further growth are elaborated.

For example, an alcoholic is told not to come to meetings drunk or high on drugs; a prostitute would be counseled on dress and improper use of language. A minimum standard is first set so the full counsel of God will be taught within the fellowship of

¹ John Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*, p. 129

other believers. What might be obvious to the western mind today was not so easily understood by the heathen of the first century.

Therefore, there can be no doubt that the decree was immediately concerned with the problem of social interaction between Jews and Gentiles within the Congregation. There was a demand for a minimum of common decency and behavior from the Gentile newcomers if they were to be received as fellow worshippers. Apparently, many Gentile converts had no intention of ordering their life in accordance with the Law of Moses (Moshe), so far as the older Jewish believers could determine in accordance with any rules (Mosaic). This insecurity naturally led Gentiles to desire to be under law (Galatians 4:21), that is, to become full-fledged covenant members by receiving circumcision (Galatians 5:2).

In summary, this background helps us understand that Paul (Sha'ul) doesn't question the validity and value of the Torah as a moral guide for the believer's conduct. On the contrary, he emphatically affirms that Messiah specifically came "in order that the just requirements of the Torah might be fulfilled in us" (Romans 8:4). Paul (Sha'ul) criticizes the soteriological understanding of the Torah (the belief that the Torah is a document of election that includes Jews and excludes Gentiles). He never criticized the moral and lifestyle instructions of the Torah. The failure to distinguish Paul's (Sha'ul's) moral and soteriological usages of the Torah, and the failure to recognize that his criticism of the Torah is directed toward Gentiles, not Messianic Jews, led many to falsely conclude that Paul (Sha'ul) is anti-Torah.

Scriptural Examples

I. Romans 2:28-29

- A. Audience (Romans 2:17): Jews
- B. Issue: Who is a real Jew?
- C. Point: A true Jew, one who praises God, is a physical descendant of Jacob (Ya'akov) who praises God from a new creation heart. Physical circumcision does not make one's heart circumcised. Circumcision of the heart will make him the kind of Jewish person God designed him to be.

II. Romans 3:19-28

- A. Audience: Jews and Gentiles
- B. Issue: Righteous from God, not the Torah
- C. Point: A man is justified by faith. If we read on to verse 31, we see this does not mean the Law of Moses (Moshe), as covenant material is null and void.

III. Galatians 3:28

- A. Audience: Gentiles (Legalists)
- B. Issue: Salvation by faith - for all
- C. Point: All men and women approach God.

IV. Galatians 4:21-31

- A. Audience: Legalists (Gentiles) and Jews.
Note: Gentiles who are not familiar with Judaism would not understand this.
 - B. Issue: Salvation by God's grace, not man's own efforts.
 - C. Point: Don't take it literally it's a Midrash (commentary).
One cannot affect God's promises (salvation) by his/her own efforts.

Ishmael (Yishma'el) was a product of Abraham's (Avraham's) attempt to "force" God's promises to come true, rather than waiting on the Lord for the promised child (Isaac) by Sarah (Sara). The same is true if you approach the covenant at Sinai as an instrument of salvation!

Remember, Israel was already redeemed by God's grace before Torah was given.

V. Colossians 2:8-23

- A. Audience: Gentiles incorporating Gnostic beliefs with some Jewish elements.
- B. Issue: The Colossian Heresy: Salvation in Messiah was not complete; one needed more rituals, such as ascetic practices.
- C. Point: God's salvation is complete! This passage does not suggest God's Torah was "nailed to the tree."

Theologically, the "Colossian philosophy" (2:8) was competing with Messiah for man's allegiance. Its source of authority, according to Paul (Sha'ul), was "human tradition" (Torah is not human tradition). Its purpose was to impact true wisdom (2:3, 23), knowledge (2:2-3, 3:10) and to assure access and participation in the divine "fullness" (2:9-10, 1:19). To attain this, Gentiles were urged to pay homage to cosmic principalities (2:10, 15), to "the elements of the universe" (2:8, 20), to "angelic powers" (2:15, 18), and to follow ritualistic ascetic practices (2:11, 14, 16-17, 21-22). Essentially, then, the error consisted in replacing God with inferior mediators (2:9-10, 18-19).

Practically, this consisted of "putting off the body of flesh" (2:11 — apparently meaning withdrawal from the world), rigorous treatment of the body (2:23), prohibition of either tasting or touching certain kinds of foods and beverages, and careful observance of sacred days and seasons. This is the theology of syncretism (combining some Jewish elements with non-Biblical practices).

What was nailed to the tree

What is the interpretation of Colossians 2:11-14? The word for law is “Torah,” (Hebrew). Traditionally, it has been interpreted as the Mosaic Law with all its ordinances, including the Shabbat, which God allegedly set aside and nailed to the tree.

First, the eradication of the moral and/or ceremonial law would hardly provide believers with the divine assurance of forgiveness. Guilt is not removed by the destruction of the Torah.

This is what is nailed to the tree — the record book of our sins!

The Jerusalem Council Acts 15

We will interpret Acts 15 through its Jewish eschatological background and build a theology for the role of Gentiles. The entire issue of Acts 15 was enacted by those Jewish believers who believed that in order for Gentiles to be saved, and therefore be on equal footing with Israel, they should be circumcised and required to obey the Law of Moses (Moshe). The question of salvation was both a Gentile and Jewish issue! Paul (Sha’ul) said in Galatians 2:15-16:

“We are Jews by birth, not so-called 'Goyishe sinners'; even so, we have come to realize that a person is not declared righteous by God on the ground of his legalistic observance of Torah commands, but through the Messiah Yeshua's trusting faithfulness. Therefore, we too have put our trust in Messiah Yeshua and become faithful to him, in order that we might be declared righteous on the ground of the Messiah's trusting faithfulness and not on the ground of our legalistic observance of Torah commands. For on the ground of legalistic observance of Torah commands, no one will be declared righteous.”

God revealed this concept to Paul (Sha’ul), Barnabas (Barnaba), and by His Spirit (Ruach), to James [Ya’akov] (Jacob) by placing His Ruach only in Gentiles who believed! For these men, the inclusion of the Gentiles into the people of God was a great revelation into how we are to approach God by faith! So, with that in mind, we come to the central issue in Acts 15:19-21:

"Therefore, my opinion is that we should not put obstacles in the way of the Goyim who are turning to God. Instead, we should write them a letter telling them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from fornication, from what is strangled and from blood. For from the earliest times, Moshe has had in every city those who proclaim him, with his words being read in the synagogues every Shabbat."

It is often difficult for many to explain why there had to be a provision, if indeed salvation is obtained by faith. James [Ya’akov] (Jacob) said, “Do not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.” The Gentiles were already manifesting the spirit of

God. The provisions in Acts 15:20 were designed for fellowship with other Jews and for protective measures for the new converts. Most scholars insist these rules in Acts 15:20 were derivatives of the seven Noachian Rules placed on all nations after the flood.

The writers of this book have a problem with this for two reasons:

1. James [Ya'akov] (Jacob) and the Council knew the rules, and
 2. An incomplete list would be meaningless to God-fearing Gentiles who were already aware.

Understanding this, we can better understand the meaning of Acts 15:21. For us, this is pivotal to our understanding of the expression of Gentile faith within the Commonwealth of Israel.

God's Torah would not be forgotten among the Gentiles, because the Council was confident that these minimum standards would enable the Jews and Gentiles to worship and learn together in the synagogues.

The writers are convinced this was the expected norm for the Congregation. Eerdmans Commentary states, "There is no danger that the Mosaic Law will be forgotten, as it is regularly made known in synagogues throughout the Gentile world."² Just as it was in ancient Israel, Gentiles would be subject to God's Torah within the boundaries of Israel. The Gentile expression of faith in Messiah would at least be recognizable as the faith and worship of Israel. Never in replacement of God's call to Israel and the Jewish people, but a part of the people of God reconciled back to Him in Messiah.

Conclusions

One might ask why it is necessary to understand the role of the Gentile within the Commonwealth of Israel. Until recently, it was not an issue. However, with the second advent of Messianic Jewish congregations, the issue has been forced to the surface. We believe God is using Messianic Judaism for the very purpose of:

1. An end time sign that God is beginning to convict the nation of Israel.
2. Bringing the body of Messiah back to its Biblical calling.

The Jewish people have not had to face Yeshua for almost 2,000 years because the Gentile Church took the issue out of its Jewish context. Messianic Jews are now forcing the issue of Yeshua back into Jewish hands. When man is disobedient to God, God must step in and affect His plan. Since so many Gentiles are coming into the movement of Messianic Judaism, the issue of the Biblical call of the Gentile has also resurfaced. It is often said that the Gospel is supra cultural. This is true — belief in Messiah goes beyond national Israel and transcends all cultures. But this doesn't mean that the Gentiles' ways are to remain with them in the reborn state.

²William B. Eerdman, *New Bible Commentary*, p. 992

There was a common belief in Judaism in Paul's (Sha'ul's) day that a Gentile proselyte was reborn when he converted to the faith of Israel. W.D. Davies wrote, "Whoever brings a heathen near God and converts him, it is as though he had created him. Again, in a closely-related metaphor, the proselyte is often likened to a newborn child."³

One can see from Jewish background studies that "born again" is a Jewish concept, not a Christian theological term. The Gentile, within a New Covenant order, was not to become a Jew and take up Israel's national calling. In the same line of thought, he was not to adopt the Biblical relation of Israel and mix it with his anti-Judaic mindset and pagan beliefs and create a new religion.

This is what Paul (Sha'ul) tried so hard to convey in Romans 11. The Gentile was to approach God the same way Jews are to approach God — by faith. Paul's (Sha'ul's) entire argument against some of the practices of Judaism is that only faith gets us to heaven. The only guide Gentiles had for worshipping God was written in Torah, and it was only natural that their worship reflected Israel's. The fact that a Gentile convert would immediately cast off his anti-Jewish pagan lifestyle and adopt the religion of Israel without first being circumcised proves that Yeshua was and is the Messiah of Israel. This should provoke Israel to jealousy for her Messiah!

We are convinced that the Church has not been in the perfect will of God. The consequences of this have been a delay of "The Life from the Dead!" Many Jews live and die without knowing the Messiah. For every Jew, there are 1,000 Gentiles who die without knowing the truth. Is it merciful for God to delay His final restoration? To the present generation — YES! But for future generations born and dying in unbelief — NO! This is the consequence of not being a part of the perfect will of God. Messianic Jews should not prevent Gentiles from fulfilling their Biblical role out of an identity crisis. Gentiles who want to become fruitful for Israel should be encouraged to do so. They can remain Gentile and still adopt the Biblical faith of Messianic Judaism in all its various forms.

The Gentile who has truly been grafted in will *not* make the Jewish tree more Gentile, but will make the tree more fruitful for God's plan. Gentiles should not be considered second-class citizens in Israel. This contradicts Scripture as so clearly studied in this chapter.

We can draw the following conclusions from our study:

1. Messiah came to reconcile all men back to God.

³ W.D. Davies, Op. Cit., *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, p. 119

2. The authority given to Satan in the Garden (Luke 4:6) was to be reclaimed by Messiah.
3. The concept for a chosen nation that would birth a Messiah was born from the rebellion of man in the Garden.
4. Man exercised his will over God's perfect will.
5. With a chosen nation came promises to a special people — special, because they would endure much to bring forth the Messiah who would redeem the world.

“Historically, it was they (the Jews) who had provided the immediate human context for, or had been the carriers of, salvation history: They who had borne the dread, burden, the terrible, almost unbearable burden of monotheism, of belief in and response to the true God and of His hope for mankind. The people of Israel have had a peculiar role in the past. Paul (Sha’ul) projects them for a peculiar role in the future also.”⁴

In this context and from this perspective, Yeshua would go to Israel. Paul (Sha’ul) would say that salvation is for the Jew first. It is from this background that the Church should receive Israel with loving arms. The Gentile has become like a person born into a very rich family. He enjoys the great wealth and privileges of that birth, but cannot fully realize the years of sacrifice and hard work spent in obtaining that wealth. God made a covenant with the nation of Israel and promised them a special role in history.

The covenant was a consequence of man's fall. God used every sin for His purpose. The reconciliation of man, however, cannot be complete until Israel becomes involved. At that time, the promises made by God to Israel will be complete. Even though man remains in disobedience to God's covenant, God is faithful to His. It is our prayer that the Church will see this soon, and God will send fullness and His plan will be complete.

The differences in identity between believing Jews and non-Jews⁵

Jewish Believers

Saved by grace through faith
 Regenerated
 Indwelt by Messiah
 New creations (Colossians 2)
 Torah written on hearts
 Circumcised (both flesh and heart)
 Sealed by the Spirit
 Indwelt by the Spirit
 Anointed for specific tasks
 The Bride of Messiah
 Physical Descendants of Avraham

Non-Jewish Believers

Saved by grace through faith
 Regenerated
 Indwelt by Messiah
 New creations
 Torah written on hearts
 Circumcised (in the heart)
 Sealed by the Spirit
 Indwelt by the Spirit
 Anointed for specific tasks
 The Bride of Messiah
 Spiritual Descendants of Avraham

⁴ W.D. Davies, Op. Cit., *Jewish and Pauline Studies*, p. 146

⁵ Ariel Berkowitz and Devorah, *Take Hold*, p. 159

Called to display unity
Called to display love
Called to testify for Messiah
Called to be holy
Recipients of the covenants
Called to live by faith
A national calling

Called to display unity
Called to display love
Called to testify for Messiah
Called to be holy
Beneficiaries of the covenants
Called to live by faith
Called to be the “nations”

The Biblical Calling of the Gentiles within the Commonwealth of Israel Gentiles — The Beginning: Sons of Adam

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis [B’resheet] 1:1).

The Garden experience for man was the ideal situation and expressed a threefold promise of God and His creation:

1. “I will be your God, you will be my people” (Jeremiah [Yirmeyahu] 31:32) and
2. “I will dwell among you.” (Exodus [Sh’mot] 25:8; 29:45-46; Deuteronomy [D’varim] 16:11 and
3. John [Yochanan] 1:14

These promises would be the theme God would express in all of His revelation to man. All covenants and events would center on these three promises.

The Fall: Sin and Separation from God

God always follows judgment with hope of restoration of the relationship. “He will crush your head and you will strike his heel” (Genesis [B’resheet] 3:15).

Genesis [B’resheet] 3:15 points to a future promise that the offspring of the woman would crush the serpent’s head. This is fulfilled in the Messiah Yeshua.

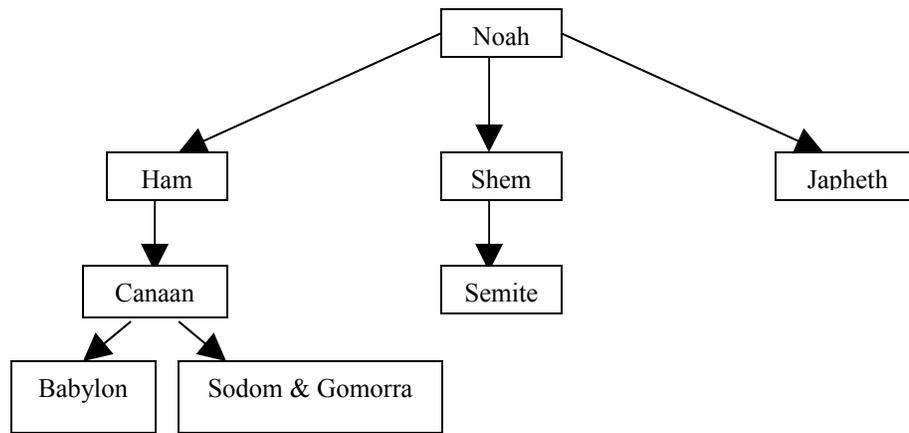
From the sons of Adam, God worked through a particular lineage to reverse the curse of the Garden. This lineage would eventually establish the nation of Israel and from the tribe of Judah (Yehudah) Messiah would come.

Adam — Seth — Enoch — Noah (Noach)

Sons of Noah (Noach)

Noah (Noach) was found righteous in his generation and he and his family would be chosen to escape God’s wrath on sinful mankind. Also note: there was a generation of

time for others to listen to Noah (Noach), and had they accepted God's salvation (i.e. the Ark), they could have entered it.



Japheth, in Genesis (B' resheet) 9:27, was promised, "May God extend the territory of Japheth, may Japheth live in the tents of Shem."

We believe this to point to a future time when the nations (Japheth) will find blessing dwelling in the house (tents) of Jacob (Israel).

After the Flood, man wished to make a name for himself. During the rebellion against the Creator, the sons of Noah (Noach) built a tower. God ends the rebellion by giving the groups of people different languages and from this we get . . .

The Nations

Hebrew=Goyim (Gentiles/Nations)

Out of the nations-the Gentiles; God continues to focus on one lineage.

The Nation of Israel

From Shem to EVER: The nation of Israel was established through the lineage of Abraham (Avraham), Isaac (Yitz'chak) and Jacob (Ya'akov), whom are all descendants of Noah (Noach) through his son Shem.

Israel would become an example to the nations around them of the power of their God. All would be invited to worship the One True God.

The God of Israel

“Today you are standing, all of you, before ADONAI your God – your heads, your tribes, your leaders and your officers – all the men of Isra’el, along with your little ones, your wives and your foreigners here with you in your camp, from the one who chops your wood to the one who draws your water. The purpose is that you should enter into the covenant of ADONAI your God and into his oath which ADONAI your God is making with you today, so that he can establish you today for himself as a people, and so that for you he will be God – as he said to you and as he swore to your ancestors, to Avraham, Yitz’chak and Ya’akov.” (Deuteronomy [D’varim] 29:9-12).

Both Israelites and Gentiles living among them were invited into the covenant of Moses (Moshe) — the Torah.

Jewish identity was given to Israel for all the world to see and learn about God. The nations were invited to come and adopt as much of Torah as they wanted.

“ADONAI -Tzva’ot says, 'When that time comes, ten men will take hold - speaking all the languages of the nations - will grab hold of the cloak of a Jew and say, "We want to go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.'” (Zechariah [Z’kharyah] 8:23).

With Torah given to the people of Israel and the Tabernacle of God erected, Scriptures say:

“Here, the days are coming,” says ADONAI, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Isra’el and with the house of Yehudah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers on the day I took them by their hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt; because they, for their part, violated my covenant, even though I, for my part, was a husband to them,” says ADONAI.” For this is the covenant I will make with the house of Isra’el after those days,” says ADONAI: “I will put my Torah within them and write it on their hearts; I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will any of them teach his fellow community member or his brother, ‘Know ADONAI’; for all will know me, from the least of them to the greatest; because I will forgive their wickednesses and remember their sins no more,” (Jeremiah [Yirmeyahu] 31:30-33)

Due to the sin in Israel, this relationship was compromised again. In the midst of judgment, Israel loses its land and temple. While in exile, God sends another promise of redemption in the New Covenant announced by Jeremiah [Yirmeyahu].

Jeremiah (Yirmeyahu)

Please note some important details and questions:

- I. The covenant made with Israel and Judah (Jeremiah [Yirmeyahu] 31:31).

II. The Torah written in the minds and hearts of people (Jeremiah [Yirmeyahu] 31:33).

III. Everlasting covenant (Jeremiah [Yirmeyahu] 31:35-37).

- How will the nations (Gentiles) come into the covenant?
- If the Torah is written on the hearts of all Israel, what Torah (if any) is written on the hearts of the Gentiles?
- Is there a different law for the hearts of the nations?
- If so, what is it, and where is it in Scripture?

Church — what is it?

“And I tell you that you are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church . . .” (Matthew [Mattityahu] 16:18)

The Greek word for Church is “kyriakos,” and is not a Biblical word. It means “belonging to the emperor, or belonging to the Lord.” It probably means “the house of the Lord” in our Bible. In Greek Bibles used for our modern translation, the word “ecclesia” is introduced in Matthew [Mattityahu] 16:18.

“The Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, uses the word ecclesia to mean the congregation of Israel, either summoned (called out) for a definite purpose or for the community of Israel collectively . . . the word implied a community based on a special religious idea and established in a special way.”⁶

“Ecclesia represents exclusively the Hebrew “kahal” and means a summons to an assembly. “Kahal” is from the same root “kehilah.” Thus, both linguistically and conceptually, the identity of God’s people is the same in the period of the Tanakh and the period of the New Covenant. They are both God’s chosen and called-out people, separated unto God in order to serve Him. Unlike the word ‘Church,’ Ecclesia NEVER refers either to an institution or a building.”⁷ One must ask why the translators felt the need to substitute the word “Church” for Ecclesia. Using the meaning of ecclesia, I will now quote Matthew (Mattityahu) 16:18. “And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my congregation (kehilah).”

⁶ Marvin R. Vincent, *World Studies in the New Testament*, Vol. I, p. 93

⁷ David H. Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, p. 54

