

## A Disingenuous God? - Part 3

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I said at the end of the last post that we would be thinking about what God thinks of those who enter into covenants and fail to perform the words of those covenants. But I find am going to put that subject off until next time, until I am satisfied that I have driven home my point about the disingenuous god whose word is something of a rubber mask. A mask behind which this god's real intentions lurk. I do not believe in this god. I believe that God means what He says! I trust such a God. I believe what He graciously promises me in the Gospel. But I don't see how I can trust a god who misled thousands of pious Jews (and Christians) into believing the plain-sense of his words and then "fulfilled" them entirely differently. If he can do that to others, he can do it to me.

**1.** When we posit a god who uses words which lead people to believe he means one thing, when, in reality, he means something very different to what those words would naturally convey, we are dealing squarely with a god who equivocates. This was illustrated in the last post, but let's have another example, just to show how pervasive this characteristic would be if supercessionism were true. This one concerns the well known incident that happened at Baal-Peor in Numbers 25:

6 And indeed, one of the children of Israel came and presented to his brethren a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

7 Now when Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose from among the congregation and took a javelin in his hand;

8 and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her body. So the plague was stopped among the children of Israel.

9 And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand.

10 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:

11 "Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned back My wrath from the children of Israel, because he was zealous with My zeal among them, so that I did not consume the children of Israel in My zeal.

12 "Therefore say, 'Behold, I give to him My covenant of peace;

13 'and it shall be to him and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel.' "

The promise is most explicit. Furthermore, Psalm 106:28-31 is evidence that God was taken at His Word; at least by the Psalmist. We should not miss this: one OT author interpreting another OT author literally. We implied three more instances of this in our last post when in commenting on the promises within Jeremiah 33:14-26, we observed:

4. The Davidic Covenant is expressly quoted

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5. The Priests will also offer to the Lord continually [probably a reference to the covenant in Num. 25]

6. God's intention to fulfill these promises is underlined by His intent to uphold His creation [cf. Gen. 8:22]

So what is God doing in these passages? Well, either the Lord is continuing the charade, or He means exactly what He says. Those are the choices, like it or lump it.

Have a look at Psalm 106:10-12. Notice that the people who experienced the deliverance at the Red Sea "believed His word" when they saw what God did. They may have had their doubts before the waters started doing strange things and the dry ground, which had been the Sea floor minutes before, appeared. But now they knew that God meant what He said and they believed Him. God is glorified when His people believe Him! He wants us to have faith in His Word. Quite how that is possible if, as supercessionists say, His words are filled with double-meanings, is anyone's guess.

**2.** When I write my posts I want to use words which convey a particular thought-content to the people who read my posts. I do not want to use words that would likely lead my reader(s) to a conclusion that I myself am not driving at. If I wanted to say one thing and mean another it would be quite easy for me to do it. But why would I do it? And if what I was writing was a promise to a named person or group. Nay, a covenant oath!. What would possess me to use words which I knew would make them think something other than what I had in mind? Why would I equivocate?

This "God," whose very nature is to equivocate, is, it seems to me, a theological and philosophical quandary of colossal proportions. Theologically, it introduces a new and unwelcome element into the attributes of Deity. This element, as we have shown, is the attribute of equivocating communication. Or, more simply, "Equivocation." An attribute that throws all the others into suspicion. This is the god who leads people to believe one thing when he doesn't really intend to stick to the words he utters. This is the god who promises things in the plainest possible terms in the Old Testament, only to either alter or repeal them in the New Testament. If anyone knows a way out of this dilemma, let them have at it.

Within the field of Philosophy of Religion, you have the problem of nailing down God's own Self-description. Let us admit that Christ is the Word (Jn. 1:1-3), and that "all things were created through Him and for Him" (Col. 1:16). Let us also agree that "by the word of the LORD [God's covenant Name] the heavens were

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made" (Psa. 33:5). What do we do with a passage like Psalm 105:6-11, which declares,

6 O seed of Abraham His servant, You children of Jacob, His chosen ones!

7 He is the LORD our God; His judgments are in all the earth.

8 He remembers His covenant forever, The word which He commanded, for a thousand generations,

9 The covenant which He made with Abraham, And His oath to Isaac,

10 And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, To Israel as an everlasting covenant,

11 Saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan As the allotment of your inheritance,"

Verse 6 is included to show to whom the covenant LORD is speaking. It is to "Jacob" (Israel). God has made a covenant with them. Which covenant are we given to understand it is? No problem, it is the Abrahamic Covenant, confirmed to both Isaac and Jacob (vv. 9-10). How long will this covenant last? God remembers it "forever," "for a thousand generations," and it is called "an everlasting covenant" (vv. 8 & 10). What, in particular, does the Psalmist emphasize about this covenant? Despite replacement theologians' complaints that the land is not a major part of this covenant, we are told that God will give Israel "the land of Canaan" for an inheritance (v.11).

Okay, but what if God meant something other than "Israel" and "the land of Canaan" when He had this Psalm recorded? What if the word, which "is right" and "done in truth" (Psa. 33:4), does not mean what it appeared to mean to the Psalmist? What if the Word (Christ) Who gave the Word (Scripture) has a prevaricating character? (I do not say He does, but I am examining the fallout of supercessionist claims). If the NT will be given to reinterpret these covenant oaths of God so that their meaning is transformed (a view never directly taught in the NT), surely this impugns the character of biblical truth? Just what IS "truth" when the one who speaks it is proved to equivocate with such alarming frequency?

**3.** I have never come across an unbeliever arguing this line against God and the Bible, but if I were one I would be all over it! Christians place themselves on the horns of this dilemma by talking of typological and symbolic interpretations of these passages, or by claiming that the NT is necessary to interpret the Old. This demotes the OT to a subservient level to the NT. But it also leads those who entertain it to embrace double-speak: Now God means what He says, now

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He is speaking in typological riddles; God has not replaced Israel with the Church, yet the Church is the "New Israel"; the Abrahamic Covenant is unconditional, yet Israel failed to keep the conditions; this covenant promises Israel a literal geo-political kingdom on earth, but not really. It goes on and on depending on which prophetic passage is under discussion.

As God is the Author of language, and the Bible is a revelation, not an obfuscation, we may confidently suppose that God's words to us are characterized by the same intentions. That is how I can be sure that when God spoke of "my witnesses" in Isaiah 44:8-9 He did not have in mind a bunch of cult members from the Watchtower organization. Come to think of it, if a plain-sense is rejected, who's to say He didn't?