

## Covenant Theology's 3 Major Covenants; Doctrine of Limited Atonement; the Unconditional Covenants to Israel Each Have Eternity Clauses; Chafer's Summary of These Covenants

16. Yet, from this system of interpretation the Covenant theologians have developed three major covenants:
  - 1) The covenant of redemption. This implies that the members of the Trinity had to enter into an agreement in order to bring about a system for salvation. This is blasphemous in that it indicates that the individual members of the Trinity did not trust the other two to uphold their end of the agreement and thus a contract had to be drawn.
  - 2) The covenant of works. This asserts that God put Adam under probation by offering him eternal life if he passed the forbidden-fruit test. But no human being can possess eternal life without faith in Christ. Adam was created trichotomous but he was not imputed eternal life. He and Ishah had everlasting life. There is no comment made in the Adamic covenant or anywhere else about acquiring eternal life by obeying the prohibition. This also indicates that divine righteousness ran a test to find out if Adam would remain perfect. When he fell, he lost his everlasting life, became spiritually dead, and was in need of redemption which could only be accomplished by faith in Christ.
  - 3) The covenant of grace. This was given to Adam and Eve after the fall which was a covenant with the elect. This is a supralapsarian approach to the divine decree which asserts that in eternity past the sovereignty of God elected a predetermined few for salvation leaving all others reprobate and condemned to eternal punishment. They profess an unbiblical doctrine that God promised to give the Holy Spirit to all those who were preordained to eternal life which enabled them to believe in Christ. They assert that this enables the person to be willing and able to believe in Christ.
17. These theological covenants present a hazy case for salvation that results in a desperate effort to find assurance for it. This effort may be reduced to a syllogism.
18. The major premise is that in eternity past God predetermined those who would be among the elect leaving all others reprobate.
19. The minor premise is that when a person is empowered by the Holy Spirit to believe in Christ he is among the elect.
20. The conclusion is that since he is among the elect then he is saved.
21. This logic places the emphasis on the sovereignty of God and deemphasizes human free will. In doing so, the election of God is emphasized and the faith of the individual is deemphasized.

22. If a person's faith in Christ is not really self-motivated but is rather the product of divine empowerment by the Holy Spirit then volition is not really free.
23. This causes many who believe in Christ to have no assurance of their salvation because there is no way, absent the assumed requirement for perseverance, to determine if they are truly among the elect.
24. This requires a person to depend on works for assurance of his salvation. This mind-set is the reason many Calvinists, when asked if they will go to heaven when they die, to respond with "I hope so," or "I don't know if I'm good enough."
25. A person that subscribes to Covenant theology has no assurance of salvation except through a system of works, desperate efforts to convince himself and others that it is so. This is why at funerals and memorials the eulogy is often dominated by examples of the deceased's good works.
26. If the production of a believer is viewed by him as a means of assuring his salvation rather than service to God then it is biblically classified as: (1) "deeds of the flesh" (Galatians 5:19a), (2) "a filthy garment" (Isaiah 64:6b), and (3) "wood, hay, straw" (1 Corinthians 3:12b).
27. The point that has been missed by Covenant theologians is that of the eight covenants just cited, five are given to Israel. At the time each was revealed the church was a mystery dispensation and there has been no subsequent revelation that any of these covenants were intended for the church
28. In addition, the covenant promises to Israel have six categories:
  - 1) Duration: fulfillment in time and in eternity.
  - 2) Grace and Law: unconditional for the former and conditional for the latter.
  - 3) To individuals: Abraham and David.
  - 4) Land: Palestine in its totality is given to Israel in the Millennium and later in the eternal state including the new Jerusalem.
  - 5) Mosaic Law: provided a system of establishment and spiritual order, a client nation to God, and a spiritual heritage for regenerate Israel.
  - 6) Client nation: Israel will be restored as a client nation at the Second Advent and she will continue to be so in the eternal state.
  - 7) New Covenant: granted to the regenerate Jews at the beginning of the Millennium.
29. A summary of the four major unconditional covenants is found in Lewis Sperry Chafer's *Systematic Theology* and it provides an excellent conclusion to this portion of our study:

#### 1. THE COVENANT MADE WITH ABRAHAM.

In its entirety, the Abrahamic covenant (cf. Genesis. 12:1–3; 13:14–17; 15:4–21; 17:1–18; 22:17–18) includes various features and is unconditional in every part of it, being that alone which Jehovah declares He will do for and through Abraham. Being unconditional, it cannot be broken by man. The covenant is restated to Isaac (Genesis. 26:3–5), and to Jacob (Genesis. 35:10–12), but is always said to be fulfilled for Abraham’s sake. The covenant reaches on to eternity, being everlasting in its duration. (p. 313)

## 2. THE COVENANT MADE WITH DAVID.

The covenant made with David (2 Samuel 7:11–16), like the covenant made with Abraham, is unconditional and everlasting in its duration. It guarantees (1) an unfailing house or line of David’s sons—a king without cessation to sit on David’s throne (The necessity of chastisement may cause the throne itself to be unoccupied; but there shall never lack one whose right it is to sit on that throne—2 Samuel 7:14–17; Psalm 89:30–33; Jeremiah 33:17. The covenant can never—on oath of Jehovah—be abrogated.); (2) a throne, the earthly throne of David to continue forever; and (3) a kingdom forever. (p. 314)

## 3. THE NEW COVENANT YET TO BE MADE IN THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM.

The old, life-governing covenant made when Jehovah took Israel by the hand to bring them out of Egypt was broken, though Jehovah was as a husband to that nation. Upon entering their kingdom, He will make a new covenant with the nation which will govern their life in the kingdom (Jeremiah 31:31–34). (pp. 314-15)

## 4. A LAND FOREVER.

What is usually termed the *Palestinian Covenant* is the oft-repeated declaration by Jehovah, wholly unconditional, that the land which was promised to Abraham—“Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates” (Genesis 15:18)—would be Abraham’s possession forever. It is thus deeded to Abraham personally and becomes the legal inheritance of his posterity.

In Deuteronomy, chapters 28–30, Jehovah records what is rightfully termed the Palestinian Covenant. The final possession of the land is, in Scripture, dated to occur at the second coming of Christ. Describing Israel’s final return to her land, Moses wrote, “The Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee.”

Thus it is asserted that Jehovah will Himself place Israel in their land and at the time of His “return.” Naturally, a return implies a previous presence. The same reference to Christ’s return and the accompanying events is recorded in Acts<sup>1</sup> 15:16–17.<sup>2</sup> (pp. 317–18)

<sup>1</sup> Acts 15:16–18 are quoted from Amos 9:11–12.

<sup>2</sup> Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology: Ecclesiology-Eschatology* (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), 4:313-15; 317-18.

30. This takes us back to our Romans passage where we are amplifying the principle that Abraham “was invigorated by the power poured into him.”

