

A contract is a binding agreement between two or more persons or parties, creating mutual obligations that are enforceable by law. The basic elements required for the agreement to be a legally enforceable contract are: mutual assent, expressed by a valid offer and acceptance; adequate consideration; capacity; and legality. Possible remedies for breach of contract include general damages, consequential damages, reliance damages, and specific performance. Look at a modern example of a contract that most of us have completed the EULA - End-User License Agreement - When you install software, at the end of the agreement is a phrase that requires you to acknowledge your participation in the contract - something like "Do you accept these terms?" and you click on an icon to say, "Yes."

Our relation to God is similar - we have free will, and we can ignore His offer of redemption, or accept it. Be sure you understand what you are accepting!

Why do I need redemption?

When I disobey God, I commit sin. Sin is a rebellion against God, going against His commands.

Redemption makes it so I can live my life in harmony with God's creation.

Think about it! All of creation WAS perfect until sin came.

Each of us is individually responsible for our actions,

and each of us individually lives with the consequences of our actions.

We also cause consequences to others for our actions - and their actions cause consequences for us.

That's a complex mess!

Deuteronomy 24:16 Fathers are not to be put to death for children, and children are not to be put to death for fathers - each one is to be put to death for his own sin.

When we sin, then we are not just rebelling against God, but we are trying to live as though we can change the laws of nature - the rules of the universe: like "what goes up must come down."

What is done (something wrong) will hurt someone or something. It can't be undone, but only corrected.

Where did this start?

Genesis 2:17 But of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil you must not eat. For when you eat from it, you most assuredly will die!

And - not obeying brought death.

Genesis 3:19 By the sweat of your brow will you eat food, until you return to the ground, since from it were you taken. For you are dust, and to dust will you return.

God provided a way to cover the sin - but it required a substitute for the death of the sinner.

Genesis 3:21 YHVH Elohim made Adam and his wife tunics of skin and He clothed them.

This was not some miracle of creation - animals were sacrificed to forgive the sin.

This understanding of sacrifice was passed to Cain and to Abel.

Genesis 4:3-5 So it happened after some time that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to YHVH, while Abel - he also brought of the firstborn of his flock and their fat portions. Now YHVH looked favorably upon Abel and his offering, but upon Cain and his offering He did not look favorably. Cain became very angry, and his countenance fell.

God gave clear instructions on how to avoid sin.

Genesis 4:7 You know that if you do what is right, I will accept you. But if you don't, sin is ready to attack you. That sin will want to control you, but you must control it.

Note - God said sin is a voluntary action on our part - we can avoid it.

James summarized what we do that leads to sin. Each of us will at some time stumble.

James 1:14-15 But each one is tempted when he is dragged away and enticed by his own desire. Then when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is full grown, it brings forth death.

God knows we are imperfect and that complete obedience out of love for Him is a long journey.

1 John 1:8-9, 2:3-6 If we claim not to have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we acknowledge our sins, then, since He is trustworthy and just, He will forgive them and purify us from all wrongdoing. The way we can be sure we know Him is if we are obeying His commands. Anyone who says, "I know Him," but isn't obeying His commands is a liar - the truth is not in him. But if someone keeps doing what He says, then truly love for God has been brought to its goal in him. This is how we are sure that we are united with Him. A person who claims to be continuing in union with Him ought to conduct his life the way He did.

If you fail, and sin, just get up, confess and repent, dust yourself off, and move on! The important thing is to get back up on the Way and keep going!

That path is safe, but if I get off the path, forgiveness is simple but getting back on the path is not.

[EXAMPLE - highway across a swamp.]

Keep going, continue obeying.

James 2:18

But someone will say, "You have faith and I have obedience." Show me your faith without obedience, and I will show you faith by my obedience.

Obedience comes AFTER forgiveness. Forgiveness requires sacrifice (death) of a substitute.

Leviticus 17:11

For the life of the creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your lives - for it is the blood that makes atonement because of the life.

It is the trust - faith - that God will provide a substitute, a ransom to redeem me, which will take my place for the sins of my life. That faith was the rescue, the salvation, of those who lived before Yeshua came as one of us.

Leviticus 1:4

[The person must lay his hand on the animal's head to identify with the animal that serves as a substitute, and the Lord will accept it to cover (atone for) the person's sin.]

Why do that, unless you believed that the covering of your sin was more important than that sacrifice?

And why would you sacrifice that, when you knew that you would eventually sin again?

You wouldn't, UNLESS you trusted that somehow God would sometime provide an ultimate substitute for your sins.

The first examples of sacrifice came with the concept of an altar. These sacrifices were to forgive sin and allow us to come near to God.

Genesis 8:20

Then Noah built an altar to YHVH and he took of every clean domestic animal and of every clean flying creature and he offered burnt offerings on the altar.

Genesis 12:7-8

Then YHVH appeared to Abram, and said, "I will give this land to your seed." So there he built an altar to YHVH, who had appeared to him. From there he moved to the mountain to the east of Beth-El and erected his tent (with Beth-El to the west and Ai to the east). There he built an altar to YHVH and called on the Name of YHVH.

Genesis 13:3-4, 18

He proceeded by stages from the Negev as far as Beth-El - to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Beth-El and Ai, to the place of the altar that he had made there at first, and there Abram called on the Name of YHVH. So Abram moved his tent from place to place, and came and dwelt by Mamre's large trees, which are in Hebron, and there built an altar to YHVH.

Genesis 15:9-10

Then He said to him, "Bring Me a three year old young cow, a three year old she-goat, a three year old ram, a turtle-dove and a young bird." So he brought all these to Him and cut them in half, and put each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds.

Genesis 22:9-13

Then they came to the place about which God had told him, and Abraham built the altar there, laid out the wood, bound up Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the angel of YHVH called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham! Abraham!" He said, "Hineni!" Then He said, "Do not reach out your hand against the young man - do nothing to him at all. For now I know that you are one who fears God - you did not withhold your son, your only son, from Me." Then Abraham lifted up his eyes and behold, there was a ram, just caught in the thick bushes by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.

Genesis 26:24-25

YHVH appeared to him that night and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you, and I will bless you and multiply your seed for the sake of Abraham my servant." So he built an altar there and called on the Name of YHVH. He pitched his tent there and Isaac's servants hollowed out a well there.

Genesis 33:19-20

He purchased the portion of the field there where he had pitched his tent from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for 100 pieces of money. There he set up an altar, and he called it, El is Israel's God.

Genesis 35:7

He built an altar there and called the place El-Beth-El because God had revealed Himself to him there when he fled from the presence of his brother.

Exodus 12:2-7

This month will mark the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year for you. Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month, each man is to take a lamb for his family one lamb for the household. But if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor are to take one according to the number of the people. According to each person eating, you are to make your count for the lamb. Your lamb is to be without blemish, a year old male. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You must watch over it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to slaughter it at twilight. They are to take the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the crossbeam of the houses where they will eat it.

Leviticus 16: 29,6-10

It is to be a statute to you forever, that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you are to afflict your souls, and do no kind of work - both the native-born and the outsider dwelling among you. Then Aaron is to offer the bull for the sin offering which is for himself and make atonement for himself and his house. Then he is to take the two goats and present them before YHVH at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. Aaron will then cast lots for the two goats - one lot for YHVH, and the other lot for the scapegoat. Aaron is to present the goat on which the lot for YHVH fell and make it a sin offering. But the goat upon which the lot for the scapegoat fell is to be presented alive before YHVH, to make atonement upon it, by sending it away as the scapegoat into the wilderness.

Now look at the major sacrifices, the common types.

Olah: Burnt Offering - Leviticus 1:3-17

This offering was a sacrifice that was completely burnt. None of it was to be eaten at all, and therefore the fire consumed the whole sacrifice. It is also important to note that the fire on the altar was never to go out. The worshipper brought a male animal without blemish to the Tabernacle. The Burnt offering was performed to atone for the peoples sins against the Lord

Zevach Sh'lamim: Peace Offering - Leviticus 3:1-17

The peace offering was a meal that was shared with the Lord, the priests, and sometimes members of the Israelite community. The worshipper was to bring a male or female oxen, sheep, or a goat to the Tabernacle.

Chatat: Sin Offering - Leviticus 4 & 5

The sin offering cleansed the worshipper's unintentional weaknesses and failures before the Lord. Sins of the high priest required the offering of a young unblemished bull, the sins of the leaders required the offering of an unblemished male goat, and members of the Israelite community were required to bring female animals as an offering in accordance with their means.

Asham: Guilt/Trespass Offering - Leviticus 6:1-7

The trespass offering was similar to that of the sin offering except that the trespass offering was an offering of money for unintentional sins related to property. The sacrifice value was to be equal to the amount taken, plus one-fifth to the priest and to the one offended.

minchah: Food and Drink Offerings - Leviticus 2:1-16

4 kinds of grain offerings - all meal (grain) offerings were made with oil and salt without honey and no leaven. The purpose of the meal offering was an offering of gifts and speaks of a life that is dedicated to generosity and giving.

Parah Adumah: The Red Heifer - Numbers 19

These were all temporary. Yeshua had to come as one of us, to substitute for the death of each of us because of our sin. He was the ultimate sacrifice, to confirm all these previous sacrifices.

Go to Isaiah 53 - the servant who pays for our sins is a human, not an animal!

The substitute must be human, just like us. Not an angel, not another animal - a human, born of a woman, growing through childhood just like us, becoming an adult just like us, having the same temptations that we have, subject to physical problems just like us. He was human, because only a normal human could be the appropriate substitute. He obeyed the Torah, and each of us can.

But wait - He was the son of God! Yes, but He denied Himself so that He could become our sacrifice.

Philippians 2:5-8

Have this attitude in yourselves, which also was in Messiah Yeshua, who, though existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal to God a thing to be grasped. But He emptied Himself - taking on the form of a slave, becoming the likeness of men and being found in appearance as a man. He humbled Himself - becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

The Creator of the universe, the Word of God, gave up all that power and glory to become just like us, to die for us.

What about the miracles of Yeshua? A normal human could not do them. *Au contraire, mon ami!* Look at the miracles performed by the prophets.

Elijah

- causes drought in the Kingdom of Israel due to King Ahab's sins (1Kings 17:1 - 5).
- miraculously causes a widow's meager food supply not to run out until a drought ends (17:9 - 16).
- resurrects the widow's son who had died (17:22 - 23).
- causes fire to come down from heaven on his altar to God during his showdown with false prophets on Mount Carmel (18:30 - 38).
- caused it to rain in Israel which ended the drought he had proclaimed (41 - 45).
- calls fire down from heaven on two sets of 51 men (a captain along with his fifty men) sent from King Ahaziah (2Kings 1:9 - 10, 11 - 12).
- with his mantle, causes the river Jordan to part and allow both him and Elisha to cross it (2Kings 2:8).

Elisha

- Jericho's waters healed (2:19 - 22).
- Young men who taunt Elisha attacked by two female bears (2:24).
- Water provided for King Jehoshaphat and allies (3:16 - 20).
- widow's supply of oil increased in order to sell and get out of debt (4:1 - 7).
- resurrects a Shunammite woman's son (4:18 - 37).
- poisonous stew rendered harmless (4:38 - 41).
- twenty barley loafs and ears of corn feed 100 people (4:42 - 44).
- Naaman, captain of Syria's army, cured of leprosy (5:1 - 19).
- Gehazi, Elisha's servant, is given leprosy for being greedy (5:26 - 27).
- ax head is made to float on water (6:6).
- servant made to see invisible army of God (6:15 - 17).
- army of Syrian king struck with blindness then healed (6:18).
- foretold Samaria's famine would end (7:6 - 7).
- a dead body is miraculously brought back to life when it accidentally touches the prophet's bones (13:21).

Isaiah

- causing the shadow of a clock to go backwards 10 degrees, to prove to King Hezekiah that he would be healed by God (2Kings 20:8 - 11).

One miracle stands out - mastering the storms and walking on water. None of the prophets did that.

Matthew 14:22-33

Yeshua had the talmidim get in the boat and go on ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away. After He had sent the crowds away, He went up into the hills by Himself to pray. Night came on, and He was there alone. But by this time, the boat was several miles from shore, battling a rough sea and a headwind. Around four o'clock in the morning, He came toward them, walking on the lake! When the talmidim saw Him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost!" they said and screamed with fear. But at once Yeshua spoke to them. "Courage," He said, "It is I. Stop being afraid." Then Kefa called to Him, "Lord, if it is really you, tell me to come to you on the water." "Come!" He said. So Kefa got out of the boat and walked on the water toward Yeshua. But when he saw the wind, he became afraid; and as he began to sink, he yelled, "Lord! Save me!" Yeshua immediately stretched out his hand, took hold of him, and said to him, "Such little trust! Why did you doubt?" As they went up into the boat, the wind ceased. The men in the boat fell down before Him and exclaimed, "You really are God's son!"

The talmidim (disciples) realized this was described in Proverbs:

Proverbs 30:4

Who has gone up to heaven and come down? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in His garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is the name of His son, if you know?

HOWEVER, note that Peter (Kefa) also walked on water, while he believed.

When it says that Yeshua knew what others were thinking, it is not different from when we are with people that we know, and from experience (and understanding the situation) we know what they are thinking.

All these miracles were performed through the very human prophets - and also Yeshua, and even Peter!

The sacrifice offerings of animals were temporary - the blood released the life and the skins covered the sin - that was sufficient for the moment, but we all sin again, and as explained in the book of Hebrews, those sacrifices over and over did not make the FINAL atonement. That was what Yeshua gave us, because He was mortal like us when He died. His death was horrible, but not because of its physical nature - others have died much more painful deaths. He took my sins and your sins on Himself, and then died "in sin" with our sins on Him. That death is: absence from God.

Psalm 22:2-3,7-9,15-19 My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Distant from my salvation are the words of my groaning. O my God, I cried out by day, but You did not answer, by night, but there was no rest for me. Am I a worm, and not a man? Am I a scorn of men, despised by people? All who see me mock me. They curl their lips, shaking their heads: "Rely on YHVH! Let Him deliver him! Let Him rescue him - since he delights in Him!" I am poured out like water, and all my bones are disjointed. My heart is like wax - melting within my innards. My strength is dried up like a clay pot, my tongue clings to my jaws. You lay me in the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded me. A band of evildoers has closed in on me. They pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. They stare, they gape at me. They divide my clothes among them, and cast lots for my garment.

1 Peter 2:22-25,3:18 "He committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth." When He was abused, He did not return the abuse. While suffering, He made no threats. Instead, He kept entrusting Himself to the One who judges righteously. He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we, removed from sins, might live for righteousness. "By His wounds you were healed." For you like sheep were going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls. For Messiah once suffered for sins also - the righteous for the unrighteous - in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Ruach.

[video "the prophet Isaiah said"]

We rejoice in the promise that God will not let go of us when we have made a contract with Him.

John 10:28-29 I give them eternal life! They will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all. And no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

However, we can squirm out from His fingers in disobedience.

Hebrews 6:4-6 But what about people who turn away after they have already seen the light and have received the gift from heaven and have shared in the Holy Spirit? What about those who turn away after they have received the good message of God and the powers of the future world? There is no way to bring them back. What they are doing is the same as nailing the Son of God to a cross and insulting him in public!

We have free will - we might turn away. Even so, God will always reach out to try to pull us back to Him.

Matthew 18:12-13 What do you think? If a certain man has a hundred sheep and one of them goes astray, won't he leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go looking for the one that is straying? And if he finds it, amen I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that didn't stray.

The Word of God became flesh, and that Word died for you - in your place - as a substitute for your death from sin. But you have to take and accept that gift. You must lay your own personal hands on that sacrifice, and acknowledge that YOU put that sacrifice to death, to pay for your sins with His blood, His life. AND then you prove that you made that choice by following Him in obedience to His Torah.

John 14:15,21,23-24 If you love Me, you will keep My commands. Whoever has My commands and keeps them is the one who loves Me, and the one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and reveal Myself to him. If someone loves me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Someone who doesn't love me doesn't keep my words.

What commands? ALL of them, since He was the One who gave us the commands at Mount Sinai. .

The Creator of the universe, long before you existed, set in motion a plan to give you freedom - you can choose death or you can choose life.

Deuteronomy 30:19-20 I call on heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have presented you with life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore, choose life, so that you will live, you and your descendants, loving YHVH your God, paying attention to what he says and clinging to him - for that is the purpose of your life!

Yeshua is our sacrifice for ALL the offerings explained in the Torah. Since He became human, He could only die once as a sacrifice, so He had to be THE perfect sacrifice.

Accepting redemption is opening the door and standing at the threshold of going what God desires. Now take the first step on the path He has given us, and continue after that with more steps, by obeying His commands.

NOW is the time to accept His offer and begin your walk in obedience.