

Genesis Bible Study 9

Will God Keep His Promise?

taken from

***Salvation for the Social Order: For Those Who Haven't Read the Bible
and for Those Who Think Religion is Merely a Private Matter***

by Philip E. Friesen

Reading: Genesis 15

Principal Question: Is God completely trustworthy?

Notes

Trust is the measure of relationship. Because he trusts God, Abram qualifies to be God's friend, and God communicates with Abram. In Genesis 15:6 Abraham believed God, and God counted his faith as righteousness. Please note the definition of righteousness below.

Righteous: (adjective) to be in a right and proper relationship to others, involving appropriate mutual trust.

Righteousness: (noun) the state of being in a right and proper relationship to others, involving appropriate mutual trust.

Discussion

1. Read the story. What questions do you have about this story?
2. What is your most important hope in life?
3. How many people know the deepest secret of your heart?
4. If you were in danger of death right now, which of your friends would you want beside you?
5. Among your friends, whom do you trust most?
6. What do you think about building a friendship with God? Is this a reasonable idea?

Cultural and Historical Notes

In Abram's time it was customary for two friends to swear friendship to each other by means of the ceremony described in this chapter. Animals would be killed, and the body parts placed on the ground. Then the two friends would walk between the parts and swear eternal friendship with each other. It meant that each could be trusted by the other, even to the point of sacrificing their lives for each other.

God told Abram to kill the animals and lay the parts on the ground. Then at sundown, probably after Abram had fasted during the day, Abram fell asleep and heard God speaking to him. In a trance or dream Abram saw a fire pot walking between the dead

animal parts, just as a friend would do to swear eternal friendship. This meant that God was walking between the animal parts. In Abram's culture, this placed God under a solemn oath to fulfill the promise he had made.

Content Questions for English Comprehension

7. What part did Abram have in this ceremony?
8. What part did God have in the ceremony?
9. Do you understand the meaning of the ceremony?
10. What other questions do you have about this story?