

1. Covenant Review -

(Hebrew *B'reit*): A covenant is an agreement between two parties in which one or both make promises under oath to perform or refrain from certain actions stipulated in advance.

2. Covenant Ratification –

- **Ratification** – formal consent, making officially valid, "sign on the dotted line."
- In the ancient world, covenants were ratified by shedding a sacrifice's blood rather than a ballpoint pen (Ex. 24:1-8).
- The blood symbolizes the **life** of each party to the covenant (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:11-15).

3. Blood Path Ratification Ceremony -

- Sacrificial animals are divided in two – "cut" in half – and placed across from each other to create a path of blood.

4. To "Cut a Covenant" -

- Hebrew idiomatic expression for making a covenant is to "cut a covenant."
- The Hebrew term "to cut a covenant" is "*karat b'reit*." And refers to the act of cutting an animal two for covenant-making (Gen. 15:18)
- Each party to the covenant walked through the pieces while reciting their vows.
- This ritual act communicates, "If I violate this covenant, you can do *this* to me."

5. Eighteenth-century-B.C. treaty between *Ashurnirari V* of Assyria and *Mati'ilu* of Arpad – ¹

“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. If *Mati'ilu* sins against this treaty, so may, just as the head of this spring lamb is torn off...the head of *Mati'ilu* be torn off, and of his sons...”

6. **Jeremiah 34:18-20** – the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem reneged on a covenant promise to release fellow Israelites who were being held as slaves to other Israelites.

7. God's Presence – Smoke (cloud) or fire.

¹ Pritchard, James B., 2011. *The Ancient Near East: an Anthology of Texts and Pictures*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, pp. 210-211.

8. Genesis 12 – 18 – God's Covenant with Abraham

- The covenant promises and stipulations/obligations are spread out and reiterated over multiple chapters.

God's Promises	
- great nation	Gen. 12:2, 18:18
- name great	Gen. 12:2
- bless all people on earth <i>through</i> you	Gen. 12: 3, 18:18
- protect you	Gen. 15:1
- many descendants	Gen 15:5
- land grant	Gen. 12:7, 15:7, 17:8
- the father of many nations	Gen. 17:4

Abraham's Obligations	
- walk before me and be blameless	Gen. 17:1
- every male must be circumcised	Gen. 17:10
- teach your descendants to 'keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just' (obey God's commandments)	Gen. 18:19

9. Genesis 15 – Covenant Ratification Ceremony

- Does Abraham pass through the pieces? No!
- God passes through the pieces on Abraham's behalf – accepting the penalty for both sides of the covenant!

“Abraham, if you, or any of your descendants, sin against this covenant, I will pay the penalty on your behalf.”

10. Genesis 15:12 – "deep sleep" and "thick and dreadful darkness."

- God is showing Abraham the future –
 - the rabbis debated how far into the future God showed him.
 - Some said the day of the Exodus (**Ex. 12:41**), while others said the day of the Messiah.²
 - **John 8:56** (see also Heb. 11:13)

11. Genesis 15:18 – "On that day" – the Rabbi's debated what day this meant.

- **Exodus 12:41** says, "On that very day," the Israelites left Egypt - the day was Passover!

1. God's covenant w/ Abraham must have happened on Passover – "on that day."
2. The same day, 430 years later, Abrahams's descendants would leave Egypt – "on that day."
3. The same day – Passover - Jesus died as the Lamb of God – fulfilling the covenant promise to pay the penalty for sin *and* as the ratification sacrifice for a New Covenant!

² Genesis Rabbah 44:22.