



Steädfast / Sumud

FOR JUSTICE IN PALESTINE & ISRAEL

Presented by the Just Love Ministry

Week 3: MOSAIC COVENANT

Meditate EXODUS 20

¹God spoke all these words: ²I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; ³you shall have no other gods before me. ⁴You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, ⁶but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments. ⁷You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name. ⁸Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work. ¹⁰But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. ¹¹For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it. ¹²Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. ¹³You shall not murder. ¹⁴You shall not commit adultery. ¹⁵You shall not steal. ¹⁶You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. ¹⁷You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Explore



Excerpts from the deep listening with Palestinian Christian leaders (RSR p. 11-12)

- Mainstream media consistently underreport violence against Palestinians (home demolitions, land seizures, physical attacks, killings and repeated Israel Defense Force incursions) while covering Palestinian displays of force; when present, “both sides” rhetoric minimizes or ignores the power differential between occupier and occupied.
- A persistent refugee crisis, beginning in 1948, and growing diaspora (both of Palestinians and others in the MENA region).
- Greater political instability across the MENA region, particularly in Syria, Iraq and Lebanon.
- A political context of hyperpolarization, the mainstreaming of white Christian nationalism, unconditional support for Israel as a political litmus test (across both major political parties, though there has been some burgeoning political questioning of that support), PACs and undisclosed election spending.

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Explore CONTINUED

Excerpts from the deep listening with Palestinian Christian leaders (RSR p. 11-12)

- Continued impact of the occupation on church members, including loss of economic resources, constant need for permits for access to work and worship, family separation, COVID-19 effects on tourism, double taxation, etc.
- A political context of hyperpolarization, the mainstreaming of white Christian nationalism, unconditional support for Israel as a political litmus test (across both major political parties, though there has been some burgeoning political questioning of that support), PACs and undisclosed election spending.
- U.S. military aid to Israel of nearly \$4 billion annually, which remains essentially unconditional.

Reflect

The stories shared in Genesis reveal the wayward choices God's people made to satisfy their ambition and gratification. These 'me first' attitudes led into indulgent, destructive, slaughtering behaviors for personal gain. God intervened, corrected, and redeemed his love for humans by calling on Moses to deliver his people from oppression and gave them the ten commandments to guide moral law.

Today, February, 2024 thousands of years later in God's Holy Land, the violation of each commandment is witnessed by the world. The 2022-2023 Review and Summary Recommendations of Peace Not Walls (RSR) reported horrid details that the mainstream media has minimized for decades regarding the Israeli occupation and its non-stop violence, chaos, and carnage against Palestinian families of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish descents. Decade after decade, Israeli military illegally demolished homes, seized undue land, and imprisoned nonmilitary protestors while the global community acknowledged the cries of Palestinians for intervention and help, to no avail.

Currently, the International Court of Justice ordered Israel to stop the death, destruction, and preemptive acts of genocide in Gaza. Meanwhile, in the United States a political, divisive movement of white Christian nationalism support Israel and the 4-billion-dollar yearly military aid allotted to them from the US as a litmus test to strengthen voter support from both sides of political candidates: even at the cost of 27,000 people murdered, half of those children, and 2 million displaced families.

As the world witnesses Israel's bombing campaign, the citizens in Palestine stand united, regardless of religious views in Steadfast/Sumud, not for a fight for land, as many are misled to believe, but instead for freedom from Israeli occupation and the human right to love, live, work and enjoy God's community, justice and love. Jesus, in similar tragic plights, also faced militant directors who committed crimes against humanity. Jesus chose to die under the hands of murderers to example God's greatest commandments: to love your God with all your heart, mind and

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Reflect CONTINUED

soul, and to love one another. The indigenous, homeland citizens in Gaza, united as one body of believers of one God, sacrificed the same “love for God and love for one another.”

1. Which of the 10 commandments is easiest for you to live into according to this reading? Which is the hardest?
2. People across time have struggled to live into this covenant. Where do you see Israel, today, attempting to honor this covenant? Where are they failing?
3. God gave this covenant to invite the ancient Israelites into God’s community, justice and love. Following Jesus’ example, what actions can we take to help end the Israeli occupation today of Gaza and help all people in the Holy Land live into God’s community, justice and love? How do you feel God’s love moving you, personally, to protect the Christian church’s presence in the Holy Land under the current threat of total annihilation?

Pray

Dear Heavenly Father, united as one we ask for the power of the Holy Spirit to guide us into healing action to end the Israeli occupation in Palestine and to ignite the two greatest commandments shared by Jesus: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Matthew 22:36-40 In Jesus name we pray.

Amen.

Sing

ELW 670: Build Us Lord

ELW 724 All Who Love and Serve Your City

ELW 866: We Are Marching in the Light of God

Additional Resources

- **[Gaza: World Court Orders Israel to Prevent Genocide | Human Rights Watch \(hrw.org\)](#)**
- **[Peace Not Walls: January 2024 - Team ELCA](#)**
- **[PalestinePortal.org](#)**