

Abraham—Father of the Faithful

(5-1) Introduction

You are “the seed of Abraham” (D&C 84:34; see also D&C 132:30). What does that statement mean? You probably have a similar statement in your patriarchal blessing. What are the blessings of Abraham to which you are entitled, and what do blessings given so long ago have to do with you today? Are Abraham’s blessings essentially any different from the blessings given to Adam, Enoch, or Noah?

The focus of this chapter is on the covenant between Jehovah and Abraham. Emphasis will be given to the elements of the covenant and its blessings and responsibilities. As you study, look for the application of this covenant to you. Because you are a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the covenant is a part of your life; you accepted it at baptism. Your eternal salvation depends on how you keep those promises. It would be very wise to understand this covenant.

Instructions to Students

1. Use Notes and Commentary below to help you as you read and study Genesis 12–17.
2. Abraham 1–3 contains valuable insights and additions not found in Genesis. Although this parallel account in Abraham is studied in detail in the Pearl of Great Price course (Rel. 327), these chapters should be read and studied in connection with the Genesis account.
3. Complete Points to Ponder as directed by your teacher. (Individual study students should complete all of this section.)

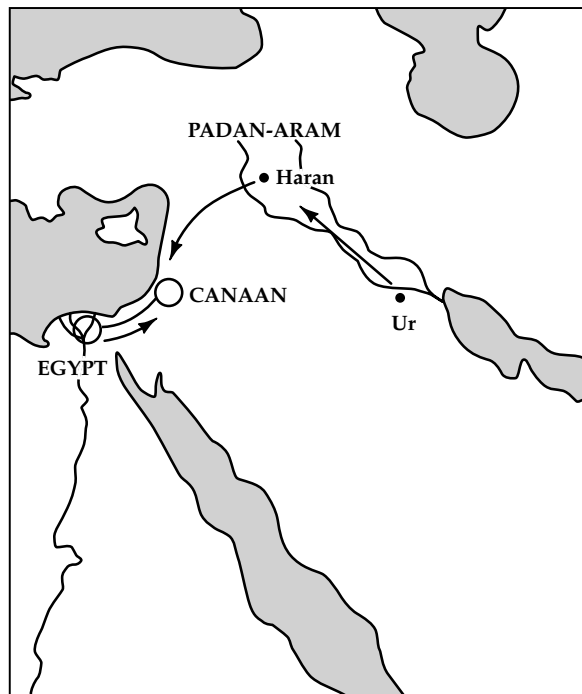
NOTES AND COMMENTARY ON GENESIS 12–17

(5-2) Genesis 12:1

Doctrine and Covenants 84:14 teaches that Abraham received the Melchizedek Priesthood from Melchizedek. It is not certain when he received it: he may have received it while still in Ur (see Abraham 1:2, 3:1) or at some later date.

(5-3) Genesis 12:1–4

As recorded in Genesis 12:1, Abraham, while living in Haran, received a call to leave his country and family and go southwest to a new land. He then departed from Haran and went to Canaan. Earlier, as recorded in Abraham 1:15–16, the Lord had called



Abraham's journey from Ur to Canaan

Abraham from Ur, which is near the mouth of the Euphrates, and led him northwesterly to Haran. Thus, Abraham was directed by the Lord to move twice in these early years. The Lord continued to lead him from place to place.

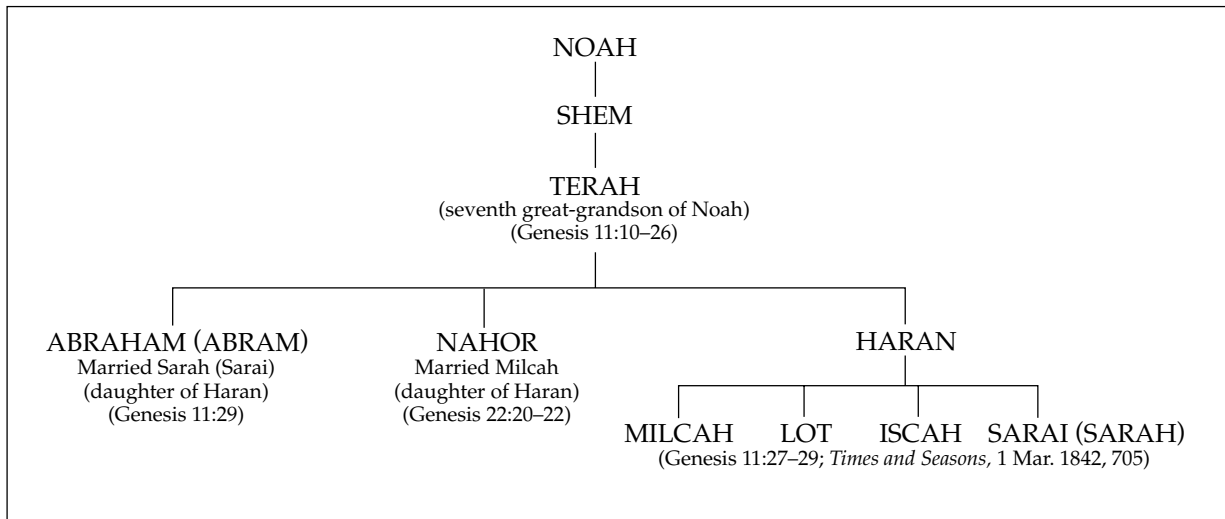
The first intimations of the covenant to be renewed through Abraham are given in verses 2–3, 7. (See Points to Ponder in this chapter for a full discussion of this covenant.)

(5-4) Genesis 12:5

Given here is evidence that Abraham was a preacher and a gatherer of souls (i.e., he did missionary work) wherever he went (see Abraham 2:15).

(5-5) Genesis 12:10–20. Why Did Abraham Call Sarah His Sister?

The idea that Abraham, the great man of righteousness, deceived Pharaoh in order to protect his own life has troubled many students of the Old Testament. That his life was in danger because of Sarah’s beauty seems quite clear. It seems peculiar, but whereas the Egyptian pharaohs had a strong aversion to committing adultery with another man’s wife, they had no qualms about murdering the man to free his spouse for remarriage.



“To kill the husband in order to possess himself of his wife seems to have been a common royal custom in those days. A papyrus tells of a Pharaoh who, acting on the advice of one of his princes, sent armed men to fetch a beautiful woman and make away with her husband. Another Pharaoh is promised by his priest on his tombstone, that even after death he will kill Palestinian sheiks and include their wives in his harem.” (Kasher, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation*, 2:128.)

Abraham could validly state that Sarah was his sister. In the Bible the Hebrew words *brother* and *sister* are often used for other blood relatives. (See Genesis 14:14, in which Lot, Abraham’s nephew, is called “his brother.”) Because Abraham and Haran, Sarah’s father, were brothers, Sarah was Abraham’s niece and thus could be called *sister*. The accompanying pedigree chart shows this relationship.

Another ancient custom that might shed light on the relationship permitted a woman to be adopted as a man’s sister upon their marriage to give her greater legal and social status (see *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, s.v. “Sarah,” 14:866).

Even though Abraham was correct in calling her his sister, he did deceive the Egyptians. How can this action be justified? The answer is very simple. His action was justified because God told him to do it (see Abraham 2:22–25). The Prophet Joseph Smith taught the following:

“That which is wrong under one circumstance, may be, and often is, right under another.

“God said, ‘Thou shalt not kill;’ at another time He said, ‘Thou shalt utterly destroy.’ This is the principle on which the government of heaven is conducted—by revelation adapted to the circumstances in which the children of the kingdom are placed. Whatever God requires is right, no matter what it is, although we

may not see the reason thereof till long after the events transpire.” (*Teachings*, p. 256.)

Since God is perfect and does not do anything that is not right (see Deuteronomy 32:4; 1 Samuel 15:29; Alma 7:20; D&C 3:2), Abraham’s act was not wrong.

(5-6) Genesis 13:1–13. Abraham Was Very Rich

The scriptures warn of the dangers of wealth so often that occasionally some people assume that wealth in and of itself is evil and that all wealthy people are automatically wicked. Without question, the temptation to set one’s heart upon the things of the world is one to which many people succumb. But Paul taught that the “love of money is the root of all evil,” not the money itself (1 Timothy 6:10; emphasis added).

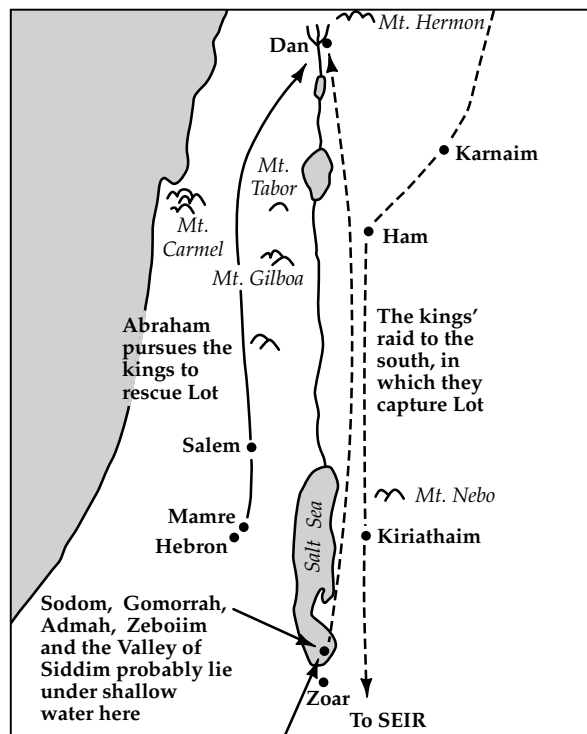
Abraham provides an example of one who had great wealth (see Genesis 13:2) and yet was a man of great faith and righteousness. The incident between him and Lot provides an excellent insight into Abraham’s Christlike nature. By all rights Lot should have insisted that Abraham choose first. Lot had been nurtured and protected by Abraham, and Abraham was the patriarch of the clan. Abraham could have taken his rights and given Lot what was left. Instead, his concern was only that “there be no strife” between them, so he gave Lot first choice (v. 8; see also vv. 9–10). Lot seems to have chosen the best land—the well-watered plains of Jordan—and yet there is not a trace of resentment in Abraham. In fact, in the next few chapters is recorded Abraham’s intervention to save Lot’s life. Here was a man for whom principles came first and material things second. It is not surprising that the Lord should renew the ancient covenant with him and make him father of the faithful.

(5-7) Genesis 13:14–17. How Can Abraham’s Seed Have the Land “Forever”?

All those who “receive this Gospel shall be called after thy [Abraham’s] name, and shall be accounted thy seed” (Abraham 2:10). Also, “the meek . . . shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5) when the earth achieves its “sanctified and immortal state” (D&C 130:9) as the celestial kingdom. Thus, Abraham’s seed (the faithful) will have the earth throughout all eternity as well as during mortality.

(5-8) Genesis 14:1–7

In this listing of conquests by the alliance of five kings, it must be remembered that anciently the most typical political entity was a small city-state wherein the king presided over one major city and the surrounding area. This territory was sometimes expanded, but kings in those days did not rule over large countries or kingdoms. Sodom had a king, Gomorrah a king, and so on.



Abraham and the Battle of the Kings

(5-9) Genesis 14:18. Who Was Melchizedek?

“To the man *Melchizedek* goes the honor of having his name used to identify the *Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God*, thus enabling men ‘to avoid the too frequent repetition’ of the name of Deity. (D. & C. 107:2–4.) Of all God’s ancient high priests ‘none were greater.’ (Alma 13:19.) His position in the priestly hierarchy of God’s earthly kingdom was like

unto that of Abraham (Heb. 7:4–10), his contemporary whom he blessed (Gen. 14:18–20; Heb. 7:1; [JST], Gen. 14:17–40), and upon whom he conferred the priesthood. (D. & C. 84:14.)

“Indeed, so exalted and high was the position of Melchizedek in the eyes of the Lord and of his people that he stood as a prototype of the Son of God himself. . . .

“Alma tells us that ‘Melchizedek was a king over the land of Salem; and his people had waxed strong in iniquity and abomination; yea, they had all gone astray; they were full of all manner of wickedness; But Melchizedek having exercised mighty faith, and received the office of the high priesthood according to the holy order of God, did preach repentance unto his people. And behold, they did repent; and Melchizedek did establish peace in the land in his days; therefore he was called the prince of peace, for he was the king of Salem; and he did reign under his father.’ (Alma 13:17–18.)

“Paul, very obviously knowing much more about Melchizedek than he happened to record in his epistles, gave as an illustration of great faith some unnamed person who ‘wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire.’ (Heb. 11:33–34.) From the Prophet’s inspired additions to the Old Testament we learn that Paul’s reference was to Melchizedek. ‘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’ [JST, Genesis 14:26].” (McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 474–75.)

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 Japheth 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. (1 Chron. 1:24–27.) 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. (Al. 13:17–18.) Concerning

his ministry and life we have several interesting and important facts. (Gen. 14:18–20; Heb. 7:1–4; Al. 13:17–18.)

“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* [15 Dec. 1844, p. 746] speaks of ‘Shem, who was Melchizedek. . . .’

“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, pp. 15–16.)

In the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis 14, several verses are added about Melchizedek that greatly increase the available knowledge of this great high priest (see JST, Genesis 14:25–40).

(5-10) Genesis 15:5–6. Abraham Saw Jesus Christ

In the Joseph Smith Translation, four significant verses are added between verses 5 and 6 of the Genesis account:

“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.

“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, and he believed in the Lord; and the Lord counted it unto him for righteousness.” (JST, Genesis 15:9–12.)

Once again it is clear that the early patriarchs knew far more about Christ and His mission than the present Old Testament record indicates (see Mosiah 13:33).

(5-11) Genesis 15:12. A Horror of Great Darkness Fell upon Him

For an interesting parallel to the experience Abraham had at the beginning of his vision, read Joseph Smith—History 1:14–16.

(5-12) Genesis 15:13–16. For the Iniquity of the Amorites Is Not Yet Full

In this prophecy about the future captivity of Israel, the Lord gives an important clue to why He later would command the Israelites to utterly destroy any Canaanites living in the land of promise (see Deuteronomy 7:1–2; 20:16–18). Evidently by that time their iniquity had become full and they were therefore ripe for destruction.

For a full discussion of the destruction of the Canaanites, see Reading 19–15.

(5-13) Genesis 16:1–3

According to the custom of the time, Sarah’s giving her handmaid, Hagar, to be a wife to Abraham was an expected and logical act (see Clarke, *Bible Commentary*, 1:109–11; D&C 132:1–2, 29–30, 34–35).

(5-14) Genesis 16:10

The angelic message to Hagar shows that the promises to Abraham go even beyond those which have come through Isaac.

(5-15) Genesis 16:11–12

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).

(5-16) Genesis 17:1. Walk Uprightly and Be Perfect

The commandment to Abraham was “thou shalt walk uprightly before me, and be perfect” (JST, Genesis 17:1). This commandment has been given to

the Saints in all ages (see Deuteronomy 18:13; Matthew 5:48; 3 Nephi 12:48; 27:27; D&C 67:13).

“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.)

(5-17) Genesis 17:2–14. What Is the Significance of Circumcision as a Token of the Covenant?

The word *circumcision* comes from the Latin words meaning “to cut around.” It was instituted by revelation as a sign or token that one was of the covenant seed of Abraham. To better understand why the Lord chose this particular sign or token, read the account in the Joseph Smith Translation:

“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. . . .

“And I will establish a covenant of circumcision with thee, and it shall be my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations; that thou mayest know for ever that children are not accountable before me until they are eight years old.” (JST, Genesis 17:3–7, 11.)

Much additional information is given in this account.

1. Before instituting the law of circumcision, the Lord explained why He was establishing this token of the covenant.

a. The people had left correct principles and forsaken the true ordinances.

b. Baptism was one ordinance being incorrectly observed.

c. The people were washing their children and sprinkling blood in remembrance of Abel’s blood, which they taught was shed for sins.

d. They misunderstood the relationship between accountability of children and the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

2. Because of this apostasy, circumcision was instituted.

a. It was a covenant token.

b. It was for the seed of Abraham.

c. It signified that children were not accountable until they were eight years old.

Other scriptures make it clear that it was not the act itself but rather what it stood for that gave circumcision its greatest significance.

In many places the Lord speaks of true circumcision as being the circumcision of the heart. The heart that is “circumcised” is one that loves God and is obedient to the Spirit. The “uncircumcised in heart” are wicked, proud, and rebellious (Ezekiel 44:7; see also Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4; Ezekiel 44:7; Acts 7:51; Romans 2:25–29; Colossians 2:11).

Though a person may have had the token of circumcision in the flesh, unless he was righteous the covenant was invalidated and the circumcision became profitless. Thus, circumcision was only a sign or token of what needed to happen to the inward man. If the inward change had not taken place, then circumcision was virtually meaningless. (See Jeremiah 9:25–26; Romans 2:25–29; 1 Corinthians 7:19; Galatians 5:1–6; 6:12–15; Philippians 3:3–4.)

With the fulfillment of the Mosaic law under Jesus, the token of circumcision was no longer required of God’s covenant people (see Acts 15:22–29; Galatians 5:1–6; 6:12–15).

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).

(5-18) Genesis 17:17

Joseph Smith corrected this verse to say that Abraham rejoiced (see JST, Genesis 17:23). This change is also substantiated by the Hebrew text.



The traditional burial place of Abraham and Sarah at Hebron

(5-19) Genesis 17:18–21

The birthright was given to Isaac, the first son of the first wife, rather than to Ishmael, who was the first son of Abraham and Hagar and was about fourteen years older than Isaac. The Lord made it clear that in accordance with the original promise Abraham's son by Sarah would bear the covenant responsibility. Yet, Ishmael, through his twelve sons, was also to be the father of a great nation.

POINTS TO PONDER

(5-20) Though we know from modern scripture that the covenant-making process began with Adam and the other patriarchs (see Moses 6:65–68; 7:51; 8:2), it is from the Abrahamic covenant that we get a fuller idea of what is involved in covenant making. Since righteous members of the Church become the seed of Abraham and thus part of the covenant people (see D&C 84:34), we should understand what is involved in the covenant made with Abraham. Abraham's part of the covenant, which is the same as for us, is that he "walk uprightly before me, and be perfect" (JST, Genesis 17:1). If he would do so, then the Lord's part of the covenant, or His promises to Abraham, constitute what is known as the Abrahamic covenant. Elder McConkie explained Abraham's covenant and its relationship to us:

"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

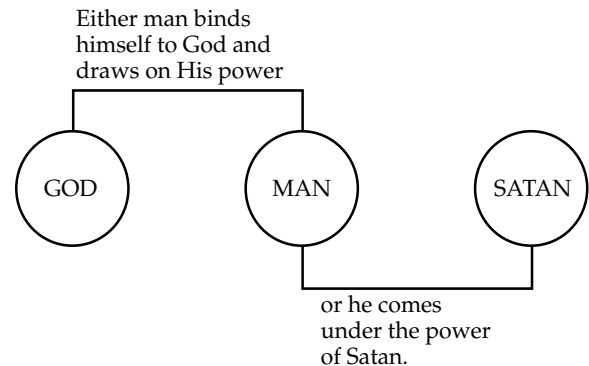
As descendants of Abraham, if we remain true and faithful to our charge to bless our own family and others with the blessings of the gospel, we will continue to do so throughout all eternity. Also, we will be heirs to all that the Father has through Christ. (See D&C 84:38–39.)

(5-21) As a second matter for you to consider, note that there are three great intelligent powers in the universe: God, man, and Satan. There is no question about which of those powers is the greatest. God has all power and therefore no one has greater power than He. But of these, who has greater power—man or Satan? Before answering, read the following scriptures, thinking in terms of power.

**Man’s Power. Read D&C 10:5; Ephesians
6:10–13; Romans 8:35–39.**

**Satan’s Power. Read Moses 4:4; 2 Nephi
2:29; 28:22–23; Alma 34:35.**

Whether man’s power is greater than Satan’s depends on man’s willingness to bind himself to God and draw on His power. If he does not, then he comes increasingly under Satan’s power and dominion. Man’s choice could be diagrammed in this way.



Joseph Smith stated this truth in these words: “The devil has no power over us only as we permit him. The moment we revolt at anything which comes from God, the devil takes power.” (*Teachings*, p. 181.)
What is the means of binding oneself to God?

Read D&C 130:20–21; 82:4–10; 54:3–6.

