

ESCHATOLOGY (73)

The **conditional covenant** is a covenant God makes with Israel in which the fulfillment of the covenant is conditioned upon the **faithfulness of Israel**, who is the recipient of the covenant. In this type of covenant, certain obligations must be met before God will fulfill it. This kind of covenant always has an “if” attached to it. The idea is—if Israel will do something, then God will fulfill it and if Israel doesn’t meet the condition, God will not fulfill the covenant.

The **unconditional covenant** is a covenant God makes with Israel that has no conditions. In this type of covenant, the fulfillment is unconditionally dependent upon the **faithfulness of God**, who gave and made the covenant. In an unconditional covenant, no obligations must be met and there is **never an “if”** attached to it. The unconditional covenant may feature a condition to enjoy the blessings attached to it, but never a condition in the fulfillment of the covenant.

QUESTION #33 – Prophetically speaking, how many covenants has God made with Israel?

When it comes to the study of biblical prophecy, as it relates to the nation Israel, God has made four major covenants with Israel. **All of these covenant are unconditional**; however, one of them clearly does have a conditional element.

In every case the covenants are literal, which means they are to be interpreted literally. These covenants are eternal, which means they are covenants whose agreement lasts forever. These covenants are unconditional, which guarantees they will be fulfilled regardless of Israel’s faithfulness or lack thereof. These covenants are made with Israel, which means they are specifically made with this nation only.

QUESTION #34 – What are the four major covenants God has made with Israel?

Covenant #1 - The Abrahamic Covenant. Genesis 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:4-21; 17:1-8; 22:15-19

Covenant #2 - The Palestinian Covenant. Deuteronomy 30:1-10

Covenant #3 - The Davidic Covenant. II Samuel 7:12-16; I Chronicles 17:1-15

Covenant #4 - The New Covenant. Jeremiah 31:31-34; Isaiah 61:8-9; Ezekiel 37:21-28

QUESTION #35 – What is the Abrahamic covenant?

This is the first of the four critical covenants made by God with Israel. The Abrahamic covenant is completely unconditional in that God declares what He is going to do for and through Abraham.

The first passage of Scripture where this covenant is found is Genesis 12:1-3. This particular covenant is restated by God to Isaac (Genesis 26:3-5) and to Jacob (Genesis 35:10-12). In every instance it is stated that the covenant will be fulfilled because of an initial promise to Abraham.

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There are several things we want to observe about the Abrahamic covenant:

- 1) God promised to lead Abraham to a land . Genesis 12:1b–boundaries are given in Genesis 15:18-19
- 2) God promised to make Abraham a great nation . Genesis 12:2a
- 3) God promised to give Abraham His blessing . Genesis 12:2b
- 4) God promised to make Abraham a great name . Genesis 12:2c
- 5) God promised to make Abraham a blessing . Genesis 12:2d
- 6) God promised to honor Abraham internationally . Genesis 12:3a
- 7) God promised to honor Abraham universally . Genesis 12:3b
- 8) God promised to give land to Abraham’s seed . Genesis 12:7
- 9) God promised to give land to Abraham’s seed forever . Genesis 13:15; 17:8
- 10) God promised to multiply (physically and spiritually) Abraham’s seed . Genesis 13:16

This covenant is extremely important because it has ramifications concerning a special individual (Abraham), to a special nation (Israel) and to the universe (whole world). It has application individually, nationally and universally.

Two critical prophetic words indicate that this covenant has not yet been completely fulfilled—“forever” (Genesis 13:15) and “everlasting” (Genesis 17:8). Both of these words are specifically connected to the “land,” which to this day is still not in Israel’s possession.

According to the Bible, Abraham, in God’s estimation, has the most honored name, next to that of Jesus Christ. Dr. Chafer observed, “...no name is more honored, outside of Christ’s, than Abraham’s” (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. 4, p. 313).

To demonstrate the significance of Abraham’s name, there are three ways humanity is related:

1) People may be in Abraham’s lineage naturally .

An Israelite born into one of the twelve tribes of Israel. This person is physically born Jewish and is naturally related to Abraham.

2) People may be in Abraham’s lineage naturally and spiritually .

One born physically as a Jew, but also has believed on Jesus Christ—a Jewish believer.

3) People may be in Abraham’s lineage spiritually .

One who is a Gentile, non-Jewish who has believed on Jesus Christ—the One who came through the Abrahamic line (Galatians 3:6-9). The only way a non-Jew can have any connection to Abraham is to be “in Christ” (Galatians 3:28-29).