

COVENANTS

A covenant is an agreement or contract between two persons or parties. All scripture centers around eight major covenants which have originated from God. These are as follows:

1. Edenic, Genesis 1-2
2. Adamic, Genesis 3-8
3. Noahic, Genesis 9-11
4. Abrahamic, Genesis 12:1-3
5. Mosaic, Exodus 19
6. Palestinian, Deuteronomy 30
7. Davidic, 2 Sam. 7
8. New, Matthew 26:28

God's covenants show His purposes for the ages, as well as the different relationships to God of the Jews, the Gentiles and the Church. They also show the distinctive obligations of the people to God.

There are two kinds of covenants: conditional and unconditional. The conditional covenant depends on the recipient of the covenant for its fulfillment. Certain obligations or conditions must be fulfilled by the receiver before the giver of the covenant is obligated to fulfill what was promised. An example of a conditional covenant in scripture is the Mosaic covenant, which depended upon obedience by the people before its blessings could be realized.

The unconditional covenant depends solely upon the one making the covenant for its fulfillment. That which is promised is sovereignly given to the recipient of the covenant on the authority and integrity of the one making the covenant *apart from* the actions of the receiver. However, an unconditional covenant, which binds God to a certain course of action, may have blessings attached to that covenant which are conditioned on the response of the recipient of the covenant. But that doesn't change the unconditional character of the covenant. An example of this would be in the fact that God promised the land of Canaan to Israel. All who believed could enter in and enjoy the blessings thereof, but those who were fearful and unbelieving died in the wilderness.

God's covenants are to be understood literally. We can know this by noticing how the promises which have already been fulfilled have been fulfilled literally. Also, the very nature of a covenant necessitates that all parties be able to understand clearly what is promised, with no hidden meanings.

Four of the above named covenants have more fully to do with our studies in Eschatology. They are the Abrahamic, the Palestinian, the Davidic, and the New Covenant. Therefore, we will concentrate on these four in our lessons. Each of these are eternal and unconditional.

The Abrahamic Covenant is the basis of the entire covenant program. The basic promises of this covenant are given in Genesis 12:1-3 as follows:

1. I will make of thee a great nation.
2. I will bless thee.

3. I will make thy name great
4. Thou shall be a blessing.
5. I will bless them that bless thee.
6. I will curse them that curse thee.
7. In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

The only condition to this covenant was that Abram leave his country and his kindred. When he obeyed that request, there were no more conditions that he was required to meet. Some of the promises of this covenant were to Abraham personally, some to his seed (Israel), and some to all the families of the earth (Gentiles).

This covenant contains a promise of a land—which promise is developed in the Palestinian covenant. It contains a promise of seed (heirs), which is developed in the Davidic covenant; and also a promise of blessings, which is developed in the New covenant.

God stated the covenant in Genesis 12:1-3. Then He confirmed and enlarged upon it in the following scriptures:

1. Genesis 12:7—Abraham's seed (heirs) would inherit the land of Canaan.
2. Genesis 13:14-16—This land would belong to him and his seed *forever*, and his seed (natural heirs) would be as the dust of the earth in number.
3. Genesis 15:4-7—Abraham's seed would be one born from his own body, and his seed (Spiritual heirs) would be as the stars in heaven in number.
4. Genesis 15:7-21—The covenant was solemnly confirmed by God when He entered into the ritual of a blood sacrifice, which was a custom in Abraham's days. God, Himself, was the only Participant in the covenant; thus enacting out the fact that the fulfillment of the covenant was not dependant upon Abraham's actions, but only on the merit of God. God also assured Abraham that, although his seed would be afflicted in a strange land for 400 years, yet that would not abrogate the promise.
5. Genesis 17:1-8—Abraham would be the father of *many* nations, and this is an *everlasting* covenant.
6. Genesis 17:9-14—The rite of circumcision was established as a token for the covenant.
7. Genesis 17:15-21—Abraham's wife, Sarah, would be a mother of many nations, and the covenant would be established through the son she would bear for him, whose name would be Isaac.
8. Genesis 22:16-18—The blessing of the covenant would come to Abraham, as well as to all nations of the earth.

It is important to note that one can be a child of Abraham through natural lineage; that is, being an Israelite—through Spiritual lineage within the natural; that is, an Israelite who believes in God and obeys Him—and through Spiritual seed who are not natural Israelites; that is, ones of Gentiles who belong to God and thus are blessed under the provision of the covenant by "all families of the earth. Note Galatians 3:28-29 and Romans 4:16-17.