

Eschatology

The Unconditional Covenants of God

To get the full picture of Eschatology we must review the unilateral or unconditional covenants of God: The Abrahamic, The Palestinian, The Davidic, and The New Covenants. The foundation of eschatology is literally built upon and fulfilled on and in these covenants.

Charles Fred Lincoln defines an unconditional covenant this way:

“A divine covenant is a sovereign disposition of God, whereby He establishes an unconditional or declarative compact with man, obligating Himself, in grace, by the untrammelled formula, “I WILL,” to bring to Pass of himself definite blessings for the covenanted ones.”

The Abrahamic Covenant

The covenant that God made with Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3, and confirmed and enlarged to him in Genesis 12:6-7; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-14; 22:15-18, is considered the basis of the entire covenant program. This is the corner stone in which all the other covenants are built upon.

The summary of these verses and the general outline of the Abrahamic covenant:

1. That Abraham's name shall be great.
2. That a great nation should come from him.
3. He should be a blessing so great that in him shall all families of the earth be blessed.
4. To him personally and to his seed should be given Palestine forever to inherit.
5. The multitude of his seed should be as the dust of the earth.
6. That whoever blessed him should be blessed, and whoever cursed him should be cursed.
7. He should be the father of many nations.
8. Kings should proceed from him.

9. The covenant shall be an “everlasting one.”
10. The land of Canaan shall be an “everlasting possession.”
11. God will be a God to him and his seed.
12. His seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.
13. In his seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.

Since the Abrahamic covenant is an unconditional covenant with Israel, and therefore cannot be fulfilled by people other than the nation Israel, it is seen that Israel has promises regarding a land and a seed, which determines the future program of God. The words *land* and *seed*, together with the word *blessing*, summarize the essential features of the eschatological portion of the covenant.

The Palestinian Covenant

Great importance is attached to this covenant in that it reaffirms to Israel, in no uncertain terms, their title deed to the land of promise. (Gen 13:15; 17:7-8)

This Palestinian covenant amplifies the *land* features of the Abrahamic covenant. The provisions of this covenant is stated in Deut. 30:1-10 and is summarized:

1. The nation will be plucked off the land for its unfaithfulness.
2. There will be a future repentance of Israel.
3. Their Messiah will return.
4. Israel will be restored to the land.
5. Israel will be converted as a nation. (Also see Rom 11:26-27)
6. Israel's enemies will be judged.
7. The nation will then receive her full blessing.

Since these things have never been fulfilled, and an eternal and unconditional covenant demands a fulfillment, we must provide for just such a program in our outline of future events. This was the expectation of the OT prophets, like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Micah, Zephaniah and Zechariah, who wrote to Israel.

The Davidic Covenant

God's covenant with David amplifies the *seed* features of the Abrahamic covenant. The provisions of this covenant is stated in 2 Sam 7:12-16 and is summarized:

1. David is to have a child, yet to be born, who shall succeed him and establish his kingdom.
2. This son (Solomon) shall build the temple instead of David.
3. The throne of his kingdom shall be established forever.
4. The throne will not be taken away from him (Solomon) even though his sins justify chastisement.
5. David's *house, throne, and kingdom* shall be established forever.

Since this covenant has not been fulfilled yet, it is the anticipated future that Israel is looking forward to. Certain facts about Israel present themselves in regards to this future (literal) fulfillment: (Isaiah 61:8-9; Ezekiel 37:21-28)

1. Israel must be preserved as a nation.
2. Israel must have a national existence, and be brought back into the land of her inheritance.
3. David's son, the Lord Jesus Christ, must return to the earth, bodily and literally, in order to reign over David's covenanted kingdom.
4. A literal earthly kingdom must be constituted over which the returned Messiah reigns.
5. This kingdom must be an eternal kingdom. Since the "*throne, house, and kingdom*" were all promised to David for all eternity.

The New Covenant

The new covenant guarantees Israel a converted heart as the foundation of all her blessings. According to the OT principle that such a conversion cannot be effected permanently without the shedding of blood, this covenant necessitates a sacrifice, acceptable to God, as the foundation on which it is instituted.

The provisions of this covenant promised to Israel was stated in Jeremiah 31:31-34 and confirmed by Isaiah (61:8-9) and Ezekiel (37:121-28). Charles Ryrie well summarizes the provisions of this new covenant when he says:

1. It is an unconditional, grace covenant resting on the “I will” of God. (Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 16:60-62)
2. It is an everlasting one. (Isa 61:2; Ezek 37:26; Jer 31:35-37)
3. It promises the impartation of a renewed mind and heart, which we call regeneration. (Isa 59:21; Jer 31:33)
4. It provides for restoration to the favor and blessing of God. (Hos 2:19-20; Isa 61:9)
5. Forgiveness of sin is promised. (Jer 31:34)
6. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is promised. (Jer 31:33; Ezek 36:27)
7. The teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit will be manifested, and the will of God will be known by obedient hearts (Jer 31:34)
8. Israel will be blessed materially in accordance with the provisions of the new covenant. (Jer 32:41; Isa 61:8; Ezek 34:25-27)
9. The sanctuary will be rebuilt in Jerusalem. (Ezek 37:26-27)
10. War shall cease and peace shall reign. (Hos 2:18; Isa 2:4)
11. The blood of Jesus Christ is the foundation of the blessings. (Zech 9:11)