

Texts for Scriptural Reasoning

Covenant

The Scriptural Reasoning Society

Genesis 17:1-14

1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.

2 And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly."

3 Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying:

4 "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations.

5 No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.

6 I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.

7 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you.

8 Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

9 And God said to Abraham: "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.

10 This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised;

11 and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you.

12 He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant.

בראשית 17:1-14

א וַיְהִי אֲבֹרָם, בֶּן-תְּשַׁעִים שָׁנָה וַתֵּשֶׁע שָׁנִים; וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה אֶל-אֲבֹרָם, וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲנִי-אֱלֹהֵי שָׁדַי--הִתְהַלֵּךְ לְפָנַי, וְהָיָה תָמִים.

ב וְאֶתְנַה בְּרִיתִי, בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ; וְאֶרְבָּה אוֹתְךָ, בְּמֵאֵד מְאֹד.

ג וַיִּפֹּל אֲבֹרָם, עַל-פָּנָיו; וַיְדַבֵּר אֵתוֹ אֱלֹהִים, לֵאמֹר.

ד אֲנִי, הִנֵּה בְרִיתִי אִתְּךָ; וְהָיִיתָ, לְאֵב הַמּוֹן גּוֹיִם.

ה וְלֹא-יִקְרָא עוֹד אֶת-שְׁמֶךָ, אֲבֹרָם; וְהָיָה שְׁמֶךָ אֲבָרָהֶם, כִּי אֵב-הַמּוֹן גּוֹיִם נִתְּתִיךָ.

ו וְהִפְרַתִּי אוֹתְךָ בְּמֵאֵד מְאֹד, וְנִתְּתִיךָ לְגוֹיִם; וּמְלָכִים, מִמֶּךָ יֵצְאוּ.

ז וְהִקְמַתִּי אֶת-בְּרִיתִי בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ, וּבֵין זָרְעֶךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ לְדֹרֹתֶם--לְבְרִית עוֹלָם; לְהִיּוֹת לְךָ לְאֱלֹהִים, וּלְזָרְעֶךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ.

ח וְנָתַתִּי לְךָ וּלְזָרְעֶךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ אֶת אֶרֶץ מִגְרִיךָ, אֶת כָּל-אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן, לְאַחֲזֹתָ, עוֹלָם; וְהָיִיתִי לָהֶם, יְאֱלֹהִים.

ט וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל-אֲבָרָהֶם, וְאֶתְּהָ אֶת-בְּרִיתִי תִשְׁמֹר--אֶתְּהָ וְזָרְעֶךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ, לְדֹרֹתֶם.

י זֹאת בְּרִיתִי אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמְרוּ, בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם, וּבֵין זָרְעֶךָ, אַחֲרֶיךָ: הַמּוֹל לָכֶם, כָּל-זָכָר.

יא וְנִמְלַתֶם, אֶת בָּשָׂר עַרְלַתְכֶם; וְהָיָה לְאוֹת בְּרִית, בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם.

יב וּבֶן-שְׁמוֹנֶת יָמִים, יְמוֹל לָכֶם כָּל-זָכָר--לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם: יְלִיד בַּיִת--וּמִקְנֵת-כֶּסֶף מִכֹּל בֶּן-נֶכֶר, אֲשֶׁר לֹא מִזָּרְעֶךָ הוּא.

13 He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.
14 And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.”

יג המול ימול יליד ביתך, ומקנת
כסףך; והיתה בריתי בבשרכם, לברית
עולם.
יד וערל זכר, אשר לא-ימול את-בשר
ערלתו--ונכרתה הנפש ההוא, מעמיה:
את-בריתי, הפר. {ס}

Romans 2:25-29

25 For circumcision¹ is indeed profitable² if you keep³ the law; but if you are a breaker⁴ of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision⁵.

26 Therefore, if an uncircumcised man⁶ keeps the righteous requirements⁷ of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted⁸ as circumcision?

27 And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfils⁹ the law, judge¹⁰ you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law?

28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly¹¹, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;

29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly¹²; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit¹³, not in the letter¹⁴; whose praise¹⁵ is not from men but from God.

Προς Ρωμαίους 2:25-29

25 περιτομή μὲν γὰρ ὠφελεῖ ἐὰν νομῶν πρᾶσσης ἐὰν δὲ παραβατῆς νομοῦ ἢ ἡ περιτομή σου ἀκροβυστία γέγονεν

26 ἐὰν οὖν ἡ ἀκροβυστία τὰ δίκαιωματα τοῦ νομοῦ φυλάσῃ οὐχὶ ἡ ἀκροβυστία αὐτοῦ εἰς περιτομὴν λογισθῆσεται

27 καὶ κρίνει ἡ ἐκ φύσεως ἀκροβυστία τὸν νόμον τελοῦσα σὲ τὸν διαγράμματος καὶ περιτομῆς παραβατὴν τοῦ νομοῦ

28 οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ Ἰουδαῖος ἐστὶν οὐδὲ ἡ ἐν τῷ φανερῷ ἐν σαρκὶ περιτομή

29 ἀλλ' ὁ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ Ἰουδαῖος καὶ περιτομή καρδίας ἐν πνεύματι οὐ γραμματι οὐ ὁ ἐπαινος οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ

¹ *peritome* 'circumcision'

² *ophelei* 3 sing. *opheleo* 'assist, help, support'

³ *prasseis* 2 sing. *prasso* 'pass over'

⁴ *parabates* 'one who stands besides'

⁵ *akrobestia* 'foreskin'

⁶ lit. 'the foreskin'

⁷ *dikaiomata* neut. pl. *dikaioma* 'an act by which a wrong is set right'

⁸ *logisthesetai* 3 sing. fut. middle/pass. *logizomai* 'count, reckon'

⁹ *telousa* fut. act. part. *teleo* 'complete, accomplish'

¹⁰ *krinei* 3 aorist subj. pass. *krino* 'to pick out, choose'

¹¹ *phaneroi* dat. sing. *phaneros* 'manifest, visible'

¹² *kruptoi* dat. sing. *kruptos* 'hidden, secret'

¹³ *pneumati* neut. dat. sing. *pneuma* 'spirit, a blowing'

¹⁴ *grammati* neut. dat. sing. *gramma* 'that which is drawn, written'

¹⁵ *epainos* 'approval, commendation'

1 Κεφάλαιον δὲ ἐπὶ τοῖς λεγομένοις τοιοῦτον ἔχομεν ἀρχιερέα ὃς ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς

2 τῶν ἁγίων λειτουργὸς καὶ τῆς σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς ἣν ἔπηξεν ὁ κύριος οὐκ ἄνθρωπος

3 πᾶς γὰρ ἀρχιερεὺς εἰς τὸ προσφέρειν δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας καθίσταται· ὅθεν ἀναγκαῖον ἔχειν τι καὶ τοῦτον ὃ προσειέγκη

4 εἰ μὲν οὖν ἦν ἐπὶ γῆς οὐδ' ἂν ἦν ἱερεὺς ὄντων τῶν προσφερόντων κατὰ νόμον τὰ δῶρα·

5 οἵτινες ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ λατρεύουσιν τῶν ἐπουρανίων καθὼς κεκηραμένιστα Μωϋσῆς μέλλων ἐπιτελεῖν τὴν σκηνὴν Ὅρα γὰρ φησὶν ποιήσεις πάντα κατὰ τὸν τύπον τὸν δειχθέντα σοι ἐν τῷ ὄρει·

6 νῦν δὲ διαφορωτέρας τέτυχεν λειτουργίας ὅσω καὶ κρείττονός ἐστιν διαθήκης μεσίτης ἣτις ἐπὶ κρείττοσιν ἐπαγγελίαις νενομοθέτηται

7 Εἰ γὰρ ἡ πρώτη ἐκείνη ἦν ἄμεμπτος οὐκ ἂν δευτέρας ἐζητεῖτο τόπος

8 μεμφόμενος γὰρ αὐτοὺς λέγει Ἰδοὺ ἡμέραι ἔρχονται λέγει κύριος καὶ συντελέσω ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰουδα διαθήκην καινὴν

9 οὐ κατὰ τὴν διαθήκην ἣν ἐποίησα τοῖς πατράσιν αὐτῶν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπιλαβομένου μου τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν ἐξαγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου ὅτι αὐτοὶ οὐκ ἐνέμειναν ἐν τῇ διαθήκῃ μου καὶ γὰρ ἠμέλησα αὐτῶν λέγει κύριος·

10 ὅτι αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη ἦν διαθήσομαι τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ μετὰ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκείνας λέγει κύριος· διδοὺς νόμους μου εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν ἐπιγράψω αὐτοὺς καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς εἰς θεὸν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μοι εἰς λαόν·

11 καὶ οὐ μὴ διδάξωσιν ἕκαστος τὸν πολίτην αὐτοῦ καὶ ἕκαστος τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ λέγων Γινώθι τὸν κύριον ὅτι πάντες εἰδήσουσίν με ἀπὸ μικροῦ ἕως μεγάλου αὐτῶν

12 ὅτι ἵλεως ἔσομαι ταῖς ἀδικίαις αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθῶ ἔτι

Hebrews 8:1-13 ¹

1 The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven²,

2 and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man³.

3 Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer.

4 If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already men who offer the gifts prescribed by the law.

5 They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: “See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain”⁴.

6 But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant⁵ of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.

7 For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another.

8 But God found fault with the people and said⁶: “The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

9 It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord.

10 This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

11 No longer will a man teach his neighbour, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord’, because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.

12 For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

13 ἐν τῷ λέγειν Καινὴν πεπαλαίωκεν τὴν
πρώτην· τὸ δὲ παλαιούμενον καὶ
γηράσκον ἐγγὺς ἀφανισμοῦ

13 By calling this covenant “new”, he
has made the first one obsolete; and what is
obsolete and ageing will soon disappear.

¹ Glossing and footnoting by David Jackson; NIV translation, 1978

² In chapter 7, the writer has been considering the need for an ideal high priest in the ‘order of Melchizedek’. His thoughts have been based on Genesis 14:17-20 and Psalm 110:1-4. In this present verse, the words “sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven” are themselves a reference to Psalm 110:1. This Psalm was often used by Christian writers to refer to Jesus, as both Priest and King, and in Matthew 22:44f Jesus himself is shown as using it. It is argued, therefore, that the use of the Psalm derives from the example and authority of Jesus.

³ This sanctuary / tabernacle is in God’s presence in heaven; compare verse 5 below.

⁴ A quotation from Exodus 25:40 (compare Exodus 25:9 and 27:8).

⁵ “Covenant” is *diathēkē*, which is the normal word in LXX and NT to translate the Hebrew *bērit*. In secular Greek, *diathēkē* means “last will and testament”, and the usual word for “covenant” is *sunthēkē*, but this latter word implies an agreement between equals, which is not appropriate to describe an agreement between God and human beings, and so *diathēkē* is used to make clear that the initiative and the authority remain with God alone.

⁶ There follows an extended quotation from Jeremiah 31:31-34.

13 εἰ γὰρ τὸ αἷμα τράγων καὶ ταύρων
καὶ σποδὸς δαμάλεως ῥαντίζουσα τοὺς
κεκοινωμένους ἀγιάζει πρὸς τὴν τῆς
σαρκὸς καθαρότητα

14 πόσω μᾶλλον τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὃς
διὰ πνεύματος αἰωνίου ἑαυτὸν
προσήνεγκεν ἄμωμον τῷ θεῷ καθαριεῖ τὴν
συνείδησιν ἡμῶν ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων εἰς
τὸ λατρεύειν θεῷ ζῶντι

15 Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο διαθήκης καινῆς
μεσίτης ἐστίν ὅπως θανάτου γενομένου εἰς
ἀπολύτρωσιν τῶν ἐπὶ τῇ πρώτῃ διαθήκῃ
παραβάσεων τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν λάβωσιν οἱ
κεκλημένοι τῆς αἰωνίου κληρονομίας

Hebrews 9:13-15 ¹

13 The blood of goats and bulls and the
ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are
ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that
they are outwardly clean².

14 How much more, then, will the
blood of Christ, who through the eternal
Spirit offered himself unblemished to God,
cleanse our consciences from acts that lead
to death, so that we may serve the living
God!

15 For this reason Christ is the
mediator of a new covenant, that those who
are called may receive the promised eternal
inheritance – now that he has died as a
ransom to set them free from the sins
committed under the first covenant.³

¹ Glossing and footnoting by David Jackson, NIV translation, 1978

² The references here are to Leviticus 16 (the annual sacrifice of a bull and a goat on the Day of Atonement and the sprinkling of their blood to cleanse from the uncleanness of sin) and to Numbers 19 (the occasional sacrifice and burning of a red heifer, and the mixing of the ashes with water to cleanse from impurity incurred by contact with death).

³ Previously, Christ has been considered as Priest-King; in this chapter, he is considered also under the aspect of the perfect sacrifice – he is the priest who offers himself. For reasons of space, we have limited the verses here, but in the rest of chapter 9, the writer goes on to mention the sacrifices which inaugurated the Mosaic covenant (Exodus 24): the sacrificial blood was sprinkled on the people, with the words, “This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you”. The death of Christ is regarded in Hebrews 9 as inaugurating the new covenant. Compare Jesus’ words at the institution of the Eucharist, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many” (Mark 14:24 and parallels).

The Cow (Quran 2:83-85)

سورة البقرة ٨٣-٨٥

83 And when we entered¹⁶ into covenant¹⁷ with the children of Israel, we said, "Worship none but God, and be good¹⁸ to your parents and kindred¹⁹, and to orphans, and to the poor, and speak with men what is right²⁰, and observe²¹ prayer, and pay the stated alms²²." Then turned ye away, except a few of you, and withdrew afar off.

84 And when we made a covenant with you that ye should not shed your own blood, nor expel one another from your abodes, then ye ratified it²³ and yourselves were witnesses.

85 Then were ye the very persons who slew one another; and ye drove out a part²⁴ of your own people from their abodes; ye lent help against them with wrong²⁵ and hatred²⁶; but if they come captives to you, ye redeem them²⁷! Yet it was forbidden²⁸ you to drive them out. Believe ye then part of the Book, and deny part? But what shall be the meed of him among you who doth this, but shame in this life? And on the day of the Resurrection they shall be sent to the most cruel²⁹ of torments, for God is not regardless of what ye do.

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ
إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا
وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلَّا
قَلِيلًا مِّنْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ٨٣

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ لَا تَسْفِكُونَ دِمَاءَكُمْ
وَلَا تُخْرِجُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ مِّنْ دِيَارِكُمْ ثُمَّ
أَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ ٨٤

ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ
وَتُخْرِجُونَ فَرِيقًا مِّنْكُمْ مِّنْ دِيَارِهِمْ
تُظَاهِرُونَ عَلَيْهِم بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَإِن
يَأْتَوْكُمْ أُسَارَىٰ تُفَادُوهُمْ وَهُوَ مُحْرَمٌ
عَلَيْكُمْ إِخْرَاجَهُمْ أَفْتَوْا مُنُونٌ بِيَعُضِ الْكِتَابِ
وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِيَعُضٍ فَمَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ يَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ
مِنكُمْ إِلَّا خِزْيٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ أَشَدِّ الْعَذَابِ وَمَا اللَّهُ
بِعَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ٨٥

¹⁶ *akbadhna* 1 pl. perf. *akbadha* root: 'k-b-dh 'take'

¹⁷ *mithaq* nom. sing. 'trust, covenant' root: *w-th-q* 'trust, have faith, surety'

¹⁸ *ihshan* acc. sing. *ihsan* 'kindness, charity' root IV: *b-s-n* 'kindness, goodness'

¹⁹ *dhū al-qurba* lit. 'possessors of near relation'

²⁰ *husnan* acc. sing. *husn* 'goodness' root: *b-s-n* 'kindness, goodness'

²¹ *aqimu* 2 pl. imperat. *aqama* 'institute, execute' root IV: *q-w-m* 'stand'

²² *zakat* nom. sing. 'alms' root: *z-k-* 'righteous'

²³ *aqartum* 2 pl. perf. *iqrar* 'ratify, cause to agree' root IV: *q-r-r* 'agree, decide'

²⁴ *fariqan* acc. sing. *fariq* 'section, division' root: *f-r-q* 'divide, separate'

²⁵ *ithm* 'sin'

²⁶ 'udwan 'enmity' root: 'u-d-w 'enemy, hatred'

²⁷ *tufaduhum* 2 pl. imperf. 'ransom them' *fada* root III: *f-d-* 'redeem, ransom'

²⁸ *mubarram* 'prohibited' sing. pass. part. root II: *b-r-m* 'forbidden, unlawful'

²⁹ *ashaddu* superl. *shadid* root: *sh-d-d* 'severe'

Sahih al-Bukhari 3107

Narrated to us Qutayba bin Sa'id, narrated Mughayra bin 'Abd al-Rahman al-Qarashi of Abu Zanad of al-'Araj of Abu Hurayra (God is pleased with him), who said:

The Prophet of God (peace be upon him) said, "*Abraham (peace be upon him) circumcised himself³⁰ at the age of eighty years³¹, with an adze*".

صحيح البخاري: أحاديث الأنبياء

٤١٠٧

حدثنا قتيبة بن سعيد حدثنا مغيرة بن عبد الرحمن القرشي عن أبي الزناد عن الأعرج عن أبي هريرة (رضي الله عنه) قال:

قال رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) «اختتن إبراهيم عليه السلام وهو ابن ثمانين سنة بالقدم»

Sahih Muslim 377

Narrated to us Abu Bakr bin Abi Shayba and 'Amr al-Naqid and Zuhayr bin Harb all together, of Sufyan, that said Abu Bakr, "Narrated to me Ibn 'Ayyina of Zuhayri of Sa'id bin al-Musib of Abu Hurayra:

That the Prophet (peace be upon him) said "*The fitra³² is five, or there are five things of fitra: Circumcision, shaving the pubic hair³³, the trimming of the nails, the depilation of the armpits and the trimming of the moustache*".

صحيح مسلم: الطهارة ٣٧٧

حدثنا أبو بكر بن أبي شيبة وعمرو الناقد وزهير بن حرب جميعا عن سفيان قال أبو بكر حدثنا ابن عيينة عن الزهري عن سعيد بن المسيب عن أبي هريرة

عن النبي (صلى الله عليه وسلم) قال «الفطرة خمس أو خمس من الفطرة الختان والاستحداد وتقليم الأظفار ونتف الإبط وقص الشارب»

³⁰ *ikhtatana* 3 sing. perf. 'circumcise oneself' root VIII: *kb-t-n* 'circumcise'

³¹ *wa huwa ibn thamanina sanatan* lit. 'while he was the son of eighty years'

³² *fitra* nom. sing. 'natural order, divinely ordained state' root: *f-t-r* 'split, create'

³³ *istihdad* nom. sing. root X: *b-d-d* 'limits, legal boundary'