

Genesis 15

The God Who Keeps Covenant

A short study summary on covenant, sacrifice, and God's faithfulness.

"In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram..."

Genesis 15:18

COVENANT FOCUS

1. Covenant is more than a casual promise

Genesis 15 moves from promise into solemn covenant.

"I bind myself to what I have promised."

Covenant idea

Promise

"I will do this."

Covenant

A solemn, binding commitment.

Promise



Assurance

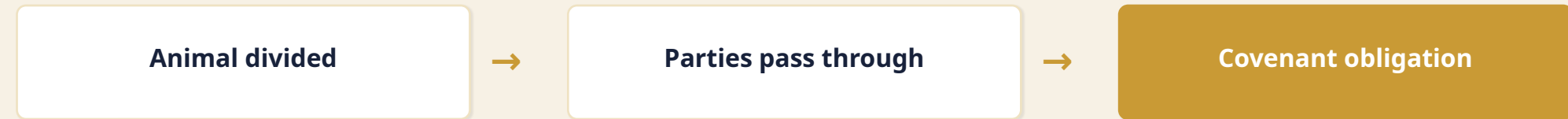


Covenant

The Hebrew idea often translated "make a covenant" carries the sense of "cut a covenant." This helps explain why animals were divided in Genesis 15.

2. Jeremiah 34 explains the ceremony

The Bible gives its own interpretive key for passing between divided animals.



"Cut the calf in two and passed between the parts thereof."

Jeremiah 34:18

The implied covenant warning:

"May what happened to this animal happen to me if I break this covenant."

Genesis 15 is therefore not strange symbolism without meaning. It is a covenant ceremony.

3. Covenant, sacrifice, blood, commitment

The wider biblical pattern helps us read Genesis 15 carefully.

"Those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."

Psalms 50:5

"Behold the blood of the covenant..."

Exodus 24:8

Wider biblical pattern

Covenant



Sacrifice



Blood



Binding commitment

Genesis 15 belongs to this pattern: covenant is serious because life, blood, and commitment are involved.

4. The extraordinary feature of Genesis 15

Abram sleeps; God passes between the pieces.

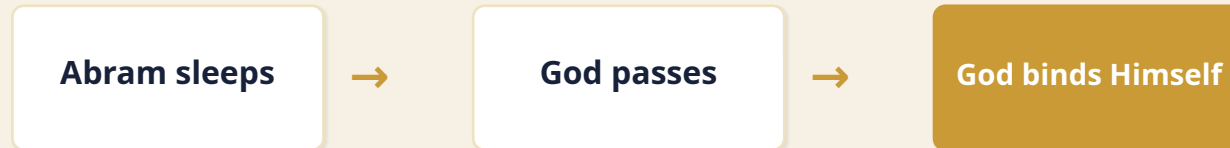
Normally expected:



"A smoking furnace, and a burning lamp... passed between those pieces."

Genesis 15:17

What Genesis records:



The emphasis is not: "Abram promises God that Abram will perform."

The emphasis is: "God binds Himself to what He has promised."

5. The certainty of God's promise

Hebrews 6 helps us see the covenant assurance.

"Because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself."

Hebrews 6:13

God guarantees the promise by:

His own character
His own name
His own faithfulness

**The strength of God's promise is not based on how strongly we feel.
It rests upon who God is.**

Central lesson: The covenant rests ultimately on God's faithfulness.