

## FBC 101 – Class 6 = The Providence of God (cont.)

### The Providence of God (cont.)

#### **Understanding Covenants – APOLOGETICS with ANE RELIGION/CULTURES**

- Ancient Near Eastern culture used common language and ideas when referring to kingdoms and covenants (Egyptian, Akkadian, Ugaritic, etc.)
  - a. Why would God use parallels to ancient pagan cultures?
  - b. To reveal himself with important contrasts using system they would understand (light to the nations)
  - c. FOR HIS GLORY! (always the answer to “why?”) = something is revealed in the difference
- Bible is Covenant doc, probably started in Exodus
  - a. Suzerain king (divine implications in pagan cultures – i.e Pharaoh), vassal king (representative for people)
    - i. Exodus 32:7-14 = God tests Moses’ loyalty to his people as vassal representative
    - ii. Moses as vassal, Christ as new (and better) Moses (Christ’s loyalty to us)
  - b. 2 tablets = there were always 2 in ancient near east (one copy for vassal king, one for suzerain king)
- **\*\*\*Aspects of covenant – vow, sign, stipulations, divine witness (only aspect of ancient near eastern cultures not present in Bible, because God alone is divine...no other divinity to be witness)**
  - Relationship between Vow & Sign
    - Sign points to the blessing for obeying the vow or the curse for breaking it
    - Ex 24:6-8 – blood is sign of disobeying vow.
    - Gen 2:22-25 – marriage intimacy is sign of vow to be as one (this is why Jesus says divorce only permissible b/c of adultery (can’t break vow unless sign is broken)
  - Covenants cut in blood - (circumcision, Mosaic, Christ). Blood was a sign of "unclean"
- **!!GEN 15 – VOW & SIGN**
  - This time God makes the vow and takes the sign (note also Gen 12:1-4)
  - Note that this covenant is one of faith = what GOD DOES, not of works = what we must do (i.e. – there are no stipulations needed on our part to fulfill God’s promise. This is very different than the other covenants in the OT = circumcision, )
  - Promise to Abraham = Vow
    - Gen 15:8 = Abraham wants to see the sign of the vow!
  - Sign = God passing through the carcasses
    - If I break my promise, I cease to be God. God cannot lie
    - Covenants are always cut in blood – as signs!
    - So is New Covenant in Christ!!!\*\*\*

Questions to know for next class:

1. What are the foundational components of any covenant in Scripture?
2. Of all the components of Ancient Near Eastern covenants (which ANE nations shared in common), why are there no divine witnesses in the Biblical ones?
3. What is the divine king called? What is the representative king (who mediates between the divine and people) called?

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4. Why would God use pagan components of covenants to set up His kingdom community with Israel?
5. Is Genesis 15 a covenant of faith or works? Why?
6. What is the vow and sign, and who takes them, in Gen 15?