

The Palestinian Covenant: The Contract Between God and Israel

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These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God." (John 3:16–18). "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!" (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If we acknowledge our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1John 1:9). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

1. A problem with the understanding of the Palestinian Covenant is that the name tends to emphasize the land. However, this is not the emphasis of Moses. Moses emphasizes the parties to the contract and the relative faithfulness of these two parties. Allegiance and behavior are more key to this contract than is the land.
2. God had promised Israel from the very beginning to be her God. "Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My contract, then you will be My special treasure among all of the peoples, for all of the earth is Mine; and you will be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Ex. 19:5–6a).
3. The best way to grasp the Palestinian Covenant is to take an overview of Deut. 29 and 30.

- I. The Introduction to the Covenant:
 - A. Title of the Covenant: These are the Words of the Covenant which Y^ehowah commanded Moses to make with the sons of Israel (Deut. 29:1)
 - B. Moses assembles the people to deliver to them the covenant (Deut. 29:2)
 - C. Moses makes clear the faithfulness of God by reminding Israel what He has done on their behalf thus far (Deut. 29:3–8).
 - D. Moses concludes the introduction by admonishing Israel to keep her side of the contract: "So keep the words of this covenant, to do them, that you may prosper in all that you do." (Deut. 29:9).
- II. The Covenant:

- A. Party of the second part—Israel (Deut. 29:10–12). The entire population of Israel is included in this covenant, including the women, children and the temporary residents.
- B. Rationale for keeping this covenant: “In order that He may establish you today as His people and that He may be your God, just as He spoke to you and as He swore to your fathers, To Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” (Deut. 29:13). Notice that this covenant is tied to the Abrahamic Covenant—the contract between God and Abraham.
- C. The extended nature of the covenant; i.e., this is not just a covenant between God and those who are standing there before Moses but this is a covenant to spans all of Israel (Deut. 29:14–15). In v. 15, Moses mentions the party of the first part, Y^ehowah God. This contract is being ratified before the presence of God.
- D. Moses contrasts their God with those of the heathen through whose lands they have passed (Deut. 29:16–17).
- E. Moses makes it clear that pursuing another god is an immediate violation of this contract which will result in horrible discipline (Deut. 29:18–29).
 - 1. Violation of this covenant is pursuing another god and thinking that they are safe and secure in this choice (vv. 18–19).
 - 2. God pours out discipline upon that individual and the nation (vv. 20–21).
 - 3. The land will bear horrible reminders of the discipline which God has placed upon Israel. It will be a desert area (v. 23)
 - 4. Other nations and people will observe this land and be totally amazed at the destruction and ask why has it been so totally destroyed (vv. 22, 24).
 - 5. They are answered that Israel chose to pursue another god, therefore, the true God, the God of Israel, Y^ehowah, poured cursing upon them (vv. 25–27).
 - 6. Israel is removed from the land (v. 28)
- F. While out of the land under the fifth stage of national discipline, Israel will have the opportunity to personally examine what it was that they did. This does not mean that each and every Jew for the past 2000 years has done soul-searching and realizes what has gone wrong with their lives. Israel is under a partial blindness now. Let me clarify that, because of her negative volition toward Jesus Christ, the natural result is a build-up of scar tissue on their souls and a soul blindness results. No matter who it is, negative volition toward the only God of the Universe, Jesus Christ, will result in a partial blindness. It is a blindness of choice. Because they have rejected God, blindness has formed on their souls. It is almost a self-protection. You see this with those who believe in evolution when confronted with the evidence. Many of them absolutely refuse to see the other side. They cannot possibly imagine that we could be created immediately by God. Therefore, no matter what evidence is presented to them, their souls are blinded to it. It is no

different than touching a hot stove and burning your hand. There is a natural reaction to every action (Deut. 30:1).

G. When, after being uprooted and thrown out of the country, Israel returns to her Lord, Jesus Christ, then God will regather Israel from all the peoples where she was banished Deut. 30:2–5).

H. God will do several things on behalf of Israel (Deut. 30:6–14):

1. He will circumcise their hearts (v. 6).
2. He will pour out the curses of this book upon Israel's enemies (v. 7).
3. God will prosper the Israelites (v. 9)
4. God promises them that they will once again obey the commands of God (vv. 8, 10).
5. The commandments will not be too difficult to keep (v. 11).
6. The Word of God will not be far from them (vv. 12–14).

III. The Conclusion (Deut. 30:15–20):

- A. Moses places before them, life and death (v. 15).
- B. Moses makes it clear what the choice of God is (v. 16).
- C. If the Israelites choose against God, then they will certainly perish and their days in the land will be short (vv. 17–18).
- D. Moses calls upon heaven and earth to witness against them (v. 19a).
- E. The Israelite can choose between life and death, blessing or a curse; he is to love Y^ehowah his God, obey His voice and hold fast to Him. That is their life and their days in the land (vv. 19b–20).

4. So you have noticed that there is very little said about the land and the boundaries. What is important is that they will be blessed by God if they love and obey Him and they will be thrown out of the land if they pursue other gods.
5. This is a simple analogy to our day. Unbelievers have set before them death and life; Jesus Christ as opposed to any shoddy imitation of Him. Whether the unbeliever makes a god in his own image to worship or follows some other cult with a pre-defined deity who lacks perfect justice and perfect righteousness.
6. This is analogous to the believer as well—the believer can determine for themselves who they will follow—God, or some cheap substitute.
7. This covenant should not be confused with the New Contract with Israel (which should not be confused with the New Testament, which is the New Contract or the New Covenant). We find the New Contract with Israel in such passages as Jer. 31:31–34 32:37–41 50:5 Ezek. 16:60–63 37:26–28 Heb. 8:7–13. “Behold the days are coming,” declares Y^ehowah, “When I will make a new contract with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not like the contract which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares Y^ehowah. “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares Y^ehowah, “I will place My Law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God and they will be My people.” (Jer. 31:31–33).