

January 15-Genesis 15

Covenants are a very important part of the Scriptures. Our God loves to make covenants and is always faithful to keep them! In this text, we read of a covenant God makes with Abraham regarding the Promised Land for the people of Israel, who will be Abraham's descendants. In this passage we can see a few interesting and important truths about covenants and the character of our great God.

First, we see the solemn nature of a covenant. Our culture today has a difficult time understanding the importance and binding nature of covenants. One must look no farther than the way marriage is treated (even inside of the church) to see an example of this misunderstanding. All too often, covenants are treated as contracts that can be nullified if a person so desires. However, in verse 9 we read the seriousness of covenants when we observe the setting and manner in which God makes this covenant with Abraham. God commands Abraham to cut in half a few different types of livestock, laying them over against the other, making a pathway between the two. In verse 17, we read that God passed through these two piles of animal remains in making His covenant with Abraham. In the Bible, God is often described or symbolized by fire (Ex: Exodus 13:21), and in this case we see this imagery used for God as He passes through the animal carcasses.

Believe it or not, it was customary in those days to have both parties walk a path through the bodies of animals as a way to symbolically communicate that the same fate should happen to them (namely death) if they broke the covenant (Ex: Jeremiah 34:18-19).

Second, we see the reliability of the biblical covenant. In Genesis 15, God is promising by His own life to uphold the terms of His covenant. Essentially then we see two reasons why God's covenants are totally reliable. Biblical covenants are absolutely trustworthy first because they are promises made by God. The Bible shares with us in several places that not only has God never lied but He absolutely cannot lie. Numbers 23:19 "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" Whenever God gives us His Word we can trust it with all of our being as we understand that our God is totally Sovereign (He is in control of all things) and absolutely honest (His righteous character prohibits Him from dishonesty).

Furthermore, God's covenants are totally reliable because they are made on condition of death. We know from Scripture that God has eternally existed. He is the "alpha and omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Revelation 22:13). There has never been a moment in which God was not living, and there will never be a moment in which He dies. He is everlasting and therefore, His death will never occur. Therefore, God's promise on condition of His own life is a promise that is necessarily fulfilled.