

The Book of Beginnings

Section 6

The Generations of Terah (11:27–25:11)

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The Land

1. God makes a promise (12:7)

“To your offspring I will give this land.”

But ...

The land is full of enemies (12:6).

The land is plagued by famine (12:10).

The land is overcrowded (13:6).

2. God repeats His promise (13:15)

“For all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever.”

3. God demonstrates His right to fulfill His promise (14:19)

He’s “God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth.” Thus, He’s entitled to give the land to whomever He chooses.

4. God confirms His promise by way of a covenant (15:7–21)

“How am I to know that I shall possess it?” (15:8).

God instructs Abraham to fetch three animals and two birds, cut the animals in two, and put the two pieces opposite each other along with the two birds thereby making two lines of four pieces (15:9–10). God puts Abraham to sleep, stressing that what is about to happen is His work alone (15:12).

A smoking firepot and a flaming torch pass between the pieces (15:17). The firepot and torch are a symbol of God. He alone passes between the pieces. See Jer. 34:8–22. He’s threatening His own destruction if He should fail to keep His promise.

“On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, ‘To your offspring I give this land’ (15:18). This the first time the word “covenant” is used in relation to Abraham.

5. God develops His promise (17:7–8)

The land will be “an everlasting possession.” He will be “their God.” This is the overarching goal of the covenant. The land is the place where they experience what it means to be God’s people. See Jer. 24:6–7; 31:23, 33–34; 32:37–41; Ezek. 11:17–20; 37:21–27; Zech. 8:7–8; Heb. 11:14–15.

6. God grants a preview of the accomplishment of His promise (19:24–25)

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is the first step in God preparing the land for His people. Abraham acknowledges that God is “the judge of all the earth” (18:25) who, therefore, has the right to do as He pleases with its inhabitants.

7. Abraham believes God’s promise

- He buries Sarah *in the land* (23:2).
- He arranges for a wife for Isaac to be brought *to the land* (24:7).
- He sends the sons of his concubines away *from the land* (25:6).
- He is buried *in the land* (25:9–10).

Significance:

How did Abraham understand God’s promise concerning the land? See Heb. 11:9–10. Abraham looked to something God would build. He looked to the new heavens and earth as the fulfillment of God’s promise.

See Ps. 80:7–11; Jn. 15:1–5.

For further context, see Isa. 5:7; 27:2–6; Jer. 2:21; 5:10; 12:11; Ezek. 15:1–8; 17:1–10; 19:10–14; Hos. 10:1.

Christ changes the place of Israel’s “rootedness.” The land was the vineyard, and the people were the vine. Now, Christ alone is the vine. All must be grafted into Him. Whatever benefits and blessings the people derived from the land in the OT, they’re now found in Christ alone.