

LESSON 23

Abraham 2; Genesis 12

Introduction

Abraham and his family experienced a famine in Ur. The Lord led him, his wife, Sarai, and others toward the land of Canaan. They stopped for a time in Haran, where the Lord appeared to Abraham and explained the covenant He would make with Abraham (later known as the Abrahamic covenant). Abraham then traveled through Canaan to Egypt.

Suggestions for Teaching

Abraham 2:1–11

The Lord begins to explain the covenant He will make with Abraham

Write the following question on the board: *Who are you?*



Invite students to explain different ways they could answer this question. Then, if possible, provide students with copies of the following statement by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Ask a student to read the statement aloud while the class follows along, pondering how they would fill in the blanks.



“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 _____”

(David A. Bednar, “Becoming a Missionary,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2005, 47).

After students have explained how they would fill in the blanks, invite them to write *God* in the first blank and *Abraham* in the second. Explain that the “seed” of Abraham refers to his posterity or descendants.

- Of all of the ways Elder Bednar could have described you, why do you think he identified you as the “seed of Abraham”?

Invite students to consider as they study Abraham 2 why it is important to know that they are the seed of Abraham.

Summarize Abraham 2:1–5 by explaining that Abraham married Sarai and then the Lord led them and members of Abraham’s extended family, including his nephew Lot, out of Ur and toward the land of Canaan. The travelers stopped for a time in a land they named Haran. (You might invite students to locate Ur, Haran, and the land of Canaan on map 9 of the Bible Maps [“The World of the Old Testament”].)

Invite a student to read Abraham 2:6 aloud. Ask the class to follow along in their scriptures and look for what happened to Abraham in Haran. Ask students to report what they find.

- What did the Lord want Abraham to be?
- What did the Lord promise to give Abraham and his seed? (A certain land as an “everlasting possession.” You may want to explain that He was referring to the land of Canaan.)
- What did Abraham’s posterity need to do in order to receive the land?

Explain that the Lord’s promise recorded in verse 6 is part of what is known as the Abrahamic covenant. The Abrahamic covenant refers to all of the covenants and promises God offered to Abraham and his seed.

Draw the following chart on the board:

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT	
Responsibilities	Blessings

Invite students to copy this chart in their class notebooks or scripture study journals. Explain that in this and future lessons they will be adding information to this chart that will help them understand the Abrahamic covenant.

Ask students to list in their class notebooks or study journals the responsibilities and blessings they found in verse 6. (Responsibilities they identify might include: *Be a minister of Jesus Christ; hearken to the Lord’s voice.* One blessing they might identify is: *Receive land for an everlasting possession.* Add these to the board.) Explain that the phrase “everlasting possession” means that the promise of land extends to eternity. The lands of the earth will eventually become part of the celestial kingdom, which the obedient will inherit (see D&C 88:17–20). Invite students to write *celestial kingdom* on their lists in parentheses next to “everlasting possession.”

Ask students to read Abraham 2:7–8 with a partner, searching for indications that the Lord can and will keep His promises to Abraham and Abraham’s seed. Invite students to report what they discover.

Invite a student to read Abraham 2:9 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what the Lord says He will make of Abraham.

- What did the Lord promise would come from Abraham? (From Abraham would come “a great nation.” Add this blessing to the board, and invite students to add it to their lists.)

Explain that the promise of children was one Abraham and Sarai greatly desired. Shortly after He gave this promise, the Lord described how numerous Abraham’s posterity would be. You may want to suggest that students write *Abraham 3:14* in their scriptures next to Abraham 2:9. Invite a student to read Abraham 3:14 aloud,

and ask the class to look for how numerous Abraham's posterity would be. Invite students to report what they find. Add *innumerable posterity* to the list of blessings on the board, and invite students to add it to their lists. Explain that the promise of innumerable posterity is also a promise of godhood, which includes receiving eternal posterity (see D&C 132:19).

Ask a student to read Abraham 2:10 aloud. Invite the class to follow along and identify who will be "accounted" as Abraham's seed.

- According to verse 10, who will be called after the name of Abraham? (Those who receive the gospel of Jesus Christ.)

Ask a student to read Abraham 2:9, 11 aloud. Invite the class to follow along, looking for responsibilities or blessings promised to Abraham and his seed.

- How would you summarize what we are to do for others as the seed of Abraham? (We are to minister to all the families of the earth with the blessings of the gospel. Ask students if they think this is a blessing or a responsibility. Invite them to explain their answers.)

After students respond, write the following principle in the chart on the board under both headings: **As the seed of Abraham, we have a responsibility to minister to and bless all the families of the earth with the blessings of the gospel.**

To help students understand their responsibilities as the seed of Abraham, invite them to imagine that their country has been exposed to a fatal disease and everyone would soon die without a particular medicine. Their family alone not only has the needed medicine but also has enough to cure everyone who is sick.

- What would you want your family to do with the medicine?
- What might you say to a family member who felt too busy or nervous to help distribute the medicine?
- How might our need to assist others in this situation be like our responsibility as the seed of Abraham?

Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by 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" (David A. Bednar, "Becoming a Missionary," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2005, 47).

- In addition to serving as full-time missionaries, how else can we bless the families of the earth? What can we do to bless our own families and the families of our friends and neighbors?

Point out that the crowning blessings of salvation and eternal life identified in Abraham 2:11 are to be had only through receiving and keeping the ordinances and covenants of the temple.

Invite students to ponder and then record in their class notebooks or study journals their answer to the following question. You may want to write the question on the board.

- How do you feel about being numbered among the seed of Abraham?

Abraham 2:12–21

Abraham journeys through the promised land of Canaan

Write the word *Earnestly* on the board. Ask students to explain what they think it means to do something earnestly. If needed, explain that the word *earnest* means sincere, serious, or intense. To illustrate the difference between doing something earnestly and doing it casually, you might invite two students to perform a task in front of the class. Instruct one of them to do the task earnestly and the other to do the task casually or halfheartedly. Ask the class to explain what the students did that showed earnestness or halfheartedness.

Invite a student to read Abraham 2:12–13 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for the conclusions Abraham drew from his experience with the Lord.

- What conclusions did Abraham draw from his experience with the Lord? (Because Abraham had sought the Lord earnestly, he had found Him. Abraham also decided that he would do well to hearken to the Lord's voice.)
- According to Abraham 1–2, how did Abraham seek the Lord earnestly?
- What can we learn from Abraham's earnest seeking of the Lord (see Abraham 2:12)? (Students may use different words, but they should identify the following principle: **If we seek the Lord earnestly, we will find Him.** Consider writing this principle on the board.)
- What are some examples of how we can earnestly seek the Lord?
- What do you think it means that we will find Him?

Invite students who feel comfortable doing so to share an experience of when they have earnestly sought the Lord and how they found Him.

Ask questions that invite feelings and testimony

Once students understand a doctrine or principle they have learned, ask questions that cause them to reflect on past spiritual experiences related to that doctrine or principle. These questions can lead students to feel more deeply the truthfulness and significance of that gospel truth in their lives. Many times, those feelings will engender in their hearts a stronger desire to live the doctrine or principle more faithfully.

Invite students to set a goal to more earnestly seek the Lord in their daily lives. You may want to testify that as they do so, they will find Him.

Summarize Abraham 2:14–21 by explaining that Abraham and his family traveled south from Haran to the land of Canaan. There Abraham offered sacrifice, and the Lord declared that this land of Canaan was to be the land promised in the Abrahamic covenant. Then, because of a famine in the land, Abraham decided to travel to Egypt.

Abraham 2:22–25; Genesis 12:14–20*The Lord warns Abraham about the Egyptians*

Summarize Abraham 2:22–25 and Genesis 12:14–20 by explaining that before Abraham entered Egypt, the Lord warned him that the Egyptians would see how beautiful Sarai was and would kill Abraham so they could take her. Therefore, the Lord instructed Sarai to say that she was Abraham’s sister to save Abraham’s life and to protect herself. Both Sarai and Abraham acted in faith, believing that God would deliver them. Sarai was taken into Pharaoh’s house, and Abraham was given riches. The Lord sent a plague to Pharaoh and his house, and Pharaoh realized that Sarai was being protected by God and that she was married to Abraham. Pharaoh then sent Abraham and Sarai away.

Conclude by sharing your testimony of the doctrines and principles discussed today.

LESSON 24

Abraham 3

Introduction

Before Abraham went to Egypt, the Lord spoke with him face to face and instructed him about the nature and order of the cosmos and the centrality of Jesus Christ in the plan of salvation. The Lord told Abraham to declare to the people in Egypt what he had learned. The Lord also showed Abraham the Council in Heaven, which occurred before the world was created, including Heavenly Father's selection of Jesus Christ to be the Savior of the world.

Suggestions for Teaching

Using the curriculum

As you prepare each lesson, prayerfully review the scripture block along with your study of the curriculum. You may choose to use all or part of the curriculum suggestions for a scripture block, or you may adapt the suggested ideas according to the needs and circumstances of your class. As you do so, the Holy Ghost can help you adapt the lesson to the needs of your students.

Abraham 3:1–21

The Lord teaches Abraham about the order of the stars

Write the following incomplete statements on the board. Invite students to complete the first statement in their class notebooks or study journals.

The world tells me I am great if ...

Real qualities of greatness include ...

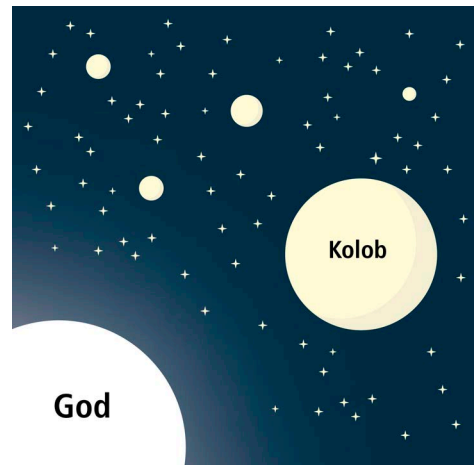
Invite a few students to tell the class how they completed the first statement.

Explain that Abraham 3 contains the account of the Lord teaching Abraham about the stars, which helped Abraham understand the greatness of Jesus Christ and the importance of each of God's children. Abraham received this revelation through the Urim and Thummim, an instrument given to seers to assist them in receiving revelation and translating languages. Invite students to look for what the Lord taught Abraham about true greatness as they study this revelation.

Invite a student to read Abraham 3:1–3 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what Abraham learned about the stars and planets. Invite students to report what they find. To help students visualize what Abraham saw, consider drawing or inviting a student to draw on the board a simple illustration of what students describe.

- Which star is “nearest unto the throne of God” (verse 2)?
- According to verse 3, what phrase did the Lord use to describe Kolob? (“The great one.”)

Summarize Abraham 3:4–17 by explaining that Abraham learned details about the planets and stars. For example, one day on Kolob is equivalent to 1,000 years on Earth (see verse 4). The Lord also showed Abraham His creations and promised Abraham that his posterity would be as numerous as the stars and sands. The Lord commanded Abraham to declare these truths in Egypt.



You may want to briefly explain that “A Facsimile from the Book of Abraham, No. 2” was part of a collection of Egyptian papyri purchased from an antiquities dealer by some of the Saints in Kirtland, Ohio. The facsimile contains symbolic figures relating to the planets and stars and the Lord’s plan of salvation. Other than the explanations provided by the Prophet Joseph Smith, we have no additional revelation about the facsimile from modern prophets.

You may want to point out that God’s instruction about the comparative differences in stars was also meant to teach Abraham about the greatness of Jesus Christ and the differences between Him and God’s other spirit children. Invite a student to read Abraham 3:18–19, 21 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what Abraham learned about the Lord Jesus Christ.

- How would you summarize what Abraham learned about Jesus Christ? (After students respond, write the following doctrine on the board: **Jesus Christ is the greatest and most intelligent of all Heavenly Father’s children.**)

Point out the phrase “*more intelligent*” in verse 19. Explain that in the scriptures, the word *intelligent* often refers to the light and truth an individual has received. We gain intelligence, or light and truth, by obeying God’s commandments; thus, the more obedient we are, the greater our intelligence can be. (See D&C 93:28, 36.) Jesus Christ is nearest to and most like Heavenly Father because of the light and truth He has received through His perfect obedience.

- How can knowing that Jesus Christ is the most intelligent and obedient of all our Heavenly Father’s children help you exercise faith in Him?

Abraham 3:22–28

The Lord shows Abraham the Council in Heaven

Invite students to think about a time they learned or discovered something new about themselves. (For example, they may have discovered a new talent or an interest in a particular hobby.) Invite a few students to share their experiences with the class.

Explain that Abraham 3:22–23 shows us that the Lord taught Abraham more about himself while showing him a vision of the Council in Heaven, which occurred before the earth was created. Invite a student to read these verses aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what Abraham learned about himself.



Abraham 3:22–23 is a doctrinal mastery passage. Invite students to consider marking doctrinal mastery passages in a distinctive way so they can locate them easily.

Who did Abraham see gathered together in heaven?

Explain that in verse 22, the word *intelligences* refers to spirit children of God.

- What did Abraham learn about himself from this vision?
- What did Heavenly Father choose Abraham and other “noble and great” spirits to do on the earth? (Students may use different words, but they should identify the following doctrine: **Heavenly Father chose His noble and great children before they were born to become leaders in His kingdom on the earth.**)

To help students understand that they too were chosen or foreordained in the premortal life to fulfill certain responsibilities on the earth, invite a student to read the following statement from *True to the Faith*:

“In the premortal spirit world, God appointed certain spirits to fulfill specific missions during their mortal lives. This is called foreordination. ...

“The doctrine of foreordination applies to all members of the Church, not just to the Savior and His prophets. Before the creation of the earth, faithful women were given certain responsibilities and faithful men were foreordained to certain priesthood duties. Although you do not remember that time, you surely agreed to fulfill significant tasks in the service of your Father” (*True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* [2004], 69, 70).

- How can knowing you were chosen in the premortal life to “fulfill significant tasks in the service of your [Heavenly] Father” influence your choices and actions in mortality?
- What might prevent someone in mortality from fulfilling the tasks God foreordained or chose him or her to do?

Read the following incomplete statement aloud, and ask students how they would complete it: “The test of life is ...”

Invite a student to read Abraham 3:24–25 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what the test of life is. Before the student reads, you may want to explain that the word *prove* in this passage means to test.

After reading Abraham 3:24–25, what would you say the test of life is? (After students respond, you may want to write the following truth on the board: **The test of life is to determine if we will do whatever God commands us.**)

Explain that this test began in our premortal life, or our “first estate.” The scriptures refer to our premortal choice to follow Heavenly Father’s plan as *keeping* our first estate. Invite a student to read Abraham 3:26 aloud. Ask students to follow along, looking for the blessing Heavenly Father planned to give to His spirit children who kept their first estate.

- What blessing did Heavenly Father plan to give to those who kept their first estate? (They would be “added upon.”)
- What do you think it means to be “added upon”? (Students might mention that if we chose to follow Heavenly Father’s plan in the premortal life, then we were given the opportunity to progress to mortality and receive a physical body.)
- What were the consequences for spirits who chose not to keep their first estate? (They would neither receive a physical body nor have the opportunity to attain eternal glory.)
- What do you think it means to keep our second estate? (The second estate refers to the time between our mortal birth and the Final Judgment. To keep our second estate, we must accept and live the gospel of Jesus Christ, including obeying all that Heavenly Father commands us to do.)

Write the following incomplete statement on the board: *If we do all that Heavenly Father commands us to do, then ...*

Refer students to verse 26, and ask them how they would complete the statement on the board based on this verse. Invite a student to write the rest of the principle on the board. They may use different words, but students should identify something similar to the following principle: **If we do all that Heavenly Father commands us to do, then we will have glory added upon us forever.**

- What do you think it means to have glory added upon us forever?

Read Abraham 3:27–28 aloud, and invite students to consider who the two spirits were who responded to Heavenly Father’s question concerning whom He should send.

- Who were the two spirits who responded to Heavenly Father’s question? (Jesus Christ was the first, and Lucifer [or Satan] was the second.)
- How did Lucifer react when Jesus Christ was chosen? (Lucifer was angry and rebelled against Heavenly Father’s plan. He also persuaded many of Heavenly Father’s children not to follow the Father’s plan.)

Because Satan and his followers did not keep their first estate, they lost the opportunity to receive physical bodies, experience mortal life, and progress toward eternal glory.

To conclude, invite students to complete the second sentence on the board from the beginning of class in their class notebooks or study journals (“Real qualities of greatness include ...”).

Invite a few students to explain to the class what they wrote. Testify that we can achieve real greatness as we draw closer to our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ through obedience to Their commandments.

LESSON 25

Genesis 13–14

Introduction

Abram and his nephew Lot returned with their families from Egypt to the land of Canaan. When strife developed between Abram's and Lot's herdmen, Abram acted as a peacemaker between them. Abram and Lot parted ways, and Lot's family was captured by an invading army while living in Sodom. Abram rescued Lot and his family from captivity and, upon returning home, received a blessing from the great high priest Melchizedek.

Note: Before class, place a small, inconspicuous length of thread on your clothing. You will refer to this thread later in the lesson.

Suggestions for Teaching

Genesis 13:1–18

Abram offers a peaceful solution to the strife between his herdmen and Lot's herdmen

Display a delicious treat, and ask who wants it. Invite two students who express interest in the treat to come to the front of the class. Divide the treat into unequal portions, and allow them to decide who gets which piece.

- How could a situation like this cause conflict in a family?

Explain that in today's lesson, we will see how Abram responded when conflict and disagreement arose in his family. Invite students to look for principles from Abram's example that can help them avoid or resolve conflict in their relationships with their families and others. You may want to remind students that Abram is the prophet whose name was later changed to Abraham (see Genesis 17:5, 15).

Summarize Genesis 13:1–4 by explaining that Abram and Lot left Egypt with all their flocks and possessions and journeyed back to the land of Canaan.

Invite a student to read Genesis 13:5–7 aloud, and ask the class to look for a disagreement that arose when Abram and Lot arrived in Canaan.

- What was the disagreement? (The servants of Lot quarreled with the servants of Abram over land and water for their flocks and herds.)
- What do you think would be a good solution to this situation?

Invite a student to read Genesis 13:8–9 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what Abram suggested they do to resolve the problem.

- What did Abram suggest?
- What do Abram's actions teach us about being a peacemaker? (Students may identify a variety of truths, but you may want to emphasize the following: **Being a peacemaker may require us to place others' interests above our own.**)
- Who do you know that, like Abram, is good at putting others' interests above his or her own? How have you been influenced by their example?

Invite a student to read Genesis 13:10–11 aloud. Ask the class to identify where Lot chose to dwell. Ask them to report what they find.

Point out that Lot chose to dwell in the more fertile, well-watered area known as the plain of Jordan.

Explain that after Lot chose where he would dwell, he and Abram took their families and parted ways. Invite a student to read Genesis 13:12–13, and ask students to look for what Lot did when he got to his new place of dwelling.

- What did Lot do when he arrived at his new dwelling place? (He “pitched his tent toward Sodom” [verse 12]. You may want to explain that one meaning of the word *toward* is “by” or “near.”)

Write the names *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* on the board, and ask students what they know about these places. Explain that these two cities were located in the plain of Jordan and have become synonymous with evil and immorality because of the wickedness of their people.

Summarize Genesis 13:14–17 by explaining that after Lot departed with his family, the Lord promised Abram all the land that he could see as an inheritance for his posterity. Invite students to read Genesis 13:18 silently, looking for what Abram did when he arrived at his new dwelling place.

- What did Abram do when he arrived in Hebron (in the land of Canaan)? (He built an altar to worship God.)
- What can we learn from Abram’s decision to build an altar when he arrived in Hebron?

Genesis 14:1–12

Lot is captured while living in Sodom

Ask students to think about all the decisions they have had to make so far this week. Invite several students to name some of these decisions. Write their responses on the board.

- Which of these decisions would you say are important? Which would you categorize as small or insignificant?

After students respond, remind them of the choice that Lot made in Genesis 13:12. (He “pitched his tent toward Sodom.”)

- What do you think might have been some of the potential consequences of Lot’s decision to live near Sodom?

Summarize Genesis 14:1–10 by explaining that four local kings united their forces and attacked several cities (including Sodom and Gomorrah).

Invite a student to read Genesis 14:11–12 aloud, and ask students to look for who was captured when Sodom was attacked and conquered.

- According to Genesis 14:12, where were Lot and his family living? (Point out that Lot and his family had gone from merely pitching his tent toward Sodom, as recorded in Genesis 13:12, to actually living in Sodom.)

- What does this account teach us about some of the decisions we make? (Students should identify a truth similar to the following: **Seemingly small choices can lead to large consequences.** In Lot's case, his decision to pitch his tent toward Sodom led to serious consequences.)

Ask students to think about some seemingly small decisions they may face that could lead to serious consequences.

Testify that much like Lot's decision regarding where to pitch his tent, the decisions we make on a daily basis can have enormous consequences.

Genesis 14:13–24

Abram rescues Lot and meets Melchizedek and the king of Sodom upon his return

Summarize Genesis 14:13–16 by explaining that when Abram learned of Lot's capture, he gathered and armed his servants and pursued the armies. He caught up with them, and during the ensuing battle, Abram and his allies freed the captives.

Invite a student to read Genesis 14:17–18 aloud, and ask the students to look for who came out to meet Abram. Invite students to report what they find.

Invite a student to read Genesis 14:18–21 aloud, and ask the class to look for what each of these kings offered Abram. (Verse 17 in the Joseph Smith Translation adds that Melchizedek “brake bread and blest it; and he blest the wine, he being the priest of the most high God” [in Genesis 14:18, footnote *d*].)

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) 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]” (Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ* [1978], 384).

- What did Melchizedek offer Abram? (A blessing.) Did he accept it? What did Abram give Melchizedek? (Tithes.)
- What did the king of Sodom offer Abram? (All the goods or spoils of the people of Sodom that had been taken by their enemies.)

Invite a student to read Genesis 14:22–23 aloud, and ask the class to look for Abram's response to the king of Sodom.

- How would you summarize Abram's response to the king of Sodom?

Ask the class if anyone has noticed anything about your clothing. Hold up the thread that you placed on your clothing before class, and ask the class if a little thread is really that big of a deal.

- Why do you think Abram would not accept even a “thread” (or small reward) from the king of Sodom?
- How might accepting a thread from the wicked king be like giving in to small temptations?

Ask students what lesson they learn from Abram's interaction with the king of Sodom. (Students may use different words, but they should express the following

principle: **Resisting evil influences, regardless of how small, helps us stay true to God and free from sin.**)

To help students better understand this principle, invite them to finish the following phrases:

Ask questions and make invitations that encourage application

Ultimately, the aim of gospel teaching is to help students apply the principles and doctrinal truths found in the scriptures, become converted, and receive the blessings promised to those who are faithful and obedient. Questions that encourage application can play a vital role in helping students see how they can apply these principles in their current situations and consider how they can apply them in the future.

- Your friend says he or she is going to copy math homework from a friend only once. To resist evil influences, you should ...
- A family member chooses to watch an inappropriate television program or movie. To resist evil influences, you should ...

Ask students to ponder what sins or temptations the adversary may be trying to convince them are not very serious. Invite them to set a goal for how they will resist and turn away from those sins or temptations.

Genesis 14:25–40 (Joseph Smith Translation)

Melchizedek blesses Abram

Ask students if they know why the Melchizedek Priesthood is called by that name. Invite a student to read Doctrine and Covenants 107:2–3 aloud. Ask students to look for why the Melchizedek Priesthood is named for Melchizedek and what this priesthood was called before Melchizedek’s day.

Invite the class to look again at Genesis 14:18–20 and list everything we learn about Melchizedek from these verses. Write this information on the board. Point out that the biblical account doesn’t give us very much information about this “great high priest” (D&C 107:2).

Explain that the Joseph Smith Translation gives us much more information about who Melchizedek was and what he did. Help students find Genesis 14:25–40 in the Joseph Smith Translation (in the appendix of the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Version of the Bible), or prepare copies of this passage for each student.

Divide the class in half. Ask one side to read Genesis 14:25–31 in the Joseph Smith Translation and the other side to read Genesis 14:32–40 in the Joseph Smith Translation. You may want to suggest that they mark what their assigned verses teach about Melchizedek.

- Based on what you learned about Melchizedek, why do you think it is appropriate to call the priesthood after his name?

Explain that in addition to teaching more about the high priest Melchizedek, these verses also teach about the priesthood that was named after him. Invite a student to read aloud Genesis 14:30–31 in the Joseph Smith Translation, and ask students

to listen for what the power of the priesthood can do. (You may have to explain that the phrase “ordained after this order” [verse 30] refers to those who have been ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood.)

- What does the Melchizedek Priesthood give worthy men the power to do?
(Help students understand the following truth: **The Melchizedek Priesthood gives men the authority to act in God’s name.**)

As time allows, invite students to share how they have been blessed because of a worthy Melchizedek Priesthood holder.

LESSON 26

The Plan of Salvation (Part 2)

Introduction

The teaching materials for this doctrinal mastery topic are divided into four parts. In part 2, students will study paragraphs 2.1–2.2 of the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document* and learn about the doctrinal mastery passages Moses 1:39 and Joshua 24:15 as well as the key statements of doctrine they help teach.

Note: You could teach the segments of this lesson in a single class session or over the course of several class sessions, dividing class time between Doctrinal Mastery and a regular sequential scripture lesson. If you choose to teach the segments over the course of several class sessions, you may need to briefly review with students what they learned in previous segments before you teach a new segment.

Suggestions for Teaching

Doctrinal mastery lessons versus sequential scripture lessons

Doctrinal mastery lessons are designed to be separate and distinct from sequential scripture lessons. Do not attempt to blend a doctrinal mastery lesson with a sequential scripture lesson. Doctrinal mastery lessons are thematic, whereas sequential scripture lessons are focused on principles that emerge from the text.

Understanding the Doctrine

Segment 1 (12 minutes)

Invite students to think of a task or project that they either want or need to complete. Ask them to write down this task or project at the top of a page in their class notebooks or study journals. Then ask them to write down a plan for how they will accomplish that task or project. After sufficient time, invite students to share their plan with someone sitting near them. Instruct students to discuss with each other any additional ideas that might help them accomplish the task they wrote down and to consider writing these suggestions into their plan. After sufficient time, ask:

- Why do you think it is important to have a plan if you want to accomplish something?

Explain that Heavenly Father has a plan for His children. It is often referred to as the plan of salvation. Invite students to silently read paragraph 2.1 in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*, looking for what Heavenly Father's plan of salvation is designed to accomplish. Ask students to report what they find.

As students respond, they should identify the following key statement of doctrine: **In the premortal existence Heavenly Father introduced a plan to enable us to become like Him and obtain immortality and eternal life.** Invite students to

consider marking this statement in their copies of the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*.

Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



“Our Eternal Father did not send us to earth on an aimless, meaningless journey. He provided for us a plan to follow. He is the author of that plan. It is designed for man’s progress and ultimate salvation and exaltation” (L. Tom Perry, “The Plan of Salvation,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 70).

- How does knowing that Heavenly Father has a plan for you affect the way you live your life?

Ask students what doctrinal mastery passage is associated with the key statement of doctrine they identified in paragraph 2.1. Invite students to open their scriptures to Moses 1:39 and to consider marking this passage in a distinctive way so they can locate it easily.

Remind students that as recorded in Moses 1, the Lord taught Moses about why He had created this world and about the work He had prepared for Moses to complete during his mortal life.

Invite students to read Moses 1:39 aloud in unison. Then ask them to look carefully at the words of this passage.

- How does this passage help teach the key statement of doctrine you identified in paragraph 2.1 of the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*?
- How would you explain the differences between immortality and eternal life? (If needed, explain that immortality is “the condition of living forever in a resurrected state” [Guide to the Scriptures, “Immortal, Immortality,” scriptures.lds.org], whereas eternal life is becoming like God and “[living] forever as families in [His] presence” [Guide to the Scriptures, “Eternal Life”].)
- How might Heavenly Father’s use of the phrases “my work” and “my glory” help us understand how important our immortality and eternal life are to Him?
- How do you feel when you consider that Heavenly Father’s plan is for you to receive immortality and eternal life?

Consider sharing your testimony of the plan of salvation.

Segment 2 (13 minutes)

Write the following question on the board:

What are some ways in which we can demonstrate that we are following Heavenly Father’s plan?

Divide students into groups of two to four students. Give each group a piece of paper, and instruct them to write down as many answers to this question as they can in 60 seconds. When the time has elapsed, ask one group to read their list aloud. As they read each answer, instruct the other groups with the same (or a similar) answer to cross it out on their papers. When the first group finishes reading their list aloud, invite another group to read any remaining answers they have on their paper. Continue this activity until all the groups have reported.

Point out that when someone demonstrates that he or she is choosing to follow Heavenly Father's plan, that person is exercising a gift that is essential to the plan of salvation. Ask students to scan paragraph 2.2 in the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*, looking for the name of this essential gift. Invite them to raise their hands as soon as they have found it. After multiple students have raised their hands, invite students to report what they found. (The gift is moral agency.)

- Based on paragraph 2.2, what is moral agency?
- What is affected by how we use the gift of moral agency? (Students should identify the following key statement of doctrine: **Our eternal progression depends on how we use the gift of moral agency.** Invite students to consider marking this key statement of doctrine in their copies of the *Doctrinal Mastery Core Document*.)

Display the following statement by Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Invite a student to read the statement aloud while the class follows along, looking for how the exercise of our moral agency affects our eternal progression.



"We are in a mortal experience because we cannot become as God without that experience. We must prove to Him and to ourselves that we can consistently make the right choices and then stick to those choices, come what may. ...

"... God is interested in what we are becoming as a result of our choices. He is not satisfied if our exercise of moral agency is simply a robotic effort at keeping some rules. Our Savior wants us to become something, not just do some things.

He is endeavoring to make us independently strong—more able to act for ourselves. ...

"Using our agency to choose God's will, and not slackening even when the going gets hard, will not make us God's puppet; it will make us like Him. God gave us agency, and Jesus showed us how to use it so that we could eventually learn what They know, do what They do, and become what They are" (D. Todd Christofferson, "Moral Agency," *Ensign*, June 2009, 53).

- What did Elder Christofferson teach about the connection between our progression and the use of our moral agency?
- In what ways is using our agency to choose God's will different than robotically keeping rules?
- When have you used your moral agency in a way that helped you to progress and become more like God?

Segment 3 (15 minutes)

Write on the board the following key statement of doctrine: **Our eternal progression depends on how we use the gift of moral agency.** Point out that one of the doctrinal mastery passages associated with this statement is Joshua 24:15. Invite students to turn to this passage in their scriptures and to consider marking it in a distinctive way so they can locate it easily.

Explain that as recorded in Joshua 24, at the end of the prophet Joshua's life he gathered the children of Israel together and recounted how the Lord had miraculously led them out of Egypt and blessed them to overcome their enemies in the promised land. Joshua challenged the people to be obedient and serve the Lord and not yield to temptation.

Ask a student to read Joshua 24:15 aloud. Invite the class to follow along, looking for Joshua's invitation to the people.

- What did Joshua invite the people to do?
- How did Joshua say he would choose to exercise his agency? (He would choose to serve the Lord.)
- What are some ways in which we can choose to serve the Lord?

To help students remember Joshua's challenge, ask a student to write on the board the phrases "*choose you this day whom ye will serve*" and "*but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*" Invite class members to repeat these phrases aloud several times so they can remember them more easily.



Show the video "Individual Agency" (1:53), which is available on LDS.org. Ask students to listen as President Monson explains why it is important to righteously exercise our agency.

- What did President Monson teach us about why it is important to righteously exercise our agency?

Invite students to ponder the following questions (you may want to write them on the board or provide them as a handout):

- Are the choices I am currently making helping me become more like God?
- In what areas of my life do I need to change or improve so I can progress spiritually?
- What choices will I make *today* to righteously exercise my agency and serve the Lord?

Give students time to record their thoughts in their class notebooks or study journals. As time permits, consider inviting one or two students to share how they want to apply what they have learned from this lesson. Encourage students to exercise their moral agency to follow our Heavenly Father's plan of salvation.

LESSON 27

Genesis 15–17

Introduction

As Abram grew older, he was concerned about how God would fulfill the promises He had made regarding Abram's posterity. The Lord comforted him, reassuring him that all of the promises would be fulfilled. Sarai gave her handmaid Hagar to Abram as a wife to raise up posterity to Abram. After Hagar conceived, a conflict arose between her and Sarai, during which Hagar received divine guidance. In Genesis 17 we learn about further promises and responsibilities the Lord revealed pertaining to the Abrahamic covenant. The Lord also promised Abraham and Sarah that in their old age they would have a son, whom they were to name Isaac.

Suggestions for Teaching

Time management

Doctrinal mastery review activities should be short and effective. Be disciplined as you administer these review activities so that they do not take more than their allotted time.

Doctrinal Mastery Review—Abraham 3:22–23 (5 minutes)

Prepare the following statements so they will be visible to students one at a time:

1. God showed Abraham only things that were organized *after* the Creation.
2. God prepared Abraham in the premortal world so he could do great things on the earth.
3. There were only a few people whom God called His “noble and great ones.”
4. I lived in the presence of God as one of His spirit children before I was born.

Give each student a small piece of paper, and ask students to write down the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 on separate lines. Inform students that they will be taking a short true-false quiz. Display each of the four statements and read them aloud, giving students time to record “true” or “false” on their papers.

Tell students this is an open-book quiz, and invite them to turn to Abraham 3:22–23. Give them time to read the scripture passage, and then administer the quiz a second time, allowing students to change their answers if needed. Correct the quiz as a class, discussing correct answers as needed.

Answers: (1) false; (2) true; (3) false; (4) true

Genesis 15:1–21; Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 15:9–12 (in the Bible appendix)

God covenants with Abram that His words will be fulfilled

Ask students to think of any concerns or worries that they may have about their future. Invite those who feel comfortable doing so to share some of their thoughts as you write them on the board.

Explain that as recorded at the beginning of Genesis 15, Abram was worried about his future. Invite students to look for truths that can help them overcome their worries about the future as they study Genesis 15–17 today.

Remind students that earlier in Abram’s life, the Lord had promised him that his posterity would be as numerous as the “dust of the earth” (Genesis 13:16). Invite a few students to take turns reading Genesis 15:1–5 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what Abraham was worried about and how the Lord responded to his concern.

- What was Abram’s concern? (That he was childless and therefore had no heir. You might need to explain that Eliezer was the man in charge of Abram’s house and that Abram wondered if Eliezer would become his heir.)
- What was the Lord’s response?

Tell students that Abram was also concerned about the land that the Lord had promised to him and his posterity. Explain that the Joseph Smith Translation shows how the Lord addressed this concern. Ask students to turn to the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis 15:9–12 in the Bible appendix or the Guide to the Scriptures.

Invite a student to read Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 15:9–12 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what Abram learned. (You may need to explain that the phrase “Son of Man” is a title for Jesus Christ.)

- According to this passage, the Lord told Abram that even if he were to die, God would be able to keep His promise. According to verse 11, why is this so?
- According to Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 15:12, what was Abram’s reaction when he understood this explanation and saw “the days of the Son of Man”?

Consider inviting students to write a principle in their scriptures based on Abram’s experience. The following is one way students may express this principle: **When we believe that the Lord will fulfill His promises to us, whether in mortality or eternity, our souls can find peace.**

- How can believing this principle give you peace when you consider your future?
- What divinely appointed sources could you consult to find some of the promises the Lord has made to you? (Answers might include patriarchal blessings, the scriptures, general conference talks, and *For the Strength of Youth*.)

Testify of the Lord and His ability to fulfill His promises according to His will and timetable. Encourage students to trust that the Lord will fulfill His promises, and that as they continue to be faithful like Abram, the Lord will bless them.

Summarize Genesis 15:9–18 by explaining that the Lord assured Abram that his seed would be given a land of inheritance, even though they would be “a stranger in a land that is not theirs” for a period of 400 years (see verse 13). This was referring to the Israelites’ bondage to the Egyptians.

Genesis 16:1–16

Sarai gives Hagar to Abram as his wife, and Hagar bears a son

Responding to difficult questions

President Boyd K. Packer taught: “A teacher must expect to be confronted frequently with difficult questions. Often these are questions to which there is no satisfying or comforting answer. A teacher cannot know everything. The Lord has not yet revealed everything. And yet, to a teacher the questions will come, asking about everything. [A teacher] should have the humility to say, ‘I don’t know.’ Often that will be the only true answer” (*Teach Ye Diligently* [1975], 65; see also Alma 37:11).

Write the names *Abram*, *Sarai*, *Hagar*, *Ishmael*, and *Isaac* on the board. Inform students that we will learn about the relationships between these individuals.

Summarize Genesis 16:1–3 by explaining that Sarai could not have any children, so she gave her handmaid Hagar to Abram as a plural wife. From latter-day revelation we understand that this was a commandment from God that Abram and Sarai obeyed (see D&C 132:34), thus fulfilling the Lord’s promise that Abram would have children.

Explain that at certain times the Lord has commanded His people to practice plural marriage. Plural marriage was practiced by Abram and Sarai and by their grandson Jacob, and it was practiced for a time during the early days of the restored Church, beginning with Joseph Smith.

Explain that we read in Genesis 16:4–6 that after Hagar conceived a child she began to despise Sarai. Sarai responded by dealing “hardly” with Hagar, who fled into the wilderness.

- How would you feel if you had been in Sarai’s position? How would you feel if you had been in Hagar’s position?

Explain that while Hagar was in the wilderness, an angel appeared to her and told her the Lord would “multiply [her] seed exceedingly” and she would bear Abraham a son who would be named Ishmael (Genesis 16:10–11). Explain that Hagar and her son Ishmael are revered in the Islamic faith as ancestors of Muhammad, the founder of Islam. Muslims (followers of Islam) also honor Abraham as a prophet.

Genesis 17:1–27

The Lord covenants with Abraham

Ask a student to read aloud Genesis 17:1–2. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what the Lord commanded Abram to do and to be. Invite students to report what they find. (You may need to explain that the command to be perfect refers to becoming like Heavenly Father. This is an ongoing process that will extend beyond this life and can be accomplished only by drawing upon the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ through diligent efforts to live His gospel.)

Explain that as part of establishing His covenant with Abram, the Lord did something to remind Abram and Sarai of the promised blessings. Divide the class

in half, and invite one half to read Genesis 17:3–5 and the other half to read Genesis 17:15–16, looking for what the Lord did as a reminder of the covenant.

- What did the Lord do for Abram and Sarai as a reminder of the covenant? (He changed their names.)

Explain that in Hebrew the name *Abram* means “exalted father” and *Abraham* means “father of a multitude” (see Bible Dictionary, “Abraham”). Both names represent what was possible for Abraham to become because of the covenant—an exalted being, like God. Explain that the name *Sarai* could mean “contentions” and the name *Sarah* means “princess” (see Bible Dictionary, “Sarah or Sarai” and Genesis 17:15, footnote *a*). You may want to suggest that students make note of the meaning of these names in the margin of their scriptures.

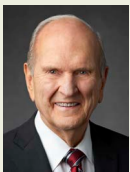
Invite a student to read Genesis 17:6 aloud. Ask the class to follow along and identify promises the Lord confirmed upon Abraham that correspond to this new name. Invite them to share what they discovered.

Explain that God wants all of His children to receive the same blessings that He promised to Abraham.

- What would we need to do in order to receive the same blessings promised to Abraham? (Following responses from students, make sure they understand that we too must covenant with the Lord and take upon ourselves the same responsibilities as Abraham. This begins with baptism and includes each of the saving ordinances of the gospel.)

Write the following principle on the board: **As we make and keep covenants with the Lord, we become heirs to the responsibilities and blessings given to Abraham.**

To help students understand this principle, invite a student to read aloud the following statement by President Russell M. Nelson.



“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)” (Russell M. Nelson, in “Special Witnesses of Christ,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Apr. 2001, 7).

- What blessings will we inherit if we make and keep these sacred temple covenants? (You might give students a moment to consider the blessings they have listed in their class notebooks or study journals. You may also want to remind students of lesson 23, in which they listed the blessings and responsibilities of the Abrahamic covenant.)

Explain that our making and keeping this covenant of exaltation can also bless our posterity. Invite a student to read Genesis 17:7–8 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for what the Lord promised to do for Abraham and his seed. Encourage them to add any new promise they find to their charts.

- What do you think it means that the Lord will be a God to Abraham’s posterity?

- In what ways can your decision to enter into and keep covenants with the Lord bless your future children?
- In what ways have you seen the lives of children affected by their parents' making and keeping covenants? (You might want to share your own experience or an example here.)

Encourage students to keep the covenants they made at baptism and to look forward to making and keeping the other covenants available only in the temple.

Summarize Genesis 17:9–14, 23–27 by explaining that as a token or reminder of the covenant God made with Abraham, He commanded that Abraham and all male members of his household be circumcised. This symbol would act as a reminder of the responsibilities and blessings of the Abrahamic covenant (see Bible Dictionary, "Circumcision"). Circumcision as a token of the Abrahamic covenant was no longer required after Jesus Christ's mortal ministry (see Moroni 8:8).

Explain that Abraham may have considered Ishmael to be the answer to his prayers for children, but the Lord planned to fulfill His covenant with Abraham in an additional way. Invite a few students to take turns reading Genesis 17:15–22 aloud. Ask the class to follow along, looking for how the Lord further kept His covenant with Abraham. Invite students to report what they find.

- What was Abraham's reaction? (You may need to explain that laughed means "rejoiced" [see Genesis 17:17, footnote *b*].)

To conclude the lesson, invite students to review the elements of the Abrahamic covenant and share their feelings about it and its blessings. You may also want to share your feelings. Encourage students to choose one thing they can do to more fully live up to their covenants with God so they can receive His promised blessings.