
CHAPTER 4

UNDERSTANDING END-TIME PROPHECY

End time prophecy spans both the Old and New Testaments. We know that God will never destroy the earth with water as He covenanted with Noah (Gen. 9:9-17). Certainly scripture affirms that the present earth will be melted, however, with fire (2Pet. 3:10). So, God has made major commitments to man's future by way of covenants. The promise to Adam in Genesis 3:15 *"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."* (NKJ), referred to the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ as a picture of the conflict between good and evil. After the fall of Adam in Eden, God predicted continued warfare between the Seed of the Woman, Jesus Christ [embodiment of godliness] (Galatians 4:4) and the seed of the Serpent [anything evil] (John 8:44). The phrase *"he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise His heel"*, indicates suffering on both sides, and there will be no peace (Genesis 3:15). In fact, Satan bruised the heel of Jesus Christ on the cross (Isaiah 53:5-10), but Jesus Christ also struck the deathblow to the serpent - the enemy of human kind's soul, and the victory was sealed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

During the Millennium, however, Satan's head will be crushed when Satan is bound and cast into the bottomless pit. Finally, Satan will be defeated and cast into the lake of fire forever after the final battle on plant earth (Rev. 20:7). Therefore, the victory of Jesus Christ over Satan as promised many times beginning with Genesis 3: 15 will not be completed until the Second Coming. Further, God's promises to Israel in the covenant with Abraham, and confirmed to David and in the New Covenant, which relate to the land and the nation of Israel are yet to be absolutely fulfilled (see Gen. 12:1-7; 15:18-21; 17:7-12).

COVENANTS OF GOD – SUZERAINTY TREATIES

It was common practice of the Ancient Near Eastern peoples to make international covenants - *the type of covenant known as the suzerainty treaty*. The ancient Hittite suzerainty treaties were thus a form of covenant. However, such treaties as these were not party treaties, treaties made between equals. They were called suzerainty treaties, treaties between a great nation/king and a vassal or dependant nation. These treaties had common unique features. They signified a contractual agreement binding two parties together into relationship.

Features of Suzerainty Treaties/Covenants

In the first place they were *blood covenants*, and so had all the features of normal Blood Covenants. Some features of blood covenants were:

1. Common language used, 'cutting or making a covenant of peace' implied shedding blood to seal the covenant (refer Ezek. 34:25; 37:26).
2. Employed certain phrases such as “oath”, “stipulations”, “blessing and cursing” and “witnesses” on the covenant terms. With these the terms of covenant must:
 - 2.1 Never be broken (see Israel-Gibeon covenant in Joshua 9; 10; 2Sam. 21:1-14)
 - 2.2 Be passed on with benefits to generations to come (2Sam. 9)
3. Religious element of a covenant meal of animal sacrifice. From Genesis 15 and elsewhere we may deduce the following:
 - 3.1 The nature of such covenants (Gen. 15:1f; 1 Sam. 18:1-4):
 - i. Between two parties or persons one of whom is higher.
 - ii. The terms are written down; where the higher dictates the terms with promises; faithfulness and obedience are required to release the full blessing; but disobedience leads to a curse.
 - iii. God-man suzerainty covenants are sometimes called 'covenant of salt' because of God's faithfulness and ability to preserve covenant relationships (Numb. 18:19; 2Chron. 13:5; 1Cor. 1:7-9; 1Thess. 5:23, 24).

3.2 The process of these covenants included all or some of these (Gen. 15:10f):

- i. The desire to covenant begins the process.
- ii. Killing and dividing an animal into two and setting the halves apart.
- iii. Walking in between from one end to the other repeating the covenant terms with an oath.
- iv. Cutting the wrist and mixing the blood of one another in blood covenant.
- v. Partaking of a covenant meal.
- vi. Making a mark of remembrance on the palm or a sign of the covenant to remind the parties of the terms of the covenant.
- vii. Remembrance or renewal meal is eaten from time to time [for suzerainty treaties].

3.3 The results from such covenants are:

- i. The exchange of life, status, strength, authority, etc in a transfer or a sharing in inheritance (1Sam. 18:1-4; Rom. 8:16-18; 2Cor. 5:17-21; Heb. 2:9-18).
- ii. Generation blessing being passed on to their progeny (Gen. 17:7; 2Sam. 9; Gal. 3:13-16).

4. Other features:

In addition to characteristics of all normal treaties of blood covenants, four other unique characteristics are observed with suzerainty treaties. Other major features of Suzerainty Treaties were:

4.1 First, the treaty *made a distinction between those who were parties to the treaty and those who were not*. Thus the Abraham covenant distinguished the Jew from the Gentile (Ex. 19:4-9). Similarly, the New Covenant in Christ distinguishes the believer from the unbeliever in the sight of God (1Pet. 2:9-12).

4.2 Another characteristic of the suzerainty treaty is that the treaty or covenant implies *the existence of a community* to enjoy the benefits. The Church thus becomes the community of saints, the body and bride of Christ. It is only when God is through with the Church, will He again turn His redemptive attention to Israel

(Rom. 9-11; esp. 11:25-27). Meanwhile, Israel will continue to see the faithfulness of God in preserving them as a people.

4.3 The third characteristic of the suzerainty treaty is *love*. Love bound the covenanted together. God loved us and gave us Jesus Christ; so all believers must reciprocate love to the Lord and serve Him faithfully (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; Rev. 1:5, 6).

4.4 The fourth and last characteristic of the Ancient Near Eastern suzerainty treaties is *the provision for renewal*. When a covenant was renewed, the stipulations were sometimes altered to fit the needs of the generation that was renewing the covenant. However, one covenant does not set aside another; one does not invalidate another so as to nullify its stipulations. Rather, it renews, expands, adapts, and updates (Deut. 29:1ff). Under the New Covenant, every believer can enjoy the eternal benefits in a fresh manner each day, due to His steadfast love (Lam. 3:23).

THE GOD-ABRAHAM SUZERAINITY COVENANT

This is the primary Covenant upon which all other God-man suzerainty treaties would be built in the Bible. When God covenanted with Abraham from Genesis 12:1-3, 7, we discover seven great promises God made to Abram. *“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed....”* *“And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him”* KJV.

In the Abrahamic covenant we observe these great promises of God:

1. I will make thee a great nation;
2. I will bless thee;
3. I will make thy name great;

4. Thou shalt be a blessing;
5. I will bless them that bless thee;
6. I will curse them that curse thee;
7. All families of the earth shalt be blessed in thee.

A shadow of all the above promises have been fulfilled in the Nation Israel, the literal seed of Abraham through the lineage of Isaac (Gen. 26:2-5) and the grandson Jacob (Gen. 28:13-15). They were later unified in the Mosaic Covenant.

THE MOSAIC/ISRAEL COVENANT

(Deut. 7:7-15KJV)

The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them. Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he swore unto thy fathers: And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he swore unto thy fathers to give thee. Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. And the LORD will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all them that hate thee.

(Deut. 10:15KJV)

Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day.

However, the final fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant to cover all peoples - both Jews and Gentiles, has been vested in the Lord Jesus Christ, who though referred to as the seed of Abraham, is indeed the Savior of the world.

(Gal. 3:13-16KJV)

'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.'

THE GOD-DAVID COVENANT

The Abrahamic Covenant having been established in the nation Israel, they now looked for a king to rule them like other nations. Saul was initially their choice. However, it was King David, who was accredited with finding favor in God's sight as the prototype desired ruler (Acts 13:32-36). So, God had to make a covenant with him.

(2 Samuel 7:8-13KJV)

"Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth. Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set

up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever”.

(Psalm 89:20- 27 KJV)

I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.

In the Davidic Covenant, God promised unconditionally to:

- (a) Make David's name great,
- (b) Provide a permanent, undisturbed home for Israel,
- (c) Establish an eternal Kingdom with David and his offspring.

Two of these prophecies have been fulfilled, and the third will happen only with the Second Coming. Through out history, we are yet to witness that eternal kingdom through the lineage of David. The Old Covenants could not provide this bit (Genesis 15:18-21; 17:7-12; 2 Samuel 7:4-17; Isaiah 9:6-7; Daniel 2:34-35, 44-45; 7:13,14; Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15-18; Zechariah 14:1-11). We, however, know that the Covenant Making God is also the Covenant Keeping God. For, He has said *"My Covenant I will not break, nor alter the Word that has gone out of My Lips. Once I have sworn by my holiness, I will not lie to David. His Seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me; it shall be established forever..."* (Psalm 89:34-37).

The Covenant would, however, only be perfectly fulfilled through the birth of Jesus Christ. Luke wrote, *"Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."* Then Mary said to the

angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:30-35).

Luke states further in the book of Acts, "And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. "And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.' "From this man's seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior – Jesus "after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. "And we declare to you glad tidings-- that promise which was made to the fathers. "God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You.' "And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: 'I will give you the sure mercies of David.' "Therefore He also says in another Psalm: 'You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.' "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; "but He whom God raised up saw no corruption. "Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; "and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts 13:21-24, 32-39).

For fulfillment, Jesus then had to also fulfill all the Biblical Covenants including, the New Covenant. In this way Jesus would perform both as Ben Joseph (literally son of Joseph, the Suffering Messiah) before Ben David (literally son of David, the Reigning Messiah).

THE NEW COVENANT

So, God had to provide a New Covenant to the former suzerainty treaties made with Abraham and his seed, including the Davidic Covenant. This new covenant will encompass all others and will be established through Jesus Christ. Even though the Jews missed the two phases of His ministry, Jesus fits into the Messianic prophecies perfectly. Though rejected in the first advent by the Jews, He was born to die for our sins so that all saints might reign with Him, as son of David, forever at the Second Coming.

(Jer. 31:31-34)

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Furthermore, in the New Covenant, God promised to re-gather Jews to the Promised Land. Part of this prophecy has been fulfilled. Israel has been drawn back into the Holy land and established their God-given homeland, after many years of being scattered and wandering around the world since A.D. 70.

In 1917, the Holy Land came under Jewish control after General Allenby of Britain liberated them from Turk and Mohammedan control. This paved the way for the free return of Jews once more into the Holy Land. Significantly, the historic decisive move by the United Nations to declare the Zionist Movement a sovereign state on May 15, 1948 is a prophetic milestone. Since then, Israel has continued to witness the exodus of Jews from all over the world into the Promised Land. In the 1950s the new Jewish settlement of Jerusalem, outside the Arab dominated old city, is reported to have fitted exactly the boundary given in the prophecy of Jeremiah some 2500 years back.

(Jer. 31:38-40)

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the city shall be built to the LORD from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner. And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the

ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the LORD; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more forever."

If this prophecy refers to modern day city of Jerusalem (and it surely does), then the times of the Gentiles is running out and the intercalation, the Church Age is almost over. We are in a transition period today, for world events are shaping up as we observe since the turn of the Twentieth Century.

There have been World War I & II. The 1967 and 1973 battles by Israel have given them control over Jerusalem and other vital places in the Holy Land. Jerusalem shall again become the focus of God's prophetic dealings with human beings. Soon the Church will be raptured and the Jews will be the sole messengers of the kingdom, preaching Christ as the Messiah and true worship on earth.

The rule of six kingdoms, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome is over. Besides, a mixture of these six kingdoms with Roman-rule-culturally-bias international super-powers will spread through out the world, but will in the end give rise to a strong European Community. Then Anti-Christ's kingdom shall come and once again Gentiles shall tread Jerusalem under foot.

(Luke 21:20-24)

"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter there into. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

Jesus Christ has ascended into heaven, but He is not through yet with this planet or the people who are living on it. Before His ascension, He gave an unconditional promise to His followers: **"I will come again"**

(John 14:3). Furthermore, the description of the Second Coming by Jesus Christ Himself, confirms the fact that He will return.

(Matt. 24:29-31)

"Immediately after the Tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other".

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ is the prophetic key that will unlock all other future events. The Second Coming will fulfill Old and New Testaments prophecies, as well as Christ's own prophecies. For instance, it will complete the work of Salvation for both Jews and Gentiles which Jesus Christ began during His first advent. Then it will start God's prophetic clock of the ultimate redemption of creation. The New Testament alone contains around three hundred and eighteen (318) references to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Two angels announced to the disciples, saying: *"Men of Galilee, Why do you stand gazing up into heavens? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven"* (Acts 1:11).

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ is by divine plan, because He was rejected as King (John 1:10-11; 19:12-17), during His first advent, though He fulfilled His role as a prophet and priest, by offering the perfect sacrifice for sin (Heb. 1:1-2; 10:11-18). Therefore He will return only as Judge to subject God's enemies to Himself, but also to rule and reign forever as King of kings and Lord of lords (1Cor. 15:24-28; Rev. 19:11-21). It appears Jesus Christ put His personal signature beneath the contents of the prophetic words of Rev. 22:16-20 saying *"I AM the root and the offspring of David ... surely, I come quickly. Amen"*

A CHART ON GOD-MAN SUZERAINTY TREATIES

<i>God's suzerainty Treaties with man</i>	<i>Covenant made with Abraham</i>	<i>Covenant made with Moses/Israel</i>	<i>Covenant made with David</i>	<i>New Covenant</i>
<i>Key Scripture Reference of the Covenant</i>	Genesis 12; 15; 17; Acts 7:8	Exodus 19 -24; 31:16, 17; Deut.7:7-15; 10:15	2 Samuel 7; Psalm 89:20f	Jeremiah 31; Galatians 3:13-16; Hebrews 7-10
<i>Provisions</i> The basic tenets or promises God makes in the covenant	Posterity, Inheritance, Land, Greatness and Blessing	Blessings or Cursing	A kingdom and a dynasty	All of the provisions of the previous Covenants plus eternal Salvation in Christ's first and second Advent.
<i>Type of Covenant</i>	Unconditional	Conditional	Unconditional	Both Conditional And Unconditional
<i>Expected Covenantal "Faith" or "obedience"</i>	Faith	Obedience	Faith	Both Faith and Obedience
<i>Sign</i>	Circumcision	Sabbath	"A House?" or a King?	The blood of Jesus Christ