

53. Abraham's Covenant, David's Covenant and the New Covenant

- God made three great, unconditional, eternal covenants with His chosen people that established a permanent relationship between God and the Jewish people; Abraham's covenant, David's covenant and the New Covenant. It is important to understand these covenants in order to fully comprehend end-time Bible prophecies.

- The first of these covenants was with Abraham. God's promise to Abraham was first made in Genesis 12:1-3. The promise was formalized into a covenant in Genesis 15:1-21 and then was amplified in Genesis 17:1-21. The Lord said to Abraham, "I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3). "On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates'" (Genesis 15:18). This promised land belongs to Israel and includes a territory much larger than the current nation of Israel. The Lord appeared to Abraham and said to him, "I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you. I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God" (Genesis 17:6-8). This unconditional promise of the land has never been completely fulfilled in history, but it will be fulfilled in the millennial kingdom when Christ gives the Jewish people the land He promised (Isaiah 60:21). God's promise to bless all the families of the earth through Abraham has been partially fulfilled in the blessing that has come to the entire world through Abraham's greatest descendant, Jesus Christ. However, the final blessing from Abraham through Christ will come when all believers inhabit the new heavens and the new earth.

- David's covenant with God builds on Abraham's covenant and is also unconditional and eternal (2 Samuel 7:12-16). The Lord said that David's descendant (Solomon) would build a house for Him and that the throne of his kingdom would be established forever (2 Samuel 7:12-13). "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever" (2 Samuel 7:16). This great covenant will be fulfilled when Jesus Christ, from the line of David, sits on David's throne in Jerusalem, ruling over Israel and the entire world in the millennial kingdom and on into eternity (Ezekiel 37:22-25). "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end" (Luke 1:32-33).

- The principal Old Testament passage on the New Covenant is found in Jeremiah 31:31-34. "'Behold, days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah... I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people... for they will all know Me... for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more'" (Jeremiah 31:31-34). This

covenant is confirmed elsewhere in the Old Testament and is stated to be eternal and unconditional (Isaiah 61:8-9; Ezekiel 16:60). "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances" (Ezekiel 36:26-27). God's promises to Israel include the forgiveness of sins, the indwelling Spirit and a new heart (Joel 2:28-32). Jesus' sacrifice was the beginning of the New Covenant (Luke 22:20; Matthew 26:27-28; Hebrews 8:6-13; 1 Corinthians 11:25-26; 2 Corinthians 3:6). While believers today enjoy the spiritual blessings of the New Covenant (forgiveness of sins and the indwelling Holy Spirit), the specific promises in Jeremiah 31:31-34 are "with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" and will find their ultimate fulfillment for Israel when Jesus Christ returns and sets up His millennial kingdom.