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# BEYOND DISPUTE

## DEBATES THAT SHAPE JEWISH LIFE

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### UNIT 6

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## WHAT DEFINES OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD? A TALE OF TWO COVENANTS

Dr. Benjamin Sommer

### I. COVENANT OF GRACE/LOVE VS. COVENANT OF LAW

1. Genesis 17:1–22
2. II Samuel 7:1–17
3. Exodus 19:2–8
4. Deuteronomy 11:1, 13–23
5. Jeremiah 2:1–3, 7–10

### II. LAW OR LOVE? THE PROPHETS DEBATE THE COVENANT

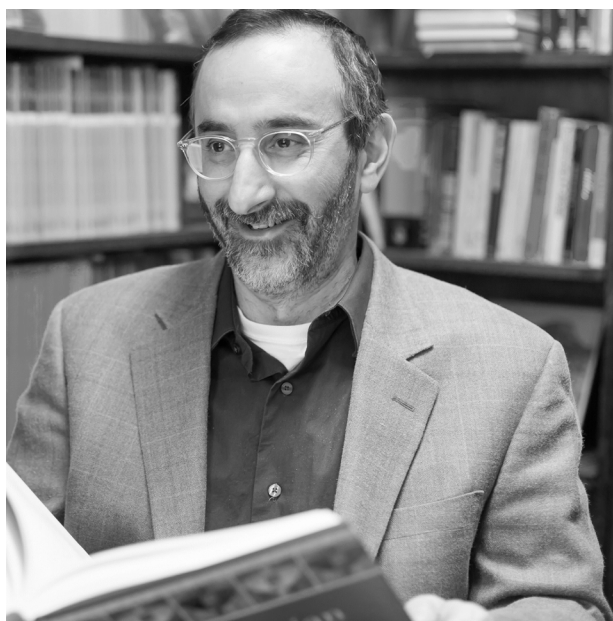
6. Jeremiah 7:1–11
7. Isaiah 54:6–10
8. Isaiah 49:14–21

### III. THE COVENANT OF LOVE UNDERLIES THE COVENANT OF LAW

9. Leviticus 26:3–5, 14–17, 39–46
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### IV. THE COVENANT OF LOVE SUPERCEDES THE COVENANT OF LAW

11. Paul's Epistle to Galatians 3:15–18 and 4:21–26
12. William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, Act IV, Scene 1
13. Avinu Malkeinu (From the High Holiday Liturgy)



## DR. BENJAMIN SOMMER

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Dr. Benjamin D. Sommer is Professor of Bible at the Jewish Theological Seminary. His most recent book, *Revelation and Authority: Sinai in Jewish Scripture and Tradition*, received the prestigious Goldstein-Goren Prize in Jewish Thought from Ben Gurion University for the years 2014–2016 and was a finalist for both for the National Jewish Book Award and the Association for Jewish Studies' Jordan Schnitzer Prize. His earlier book, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel*, received the Award for Excellence in the Study of Religion from the American Academy of Religion, as well as the Jordan Schnitzer Award from the Association for Jewish Studies. His first book, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66*, was awarded the Salo Wittmayer Baron Prize by the American Academy of Jewish Research. Professor Sommer frequently teaches rabbinic and lay groups in both the United States and Israel. Learn more at [www.jtsa.edu/benjamin-d-sommer](http://www.jtsa.edu/benjamin-d-sommer).

## I. COVENANT OF GRACE/LOVE VS. COVENANT OF LAW

As Dr. Sommer discusses in his video, biblical texts describe the covenant concretely by telling stories about characters associated with each of the two covenant ideas and connecting each with a particular set of words and motifs. When going through Sources 1–5, ask participants to focus on the words, characters, and motifs associated with each type of covenant, which have been organized into the accompanying chart. It's important for students to be familiar with vocabulary and motifs associated with each covenant, since biblical authors will use them when referring to one covenant idea or the other. For example, to evoke the concept of a covenant of love, the biblical author will refer to David, compare God to a parent and Israel to a child, and perhaps use the word *l'olam*. Encourage participants to consider whether the texts indicate that the covenantal relationship will last forever.

Associated terms, motifs, etc.	<b>Covenant of Grace/Love:</b> <b>Sources 1–2</b> Also called covenant of grant; gift covenant; promise; testament	<b>Covenant of Law:</b> <b>Sources 3–5</b> Also called covenant of mutual responsibility; contract
<b>Recurring vocabulary</b>	<i>Olam, l'olam</i> —forever, eternity (Genesis 9:12, 17:7, 8, 13, 19; II Samuel Chapters 13, 16, 24, 25, 26, 29)	<i>Im</i> —if (Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 11:13, 22, 28)
<b>Mountains</b>	Mount Zion (the Temple Mount); Mount Ararat	Mount Sinai, also known as Horeb
<b>Characters</b>	Noah; Abraham; the <i>avot</i> (patriarchs) as a group: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; David	Moses
<b>Familial relationship</b>	Parent–child (II Samuel 7:14)	Marriage (Jeremiah 2:1–3, 32–33, 3:1–3, 7–10)
<b>Events</b>	The Patriarchal Age; the Flood	The Exodus from Egypt; the giving of the Ten Commandments

### 1. Genesis 17:1-22

<sup>1</sup>When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am El Shaddai. Walk in My ways and be blameless. <sup>2</sup>I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will make you exceedingly numerous.”

(א) וַיְהִי אֲבָרָם בְּנֵי־תשעים שָׁנָה וַתֵּשַׁע שָׁנִים  
וַיֵּרָא ה' אֶל־אֲבָרָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲנִי־אל שְׁדֵי  
הַתְּהִלָּה לִפְנֵי וְהָיָה תָמִיד: (ב) וְאַתָּנָה בְּרִיתִי  
בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ וְאַרְבָּה אוֹתְךָ בְּמֵאד מְאֹד:

(ג) וַיִּפֹּל אֲבָרָם עַל־פָּנָיו וַיְדַבֵּר אֵתוֹ אֱלֹהִים

<sup>3</sup>Abram threw himself on his face; and God spoke to him further, <sup>4</sup>“As for Me, this is My covenant with you: You shall be the father of a multitude of nations. <sup>5</sup>And you shall no longer be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I make you the father of a multitude of nations. <sup>6</sup>I will make you exceedingly fertile, and make nations of you; and kings shall come forth from you. <sup>7</sup>I will maintain My covenant between Me and you, and your offspring to come, as an everlasting covenant throughout the ages, to be God to you and to your offspring to come. <sup>8</sup>I assign the land you sojourn in to you and your offspring to come, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting holding. I will be their God.”

<sup>9</sup>God further said to Abraham, “As for you, you and your offspring to come throughout the ages shall keep My covenant. <sup>10</sup>Such shall be the covenant between Me and you and your offspring to follow which you shall keep: every male among you shall be circumcised. <sup>11</sup>You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and that shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. <sup>12</sup>And throughout the generations, every male among you shall be circumcised at the age of eight days. As for the homeborn slave and the one bought from an outsider who is not of your offspring, <sup>13</sup>they must be circumcised, homeborn, and purchased alike. Thus shall My covenant be marked in your flesh as an everlasting pact. <sup>14</sup>And if any male who is uncircumcised fails to circumcise the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his kin; he has broken My covenant.”

<sup>15</sup>And God said to Abraham, “As for your wife Sarai, you shall not call her Sarai, but her name shall be Sarah. <sup>16</sup>I will bless her; indeed, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she shall give rise to

לאמר: (ד) אני הנה בריתי אתך והיית לאב המון גוים: (ה) ולא יקרא עוד את שמך אברם והיה שמך אברהם כי אבהמון גוים נתתיך: (ו) והפירתי אתך במאד מאד ונתתיך לגוים ומלכים ממך יצאו: (ז) והקמתי את בריתי ביני ובינך ובין זרעך אחריך לדורתם לברית עולם להיות לך לאלהים ולזרעך אחריך: (ח) ונתתי לך ולזרעך אחריך את ארץ מגרדך את כל ארץ כנען לאחזת עולם והייתי להם לאלהים:

(ט) ויאמר אלהים אל אברהם ואתה את בריתי תשמר אתה וזרעך אחריך לדורתם: (י) זאת בריתי אשר תשמרו ביני וביניכם ובין זרעך אחריך המול לכם כל זכר: (יא) ונמלתם את בשר ערלתכם והיה לאות ברית ביני וביניכם: (יב) ובן שמונת ימים ימול לכם כל זכר לדורתיכם יליד בית ומקנת כסף מכל בן נכר אשר לא מזרעך הוא: (יג) המול ימול יליד ביתך ומקנת כסף והייתה בריתי בבשרכם לברית עולם: (יד) וערל זכר אשר לא ימול את בשר ערלתו ונקרתה הנפש ההוא מעמיה את בריתי הפר:

(טו) ויאמר אלהים אל אברהם שרי אשתך לא תקרא את שמה שרי כי שרה שמה: (טז) וברכתי אתה וגם נתתי ממנה לך בן וברכתיה והייתה לגוים מלכי עמים ממנה יהיו: (יז) ויפל אברהם על פניו ויצחק ויאמר

nations; rulers of peoples shall issue from her.”<sup>17</sup> Abraham threw himself on his face and laughed, as he said to himself, “Can a child be born to a man a hundred years old, or can Sarah bear a child at ninety?”<sup>18</sup> And Abraham said to God, “O that Ishmael might live by Your favor!”<sup>19</sup> God said, “Nevertheless, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac; and I will maintain My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring to come.”<sup>20</sup> As for Ishmael, I have heeded you. I hereby bless him. I will make him fertile and exceedingly numerous. He shall be the father of twelve chieftains, and I will make of him a great nation.”<sup>21</sup> But My covenant I will maintain with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year.”<sup>22</sup> And when He was done speaking with him, God was gone from Abraham.

בָּלְבוּ הַלְבֹן מֵאֶהֱשָנָה יוֹלֵד וְאִם־שָׂרָה הִבִּיתָ  
תִּשְׁעִים שָׁנָה תֵּלֵד: (יח) וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל־  
הָאֱלֹהִים לוֹ יִשְׁמַעְאֵל יְחִיָּה לִפְנֵיךָ:  
(יט) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֲבֹל שָׂרָה אֲשֶׁתְּךָ יִלְדָת  
לְךָ בֶן וְקִרְאתָ אֶת־שְׁמוֹ יִצְחָק וְהִקְמַתִי אֶת־  
בְּרִיתִי אִתּוֹ לְבְרִית עוֹלָם לְזָרְעוֹ אַחֲרָיו:  
(כ) וְלִישְׁמַעְאֵל שְׁמַעְתִּיךָ הִנֵּה בֵרַכְתִּי אֹתוֹ  
וְהִפְרִיתִי אֹתוֹ וְהִרְבִּיתִי אֹתוֹ בְּמֵאד מְאֹד  
שְׁנַיִם־עָשָׂר נָשִׂאִם יוֹלִיד וּנְתַתִּיו לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל:  
(כא) וְאֶת־בְּרִיתִי אֶקִּים אֶת־יִצְחָק אֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵד  
לְךָ שָׂרָה לְמוֹעֵד הַזֶּה בְּשָׁנָה הָאַחֲרִית:  
(כב) וַיְכַל לְדַבֵּר אֹתוֹ וַיַּעַל אֱלֹהִים מֵעַל  
אַבְרָהָם:

## 2. II Samuel 7:1-17

*Samuel was the last prophet from the period of the biblical judges, c. 1000 BCE. He anointed the first two kings of Israel, Saul and David.*

<sup>1</sup>When the king [David] was settled in his palace and the Lord had granted him safety from all the enemies around him, <sup>2</sup>the king said to the prophet Nathan: “Here I am dwelling in a house of cedar, while the Ark of the Lord abides in a tent!” <sup>3</sup>Nathan said to the king, “Go and do whatever you have in mind, for the Lord is with you.”

<sup>4</sup>But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: <sup>5</sup>“Go and say to My servant David: Thus said the Lord: Are you the one to build a house for Me to dwell in? <sup>6</sup>From the day that I brought the people of Israel out of Egypt to this day I have not dwelt in a house, but have moved about in Tent and Tabernacle. <sup>7</sup>As I moved about wherever the Israelites went, did I ever

(א) וַיְהִי כִּי־יָשֵׁב הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּבֵיתוֹ וְה' הֵנִיחַ לוֹ  
מִסְבִּיב מִכָּל אִיָּבָיו: (ב) וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל נָתָן  
הִנְבִּיא רָאָה נָא אֲנֹכִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּבֵית אֲרָזִים  
וְאָרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים יֹשֵׁב בְּתוֹךְ הִרְיָעָה:  
(ג) וַיֹּאמֶר נָתָן אֶל הַמֶּלֶךְ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר בְּלִבְּךָ לַךְ  
עֲשֵׂה כִּי ה' עִמָּךְ:

(ד) וַיְהִי בַלַּיְלָה הַהוּא וַיְהִי דְבַר ה' אֶל נָתָן  
לֵאמֹר: (ה) לָךְ וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶל עַבְדִּי אֶל דָּוִד כֹּה  
אָמַר ה' הֲאֵתָה תִּבְנֶה לִּי בַּיִת לְשִׁבְתִּי: (ו) כִּי  
לֹא יִשְׁבְּתִי בְּבֵית לְמִיּוֹם הָעָלֹתִי אֶת בְּנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וְאֵהְיָה  
מִתְהַלֵּךְ בָּאֹהֶל וּבְמִשְׁכָּן: (ז) בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר  
הִתְהַלַּכְתִּי בְּכָל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִדְבַּר דְּבָרֹתַי  
אֶת אֶחָד שְׁבָטִי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי לְרִעוּת

reproach any of the tribal leaders whom I appointed to care for My people Israel: Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?

<sup>8</sup>Further, say thus to My servant David: Thus said the Lord of Hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the flock, to be ruler of My people Israel, <sup>9</sup>and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut down all your enemies before you. Moreover, I will give you great renown like that of the greatest men on earth. <sup>10</sup>I will establish a home for My people Israel and will plant them firm, so that they shall dwell secure and shall tremble no more. Evil men shall not oppress them any more as in the past, <sup>11</sup>ever since I appointed chieftains over My people Israel. I will give you safety from all your enemies.

The Lord declares to you that He, the Lord, will establish a house for you. <sup>12</sup>When your days are done and you lie with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own issue, and I will establish his kingship. <sup>13</sup>He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish his royal throne forever. <sup>14</sup>I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to Me. When he does wrong, I will chastise him with the rod of men and the affliction of mortals; <sup>15</sup>but I will never withdraw My favor from him as I withdrew it from Saul, whom I removed to make room for you. <sup>16</sup>Your house and your kingship shall ever be secure before you; your throne shall be established forever.”

<sup>17</sup>Nathan spoke to David in accordance with all these words and all this prophecy.

את עמי את ישראל לאמר למה לא בניתם  
לי בית ארזים:

(ח) ועתה כה תאמר לעבדי לדוד כה אמר ה'  
צבאות אני לקחתך מן הנה מאחר הצאן  
להיות נגיד על עמי על ישראל: (ט) ואהיה  
עמך בכל אשר הלכת ואכרתה את כל איביך  
מפניך ועשתי לך שם גדול כשם הגדלים  
אשר בארץ: (י) ושמתי מקום לעמי לישראל  
ונטעתיו ושכן תחתיו ולא ירגז עוד ולא  
יסיפו בני עולה לענותו כאשר בראשונה:  
(יא) ולמן היום אשר צויתי שפטים על עמי  
ישראל והניחתי לך מכל איביך והגיד לך ה'  
כי בית יעשה לך ה': (יב) כי ימלאו ימיו  
ושכבת את אבתיך והקימתי את זרעך  
אחרך אשר יצא ממעיך והכינתי את  
ממלכתו: (יג) הוא יבנה בית לשמי וכוננתי  
את כסא ממלכתו עד עולם: (יד) אני אהיה  
לו לאב והוא יהיה לי לבן אשר בהעות  
והכחתי בשבט אנשים ובנגעי בני אדם:  
(טו) וחסדי לא יסור ממנו כאשר הסרתי  
מעם שאול אשר הסרתי מלפניך:  
(טז) ונאמן ביתך וממלכתך עד עולם לפניך  
כסאך יהיה נכון עד עולם:

(יז) ככל הדברים האלה וככל החזיון הזה כן  
דבר נתן אל דוד:

### 3. Exodus 19:2-8

<sup>2</sup>Having journeyed from Rephidim, they entered the wilderness of Sinai and encamped in the wilderness. Israel encamped

(ב) ויסעו מרפידים ויבאו מדבר סיני ויחנו  
במדבר ויחן שם ישראל נגד ההר: (ג) ומשה



there in front of the mountain, <sup>3</sup>and Moses went up to God. The Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob and declare to the children of Israel: <sup>4</sup>‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Me. <sup>5</sup>Now then, if you will obey Me faithfully and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples. Indeed, all the earth is Mine, <sup>6</sup>but you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel.”

<sup>7</sup>Moses came and summoned the elders of the people and put before them all that the Lord had commanded him. <sup>8</sup>All the people answered as one, saying, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do!” And Moses brought back the people’s words to the Lord.

עֲלָה אֶל הָאֱלֹהִים וִיקְרָא אֵלָיו ה' מִן הָהָר  
לֵאמֹר כֹּה תֹאמַר לְבֵית יַעֲקֹב וְתִגִּיד לְבְנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל: (ד) אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי  
לְמִצְרַיִם וְאֲשָׂא אֶתְכֶם עַל כַּנְּפֵי נְשָׁרִים וְאָבֹא  
אֶתְכֶם אֵלָי: (ה) וְעַתָּה אִם שְׁמוֹעַ תִּשְׁמָעוּ בְּקוֹלִי  
וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת בְּרִיתִי וְהִיִּיתֶם לִי סֻגְלָה מִכָּל  
הָעַמִּים כִּי לִי כָל הָאָרֶץ: (ו) וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ לִי  
מִמְלַכְת כֹּהֲנִים וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר  
תִּדְבֹּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

(ז) וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וִיקְרָא לְזִקְנֵי הָעָם וַיָּשֶׁם  
לִפְנֵיהֶם אֶת כָּל הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר צִוָּהוּ ה':  
(ח) וַיַּעֲנוּ כָל הָעָם יְחָדוּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָל אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר  
ה' נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁבַּע מֹשֶׁה אֶת דְּבָרֵי הָעָם אֶל ה':

#### 4. Deuteronomy 11:1, 13–23

<sup>1</sup>Love, therefore, the Lord your God, and always keep His charge, His laws, His rules, and His commandments....

<sup>13</sup>If, then, you obey the commandments that I enjoin upon you this day, loving the Lord your God and serving Him with all your heart and soul, <sup>14</sup>I will grant the rain for your land in season, the early rain and the late. You shall gather in your new grain and wine and oil—<sup>15</sup>I will also provide grass in the fields for your cattle—and thus you shall eat your fill. <sup>16</sup>Take care not to be lured away to serve other gods and bow to them. <sup>17</sup>For the Lord’s anger will flare up against you, and He will shut up the skies so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its produce; and you will soon perish from the good land that the Lord is assigning to you.

(א) וְאַהֲבַת אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּשְׁמַרְתָּ מִשְׁמֶרֶתוֹ  
וְחֻקָּתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וּמִצְוֹתָיו כָּל הַיָּמִים...

(יג) וְהָיָה אִם שָׁמַעַתְּ תִשְׁמָעוּ אֶל מִצְוֹתֵי אֲשֶׁר  
אֲנִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיכֶם  
וּלְעֲבֹדוֹ בְּכָל לִבְבְּכֶם וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁכֶם:  
(יד) וְנָתַתִּי מָטָר אֲרָצְכֶם בְּעֵתוֹ יוֹרֵה וּמִלְקוֹשׁ  
וְאִסַּפְתִּי דֶגְגֶנְךָ וְתִירְשְׁךָ וַיִּצְהַרְךָ: (טו) וְנָתַתִּי  
עֹשֶׁב בְּשָׂדֶךָ לִבְהֶמְתְּךָ וְאָכַלְתָּ וּשְׂבַעְתָּ:  
(טז) הִשְׁמָרוּ לָכֶם פֶּן יִפְתֶּה לְבַבְכֶם וְסָרְתֶם  
וְעַבַּדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם:  
(יז) וְחָרָה אַף ה' בְּכֶם וְעֶצֶר אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם  
וְלֹא יִהְיֶה מָטָר וְהָאֲדָמָה לֹא תִתֵּן אֶת יְבוּלָהּ  
וְאֲבִדְתֶּם מְהֵרָה מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר ה'  
נָתַן לָכֶם:

<sup>18</sup>Therefore impress these My words upon your very heart: bind them as a sign on your hand and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead,<sup>19</sup>and teach them to your children—reciting them when you stay at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up;<sup>20</sup>and inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates—<sup>21</sup>to the end that you and your children may endure, in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers to assign to them, as long as there is a heaven over the earth.

<sup>22</sup>If, then, you faithfully keep all this Instruction that I command you, loving the Lord your God, walking in all His ways, and holding fast to Him,<sup>23</sup>the Lord will dislodge before you all these nations: you will dispossess nations greater and more numerous than you.

(יח) וְשִׁמַּתֶּם אֶת דְּבָרֵי אֵלֶּה עַל לִבְבְּכֶם וְעַל נַפְשְׁכֶם וְקִשְׁרֶתֶם אֹתָם לְאוֹת עַל יָדְכֶם וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם: (יט) וְלִמַּדְתֶּם אֹתָם אֶת בְּנֵיכֶם לְדַבֵּר בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבִלְכָתְךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ: (כ) וְכַתַּבְתֶּם עַל מְזוֹזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ: (כא) לְמַעַן יִרְבוּ יְמֵיכֶם וְיָמֵי בְנֵיכֶם עַל הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע ה' לְאַבְתִּיכֶם לָתֵת לָהֶם כִּימֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם עַל הָאָרֶץ:

(כב) כִּי אִם שָׁמַר תִּשְׁמְרוּן אֶת כָּל הַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מִצְוֶה אֶתְכֶם לַעֲשׂוֹתָהּ לְאַהֲבָה אֶת ה' אֱ-לֹהֵיכֶם לָלֶכֶת בְּכָל דְּרָכָיו וּלְדַבְּקָהּ בּוֹ: (כג) וְהוֹרִישׁ ה' אֶת כָּל הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה מִלְּפָנֵיכֶם וִירְשֶׁתֶם גּוֹיִם גְּדֻלִּים וְעַצְמִים מִכֶּם:

## 5. Jeremiah 2:1-3, 3:7-10

*The prophet Jeremiah was active during in the period immediately before the destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonians (586 BCE) and the end of Judean independence; he also prophesied during the period of the exile itself.*

<sup>1</sup>The word of the Lord came to me, saying, <sup>2</sup>Go proclaim to Jerusalem: Thus said the Lord: I accounted to your favor  
The devotion of your youth,  
Your love as a bride—  
How you followed Me in the wilderness,  
In a land not sown.  
<sup>3</sup>Israel was holy to the Lord,  
The first fruits of His harvest.  
All who ate of it were held guilty;  
Disaster befell them  
—declares the Lord.

<sup>7</sup>Even after she had done all this I thought she would come back to me, but she did not. That faithless woman, her sister Judah, saw it;

(א) וַיְהִי דְבַר ה' אֵלַי לֵאמֹר: (ב) הֲלֹךְ וְקִרְאתָ בְּאָזְנֵי יְרוּשָׁלַיִם לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר ה' זָכַרְתִּי לָךְ חֶסֶד נְעוּרֶיךָ אֲהַבַת כְּלוּלֶתֶיךָ לְכַתֹּךְ אַחֲרַי בַּמִּדְבָּר בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא זְרוּעָה: (ג) קִדַּשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל לָהּ רֵאשִׁית תְּבוּאָתָהּ כָּל אֲכָלֶיהָ יִאֲשָׁמוּ רָעָה תָּבֵא אֱלֹהֵיהֶם נָאִם ה':

(ז) וְאָמַר אַחֲרַי עֲשֵׂתָה אֶת-כָּל-אֵלֶּה אֵלַי תָּשׁוּב וְלֹא-שָׁבָה וַתֵּרָא בְּגוֹדָה אַחֻתָּהּ



<sup>8</sup>she saw too that I had put apostate Israel away and given her a certificate of divorce because she had committed adultery. Yet that faithless woman, her sister Judah, was not afraid; she too went and committed adultery.

<sup>9</sup>She defiled the land with her casual prostitution and her adulterous worship of stone and wood.

<sup>10</sup>In spite of all this Judah, that faithless woman, has not come back to me in sincerity, but only in pretence.

יְהוּדָה:

(ח) וְאָרָא כִּי עַל־כָּל־אֲדוֹת אֲשֶׁר נֶאֱמָה  
מִשְׁבָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁלַחְתִּיהָ וְאָתַן אֶת־סִפָּר  
כְּרִיתֶתִיהָ אֵלֶיהָ וְלֹא יָרָא בְּגִדָה יְהוּדָה  
אֲחוֹתָהּ וְתִלְךְ וְתִזֶן גַּם־הִיא:  
(ט) וְהָיָה מִקֵּל זְנוּתָהּ וְתַחֲנוּף אֶת־הָאָרֶץ  
וְתִנְאָף אֶת־הָאֶבֶן וְאֶת־הָעֵץ:  
(י) וְגַם־בְּכָל־זֹאת לֹא־שָׁבָה אֵלַי בְּגִדָה  
אֲחוֹתָהּ יְהוּדָה בְּכָל־לֵבָהּ כִּי אִם־בְּשֹׁקֶר  
נֹאמְרָה:

## II. LAW OR LOVE? THE PROPHETS DEBATE THE COVENANT

### 6. Jeremiah 7:1-11

<sup>1</sup>The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord: <sup>2</sup>Stand at the gate of the House of the Lord, and there proclaim this word: Hear the word of the Lord, all you of Judah who enter these gates to worship the Lord!

<sup>3</sup>Thus said the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel: Mend your ways and your actions, and I will let you dwell in this place. <sup>4</sup>Don't put your trust in illusions and say, "The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these [buildings]." <sup>5</sup>No, if you really mend your ways and your actions; if you execute justice between one man and another; <sup>6</sup>if you do not oppress the stranger, the orphan, and the widow; if you do not shed the blood of the innocent in this place; if you do not follow other gods, to your own hurt—<sup>7</sup>then only will I let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers for all time.

<sup>8</sup>See, you are relying on illusions that are of no avail. <sup>9</sup>Will you steal and murder and commit adultery and swear falsely, and sacrifice to Baal, and follow other gods whom you have not experienced, <sup>10</sup>and then come and stand

(א) הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר הָיָה אֵלַיִרְמְיָהוּ מֵאֵת ה'  
לֵאמֹר: (ב) עֲמֵד בַּשַּׁעַר בֵּית ה' וְקִרְאתָ שָׁם  
אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה וְאָמַרְתָּ שְׁמָעוּ דְּבַר־ה' כָּל־יְהוּדָה  
הַבָּאִים בַּשַּׁעֲרִים הָאֵלֶּה לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לַה':

(ג) כֹּה־אָמַר ה' צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִיטִיבוּ  
דְּרָכֵיכֶם וּמַעַלְלֵיכֶם וְאִשְׁכְּנָה אֶתְכֶם בְּמָקוֹם  
הַזֶּה: (ד) אַל־תִּבְטְחוּ לָכֶם אֶל־דְּבַר־הַשֶּׁקֶר  
לֵאמֹר הִכַּל ה' הִכַּל ה' הִכַּל ה' הִמָּה: (ה) כִּי  
אִם־הִיטִיב תִּיטִיבוּ אֶת־דְּרָכֵיכֶם וְאֶת־מַעַלְלֵיכֶם  
אִם־עָשׂוֹ תַעֲשׂוּ מִשְׁפָּט בֵּין אִישׁ וּבֵין רֵעֵהוּ:  
(ו) גֵּר יָתוֹם וְאַלְמָנָה לֹא תַעֲשֻׁקוּ וְדָם נָקִי אַל־  
תִּשְׁפְּכוּ בְּמָקוֹם הַזֶּה וְאַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים  
לֹא תִלְכוּ לְרַע לָכֶם: (ז) וְשִׁכַּנְתִּי אֶתְכֶם בְּמָקוֹם  
הַזֶּה בָּאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם לְמִן־עוֹלָם  
וְעַד־עוֹלָם: (ח) הִנֵּה אַתֶּם בֹּטְחִים לָכֶם עַל־  
דְּבַר־הַשֶּׁקֶר לְבִלְתִּי הוֹעִיל: (ט) הִגְנֹב רָצַח  
וְנֹאֵף וְהִשָּׁבַע לַשֶּׁקֶר וְקִטֹּר לַבַּעַל וְהִלֵּךְ אַחֲרֵי  
אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יַדְעֶתֶם: (י) וּבָאתֶם  
וְעַמַּדְתֶּם לִפְנֵי בַּיִת הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר נִקְרָאִישְׁמִי  
עָלָיו וְאָמַרְתֶּם נִצַּלְנוּ לְמַעַן עֲשׂוֹת אֵת כָּל־

before Me in this House which bears My name and say, “We are safe?”—[Safe] to do all these abhorrent things! <sup>11</sup>Do you consider this House, which bears My name, to be a den of thieves? As for Me, I have been watching—declares the Lord.

הַתּוֹעֲבוֹת הָאֵלֶּה: (יא) הַמַּעֲרַת פְּרָצִים הִיא  
הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר-נִקְרָא שְׁמִי עָלָיו בְּעֵינֵיכֶם גַּם  
אֲנִכִּי הִנֵּה רֹאֵתִי נְאֻם-ה'.

## 7. Isaiah 54:6–10

<sup>6</sup>The Lord has called you back  
As a wife forlorn and forsaken.  
Can one cast off the wife of his youth?  
—said your God.

<sup>7</sup>For a little while I forsook you,  
But with vast love I will bring you back.

<sup>8</sup>In slight anger, for a moment,  
I hid My face from you;  
But with kindness everlasting  
I will take you back in love  
—said the Lord your Redeemer.

<sup>9</sup>For this to Me is like the waters of Noah:  
As I swore that the waters of Noah  
Nevermore would flood the earth,  
So I swear that I will not  
Be angry with you or rebuke you.  
<sup>10</sup>For the mountains may move  
And the hills be shaken,  
But my loyalty shall never move from you,  
Nor My covenant of friendship be shaken  
—said the Lord, who takes you back in love.

(ו) כִּי-כָאִשָּׁה עֲזוּבָה וְעֲצוּבַת רוּחַ קָרָאךָ ה'  
וְאִשָּׁת נְעוּרִים כִּי תִמָּאֵס אָמַר אֱלֹהֶיךָ:  
(ז) בְּרִגְעַ קָטָן עֲזַבְתִּיךָ וּבְרַחֲמִים גְּדֹלִים  
אֶקְבְּצֶךָ: (ח) בְּשֹׁצֵף קֶצֶף הִסְתַּרְתִּי פָנַי רִגַע  
מִמֶּךָ וּבְחֶסֶד עוֹלָם רַחֲמֶתִיךָ אָמַר גְּאֻלְךָ ה':

(ט) כִּי-מִי נֹחַ זֹאת לִי אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי מִעַבֵּר  
מִי-נֹחַ עוֹד עַל-הָאָרֶץ כֵּן נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי מִקֶּצֶף  
עָלֶיךָ וּמִגְעָרְבֶךָ: (י) כִּי עָהָרִים יָמוּשׁוּ  
וְהַגְּבוּעוֹת תִּמְוָטֶינָה וְחֶסְדִּי מֵאֵתֶךָ לֹא-יָמוּשׁ  
וּבְרִית שְׁלוֹמִי לֹא תִמוּט אָמַר מְרַחֲמֶךָ ה':

## 8. Isaiah 49:14–21

<sup>14</sup>Zion says,  
“The Lord has forsaken me,  
My Lord has forgotten me.”  
<sup>15</sup>Can a woman forget her baby,  
Or disown the child of her womb?  
Though she might forget,  
I never could forget you.

(יד) וַתֹּאמֶר צִיּוֹן עֲזַבְנִי ה' וַאֲדֹנָי שָׁכַחְנִי:  
(טו) הֲתִשְׁכַּח אִשָּׁה עוֹלָה מֵרַחֵם בְּיָבֻטָּנָה  
גַּם-אֵלֶּה תִשְׁכַּחנָּה וְאֲנִכִּי לֹא אֲשַׁכַּח:  
(טז) הֵן עַל-כִּפְּיָם חִקְתִּיךָ חוֹמֶתֶךָ נִגְדִּי  
תָּמִיד: (יז) מִהֲרוּ בָנֶיךָ מִהֲרִסֶיךָ וּמִחֲרִבֶיךָ  
מִמֶּךָ יֵצְאוּ: (יח) שְׂאִי-סִבִּיב עֵינֶיךָ וּרְאִי

<sup>16</sup>See, I have engraved you  
On the palms of My hands,  
Your walls are ever before Me.  
<sup>17</sup>Swiftly your children are coming;  
Those who ravaged and ruined you shall leave you.  
<sup>18</sup>Look up all around you and see:  
They are all assembled, are come to you!  
As I live—declares the Lord—  
You shall don them all like jewels,  
Deck yourself with them like a bride.  
<sup>19</sup>As for your ruins and desolate places  
And your land laid waste—  
You shall soon be crowded with settlers,  
While destroyers stay far from you.  
<sup>20</sup>The children you thought you had lost  
Shall yet say in your hearing,  
“The place is too crowded for me;  
Make room for me to settle.”  
<sup>21</sup>And you will say to yourself,  
“Who bore these for me  
When I was bereaved and barren,  
Exiled and disdained—  
By whom, then, were these reared?  
I was left all alone—  
And where have these been?”

כָּלֶם נִקְבְּצוּ בְּאֶרְצוֹ חֵי־אֲנִי נֶאֱמַר ה' כִּי  
כָּלֶם כַּעֲדֵי תִלְבָּשִׁי וְתִקְשְׁרִים כִּכְלָה:  
(יט) כִּי חֲרֻבְתִּיךָ וְשִׁמְמִתִּיךָ וְאֶרֶץ הִרְסִיתִיךָ  
כִּי עֵתָה תִצְרִי מִיּוֹשֵׁב וְרִחְקוֹ מִבְּלָעִיךָ:  
(כ) עוֹד יֵאמְרוּ בְּאָזְנֶיךָ בְּנֵי שְׂכָלֶיךָ צֶרֶלִי  
הַמָּקוֹם גִּשָּׁה־לִּי וְאַשְׁבָּה: (כא) וְאַמְרַת  
בְּלִבְבְּךָ מִי יִלְד־לִי אֶת־אֱלֹהָ וְאֲנִי שְׂכוּלָה  
וְגִלְמוּדָה גְּלָה וְסוּרָה וְאֱלֹהָ מִי גִדֵּל הֵן אֲנִי  
נִשְׁאַרְתִּי לְבִדִּי אֱלֹהָ אֵיפָה הֵם:

### III. THE COVENANT OF LOVE UNDERLIES THE COVENANT OF LAW

#### 9. Leviticus 26:3–5, 14–17, 39–46

<sup>3</sup>If you follow My laws and faithfully observe  
My commandments, <sup>4</sup>I will grant your rains in  
their season, so that the earth shall yield its  
produce and the trees of the field their fruit.  
<sup>5</sup>Your threshing shall overtake the vintage,  
and your vintage shall overtake the sowing;  
you shall eat your fill of bread and dwell  
securely in your land.

<sup>14</sup>But if you do not obey Me and do not observe  
all these commandments, <sup>15</sup>if you reject My  
laws and spurn My rules, so that you do not

(ג) אִם־בְּחֻקֹּתַי תֵּלְכוּ וְאֶת־מִצְוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ  
וְעָשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם: (ד) וְנָתַתִּי גֶשְׁמִיכֶם בְּעֵתָם  
וְנָתַנָּה הָאָרֶץ יְבוּלָה וְעֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה יִתֵּן פִּרְיוֹ:  
(ה) וְהָשִׁיג לָכֶם דִּישׁ אֶת־בִּצְרִיר וּבִצְרִיר יִשְׁיג אֶת־  
זֶרַע וְאָכַלְתֶּם לַחֲמִיכֶם לְשֹׁבַע וְיִשְׁבַּתֶּם לְבֶטַח  
בְּאַרְצְכֶם:

(יד) וְאִם־לֹא תִשְׁמְעוּ לִי וְלֹא תַעֲשׂוּ אֶת־כָּל־  
הַמִּצְוֹת הָאֵלֶּה: (טו) וְאִם־בְּחֻקֹּתַי תִּמְאָסוּ וְאִם־  
אֶת־מִשְׁפָּטִי תִגְעַל נִפְשְׁכֶם לְבִלְתִּי עֲשׂוֹת אֶת־

observe all My commandments and you break My covenant, <sup>16</sup>I in turn will do this to you: I will wreak misery upon you—consumption and fever, which cause the eyes to pine and the body to languish; you shall sow your seed to no purpose, for your enemies shall eat it. <sup>17</sup>I will set My face against you: you shall be routed by your enemies, and your foes shall dominate you. You shall flee though none pursues.

<sup>39</sup>Those of you who survive shall be heartsick over their iniquity in the land of your enemies; more, they shall be heartsick over the iniquities of their fathers; <sup>40</sup>and they shall confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, in that they trespassed against Me, yea, were hostile to Me. <sup>41</sup>When I, in turn, have been hostile to them and have removed them into the land of their enemies, then at last shall their obdurate heart humble itself, and they shall atone for their iniquity. <sup>42</sup>Then will I remember My covenant with Jacob; I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham; and I will remember the land.

<sup>43</sup>For the land shall be forsaken of them, making up for its sabbath years by being desolate of them, while they atone for their iniquity; for the abundant reason that they rejected My rules and spurned My laws. <sup>44</sup>Yet, even then, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them or spurn them so as to destroy them, annulling My covenant with them: for I the Lord am their God. <sup>45</sup>I will remember in their favor the covenant with the ancients, whom I freed from the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations to be their God: I, the Lord.

<sup>46</sup>These are the laws, rules, and instructions that the Lord established, through Moses on Mount Sinai, between Himself and the Israelite people.

כָּל־מִצְוֹתַי לְהִפָּרֶכֶם אֶת־בְּרִיתִי: (טז) אֶף־אֲנִי  
אֶעֱשֶׂה־זֹאת לָכֶם וְהִפְקַדְתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם בְּהִלָּה אֶת־  
הַשְׁחָפָת וְאֶת־הַקְדַּחַת מְכֹלוֹת עֵינַיִם וּמְדִיבַת  
נֶפֶשׁ וְזִרְעָתָם לָרִיק זִרְעָכֶם וְאָכְלָהּ אֹיְבֵיכֶם:  
(יז) וְנָתַתִּי פָנַי בָּכֶם וְנִגַּפְתֶּם לִפְנֵי אֹיְבֵיכֶם  
וְרָדוּ בָכֶם שְׂנְאֵיכֶם וְנִסְתָּם וְאִין־רָדָף אֶתְכֶם:

(לט) וְהִנָּשְׂאִים בָּכֶם יִמְקוּ בַּעֲוֹנָם בָּאֶרֶצַת  
אֹיְבֵיכֶם וְאֶף בַּעֲוֹנֹת אֲבֹתָם אֶתָּם יִמְקוּ:  
(מ) וְהִתְדוּ אֶת־עֲוֹנָם וְאֶת־עוֹן אֲבֹתָם בְּמַעַלְם  
אֲשֶׁר מַעְלֹבִי וְאֶף אֲשֶׁר־הִלְכוּ עִמִּי בְקָרִי:  
(מא) אֶף־אֲנִי אֶלֶף עִמָּם בְּקָרִי וְהִבֵּאתִי אֹתָם  
בָּאֶרֶץ אֹיְבֵיהֶם אוֹ־אֲזִי יִכְנַע לְבָבָם הָעָרֶל וְאֲזִי  
יִרְצוּ אֶת־עֲוֹנָם: (מב) וְזָכַרְתִּי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי  
יַעֲקֹב וְאֶף אֶת־בְּרִיתִי יִצְחָק וְאֶף אֶת־בְּרִיתִי  
אַבְרָהָם אֲזָכֹר וְהָאֶרֶץ אֲזָכֹר:  
(מג) וְהָאֶרֶץ תַּעֲזֹב מֵהֶם וְתִרְץ אֶת־שִׁבְתֶּיהָ  
בְּהִשְׁמָה מֵהֶם וְהֵם יִרְצוּ אֶת־עֲוֹנָם יַעֲן וּבִיעוֹן  
בְּמִשְׁפָּטִי מֵאִסּוֹ וְאֶת־חֻקְתִּי גָעִלָה נִפְשָׁם:  
(מד) וְאֶף גַּם־זֹאת בְּהִיּוֹתָם בָּאֶרֶץ אֹיְבֵיהֶם  
לֹא־מֵאִסְתִּים וְלֹא־גָעִלְתִּים לְכֻלָּתָם לְהִפָּרֶכֶם  
בְּרִיתִי אֶתָּם כִּי אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיהֶם:  
(מה) וְזָכַרְתִּי לָהֶם בְּרִית רֵאשִׁנִּים אֲשֶׁר  
הוֹצֵאתִי־אֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְעֵינֵי הַגּוֹיִם  
לְהִיּוֹת לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים אֲנִי ה':  
(מו) אֵלֶּה הַחֻקִּים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים וְהַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר  
נָתַן ה' בֵּינוֹ וּבֵין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּהַר סִינַי בְּיַד  
מֹשֶׁה:

## 10. Ahavat Olam (from the Second Blessing before the Shema in the Evening Service)

With timeless love, You have loved Your people, the house of Israel: You have taught us Torah and mitzvot, statutes and laws. Therefore, Adonai our God, as we lie down and as we rise up, we shall speak of Your laws, rejoicing in the words of Your Torah and in Your mitzvot forever and ever. For they are our life and the fullness of our days, and on them we shall meditate day and night. Do not ever withdraw Your love from us. Praised are You, Adonai, who loves Your people Israel.

אַהֲבַת עוֹלָם בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ אָהֲבָתָּה, תּוֹרָה  
וּמִצְוֹת חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים אוֹתָנוּ לְמַדָּתָּה. עַל כֵּן  
ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּשִׁכְבָּנוּ וּבִקְוִמָנוּ נִשְׁיַח בְּחֻקֶּיךָ,  
וְנִשְׂמַח בְּדִבְרֵי תּוֹרָתְךָ וּבְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.  
כִּי הֵם חַיֵּינוּ וְאַרְךָ יָמֵינוּ וּבָהֶם נִהְיָה יוֹמָם  
וְלַיְלָה. וְאַהֲבָתְךָ אֵל תִּסִּיר מִמָּנוּ לְעוֹלָמִים.  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אוֹהֵב עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

## IV. THE COVENANT OF LOVE SUPERCEDES THE COVENANT OF LAW

### 11. Paul's Epistle to Galatians 3:15–18 and 4:21–26<sup>1</sup>

*Also known as Saint Paul the Apostle and Saul of Tarsus; early Christian leader and teacher of the gospel of Christ; Roman Empire (c. 5 CE–c. 64 CE).*

3<sup>15</sup>My friends, let me give you an illustration. When a man's will and testament has been duly executed, no one else can set it aside or add a codicil. <sup>16</sup>Now, the promises were pronounced to Abraham and to his 'issue'. It does not say 'issues' in the plural, but 'your issue' in the singular; and by 'issue' is meant Christ. <sup>17</sup>My point is this: a testament, or covenant, had already been validated by God; a law made four hundred and thirty years later cannot invalidate it and so render its promises ineffective. <sup>18</sup>If the inheritance is by legal right, then it is not by promise; but it was by promise that God bestowed it as a free gift on Abraham.

4<sup>21</sup>Tell me now, you that are so anxious to be under law, will you not listen to what the law says? <sup>22</sup>It is written there that Abraham had two sons, the one by a slave, the other by a free-born woman. <sup>23</sup>The slave's son was born in the ordinary course of nature, but the free woman's through God's promise. <sup>24</sup>This is an allegory: the two women stand for two covenants. The one covenant comes from Mount Sinai; that is Hagar, and her children are born into slavery. <sup>25</sup>Sinai is a mountain in Arabia and represents the Jerusalem of today for she and her children are in slavery. <sup>26</sup>But the heavenly Jerusalem is the free woman; she is our mother.

<sup>1</sup> *The Oxford Study Bible*. Ed. M. Jack Suggs, Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, and James R. Mueller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

## 12. William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, Act IV, Scene 1

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*A poet, playwright, and actor widely regarded as one of the greatest writers of the English language (England, 1564–1616).*

*Shylock:*

The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,  
Is dearly bought; 'tis mine and I will have it.  
If you deny me, fie upon your law!  
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.  
I stand for judgment: answer; shall I have it?

...

*Portia:*

Then must the Jew be merciful.

*Shylock:*

On what compulsion must I? Tell me that.

*Portia:*

The quality of mercy is not strained;  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest;  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:  
'T is mightiest in the mightiest;  
...  
It is an attribute to God himself;  
And earthly power doth then show likest God's  
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,  
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,  
That, in the course of justice, none of us  
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;  
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render  
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much  
To mitigate the justice of thy plea;  
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice  
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

*Shylock:*

My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,  
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.



### 13. Avinu Malkeinu (from the High Holiday Liturgy)

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Our Father, our King, treat us with grace and answer us, for our deeds are insufficient; deal with us charitably and lovingly, and redeem us.

אָבֵינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ חַנּוּנוּ וְעֲנֵנוּ כִּי אֵין בְּנוֹ מַעֲשִׂים.  
עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה וְחֶסֶד וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Held, Shai. *Abraham Joshua Heschel: The Call of Transcendence*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013. See esp. Index, discussions of “commandment,” “covenant,” and “grace.”
2. \_\_\_\_\_. “The God of Judaism is a God of Love.” Hadar Summer Lecture Series 2018. <https://www.hadar.org/torah-resource/on-love>
3. Hillers, Delbert R. *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969.

*Note: The following two books by Jon Levenson are particularly helpful on the themes of covenant and divine love:*

4. Levenson, Jon. *The Love of God: Divine Gift, Human Gratitude, and Mutual Faithfulness in Judaism*. Princeton: Princeton University press, 2015.
5. \_\_\_\_\_. *Sinai and Zion: An Entry Into the Jewish Bible*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987.
6. Muffs, Yochanan. *Love and Joy: Law, Language and Religion in Ancient Israel*. New York and Cambridge: The Jewish Theological Seminary and Harvard University Press, 1992. See esp. chapters 1, 2, 7, and 8.
7. Nicholson, Ernest W. *God and His People: Covenant and Theology in the Old Testament*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Clarendon, 1986.
8. Nirenberg, David and Capezzone, Leonardo. “Religions of Love: Judaism, Christianity, Islam.” In *The Oxford Guide to Abrahamic Religions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
9. Novak, David. “Avoiding Charges of Legalism and Antinomianism in Jewish-Christian Dialogue.” In *Talking with Christians: Musings of a Jewish Theologian*, 26–45. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2005.
10. Tomson, Peter J. *Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles*, vol. 1, 1–30. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990.