

# Torah Portion Lech Lecha

## Genesis 12:1 – 17:27

Grant Covenant with Abraham our  
Father.



# Meredith Kline

“a sanction-sealed commitment to maintain a particular relationship or follow a stipulated course of action. In general, then a covenant may be defined as a relationship under sanctions” (1968:16).

**Meredith Kline**

***“Covenants function as the  
administrative instruments for God’s  
kingly rule”***

# Covenant vs. Contract (Law)

## Difference between a covenant and a contract

(Ref: Hugenberger's Marriage as a Covenant)

- **Covenant** is *“an elected, as opposed to natural, relationship of obligation established under divine sanction”*
- **Contract** is *“private legal and commercial agreements of which the principle guarantors are the courts and community rather than God or the gods”*

Mendenhall defines Brit 'covenant'

“as a solemn promise made binding by an oath, which may be either a verbal formula or a symbolic oath/action”  
(1962:714).

# The biblical Hebrew term “Brit” (Covenant)

Covenant in its Ancient Near Eastern context as:

- 1) chosen
- 2) relationship
- 3) mutual obligation
- 4) guaranteed by oath sanctions.

# Chosen

‘Covenant’ is chosen. It creates the relationship. Those who are family members by birth do not make a Brit, ‘covenant’.

\*That is why the Circumcision is a sign of the covenant

# Relationship

A Covenant establishes a relationship, analogous to kinship. This family relationship aspect is highlighted by the conventions of ANE treaty literature. Whatever the political and military circumstances leading to the making of a covenant between an overlord and a possibly reluctant vassal, they would address each other in this context as father and son.



Thus covenant is closely linked with strongly relational words in both biblical Hebrew and the ANE treaty-literature. On **OHEB**, ‘love’ Els summarizes: ‘the concept of the covenant is itself an expression, in judicial terms, of the experience of the love of God’ (1997:280). Moran shows that love belonged to the terminology of international relations at the Amarna period and was required of covenant partners, whether equals or vassal and suzerain (1963:79,82). The term “SHALOM”, ‘peace, well-being’ can function with Brit, ‘covenant’ (Weinfeld 1973:191-2; cf. Num 25:12; Isa 54:7-8; Ezek 34:5, 37:26). Another word with strong covenantal associations is Chesed ‘loyalty, kindness’ defined in a thorough study as ‘deep and enduring’ bilateral commitment given practical expression (Clark 1993:217).

# Mutual Obligation

The importance of obligations in a covenant relationship is widely acknowledged. Hugenberger speaks of that rare thing, 'a scholarly consensus' (1998:181), and notes that obligations are implied in 263 out of 283 biblical Hebrew references to אָוֶן, 'covenant' (1998:169). The element of obligation is such that in biblical Hebrew a 'covenant' can be commanded. Note 'his covenant which he commanded' in Deut 4:13 (cf. Judges 2:20, Psalm 111:9). In Psalm 103:18 'to those keeping his covenant' parallels 'to those remembering to do his orders.' Also 'covenant' and 'statute' function as synonyms in Psalm 50:16 and Isa 24:5.

# Guaranteed by Oath Sanctions

This commitment is guaranteed by oath sanctions. Whether in words or symbols, whether explicitly or implicitly, the gods are summoned to enforce the commitment made. Frequently the oath is self-maledictory in form: 'May I die may they kill me if I do not keep my commitment.' The appeal to divine authority and intervention is intrinsic to ANE covenant-making. The prominence of blessings and curses in the ANE treaty-literature is a clear illustration of the expected divine enforcement of a covenant. Oath is not simply symbolic words and ritual.

- The phrase 'cut covenant' occurs 86 times in biblical Hebrew, and its cognates are well-established in Sumerian and the Semitic languages (Carpenter 1997:729-31).
- It is the stereotyped phrase for the process of entering into a covenant relationship and is usually rendered simply 'make a covenant' in English translations (NASB, NIV, NLT, NRSV, REB, etc.). It alludes to the oath ritual invoking divine enforcement of the covenant commitments.

This ritual is alluded to in the Tanack

Genesis 15:9-21,

Exodus 24:3-88

Jeremiah 34:1-20

Psalms 50:5

An extra-biblical treaty parallel  
illustrates the point:

‘This head is not the head of a  
lamb, it is the head of Mati’ilu, it  
is the head of his sons, his  
officials, and the people of his  
land’

# The Grant Covenants of our Suzerain

The Near Eastern Perspective of the Royal  
Grant Covenants

And

the Grants of the Renewed Covenant



Greater

Israel's

Borders

Antalya

İçel (Mersin)

Adana

Antep

Diyarbakır

Tabriz

Rasht

Zanjan

Qazvin

Nicosia

CYPRUS

Aleppo

Latakia

Hims

Damascus

Mosul

Arbil

Karkuk

Kermanshah

Arak

Beirut

LEBANON

Haifa

ISRAEL

Jerusalem

Port Said

West Bank

Amman

JORDAN

Al Aqabah

Tabuk

IRAQ

Baghdad

An Nasiriyan

Al Basrah

Ahvaz

Abadan

Kuwait

KUWAIT

Hafar al Batin

Alexandria

Cairo

Al Bazah

Gaza Strip

Suez

Asyut

EGYPT

Luxor

Aswan

Yanbu al Bahr

Halab

Medina

SAUDI

Riyadh

ARABIA

Buraydah

Al Jubayf

Ad Dammam

Dhahran

BAHRAIN

Mediterranean Sea

Suez Canal

Aden

Yemen

Boundary

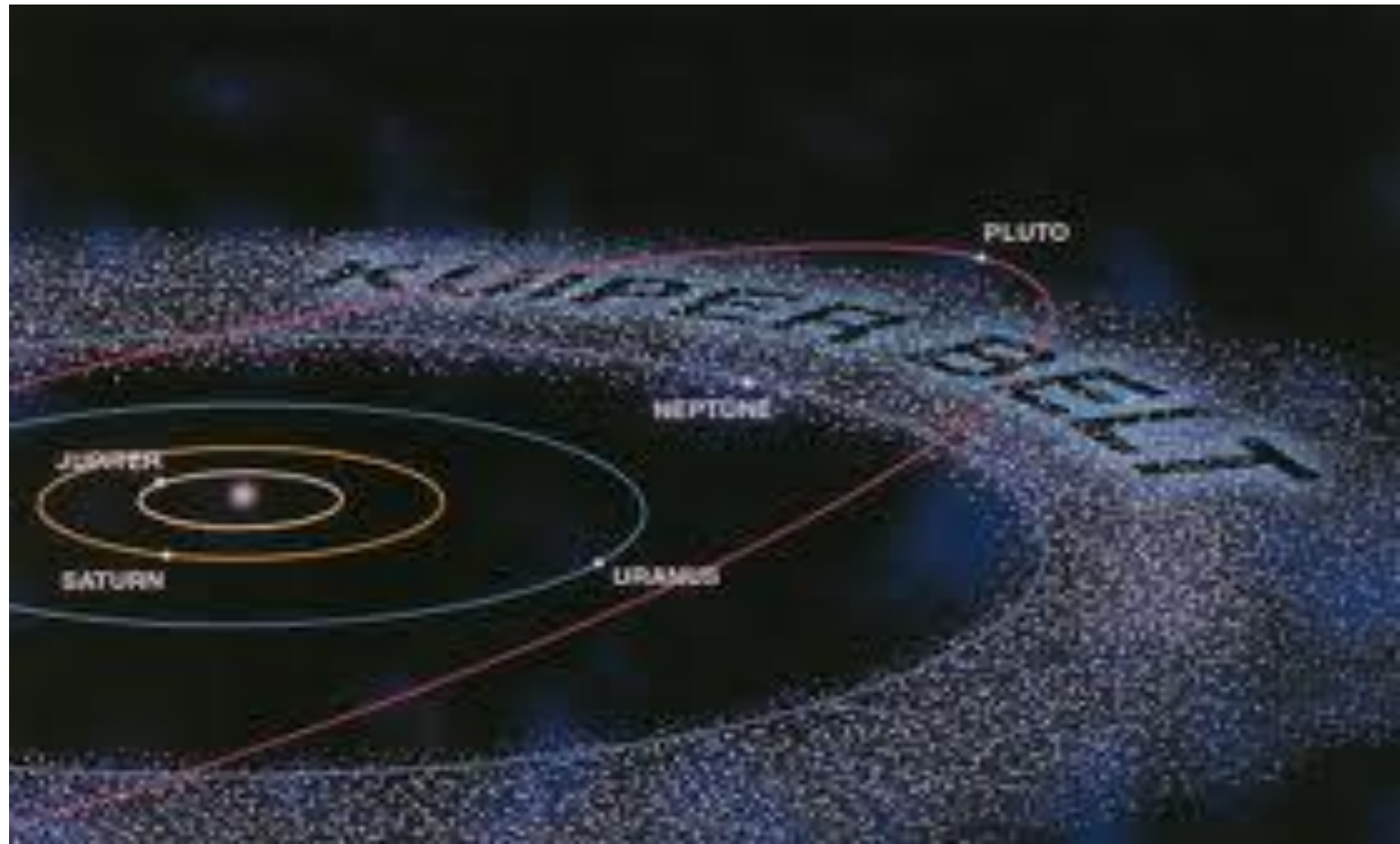
Boundary



## Exodus 19:5

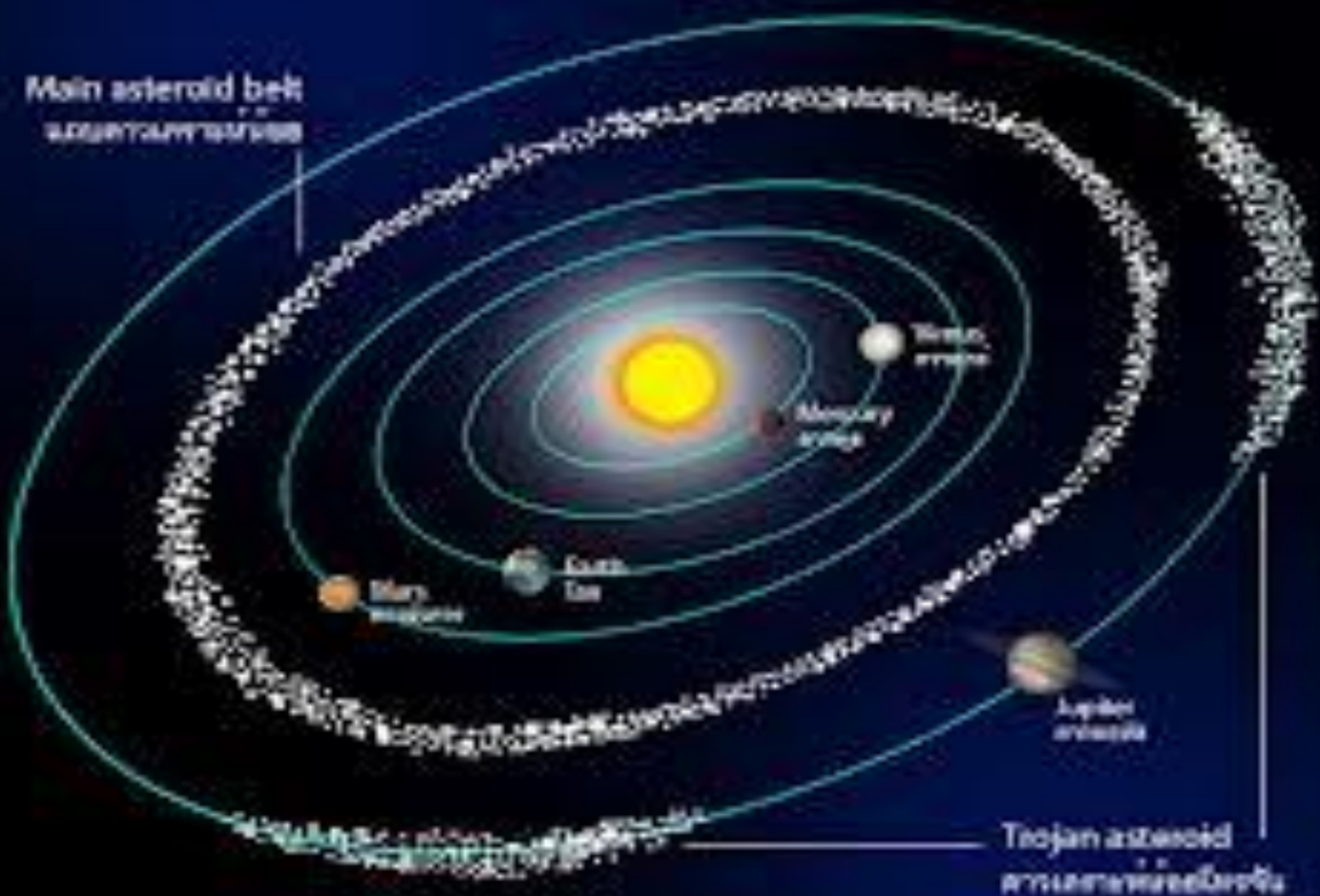
Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

# Threshold of YHVH





# SunflowerCosmos



# ANE Treaties

## 1. Royal Grant

a) Given as a reward for faithful service

b) Land or Positional

c) Self-maledictory on the suzerain's part

## 2. Suzerainty

# ROYAL GRANT (UNCONDITIONAL)

A king's grant (of land or some other benefit) to a loyal servant for faithful or exceptional service. The grant was normally perpetual and unconditional, but the servant's heirs benefited from it only as they continued their father's loyalty and service

1. Granted Pinchas and the Priesthood for ever.
2. Granted Abraham a Grant Land Covenant.
3. Granted David the Eternal Kingdom
4. Granted The Children of Israel a piece of Land
5. Granted The believers Eternal life, fruit of the Spirit, New Name, Land grant for the Service.

# Types of Royal Grant Covenants in the Scriptures”

- Land Grant to Abraham
- Priesthood to the Levites and **Phinehas**
- Davidic Kingdom

**(They All received the Royal Grants for their Loyal Service to the Suzerain)**

# Suzerain - Vassal Treaty

The "treaty" constitutes an obligation of the vassal to his master, the suzerain,



# Chapter 12

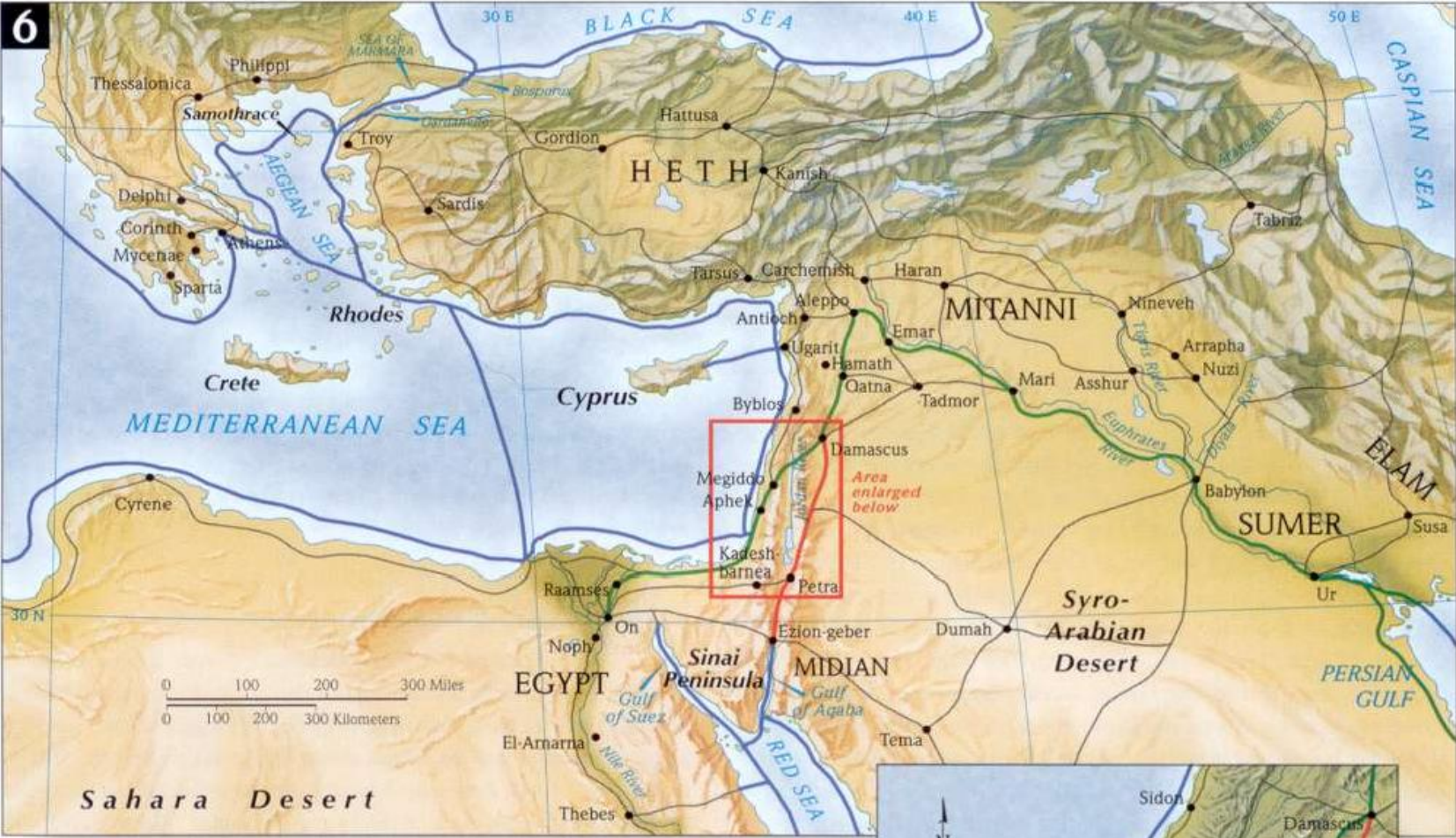
YHWH establishes His Suzerainty  
Covenant with Abram

Verses 6 to 8

Abram builds an Altar

# Genesis 12:

- 4 ¶ So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.
- 5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.



**THE KING'S HIGHWAY**

A second, less important interregional highway linked Arabia with Damascus. This "King's Highway" (Num. 21:22) extended from Ezion-geber at the top of the Gulf of Aqabah through the Transjordan to Damascus. Important cities along this route included Kirhareth, Dibon, Heshbon, Ramoth-gilead, Ashtaroth, and Karnaim. Caravans conveyed spices and perfumes as well as

**"INTERNATIONAL ROUTES"**

- City
- International Coastal Highway
- King's Highway
- Sea routes
- Other routes



# Genesis 12:

6 ¶ And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Alon Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.



Mount  
Ebal

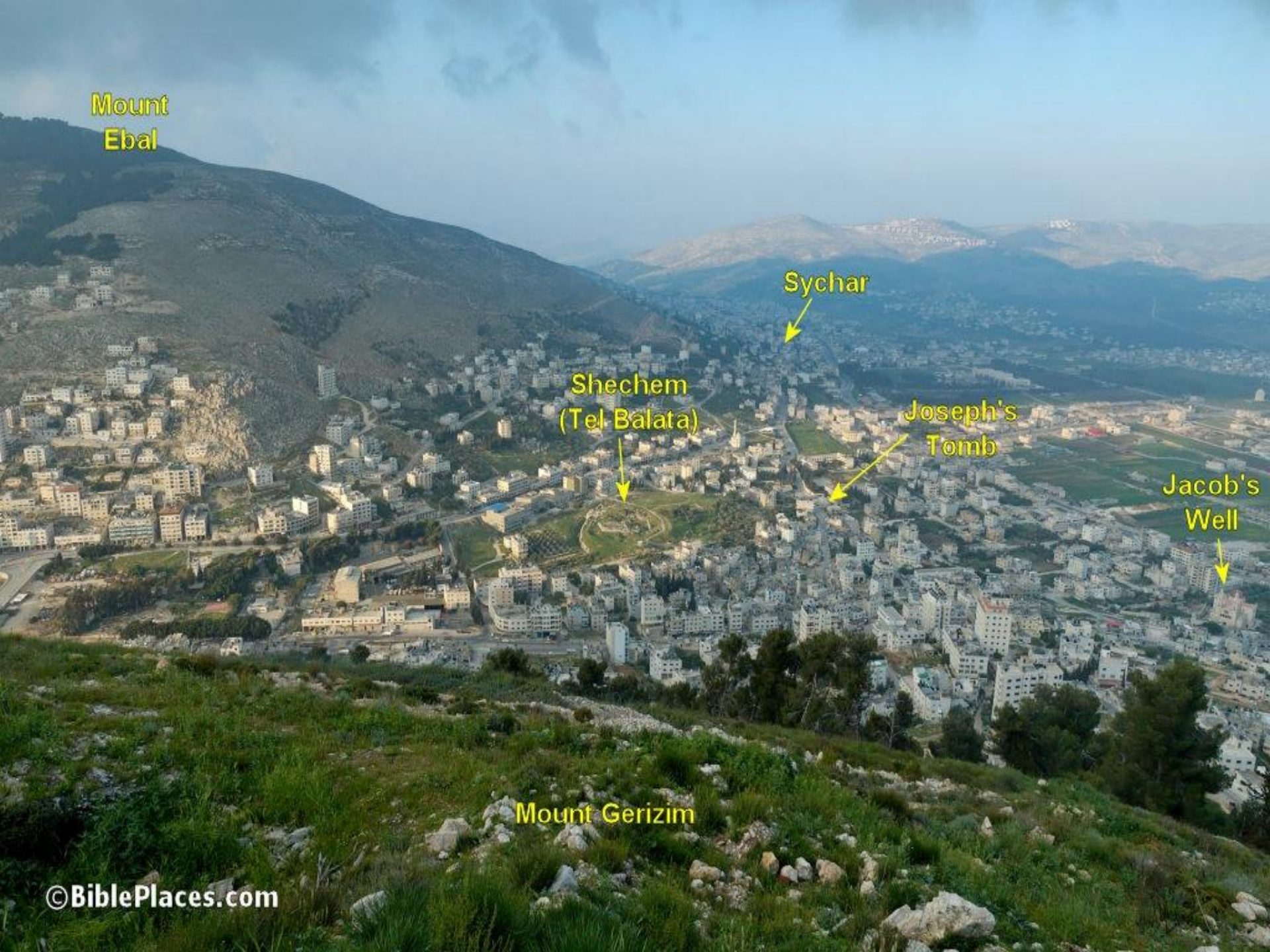
Sychar

Shechem  
(Tel Balata)

Joseph's  
Tomb

Jacob's  
Well

Mount Gerizim



Genesis 12:7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

8 And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.

9 And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.

# The Journey to Hebron





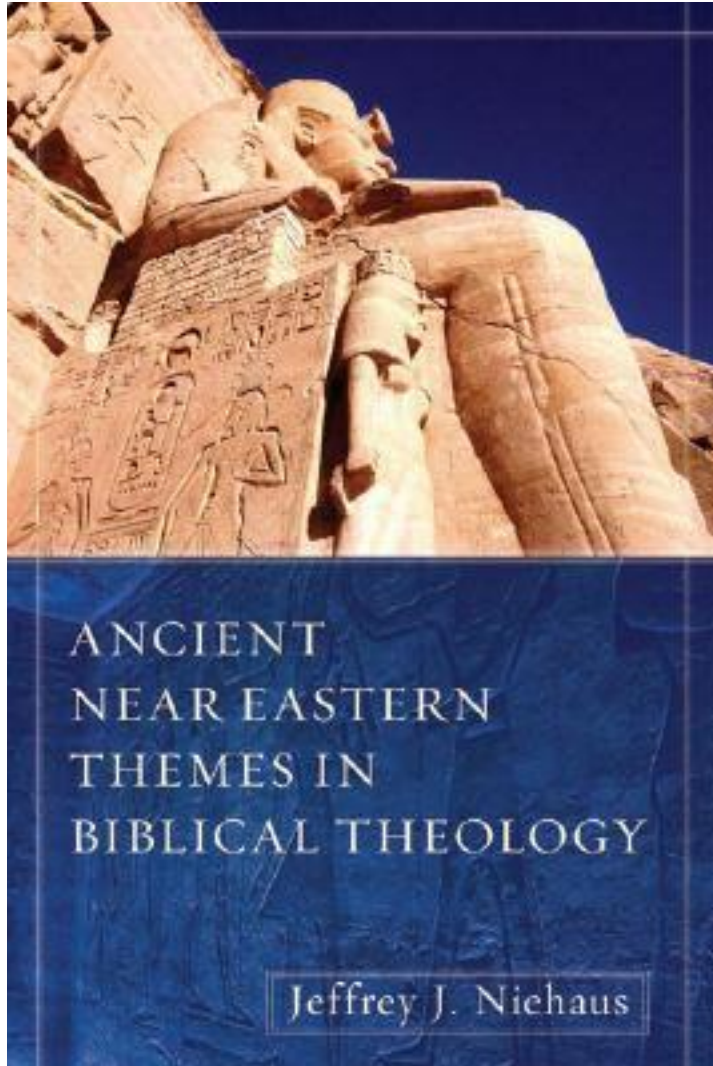
# Genesis 13:

- 14 Yahweh said to Abram, after Lot was separated from him,  
"Now, lift up your eyes, and look from the place where you  
are, northward and southward and eastward and westward,  
15 for all the land which you see, I will give to you, and to your  
offspring forever.
- 16 I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if a  
man can number the dust of the earth, then your seed may  
also be numbered.
- 17 Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the  
breadth of it; for I will give it to you."
- 18 Abram moved his tent, and came and lived by the oaks of  
Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built an altar there to  
Yahweh.

Genesis 13:17

Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it to you."

For Reference please read pages 67 – 68



Ancient Near Eastern Themes  
in the Biblical Theology by  
Jeffrey J. Niehaus

Context of Walking, and  
treading the land in the ANET  
Context

# Declaring Ownership of the Land



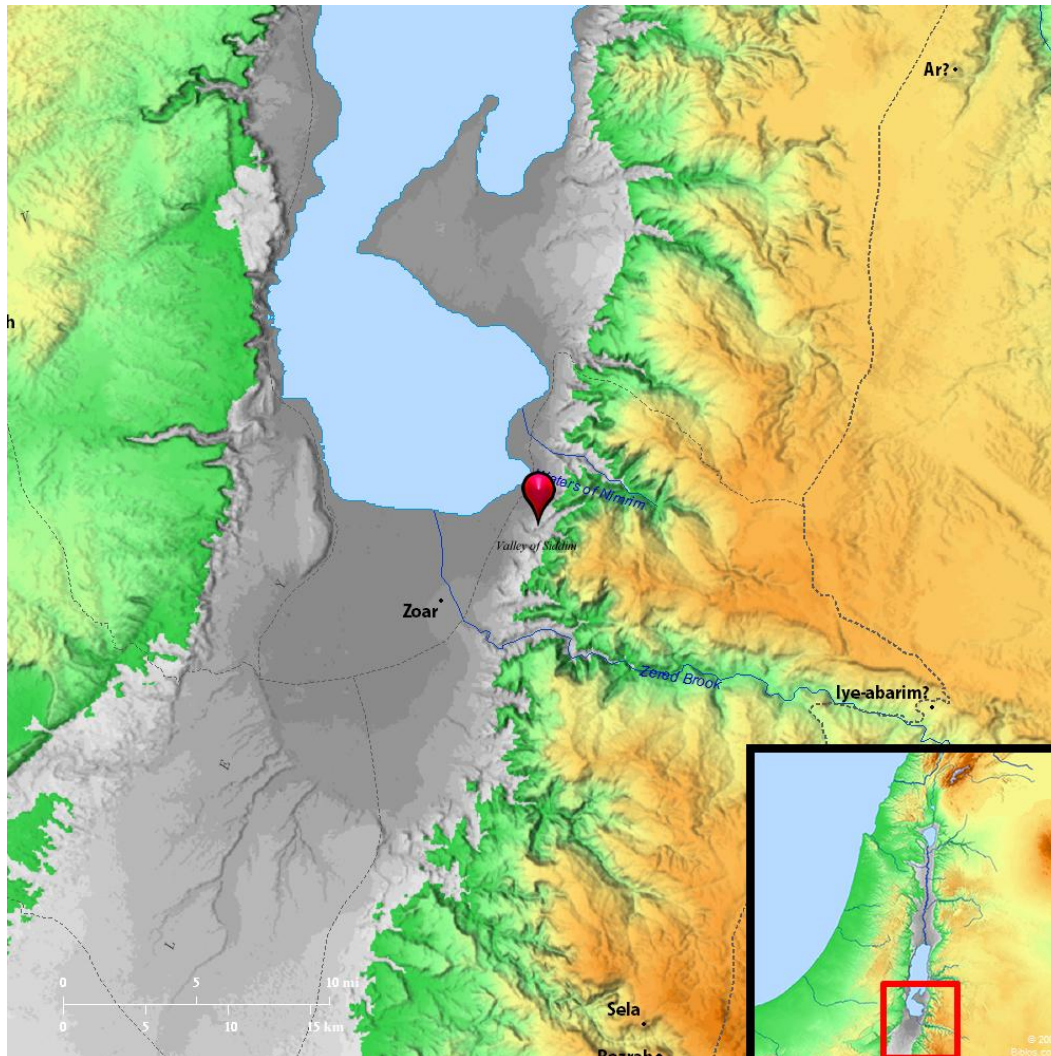
*Every place whereon the soles  
of your feet shall tread shall be yours*

Genesis Chapter 14 is a  
Classic Example of Suzerainty  
treaties between Nations the  
responsibility of the Oath of  
Loyalty between them.

# Place of the Battle of Abraham with the Kings

Genesis 14:3

All these joined together in the valley of Siddim (the same is the Salt Sea).



Valley of Siddim south of the Dead Sea

# Loyalty to the Great King YHVH

Genesis 14:

21 The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people, and take the goods to yourself."

22 Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have lifted up my hand to Yahweh, God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth,

23 that I will not take a thread nor a sandal strap nor anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.'

24 I will accept nothing from you except that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre. Let them take their portion."

# The Targum Onkelos

Genesis 15:1

saying, Fear not, Abram: My Word (Memra) shall be thy strength, and thy exceeding great reward.



# Language of Adoption in the ANE

Genesis 15:

2 Abram said, "Lord Yahweh, what will you give me, seeing I go childless, and he who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?"

3 Abram said, "Behold, to me you have given no seed: and, behold, one born in my house is my heir."

4 Behold, the word of Yahweh came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir, but he who will come forth out of your own body will be your heir."

Read from Abram's Amen  
by Meredith Kline

- יהאמן ביהוה ויחשבה לו צדקה:

Genesis 15:6

He believed in Yahweh; and he  
reckoned it to him for  
righteousness.

\*Also, treaty of the Great King by same writer page 29

# Genesis 15:

9 He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon."

10 He brought him all of these, and divided them in the middle, and laid each half opposite the other; but he didn't divide the birds.

11 The birds of prey came down on the carcasses, and Abram drove them away.

12 When the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. Now terror and great darkness fell on him.

13 He said to Abram, "Know for sure that your seed will live as foreigners in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them. They will afflict them four hundred years.

## Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible on "Adoption and Adoption Formulas"

- "The legal transfer of a person from a family or slavery into another family, thereby improving the situation of the adopter and the adoptee.
- Adoption in the ANE was transacted before witnesses by the adopter declaring "He/She is my child" or "I called him/her my child" The child may respond "You are my father/mother" The same formulas were used to "*legitimize*" children fathered through secondary wives such as concubines or slaves. A negative counterpart to these formulas disowned and disinherited a child or, from the child's side, repudiated the parents. The act of adoption was described as "make/take/designate/establish as a son." The parents or adopters were obligated to raise the children by providing a trade and an inheritance; children were required to obey the parent. Disobedient children were punished, disinherited, and sometimes sold back into slavery. Occasionally adopters would reverse this decision and readopt the disowned child."

- Nuzi - an ancient Mesopotamian city southwest of Kirkuk in modern Iraq. Excavations were carried out at Nuzi by American teams from 1925 to 1933. The major find was more than 5,000 family and administrative archives spanning six generations, ca. 1450-1350 BC. They deal with family customs and the social, economic, religious and legal institutions of the Hurrians. The Nuzi texts have played a major role in the comparative study of the Tanak since the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. As land could not be legally sold but only inherited, Nuzi had an institution of pseudo-adoption, whereby one was adopted by presenting his or her "father" a gift which was in fact the purchase price.

The practice of indenture is also attested. An individual pledged to serve a family for a period of time after which he was free; in return, the family of the indentured person gained access to various resources. A number of institutions existed at Nuzi which are generally analogous to those in early Israelite Society, including levirate marriage, a system of bride wealth and dowry, and the formal adoption of daughters in the absence of male offspring.

The Nuzi marriage contracts, adoptions, and herding agreements provide important comparative material for interpreting the patriarchal narratives, especially those pertaining to Jacob and Laban. Moreover the Nuzi texts allowed a father to provide security for his daughters by selling them into adoption for purposes of marriage. Exodus 21:7-11 somewhat resembles the Nuzi texts in that it allows for a father to sell his daughter to a buyer who was then required to see that she was married. The adoption of the daughter however is never mentioned in the biblical text.

## "Babylonian and Assyrian Laws, Contracts and Letters"

By Claude Herman and Walter Johns

- "Adoption was effected by a deed, drawn up and sealed by the adoptive parents, duly sworn to and witnessed. Such contracts definitely state the relationship, which in all respects was the same as that of a son born in matrimony. But it laid out the obligations of the son, while it stipulated what was the inheritance to which he might expect to succeed. It brought responsibilities to both parties and fixed them. The son was bound to do that which a son naturally would have done, explicitly, to maintain his parents while they lived. The parents were bound, not only to leave him property, but to treat him as a son. But, as a rule, all was matter of contract and carefully set down. If such a contract was not drawn up, although the adoptive parents had brought him up, the child must return to his father's house."

- ADOPTIONS WERE SET UP AS FORMULATED STRUCTURED COVENANTS OR CONTRACTS THAT WERE LEGALLY BINDING.

# Article "New Kirkuk Documents Relating to Family Laws"

By E. A. Speiser

- "In considering the documents that deal with adoption, it is of importance to establish at the very outset the essential distinction between cases of actual adoption on the one hand, and instances of nominal adoption on the other. In the one class we have an actual transference of parental authority; in the other, the form of adoption is used to further other purposes. The Kirkuk documents contain both types of adoption...
- ...As summed up by Koschaker, an act of adoption gives the adopted child the right to the inheritance of the property of the adoptive parent or parents; this may cover either the whole, or a specified part, of that property. By virtue of the same act the adopted child assumes the rights and obligations of the begotten children
- ...For, as Koschaker has pointed out, in the sale-adoptions it is always a specified piece of property that figures in the transaction, whereas the person actually adopted becomes the sole, or joint heir of the entire estate of the adoptive parent.



## Recent Discovery and The Patriarchal Age" By Harold H. Rowley"

Finally we may see how some of the customs referred to in the stories of the patriarchal age find their illustration in recently found evidence in Nuzi. Many of the documents found there relate to adoption. Sometimes a childless man or woman legally adopted a free-born person or slave, thus securing someone whose duty it would be to look after them and to bury them, and who in return became the heir of the adopter. The practice was liable to abuse, and indeed became a means of evading one of the laws of the land. For in addition to genuine adoptions, there were what are called sale-adoptions. A man who was financially embarrassed would adopt as his son a wealthy man who would help him out of his difficulties and who would become the heir to his land. The law provided that land was inalienable and must be kept within the family, but by the fiction of adoption this was evaded. One man, who appears to have been the richest man in the community was adopted by very many men. In the deeds of adoption it is specified what gift he gave to each of his "fathers" , but there is no mention of any duty to care for them during life and to mourn for them when dead, as there is in genuine adoption cases."

## "Recent Discovery and The Patriarchal Age" By Harold H. Rowley" Continued...

It will be remembered that in Gen. 15:2 Abraham ,who has no hope of any children of his own, refers to Eliezer as his heir, and further calls him "one born in my house", i.e a slave who had been born in slavery. Presumably Abraham had adopted him in accordance with this custom,to the mutual advantage of them both. But God says to the Patriarch "This man shall not be thine heir" in verse4. If he had been a legally adopted heir, how could his rights be set aside so long as he fulfilled his filial duties? Here again, we find illustration in the Nuzi texts, where it is provided *that if the adopter should subsequently beget a son, the adopted son must yield to him the place of chief heir."*

- *LADIES AND GENTLEMAN THIS IS THE EXACT SAME CONTEXT AND LANGUAGE THAT PAUL IS USING IN THE BRIT CHADESHA!*

Rom 8:9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of Elohim dwells in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Messiah, this one is not His.

10 And if Messiah is in you, the body is truly dead on account of sin, but the Spirit is life on account of righteousness.

11 And if the Spirit of Him who raised יהושע from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Messiah from the dead shall also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit dwelling in you.

12 So then, brothers, we are not debtors to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

13 For if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you shall live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of Elohim, these are sons of Elohim.

15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of Elohim,

17 and if children, also heirs – truly heirs of Elohim, and co-heirs with Messiah, if indeed we suffer with Him, in order that we also be exalted together.

•(Also See Romans Chapter 9, and Ephesians Chapter 1!)

Abraham's Household as a Shadow of the Order in the Heavenly Realm for the  
Redemption of the Entire World THRU LEGAL ADOPTION LANGUAGE  
Abraham is a Shadow and Representation of the Father

*Isaac a Shadow of...*

- \* Natural-Born,
- \* Begotten of the Father,
- \* Chief Heir,
- \* Yeshua the Mashiach

*Eliezer a Shadow of...*

- \* Nations, Foreigners within gates
- \* Born into slavery, adopted by the Father,
- \* Co-heir with Chief Heir with Submission to the Chief Heir
- \* Israel

"A HOUSEHOLD OF ELOHIM" ...EPHESIANS CHAPTER 2!

All of the Adoption Research was  
done by Daniel McGirr one the  
Yeshiva Teachers on the Wisdom  
in Torah Talmidim.

# Covenant of the Pieces

Genesis 15:

17 It came to pass that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold, a smoking furnace, and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.

18 In that day Yahweh made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your seed I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates:

19 the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites,

20 the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim,

21 the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."



Curses  
in the  
Covenants

# Grant Covenants

The "grant" constitutes an obligation of the master to his servant.



# Suzerain - Vassal Treaty

In the treaty the curse is directed towards the vassal who will violate the rights of his king.

# In the Grants

In the "grant" the curse is directed towards the one who will violate the rights of the king's vassal.

Examples:

A peculiar threat occurs in an Old Babylonian grant from Hana: "whoever challenges the gift, his head will be covered with hot pitch,"

# Examples of Oaths in the ANET:

At times the donor takes upon him-self a conditional self-curse as for instance in the grant of Abba-El where Abba-El takes the following oath: "(May I be cursed) if I take back what I gave you"

# Genesis 15:

14 I will also judge that nation, whom they will serve. Afterward they will come out with great wealth,

15 but you will go to your fathers in peace. You will be buried in a good old age.

16 In the fourth generation they will come here again, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full."

17 It came to pass that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold, a smoking furnace, and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.

**18 In that day Yahweh made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your seed I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates:**

## Le 26:

40""If they confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, in their trespass which they trespassed against me, and also that, because they walked contrary to me, 41 I also walked contrary to them, and brought them into the land of their enemies: if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled, and they then accept the punishment of their iniquity;

42 then I will remember my covenant with Jacob; and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham; and **I will remember the land.**

## Ezequiel 36

5 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Surely in the fire of my jealousy have I spoken against the residue of the heathen, and against all Idumea (Edom), which have appointed my land into their possession with the joy of all their heart, with despiteful minds, to cast it out for a prey.

6 Prophecy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen:

7 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; **I have lifted up mine hand,** Surely the heathen that are about you, they shall bear their shame.

# Genesis 16

- 1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children. She had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.
- 2 Sarai said to Abram, "See now, Yahweh has restrained me from bearing. Please go in to my handmaid. It may be that I will obtain children by her." Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.
- 3 Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her handmaid, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to Abram her husband to be his wife.
- 4 He went in to Hagar, and she conceived. When she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

See article Patriarchal Family  
Relationship and the Near  
Eastern law by Tikva Frymer-  
Kensky page 211 of article



There are a number of marriage laws and contracts from Mesopotamia over a considerable period of time which deal with the giving of a maid or slave girl by a wife to her husband and the subsequent treatment of the slave girl by her mistress.

The Code of Hammurabi 146 states:

If a man has married a priestess and she has given a slave girl to her husband and she bears sons, (if) thereafter that slave girl goes about making herself equal to her mistress, because she has borne sons her mistress shall not sell her, she may put the mark (of a slave) on her and may count her with the slave girls."

The customs reflected in the Nuzi texts present quite a different situation. Within one of the tablets of adoption, HSS v, 67, there is a marriage arrangement in which an adopted son Shennima, is married to Kelim-ninu, the daughter of his adopter.

The provision states:

Furthermore, Kelim-ninu has been given in marriage to Shennima. If Kelim-ninu bears (children), Shennima shall not take another wife; but if Kelim-ninu does not bear, Kelim-ninu shall acquire a woman of the land of Lullu as wife for Shennima, and Kelim-ninu may not send the offspring away. Any sons that may be born to Shennima from the womb of Kelim-ninu, to (these) sons shall be given [all] the land (and) buildings of every sort. [However], if she does not bear a son, [then] the daughter of Kelim-ninu from the land (and) buildings shall take one (portion) of the property.



