

The Church of the Servant King

Prophecy Series (Proph5_God's Eschatological Covenants With Israel)

Definitions

Eschatology – that portion of theology that is concerned with doctrines and concepts related to last things, such as future events of human history, death, judgment, the eternal state, and prophecy related thereto.

Soteriology – that portion of theology that is concerned with doctrines and concepts related to our salvation effected by the person and work of Christ.

Introduction

In our last session, I introduced this study of the covenants within our prophecy series by presenting a distinction between what is known as Covenant Theology and the covenants between God and Israel. The former, while based upon certain biblical truths, is soteriological in focus, explained in a manner that the covenants are directed toward selected individuals, the covenants are not eschatological in nature, and the names for the covenants are not found in Scripture.¹ The covenant terminology and concepts contained within Reformed theology “is woefully inadequate to explain the Scriptures eschatologically, for it ignores the great field of the Biblical covenants which determine the whole eschatological program.”² Thus, the set of covenants embodied within Covenant theology fails to discern the purpose and direction of human history. It fails to synthesize soteriological principles found in Scripture and embraced by its “covenants” with the primarily eschatological covenants that are specifically found in Scripture which happen to contain soteriological components.

A theology which penetrates no further into Scripture than to discover that in all ages God is immutable in His grace toward penitent sinners, and constructs the idea of a universal church, continuing through the ages, on the one truth of immutable grace, is not only disregarding vast spheres of revelation but is reaping the unavoidable confusion and misdirection which part-truth engenders.³

¹ As we observed in the previous session, the three major covenants addressed by the Covenant theologians' system are: **1) Covenant of Works** – According to Reformed theology, this was an agreement made by God with Adam as the representative head of the human race, whereby he was placed on probation. Obedience would be rewarded with eternal life and disobedience would be punished with death; **2) Covenant of Redemption** – The agreement between the Father and the Son whereby the Father gave the Son as Head and redeemer of the elect and the Son volunteered to take the place of those whom the Father had given Him; **3) Covenant of Grace** – The agreement between the offended God and the offending, but elect sinner, in which God promises salvation through faith in Christ, and the sinner accepts this provision which results in a life of faith and obedience. See Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1953), 211-218; 262-301.

² J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 66.

³ Lewis S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas, Texas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947), Volume 1, 156.

The Scriptures contain references to five major covenants. All of these covenants were made by God with Israel in one form or fashion. The five covenants are highlighted in the chart to follow.

Covenant	Type	Passages
Abrahamic	Unilateral (a.k.a. "Unconditional")	Gen 12:1-3 (confirmed and enlarged in 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-14; 22: 15-18; 26:2-4; 28:13-14; 35:11-12)
Mosaic	Bilateral (a.k.a. "Conditional")	Ex 19:5ff; Deut 28:1-68
Palestinian	Unilateral (a.k.a "Unconditional")	Deut 30:1-10
Davidic	Unilateral (a.k.a "Unconditional")	2 Sam 7:11-16; 1 Chron 17:10-15
New	Unilateral (a.k.a "Unconditional")	Jer 31:31-34 (contains term "New Covenant"); Concept found in Isa 49:8; 54:10; 55:3; 59:21; 61:8-9; Jer 32:39-40; 50:5; Ezek 11:19; 16:60-63; 18:31; 34:25; 36:22-36; 37:26; Hos 2:18-20

In this week's session, we shall read from these passages of Scripture and we shall review the major provisions of the unilateral covenants. (The bilateral covenant known as the Mosaic Law will be the focus of another study at another time). The purpose of this lesson is not to study each covenant in detail. Rather, the purpose is to introduce the four covenants and the Scriptures that give basis to them.

The Covenants

The **Abrahamic Covenant** includes the following provisions:

- Abraham's name shall be great (Ge 12:2)
- A great nation shall come from him (Ge 12:2)
- Those who bless Abram would be blessed and those who curse Abram would be cursed (Ge 12:3)
- All families of the earth would be blessed in him (Ge 12:3)
- To him and to his seed would be given the Land to inherit (Ge 12:1, 7; 13:14-18; 15:18-21; 17:8)
- The multitude of his seed should be as the dust of the earth and the stars of the heavens (Ge 13:16; 15:5; 22:17)
- He would be the father of many nations (Ge 17:6)
- Kings would proceed from him (Ge 17:6)
- An everlasting, perpetual covenant (Ge 17:7)
- God would be a God to him and his seed (Ge 17:8)
- In his seed, all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Ge 22:18)

The **Palestinian Covenant** includes the following provisions:

- There will be a future repentance of Israel (Deut 30:2)
- The Messiah of Israel will return (30:3)
- Israel will be restored to the land (30:3-4)
- Israel will be converted as a nation (30:6)
- Israel's enemies will be judged (30:7)
- The nation will then receive her full blessing, specifically the blessings associated with the Messianic Kingdom (30:8-10)

The **Davidic Covenant** includes the following provisions:

- David was promised an eternal dynasty (2 Sam 7:11, 16; 1 Chron 17:10)
- One of David's own sons, specifically Solomon, was to occupy the throne after David (2 Sam 7:12)
- This son, Solomon would build the Temple (2 Sam 7:13)

- The throne of David and Solomon's kingdom would be established forever (2 Sam 7:13, 16). Note that it is not Solomon, but the throne which would be established forever.
- Solomon would be disciplined for disobedience, but God would not remove His lovingkindness from him (2 Sam 7:14-15).
- The Messiah would come from the seed of David (1 Chron 17:11)
- The Messiah's throne, house and kingdom will be established forever (1 Chron 17:12-14)

The **New Covenant** includes the following provisions:

- The impartation of a renewed mind and heart which we may call regeneration (Jer 31:33 cf. Isa 59:21; Ezek 36:26)
- A comprehensive knowledge of God and relationship with God (Jer 31:33, 34; Ezek 36:27)
- Forgiveness of sin (Jer 31:34b; Ezek 36:25)
- The continued national existence of Israel (Jer 31:35-37)
- Jerusalem to be rebuilt and never again to be demolished (Jer 31:38-40; Ezek 37:26-27a)
- Restoration to the land and a position of favor and blessing from God (Isa 61:8-9; Jer 32:41; Ezek 34:25-27; 36:24, 28, 29-30, 33-35; Hos 2:19-20)
- The permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Jer 31:33 cf. Ezek 36:27)
- A large population in the restored land (Ezek 36:37-38)
- War shall cease and peace shall reign according to Hosea 2:18 and Isaiah 2:4