

ESCHATOLOGY (80)

The central passage of Scripture that deals with the Palestinian covenant is Deuteronomy 30:1-10.

Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost does a good job setting the context of this covenant:

“In the closing chapter of the book of Deuteronomy the children of Israel, the physical seed of Abraham, are facing a crisis in their national existence. They are about to pass from the proved leadership of Moses into the unproven leadership of Joshua. They are standing at the entrance to the land that was promised to them by God ... But this land is possessed by Israel’s enemies, who have shown they will resist any attempt by Israel to enter the land promised them. It is impossible for them to return to their former status as a slave nation and the land to which they were journeying as “stranger and pilgrims” seemed shut out before them. As a result, certain important considerations must be faced by the nation. Is the land of Palestine still their possession? Did the inauguration of the Mosaic covenant (the law), which all agree was conditional, set aside the unconditional Abrahamic covenant? Could Israel hope to enter into permanent possession of their land in the face of such opposition? To answer these important questions God stated again His covenant promise concerning Israel’s possession of and inheritance in the land in Deuteronomy 30:1-10, which statement we call the Palestinian covenant, because it answers the questions of Israel’s relation to the land promises of the Abrahamic covenant” (*Things To Come*, p. 95).

When this covenant is given, there had been several moments of rebellion with the people of Israel. Had the Abrahamic covenant been conditional, certainly it would have been canceled. However, the Palestinian covenant clearly establishes the unconditional nature of the Abrahamic covenant.

The Palestinian Covenant is important for three reasons:

(Reason #1) - It reaffirms that Israel has the promise of land.

This is extremely important because while Moses was leading the children of Israel in the wilderness, she proved to be very unfaithful. This covenant reaffirms the land would still be hers in spite of her unfaithfulness.

(Reason #2) - It establishes that a conditional covenant never negates an unconditional covenant.

The Mosaic covenant of the Law was conditional (Exodus 20:1-31:18). This Law was designed to govern everyday life for the Israelite and offered blessings or cursings for obedience or disobedience to the conditional requirements (Deuteronomy 28:1-68). When the Palestinian covenant was given, Israel was under the Mosaic Law, so the question arises, what if Israel does not meet the conditions of the Law, would that negate her getting her land? This covenant clearly establishes that Israel was unconditionally guaranteed her land so the conditions of the Mosaic Law do not negate the unconditional covenant made with Abraham.

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(Reason #3) - It amplifies the land features of the Abrahamic covenant.

This Palestinian covenant once again directs Israel's attention back to her land. Even though she had been unfaithful, she was still entitled to her land because of the promise made by God.

There are seven key expansions made by this covenant in regard to the promises made to Abraham in Genesis 12:

Expansion #1 - Israel will be removed from the land for her unfaithfulness.
Deuteronomy 28:63-68; 30:1-3

Expansion #2 - Israel will be repentant at some point in the future. Deut. 28:63-68; 30:1-3

Expansion #3 - Israel will be returned to the land by the returning Messiah. Deut. 30:3-6

Expansion #4 - Israel will be restored to the land with full blessings. Deut. 30:5

Expansion #5 - Israel will be completely and nationally converted.
Deuteronomy 30:4-8; Romans 11:26-27

Expansion #6 - Israel's enemies will be judged. Deuteronomy 30:7

Expansion #7 - Israel will receive all blessings. Deuteronomy 30:9

Again Dr. Pentecost writes: "As one surveys the wide areas included in this one passage which sets forth this covenant program, one is compelled to feel that God takes Israel's relation to the land as a matter of extreme importance. God not only guarantees its possession to them, but obligates Himself to judge and remove all Israel's enemies, give the nation a new heart, a conversion, prior to placing them in the land" (*Ibid.*, p. 97).

This particular covenant was referred to by the prophet Ezekiel in his prophecy found in Ezekiel 16. In this prophecy, God once again reconfirms the Palestinian covenant and reminds Israel: 1) God loved her from her infancy (Ezekiel 16:1-7); 2) God has taken her to Himself as in a covenantal marriage (Ezekiel 16:8-14); 3) Israel did not stay faithful to God but played the harlot (Ezekiel 16:15-34); 4) God punished Israel and caused her to be dispersed from her land (Ezekiel 16:35-52); 5) God will eventually restore Israel (Ezekiel 16:53-63).

This chapter clearly deals with land matters of the Palestinian covenant. In recognizing this point, it becomes clear that this covenant is also unconditional. Since it is specifically stated that Israel has been unfaithful (Ezekiel 16:15-34) and it is stated that the covenant is an everlasting covenant, it must be unconditional. Israel has not met any of the conditions, yet God still intends to fulfill the covenant.

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Those who attack the unconditional nature of this covenant typically do so by referring to the adverbs “when” of Deuteronomy 30:1 and the “then” of Deuteronomy 30:3. The claim is that this implies a condition—God will do this “when” Israel does this and if Israel doesn’t do this “then” God does not have to fulfill the covenant.

What is neglected to be realized is that **the adverbs “when” and “then” both have to do with the time the covenant will be fulfilled, not the certainty of it being fulfilled.** God is going to fulfill this covenant and the time of the fulfillment will be “when” God determines to finish the program with the Gentiles and take up His program with Israel.

When it comes to prophecy, this “Palestinian covenant” is extremely important because it gives us some prophetic insight into the future:

- 1) This covenant clearly establishes that Israel, as a nation, will be converted.
- 2) This covenant clearly establishes that Israel will be regathered from various parts of the world.
- 3) This covenant clearly establishes that Israel will eventually receive her land.
- 4) This covenant clearly establishes that Israel will see God destroy her enemies.
- 5) This covenant clearly establishes that Israel will have great prosperity in her land.

QUESTION #37 – What is the Davidic covenant?

The central passage that presents the Davidic covenant is II Samuel 7:12-16 (I Chron. 17:1-15). As we have stated, all of the covenants with Israel have a connection to the Abrahamic covenant. Each one stresses or confirms or emphasizes some of the promises made to Israel in that first covenant.

For example, the Palestinian covenant primarily stresses the land promises made to Israel. What we will see about the Davidic covenant is that it stresses the seed promises made to Israel. Both of these covenants are important to the original made with Abraham.

There are several passages that clearly indicate that the Davidic covenant has a major emphasis on the seed promise: 1) II Samuel 7:12; 2) Psalm 89:3-4; 3) Jeremiah 33:22, 25-26.

What this particular covenant does is to narrow the seed promise made to Abraham (Genesis 22:17-18) in that it clearly establishes that the promise would come through the line of David and would include a King, Kingdom, house, Temple and throne.

The Davidic covenant is crucial to biblical Eschatology for this covenant answers many important futuristic questions: 1) Will there be a literal Millennium? 2) Is the Church supposed to be in the Kingdom? 3) Just exactly what is God’s Kingdom? 4) Can we actually expect Jesus Christ to literally return and restore Israel and reign over Israel? 5) Is the Kingdom presently being fulfilled or is it to be fulfilled in the future? All of these questions are important and all are answered by the Davidic covenant.