

**LESSON 7**  
**Genesis 12-17; Abraham 1-2**  
**Abraham 1**

**OVERVIEW:**

God covenants with Abraham. We are heirs to the blessings and responsibilities of the Abrahamic covenant.

Abraham was born about 300 years after the flood. Shem was still alive then.

Blessings and Responsibilities of the Abrahamic Covenant			
Earthly Blessings:	A promised land to live in. Abraham 2:6, 19; Genesis 12:7, 17:8	A great posterity. Abraham 2:9-10; Genesis 12:2-3; 17:2, 4-6	The gospel of Jesus Christ and the priesthood for Abraham and his posterity. Abraham 2:9-11; Genesis 17:7.
Eternal Parallels:	The celestial kingdom D&C 88:17-20	Eternal marriage and eternal increase D&C 132:19-22	Exaltation and eternal life D&C 132:23-24

**All Church members are the seed of Abraham, which means we are his descendants. Elder Joseph Fielding Smith said: The great majority of those who become members of the Church are literal descendants of Abraham through Ephraim, son of Joseph. Those who are not literal descendants of Abraham and Israel must become such, and when they are baptized and confirmed they are grafted into the tree and are entitled to all the rights and privileges as heirs.** Improvement Era, Oct 1923, p. 1149. Source: Lesson Manual.

It can be considered that the Abrahamic covenant was in existence before Abraham’s time. The honor bestowed on this faithful dispensation leader was to have the covenant that eternally binds God and man named after him. A few others have been honored similarly, such as the Law of Moses, and the Sign of the Prophet Jonah. Old Testament Supplemental Study Materials, p. 13

Adam and the ancients – those before the flood – had the fullness of the gospel in the same sense that we have it. They knew about Christ, baptism, salvation and temple ordinances, and had the holy priesthood and all the rest. That same thing was true in the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but so far we do not have an Old Testament that tells us this. There will surely be a day when we will have the Old Testament in its original form, so it will demonstrate that fact. If I were to hazard a guess, I would say that it will not be until the millennial era. Bruce R. McConkie, The Doctrinal Restoration.

Hitherto, God had only interposed, as in the flood, and at the confounding of tongues, to arrest the attempts of man against His purposes of mercy. But when God called Abram, He personally and actively interfered, and this time in mercy, not in judgment. The whole history of Abram may be arranged into four stages, each commencing with a personal revelation of Jehovah. The first, when the patriarch was called to his work and mission; (Genesis 12-14) the second, when he received the promise of an heir,

and the covenant was made with him; (Genesis 15, 16) the third, when that covenant was established in the change of his name from Abram to Abraham, and in circumcision as the sign and seal of the covenant; (Genesis 17-21) the fourth, when his faith was tried, proved, and perfected in the offering up of Isaac. (Genesis 22-25:11) These are, so to speak, the high points in Abram's history, which the patriarch successively climbed, and to which all the other events of his life may be regarded as the ascent. Alfred Edersheim, *The World Before the Flood, and The History of the Patriarchs*, Chapter 11.

## SCRIPTURES:

### THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM TRANSLATED FROM THE PAPYRUS, BY JOSEPH SMITH CHAPTER 1

*Abraham seeks the blessings of the patriarchal order* (Joseph Smith explained that there are "three grand orders of priesthood" (not three priesthoods—but three orders of the priesthood); they are the Levitical order, the Melchizedek order, and the patriarchal order as spoken of in this verse (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 322). "All priesthood," he said, "is Melchizedek" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 180). "What was the power of Melchizedek?" the Prophet inquired, "'Twas not the Priesthood of Aaron which administers in outward ordinances, and the offering of sacrifices. Those holding the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood are kings and priests of the Most High God, holding the keys of power and blessings. In fact, that Priesthood is a perfect law of theocracy, and stands as God to give laws to the people, administering endless lives to the sons and daughters of Adam. "Abraham says to Melchizedek, I believe all that thou hast taught me concerning the priesthood and the coming of the Son of Man; so Melchizedek ordained Abraham and sent him away. Abraham rejoiced, saying, Now I have a priesthood" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 322-23). **As to what is involved in the patriarchal order of the priesthood, Elder Bruce R. McConkie observed, "Joseph Smith says that in the temple of God there is an order of priesthood that is patriarchal. 'Go to the temple,' he says, 'and find out about this order.' So I went to the temple, and I took my wife with me, and we knelt at the altar. There on that occasion we entered, the two of us, into an 'order of the priesthood,' When we did it, we had sealed upon us, on a conditional basis, every blessing that God promised Father Abraham—the blessings of exaltation and eternal increase. The name of that order of priesthood, which is patriarchal in nature, because Abraham was a natural patriarch to his posterity, is the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage"** ("Eternal Family," 7). Responding to the question, "What is the new and everlasting covenant?" President Joseph Fielding Smith said, "I regret to say that there are some members of the Church who are misled and misinformed in regard to what the new and everlasting covenant really is. The new and everlasting covenant is the sum total of all gospel covenants and obligations, and I want to prove it. In the 66th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, verse 2, I read: 'Verily I say unto you, blessed are you for receiving mine everlasting covenant, even the fulness of my gospel, sent forth unto the children of men, that they might have life and be made partakers of the glories which are to be revealed in the last days, as it was written by the prophets and apostles in days of old.' More definitely stated is the definition of the new and everlasting covenant given to us in section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Now I am going to say before I read this that **marriage is not the new and everlasting covenant**. If there are any here that have that idea I want to say that right to them. Baptism is not the new and everlasting covenant. Ordination to the priesthood is not the new and everlasting covenant. In section 22 of the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord says that baptism is 'a new and an everlasting covenant, even that which was from the beginning.' Marriage in the temple of the Lord for time and for eternity is 'a' new and everlasting covenant (Doctrines of Salvation, 1:156). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1053-54. George Q. Cannon: We believe in the eternal nature of the marriage relation, that man and woman are destined, as

husband and wife, to dwell together eternally. We believe that we are organized as we are, with all these affections, with all this love for each other, for a definite purpose, something far more lasting than to be extinguished when death shall overtake us. We believe that when a man and woman are united as husband and wife, and they love each other, their hearts and feelings are one, that that love is as enduring as eternity itself, and that when death overtakes them it will neither extinguish nor cool that love, but that it will brighten and kindle it to a purer flame, and that it will endure through eternity; and that if we have offspring they will be with us and our mutual associations will be one of the chief joys of the heaven to which we are hastening. . . . God has restored the everlasting priesthood, by which ties can be formed, consecrated and consummated, which shall be as enduring as we ourselves are enduring, that is, as our spiritual nature; and husbands and wives will be united together, and they and their children will dwell and associate together eternally, and this, as I have said, will constitute one of the chief joys of heaven; and we look forward to it with delightful anticipations. (JD, December 3, 1871, 14:320-21.)—*He is persecuted by false priests in Chaldea—Jehovah saves him—Origins and government of Egypt reviewed.*

1 IN the land of the <sup>a</sup>Chaldeans, at the residence of my fathers, I, <sup>b</sup>Abraham, saw that it was needful for me to obtain another place of <sup>c</sup>residence; (His father had tried to kill him. An understatement.)

2 And, finding there was greater <sup>a</sup>happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought (Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “The word seek means to go in search of, try to discover, try to acquire. It requires an active, assertive approach to life. . . . It is the opposite of passively waiting for something good to come to us, with no effort on our part” (“Seeking the Good,” Ensign, May 1992, 86).) for the blessings of the fathers, (priesthood) and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; having been myself a follower of <sup>b</sup>righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great <sup>c</sup>knowledge, (Neal A. Maxwell said: “Desire denotes a real longing or craving. . . . “ . . . What we insistently desire, over time, is what we will eventually become and what we will receive in eternity” (“According to the Desire of [Our] Hearts,” Ensign, Nov. 1996, 21).) and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many <sup>d</sup>nations, a prince of peace, and <sup>e</sup>desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a <sup>f</sup>High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers.

3 It (the priesthood) was <sup>a</sup>conferred upon me from the fathers (by Melchizedek); it came down from the fathers (Patriarchal Priesthood), from the beginning of time, yea, even from the beginning, or before the foundation of the earth, down to the present time, even the right of the <sup>b</sup>firstborn, or the first man, who is <sup>c</sup>Adam, or first father, through the fathers unto me. (The priesthood has always existed.)

4 I sought for mine <sup>a</sup>appointment unto the Priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the <sup>b</sup>fathers concerning the seed. (Two major priesthood orders, or systems, were associated with the people of God; and under the law of these two priesthoods they were organized in their family, social, economic, and political affairs. The first of these priesthoods was the Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God, later named Melchizedek Priesthood. By revelation, Joseph Smith wrote: “The Melchizedek Priesthood holds the right of presidency, and has power and authority over all the offices in the church in all ages of the world, to administer in spiritual things.” (D&C 107:8) Those who possess the fullness of this priesthood and its keys have the right “to receive, obtain and perform all the ordinances belonging to the kingdom of God.” TPJS, p. 337. To His chosen people on earth, the Lord has given the promise of receiving and exercising all priesthood rights within the Kingdom of God. But aside from this fact there is no specific lineage in the flesh to which the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood has been promised. Joseph Smith’ Inspired Revision of Hebrews 7 therefore says in part: “this Melchizedek was ordained a priest after the order of the Son of God, which order was without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life. And all those who are ordained unto this priesthood are made like unto the Son of God, abiding a priest continually. JST Hebrews 7:3. **The second major order, or system, is that of the Patriarchal Priesthood. D&C**

**107:40. The Melchizedek and the Patriarchal Priesthoods are essentially the same Priesthood, but they differ in their organization and in the rights and prerogatives they possess. The Patriarchal Priesthood is the Melchizedek Priesthood organized according to a family order. Hence it is called the Patriarchal Priesthood. By contrast, the Melchizedek Priesthood is organized according to a system of quorums and presiding offices. Though the rights and privileges of the Melchizedek Priesthood are not appointed by promise to a given lineage within the chosen family, those of the Patriarchal Priesthood belong by right to a chosen lineage which God has appointed. Within the Kingdom of God, the Holy (or Melchizedek) Priesthood is the presiding authority, and each right or privilege that pertains to the patriarchal order must be appointed or sanctioned by the presiding High Priest who holds the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood. At times, the keys of both the Holy Priesthood and the Patriarchal Priesthood centered in one man. This was true of Adam and of Noah. It was also true of Enoch, for those over whom he had jurisdiction. (See for example D&C 84:6-16 for the descent of the keys of the Holy Priesthood, and compare D&C 107:41-52 which gives the descent of the keys of the Patriarchal Priesthood.)** At other times, the keys of the two orders of priesthood were centered in different men. This was true in Abraham's day, when Melchizedek presided over the Church and also reigned by virtue of the Holy Priesthood and its political rights, as King of Salem, while Abraham was given the keys of the Patriarchal Priesthood under Melchizedek, and the promises associated with the divine family order in later generations. It is by means of the higher ordinances within the Gospel plan – those ordinances that are now centered in the House of the Lord – that the divine patriarchal order is built up in the earth. In discussing the Patriarchal Priesthood, Joseph Smith observed: "Go to and finish the temple, and God will fill it with power, and you will then receive more knowledge concerning this priesthood." DHC 5:555. Having administered the higher ordinances of the House of the Lord to certain brethren, the Prophet observed that he had attended to "washings, anointings, endowments and the communication of keys pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on to the highest order of the Melchizedek Priesthood, setting forth the order pertaining to the Ancient of Days. DHC, 5:1-2. Again he commented: As soon as the Temple and baptismal font are prepared, we calculate to give the Elders of Israel their washings and anointings, and attend to those last and most impressive ordinances, without which we cannot obtain celestial thrones. But there must be a holy place prepared for this purpose... that men may receive their endowments and be made kings and priests unto the most High God. DHC, 6:319. Doctrinal Commentary on the Pearl of Great Price, Hyrum Andrus, p. 356-359. **The Patriarchal Priesthood has been restored in our day:** In the blessing pronounced upon his father's head, given December 18, 1833, the Prophet said: "Three years previous to the death of Adam, he called Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, and Methuselah, who were all high priests, with the residue of his posterity who were righteous, into the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, and there bestowed upon them his last blessing. And the Lord appeared unto them, and they rose up and blessed Adam, and called him Michael the prince, the archangel. And the Lord administered comfort unto Adam, and said unto him: I have set thee to be at the head; a multitude of nations shall come of thee, and thou art a prince over them forever. "So shall it be with my father. He shall be called a prince over his posterity, holding the keys of the Patriarchal Priesthood over the kingdom of God on earth, even the Church of the Latter-day Saints, and he shall sit in the general assembly of patriarchs, even in council with the Ancient of Days, when he shall sit and all the patriarchs with him, and shall enjoy his right and authority under the direction of the Ancient of Days. Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation. In April of 1836 Moses restored the keys to gather Israel, to bring people into the Church and kingdom through missionary work. Elias restored the keys associated with the patriarchal order, the power to organize the Saints into eternal families through the covenant and ordinance of eternal marriage. And Elijah restored the keys associated with the fulness of the priesthood, the powers necessary to bind families and seal them up unto eternal life. The ordinances associated with the ministry and bestowal of keys by Moses, Elias, and Elijah (culminating in temples of the Lord) are the capstone blessings of the gospel and the consummation of the Father's work: they provide purpose and perspective for all other

gospel principles and ordinances (see D&C 110:11-16). And so with the coming of heavenly messengers to the Kirtland Temple, the ancient order of things was restored to earth. The order in which Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah were a part, even those keys and powers and rights are once again available to men and women. Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught: "I went to the temple, and I took my wife with me, and we kneeled at the altar. There on that occasion we entered, the two of us, into an 'order of the priesthood.' When we did it, we had sealed upon us, on a conditional basis, every blessing that God promised Father Abraham—the blessings of exaltation and eternal increase. The name of that order of priesthood, which is patriarchal in nature, because Abraham was a natural patriarch to his posterity, is the New and Everlasting Covenant of marriage." Selected Writings of Gospel Scholars, Robert Millet. A man cannot enter the patriarchal order without his wife. They serve together as co-equals in the patriarchal order. The patriarchal order is an order of the Melchizedek Priesthood; it is, in fact, the new and everlasting covenant of marriage, an order entered into by men and women whenever they are married in the temple by one having proper sealing authority. Selected Writings of Gospel Scholars, Robert Millet.)

5 My <sup>a</sup>fathers, having turned from their righteousness, and from the holy commandments which the Lord their God had given unto them, unto the worshiping of the <sup>b</sup>gods of the <sup>c</sup>heathen, utterly refused to hearken to my voice; (We can still be righteous even when our family members are not.)

6 For their <sup>a</sup>hearts were set to do <sup>b</sup>evil, and were wholly turned to the god of <sup>c</sup>Elkenah, and the god of Libnah, and the god of Mahmackrah, and the god of Korash, and the god of Pharaoh, king of Egypt;  
7 Therefore they turned their hearts to the sacrifice of the <sup>a</sup>heathen in offering up their children unto these dumb idols, and hearkened not unto my voice, but endeavored to take away my <sup>b</sup>life by the hand of the priest of Elkenah. The priest of Elkenah was also the priest of Pharaoh. (They try to kill Abram.)

8 Now, at this time it was the custom of the priest of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, to offer up upon the altar which was built in the land of Chaldea, for the offering unto these strange gods, men, women, and children.

9 And it came to pass that the priest made an offering unto the god of Pharaoh, and also unto the god of Shagreel, even after the manner of the Egyptians. Now the god of Shagreel was the sun.

10 Even the thank-offering of a child did the <sup>a</sup>priest of Pharaoh offer upon the altar which stood by the hill called Potiphar's Hill, at the head of the plain of Olishem.

11 Now, this priest had offered upon this altar three virgins at one time, who were the daughters of Onitah, one of the royal descent directly from the loins of <sup>a</sup>Ham. These virgins were offered up because of their virtue; they would not <sup>b</sup>bow down to worship gods of wood or of stone, therefore they were killed upon this altar, and it was done after the manner of the Egyptians. (President Joseph Fielding Smith: "We all know something of the courage it takes for one to stand in opposition to united custom, and general belief. None of us likes to be ridiculed. Few are able to withstand popular opinion even when they know it is wrong, and it is difficult to comprehend the magnificent courage displayed by Abraham in his profound obedience to Jehovah, in the midst of his surroundings. His moral courage, his implicit faith in God, his boldness in raising his voice in opposition to the prevailing wickedness, is almost beyond comparison (The Way to Perfection [1953], 86)" (Pearl of Great Price Student Manual, 30).)

12 And it came to pass that the priests laid violence upon me, that they might slay me also, as they did those virgins upon this altar; and that you may have a knowledge of this altar, I will refer you to the representation at the commencement of this record. (This representation is on the facsimile no.1)

13 It was made after the form of a bedstead, such as was had among the Chaldeans, and it stood before the gods of Elkenah, Libnah, Mahmackrah, Korash, and also a god like unto that of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

14 That you may have an understanding of these gods, I have given you the fashion of them in the figures at the beginning, which manner of figures is called by the Chaldeans Rahleenos, which signifies hieroglyphics.

15 And as they lifted up their hands upon me, that they might offer me up and take away my life, (Hold on, fear not – these are the words of Him who has passed perfectly through all these things, and who now seeks to bring us lovingly and safely through our own individually designed experiences. Neal A. Maxwell, All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience, p. 5) behold, I lifted up my voice unto the Lord my God, and the Lord <sup>a</sup>hearkened and heard, and he filled me with the vision of the Almighty, and the angel of his presence stood by me, and immediately <sup>b</sup>unloosed my bands; (At the moment a great alarm.)

16 And his voice was unto me: <sup>a</sup>Abraham, Abraham, behold, my <sup>b</sup>name is Jehovah, and I have heard thee, and have come down to deliver thee, and to take thee away from thy <sup>c</sup>father’s house, and from all thy kinsfolk, into a strange <sup>d</sup>land which thou knowest not of;

17 And this because they have turned their <sup>a</sup>hearts away from me, to worship the god of Elkenah, and the god of Libnah, and the god of Mahmackrah, and the god of Korash, and the god of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; therefore I have come down to <sup>b</sup>visit them, and to destroy him who hath lifted up his hand against thee, Abraham, my son, to take away thy life.

18 Behold, I will lead thee by my hand, and I will take thee, to put upon thee my name, even the Priesthood of thy father, and my power shall be over thee.

19 As it was with <sup>a</sup>Noah (The patriarchal order) so shall it be with thee; but through thy ministry my <sup>b</sup>name shall be known in the earth <sup>c</sup>forever, for I am thy God. (And who were the prophets that existed among ancient Israel? They were descendants of Abraham; and to them came the word of God and the light of revelation. Who was Jesus? After the flesh of the seed of Abraham. Who were the people that came to this continent – Lehi and his family, about 600 years B.C.? Of the seed of Abraham. Who were the Apostles they had among them that spread forth among the millions that then lived upon this continent? Of the seed of Abraham. Who was Joseph Smith? Of the seed of Abraham. John Taylor, JD, 20:224)

20 Behold, Potiphar’s Hill was in the land of <sup>a</sup>Ur, of Chaldea. And the Lord broke down the altar of Elkenah, and of the gods of the land, and utterly destroyed them, and smote the priest that he died; and there was great mourning in Chaldea, and also in the court of Pharaoh; which Pharaoh signifies king by royal blood.

21 Now this king of Egypt was a descendant from the <sup>a</sup>loins of <sup>b</sup>Ham, and was a partaker of the blood of the <sup>c</sup>Canaanites by birth.

22 From this descent sprang all the Egyptians, and thus the blood of the <sup>a</sup>Canaanites was preserved in the land.

23 The land of <sup>a</sup>Egypt being first discovered by a woman, who was the daughter of Ham, and the daughter of Egyptus, which in the Chaldean signifies Egypt, which signifies that which is forbidden;

24 When this woman discovered the land it was under water, who afterward settled her sons in it; and thus, from Ham, sprang that race which preserved the curse in the land. (The curse pertained to their being unable to hold the priesthood.)

25 Now the first <sup>a</sup>government of Egypt was established by Pharaoh, the eldest son of Egyptus, the daughter of Ham, and it was after the manner of the government of Ham, which was patriarchal. (Egypt is trying to set up a patriarchal order like the ancients lived under.)

26 Pharaoh, being a righteous man, established his kingdom and judged his people wisely and justly all his days, seeking earnestly to imitate that <sup>a</sup>order established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first patriarchal reign, even in the reign of Adam, and also of Noah, his father, who blessed him with the <sup>b</sup>blessings of the earth, and with the blessings of wisdom, but cursed him as pertaining to the Priesthood.

27 Now, Pharaoh being of that lineage by which he could not have the right of <sup>a</sup>Priesthood, (descendants of Cain.) notwithstanding the Pharaohs would fain <sup>b</sup>claim it from Noah, through Ham, therefore my father was led away by their idolatry;

28 But I shall endeavor, hereafter, to delineate the chronology running back from myself to the beginning of the creation, for the <sup>a</sup>records have come into my hands, which I hold unto this present time.

29 Now, after the priest of Elkenah was smitten that he died, there came a fulfilment of those things which were said unto me concerning the land of Chaldea, that there should be a <sup>a</sup>famine in the land. 30 Accordingly a famine prevailed throughout all the land of Chaldea, and my father was sorely tormented because of the famine, and he repented of the evil which he had determined against me, to take away my <sup>a</sup>life.

31 But the <sup>a</sup>records of the fathers, even the patriarchs, concerning the right of Priesthood, the Lord my God preserved in mine own hands; therefore a knowledge of the beginning of the creation, and also of the <sup>b</sup>planets, and of the stars, as they were made known unto the fathers, have I kept even unto this day, and I shall endeavor to write some of these things upon this <sup>c</sup>record, for the benefit of my posterity that shall come after me.

### Abraham 2; Genesis 12

#### OVERVIEW:

Abraham leaves Ur to go to Canaan - Jehovah appears to him at Haran - All gospel blessings are promised to his seed, and through his seed to all – He goes to Canaan, and on to Egypt.

#### SCRIPTURES:

Abraham 2	Genesis 11
1 NOW the Lord God caused the <sup>a</sup> famine to wax sore in the land of Ur, insomuch that <sup>b</sup> Haran, my brother, died; but <sup>c</sup> Terah, my father, yet lived in the land of Ur, of the Chaldees.	28 And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the <sup>a</sup> Chaldees.
2 And it came to pass that I, Abraham, took <sup>a</sup> Sarai to wife, and <sup>b</sup> Nahor, my brother, took Milcah to wife, who was the <sup>c</sup> daughter of Haran.	29 And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram’s wife <i>was</i> <sup>a</sup> Sarai; and the name of Nahor’s wife, <sup>b</sup> Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah.
(Elder David A. Bednar: “You may enjoy music, athletics, or be mechanically inclined, and someday you may work in a trade or a profession or in the arts. As important as such activities and occupations can be, they do not define who we are. First and foremost, we are spiritual beings. We are sons [and daughters] of and the seed of ” (“Becoming a Missionary,” Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2005, 47).)	30 But Sarai was <sup>a</sup> barren; she <del>had</del> (bear) no child.
3 Now the Lord had <sup>a</sup> said unto me: Abraham, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee.	

<p>4 Therefore I left the land of <sup>a</sup>Ur, of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and I took Lot, my brother's son, and his wife, and Sarai my wife; and also my <sup>b</sup>father followed after me, unto the land which we denominated Haran.</p>	<p>31 And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the <sup>a</sup>Chaldees, to go into the land of <sup>b</sup>Canaan; and they came unto <sup>c</sup>Haran, and dwelt there.</p>
<p>5 And the famine abated; and my father tarried in Haran and dwelt there, as there were many flocks in Haran; and my father turned again unto his <sup>a</sup>idolatry, therefore he continued in Haran.</p>	
	<p>32 And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.</p>
	<p>Genesis 12</p>
<p>6 But I, Abraham, and Lot, my brother's son, prayed unto the Lord, and the Lord <sup>a</sup>appeared unto me, and said unto me: Arise, and take Lot with thee; for I have purposed to take thee away out of Haran, and to make of thee a <sup>b</sup>minister to bear my <sup>c</sup>name in a strange <sup>d</sup>land which I will give unto thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession, when they hearken to my voice. (Abraham first received the gospel by baptism (which is the covenant of salvation); then he had conferred upon him the higher priesthood, and he entered into celestial marriage (which is the covenant of exaltation), gaining assurance thereby that he would have eternal increase; finally he received a promise that all of these blessings would be offered to all of his mortal posterity. Included in the divine promises to Abraham was the assurance that Christ would come through his lineage, and the assurance that Abraham's posterity would receive certain choice, promised lands as an eternal inheritance. All of these promises lumped together are called the Abrahamic covenant. Those portions of it which pertain to personal exaltation and eternal increase are renewed with each member of the house of Israel who enters the order of celestial marriage; through that order the participating parties become inheritors of all the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p. 13.)</p>	<p>1 NOW the LORD had <sup>a</sup>said unto <sup>b</sup>Abram, <sup>c</sup>Get thee out of thy <sup>d</sup>country, and from thy <sup>e</sup>kindred, and from thy <sup>f</sup>father's house, unto a <sup>g</sup>land that I will shew thee:</p>



<p>7 For I am the Lord thy God; I dwell in <sup>a</sup>heaven; the earth is my <sup>b</sup>footstool; I stretch my hand over the sea, and it obeys my voice; I cause the wind and the fire to be my <sup>c</sup>chariot; I say to the mountains—Depart hence—and behold, they are taken away by a whirlwind, in an instant, suddenly.</p>	
<p>8 My <sup>a</sup>name is Jehovah, and I <sup>b</sup>know the end from the beginning; therefore my hand shall be over thee.</p>	
<p>9 And I will make of thee a great <sup>a</sup>nation, and I will <sup>b</sup>bless thee above measure, and make thy name great among all nations, and thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and <sup>c</sup>Priesthood unto all nations; <b>(The responsibility of the seed of Abraham, which we are, is to be missionaries to bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations. Ezra Taft Benson, CR, Apr 1987, p. 107)</b></p>	<p>2 And I will make of thee a <sup>a</sup>great <sup>b</sup>nation, and I will <sup>c</sup>bless thee, and make thy <sup>d</sup>name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: (Thus through this scattering the Lord has caused Israel to mix with the nations and bring the Gentiles within the blessings of the seed of Abraham. We are preaching the gospel now in all parts of the world, and for what purpose? To gather out from the Gentile nations the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It is by this scattering that the Gentile nations have been blessed, and if they will truly repent they are entitled to all the blessings promised to Israel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal. Joseph Fielding Smith, Answers to Gospel Questions, 2:57)</p>
<p>10 And I will <sup>a</sup>bless them through thy name; for as many as receive this <sup>b</sup>Gospel shall be called after thy <sup>c</sup>name, and shall be accounted thy <sup>d</sup>seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their <sup>e</sup>father;</p>	
<p>11 And I will <sup>a</sup>bless them that bless thee, and <sup>b</sup>curse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is, in thy Priesthood) and in thy <sup>c</sup>seed (that is, thy Priesthood), for I give unto thee a promise that this <sup>d</sup>right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) <b>(The royal lineage comes down through Isaac, and Jacob and not Abraham's other descendants. Bruce R. McConkie, Studies in Scripture 3:54. And who were the prophets that existed among ancient Israel? They were descendants of Abraham; and to them came the word of God and the light of revelation. Who was Jesus? After the flesh of the seed of Abraham. Who were his Twelve Apostles? Of the seed of Abraham. Who were the people that came to this</b></p>	<p>3 And I will <sup>a</sup>bless them that bless thee, and <sup>b</sup>curse <del>him</del> (them) that <sup>c</sup>curseth thee: and in thee shall <del>all</del> (the) <sup>d</sup>families of the earth be <sup>e</sup>blessed. (No person who is not of Israel can become a member of the Church without becoming of the house of Israel by adoption. Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, 3:246 The solemn obligation associated with the Abrahamic Covenant is to be worthy spiritual servants to the world, delivering to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples the blessings associated with the kingdom of God upon the earth, including the priesthood in all its saving functions. Latter-Day Commentary on the Old Testament, p. 76. Your descendants, meaning as we shall see, the ones through Isaac and Jacob, shall have a right to the priesthood, to the gospel</p>

<p>continent – Lehi and his family, about 600 BC? Of the seed of Abraham. Who were the Apostles they had among them that spread forth among the millions that then lived upon this continent? Of the seed of Abraham. Who was Joseph Smith? Of the seed of Abraham. John Taylor, JD, 20:224.) shall all the families of the earth be blessed, <b>(The seed of Abraham is so universally spread over the earth that it is a little difficult to suppose that there are any people left on earth who do not have some of the blood of Abraham in their veins, excepting the seed of Cain. There would be many people who have very little of the blood of Israel, but I believe the seed of Cain has none.</b> Bruce R. McConkie, Studies in Scripture, 3:53) even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal. (It is the seed of Abraham who themselves hold the same priesthood held by their noble forebear who will take salvation to all the nations of the earth. Bruce R. McConkie, Millennial Messiah, p. 263.)</p>	<p>and to eternal life. Three things. I have a right to them. It may be different with some others. If they are not the seed of Abraham, they can obtain the gospel, or they can obtain the priesthood, and they can be adopted in, but I have a right – a right that I earned in pre-existence when the Lord decided that I should be born in the lineage that is royal. The royal lineage! It is their right to have the priesthood, the gospel, and eternal life. If I do not obtain those things, it is my fault for not living up to the potential and the possibility that God gave me. Bruce R. McConkie, Studies in Scripture, 3:54)</p> <p>(Elder Bednar: “Truly, great responsibility rests upon the seed of Abraham in these latter days. . . . “ . . . We are here upon the earth at this time to magnify the priesthood and to preach the gospel. That is who we are, and that is why we are here” (“Becoming a Missionary,” 47).)</p>
<p>12 Now, after the Lord had withdrawn from speaking to me, and withdrawn his face from me, I said in my heart: Thy servant has <sup>a</sup>sought thee earnestly; now I have found thee;</p>	
<p>13 Thou didst send thine angel to <sup>a</sup>deliver me from the gods of Elkenah, and I will do well to hearken unto thy voice, therefore let thy servant rise up and depart in peace.</p>	
<p>14 So I, Abraham, departed as the Lord had said unto me, and Lot with me; and I, Abraham, was <sup>a</sup>sixty and two years old when I departed out of Haran.</p>	<p>4 So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram <i>was</i> <sup>a</sup>seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.</p>
<p>15 And I took Sarai, whom I took to wife when I was in Ur, in Chaldea, and Lot, my brother’s son, and all our substance that we had gathered, and the souls that we had <sup>a</sup>won in Haran, and came forth in the way to the land of Canaan, and dwelt in tents as we came on our way;</p>	<p>5 And Abram took <sup>a</sup>Sarai his wife, and <sup>b</sup>Lot his <sup>c</sup>brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had <sup>d</sup>gotten (Heb made; i.e. converted) in <sup>e</sup>Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.</p>
<p>16 Therefore, <sup>a</sup>eternity was our covering and our <sup>b</sup>rock and our salvation, as we journeyed from Haran by the way of <sup>c</sup>Jershon, to come to the land of Canaan. (There is a possibility that Abram traveled southward on the ancient route by way of</p>	

<p>Damascus to the site of ancient Jerash (Jershon), thence down the Jabbok, across the Jordan, and up the Wadi Farah to Sechem (also spelled Shechem, Sichern, and Sychem).)</p> <p>17 Now I, Abraham, built an <sup>a</sup>altar in the land of Jershon, and made an offering unto the Lord, and prayed that the <sup>b</sup>famine might be turned away from my father's house, that they might not perish.</p>	
<p>18 And then we passed from Jershon through the land unto the place of Sechem; it was situated in the plains of Moreh, and we had already come into the borders of the land of the <sup>a</sup>Canaanites, and I offered <sup>b</sup>sacrifice there in the plains of Moreh, and called on the Lord devoutly, because we had already come into the land of this idolatrous nation.</p>	<p>6 ¶ And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichern, <del>unto</del> (and) the plain of Moreh. And the <sup>a</sup>Canaanite <del>was</del> (were) then in the land.</p>
<p>19 And the Lord <sup>a</sup>appeared unto me in answer to my prayers, and said unto me: Unto thy seed will I give this <sup>b</sup>land.</p>	<p>7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, <sup>a</sup>Unto thy <sup>b</sup>seed will I give this <sup>c</sup>land: and there builded he an <sup>d</sup>altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.</p>
<p>20 And I, Abraham, arose from the place of the altar which I had built unto the Lord, and removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of <sup>a</sup>Bethel, and pitched my tent there, Bethel on the west, and <sup>b</sup>Hai on the east; and there I built another <sup>c</sup>altar unto the Lord, and <sup>d</sup>called again upon the name of the Lord.</p>	<p>8 And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of <sup>a</sup>Beth-el, and pitched his tent, <del>having</del> (leaving) <sup>b</sup>Beth-el on the west, and <sup>c</sup>Hai (or Ai) on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and <sup>d</sup>called upon the <sup>e</sup>name of the LORD.</p>
<p>21 And I, Abraham, journeyed, going on still towards the south;</p>	<p>9 And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.</p>
<p>and there was a continuation of a famine in the land; and I, Abraham, concluded to go down into Egypt, to sojourn there, for the famine became very grievous.</p>	<p>10 ¶ And there was a <sup>a</sup>famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine <i>was</i> grievous in the land.</p>
<p>22 And it came to pass when I was come near to enter into Egypt, the Lord <sup>a</sup>said unto me: Behold, Sarai, thy wife, is a very fair woman to look upon;</p>	<p>11 And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he <sup>a</sup>said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou <i>art</i> a fair woman to look upon:</p>
<p>23 Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see her, they will say—She is his wife; and they will kill you, but they will save her alive; therefore see that ye do on this wise:</p>	<p>12 Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This <i>is</i> his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.</p>
<p>24 Let her say unto the Egyptians, she is thy sister, and thy soul shall live. 25 And it came to pass that I, Abraham, told Sarai, my wife, all that the Lord had said unto me— Therefore say unto them, I pray thee, thou art my</p>	<p>13 Say, I pray thee, thou <i>art</i> my <sup>a</sup>sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.</p>

<sup>a</sup> sister, that it may be well with me for thy sake, and my soul shall live because of thee.	
	14 ¶ And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians <sup>a</sup> beheld the woman that she <i>was</i> very fair.
	15 The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.
	16 And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels. (Because they thought Sarai was Abram's sister, they gave him much stuff in payment for her hand. He is allowed to keep all they gave him as he leaves Egypt.)
	17 And the LORD <sup>a</sup> plagued Pharaoh and his house with great <sup>b</sup> plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife.
	18 And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What <i>is</i> this <i>that</i> thou hast <sup>a</sup> done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she <i>was</i> thy wife?
	19 Why saidst thou, She <i>is</i> my <sup>a</sup> sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take <i>her</i> , and go thy way.
	20 And Pharaoh commanded <i>his</i> men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had. (Abraham will leave Egypt laden with riches just like the Israelites will leave hundreds of years into the future.)

(God had said nothing as yet to him, directly, about Sarai; and, in the absence of any special direction, he seems to have taken the matter into his own hands, after the manner of those times and countries. From Genesis 20:13 we learn that when he first set out from his father's house, an agreement had been made between the two, that Sarai was to pass as his sister, because, as he said, "the fear of God" was not among the nations with whom they would be brought in contact; and they might slay Abram for his wife's sake.\* The deceit - for such it really was - seemed scarcely such in their eyes, since Sarai was so closely related to her husband that she might almost be called his sister. In short, as we all too oftentimes do, it was deception, commencing with self-deception; and though what he said might be true in the letter, it was false in the spirit of it. But we must not imagine that Abram was so heartless as to endanger his wife for the sake of his own safety. On the contrary, it seemed the readiest means of guarding her honor also; since, if she were looked upon as the sister of a mighty chief, her hand would be sought, and certain formalities have to be gone through, which would give Abram time to escape with his wife. This is not said in apology, but in explanation of the matter. Edersheim, OT, Vol 1, Chapter 11.)

## Genesis 13-14

### SCRIPTURES:

### CHAPTER 13

*Abram returns from Egypt—He and Lot part—The Lord will make Abram's seed as the dust of the earth in number—Abram settles in Hebron.*

1 AND Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, ~~into~~ (unto) the south.

2 And Abram *was* very <sup>a</sup>rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

3 And he went on his journeys from the south even to <sup>a</sup>Beth-el, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Beth-el and <sup>b</sup>Hai; (or Ai)

4 Unto the place of the <sup>a</sup>altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram <sup>b</sup>called on the name of the LORD.

5 ¶ And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

6 And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.

7 And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: (that they could not dwell together,) And the <sup>a</sup>Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.

8 And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no <sup>a</sup>strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we ~~be~~ (are) <sup>b</sup>brethren.

9 *Is* not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if *thou* ~~wilt take~~ (go to) the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if *thou* ~~depart~~ (go) to the right hand, then I will go to the left. (Abraham being the eldest had the right to choose first, but he, humbly, deferred to Lot to choose which way he preferred.)

10 And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed <sup>a</sup>Sodom and Gomorrah, ~~even~~ (like) as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, ~~as thou comest unto~~ <sup>b</sup>Zoar.

11 Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. (As the two stood on that highest ridge between Bethel and Ai, the prospect before them was indeed unrivaled. Looking back northwards, the eye would rest on the mountains which divide Samaria from Judaea; westwards and southwards, it would range over the later possession of Benjamin and Judah, till in the far distance it descried the slope on which Hebron lay. **But the fairest vision was eastward: in the extreme distance, the dark mountains of Moab; at their foot, the Jordan, winding through a valley of untold fertility; and in the immediate foreground, the range of hills above Jericho. As the patriarchs gazed upon it, the whole cleft of the Jordan valley was rich with the most luxuriant tropical vegetation, the sweetest spot of all being around the Lake of Sodom, at that time probably a sweetwater lake, the "circuit" of the plain resembling in appearance, but far exceeding in fertility and beauty, the district around the Sea of Galilee.** In this "round" of Jordan, and by the waters of Sodom, rich cities had sprung up, which, alas! were also the seat of the most terrible corruption. As Lot saw this "round" or district, fair like Paradise, green with perennial verdure, like the part of Egypt watered by the Nile, his heart went out after it, unmindful of, or not caring to inquire into, the character of its inhabitants. The scene might well have won the heart of any one whose affections were set on things beneath. Lot's heart was so set; and he now vindicated by his choice the propriety of his being separated from Abram. Assuredly their aims went asunder, as the ways which they took. Yet, even thus, God watched over Lot, and left him not to reap the bitter fruit of his own choice. Alfred Edersheim, Bible History, Old Testament, Chapter 12.)

12 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and <sup>a</sup>Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched *his* tent toward Sodom. (Many readers do not pick up on the subtle significance of Lot's pitching his tent toward Sodom, a city of sin. We should abhor sin, and avoid the road to it. Having pitched his tent toward Sodom, it wasn't long before Lot lived there. As is often the case when people ripen in iniquity, the result was war and bloodshed. Lot was caught up in this and lost everything. Abraham came to his rescue and saved Lot, his family, friends, and his possessions. Latter-Day

**Commentary on the Old Testament, p. 84. Regarding the pitching of the tent toward Sodom; it was customary for the women to pitch the tents. Since the tent was pitched toward Sodom, maybe Lot's wife loved the city, which might explain why she turned as they were leaving the city, longing to be back there, which caused her to be turned into a pillar of salt.)**

13 But the men of <sup>a</sup>Sodom were (becoming sinners, and exceedingly) <sup>b</sup>wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly (, the Lord was angry with them).

14 ¶ And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and <sup>a</sup>westward: (And remember the covenant which I make with thee; for it shall be an everlasting covenant; and thou shalt remember the days of Enoch thy father;)

15 For all the <sup>a</sup>land which thou seest, to thee will I give it (thee), and to thy seed for ever. (Abraham's seed will have the land of Palestine in the resurrection. Bruce R. McConkie, Studies in Scripture, 3:55. The time would eventually come, after the resurrection from the dead, when Abraham and his children who have been faithful in the keeping of the commandments of the Lord, should possess that land, and they shall also spread forth as far as it is necessary for them to receive an inheritance. Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, 1:88)

16 And I will make thy <sup>a</sup>seed as the <sup>b</sup>dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.

17 Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.

18 Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt <sup>a</sup>in the plain of (Heb by the terebinth(s) of) Mamre, which is (was) in <sup>b</sup>Hebron, and built there an <sup>c</sup>altar unto the LORD.

## CHAPTER 14

*Lot captured in battles of the kings—He is rescued by Abram—Melchizedek administers bread and wine, and blesses Abram—Abram pays tithes—He declines to accept spoils of conquest.*

1 AND it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of <sup>a</sup>Shinar, (and) Arioch king of Ellasar, (and) Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations; (These kings ruled over cities, not kingdoms.)

2 That these (kings) made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is <sup>a</sup>Zoar.

3 All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the salt <sup>a</sup>sea.

4 Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

5 And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and smote the <sup>a</sup>Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the <sup>b</sup>Zuzims in Ham, and the <sup>c</sup>Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim,

6 And the <sup>a</sup>Horites in their mount Seir, unto El-paran, which is (was) by the wilderness.

7 And they returned, and came to En-mishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezon-tamar.

8 And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same (which) is Zoar;) and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim;

9 With Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings with five.

10 And the vale of Siddim was full of (filled with) <sup>a</sup>slimepits; (or bitumen pits) and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain (which was called Hanabal.).

11 And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way.

12 And they took <sup>a</sup>Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

13 ¶ And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the <sup>a</sup>Hebrew; (the man of God,) for he dwelt

<sup>b</sup>in the plain of (Heb by the terebinth(s) of Mamre) Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these *were* confederate with Abram.

14 And when Abram heard that (Lot,) his brother (<sup>c</sup>son,) was taken captive, <sup>a</sup>he armed (or he led forth) his trained servants, (men, and they which were) <sup>b</sup>born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.

15 And he divided himself against them, he and his servants (men), by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is (was) on the <sup>a</sup>left hand (ie north) of Damascus.

16 And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, (his brother's son,) and (all) his goods, and the women also, and the people.

17 ¶ And the king of Sodom (also) went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that *were* with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is (was) the <sup>a</sup>king's dale.

18 And <sup>a</sup>Melchizedek(.) (Heb king of righteousness) king of <sup>b</sup>Salem(.) (Later became Jerusalem.) brought forth <sup>c</sup>bread and wine: <sup>d</sup>and he (break bread and blest it; and he blest the wine, he being) was the <sup>e</sup>priest of the most high God. (Melchizedek administered the sacrament to Abram. Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles wrote that this event "may well have . . . prefigured [the sacrament of the Lord's Supper], some two thousand years before its formal institution among men . . . when Jesus and his apostolic witnesses celebrated the feast of the Passover during the week [of the Atonement and Crucifixion]" (The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ [1978], 384.)

19 (And he gave to Abram,) And he blessed him, and said, <sup>a</sup>Blessed be Abram, (thou are a man) of the most high <sup>b</sup>God, <sup>c</sup>possessor (or creator) of heaven and earth:

20 And <sup>a</sup>blessed be (is) the (name of the) most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy (thine) hand. And he (Abram) gave him <sup>b</sup>tithes of all (he had taken).

21 And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the <sup>a</sup>goods to thyself.

22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift(ed) up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,

23 (And have sworn) That I will not take (of thee) from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram <sup>a</sup>rich:

24 Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, (Ener) Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their <sup>a</sup>portion.

(25 And Melchizedek lifted up his voice and blessed Abram.

26 Now Melchizedek was a man of faith, who wrought righteousness; and when a child he feared God, and stopped the mouths of lions, and quenched the violence of fire.

27 And thus, having been approved of God, he was ordained an high priest after the order of the covenant which God made with Enoch,

28 It being after the order of the Son of God; which order came, not by man, nor the will of man; neither by father nor mother; neither by beginning of days nor end of years; but of God;

29 And it was delivered unto men by the calling of his own voice, according to his own will, unto as many as believed on his name.

30 For God having sworn unto Enoch and unto his seed with an oath by himself; that every one being ordained after this order and calling should have power, by faith, to break mountains, to divide the seas, to dry up waters, to turn them out of their course; (The power of the priesthood.)

31 To put at defiance the armies of nations, to divide the earth, to break every band, to stand in the presence of God; to do all things according to his will, according to his command, subdue principalities and powers; and this by the will of the Son of God which was from before the foundation of the world.

32 And men having this faith, coming up unto this order of God, were translated and taken up into heaven. (Enoch and the people of his city were translated.)

33 And now, Melchizedek was a priest of this order; therefore he obtained peace in Salem, and was

called the Prince of peace.

34 And his people wrought righteousness, and obtained heaven, and sought for the city of Enoch which God had before taken, separating it from the earth, having reserved it unto the latter days, or the end of the world; (Melchizedek and his people were translated.)

35 And hath said, and sworn with an oath, that the heavens and the earth should come together; and the sons of God should be tried so as by fire.

36 And this Melchizedek, having thus established righteousness, was called the king of heaven by his people, or, in other words, the King of peace.

37 And he lifted up his voice, and he blessed Abram, being the high priest, and the keeper of the storehouse of God;

38 Him whom God had appointed to receive tithes for the poor. (Melchizedek was the presiding authority in the priesthood. President of the Church.)

39 Wherefore, Abram paid unto him tithes of all that he had, of all the riches which he possessed, which God had given him more than that which he had need.

40 And it came to pass, that God blessed Abram, and gave unto him riches, and honor, and lands for an everlasting possession; according to the covenant which he had made, and according to the blessing wherewith Melchizedek had blessed him.) **(The accepted Hebrew meaning of Melchizedek may then be taken as king of righteousness or peace. But, students of language suggested that the word is a title rather than a name, a title implying a high position of spiritual leadership. Linguists, dissecting the word and finding the syllable “el” in it, the Hebrew for God, interpret Melchizedek to mean a servant or king of the supreme God, a “King-priest.” Paul tells the Hebrews to “consider how great this man was. (Heb 7:4) Through the ages Melchizedek has been a somewhat mystical figure, but one to whom the highest respect is given. John A. Widtsoe, Evidences and Reconciliations, p. 231-32. Through the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we find that the people who many call the Essenes desired to move away from wickedness and establish a singular community of righteousness. Their organization had a shadow of biblical organization. Their leader was called the “Teacher of Righteousness” and he had two assistants. There was also a council of “Twelve Overseers.” They had an order following the righteous king which is said in Hebrew, “Melech Zedek.” Old Testament Supplemental Study Materials, p. 15)**

### **Is Shem Melchizedek?**

In ancient Jewish traditions Melchizedek is often thought to be Shem, the son of Noah. Melchizedek is a title meaning “king of righteousness,” even though it is also used as a proper name. A modern writer examined the question of whether Shem and Melchizedek could be the same person and concluded that, while we cannot say for sure, the possibility is clearly there. He said: Let us examine first what we know about Shem. Although the Bible names Shem as the eldest son of Noah (Gen 5:32), modern-day revelation places Japeth as the eldest (Moses 8:12). Both reports, however, are harmonious in naming Shem as the progenitor of Israel and in the fact that the priesthood descended through Shem to all the great patriarchs after Noah. In this patriarchal order of priesthood, Shem stands next to Noah. He held the keys to the priesthood and was the great high priest of his day. Living contemporary with Shem was a man known as Melchizedek, who was also known as the great high priest. The scriptures give us the details of Shem’s birth and ancestry but are silent as to his ministry and later life. Of Melchizedek, however, the opposite is true. Nothing is recorded about his birth or ancestry, even though the Book of Mormon states that he did have a father. Concerning his ministry and life we have several interesting and important facts. All of this provokes some questions and calls for answers. Were there two high priests presiding at the same time? Why is the record silent concerning Shem’s ministry? Why is nothing known concerning Melchizedek’s ancestry? Because of this state of knowledge on our part many Saints and gospel scholars have wondered if these men were the same person. **The truth is, we do not know the answer. But an examination of the scriptures is fascinating, because it seems to indicate that these men may have been one and the same.** For example, here is the case for their oneness; 1. The



inheritance given to Shem included the land of Salem. Melchizedek appears in scripture as the king of Salem, who reigns over this area. 2. Shem, according to later revelation, reigned in righteousness and the priesthood came through him. Melchizedek appears on the scene with a title that means “king of righteousness.” 3. Shem was the great high priest of his day. Abraham honored the high priest Melchizedek by seeking a blessing at his hands and paying him tithes. 4. Abraham stands next to Shem in the patriarchal order of the priesthood and would surely have received the priesthood from Shem; but D&C 84:5-17 says Abraham received the priesthood from Melchizedek. 5. Jewish tradition identifies Shem as Melchizedek. 6. President Joseph F. Smith’s remarkable vision names Shem among the great patriarchs, but no mention is made of Melchizedek. 7. Times and Seasons speaks of Shem who was Melchizedek. [15 Dec 1844, p. 746] On the other hand, there is a case for their being two distinct personalities. Many persons believe D&C 84:14 is proof that there are perhaps several generations between Melchizedek and Noah. The scripture says, “Which Abraham received the priesthood from Melchizedek, who received it through the lineage of his fathers, even till Noah.” If it does turn out that Shem and Melchizedek are the same person, this scripture should prove no stumbling block, because it could be interpreted to mean that priesthood authority commenced with Adam and came through the fathers, even till Noah and then to Shem. Alma E. Gygi, Is it Possible That Shem and Melchizedek Are the Same Person? Ensign, Nov 1973, p. 15-16.

## Genesis 15-16

### SCRIPTURES:

#### THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES CALLED GENESIS CHAPTER 15

*Abram desires offspring—The Lord promises him seed in number as the stars—He believes the promise—His seed shall be strangers in Egypt—Then, after four generations, they shall inherit Canaan.*

- 1 (And it came to pass, that) AFTER these things(,) the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a <sup>a</sup>vision, saying, <sup>b</sup>Fear not, Abram: I am (will be) thy <sup>c</sup>shield, and (I will be) thy exceeding great reward. (And according to the blessings of my servant, I will give unto thee.)
- 2 And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and ~~the steward of my house is this~~ Eliezer of Damascus (was made the steward of my house)?
- 3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, <sup>a</sup>one born in my house (Heb a son of my house) is mine heir.
- 4 And, behold, the word of the LORD *came* unto him (again), saying, This ~~shalt~~ (shalt) not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.
- 5 And he brought him forth abroad, and (he) said, Look now toward heaven, and <sup>a</sup>tell (Heb count) the <sup>b</sup>stars, if thou be able to <sup>c</sup>number them:(.) And he said unto him, So shall thy <sup>d</sup>seed be. (And Abram said, Lord God, how wilt thou give me this land for an everlasting inheritance? And the Lord said, Though thou wast dead, yet am I not able to give it thee? And if thou shalt die, yet thou shalt possess it, for the day cometh, that the Son of Man shall live; but how can he live if he be not dead? He must first be quickened.) (All the prophets of the Old Testament knew more about Jesus Christ than our present Old Testament contains.)
- 6 (And it came to pass, that Abram looked forth and saw the days of the Son of Man, and was glad, and his soul found rest,) <sup>a</sup>And he <sup>b</sup>believed in the LORD; and he (the Lord) counted it (un)to him for <sup>c</sup>righteousness.
- 7 And he (the Lord) said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give

thee this land to <sup>a</sup>inherit it.

8 And he (Abram) said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I <sup>a</sup>know that I shall inherit it? (yet he believed God.)

9 And he (the Lord) said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.

10 And he took unto him all these, and (he) <sup>a</sup>divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. (In a covenant between two people, both people would walk between the divided animals to signify that they are not divided. Abram was waiting for God to appear to walk with him through the carcasses.)

11 And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of (a) great (horror of) <sup>a</sup>darkness fell upon him. (Joseph Smith – thick darkness gathered around me.)

13 (And the Lord spake,) And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a <sup>a</sup>stranger in a land ~~that is not~~ (which shall not be) theirs, and shall serve ~~them~~ (strangers); and they shall (be) <sup>b</sup>afflict(ed; and serve) them four hundred years; (The Israelites spent 400 years in Egypt.)

14 And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they <sup>a</sup>come out with great <sup>b</sup>substance. (The Exodus)

15 And thou shalt (die, and) go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good <sup>a</sup>old age.

16 But in the <sup>a</sup>fourth generation (Note in Ex. 6:16-20 that four generations of Levi's descendants are named; they include (1) Levi, (2) Kohath, (3) Amram, (4) Moses) they shall come <sup>b</sup>hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet <sup>c</sup>full. (When the Israelites come into the land of Canaan, they are commanded to kill all the Canaanites.)

17 And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp (symbols of Jehovah) ~~that~~ (which) <sup>a</sup>passed between those pieces (which Abram had divided.).

18 (And) In ~~the~~ (that) same day the LORD made a <sup>a</sup>covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this <sup>b</sup>land, from <sup>c</sup>the river of Egypt (ie the Wadi El Arish in northern Sinai) unto the great river; ~~the river~~ <sup>d</sup>Euphrates: (This area of land is larger than Israel has ever possessed.)

19 The Kenites, and the ~~Kenizzites~~ (Kenazites), and the Kadmonites,

20 And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims,

21 And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites. (Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "This life is an experience in profound trust. . . . To trust means to obey willingly without knowing the end from the beginning (see Prov. 3:5-7). . . . "To exercise faith is to trust that the Lord knows what He is doing with you and that He can accomplish it for your eternal good even though you cannot understand how He can possibly do it" ("Trust in the Lord," Ensign, Nov. 1995, 17).)

## CHAPTER 16

*Sarai gives Hagar to Abram as his wife—Hagar flees from Sarai—An angel commands Hagar to return and submit herself to Sarai—Hagar bears Ishmael.*

1 NOW Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an <sup>a</sup>Egyptian, whose name was <sup>b</sup>Hagar. (They've lived ten years in Canaan without an heir, so Sarai gives Abram Hagar to wife.)

2 And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my <sup>a</sup>maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened (un)to the voice of Sarai. (Sarai does this on her own without the Lord's command.)

3 And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, (Abram married Hagar) after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. (In polygamy, the first wife must give her consent for her husband to marry another.)

4 ¶ And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

5 And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be (is) upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was <sup>a</sup>despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee.

6 But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid *is* in thy hand; do to her <sup>a</sup>as it pleaseth thee (Heb that which is good in thine eyes). And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face. (Hagar leaves the protection of Abram.)

7 ¶ And the (an) angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to <sup>a</sup>Shur.

8 And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence comest thou? (,) and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai.

9 And the <sup>a</sup>angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and <sup>b</sup>submit thyself under (unto) her hands.

10 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I (The Lord) will multiply thy <sup>a</sup>seed exceedingly, (so) that it shall not be numbered for multitude.

11 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou *art* with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name <sup>a</sup>Ishmael; (The Hebrew word *Ishmael* literally means, "God hears" (v. 11a). In verse 12 he is called a "wild man," or in Hebrew, a "wild ass," which metaphor implies one who loves freedom. This metaphor could be a prophetic description of the nomadic life of the descendants of Ishmael (see v. 12a).) because the LORD hath heard thy affliction.

12 And he will be a <sup>a</sup>wild man (Heb wild ass (metaphorical here for freedom-loving; probably a nomad); (and) his hand *will be* against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

13 And she called the name of the (angel of the) LORD that (.) And he spake unto her (saying, Knowest) Thou (that) God seest me: for (thee? And) she said, (I know that God seest me, for I) Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?

14 (And there was a well between Kadesh and Bered, near where Hagar saw the angel. And the name of the angel was Beer-la-hai-roi;) Wherefore the <sup>a</sup>well was called <sup>b</sup>Beer-lahai-roi (for a memorial.); ~~behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.~~ (ie The well of him who liveth and seeth me)

15 ¶ And Hagar <sup>a</sup>bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, <sup>b</sup>Ishmael.

16 And Abram *was* fourscore and six years old, (Abram was 86 years old) when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram. (President Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the First Presidency: "You are not alone on this journey. Your Heavenly Father knows you. Even when no one else hears you, He hears you. When you rejoice in righteousness, He rejoices with you. When you are beset with trial, He grieves with you" ("Your Wonderful Journey Home," Ensign or Liahona, May 2013, 127–28).)

(HIGH times of success and prosperity are only too often followed by seasons of depression. Abram had indeed conquered the kings of Assyria, but his very victory might expose him to their vengeance, or draw down the jealousy of those around him. He was but a stranger in a strange land, with no other possession than a promise, - and not even an heir to whom to transmit it. In these circumstances it was that "Jehovah came unto Abram in a vision," saying, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" - that is, Myself am thy defense from all foes, and the source and spring whence thy faith shall be fully satisfied with joy. It was but natural, and, as one may say, childlike, that Abram should in reply have opened up before God all his wants and his sorrow, as he pointed, not in the language of doubt, but rather of question, to his own childless state, which seemed to leave Eliezer, his servant, his only heir. But Jehovah assured him that it was to be otherwise than it seemed; nay, that his seed should be numberless as the stars in the sky. "And he believed in Jehovah: and He counted it to him for righteousness." The remark stands solitary in the narrative, as if to call attention to a great fact; and its

terms indicate, on the part of Abram, not merely faith in the word, but trustfulness in the person of Jehovah as his Covenant-God. Most touching and sublime is the childlikeness of that simple believing without seeing, and its absolute confidence. Ever since, through thousands of years, it has stood out as the great example of faith to the church of God. And from this faith in the living God sprang all the obedience of Abram. Like the rod of Aaron, his life budded and blossomed and bore fruit "within the secret place of the Most High."

To confirm this faith Jehovah now gave to Abram a sign and a seal, which yet were such once more only to his faith. He entered into a covenant with him. For this purpose the Lord directed Abram to bring an heifer, a she-goat, and a ram, each of three years old, also a turtle-dove and a young pigeon. These sacrifices - for they were all representatives of the kinds afterwards used as sacrifices - were to be divided, and the pieces laid one against the other, as the custom was in making a covenant, **the covenanting parties always passing between them, as it were to show that now there was no longer to be division**, but that what had been divided was to be considered as one between them. But here, at the first, no covenanting party appeared at all to pass between the divided sacrifices. **All day long, as it seemed to Abram, he sat watching lonely, only driving from the carcasses the birds of prey which came down upon them. So it seemed to the eye of sense! Presently even gathered around, and a deep sleep and a horror of great darkness fell upon Abram. The age of each sacrificed animal, the long, lonely day, the birds of prey swooping around, and the horror that had come with the night, all betokened what Jehovah now foretold: how for three generations the seed of Abram should be afflicted in Egypt; but in the fourth, when the measure of the iniquity of the present inhabitants of Canaan would be full, they were to return, and enter on the promised possession of the land. As for Abram himself, he was to go "to his fathers in peace."** Then it was that the covenant was made; not, as usually, by both parties passing between the divided sacrifice, but by Jehovah alone doing so, since the covenant was that of grace, in which one party alone - God - undertook all the obligations, while the other received all the benefits.

For the first time did Abram see passing between those pieces the smoking furnace and the burning lamp - the Divine brightness enwrapped in a cloud, just as Moses saw it in the bush, and the children of Israel on their wilderness march, and as it afterwards dwelt in the sanctuary above the mercy-seat, and between the cherubim. This was the first vision vouchsafed to Abram, the first stage of the covenant into which God entered with him, and the first appearance of the glory of the Lord. **At the same time, what may be called the personal promise to Abram was also enlarged, and the boundaries of the land clearly defined as stretching from the Nile in the west, to the Euphrates in the east, an extent, it may be here observed, which the Holy Land has never yet attained, not even in the most flourishing days of the Hebrew monarchy.**

Precious as the promise of God to Abram had been, it had still left one point undetermined - who the mother of the promised seed was to be. **Instead of waiting for the direction of God in this respect also, Sarai seems in her impatience to have anticipated the Lord; and, as we always do when taking things into our own hands, in a manner contrary to the mind of God, as well as to her own sorrow and disappointment.** Ten years had elapsed since Abram had entered Canaan, when Sarai, despairing of giving birth to the heir of the promise, followed the common custom of those days and countries, and sought a son by an alliance between her husband and Hagar, her own Egyptian maid. The consequences of her folly were dispeace in her home, then reproaches, and the flight of Hagar. What else might have followed it is difficult to tell, had not the Lord in mercy interposed. None less than the Angel of the Covenant Himself appeared to the fugitive slave, as she rested by a fountain in the wilderness that led down into her native Egypt. He bade her return to her mistress, promised to the son whom she was to bear that liberty and independence of bearing which has ever since characterized his

descendants, and gave him the name of Ishmael - the Lord heareth, - as it were thus binding him alike by his descent, and by the Providence that had watched over him, to the God of Abram. Hagar also learned there for the first time to know Him as the God who seeth, the living God, whence the fountain by which she had sat henceforth bore the name of "The Well of the Living, who beholdeth me." So deep are the impressions which a view of the Lord maketh, and so closely should we always connect with them the events of our lives. Edersheim, OT, Vol. 1, Chapter 13)

## Genesis 17

### SCRIPTURES:

*Abram commanded to be perfect—He shall be a father of many nations—His name changed to Abraham—The Lord covenants to be a God unto Abraham and his seed for ever—Also, to give him the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession—Circumcision becomes token of everlasting covenant between God and Abraham—Sarai's name changed to Sarah—She shall bear Isaac, with whom the Lord will establish his covenant—Abraham and his house circumcised.*

1 AND when Abram was ninety (and nine) years old ~~and nine~~, the LORD <sup>a</sup>appeared to <sup>b</sup>Abram, (The word Abram means "exalted father" and Abraham means "father of a multitude.") and said unto him, I ~~am~~ the <sup>c</sup>Almighty God(, give unto thee a commandment; that thou shalt <sup>d</sup>walk (uprightly) before me, and be ~~thou~~ <sup>e</sup>perfect. ("Salvation does not come all at once; we are commanded to be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect. It will take us ages to accomplish this end, for there will be greater progress beyond the grave, and it will be there that the faithful will overcome all things, and receive all things, even the fulness of the Father's glory. "I believe the Lord meant just what he said: that we should be perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect. That will not come all at once, but line upon line, and precept upon precept, example upon example, and even then not as long as we live in this mortal life, for we will have to go even beyond the grave before we reach that perfection and shall be like God. "But here we lay the foundation. Here is where we are taught these simple truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ, in this probationary state, to prepare us for that perfection. It is our duty to be better today than we were yesterday, and better tomorrow than we are today. Why? Because we are on that road, if we are keeping the commandments of the Lord, we are on that road to perfection, and that can only come through obedience and the desire in our hearts to overcome the world." (Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:18–19.))

2 And I will make my <sup>a</sup>covenant between me and thee, and (I) will multiply thee exceedingly.

3 <sup>a</sup>And (it came to pass, that) Abram fell on his face: (and called upon the name of the Lord.) And God talked with him, saying, (My people have gone astray from my precepts, and have not kept mine ordinances, which I gave unto their fathers; And they have not observed mine anointing, and the burial, or baptism wherewith I commanded them; But have turned from the commandment, and taken unto themselves the washing of children, and the blood of sprinkling; And have said that the blood of the righteous Abel was shed for sins; and have not known wherein they are accountable before me.)

4 (But) As for ~~me~~ (thee), behold, (I will make) my <sup>a</sup>covenant ~~is~~ with thee, and thou shalt be a <sup>b</sup>father of many <sup>c</sup>nations.

5 (And this covenant I make, that thy children may be known among all nations.) Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be <sup>a</sup>Abraham; (Conversion to Judaism is always accompanied by giving a new name. For men, it is usually Abraham or Ben Avraham (son of Abraham). When blessings are given for health, at marriages, and at other festive occasions, often the "new" or "special" name is used. Old Testament Supplementary Study Materials, p. 13) for a father of many nations have I made thee.

6 And I will make thee exceeding <sup>a</sup>fruitful, and I will make <sup>b</sup>nations of thee, and <sup>c</sup>kings shall come ~~out~~ of

thee(, and of thy seed).

7 <sup>a</sup>And I will establish (a covenant of circumcision with thee, and it shall be) my <sup>b</sup>covenant between me and thee(,) and thy seed after thee(,) in their generations for an <sup>c</sup>everlasting covenant, to (that thou mayest know for ever that children are not accountable before me until they are eight years old. And thou shalt observe to keep all my commandments wherein I covenanted with thy fathers; and thou shalt keep the commandments which I have given thee with mine own mouth, and I will) be a <sup>d</sup>God unto thee, and ~~to~~ thy seed after thee. **(The Abrahamic covenant makes frequent reference to one's seed (see Genesis 17:6–12). The organ of the body that produces seed and brings about physical birth is the organ on which the token of the covenant was made. The organ of spiritual rebirth, however, is the heart (see 3 Nephi 9:20). Thus, when a person was circumcised it signified that while he had been born into the covenant, he need not be baptized until he became accountable before the Lord. But spiritual circumcision, or the circumcision of the heart, must take place once one becomes accountable or one is not considered as true Israel. As Paul said so aptly, "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: "But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Romans 2:28–29).)**

8 And I will <sup>a</sup>give unto thee, and ~~to~~ thy seed after thee, ~~the~~ (a) <sup>b</sup>land wherein thou art a <sup>c</sup>stranger, all the <sup>d</sup>land of <sup>e</sup>Canaan, for an everlasting <sup>f</sup>possession; and I will be their <sup>g</sup>God. (Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles testified: "The ultimate blessings of the Abrahamic covenant are conferred in holy temples. These blessings allow us to come forth in the First Resurrection and inherit thrones, kingdoms, powers, principalities, and dominions, to our 'exaltation and glory in all things' (D&C 132:19)" (in "Special Witnesses of Christ," Ensign or Liahona, Apr. 2001, 7). Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "When he [or she] is married in the temple for time and for all eternity, each worthy member of the Church enters personally into the same covenant the Lord made with Abraham. This is the occasion when the promises of eternal increase are made, and it is then specified that those who keep the covenants made there shall be inheritors of all the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (A New Witness for the Articles of Faith [1985], 508).)

9 ¶ And God said unto Abraham, (Therefore) Thou shalt keep my covenant ~~therefore~~, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. (On April 3, 1836, as part of a magnificent sequence of heavenly manifestations in the newly completed Kirtland Temple, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery experienced a visitation by Elias, who committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed. Thus the continuity of the Lord's ancient covenant program was assured in the latter days. The Lord delights in blessing his children. He gives them places of refuge in this world (lands and gathering places, such as the stakes of Zion). He gives them hope for eternal mansions on high. He makes them fruitful in their posterity and gives them the hope of eternal increase through the blessings of temple marriage. He provides the fullness of the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ and the priesthood of God, with its ennobling and redeeming power to grant immortality and eternal life for the valiant who endure to the end. For all of these extraordinary blessings, he asks only that we walk in righteousness and obey his commandments, sharing our witness to the world through his missionary program. Latter-Day Commentary of the Old Testament, p. 78)

10 (And) This ~~is~~ (shall be) my <sup>a</sup>covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and ~~you~~ (thee) and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be <sup>b</sup>circumcised.

11 And ye shall <sup>a</sup>circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a <sup>b</sup>token of the <sup>c</sup>covenant betwixt me and you.

12 And he that is <sup>a</sup>eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or <sup>b</sup>bought with money of any stranger, which *is* not of thy seed.

13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an <sup>a</sup>everlasting covenant. (The covenant is everlasting, but circumcision as a sign of such a covenant was later discontinued.)

14 And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be <sup>a</sup>cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

15 ¶ And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but <sup>a</sup>Sarah ~~shall~~ (thou shalt call) her name ~~be~~.

16 And I will bless her, and (I will) <sup>a</sup>give thee a son ~~also~~ of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be (blessed, The) ~~a~~<sup>b</sup>mother of nations; kings of (and) people shall be of her. (Hagar had returned to Abram's house, and given birth to Ishmael. And now ensued a period which we must regard as of most sore trial to Abram's faith. Full thirteen years elapsed without apparently any revelation on the part of God. During this time Ishmael had grown up, and Abram may almost insensibly have accustomed himself to look upon him as the heir, even though in all probability he knew that he had not been destined for it. Abram was now ninety-nine years old, and Sarai stricken in years. For every human hope and prospect must be swept away, and the heir be, in the fullest sense, the child of the promise, that so faith might receive directly from God that for which it had waited. It was in these circumstances that Jehovah at last once more appeared in visible form to Abram, - this time to establish and fulfill the covenant which He had formerly made.\* Hence also now the admonition: "Walk before Me, and be thou perfect," which follows but can never precede the covenant. In token of this established covenant, God enjoined upon Abram and his descendants the rite of circumcision as a sign and a seal; at the same time **changing the name of Abram, "father of elevation" (noble chief?), into Abraham, "the father of a multitude," and that of Sarai, "the princely," into Sarah, or "the princess,"\*\*** to denote that through these two the promise was to be fulfilled, and that from them the chosen race was to spring. These tidings came upon Abraham with such joyous surprise that, as in humble worship, he "fell upon his face," **he "laughed," as he considered within himself the circumstances of the case, - as Calvin remarks, not from doubt or disbelief, but in gladness and wonder. To perpetuate the remembrance of the wonder, the promised seed was to bear the name of Isaac, or "laughter."**

Thus, as afterwards, at the outset of the calling of the Gentiles, the name of Saul was changed into Paul - probably after the first-fruits of his ministry, - so here, at the outset of Israel's calling, we have three new names, indicative of the power of God, which lay at the root of all, and of the simple faith which received the promise. The heir of the promises was indeed to be the child of Sarah; but over Ishmael also would the Lord watch, and "multiply him exceedingly," and "make him a great nation." Ever since those days has the sign of circumcision remained to bear testimony to the covenant with Abraham. On the eighth day, as the first full period of seven has elapsed, a new period is, as it were, to begin; and each Jewish child so circumcised is a living witness to the transaction between God and Abraham more than three thousand years ago. But, better far, it pointed forward to the fulfillment of the covenant-promise in Christ Jesus, in whom there is now no other circumcision needed than that of the heart. Edersheim, OT, Vol 1, Ch 13)

17 Then Abraham fell upon his face, and <sup>a</sup>laughed, (rejoiced) (Heb also rejoiced) and said in his heart, (There) Shall (be) *a child* be born unto him that is an <sup>b</sup>hundred years old? and ~~shall~~ Sarah, that is ninety years old, (shall) bear? (.)

18 And Abraham said unto God, O that <sup>a</sup>Ishmael might live (uprightly) before thee!

19 And God said, <sup>a</sup>Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son ~~indeed~~; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my <sup>b</sup>covenant with him (also) for an everlasting covenant, ~~and~~ with his seed after him.

20 And as for <sup>a</sup>Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; <sup>b</sup>twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

21 But my <sup>a</sup>covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set <sup>b</sup>time in the next year.

22 And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

23 ¶ And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and <sup>a</sup>circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, (swift obedience) as God had said unto him.

24 And Abraham *was* ninety (and nine) years old ~~and nine~~, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

25 And Ishmael his son *was* thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.

26 In the selfsame day *was* Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son.

27 And all the men of his house, (which were) born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger(s), were (also) circumcised with him.

### (The Abrahamic Covenant:

**“Abraham first received the gospel by baptism (which is the covenant of salvation); then he had conferred upon him the higher priesthood, and he entered into celestial marriage (which is the covenant of exaltation), gaining assurance thereby that he would have eternal increase; finally he received a promise that all of these blessings would be offered to all of his mortal posterity. (Abra. 2:6–11; D. & C. 132:29–50.) Included in the divine promises to Abraham was the assurance that Christ would come through his lineage, and the assurance that Abraham’s posterity would receive certain choice, promised lands as an eternal inheritance. (Abra. 2; Gen. 17; 22:15–18; Gal. 3.) “All of these promises lumped together are called the *Abrahamic covenant*. This covenant was renewed with Isaac (Gen. 24:60; 26:1–4, 24) and again with Jacob. (Gen. 28; 35:9–13; 48:3–4.) *Those portions of it which pertain to personal exaltation and eternal increase are renewed with each member of the House of Israel who enters the order of celestial marriage; through that order the participating parties become inheritors of all the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (D. & C. 132; Rom. 9:4; Gal. 3; 4.)” (Mormon Doctrine, p. 13.) A close analysis of the promises shows both their temporal and eternal significance.***

### **The Land Promise. Read Genesis 15:18; 17:8; Abraham 2:6.**

#### **Temporal Significance**

The land of Canaan was promised to Abraham and his descendants, even though he never personally possessed it (see Genesis 17:7; 13:15; 17:8). “The Lord gave the promise to Abraham that he should have Palestine, or the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession. Yet, as Stephen said at the time of his martyrdom, Abraham never received as much as a foot of it as a possession while he lived. “Then what did the Lord mean in making a promise to Abraham of that kind, giving him that portion of the earth as an everlasting possession for himself and his posterity, the righteous part of it, forever? Simply this, that the time would eventually come, after the resurrection from the dead, when Abraham and his children who have been faithful in the keeping of the commandments of the Lord, should possess that land, and they shall also spread forth as far as it is necessary for them to receive an inheritance.” (Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:88.)

#### **Eternal Significance**

Abraham’s righteous descendants will inherit the earth. “Following the millennium plus ‘a little season’ (D. & C. 29:22–25), the earth will die, be resurrected, and becoming like a ‘sea of glass’ (D. & C. 130:7), attain unto ‘its sanctified, immortal, and eternal state.’ (D. & C. 77:1–2.) Then the poor and the meek—that is, the godfearing and the righteous—shall inherit the earth; it will become an abiding place for the Father and the Son, and celestial beings will possess it forever and ever. (D. & C. 88:14–26, 111.)” (McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 211.)

### **The Posterity Promise. Read Abraham 2:9; Genesis 17:4–6; 16; Abraham 3:14.**

#### **Temporal Significance**

Abraham was one hundred years old before his covenant son, Isaac, was born. Abraham had eight sons in all; however, from Isaac the covenant people developed; through Ishmael came many of the Arab nations (see D&C 132:34). Through Keturah’s sons came the Midianites and others. “The vast population of the Arab, Moslem, and Israeli world which claim to be descendants of Abraham numbers approximately one hundred million. When one adds to that figure the deceased ancestors, and the estimates of future posterities of those groups, plus other descendants of Abraham such as the past, present, and future members of the Nephite-Lamanite cultures, the lost ten tribes, and the Latter-day Saints, he sees what the Lord meant concerning the innumerable and unmeasurable blessing of posterity.” (Nyman, in *Sperry Lecture Series*, 1975, p. 13.)



**Eternal Significance**

In a literal sense Abraham's posterity will have no end because his righteous descendants will go on through eternity bringing forth posterity (see D&C 132:30)

**The Priesthood Promise. Read Abraham 1:18–19; 2:9–11.****Temporal Significance**

As Noah was given the priesthood and commissioned to preach the gospel, so Abraham received the priesthood that he might preach and bless others with the gospel. The mission of the covenant people is to serve the Lord by blessing others with the gospel. "We go to the promise made to Abraham, which was that in him and in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. Moses, as I have said was of his seed, and he was the deliverer of the whole of that nation. And who were the prophets that existed among ancient Israel? They were descendants of Abraham; and to them came the word of God and the light of revelation. Who was Jesus? After the flesh of the seed of Abraham. Who were his Twelve Apostles? Of the seed of Abraham. Who were the people that came to this continent—Lehi and his family, about 600 years B.C.? Of the seed of Abraham. Who were the Apostles they had among them that spread forth among the millions that then lived upon this continent? Of the seed of Abraham. Who was Joseph Smith? Of the seed of Abraham." (John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 20:224.)

**Eternal Significance**

As descendants of Abraham, if we remain true and faithful to our charge to bless our own family and others with the blessings of the gospel, we will continue to do so throughout all eternity. Also, we will be heirs to all that the Father has through Christ. (See D&C 84:38–39)