

# Triennial Torah Cycle

03/08/2013    Deut 29    2 Chron 21-25    Revelation 11-12

## The Land Covenant (Deuteronomy 29)

Here, on the verge of crossing into the Promised Land, an additional covenant is made between God and “the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb”—i.e., Mount Sinai (verses 1, 14). Many refer to this as the Land Covenant. (Some call it the Palestinian Covenant but the name Palestine was not used until Roman times—and that to spite the Jews.) As pointed out before, a covenant is simply a contract or an agreement between two or more parties. It is not identical to the law on which a covenant is based. Since a covenant is merely a contract, it should not surprise us that when Israel broke a covenant by violating the law on which the covenant was based, God would make a new covenant with Israel based on the same or similar laws. In fact, God made at least three covenants with the entire nation of Israel in the book of Exodus, not just one, as some have erroneously concluded (compare Exodus 24:1-8; 31:12-18; 34:10, 27).

Here, in Deuteronomy 29, God made still another covenant. It was to apply to future generations as well as the people of that day (verses 15, 25). But God had not yet given the people “a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear” (verse 4). He therefore knew that they would not obey Him, and He warns them that the “curses of the covenant written in this Book of the Law” would come on them for their disobedience (verses 20-21, 27; compare 31:15-29). Still, despite their lack of spiritual conversion, the laws God had revealed to them would have enabled the nation of Israel to build a just and equitable society and be richly blessed even if they would have kept only the letter of the law, which they could have followed (29:29). Yet, more often than not, they failed in that also.

## Joash Becomes King of Judah

### (2 Chronicles 23; 2 Kings 11:4-21)

In the seventh year of the reign of evil Queen Athaliah, Jehoida the priest, with the support and protection of the “captains of hundreds” of the army and the Levites and the “chief fathers of Israel,” anointed Joash to be the new king of Judah. This was done on the Sabbath (2 Chronicles 23:4, 8). Joash was seven years old when he was appointed and proclaimed to be the new king (2 Kings 11:21, 12). Jehoida had Queen Athaliah killed by the captains of the army (2 Chronicles 23:14-15). He then “made a covenant between the Lord, the king, and the people, that they should be the Lord’s people, and also between the king and the people” (2 Kings 11:17; 2 Chronicles 23:16 adds that the priest was also a party to this covenant.)

Note that two agreements (covenants) were made: one between the Lord, the king and the people, rededicating themselves to God; and a second between only the king and the people. This second covenant was apparently a rededication to constitutional monarchy, in which the king is not above the law. Jehoiada was engaged in reestablishing right government in Judah after the disastrous

reigns of Ahaziah and Athaliah. A feature of that reestablishment was settling Judah's government upon its original ground—that of a limited monarchy established under Samuel's superintendence when he “explained to the people the regulations of the kingship” (1 Samuel 10:25, NIV).

Also interesting in this reading is that when Joash was crowned he “stood by his pillar” (2 Chronicles 23:13)—2 Kings 11:14 reads “a pillar.” Israel's kings, according to the custom (2 Kings 11:14), were crowned in a ceremony involving a “pillar.” This pillar was apparently a matsebah, a standing stone. It is interesting to note that Britain's sovereigns are also crowned in a ceremony involving a “pillar”—Jacob's stone. The Hebrew in these passages is even more interesting, for it literally says the king stood “upon his pillar.” Britain's monarchs are also crowned “upon” a pillar stone—sitting upon it (i.e., upon a throne that contains it). Thus, though slightly modified, the custom still prevails thousands of years later. Indeed, the royal house of Britain is a continuation of the very same dynasty of ancient Judah—the dynasty of David (see “The Throne of David: Its Biblical Origin and Future,” [www.ucg.org/brp/materials](http://www.ucg.org/brp/materials)).

As a consequence of renewed commitment to God under Joash, the people destroyed the center of Baal worship in Judah (2 Kings 11:18; 2 Chronicles 23:17), and they reinstated the proper sacrificial worship system, as commanded “in the Law of Moses” (verse 18). But, as we will see, some idolatry remained in the land.

Joash's Apostasy; Elisha's Last Signs (2 Chronicles 24:15-27; 2 Kings 12:17-21; 13:3-11, 14-25)  
In Judah: Judah's leaders once again depart from the truth. Jehoiada had provided a great deal of strength and encouragement. The nation respected the results of his work. But as is so often the case, the other leaders didn't appreciate the means to that end—obedience to God—and soon sank back into idolatry. Again, God took action to show them how wrong they were. He had warned them through Moses about what would happen (Leviticus 26:17; compare verse 8).

The really sad part of the story is that of King Joash. From the time he came to the throne as a seven-year-old boy, Jehoiada had been almost an adoptive father to him, even having chosen his wives (2 Chronicles 24:3). And Joash had done so well in restoring proper worship in Judah. Yet he “comes across as a man of weak character. As long as Jehoiada lived, he followed the Lord. But with the priest gone, the king was just as easily led into sin. The measure of our children's character is not how they behave while they are at home, but the choices they make after they leave!” (Bible Reader's Companion, note on verse 17). Incredibly, the king, who had been like a son to Jehoiada, ended up killing Jehoiada's actual son for giving advice he didn't like. This was his own cousin (22:11; 24:20). “This once-good king had sunk to the level of his evil grandmother Athaliah (see 22:10), despite decades of past faithfulness to God” (Nelson Study Bible, note on verse 24).

This should serve as a warning to us all. In the end, Joash was murdered. But he “was excluded from the royal cemetery because he fell far short of the Davidic ideal (see 21:20). Ironically, Jehoiada, who was not a king at all, was buried among the kings because of his faithfulness to God and to God's chosen king (v. 16)” (same note). There are other examples in Scripture of apostasy following the removal of an influential righteous figure. The apostle Paul, for instance, knew that apostasy would follow his own death. And sadly, this pattern has persisted.

In Israel: While Joash was starting to rebuild the temple in Judah, Jehoahaz was coming to the throne in Israel. But his rule was nothing like what was happening in Judah. Jehoahaz continued in the sins of Jeroboam, as Jehu had. The reduction of Israel's power as divine punishment was severe (see 2 Kings 13:7), “a far cry from the time when Ahab alone could muster two thousand chariots for the allied forces at Qarqar” (The Expositor's Bible Commentary, note on verse 7).

The next king of Israel was Jehoash (or Joash) and he too persisted in wrongdoing. In 2 Kings 13:14, “Jehoash’s cry over the aged Elisha repeats the words of Elisha spoken when Elijah was taken up to heaven (2:12). Thus, both at the beginning of his ministry and at its conclusion, Elisha is unmistakably linked to his mentor Elijah. The grief of Jehoash at the impending death of Elisha shows that, like his father Jehoahaz (see vv. 4, 5), this Israelite king possessed some genuine spirituality. The line of Jehu had its good moments and received some reward from the Lord (see 10:30). However, none of this line or any other of the kings of Israel served God with all their heart (see 10:31)” (Nelson, note on 13:14).

A slightly different take on Jehoash’s grief is explained in *The Bible Reader’s Companion*: “Even the wicked king Jehoash wept at the death of Elisha, but only because he was a national resource; the equivalent of a chariot army! Yet even this cry shows a lack of faith. Elisha died [or, at this point, was dying]. But God lived [—a point illustrated by the miracle of Elisha’s bones].... Let’s not make the mistake of trusting in God’s ministers, and not in God” (note on verse 16).

Before his death, Elisha asked Jehoash to shoot an arrow and then to strike some arrows on the ground. “This section describes a symbolic act that Elisha had Joash perform to ensure victories over his enemies; the king was only partly successful in completing the task. Elisha’s symbolic act of putting his hands on the king’s hands should have alerted the king that the aged prophet was conveying a divine blessing on him. Jehoash’s halfhearted compliance with Elisha’s instructions exposed his weak faith and illustrated God’s unfavorable evaluation of his character (v. 11). God’s dying prophet was rightly disturbed. Although God would allow Israel to defeat the Aramean army three times, their victory would be incomplete” (Nelson, note on verses 15-19).

After this, Elisha died. But the miracles associated with him didn’t stop. God had one more dramatic sign: the raising of a dead man who came in contact with Elisha’s remains. “There was no magic in Elisha’s bones, but a demonstration of the power of God associated with his servant” (note on verse 21). “The juxtaposition of this event with the account that precedes it makes it clear that herein was another divinely intended sign for Jehoash and Israel; God was the God of the living, not the dead (cf. Luke 20:38), not only for Elisha [who would one day be resurrected] and the man who had [now] been restored to life, but for Israel as well. Israel could yet ‘live’ if she would but appropriate the eternally living God as her own. The entire episode was, further, a corroborative sign that what Elisha had prophesied would certainly come to pass. Only a living God could guarantee such a thing (cf. Isa 44)” (Expositor’s, note on 2 Kings 13:21). “This miracle should have reassured Jehoash that God intended to rescue Israel from the deadly grip of Aramean domination (see v. 25)” (Nelson, note on verse 21).

“In accordance with Jehoash’s striking the ground three times with arrows (v. 18), God gave Jehoash victory over the Arameans only three times. Yet God graciously overruled Jehoash’s inadequate faith by granting Israel full victory over the Arameans during the reign of his son Jeroboam II” (note on verse 25).

## Joash’s Apostasy; Elisha’s Last Signs

(2 Chronicles 24:15-27; 2 Kings 12:17-21; 13:3-11, 14-25)

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## Revelation 11

In Chapter 11, John is given a measuring rod and instructed to measure the Dwelling Place of Elohim, the altar, and the people worshipping in it. But the outside court he is instructed not to measure because it is to be given over to the gentiles. The outer court is given to them to trample under foot for forty two months.

Next, we are introduced to the two witnesses of the Revelation. They will prophesy 1,260 days in cloths of mourning (sackcloth). The two witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that are standing before the Elohim of the earth. These witnesses have authority to cause drought (shut up the heaven). They can also turn water to blood, to smite the earth with plagues. Once their witness has ended, the beast of the pit of the deep will make war with them, overcome them, and murder them.

Their dead bodies will lay in the street of Jerusalem and all the world will rejoice over their deaths. The world rejoices because the witness of these two were making the world miserable due to the conviction, drought, plague, and truth. Their bodies will lay in the streets for three and a half days and will not be buried.

Then, after three and a half days, the Spirit of life will return unto them and they will be raised from the dead. There will then be great fear from all those who witness this event. They will be called in an audible voice to "come up here" (to heaven). Then a great earthquake and a tenth of the city of Jerusalem will fall along with 7,000 men killed. The rest will then finally praise Elohim.

This is the second woe. The seventh messenger sounded and there was a proclamation in heaven concerning the reign of the Master Yeshua. Then the time of the dead to be judged and servants to be rewarded was also proclaimed. The Dwelling Place was opened and the ark of His covenant was seen in His Dwelling Place.

## Revelation 12

The virgin was seen in the heaven. She was clad with the sun, the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and cried out to give birth. Another sign in heaven – a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns on his heads was seen.

This dragon caused a third of the stars of heaven to fall to the earth and he stood ready to devour the child the woman was preparing to deliver. She bore a male child. He was to shepherd all nations with a rod of iron, and he was caught away to Elohim and to His throne.

These scriptures are speaking of the constellations which can be seen in the night sky every night around the world. All you have to do is to look up.

The woman fled into the wilderness and there was nourished and protected by Elohim for 1,260 days. A battle in heaven ensues between the dragon and his minions and the servants of YHWH. The dragon and his army were defeated and was thrown out and expelled from heaven and will no longer accuse the children of Elohim.

The dragon, being thrown down to earth, begins to persecute the woman. He tried to overcome her, but she was protected and the dragon is all the more enraged. He went on to fight with the remnant of her seed, which are: those guarding the commands of Elohim and possessing the witness of Yeshua Messiah.