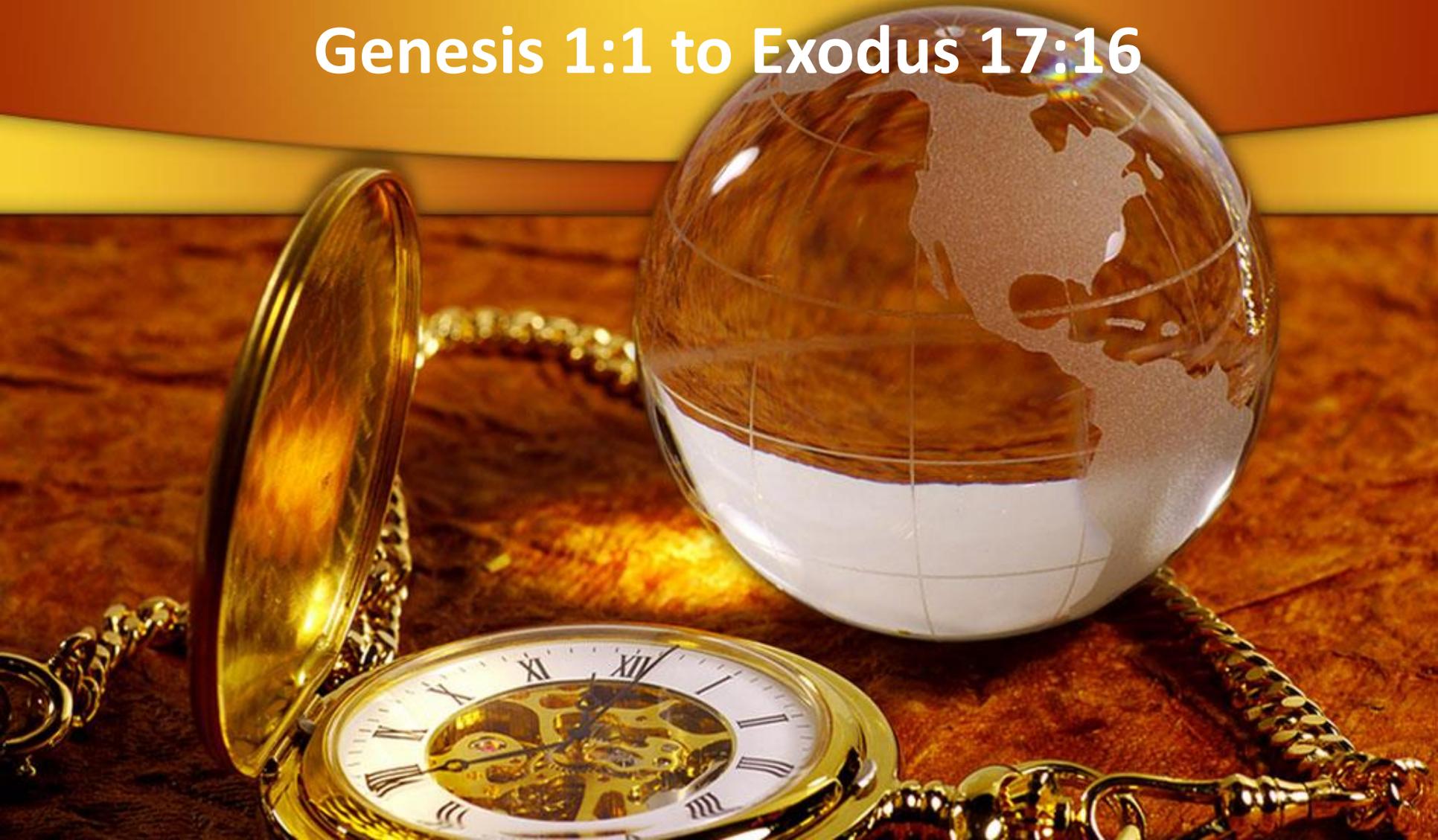
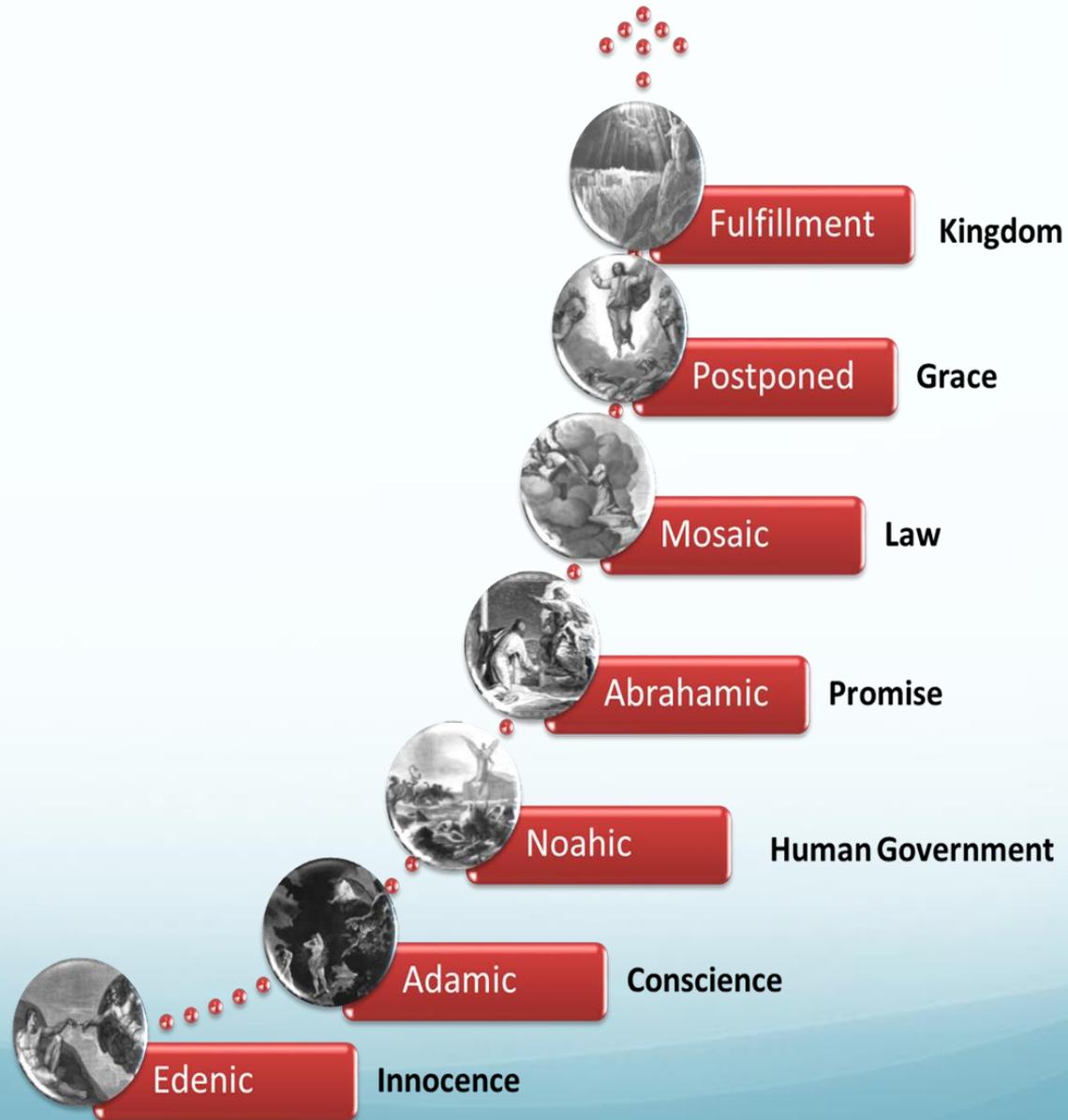


From God's Creation to God's Nation

Genesis 1:1 to Exodus 17:16



Review of Covenants in the Bible & Dispensations



Quick Review of Ch. 16

- 16:1-4 Sarai decides to “supplement” YHWH’s promise of an heir/son, & Abram “goes along”
- 16:5-6 Sarai & Abram play the blame game when Hagar is pregnant and Sarai sends Hagar away
- 16:7-14 Hagar encounters the angel of the Lord who comforts, assures, and promises her with divine authority of her and her descendants future
- 16:15-16 Hagar returned to Sarai & Abram and gives birth to a son and Abram names him Ishmael as the angel of the Lord had commanded (Abram was 86 yrs old at Ishmael’s birth)

Chapter 17 Audio



Genesis 17 Outline

- I. The Lord appears to Abram with a command & 6 “I wills” 17:1-8
 - A. Divine pronouncement & command & 1st and 2nd “I wills” (v.1-2)
 - B. Abram’s reverent reaction & more reminders (3rd I will) & name change (v.3-5)
 - C. 4th “I will” fruitfulness, nations, & kings (v.6)
 - D. 5th & 6th “I will” divine everlasting promises (v.7-8)
- II. The Lord gives the sign of the covenant 17: 9-14
 - A. Sign of the covenant, circumcision instructed & explained (v.9-11)
 - B. To Whom the circumcision should be done to & why (v. 12-14)
- III. The Lord pronounces to Abram Sarai’s name change & explain and name the progeny YHWH will establish covenant through 17: 15-22
 - A. Sarai’s name change & meaning and Abram’s reaction (v. 15-18)
 - B. YHWH explaining progeny & giving name to him (v.19)
 - C. YHWH correcting Abraham’s assumption & clarifications (v. 20-22)
- IV. The Lord’s instructions obediently carried out by Abraham 17:23-27
 - A. Abraham circumcises Ishmael & his household (v. 23)
 - B. Abraham & Ishmael’s age at circumcision & all household given (v. 24-27)

Abrahamic Covenant (12–17)

- Abrahamic promises (12)
- Abraham's sanctification (13–14)
- Abrahamic Covenant (Formal ratification of it, or as Constable says “formalizing the promises and making a covenant” (15)
- Ishmael's line (16)
- Circumcision (17)
 - Taken from Andy Woods power point on Genesis (edited/added to by RR)

Abrahamic Covenant

ABRAHAMIC
Genesis
15

LAND

SEED

BLESSING

LAND
Deuteronomy
29-30

DAVIDIC
2 Samuel
7:12-16

NEW
Jeremiah
31:31-34



Unconditional covenant with a conditional blessing (Deut. 28; Lev. 26)

Introductory Comments on *Chapter 17*

- Although the Edenic & the Adamic covenants did not have specific “signs” or “tokens”....although the token in the Edenic could have been the tree of life.....maybe the Adamic would be the covering YHWH supplied (animal skins) to Adam & Eve
- The Abrahamic, like the Noahic (the rainbow) does.....it is circumcision
- We see in this chapter that the Lord dominates the dialogue & continues His supernatural promises
- YHWH repeats many of the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant, after all 13 years had passed from end of ch. 16:16, the birth of Ishmael & 24 years between the promises in ch. 12.....every single one of us would need much MUCH reassurance, I dare say more than Abram did!
- As a way to further assure Abram & Sarai, YHWH changes their names to accurately reflect the surety that through them YHWH would certainly fulfill His purposes in the Land

I. The Lord appears to Abram with a command & five “I wills” 17:1-8

A. Divine pronouncement & command & 1st and 2nd “I wills” (v.1-2)

- Verse 1: The divine pronouncement & command
- “Now when Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless.....”
- 13 years had passed from end of ch. 16:16, the birth of Ishmael
- It would have been easy to forget God’s covenant promise. Abram was prospering financially, Ishmael was growing into young manhood, the land was at peace, and Abram had apparently given up all hope that he and Sarai would have a son of their own (Morris)
- God had not forgotten, however, and in the fullness of time, He would bring it to pass

I. The Lord appears to Abram with a command & five “I wills” 17:1-8

A. Divine pronouncement & command & 1st and 2nd “I wills” (v.1-2)

- “I am God Almighty” is the translation of *El Shaddai* (’ē/šadday) as understood by the LXX
- This is the 1st OT occurrence of the title “God Almighty” [’ē/šadday], which is used several times in Gen. [17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; cf. 49:25]. (Also Exod. 3:14; 6:3)
- So šadday, when used of God, refers either to His ability to supply abundantly [“the Abundant One”] or to His majestic strength [“the Almighty One”].) (Ross, from BKC)

Divine pronouncement & command & 1st and 2nd “I wills” (v.1-2)

- *El Shaddai is used a total of forty-eight times in the Old Testament. In the Book of Job, it is found thirty-one times as Shaddai without the use of the word El*
- *In Genesis, this Name for God, El Shaddai, always appears with the promise of prosperity, with one exception (43:14). The meaning of the name El Shaddai, then, emphasizes God’s power (Fruchtenbaum)*
- *However, the origin of the word Shaddai is the Akkadian word Shaddu, which means “breast,” and so this Name emphasizes not only the power of God but also His ability to supply His majestic strength (Fruchtenbaum)*

Divine pronouncement & command & 1st and 2nd “I wills” (v.1-2)

- A **Quick aside** (not going on a long discussion here, or **theological rabbit trail**), but Who?, Which Personage of the Trinity are we going to ascribe this appearance of the Lord to?? And similarly, in 12:7?? Just mentioning to make a point from the long “discussion” we had on “the angel of the Lord” that we.....i.e. every last one of us might not know “dogmatically” which member of the Trinity this appearance, and the “angel” of the Lord is, just “food” for thought.....nuff said!!
- The issue I am “struggling” with is when/how to use progressive revelation from the NT to confirm/interpret OT texts.....I think we need to be careful when doing this so not to fall into the “progressive dispy’s frequent errors”
- Nelson Study Bible says this: “for the 4th time, the Lord appeared to Abram.....1st in 12:7, 2nd in 13:14-17, the 3rd in ch. 15, and the next in ch. 18”

Divine pronouncement & command & 1st and 2nd “I wills” (v.1-2)

- In identifying Himself as “God Almighty” (*’ēl šaddāy*) the author removed all/any doubt regarding the faith of Abram at this stage in the narrative
- He worships the covenantal God, “the Lord” (*yhwh*), *but he knows him as “God Almighty.”* (This is consistent with Exodus 6:3: “I appeared [*wā ’ērā ’*] to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty [*’ēl šaddāy*], but by my name the Lord [*yhwh*, ‘Yahweh’] I did not make myself known to them.”) (Sailhamer, *The Exp. Bible Comm.*)

Divine pronouncement & command & 1st and 2nd “I wills” (v.1-2)

- “.....walk before me, and be blameless
- tamīm תָּמִים here translated blameless can really be translated perfect
- The Hebrew word is *tamim*, used of Noah in Genesis 6:9, and will be used of Jacob in Genesis 25:27
- Perfect?? How in the world?
- Many verses speak of the Lord’s perfection (Deut. 32:4; in Your ways, Job 22:3; 36:4 in knowledge Job 37:16; in the Law Psa. 19:7; in faithfulness Isa. 25:1; perfect peace Isa. 26:3; in beauty Ez. 16:14; of His temple Ez. 40:47)
- Believers are exhorted to be “perfect” (Mt. 5:48 “be perfect”; Rom. 12:2 “.....that which is good & acceptable & perfect”; Col. 4:12 “.....that you may stand perfect”)

Divine pronouncement & command & 1st and 2nd “I wills” (v.1-2)

- Hebrews talks much about the perfection of Jesus, and by drawing near to Him through faith we are “made perfect” Heb 2:10; 5:9; 7:19, 28; 9:9, 11; 10:1; 11:40; 12 :23
- Also commanded in the book of James: 1:4 “.....that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing”
- James 3:2 “....he is a perfect man”
- Peter hints at this doctrine (really explains it) in 1 Peter 5:10
- 1 Jn 2:3-8 “keep His commandments”, “truly been perfected”
- The reason I listed all of these is Abram is dependent on the righteous imputation of the Lord through faith just as we are in the church age....it has ALWAYS been the only way to salvation/sanctification.....through faith

Divine pronouncement & command & 1st and 2nd “I wills” (v.1-2)

- Verse 2: “I will establish My covenant between me and you, and I will multiply you exceedingly”
- Hasn't the covenant already been established? (cf 15:18)
- Yes, God was refreshing & reassuring Abram & Sarai in their hearts & minds that He would bring the promises to pass.....both the promise of the Land (15:18-21) & the promise of descendants (17:2)
- YHWH used the term “covenant” (Hebrew *berith*) once before (15:18) when He outlined boundaries of the promised land
- Here in ch. 17, God uses the term covenant 13X

Verse 2 (Cont.)

- Interesting note on use of term covenant by YHWH
- Nine times it is called “*my covenant,*” *three times it is called “an everlasting covenant,” and once it is called “the covenant between Me and you.” In every case, God Himself was speaking (Morris)*
- Verse 3-4: “Abram fell on his face, & God talked with him, saying, “As for Me, behold, **4** My covenant is with you , and you will be the father of a multitude of nations”
- Both the theophany and the divine words of directives & promises produce a reverent response by Abram
- The response here when compared to 15:2-3 (questioning), to one of immediate prostration (worship)

Abram's reverent reaction & more reminders & name change (v.3-5)

- Thus, when Abram hears *that God will greatly increase his descendants, he responds with respect and submission*
- Thus we see here the progressive sanctified Abram in his response
- V. 4 “As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you will be the father of a multitude of nations”
- Again a unilateral reminder to Abram, “As for Me”
- This formula marks the first division of the covenant obligations: God's responsibilities
- Fruchtenbaum: “*and God talked with him, saying, As for me, meaning “this is what I will do.” Then He continues: Behold, my covenant is with you, reaffirming the Abrahamic Covenant*”

Abram's reverent reaction & more reminders & name change (v.3-5)

- V. 4b “and you will be the father of a multitude of nations”
- Here YHWH gives additional details of the promise
- Prior promised father of only one nation
- This is fulfilled in two Jewish nations, Israel and Judah, and also in the many Arab countries and tribes. In the course of time, indeed, he became the father of many nations
- Materially, the promise of land is unchanged, but *nations and kings come into view, and Genesis will tell of their emergence, including Midianites (25:2), Ishmaelites (25:12) and kings of Edom and of Israel (36:31). Beyond these, however, the New Testament could see the Christian multitude in the ‘many nations’ (Rom. 4:16, 17) (Derek Kidner in the Tyndale commentary)*

Abram's reverent reaction & more reminders & name change (v.3-5)

- V. 5 “No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations” (3rd “I will”)
- The name change emphasizes YHWH's new promise
- In Hebrew, *Abram is Avram, which means “exalted father.”*
- Now God declares: *Your name shall be Abraham. In Hebrew, Avraham means “the father of a multitude.”*
- The first part of the name, *Av, means “father.” The second part comes from raham, which means “multitudes,” “a great number.” (Fruchtenbaum)*

Abram's reverent reaction & more reminders & name change (v.3-5)

- The reason for this change of name is: *For the father of a multitude of nations [Avhamon] have I made you*
- The Hebrew word for *nations here is goyim, emphasizing Gentile nations coming from him, and this, too, is a new provision, a new promise*
- Interestingly, later in OT & certainly in NT goyim (nations) is a negative connotation given to designate/synonym for the Gentile nations
- It is true that naming is an act of authority, but we must also recognize it, as Abram undoubtedly did, as constituting a great privilege
- Considering God's sovereignty, his giving of a name is much more determinative. Up until now, God has been interacting with Abram and directing him, but this is more like taking him into the household.
 - John H. Walton, *Genesis, The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 450.

4th “I will” fruitfulness, nations, & kings (v.6)

- V. 6 “I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, & kings will come forth from you”
- The evidence of Abraham’s fruitfulness will be twofold:
- First, *I will make nations of you (the fourth I will), and this is a reaffirmation of a previous promise*
- Second, *Kings shall come out of you, another new provision not mentioned earlier. The promise included both Jewish and Gentile kings*
- The word “fruitful” & “exceedingly fruitful” harkens back to the original divine blessing given to Adam & Eve (1:28)

4th “I will” fruitfulness, nations, & kings (v.6)

- To Adam, YHWH said “Be fruitful” and “multiply” (NASB)
- Reiterated by YHWH to Noah in 9:1 “Be fruitful & multiply, & fill the earth”
- The author’s purpose is to show that God’s covenant with Abraham is the chosen means through which his original blessing will again be channeled to all humankind
 - John H. Sailhamer, Genesis, in The Expositors Bible Commentary
- V. 6b “kings shall come forth from you”
- Not only Abrahams descendants (Samuel & Kings), but the royal house of Judah (Gen. 49:8-12 fulfilled beginning with King David; Num. 24:7-9 Balaam receiving divine revelation of future of Israel & future Messiah)

4th “I will” fruitfulness, nations, & kings (v.6)

- “kings” In primary view are Israel’s kings (see 35:11; 49:10; 2 Sam. 7:8–16) but also the messianic king (Waltke)
- God will make Abraham the father of a multitude of nations through numerous physical and spiritual progeny (17:4–6). Kings from his own body will rule the nations (cf. Deut. 17:14–20). Nehemiah treats the covenants of chapters 15 and 17 as two aspects of the Abrahamic covenant, connecting the land grant of chapter 15 with the change of Abraham’s names in chapter 17 (**Neh. 9:7–8**)

5th & 6th “I will” divine everlasting promises (v.7-8)

- “I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.”
- So then, the covenant is to be established with and through only one specific seed (which was established in Genesis 12:1–3)
- Spiritually, the essence of the covenant is personal, like the ‘I will’ of a marriage: so the pledge *I will be their God (8b; cf. 7b) far outweighs the particular benefits. This is the covenant (Derek Kidner)*
- God’s covenant endures forever because he is faithful and does not change (immutability)

5th & 6th “I will” divine everlasting promises (v.7-8)

- While God will make many nations of Abraham, the covenant is going to be sustained through only one nation. The duration is: *for an everlasting covenant*
- Unlike the Noahic, which is universal (“every living creature,” 9:10a, 12b, 15a, 16b), the Abrahamic is ultimately restricted to a particular branch of his descendants, only through Isaac (21:12), not the children of Hagar and Keturah
- Genesis shows a narrowing of the appointed line, involving the election of the younger son (i.e., Jacob; see Rom 9:6–8; Heb 11:17–19)

5th & 6th “I will” divine everlasting promises (v.7-8)

- The Hebrew word for *everlasting* is the word *olam*, which does not contain the concept of eternity as it does in English but means “up to the end of a period of time.” In this case, it is for the whole duration of human history (Fruchtenbaum)
- The promise of the covenant is twofold: First, *to be a God unto you, to be Abraham’s God, personally; and second, and to your seed after you, to be the God of Abraham’s seed*
- V. 8 the 6th “I will”
- Again, the Land is promised to Abraham individually; Abraham himself is to possess the Land: *and to your seed after you, the Land was also promised to Abraham’s seed*

5th & 6th “I will” divine everlasting promises (v.7-8)

- The content is: *the land of your sojournings; the very land that Abraham was told to walk throughout in 13:17 is the land he is destined to inherit*
- This is reaffirmed with the next phrase: *all the land of Canaan; so the promise is the possession of all the Promised Land*
- Again, Abraham owned almost nothing of the Promised Land at this point in the narrative
- Modern day: his seed has possessed much more of the Promised Land, they have not as yet in Jewish history possessed all the Promised Land

5th & 6th “I will” divine everlasting promises (v.7-8)

- Fructenbaum makes great summary statements on v. 7-8
- However, the promise here is clear: to have *all the land of Canaan, all the Promised Land. This is yet future, to be fulfilled in the Messianic Kingdom. The duration is: for an everlasting possession. It will always be Jewish Land. The word everlasting again means “to the end of a period of time,” in this case throughout the history of this planet. Only when God does away with this planet will the Land no longer exist. But for the duration of the existence of this planet, the Land is a Jewish Land. It is irrelevant whether the Jews are inside the Land or outside the Land; by divine grant, the Land belongs to the Jewish people*

5th & 6th “I will” divine everlasting promises (v.7-8)

- “I will be their God”
- That the promise is multigenerational is evidenced by its virtual repetition to Jacob (28:3–4)
- Ishmael in contrast to Isaac would not share in the “inheritance” (21:10; Gal 4:30), neither does Jacob’s twin Esau (25:33–34; 27:37; Heb 12:16)
- Theologically, the promise of “inheritance” (*’ăḥuzzâ*) was *the divine gift reserved for Abraham’s offspring (Exod 32:13; Deut 4:21; 12:10; Josh 11:23; 23:4; Isa 61:7)*

5th & 6th “I will” divine everlasting promises (v.7-8)

- Morris’ comments on “will be their God”
- Though many have gone astray, and the history of Abraham’s seed has been long and sad, there has always been at least a remnant in every generation that continues to worship and obey the God of Abraham
- God is, of course, the God of all men, whether they acknowledge Him or not; but He undertook here to be in a special and unique way the God of Abraham’s seed
- This promise no doubt applied primarily to those who are his seed according to the flesh, but also encompassed the spiritual seed of Abraham, who is the father of all them that believe
 - Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1976), 332333.

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