

# *The Book of the Law Disputation*

## Slide A 1

**Introduction:** In our previous teaching we came to understand some unique principles regarding the cutting of a Covenant. We discovered that a Covenant was a commitment to developing a continuing relationship between two parties and from the ancient prospective a Covenant was such an intense agreement that it required a death penalty if broken. One aspect that must also be stressed is that a Covenant could not be changed or added to therefore we could say that from that prospective each Covenant that we find in Scripture could be considered a New Covenant that further expands the revelation of YHWH but never nullifies or alters the previous revelation that was shown through the other Covenants.

## Slide B 2

**Galatians 3:15 Brothers, as a man I say it: a Covenant even though it is mans, yet if it is confirmed no one sets it aside or adds to it.**

Through each of these teaching I have tried to emphasise the centrality of Torah from which we came to understand that the early Assemblies differed little from the Yahudim (the Jews) only in that they now believed in Yahshua as the promised Messiah. Based on the concept of Covenants we will attempt to unravel some disputations that have arisen surrounding the principle of the Book of the Covenant & the Book of the Law. This has stirred up much contention mainly among Messianic groups since Christians in general tend not to regard the Torah commands as written in the Tanakh (Old Testament) as significant based on the belief that they now live under unconditional divine grace enabling them to now determine themselves what is appropriate to obey based on the concept of loving one's neighbour. The Messianic communities however adhere to a belief that now they live under the Malki-Zedek anointing as Kings & Priests so it is to this that we will turn in our discussion.

## Understanding the Word Brit

The moment anyone sees the Hebrew Word "Brit" in the Scriptures one naturally thinks of Covenant which occurs 286 times just in the Masoretic Text but its meaning must be determined from its usage since it can mean:

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Covenant, Treaty, Pact, Agreement, Solemn Promise, Obligation, Alliance or Oath.

Since the components of a true Covenant do not appear until Abraham we could say the previous were more of an Oath that Yahweh made. An example of this would be that of Noach (Noah) in which we read YHWH made a "Brit" but rather it

was an agreement with himself for the benefit of Mankind, the Animals & the plants who did not participate in the process. This was then an unconditional Covenant or Oath.

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**Bereshith (Genesis) 8:20-22** And Noach built an Altar to YHWH and took of every clean beast and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the Altar. **21.** And YHWH smelled a soothing fragrance and YHWH said in his heart “never again shall I curse the ground because of man, although the inclination of man’s heart is evil from his youth and never again smite all living creatures as I have done **22** as long as the Earth remains seedtime and harvest and cold and heat and day and night shall not cease.

#### Yahshua fulfils the Oath made to the Fathers:

As we saw last time that according to Bereshith (Genesis) 15 YHWH was making a Covenant with Abram in which he promised to take the death penalty on himself if either party broke covenant and so Yahshua fulfils that promise.

**Luke 1:70- 73** As he spoke by the mouth of his set-apart prophets from of old- **71** deliverance from our enemies and from the hand of all those that hate us. **72** to show compassion towards our fathers and to remember his set-apart covenant **73** an Oath which he swore to our father Abraham.

Yahshua confirms that when YHWH made the Covenant with Abram & Abram saw him as the torch passing between the slaughtered animals he received a revelation and an understanding of something that would happen in the far future. He not only saw how his descendants would fail to maintain the Covenant but he also saw how YHWH would take the consequences of that debt through Yahshua as we read in:

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**Yochanan (John) 8:56** Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day and he saw it and was glad.

#### The Book of the Covenant:

We note that in Scripture there are two distinct unique books mentioned. One that is referred to as the Book of the Covenant & one that is referred to as The Book of the Law (Torah) and they are not the same. At Mt Sinai, in Shemoth (Exodus) 19 through to Shemoth (Exodus) 24 we find recorded the steps Yisrael took to enter into a marital or covenantal agreement with YHWH.

Chapter 19 records the Pre-Marital requirements for Yisrael.

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**Shemoth (Exodus) 19:5b-6a “...if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a Kadosh (holy) nation.”**

Chapter 20-23 records the terms of the marriage covenant (The Ketubah). These were the marriage vows that Yisrael agreed to live by. These conditions were the Torah. If they agreed to those conditions they would be his treasured possession (Am Segulah-chosen people).

In Chapter 24 the marriage contract is committed to writing & ratified. The 70 Elders and the Priests went up to meet & fellowship with YHWH at the Covenantal meal upon the closure of the Covenant.

### **Slide G 7**

**Shemoth (Exodus) 24:10-11 And they saw the Elohim of Yisrael and under his feet was like a paved work of Sapphire stone and like the heavens for brightness. 11 Yet he did not stretch out his hand against the chiefs of the children of Yisrael! And they saw Elohim and they ate and drank.**

In all this account we discover the complete elements of a true Covenant between YHWH who appears in the form of the D’var (the Word) of YHWH and Yisrael including the agreed upon conditional covenant and the Covenantal meal at its closure. Since we know that none can look upon YHWH and live therefore we see this as the manifestation of YHWH as Yahshua the Bridegroom of Yisrael.

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#### **Ratification of the Covenant**

This Covenant at Sinai between YHWH and Yisrael was a blood-ratified covenant. The first blood-ratified covenant that we saw in Torah was Abram’s Covenant with YHWH.

#### **The Proposal:**

**Shemoth (Exodus) 24:7a “Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people.”**

#### **The Agreement:**

**Shemoth (Exodus) 24:7b “All the words which YHWH (the Lord) has said we will do.”**

#### **The Blood Ratification:**

**Shemoth (Exodus) 24:5-6 “Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to YHWH. And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar.”`**

### **The Covenant-Confirming Meal:**

**Shemoth (Exodus) 24:11b “So they saw YHWH, and they ate and drank.”**

So the Book of the Covenant was blood ratified, meaning whichever party broke the covenant must shed his blood just as the animals that were sacrificed shed their blood. And once ratified, the covenant could not be added to, taken away from, nor changed:

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#### **The Covenant Broken**

Moses had not even returned from the top of Mt Sinai with the stone tablets of the Covenant before Yisrael had moulded the image of the Golden Calf and was worshipping it. Yisrael had committed spiritual adultery; they broke the Covenant, and the penalty for breaking that blood covenant was the shedding of the blood of the guilty party. That’s why YHWH wanted to kill the entire Nation of Yisrael and start over again with Mosheh (Moses) but Moses interceded:

**Shemoth (Exodus) 32:31-32 “Then Moses returned to YHWH and said, “Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves an Elohim of gold! Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.”**

Moses even offered to give his life in place of the people and now we see a word coming from YHWH that reveals something special:

### **Click I 9 again**

**Shemoth (Exodus) 32:33-34 And YHWH said to Mosheh “whoever has sinned against me I blot him out of my book.<sup>34</sup> And now go lead the people to the place of which I have spoken to you. See my Messenger goes before you and in the day of my visitation I shall visit their sin upon them.**

So YHWH their Elohim postponed Israel’s punishment being the shedding of their blood, i.e. DEATH for the Sin of the Golden Calf until as he said “the day when I shall visit their sin upon them for punishment.”

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This particular phrase has led to a concept in Judaism as Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki known by Yahudim (Jews) as Rashi a highly respect sage puts it when he writes:

**“There is no punishment that comes upon Yisrael which does not have in it some retribution for the sin of the Golden Calf”**

It is therefore said in Judaism that wherever National sins are committed they are due in part to the Spiritual residue of the Golden Calf.

However from our understanding of the Covenant with Abram we see a different picture. It leads to one that shows that the day that YHWH would visit punishment on his people was fulfilled when Yahshua took that punishment on the tree at Golgotha. YHWH being faithful to his covenant satisfied the death penalty that he promised to Abram by passing between the slaughtered animals. From all this we have an understanding of the Covenant and now we need to see what is the Book of the Law and its purpose and how has it caused so much division and misunderstanding.

### The Book of the Law

With the Covenant broken, YHWH needed a way to allow Yisrael to postpone her death penalty; this is where the Book of the Law comes in.

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The Apostle Paul explains:

**Galatians 3:19** “What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, until the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through Messengers by the hand of a mediator.”

It is this particular verse that has caused some major divisions even among Messianic Assemblies. When Sha’ul (Paul) uses the word “law” here, it is suggested that he is referring to “the Book of the Law” - that portion of Torah from Exodus 24:12 to the end of Deuteronomy since in the previous verse Sha’ul says that it was added because of transgressions implying the “Golden Calf” sin. In fact, whenever he talks about “law versus Favour (grace)” he is referring to “The Book of the Law” ... not the entire Torah. This also explains why Sha’ul’s (Paul’s) writings can so easily be confusing. In the previous verse we read that the Law was added until the seed would come which was Yahshua.

It is to that question that I wish to turn to gain us some resolution. No doubt upon this reading most Christians would assume this refers to all Torah apart from those self-perceived morally obvious commands that pertain to a life of loving one’s neighbour.

These other groups seem to suggest that the Book of the Law had an expiry date & is no longer binding. It is therefore no wonder Sha’ul’s (Paul’s) writings have been so contested:

### The Purpose of the Book of the Law

To help us resolve this dilemma we need to address the general purpose of it as well as its main purpose to establish what Sha’ul (Paul) is saying.

Since Sha’ul uses the phrase “Law” we need to consider what does he mean. Unlike the Covenant that cannot be added to we find that the Book of the Law was

added to & imposed as a witness against the people. If we consider the central purpose of the Book of the Law we find that it mainly related to the sacrificial system of dealing with sin. There is however a far more significant purpose that it represented and that was, it was the means by which YHWH in his mercy gave Yisrael to delay the promised judgement upon Yisrael for the sin of the Golden Calf. It could be best represented by a credit card that allows a temporary payment until a prescribed time when the debt must be paid. Based on this concept & our knowledge of the Covenant we know that debt was paid by Yahshua on the tree when he said:

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**MattithYahu (Matthew) 27:46** And about the ninth hour Yahshua cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eliyahu, Eliyahu, l’mah sh’baq-thani?” that is, my El YHWH, my El YHWH why have You forsaken Me?”

Those who say that through Yahshua the long held debt was paid and the entire Book of the Law was abolished find themselves in deep water because this section of Scripture gives us many commands that further explain former commands or we could say the added Laws act like fence Laws like that of the Pharisees who introduced “Nikadot” commands to prevent one from breaking Torah much like Halakah today though in the case of the Book of the Law we find specific laws pertaining to areas that were not revealed previously like:

#### Slide M 13

1. Tassels on Garments (Bemidbar [Numbers] 15:38)
2. Two or three witnesses to establish truth (Devarim [Deut] 17:6)
3. Law against divination, mediums or spiritists or calling up the dead (Devarim 18:10-11)
4. The Command to teach one’s children Torah (Devarim 6:7)
5. Punishment for the rapist etc. (Devarim 22:25)

Plus many more commands against Homosexuality, marrying sisters & whoredom.

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It is my conclusion that Sha’ul (Paul) is not dealing with all areas of the law but particularly the Law to do with sacrifices for sin which were dealt with by Yahshua as we read in the following:

**Ibrim (Hebrews) 9:12** Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Kadosh (Holy) Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

So the Book of the Law was added to assist but not take the place of the Book of the Covenant. And all this was necessary because the Covenant was broken by Yisrael’s idolatrous actions with the Golden Calf.

The phrase “Book of the Law” does not appear actually until the end of Torah - Therefore Deuteronomy Chapters 29-31:

#### Slide O 15

**Devarim (Deut) 31:26 “Take this Book of the Torah (Law), and put it beside the ark of the covenant of YHWH your Elohim, that it may be there as a witness against you;”**

Therefore Elohim imposed the Book of the Law upon Israel since we do not see a two-party agreement and it was his mercy and his way to postpone her death penalty resulting from the broken Covenant. Only a blood sacrifice could satisfy that penalty. The Levitical sacrifices that Israel offered (under the Book of the Law) served that purpose. Every year, on *Yom Kippur*, the blood of sacrificed animals was offered in place of the blood of Israel to satisfy the breaking of the Blood Covenant. But YHWH, in His Mercy, had a plan:

In Yahshua the Penalty was paid for all those who put their trust & faith in him and so we see that in about 70CE the Temple itself was destroyed since that purpose as revealed in through book of the Law was satisfied.

Only Yahshua’s shed blood could permanently erase that blood penalty! Yahshua was not just the Pesach (Passover) Lamb; He was not just the Red Heifer Sacrifice. His shed blood satisfied the 1,500 year old blood debt that Yisrael owed for their Sin of the Golden Calf.

### **The Truth of the Good News:**

Those who have not believed in Yahshua still have that death penalty hanging over their head & it is this truth that our Yahudi (Jewish) brethren need to hear since they still believe they are under the residue of that sin. The other groups also fail to see that this part of the Torah is yet of great benefit even though the need for the sin offering has been fulfilled in Yahshua which comprised the central part of the Book of the Law.

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As far as the Christian is concerned if Yahshua has Renewed the broken covenant then there are still certain parts of the covenant that are without question obligatory which come directly under the Covenant before the Golden Calf incident which include:

1. Obedience to the “Ten Commandments.”
2. Statutes about relationship with People & Animals.
3. Statutes on equal justice in Society.
4. Commandments on celebrating the Moedim (the Appointed times) ie. The Feasts, The Sh’mitah Shabbat (7 year Sabbath for the land) & Yovel (Jubilee).
5. Dietary Laws.

Since all of these are under the Covenant and are doable today this gives us an ability to live an obedient life through faith in Yahshua and obedience to his Covenantal instructions remembering that any short fall is covered by his great sacrifice but that in no ways allows for a total unwillingness to be obedient. We

now have the joy of doing them rather than the fear of punishment for failing to do them. This is further emphasised by the words of Yahshua when he said:

**Yochanan (John) 14:15 If you love me keep my commandments.**

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#### The Revealed Truths Discovered:

1. Christians & some Messianic groups believe that through Yahshua's sacrifice they have been freed from the Book of the Law because it was imposed until the seed.
2. These believe they are now only under the Book of the Covenant and what it reveals.
3. The sacrificial system was a means to delay the punishment on Yisrael for the sin of the Golden Calf and was fulfilled by the death of Yahshua.
4. Within the Book of the Covenant there still remains the obligation of keeping the 10 Commandments, The Feasts, the Sabbaths years and the Dietary requirements.
5. The Book of the Law now aids in guiding us in areas of righteous living and acts as a fence to protect Torah.

#### Conclusion

The aim of this teaching is to establish that though Yahshua came to pay the debt of sin and renew the Covenant he has also come to cause all believers to desire to live righteously and has imparted the Ruach ha Kodesh (The Holy Spirit) as our helper. As we desire to reclaim the Original Faith we can see that the concept of an expired "Book of the Law" seems to run contrary to what we believe the early Assemblies looked like since they were by all accounts as written by the early Church Fathers very Jewish even to the point of using Hebrew. We therefore must desire to live faithful lives in the joy of obeying all that is written for our benefit that one day the Master himself will declare these words to us:

### Slide R 18

**MatithYahu (Matthew) 25:21 "Well done, good and faithful servant."**