

Dr. David Howard, Joshua - Ruth, Session 11, Covenants Excursus Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 11, Covenant Excursus, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture excerpt from Dr. David Howard's series on Joshua through Ruth focuses on the significance of covenants in biblical theology. **Dr. Howard primarily examines the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants**, explaining their interconnectedness and influence on Israel's history. He highlights how the promise of kingship within the Abrahamic covenant foreshadows the Davidic covenant, ultimately culminating in the New Covenant in Christ. **The lecture uses specific biblical passages to illustrate these connections**, particularly emphasizing God's intention for a godly kingship in contrast to the surrounding nations. **It also addresses the problematic request for a king in 1 Samuel**, arguing that the issue lay not in the desire for kingship itself, but in the type of king sought.

2. 25 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 11 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Joshua-Ruth).



**Howard_Josh_Ruth
_Session 11.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 11, Covenant Excursus

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided source, "Howard_Josh_Ruth_EN_Session11_Covenants.pdf":

Briefing Document: Covenants in Joshua, Judges, and Ruth

Overview:

This document summarizes Dr. David Howard's lecture on the major biblical covenants, specifically focusing on their relevance to the books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. Howard argues that understanding these covenants is crucial for grasping the theological framework of these Old Testament books. The lecture primarily focuses on the Abrahamic covenant, the Mosaic covenant, and the Davidic covenant, highlighting their interconnectedness and how they point towards the New Testament and the coming of Christ. He also discusses the Israelite desire for a king and how it fits within the covenantal framework.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. **The Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12, 15, 17):**
 - **God's Initiative and Unconditional Nature:** Howard emphasizes that the Abrahamic covenant is God's initiative, with God making promises to Abraham, and this is not dependent on human actions. He highlights the series of cohortative verbs in Genesis 12:2-3 ("I will make you a great nation... I will bless you... I will make your name great...") as demonstrating God's intention and power, indicating an unconditional covenant: "God is saying, I intend to do these things and the subtext is nobody can stop me."
 - **Blessing to All Nations:** The covenant's purpose extends beyond Abraham to be a blessing to all families of the earth (Genesis 12:3). This is a central theme, with Abraham intended to be a "means of blessing on others." This concept is rooted in Genesis 3:15 and the promise of victory over the serpent. The blessing ultimately comes through Christ.
 - **Key Promises:** God promises Abraham a great nation, a blessing, a great name, descendants, and the land of Canaan. "I will make you a great nation, bless you, make his name great." Also, God promises the land: "To your offspring I will give this land" (Genesis 12:7).

- **Descendants as Sojourners and the Return:** God tells Abraham in Genesis 15 that his descendants will be sojourners and foreigners and will return to the land after 400 years. There is a preview of the conquest of Canaan and God's judgement of the Canaanites when their sin reaches the "tipping point," to be later seen in the book of Joshua.

1. **The Mosaic Covenant (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy):**

- **Law as Expression of the Abrahamic Covenant:** Howard argues that the Mosaic Law is not separate from, but rather an expression of, the Abrahamic covenant. He notes that Abraham's obedience, as described in Genesis 26:5 ("Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."), shows that even without the codified law, Abraham lived in a way that could be later seen as keeping the law through his relationship with God. "The Mosaic law shows how life was to be lived under the Abrahamic covenant."
- **Internal Heart Attitude:** He stresses that the Old Testament itself emphasized the importance of an internal heart attitude toward God, not just external actions: "the Old Testament itself is aware of the idea of keeping faith as the core of that. The keeping of the commandments is the external indicator of that." He compares this to Paul's emphasis on faith and James' emphasis on works. He references Old Testament passages that show God's concern for "circumcising their heart," including Deuteronomy 10:15-16 and Jeremiah 4:4.

1. **The Promise of Kingship:**

- **Kings as Part of God's Plan:** Howard argues that the idea of kingship for Israel is not a deviation from God's plan, but an intended part of the Abrahamic covenant, specifically that "kings shall come from you" (Genesis 17:6, 16; 35:11). He highlights the blessing on Judah in Genesis 49:10 which states, "the scepter will not depart from Judah" to show the promise of kingship in this line.
- **Counter-Cultural Kingship:** God intended for Israel's kings to be different from other nations. Deuteronomy 17:14-20 outlines that the king should be chosen by God, an Israelite, not multiply horses (military might), not seek foreign alliances, not multiply wives, and not amass great personal wealth. The Israelite king is not meant to be like the kings of the Near East, "the great warrior," but instead, the ideal king is meant to be rooted in God's Word (Deuteronomy 17:18-20).

- **Solomon as an Anti-Type:** King Solomon is presented as an example of a king who failed, as he did acquire many wives, horses, and wealth, failing to follow God's specifications.
- **Judges and the Need for a King:** The book of Judges illustrates the negative consequences of having no godly king. Howard cites the recurring phrase, "In those days there was no king in Israel, everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25), and argues that it points to a need for a godly king to model obedience to God's law. The downward cycle throughout the book of Judges shows that the lack of a godly king was detrimental.
- **Israel's Sinful Request for a King (1 Samuel 8):** When Israel asks for a king in 1 Samuel 8, it's a sin because they want a king "like the nations" (1 Samuel 8:20) – a military leader like the other nations' kings. "The reason for the problem is not the fact that they requested a king. The reason for the problem is what kind of king they were asking for..." They wanted a king to "go out before us and fight our battles." The problem was not the desire for a king but the motivation and the type of king desired.

1. **Davidic Covenant and Connection to New Testament:**

- **Davidic Covenant as Culmination:** The Abrahamic covenant ultimately leads to the Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7), where God promises David an eternal dynasty.
- **Matthew 1 and Genealogy of Jesus:** Matthew's genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1 begins with Abraham and David to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of these covenants. Howard concludes that Matthew is anchoring the story of the Messiah in these twin peaks of Old Testament theology. "You can't understand the story of Jesus without understanding the promises God made to David and Abraham."

Application to Joshua, Judges, and Ruth:

- **Joshua:** The Abrahamic covenant plays out in the book of Joshua in that it is fulfilling the promise of the land. The judgment of the Canaanites is a result of them reaching the "tipping point" of iniquity.
- **Judges:** The book of Judges illustrates the negative consequences of not having a godly king. It shows the decline and lawlessness of a society where everyone is doing what is right in their own eyes. The desire of the people to have a king like the nations is a main point of critique in the book of Judges.

- **Ruth:** The lecture sets the stage for how the Davidic covenant will be a key part of the book of Ruth, but is not explicitly discussed in this lecture.

Conclusion:

Dr. Howard's lecture emphasizes the importance of understanding the major covenants as a framework for interpreting the Old Testament. He shows how the Abrahamic covenant is the foundational covenant, the Mosaic covenant explains how to live under that covenant, and the Davidic covenant is the culmination of the Abrahamic covenant that points toward Christ. Furthermore, the lecture challenges the idea that the institution of kingship was inherently wrong, but that the focus should be on the nature of kingship in light of the covenant with God, pointing to the need for a godly king who leads according to God's Word.

4. Study Guide: Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 11, Covenant Excursus

Covenant Theology: A Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 complete sentences.

1. What are the three primary chapters in Genesis that outline the Abrahamic covenant, and what kind of assignment does Dr. Howard give his students using them?
2. According to Genesis 12:1-3, what are the five promises or intentions of God toward Abraham, and what is the significance of the way those promises are stated?
3. How does Dr. Howard describe the relationship between the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants?
4. What did God promise to Abraham regarding kings, and how do these promises develop throughout Genesis?
5. According to Deuteronomy 17:14-20, what are the six restrictions placed upon the king in Israel, and what is the purpose of these limitations?
6. In Judges 8, why did the people of Israel want Gideon to be their king, and how did Gideon respond to this offer?
7. What statement is repeated at the beginning and end of the book of Judges and what does it imply about Israel's condition?
8. What does Deuteronomy 17:18-20 say about the key to success for the godly king?
9. In 1 Samuel 8, what was the real motivation behind Israel's request for a king?
10. Why does Matthew's genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1 start with Abraham and David?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The three primary chapters are Genesis 12, 15, and 17. Dr. Howard assigns his students to read these chapters and make a list of all the things God intends to give to or do for Abraham, which usually amounts to 15-20 items.

2. God intends to make Abraham a great nation, bless him, make his name great, bless those who bless him, and curse those who dishonor him. These intentions are emphasized through the use of cohortatives in Hebrew, indicating that God's plans are certain and unstoppable.
3. Dr. Howard views the Mosaic covenant as subordinate to the Abrahamic covenant, serving as the means through which life under the Abrahamic covenant is to be lived out. He states that the Mosaic law is like an elaboration of the nitty-gritty of how to live out the faith relationship with God.
4. God promised Abraham that kings would come from his line, a promise reiterated through Sarah to Isaac and then Jacob. This promise begins to be fulfilled with the line of Judah.
5. The six restrictions are that the king must be chosen by God, must be an Israelite, should not acquire many horses, should not return to Egypt, should not acquire many wives, and should not acquire excessive wealth. These limitations are to prevent Israel's king from emulating the kings of the surrounding nations.
6. The people wanted Gideon to be their king because he had saved them from the Midianites, viewing him as a conquering hero. Gideon correctly responds that Yahweh, the Lord, should be their king, not him.
7. The statement, "In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes," is repeated at the beginning and end of the book of Judges. This implies that Israel was in a state of moral and spiritual decline due to a lack of godly leadership.
8. Deuteronomy 17:18-20 states that the key to success for a godly king is to be rooted in God's Word, writing for himself a copy of the law and reading it daily. This would enable him to fear the Lord and follow His commands.
9. Israel's primary motivation behind asking for a king in 1 Samuel 8 was so that they could be like the other nations and have a leader who would fight their battles for them. The people wanted a king to lead them in military exploits instead of a king that would encourage them to follow God.
10. Matthew's genealogy starts with Abraham and David to highlight the twin pillars of Old Testament theology – the Abrahamic covenant and the Davidic covenant. This connects Jesus's lineage to God's promises and the fulfillment of these covenants in the Messiah.

Essay Questions

Instructions: Please answer each question in an essay format. Provide a thesis statement in the first paragraph of the essay and use evidence from the source to support your ideas.

1. Analyze the significance of the Abrahamic covenant, as described in the lecture, and explain its importance as a framework for biblical theology. How does this covenant set the stage for the rest of the Old Testament?
2. Compare and contrast the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants as they are presented in the lecture. Discuss how the Mosaic covenant relates to and expands upon the Abrahamic covenant, and how both are related to the New Testament.
3. Examine the role of kingship in Israelite society, as discussed in the lecture. What was God's original intention for kingship, and how does Israel's request for a king in 1 Samuel 8 reflect a misunderstanding of this plan?
4. Discuss how the lecture uses the book of Judges to illustrate the consequences of a lack of godly leadership. Analyze how the refrain "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes" emphasizes the state of Israel and points toward the need for a king.
5. How does the lecture connect Old Testament covenants with the New Testament? Analyze how the selection of Abraham and David in Matthew 1 demonstrates the continuity of God's plan and covenants throughout biblical history.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Abrahamic Covenant:** The covenant God made with Abraham promising land, descendants, and blessing to all nations through him.
- **Cohortative:** A grammatical construction in Hebrew that expresses strong intention or determination, emphasizing that something will definitely happen.
- **Davidic Covenant:** The covenant God made with David, promising that a descendant of his would always rule on the throne, ultimately fulfilled in Jesus.
- **Ger:** A Hebrew word referring to a sojourner or foreigner, especially in the context of ancient Israel.
- **Infinitive Absolute:** A verbal form used in Hebrew that can emphasize a particular action, often conveying a sense of purpose or result.
- **Mosaic Covenant:** The covenant God made with Israel through Moses at Mount Sinai, encompassing the Law of Moses, and defining how they were to live.
- **Shiloh:** A reference to a person or place to which authority and tribute will belong, often understood to refer to the Messiah.
- **El Shaddai:** A name for God which means God Almighty.
- **Scepter:** A symbol of kingly authority, usually a decorated rod or staff.
- **Torah:** The first five books of the Hebrew Bible, also known as the Law of Moses, which contains the Mosaic covenant.

5. FAQs on Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 11, Covenant Excursus, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Biblical Covenants

- **What are the major covenants in the Old Testament, and how do they relate to each other?**
- The major covenants discussed are the Abrahamic covenant, the Mosaic covenant, and the Davidic covenant. The Abrahamic covenant, found primarily in Genesis 12, 15, and 17, is the foundational covenant where God promises to make Abraham a great nation, bless him, make his name great, and through him bless all the families of the earth. The Mosaic covenant, found in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, establishes the law and the rules for how Israel is to live under the Abrahamic covenant. It provides the practical outworking and behavioral specifics for life within the covenant. The Davidic covenant, which comes later, promises an everlasting kingdom through David's lineage. The Davidic covenant has its roots in the Abrahamic covenant in the promise that kings will come from Abraham's line. These covenants are interconnected, with the Abrahamic covenant providing the overarching framework, the Mosaic covenant giving specific guidelines, and the Davidic covenant establishing a royal line through which the ultimate blessings would come.
- **What are the key elements of the Abrahamic covenant?**
- Key elements of the Abrahamic covenant include God's promise to make Abraham a great nation, bless him, and make his name great. Crucially, God also promises that through Abraham, all the families of the earth will be blessed. This implies both the blessing of Abraham and his descendants and their role as a means of blessing to others. Additionally, the land of Canaan is promised to Abraham's offspring. The covenant is initiated by God and is unconditional in that it does not rely on Abraham's adherence to stipulations for it to remain in place. However, people can opt in or out of the covenant.

- **How is the concept of "blessing" understood in the Abrahamic covenant?**
- In the Abrahamic covenant, "blessing" is not limited to Abraham's personal prosperity or that of his descendants. God intends that Abraham and his lineage to be a means of blessing to others. It begins with the promise in Genesis 3:15 that the seed of the woman will triumph over the seed of the serpent. This idea is then made more explicit in Genesis 12 where God's promises to Abraham become a means of blessing for all the earth. The ultimate fulfillment of this blessing comes through Christ, but along the way, Abraham, the Israelites, Jonah and others were to be instruments of blessing to different nations.
- **How does the Mosaic Law relate to the Abrahamic covenant?**
- The Mosaic Law is the means by which life is to be lived under the Abrahamic covenant. The Abrahamic covenant is overarching, unconditional, and primary; the Mosaic covenant provides detailed instructions and laws that govern the behavior and life of the Israelites under that covenant. It reveals how faith in God should be expressed through practical actions. The Mosaic Law was never intended to be a means of salvation in itself, but rather a guide to how a faithful life should look.
- **What was God's intention regarding kingship for Israel, and how does this connect with the Abrahamic covenant?**
- God's intention, from the beginning, was for Israel to have kings from Abraham's line. The promise of kings is part of the overall blessings of the Abrahamic covenant. This is made clear in promises given to Abraham, Sarah, and Jacob that kings will come from their line. The issue wasn't the request for a king in itself, but the type of king that Israel requested, which is a king like the nations around them and not a king after God's own heart. The Mosaic law outlined the character and expectations for a godly king of Israel in Deuteronomy 17:14-20 which are fundamentally different from the warrior kings of the surrounding nations. God wanted a king who was rooted in His word and dependent on Him, and not on military might.

- **What were the key differences between a godly king according to Deuteronomy and the kings of the surrounding nations?**
- According to Deuteronomy, a godly king was to be chosen by God from among the Israelites. He was not to accumulate excessive horses (military might), make foreign alliances, amass many wives, or collect excessive wealth. These rules were meant to prevent the king from trusting in his own power or foreign powers, but to instead to place his trust in God. In contrast, the kings of the surrounding nations were often warrior kings who amassed wealth and power and established their authority by military might. The Israelite king was intended to lead the people by being rooted in God's law and providing a godly example.
- **Why was Israel's request for a king in 1 Samuel 8 considered sinful?**
- Israel's request for a king in 1 Samuel 8 was sinful because they desired a king like the nations around them, not a king chosen by God and living by his Law. The people wanted a king who could lead them in battle and provide for them through human means, instead of depending on God. This desire reflected a rejection of God as their true king and a lack of trust in His provision and protection. Although the office of kingship was part of God's plan for them, they were motivated by a desire to be like other nations.
- **How does Matthew 1 connect Jesus to the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants?**
- Matthew 1, which introduces Jesus' genealogy, explicitly labels Jesus as the son of David and the son of Abraham. By anchoring the genealogy with Abraham and David, Matthew is connecting Jesus to the foundational covenants in the Old Testament. He shows that Jesus is not just a physical descendant of these figures, but also the fulfillment of God's promises through those covenants. Jesus, as the Messiah, is the ultimate blessing promised to the nations through Abraham, and he sits on the throne as the everlasting king, fulfilling the promises to David. The reference highlights the importance of understanding these covenants to understand the identity and mission of Jesus.