



CONNECTING THE DOTS: MOSAIC COVENANT

The Grammys are the music industry's awards show. Ironically, the 2012 edition began with a *prayer to God*, and ended with an *ode to Satan*. Thanks to the Grammys, 40 million viewers watched Nicki Minja stage satanic rituals like levitation, demon possession, sexualized torture, an exorcism... even altar boys danced in sexually suggestive maneuvers. "*Creepy*," "*dark*," "*evil*," "*deplorable*" were just a few of the adjectives used to describe her act. Sadly, for Nicki you got the feeling it might not be an act!

But as shocking as the Grammys' depiction of satanism might've been to us, if the show had aired on [19th Century BC Amorite TV](#) I doubt if anyone would've batted an eye. Canaan-land was a *hot bed for all things demonic*. Sexualized shamanism was a common practice in the ancient world. God gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob the land of Canaan, but these faithful men never felt at home there. They were strangers in a strange land. *Recall the evils of Sodom and Gomorrah*. That was the tip of the iceberg. The Canaanites indulged in *occult fertility rites, temple prostitution, even child sacrifice*... The Grammys would've had plenty of programming.

Flashback to the days of Noah... Something weird and evil happened on planet Earth. It was so repulsive, God flooded humanity and started over. Genesis 6 implies there was a sexual intermingling between humans and demons... *Something you might see in a Nicki Minja video*... The Bible refers to the offspring of these perverted unions as "*giants*." The Hebrew word is "*nephilim*" which means "*fallen ones*." Jude 6 tells us these demons "*did not keep their proper domain*..." They failed to maintain proper boundaries. They materialized as humans to impregnate women. It's interesting, Genesis 6:9 says God started over with Noah because he was "*perfect in his generations*" or we could say, "*pure in his lineage*."

Now flash ahead to the days of Moses – after Abraham. The Deliverer returns Israel to the edge of the Promised Land. The nation sends in spies. And the reconnaissance reports "*giants*" in the land. It's "*The Return of the Nephilim*." It was a post-flood outbreak of Nicki Minja-type demonism. Still later, David's archenemy is another "*nephilim*" named "*Goliath*."

I know this all sounds strange... dark, sinister, sexual perversions were occurring in the distant past... *with your great, great, great, great Grammy*. But what Nicki Minja gave you a taste of at this year's Grammys was nothing unusual in the land God gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When first promised, ***the Promised Land was a Perverted Land***.

Last week we talked about the Abrahamic Covenant. Out of all the families of the world, God chose one man and made him three promises... Abraham inherits a chunk of **land**. His descendants become a great **nation**. Through His Seed – a special heir – all the nations will be **blessed**. ***Land, nation, blessing***... We identified the land as **Canaan** - the nation as **Israel** - and the Seed through whom the blessing comes as **Jesus**.

These were important promises, and God invested them in one family, *the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*. But narrowing down His redemptive plan to a single family made God's strategy more vulnerable. Abraham's offspring will be a **"great nation,"** but at the time of their choosing they were an **"average family."** Genesis 46 adds up 70 people, *kids and grandkids*. The nation was really just a fair-sized extended family. Here's God's dilemma in the 19th century BC... a corrupt Canaanite culture is strong and influential - *a Hollywood on steroids*. Whereas, Abraham's family is susceptible - impressionable. It's just getting started. *Now all Satan has to do is to pollute a single family, and salvation is over for mankind*. How can God protect this small band from extinction?

Think of a little lamb surrounded by a dozen wolves closing in for the kill. How will *God's vulnerable few* survive in a land of devouring evil? If God had left Abraham's family defenseless in Canaan they would've been gobbled up by the culture. In a few generations they would've disappeared through intermarriage, assimilation, and spiritual compromise. God needed to get them somewhere protected, where they could grow and gain strength - until He could equip them to stand out as a separate culture and people... God's answer was two-fold – **Egypt** and **Covenant**.

We too live in hostile surroundings. We live in a sexualized world of evil, spiritual influences. *But this is the Christian's calling*. **"We're in the world, but not of it."** Our job is **infiltration**. God has given us an internal power. His Holy Spirit lives in our hearts to make a difference in the world. But Abraham's family didn't have this internal Spirit. God needed to protect them from evil influences until they could grow strong enough to survive and maintain their distinctiveness. Thus, His strategy for Israel was **isolation, not infiltration**. God loaded them up and moved them to Egypt.

Egypt was the one country on Earth where God's people could remain completely segregated. Ancient Egyptians were racists. They believed Egyptians descended from the gods; thus, marriage to a non-Egyptian was unthinkable. The Hebrews had no opportunity to mingle with the locals. At the end of Genesis, God engineers Joseph from a pit, to a prison, to the pinnacle of power in Egypt – in preparation for the famine that strikes Canaan. Israel left for Egypt to wait out the famine - *and stayed 400 years*. Due to Joseph's influence, Israel's first years in Egypt were prosperous ones. They multiplied like rabbits. But when a pharaoh came to power who didn't know Joseph their plight changed. They were forced into slavery. *But think of Egypt as a mother's womb*. The safest nine months your baby will ever know is in-utero. And Israel's time in Egypt allowed a baby nation to grow, and gain strength enough to survive in the land of Canaan.

Don't ever assume God gets caught by surprise. Even difficult scenarios are part of His plan. Israel's bondage in Egypt had been predicted by God. In Genesis 15 when God cut the covenant with Abraham, He spoke of his family's future, **"Your descendants will be strangers in a**

land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them 400 years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions... In the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” Six hundred years before any of it happens God says He’ll *judge Egypt, bless the Hebrews* - then *use the children of Israel to punish the evil of the Amorites*. It was all God’s design. Seventy people went down to Egypt. They returned six million strong.

Once a visiting pastor got carried away. He preached on and on and on. Finally, the host pastor started shouting, “Amen, pharaoh!” It got more and more frequent, “Amen, pharaoh!” Well, when the visitor had finally finished, he asked his host what he meant by “Amen, pharaoh!” The pastor of the church replied, “Man, I was trying to get you to **let my people go!**” Well, that’s what Moses told the pharaoh. *Let God’s people go!* And God backed it up with ten plagues aimed squarely at the idols of Egypt. Egyptians worshipped the Nile, the frog, the cow, the sun, and the firstborn – and guess where God targeted his attacks? He proved to Egypt that all their gods were futile against Him. “**I am**” is the only true God.

The final plague was most important. On the night before the Jewish exodus death passed over every home in Egypt, killing every firstborn son. *But God provided a means of deliverance... He always does...* If you slaughtered a lamb and spread its blood on the doorposts, when the death plague saw the blood it would **pass over** the house. The folks inside would be saved - not because of their own merit - but due to the blood. *It was a type of all God’s covenants. God seals His deals with blood.* Salvation has nothing to do with our moral scorecard, or good works, or religious observance – it’s determined by **our faith** in God’s sacrifice.

The next day, Moses led the people out of Egypt. They came to Egypt *a family* and departed *a nation...* Moses led them through the Red Sea. In 1 Corinthians 10 Paul refers to it as a baptism. It marked a new beginning. The children of Jacob went *from slaves to freemen – from nobodies to a great nation – from an army of brick-masons to the army of the Lord.*

After exiting Egypt, Moses headed at God’s command to Mount Sinai. It took Israel three months to arrive, and along the way they learned lessons. Everyday they awoke to the wonder break – the manna... God brought water from the rock... They won a decisive victory over the Amalekites... Recall, when God walked through the animal parts to seal the covenant with Abraham, He appeared as **smoke and fire – a smoking furnace and a burning torch**. Now God leads Israel with **smoke and fire - the cloud by day and the fire by night**. God was reminding us that He keeps His covenant.

There’s a great debate today in biblical archeology over the true location of Mount Sinai. There’re at least a dozen different proposed sites. The traditional site of Mount Sinai is a colossal outcropping of rock that rises 7,500 feet ASL. *It looks like a giant pulpit rising up from the ground...* Whichever is the true Mount Sinai, God did use it as a pulpit! It was never God’s intention to rush Israel straight into the promised land. They needed preparation. God wanted to teach and prepare His people. Most importantly, He wanted to establish a protective **covenant...**

Recall, God always works a covenant. He wants a relationship with us, but not just any relationship. He demands a relationship on His own terms. Everybody today says they love God and believes in God, but the true test is whether you’re willing to submit to the expectations God sets out in His covenant. **A relationship of convenience is not a covenant relationship.** Israel’s destiny was to return to the land God promised and be a holy nation in an unholy world, *but to do so God will arm them with a covenant.*

Israel camped for a year at the base of Mount Sinai - *God's pulpit*. Exodus 19 – Numbers 10 all takes place at the mountain. Over 57 chapters record what happened at Sinai with the making of this covenant. God took His time. He wanted His people to *behold His glory* and *know His heart*. At Sinai God entered another covenant with Abraham's family. This time through Moses. Exodus 19 begins **The Mosaic Covenant**.

Let's start in verse 3, "And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians...'" God points out He's on their side. The proof is in the pudding. He shook the greatest kingdom in the world. He embarrassed their idols in head-to-head competition. He humbled the most powerful ruler on earth. He loosen the pharaoh's terrible grip. *They should never doubt His love*.

And God uses some beautiful imagery to describe His treatment of the new nation, "how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself." The Hebrews had come through a mountainous area. They watched the mother eagles stretch out their huge wingspans and catch their little eaglets on their feathers. When one fell from the nest, the mama bird swooped to its rescue just before it smacked the ground. And this is what God had done for Israel over the last three months. *He'd carried the nation*. They needed food and He provided bread supernaturally... They wanted water, so God provided it miraculously from a rock... A skilled enemy attacks a group of untrained slaves – and again God flaps to their rescue... God was teaching Israel to trust Him. They needed to walk by faith.

Verse 5, "Now therefore, 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." Recall, God chose Abraham out of all the peoples of the Earth. *We say that Israel is God's nation, but all the nations are His*. Yet God chose Israel to be "a special treasure... above all people..." This reminds me of Zechariah 2:8. It's said of Israel, "he who touches you touches the apple of His eye." I don't like to stump my toe, or hit my head, but it happens... Yet my eye is a different. Seldom do I get poked in the eye. When it comes to my eye reflexes are faster. I have a designated lid – a shutter – that protect the eye. I'm far more sensitive about my eye. And this is how God feels about the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The nation was a special treasure. God cherished Israel.

Of course, Israel didn't deserve such treatment. They were a stubborn lot. In Deuteronomy 9:4 God speaks to the second generation that enters the land... *After He drives out the enemy*, He warns Israel, "Do not think... Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me into this land..." He defeated the Canaanites because of *their sin*, not *Israel's goodness*. In Deuteronomy 7:7 Moses says to the same generation, "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples..." Why God chose Abraham's family over every other family on Earth doesn't make sense, *but grace never makes sense! Lots of folk are scratching their head wondering why God chose me!* All I know is if grace is earned - it's no longer grace. God blessed Israel because *He chose* to love and favor her. Now He's asking Israel to enter a covenant with Him...

God says to them in verse 6, "You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." This is a call to enormous privilege and responsibility. God is going to love Israel – *treat her like a treasure*. But in return Israel needs to treat God with special dedication. Israel is assuming a unique calling. Jacob's family will be "a kingdom of priests" and "a holy nation." God chose Israel to be a light to all the other nations on the Earth.

Remember, rather than working with mankind as a whole, God chose one family. Now God plans to use that family as a witness to the world. Israel will be a signpost to the nations. Through Israel God will teach truth, and shine light. People will learn of God by watching Israel. The family of Abraham will serve a priestly role and draw other nations to worship God.

Within Israel God designated one tribe – the family of Levi – to serve as the priests. Levi will assume the administration of the sacrifices and Temple worship. Levi will have a priestly role among the tribes of Israel. But in the same way, Israel will have a priestly role among the tribes of the world. God loved Israel as a special treasure, but that didn't negate His love for all nations. *And God's means of reaching the world was through Israel.* OT evangelism depended on Israel. This is **The Mosaic Covenant**.

But notice what happens next. Verse 7, *“So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him. Then all the people answered together and said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do. So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD.”* Notice the difference between **the Mosaic Covenant** and **the covenant God made with Abraham**. When Abraham cut the covenant, God walked through the animal parts all by Himself. *All Abraham did was wake up, look on, and believe.* But here the people do more. They accept their part in the covenant. The people answer God, *“All the LORD has spoken we will do.”* The Mosaic Covenant required not just faith, but total obedience.

In Exodus 24 Moses leads the elders of Israel up to the mountain of God to offer a sacrifice and officially accept the terms of this covenant. The elders agree to keep God's word, then Moses sprinkles them with blood. Imagine, being rained on with warm cow's blood. As we've noted all the covenants are **initiated by grace, entered by faith, and sealed by blood**. Read Exodus 24 God celebrates the covenant by revealing His glory.

Understand, just as there were three parts to **The Abrahamic Covenant: land, nation, blessing** – there're also three parts to **The Mosaic Covenant: the law, and the sacrificial system, and the blessings and the curses**. With the rest of our time we'll explore each of the three...

When we think of **the Law** we usually think of God's Top Ten – **The Ten Commandments** – but that's just the tip of the iceberg. One rabbi counted 613 laws – 248 do's, 365 don'ts – *one prohibition for everyday of the year*. **The Law** consisted of three types of laws. First, were **moral laws** (*these were God's standards for personal character and sexuality*). Second, **civil or social laws** (*these governed life as it related to the land of Canaan*). And third, **ceremonial laws** (*these were kept to symbolize the work of Jesus*).

Remember, the purpose of **the Mosaic Covenant** was to segregate Israel from other nations. It set them apart from the Canaanite culture. Three times in the Law it reads, *“You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.”* We read that and think what's the big deal?... The Jewish rabbis turned it into a big deal! They made it the basis of a intricate set of Jewish kosher laws... In reality boiling a goat in its mother's milk had to do with a Canaanite fertility rite that God didn't want His people to adopt. Again, the Law set Israel apart from a Nicki Minja culture of Canaan. It defined Israel as God's people by way of **character, culture, and ceremony**.

It's been pointed out that after 400 years of brutish slavery the bar of decency and morality needed to be raised for the Israelites. When a person lives year in, year out - generation after generation - fighting for their survival they tend to cut corners, and lose their moral sensitivities. For example, Leviticus 19:14, *“You shall not... put a stumbling block before the blind, but shall fear your God..”* I mean, what kind of society

needs to be told they shouldn't trip blind-folk? The Israelites had sunk to a low morality. They needed to be re-sensitized to their communal obligations.

In short, **the Law taught the nation how to love God and one another**. Just look at the Ten Commandments. Commandments 1-5 deal with our love for God. Commandments 6-10 address our love for our fellow man. In Matthew 22 a rabbinical scholar asks Jesus, **"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"** He answers, **"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as Yourself.'"** Then Jesus tells him, **"On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."** He's saying this is what the Law is all about – **how to love God and how to love one another**. The Mosaic Covenant gave us a picture of how love is done.

But there was more to the Covenant than just laws. It's interesting in Exodus 20, immediately following God's Big Ten, the very next set of commands, verse 22-26, relate to the construction of a sacrificial altar. That means God knew they would break His commandments, and need His forgiveness. As soon as He gave the laws, He prepared for them to be broken. **The Mosaic Covenant** set up a whole **system of proper sacrifice**.

In the Garden of Eden, immediately after the first sin, God revealed the need for a sacrifice. Adam and Eve clothed themselves in *fig leaves – the work of their hands*. God replaced the leaves with *skins – which required the death of an animal – a sacrifice*. Until this point in history, God expected a sacrifice, but *how, when, who, and where* were never codified. This caused confusion. The pagans also made sacrifice. God wanted to keep His worship pure and separate, so He provided a sacrificial system. It included four elements: **sacrifices, priests, Tabernacle, and feasts**. Leviticus 1-9 outlines **the different types of sacrifices**... Leviticus also instructs **the people authorized to make sacrifice, the priests**... Sections of Exodus are like a set of blueprints. They give instructions on how to build **the place of sacrifice, the Tabernacle**... And Leviticus 23-25 is God's Calendar. He instructs His people on **the times of the sacrifices, the feasts**.

Ultimately, everything about the **sacrifices** looked to Jesus. The NT calls Jesus the Lamb of God. All the sacrifices were fulfilled on His cross. The book of Hebrews, 4:14, refers to Jesus as our **"Great High Priest"**. John 1:14 says of Jesus, **"The Word became flesh and (tabernacled) among us."** When Jesus mentioned toppling the **Temple** and rebuilding it in three days He spoke of His bodily resurrection. Jesus was God's one dwelling place on Earth. He's the *one stop shop* where you could find God. And Jesus fulfills all the Jewish **feasts**. He's our **Passover**. By faith apply His blood to the doorposts of your heart, and death passes over you. **The entire sacrificial system was to point to the ultimate sacrifice, Jesus!**

And finally, the third part of **the Mosaic Covenant** was **the blessings and the curses**. Or as some people refer to it, **the choice**. Israel would always be under this covenant, but how it played out would be up to them. If Israel **obeyed** God... then He would bless them extravagantly. But if Israel **disobeyed** the covenant... God would curse them brutally. Either way – through *extreme blessing or extreme cursing* - the world would look on the plight of Israel and say the God of Israel must be God!

One author writes of this covenant, **"It was like a marriage. God married Israel. God irrevocably linked Himself to a nation, and the nation Israel irrevocably linked themselves to God."** It was a for better or worse union. I like to think of it as more of a parent / child relationship. My kids will always be my kids – *no matter what, we'll always be family*. But at times you'll find them at the head of the table. At other times they're

in the woodshed. It depends on the respect they show the covenant we have. For the last 3500 years this has been the case with the nation Israel. It reminds me of a line from “Fiddler on the Roof.” Tevye says to God, “I know, I know. We are Your chosen people. But, once in a while, can’t You choose someone else?” Israel’s role in the Mosaic Covenant has placed the Jews in the spotlight. Global attention is on this little nation. For better or worse – in blessing and in cursing – Israel is God’s witness to the world!

If you comb through the two chapters that lay out the blessings and the curses - **Leviticus 26** and **Deuteronomy 28** – you see how precise these predictions have been. The annals of history have fulfilled these passages. For example, the reign of Kings David and Solomon were a highpoint. When Israel followed after God, He blessed the nation with military victories, increased wealth, full storehouses. Deuteronomy 28:13 sums it up, “the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not beneath, if you heed the commandments of the LORD...” 1 Kings 10 is a great case study of OT evangelism at work. The Queen of Sheba heard about Solomon’s wisdom and wealth, and caravanned to Jerusalem to see for herself. When she arrived, she confessed, “the half was not told me.” She went on to praise God for blessing Solomon’s reign.

But OT evangelism also worked in reverse. Deuteronomy 28 predicts terrible days. Verse 52 foresees cities under siege and populations facing starvation. Jewish residents resort to cannibalism in an effort to survive. This happened in 586 BC, during the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem. It occurred again in 70 AD, when the Romans laid siege and eventually burned down the Temple. *The Jews not crucified by the Romans, were sold into slavery* - exactly as predicted in the last verse of Chapter 28.

I once saw a documentary on the Holocaust where photos were shown, and at the bottom of each photograph were verses from Deuteronomy 28. Read verse 67, “In the morning you shall say, ‘Oh, that it was evening!’ At evening you shall say, ‘Oh, that it were morning!’ because of the fear which terrifies your heart, and because of the sight which your eyes see.” The last 2000 years of Jewish history are summarized in verses 64-66, “The LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other... And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. Your life shall hang in doubt... you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life.”

Sadly, under the Mosaic Covenant Israel experienced a lot more *cursing* than *blessing*. They disobeyed God and refused to live by faith. When Moses leaves camp to behold God’s glory, He doesn’t even get off the mountain before the children of Israel erect a golden calf, and dance around the idol in Nicki Minja-style lewdness. God has to send a plague.

In Numbers 14 Israel leaves Sinai and marches to the Promised Land, they refuse to enter. They’re afraid of “the giants.” True to His covenant, God curses Israel. The generation that exited Egypt dies in the wilderness. God repeats the covenant with *their* kids. This is what “Deuteronomy” is about. The word means “second law.” God is preparing a new generation.

When the children of Israel finally cross the Jordan River and taste a few victories - their new leader, Joshua, ushers them to heart of the land. He takes them to the Shechem Valley for a *Promised Land Pep Rally*. *And this was a significant site*. Shechem was the first place in Canaan where God promised the land to Abram. At the time he had no child. Now God’s word is fulfilled. Abraham is a “great nation” – several million strong. And Israel is back in the land. They’ve regained a foothold. They’re on the march. They’re taking possession of all that God has promise them.

In Joshua 8, here's what Joshua does... North of Shechem's slender valley is [Mount Ebal](#) – south is [Mount Gerizim](#). Both peaks rise 3000 feet. Joshua splits the tribes of Israel, and sends half to each mountain. From *Mount Ebal* [the curses](#) were shouted. Then from *Mount Gerizim* they shout out [the blessings](#). It was an awesome experience. They were declaring their future before it came to pass. *The choice would be theirs...*

As I said earlier, history shows Israel's future held far more *cursing* than *blessing*. The nation was unable to keep the Law. The sacrifices merely covered sin. They didn't remove man's uncleanness or change his heart. So again God comes to the rescue with a covenant. Man needed a Savior, so God makes another covenant with a king named David. And next week we'll delve into [The Davidic Covenant](#).