

LESSON 7
“The Abrahamic Covenant”
Abraham 1:1-4; 2:1-11; Genesis 12:1-8; 17:1-9

OVERVIEW:

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

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 Edershiem, *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 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" ("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 ^aChaldeans, at the residence of my fathers, I, ^bAbraham, saw that it was needful for me to obtain another place of ^cresidence;
- 2 And, finding there was greater ^ahappiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; having been myself a follower of ^brighteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great ^cknowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many ^dnations, a prince of peace, and ^edesiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a ^fHigh Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers.
- 3 It was ^aconferred upon me from the fathers; it came down from the fathers, 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 ^bfirstborn, or the first man, who is ^cAdam, or first father, through the fathers unto me.
- 4 I sought for mine ^aappointment unto the Priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the ^bfathers concerning the seed.

Abraham 2	Genesis 11
1 NOW the Lord God caused the ^a famine to wax sore in the land of Ur, insomuch that ^b Haran, my brother, died; but ^c 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 ^a Chaldees.
2 And it came to pass that I, Abraham, took ^a Sarai to wife, and ^b Nahor, my brother, took Milcah to wife, who was the ^c daughter of Haran.	29 And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was ^a Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, ^b Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Ischah.
	30 But Sarai was ^a barren; she had (bear) no child.
3 Now the Lord had ^a 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.	
4 Therefore I left the land of ^a 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 ^b father followed after me, unto the land which we denominated Haran.	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 ^a Chaldees, to go into the land of ^b Canaan; and they came unto ^c Haran, and dwelt there.
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 ^a idolatry, therefore he continued in Haran.	
	32 And the days of Terah were two hundred and

	five years: and Terah died in Haran.
	Genesis 12
<p>6 But I, Abraham, and Lot, my brother's son, prayed unto the Lord, and the Lord ^aappeared 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 ^bminister to bear my ^cname in a strange ^dland 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 ^asaid unto ^bAbram, ^cGet thee out of thy ^dcountry, and from thy ^ekindred, and from thy ^ffather's house, unto a ^gland that I will shew thee:</p>
<p>7 For I am the Lord thy God; I dwell in ^aheaven; the earth is my ^bfootstool; I stretch my hand over the sea, and it obeys my voice; I cause the wind and the fire to be my ^cchariot; I say to the mountains—Depart hence—and behold, they are taken away by a whirlwind, in an instant, suddenly.</p>	
<p>8 My ^aname is Jehovah, and I ^bknow the end from the beginning; therefore my hand shall be over thee.</p>	
<p>9 And I will make of thee a great ^anation, and I will ^bbless 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 ^cPriesthood unto all nations; (The responsibility of the seed of Abraham, which we are, is to be missionaries to bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations.</p>	<p>2 And I will make of thee a ^agreat ^bnation, and I will ^cbless thee, and make thy ^dname 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</p>

<p>Ezra Taft Benson, CR, Apr 1987, p. 107)</p>	<p>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 ^abless them through thy name; for as many as receive this ^bGospel shall be called after thy ^cname, and shall be accounted thy ^dseed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their ^efather;</p>	
<p>11 And I will ^abless them that bless thee, and ^bcurse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is, in thy Priesthood) and in thy ^cseed (that is, thy Priesthood), for I give unto thee a promise that this ^dright shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) (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 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, (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. 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>3 And I will ^abless them that bless thee, and ^bcurse him (them) that ^ccurseth thee: and in thee shall all (the) ^dfamilies of the earth be ^eblessed. (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 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>12 Now, after the Lord had withdrawn from</p>	

<p>speaking to me, and withdrawn his face from me, I said in my heart: Thy servant has ^asought thee earnestly; now I have found thee;</p>	
<p>13 Thou didst send thine angel to ^adeliver 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 ^asixty 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> ^aseventy 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 ^awon 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 ^aSarai his wife, and ^bLot his ^cbrother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had ^dgotten (Heb made; i.e. converted) in ^eHaran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.</p>
<p>16 Therefore, ^aeternity was our covering and our ^brock and our salvation, as we journeyed from Haran by the way of ^cJershon, to come to the land of Canaan. 17 Now I, Abraham, built an ^aaltar in the land of Jershon, and made an offering unto the Lord, and prayed that the ^bfamine 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 ^aCanaanites, and I offered ^bsacrifice 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 Sichem, unto (and) the plain of Moreh. And the ^aCanaanite was (were) then in the land.</p>
<p>19 And the Lord ^aappeared unto me in answer to my prayers, and said unto me: Unto thy seed will I give this ^bland.</p>	<p>7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, ^aUnto thy ^bseed will I give this ^cland: and there builded he an ^daltar 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 ^aBethel, and pitched my tent there, Bethel on the west, and ^bHai on the east; and there I built another ^caltar unto the Lord, and ^dcalled again upon the name of the Lord.</p>	<p>8 And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of ^aBeth-el, and pitched his tent, having (leaving) ^bBeth-el on the west, and ^cHai (or Ai) on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and ^dcalled upon the ^ename of the LORD.</p>

GENESIS CHAPTER 17

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 ^aappeared to ^bAbram, and said unto him, I ~~am~~ the ^cAlmighty God(, give unto thee a commandment; that thou shalt) ^dwalk (uprightly) before me, and be ~~thou~~ ^eperfect.

2 And I will make my ^acovenant between me and thee, and (I) will multiply thee exceedingly.

3 ^aAnd (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 ^acovenant ~~is~~ with thee, and thou shalt be a ^b'father' of many ^cnations.

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 ^aAbraham; (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 ^afruitful, and I will make ^bnations of thee, and ^ckings shall come ~~out~~ of thee(, and of thy seed).

7 ^aAnd I will establish (a covenant of circumcision with thee, and it shall be) my ^bcovenant between me and thee(,) and thy seed after thee(,) in their generations for an ^ceverlasting 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 ^dGod unto thee, and ~~to~~ thy seed after thee.

8 And I will ^agive unto thee, and ~~to~~ thy seed after thee, ~~the~~ (a) ^bland wherein thou art a ^cstranger, all the ^dland of ^eCanaan, for an everlasting ^fpossession; and I will be their ^gGod.

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)

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