

**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.

Before, we start, let's discuss the mercy of the flood: This people were not only very wicked themselves, but having the power to propagate their species, they transmitted their unrighteous natures and desires to their children, and brought them up to indulge in their own wicked practices. And the spirits that dwelt in the eternal worlds knew this, and they knew very well that to be born of such parentage would entail upon themselves an infinite amount of trouble, misery and sin. Is it right that a just God should sweep off so many people? Is that in accordance with mercy? Yes, it was just to those spirits that had not received their bodies, and it was just and merciful too to those people guilty of the iniquity. Why? Because by taking away their earthly existence he prevented them from entailing their sins upon their posterity and degenerating them, and also prevented them from committing further acts of wickedness. John Taylor, JD, 19:158-59.

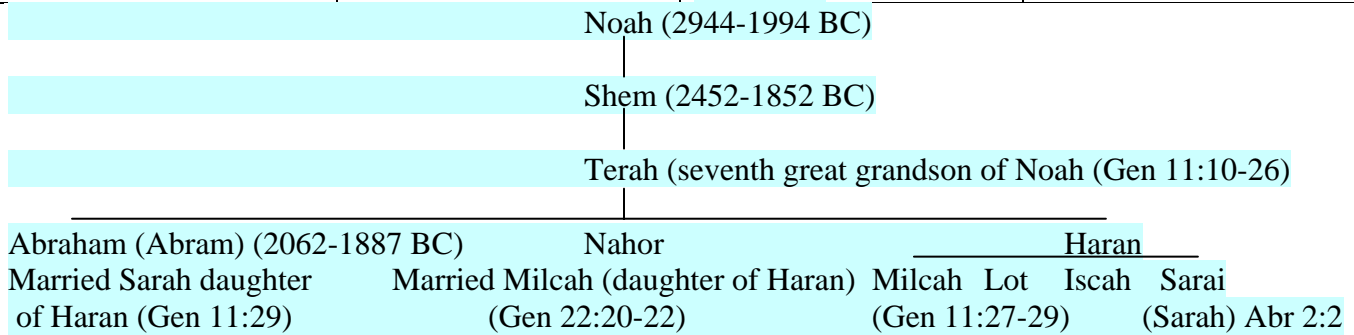
The wicked prior to the flood were making it difficult for the spirits in heaven to have a good chance at being righteous themselves. The flood prepared the way for more righteous spirits to be born on earth so that they could be righteous on earth. Another theory is that the people were intermarrying with the seed of Cain and therefore their posterity would not have been allowed to hold the priesthood. Melchizedek was righteous, then Abraham. Who was Melchizedek?

**What are the elements of the Abrahamic Covenant?**

1. The right to be a joint heir of the heirship of the Son of God, or to be exalted above the heavens.
2. A great nation. (Abraham 2:9)
3. Both an earthly and an eternal posterity. (Abraham 3:12,14)
4. A father, under Christ, of all people from his day on who would become sons and daughters of God in the new birth that the infinite atonement of the Lord Jesus makes possible. (Abraham 2:10)
5. In the hands of his elect posterity and of the holy priesthood they shall bear this ministry and priesthood unto all nations that all families of the earth may be blessed, even with the blessings of the gospel. (Abraham 2:9, 11)
6. The right of Abraham's elect posterity to be adopted into the eternal family of Christ. (Romans 9:4-5)
7. Lands of inheritance, beginning with Palestine and then the western hemisphere where they would build New Jerusalem. (Genesis 12:1,7; 13:14-17; 15:7, 18; 24:7; 48:4; Abraham 2:19; 3 Nephi 20:22; Ether 13:6-10)

**How do we participate in 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



Shem lived another 210 years after Abraham was born. Noah lived another 68 years after Abraham was born.

Are all Church members of the seed of Abraham? Are you a literal descendant of Abraham, or are you adopted in?

**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.

Patriarchal Blessings: (The patriarch is to discern and declare a person's lineage through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The declaration of lineage is not determined by a person's race or nationality. Because of the scattering of Israel among all nations of the earth, the lineage of Israel is found in people of most races and nationalities.... Because the tribes of Israel have intermixed with one another, most people are of mixed lineage. Even family members can be of mixed lineage, and occasionally children of the same parents receive patriarchal blessings that declare their lineage to be from different tribes. The blessing of one tribe may be dominant in one child, and the blessing of another tribe may be dominant in another. Some Church members may not have any of the lineage of Israel. For these members a patriarch may not be prompted by the Spirit to declare lineage from a particular tribe. Instead, he may declare that the individual will receive his or her blessings through Abraham. Patriarch's Handbook, p.3)

Who was the first person to obtain the Abrahamic Covenant?

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. (Melchizedek administered the sacrament to Abraham Gen 14:18, JST Gen 14:17 -And <sup>a</sup>Melchizedek (,) king of <sup>b</sup>Salem (,) brought forth <sup>c</sup>bread and wine: <sup>d</sup>and he (break bread and blest it; and he blest the wine, he being) ~~was~~ the <sup>e</sup>priest of the most high God.) 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

**How many orders of the priesthood are there?**

**Who ordained Abraham to the priesthood?**

**Is it possible for us to obtain the patriarchal order of the priesthood? How?**

**What is the new and everlasting covenant?**

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

2 And, finding there was greater <sup>a</sup>happiness 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 <sup>b</sup>righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great <sup>c</sup>knowledge, and to

be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many <sup>d</sup>nations, a prince of peace, and <sup>e</sup>desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a <sup>f</sup>High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers.

3 It was <sup>a</sup>conferred 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 <sup>b</sup>firstborn, or the first man, who is <sup>c</sup>Adam, or first father, through the fathers unto me.

4 I sought for mine <sup>a</sup>appointment unto the Priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the <sup>b</sup>fathers concerning the seed.

Abraham 2	Genesis 11
1 NOW the Lord God caused the <sup>a</sup> famine to wax sore in the land of Ur, insomuch that <sup>b</sup> Haran, my brother, died; but <sup>c</sup> Terah, my father, yet lived in the land of Ur, of the Chaldees.	28 And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the <sup>a</sup> Chaldees.
2 And it came to pass that I, Abraham, took <sup>a</sup> Sarai to wife, and <sup>b</sup> Nahor, my brother, took Milcah to wife, who was the <sup>c</sup> daughter of Haran.	29 And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was <sup>a</sup> Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, <sup>b</sup> Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah.
	30 But Sarai was <sup>a</sup> barren; she <del>had</del> (bear) no child.
3 Now the Lord had <sup>a</sup> said unto me: Abraham, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee.	
4 Therefore I left the land of <sup>a</sup> Ur, of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and I took Lot, my brother's son, and his wife, and Sarai my wife; and also my <sup>b</sup> father followed after me, unto the land which we denominated Haran.	31 And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the <sup>a</sup> Chaldees, to go into the land of <sup>b</sup> Canaan; and they came unto <sup>c</sup> Haran, and dwelt there.
5 And the famine abated; and my father tarried in Haran and dwelt there, as there were many flocks in Haran; and my father turned again unto his <sup>a</sup> idolatry, therefore he continued in Haran.	
	32 And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.
	Genesis 12
6 But I, Abraham, and Lot, my brother's son, prayed unto the Lord, and (1)the Lord <sup>a</sup> appeared unto me, and said unto me: Arise, and take Lot with thee; for I have purposed to take thee away out of Haran, and to make of thee a <sup>b</sup> minister to bear my <sup>c</sup> name in a strange <sup>d</sup> land which I will give unto thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession, when they hearken to my voice. <b>(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</b>	1 NOW the LORD had <sup>a</sup> said unto <sup>b</sup> Abram, <sup>c</sup> Get thee out of thy <sup>d</sup> country, and from thy <sup>e</sup> kindred, and from thy <sup>f</sup> father's house, unto a <sup>g</sup> land that I will shew thee:  <b>(Abraham was called as a missionary.)</b>

<p>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>7 For I am the Lord thy God; I dwell in <sup>a</sup>heaven; the earth is my <sup>b</sup>footstool; I stretch my hand over the sea, and it obeys my voice; I cause the wind and the fire to be my <sup>c</sup>chariot; I say to the mountains—Depart hence—and behold, they are taken away by a whirlwind, in an instant, suddenly.</p>	
<p>8 My <sup>a</sup>name is Jehovah, and I <sup>b</sup>know the end from the beginning; therefore my hand shall be over thee.</p>	
<p>9 And <b>I will make of thee a great <sup>a</sup>nation</b>, and I will <sup>b</sup>bless thee above measure, and make thy name great among all nations, and thou shalt be a blessing unto <b>thy seed after thee, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and <sup>c</sup>Priesthood unto all nations;</b> (The responsibility of the seed of Abraham, which we are, is to be missionaries to bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations. Ezra Taft Benson, CR, Apr 1987, p. 107)</p>	<p>2 And I will make of thee a <sup>a</sup>great <sup>b</sup>nation, and I will <sup>c</sup>bless thee, and make thy <sup>d</sup>name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: <b>(How did God make Abraham a great nation? Thus through this scattering the Lord has caused Israel to mix with the nations and bring the Gentiles within the blessings of the seed of Abraham. We are preaching the gospel now in all parts of the world, and for what purpose? To gather out from the Gentile nations the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It is by this scattering that the Gentile nations have been blessed, and if they will truly repent they are entitled to all the blessings promised to Israel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal. Joseph Fielding Smith, Answers to Gospel Questions, 2:57)</b></p>
<p>10 And I will <sup>a</sup>bless them through thy name; for as many as receive this <sup>b</sup>Gospel shall be called after thy <sup>c</sup>name, and shall be accounted thy <sup>d</sup>seed, and</p>	<p><b>(All who join the Church become the children of Abraham.)</b></p>



<p>shall rise up and bless thee, as their <sup>c</sup>father;</p> <p>11 And I will <sup>a</sup>bless them that bless thee, and <sup>b</sup>curse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is, in thy Priesthood) and in thy <sup>c</sup>seed (that is, thy Priesthood), for I give unto thee a promise that this <sup>d</sup>right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) (<b>Are all of Abraham's descendants given the promised blessings? The royal lineage comes down through Isaac, and Jacob and not Abraham's other descendants.</b> 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, (<b>The seed of Abraham is so universally spread over the earth that it is a little difficult to suppose that there are any people left on earth who do not have some of the blood of Abraham in their veins, excepting the seed of Cain. There would be many people who have very little of the blood of Israel, but I believe the seed of Cain has none.</b> Bruce R. McConkie, Studies in Scripture, 3:53) even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal. (It is the seed of Abraham who themselves hold the same priesthood held by their noble forebear who will take salvation to all the nations of the earth. Bruce R. McConkie, Millennial Messiah, p. 263.)</p>	<p>3 And I will <sup>a</sup>bless them that bless thee, and <sup>b</sup>curse <del>him</del> (them) that <sup>c</sup>curseth thee: and in thee shall <del>all</del> (the) <sup>d</sup>families of the earth be <sup>e</sup>blessed. (<b>No person who is not of Israel can become a member of the Church without becoming of the house of Israel by adoption.</b> 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. <b>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.</b> Bruce R. McConkie, Studies in Scripture, 3:54)</p>
<p><b>What RIGHT do the descendants of Abraham receive and why?</b> Bruce R. McConkie: “The concept of a chosen and favored people, a concept scarcely known in the world and but little understood even by the saints of God, is one of the most marvelous systems ever devised for administering salvation to all men in all nations in all ages...This is the doctrine of election. They were true and faithful in the premortal life, and they earned the right to be born as the Lord's people and to have the privilege, on a preferential basis, of believing and obeying the word of truth. Believing blood, the blood of Abraham, flows in their veins. They are the ones of whom Jesus said: ‘My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.’ (John 10:27-28.)” (The</p>	

**Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982], 182.)** Alma 13:3 And this is the manner after which they were ordained—being <sup>a</sup>called and <sup>b</sup>prepared from the <sup>c</sup>foundation of the world (As in the Grand Council in Heaven Christ was called and ordained to his earthly ministry, so were all who minister in his name first called in heavenly councils, where they too were ordained to labors that would be theirs in mortality. TPJS, p. 365. None were called to offices for which they had not been properly prepared. In teaching this principle, Alma’s reference is to men like Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and many other faithful priesthood holders of the earth’s early history. Modern revelation uses as illustrations Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, and Wilford Woodruff. These, we were told, were “among the noble and great ones who were chosen in the beginning to be rulers in the Church of God. Even before they were born, they with many others, received their first lessons in the world of spirits and were prepared to come forth in the due time of the Lord to labor in the vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men. DCBM, 3:94.) according to the <sup>d</sup>foreknowledge of God, (“**Brigham Young and Willard Richards explained that the general principle of election means that God elected or chose certain individuals in our premortal state to receive certain blessings, or to perform certain works, while in mortality (HC 4:258).** According to the Book of Mormon, one great foreordained appointment or blessing was to receive the Melchizedek priesthood (Alma 13:3-9). Since we know that the greatest of all the gifts or blessings which God can bestow is eternal life (D&C 14:7), it follows that the greatest foreordained calling or appointment that could be received in the premortal existence was to eternal life. (*Book of Mormon Symposium Series*, edited by PR Cheesman, MS Nyman, and CD Tate, Jr., 1988, Hel 3 – 3 Ne 8, p. 115) Bruce R. McConkie: “**Since men are foreordained to gain exaltation, and since no man can be exalted without the priesthood, it is almost self-evident that worthy brethren were foreordained to receive the priesthood.** And so we find Alma teaching that those who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood in this life were ‘called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God.’ (Alma 13:1-12.) And Joseph Smith said, ‘Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world,’ and this includes all who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood, ‘was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was. I suppose that I was ordained to this very office in that Grand Council.’ (*Teachings*, p. 365.)” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 329) Neal A. Maxwell: “**Yet, though foreordination is a difficult doctrine, it has been given to us by the living God, through living prophets, for a purpose. It can increase our understanding of how crucial this mortal second estate is and encourage us in good works. This precious doctrine can help us go the second mile because we are doubly called. When we mortals try to comprehend rather than to accept foreordination, finite minds are trying to comprehend omniscience. A full understanding is impossible; we simply have to trust in what the Lord has told us, knowing that we are not dealing with guarantees from God, but extra opportunities and heavy responsibilities.**” (*Things As They Really Are*, p. 24) Spencer W. Kimball: “Remember, in the world before we came here, faithful women were given certain assignments while faithful men were foreordained to certain priesthood tasks. While we do not now remember the particulars, this does not alter the glorious reality of what we once agreed to.” (*Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p. 316 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 267)) **on account of their exceeding faith and good works;** (Those designated in heavenly councils as “noble and great” had proven themselves even in the pre-earth estate. To suppose that in our spirit existence prior to mortal birth we walked exclusively by sight, never having to exercise faith, is to misunderstand the purpose of that existence as a training ground for mortality. Those born into this life with the gift of faith merited that blessing, for we are told that there is a law “irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated.” D&C 130:20. Good works were also requisite for such high and holy foreordinations. Surely there is no better preparation for exercising faith and doing good works in the second estate than actually exercising faith and doing good works in the first. DCBM, 3:94-95.) **in the first place (first estate) being left to <sup>e</sup>choose good or evil;** (This phrase affirms the



existence of good, evil, and agency in our first estate. The scriptural declaration that God gave us agency in that estate also attests to the existence of good and evil, for without these agency would have been a needless gift. DCBM, 3:95) therefore they having chosen good, and exercising exceedingly great <sup>f</sup>faith, are <sup>g</sup>called with a holy calling, (Foreordinations to the higher priesthood.) yea, with that holy calling which was prepared with, and according to, a preparatory redemption for such. (“All doctrines, ordinances, and powers associated with the gospel of Jesus Christ assume force and meaning only in and through Christ’s atoning sacrifice. Such was the plan prepared before the foundation of the earth. Men are called to receive the priesthood to assist in the redemption of souls. They are called to preach and make available what Paul described as the ‘ministry of reconciliation’ (2 Corinthians 5:18). They are called to bless lives-to lighten burdens, to strengthen the feeble knees and lift up the hands that hang down-just as their Master, the great high priest, is called upon to do. The priesthood bearers before and after Christ are thus involved in the work of his ministry. Their work is preparatory. They, like the preeminent forerunner, John the Baptist, prepare the way of the Lord. Those prophets and priests who labored before the meridian of time sought to prepare mankind for the coming of the Redeemer. In the words of Elder Bruce R. McConkie: ‘They could preach redemption; they could foretell its coming; but their work was preparatory only. Redemption itself would come through the ministry of Him of whom they were but types and shadows.’ (*Promised Messiah*, p. 451.) Those who have lived since that time seek to instruct and warn and exhort mankind-all in preparation for his second advent, that final redemption of the earth and its inhabitants.” (McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, p. 95) I fear there are many among us who because of the faithfulness in the spirit world were called to do a great work here, but like reckless spendthrifts they are exercising their free agency in riotous living and are losing their birthright and the blessings that were theirs had they proved faithful to their calling. Hence as the Lord has said, there are many called but few are chosen. Harold B. Lee, *Decisions for Successful Living*, p. 168-69.)

4 And thus they have been <sup>a</sup>called to this holy calling on account of their faith, while others would reject the Spirit of God on account of the hardness of their hearts and <sup>b</sup>blindness of their minds, (The voice of the Spirit speaks to us in our hearts and minds. Gospel understanding can be neither heartless nor mindless. Neither feeling nor intellect, standing alone, is sufficient to bring the understanding and faith essential to salvation. Thus in the pre-earth life those who rejected the fullness of gospel blessings did it as it is done in mortality, that, is by ignoring the feelings of their hearts and by closing the windows of their minds to light and truth. DCBM, 3:96) while, if it had not been for this they might have had as great <sup>c</sup>privilege as their brethren. (We would suppose that in our pre-earth existence all persons had the opportunity to exercise faith and involved themselves in works of righteousness. Those so doing obtained a birthright to the blessings of the priesthood as Abraham’s seed. Before the day of judgment, that opportunity will again be extended, and again it will become the privilege of those men exercising faith and doing works of righteousness to have the priesthood conferred upon them. DCBM, 3:95.)

5 Or in fine, in the first place (first estate) they were on the <sup>a</sup>same standing with their brethren; (All men in the pre-existence could have received the priesthood if they had been worthy in their first estate. God gave his children their free agency even in the spirit world, by which the individual spirits had the privilege, just as men have here, of choosing the good and rejecting the evil, or partaking of the evil to suffer the consequences of their sins. Because of this, some even there were more faithful than others in keeping the commandments of the Lord. Some were of greater intelligence than others, as we find it here, and were honored accordingly...The spirits of men had their free agency, some were greater than others, and from among them the Father called and foreordained his prophets and rulers...The spirits of men were not equal. They may have had an equal start, and we know they were all innocent in the beginning; but the right of free agency which was given to them enabled some to outstrip others, and thus, through the eons of immortal existence, to become more intelligent, more faithful, for they were free to act for themselves, to think for themselves, to receive the truth or rebel against it. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:58-59) thus this holy calling being prepared from the foundation of the

world for such as would not harden their hearts, being in and through the atonement of the Only Begotten Son, who was prepared—

6 And thus being called by this holy calling, and ordained unto the high priesthood of the holy order of God (There are two meanings of the title high priest. First, high priest is one of the ordained offices in the Melchizedek Priesthood. Second, God’s chief representative on earth, the one who holds the highest spiritual position in his kingdom in any age, is called the high priest. This special designation of the chief spiritual officer of the Church has reference to the administrative position which he holds rather than to the office to which he is ordained in the priesthood. MD, p. 355-56. DCBM, 3:96), to teach his commandments (The Melchizedek Priesthood, Joseph Smith taught, “is the channel through which all knowledge, doctrine, the plan of salvation and every important matter is revealed from heaven. TPJS, p. 166-67, DCBM, 3:97) unto the children of men, that they also might enter into his <sup>a</sup>rest—

7 This high priesthood being after the order of his Son, which order was from the foundation of the world; or in other words, being <sup>a</sup>without beginning of days or end of years, (Joseph Smith: “The Priesthood is an everlasting principle, and existed with God from eternity, and will to eternity, without beginning of days or end of years. The keys have to be brought from heaven whenever the Gospel is sent. When they are revealed from heaven, it is by Adam’s authority.” (*Teachings*, p. 157)) being prepared from <sup>b</sup>eternity to all eternity, according to his <sup>c</sup>foreknowledge of all things— (Why were some spirits sent to earth among the Amalekites, the Assyrians, and the Babylonians, while others at the same moments found birth in the house of Israel? Why was Antipas sent as the son of a debauched and evil Herod, while John the Baptist came into the home of a priestly Zacharias and a saintly Elisabeth? All of these things operate by law; they are the outgrowth of long years of personal preparation in preexistence on the part of each individual; they come to pass according to the laws that the Lord has ordained. This second estate is a continuation of our first estate; we are born here with the talents and capacities acquired there. **Abraham was one of the noble and great spirits in the premortal life. He was chosen for his mortal ministry and position before he was born, and as with the father of the faithful so with all of the spirits destined to be born as his seed. The greatest and most important talent or capacity that any of the spirit children of the Father could gain is the talent of spirituality. Most of those who gained this talent were chosen, before they were born, to come to earth as members of the house of Israel. They were foreordained to receive the blessings that the Lord promised to Abraham and to his seed in all their generations. This foreordination is an election, Paul tells us, and truly it is so, for those so chosen, selected, or elected become, in this life, the favored people. Though all mankind may be saved by obedience, some find it easier to believe and obey than others. Hence the concept, taught by Jesus, that his sheep know his voice and will not follow the dissident voices of the world.** (Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, p.512 p.513))

12 Now, after the Lord had withdrawn from speaking to me, and withdrawn his face from me, I said in my heart: Thy servant has <sup>a</sup>sought thee earnestly; now I have found thee;

(So we seek the Lord earnestly?)

13 Thou didst send thine angel to <sup>a</sup>deliver me from the gods of Elkenah, and I will do well to hearken unto thy voice, therefore let thy servant rise up and depart in peace.

14 So I, Abraham, departed as the Lord had said unto me, and Lot with me; and I, Abraham, was <sup>a</sup>sixty and two years old when I departed out of Haran.

4 So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was <sup>a</sup>seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

15 And I took Sarai, whom I took to wife when I was in Ur, in Chaldea, and Lot, my brother’s son,

5 And Abram took <sup>a</sup>Sarai his wife, and <sup>b</sup>Lot his <sup>c</sup>brother’s son, and all their substance that they had

and all our substance that we had gathered, and <b>the souls that we had <sup>a</sup>won in Haran, (Abraham was successful in his missionary work to have converts whom he brought with him.)</b> and came forth in the way to the land of Canaan, and dwelt in tents as we came on our way;	gathered, and the souls that they had <sup>d</sup> gotten (Heb made; i.e. converted) in <sup>c</sup> Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.
16 Therefore, <sup>a</sup> eternity was our covering and our <sup>b</sup> rock and our salvation, as we journeyed from Haran by the way of <sup>c</sup> Jershon, to come to the land of Canaan. 17 Now I, Abraham, built an <sup>a</sup> altar in the land of Jershon, and made an offering unto the Lord, and prayed that the <sup>b</sup> famine might be turned away from my father's house, that they might not perish.	
18 And then we passed from Jershon through the land unto the place of Sechem; it was situated in the plains of Moreh, and we had already come into the borders of the land of the <sup>a</sup> Canaanites, and I offered <sup>b</sup> sacrifice there in the plains of Moreh, and called on the Lord devoutly, because we had already come into the land of this idolatrous nation.	6 ¶ And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, <del>unto</del> (and) the plain of Moreh. And the <sup>a</sup> Canaanite was (were) then in the land.
19 And (2) <b>the Lord <sup>a</sup>appeared unto me</b> in answer to my prayers, and said unto me: Unto thy seed will I give this <sup>b</sup> land.	7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, <sup>a</sup> Unto thy <sup>b</sup> seed will I give this <sup>c</sup> land: and there builded he an <sup>d</sup> altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.
20 And I, Abraham, arose from the place of the altar which I had built unto the Lord, and removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of <sup>a</sup> Bethel, and pitched my tent there, Bethel on the west, and <sup>b</sup> Hai on the east; and there I built another <sup>c</sup> altar unto the Lord, and <sup>d</sup> called again upon the name of the Lord.	8 And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of <sup>a</sup> Beth-el, and pitched his tent, <b>having (leaving)</b> <sup>b</sup> Beth-el on the west, and <sup>c</sup> Hai (or Ai) on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and <sup>d</sup> called upon the <sup>c</sup> name of the LORD.

## 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~~, (3) **the LORD <sup>a</sup>appeared to <sup>b</sup>Abram**, and said unto him, I ~~am~~ the <sup>c</sup>Almighty God(, give unto thee a commandment; that thou shalt) <sup>d</sup>walk (uprightly) before me, and be ~~thou~~ <sup>e</sup>perfect.  
2 And I will make my <sup>a</sup>covenant between me and thee, and (I) will multiply thee exceedingly.  
3 <sup>a</sup>And (it came to pass, that) Abram fell on his face: (and called upon the name of the Lord.) And God talked with him, saying, (My people have gone astray from my precepts, and have not kept mine ordinances, which I gave unto their fathers; And they have not observed mine anointing, and the burial,

or baptism wherewith I commanded them; But have turned from the commandment, and taken unto themselves the washing of children, and the blood of sprinkling; And have said that the blood of the righteous Abel was shed for sins; and have not known wherein they are accountable before me.)

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

5 (And this covenant I make, that thy children may be known among all nations.) Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be <sup>a</sup>Abraham; **(Abram is given a new name:**

**Conversion to Judaism is always accompanied by giving a new name. For men, it is usually Abraham or Ben Avraham (son of Abraham). When blessings are given for health, at marriages, and at other festive occasions, often the “new” or “special” name is used.** Old Testament Supplementary Study Materials, p. 13) for a father of many nations have I made thee.

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

7 <sup>a</sup>And I will establish (a covenant of circumcision with thee, and it shall be) my <sup>b</sup>covenant between me and thee(,) and thy seed after thee(,) in their generations for an <sup>c</sup>everlasting covenant, to (that thou mayest know for ever that children are not accountable before me until they are eight years old. And thou shalt observe to keep all my commandments wherein I covenanted with thy fathers; and thou shalt keep the commandments which I have given thee with mine own mouth, and I will) be a <sup>d</sup>God unto thee, and ~~to~~ thy seed after thee.

8 And I will <sup>a</sup>give unto thee, and ~~to~~ thy seed after thee, ~~the~~ (a) <sup>b</sup>land wherein thou art a <sup>c</sup>stranger, all the <sup>d</sup>land of <sup>e</sup>Canaan, for an everlasting <sup>f</sup>possession; and I will be their <sup>g</sup>God.

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)

Additional Reading:

## GENESIS CHAPTER 15

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

1 (And it came to pass, that) AFTER these things(,) the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a <sup>a</sup>vision, saying, <sup>b</sup>Fear not, Abram: I ~~am~~ (will be) thy <sup>c</sup>shield, ~~and~~ (I will be) thy exceeding great reward. (And according to the blessings of my servant, I will give unto thee.)

2 And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and ~~the steward of my house is this~~ Eliezer of Damascus (was made the steward of my house)?

3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, <sup>a</sup>one born in my house (Heb a son of



my house) is mine heir.

4 And, behold, the word of the LORD *came* unto him (again), saying, This shall (shalt) not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

5 And he brought him forth abroad, and (he) said, Look now toward heaven, and <sup>a</sup>tell (Heb count) the <sup>b</sup>stars, if thou be able to <sup>c</sup>number them: (.) And he said unto him, So shall thy <sup>d</sup>seed be. (And Abram said, Lord God, how wilt thou give me this land for an everlasting inheritance? And the Lord said, Though thou wast dead, yet am I not able to give it thee? And if thou shalt die, yet thou shalt possess it, for the day cometh, that the Son of Man shall live; but how can he live if he be not dead? He must first be quickened.)

6 (And it came to pass, that Abram looked forth and saw the days of the Son of Man, and was glad, and his soul found rest,) <sup>a</sup>And he <sup>b</sup>believed in the LORD; and he (the Lord) counted it (un)to him for <sup>c</sup>righteousness.

7 And he (the Lord) said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to <sup>a</sup>inherit it.

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

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

10 And he took unto him all these, and (he) <sup>a</sup>divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

18 (And) In the (that) same day the LORD made a <sup>a</sup>covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this <sup>b</sup>land, from <sup>c</sup>the river of Egypt (ie the Wadi El Arish in northern Sinai) unto the great river, the river <sup>d</sup>Euphrates:

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

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

21 And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

## THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS SECTION 131

(Doctrine and Covenants 131 consists of three different doctrinal statements made by the Prophet Joseph Smith while visiting members of the Church in Ramus, Illinois. They were recorded by his personal scribe, William Clayton, who was among those who accompanied him. The History of the Church reads as follows: "Tuesday, 16.—At eleven o'clock, with George Miller, William Clayton, Eliza and Lydia Partridge and J. M. Smith, I started for Carthage where we tarried about half-an-hour conversing with different individuals, when we started for Ramus; arrived about half-past three, p. m., and stayed at



William G. Perkins for the evening; then went to Benjamin F. Johnson's with William Clayton to sleep. Before retiring, I gave Brother and Sister Johnson some instructions on the priesthood; and putting my hand on the knee of William Clayton, I said: Your life is hid with Christ in God, and so are many others. Nothing but the unpardonable sin can prevent you from inheriting eternal life for you are sealed up by the power of the Priesthood unto eternal life, having taken the step necessary for that purpose. "Except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity, while in this probation, by the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood, they will cease to increase when they die; that is, they will not have any children after the resurrection. But those who are married by the power and authority of the priesthood in this life, and continue without committing the sin against the Holy Ghost, will continue to increase and have children in the celestial glory. The unpardonable sin is to shed innocent blood, or be accessory thereto. All other sins will be visited with judgment in the flesh, and the spirit being delivered to the buffetings of Satan until the day of the Lord Jesus. "The way I know in whom to confide—God tells me in whom I may place confidence" (Smith, History of the Church, 5:391-92). Then followed verses 1 through 4 as found in Doctrine and Covenants 131.)

*Instructions by Joseph Smith the Prophet, given at Ramus, Illinois, (about 20 miles from Nauvoo) May 16 and 17, 1843. HC 5: 392—393.*

*1—4, Celestial marriage is essential to exaltation in the highest heaven; 5—6, How men are sealed up unto eternal life; 7—8, All spirit is matter.*

1 **IN the <sup>a</sup>celestial glory** (Orson Pratt: The earth will have to pass away the same as our bodies do, and the dust thereof be mingled in a chaotic form. But that same being who organized the earth will again speak, and eternity will again hear his voice, and the materials of our earth will come together again, and when it unites them in one, and forms them into a world, it will be a glorious world, a habitation for immortal beings; for kings and for priests, and for those that have been faithful to the end. [Sec. 88:87-90.] (JD, March 9, 1879, 20:155.) **there are three <sup>b</sup>heavens or degrees;** (The Lord has not revealed to the Church who will live in two of the three degrees in the celestial kingdom. Any discussion on this topic is speculation. Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual, p. 325)

2 **And in order to obtain the <sup>a</sup>highest, a man must enter into this <sup>b</sup>order (patriarchal) of the <sup>c</sup>priesthood [meaning the new and <sup>d</sup>everlasting covenant of <sup>e</sup>marriage];** (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.))

3 And if he does not, he cannot obtain it. (Exaltation is obtained only by couples, not singly.)

4 He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an <sup>a</sup>increase. ("Except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity, while in this probation, by the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood, they will cease to increase when they die; that is, they will not have any children after the resurrection" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 300-301). Melvin J. Ballard: What do we mean by endless or eternal increase? We mean that through the righteousness and faithfulness of men and women who keep the commandments of God they will come forth with celestial bodies, fitted and prepared to enter into their great, high and eternal glory in the celestial kingdom of God; and unto them, through their preparation, there will come children, who will be spirit children. I don't think that is very difficult to comprehend and understand. The nature of the offspring is determined by the nature of the substance that flows in the veins of the being. When blood flows in the veins of the being, the offspring will be what blood produces, which is tangible flesh and bone, but when that which flows in the veins is spirit matter, a substance which is more refined and pure and glorious than blood, the offspring of such beings will be spirit children. By that I mean they will be in the image of the parents. They will have a spirit body and have a spark of the eternal or divine that always did exist in them. (Sermons and Missionary Services of Melvin J. Ballard, 1949, pp. 239-40.))

## SECTION 132

*Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Nauvoo, Illinois, recorded July 12, 1843, relating to the new and everlasting covenant, including the eternity of the marriage covenant, as also plurality of wives. HC 5: 501—507. Although the revelation was recorded in 1843, it is evident from the historical records that the doctrines and principles involved in this revelation had been known by the Prophet since 1831. (Joseph had been translating the Bible and wondered how the patriarchs were justified in having plural wives. This revelation was dictated to William Clayton.)*

*1—6, Exaltation is gained through the new and everlasting covenant; 7—14, The terms and conditions of that covenant are set forth; 15—20, Celestial marriage and a continuation of the family unit enable men to become gods; 21—25, The strait and narrow way that leads to eternal lives; 26—27, Law given relative to blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; 28—39, Promises of eternal increase and exaltation made to prophets and saints in all ages; 40—47, Joseph Smith is given the power to bind and seal on earth and in heaven; 48—50, The Lord seals upon him his exaltation; 51—57, Emma Smith is counseled to be faithful and true; 58—66, Laws governing the plurality of wives are set forth.*

1 VERILY, thus saith the Lord unto you my servant Joseph, that inasmuch as you have inquired of my hand to know and understand wherein I, the Lord, justified my servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as also Moses, David and Solomon, my servants, as touching the principle and doctrine of their having many <sup>a</sup>wives and <sup>b</sup>concubines—

2 Behold, and lo, I am the Lord thy God, and will answer thee as touching this matter.

3 Therefore, <sup>a</sup>prepare thy heart to receive and <sup>b</sup>obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same.

4 For behold, I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting <sup>a</sup>covenant; (What is the “new and everlasting covenant?” Joseph Fielding Smith: Each ordinance of the Gospel is a covenant which is new and everlasting. It is new and everlasting because it is divine truth and never grows old. . . . This was said of baptism, and the Lord calls it "a new and an everlasting covenant, even that which was from the beginning." (Sec. 22:1.) It is so with all the covenants and obligations in the Gospel which pertain to salvation and exaltation of man. . . . President Brigham Young has said, that "All Latter-day Saints enter the new and everlasting covenant when they enter the Church. . . ." (Discourses of Brigham Young, pp. 247-248.) There are some members of the Church who seem to think that the new and everlasting covenant is the covenant of celestial marriage, or marriage for eternity, but this is not so. Marriage for eternity is an everlasting covenant, and like the Lord said of baptism, we may say of marriage, it is a new as well as an everlasting covenant because it was from the beginning. It will be, if properly performed according to the law of the Lord, eternal. In the opening verses of Section 132, the Lord draws a distinction between a new and everlasting covenant and the new and everlasting covenant. While the definition is given in the negative form, it is plainly discernible that the new and everlasting covenant is the fulness of the Gospel. In the words of the Lord, [Sec. 132:7, quoted] . (CHMR, 1948, 2:157-58.) Marriage, when performed by the authority of God, is here announced to be "a" new and "an" everlasting covenant. In like manner, baptism is "a" new and "an" everlasting covenant (D&C 22:1) as are all other "covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations" intended to be of "efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection" (v. 7). The composite or sum of these individual covenants is "the" new and everlasting covenant. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1059) and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye <sup>b</sup>damned; for no one can <sup>c</sup>reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory. (Spencer W. Kimball: I am aware of some young men and women who seemingly have not been successful in total fulfillment. Some have been on missions; some have completed their education. And yet they have passed the period of their greatest opportunity for marriage. The time has passed, and while still attractive and desirable and

efficient, they find themselves alone. To you we say this: You are making a great contribution to the world as you serve your families and the Church and the world. You must remember that the Lord loves you and the Church loves you. To you women, we can only say we have no control over the heartbeats or the affections of men, but pray that you may find fulfillment. And in the meantime, we promise you that insofar as eternity is concerned, no soul will be deprived of rich and high and eternal blessings for anything which that person could not help, that the Lord never fails in his promises, and that every righteous person will receive eventually all to which the person is entitled and which he or she has not forfeited through any fault of his or her own. We encourage both men and women to keep themselves well-groomed, well-dressed, abreast of the times, attractive mentally, spiritually, physically, and especially morally, and then they can lean heavily upon the Lord's promises for these heavenly blessings. Ensign, Oct, 1979, p. 5)

5 For all who will have a <sup>a</sup>blessing at my hands shall abide the <sup>b</sup>law which was appointed for that blessing, and the conditions thereof, as were instituted from before the foundation of the world. ("There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated" (D&C 130:20-21). "The law" to which reference is made in this revelation is the law of the holy priesthood (v. 38), or eternal marriage. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1059. Referring to our premortal life, President Spencer W. Kimball said, "We committed ourselves to our Heavenly Father, that if He would send us to the earth and give us bodies and give to us the priceless opportunities that earth life afforded, we would keep our lives clean and would marry in the holy temple and would rear a family and teach them righteousness. This was a solemn oath, a solemn promise" ("Be Ye Therefore Perfect," 2).)

6 And as pertaining to the new and <sup>a</sup>everlasting covenant, it was instituted for the fulness of my <sup>b</sup>glory; and he that receiveth a fulness thereof must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned, (stopped in one's progress) saith the Lord God. (It is in and through the new and everlasting covenant that we obtain the fulness of God's glory. There is no salvation independent of such a covenant (v. 31). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1060)

7 And verily I say unto you, that the <sup>a</sup>conditions of this law are these: All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, <sup>b</sup>oaths, <sup>c</sup>vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and <sup>d</sup>sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, (It is not enough to receive an ordinance. For any ordinance to be valid, it must be ratified by the Holy Ghost, making it of efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection. For an ordinance and its promised blessings to stand approved in the eternal world it must pass a threefold test. First, it must have a divine origin—it must be of God's making, not of man's; second, it must be performed by one in authority, under the direction of the keys or presidency of the appropriate priesthood; third, it must receive the seal of the Holy Spirit of promise. That is, the Holy Ghost—who cannot be deceived—must attest that the one seeking the promised blessing lived in compliance with the terms of the covenant he or she made. "All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations" that we desire to have in a future world must be approved by the Holy Ghost (D&C 132:7). This principle assures that there will be no unearned blessings in the heavenly realms. One might deceive a bishop or other ecclesiastical leader and thereby obtain the promise to a blessing in mortality for which he or she is not worthy (for instance, baptism, priesthood, the endowment, temple marriage), but no one will deceive the Holy Ghost. The promises given to those unworthy to receive them will have no effect on the other side of the veil, for the performance involved will not bear the approving seal of the Holy Ghost. On the other hand, those who have received all the ordinances of salvation—each of them bearing the seal of the Holy Spirit of promise— have the sure promise of salvation. The Holy Ghost may place his approving seal on the various ordinances of salvation as we enter into them; then when we have received all the ordinances of salvation and have received the seal on all those ordinances, we have essentially received the sure promise of exaltation. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 528-29. Bruce R. McConkie: One of the



functions assigned and delegated to the Holy spirit is to seal, and the following expressions are identical in thought content: To be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise; To be justified by the Spirit; To be approved by the Lord; and To be ratified by the Holy Ghost. Accordingly, any act which is sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise is one which is justified by the Spirit, one which is approved by the Lord, one which is ratified by the Holy Ghost. One of Paul's great concerns was that the saints in his day should be justified by faith, through grace, because of the shedding of the blood of Christ. (Commentary II, pp. 224-240.) In other words, he sought to perfect the lives of those souls put into his care and custody so that, as a result of good works, all their acts would have divine approval and be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise. As revealed to Joseph Smith, the Lord's law in this respect is: "All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, of him who is anointed, both as well for time and for all eternity, and that too most holy, by revelation and commandment through the medium of mine anointed, whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this power (and I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days, and there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred), are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead." (D. & C. 132:7.) By way of illustration, this means that baptism, partaking of the sacrament, administering to the sick, marriage, and every covenant that man ever makes with the Lord—plus all other "contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, associations, or expectations"—must be performed in righteousness by and for people who are worthy to receive whatever blessing is involved, otherwise whatever is done has no binding and sealing effect in eternity. Since "the Comforter knoweth all things" (D. & C. 42:17), it follows that it is not possible "to lie to the Holy Ghost" and thereby gain an unearned or undeserved blessing, as Ananias and Sapphira found out to their sorrow. (Acts 5:1-11.) And so this provision that all things must be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, if they are to have "efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead" (D. & C. 132:7), is the Lord's system for dealing with absolute impartiality with all men, and for giving all men exactly what they merit, neither adding to nor diminishing from. See Commentary II, pp. 493-495. DNTC, 3:333-35) of him who is <sup>e</sup>anointed, both as well for time and for all eternity, and that too most holy, by <sup>f</sup>revelation and commandment through the medium of mine anointed, whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this <sup>g</sup>power (and I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this <sup>h</sup>power in the last days, and there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the <sup>i</sup>keys of this priesthood are conferred), (This refers to Joseph Smith and, by implication, his rightful successors in the office of president of the high priesthood, or president of the Church. Though the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve all hold the keys of the kingdom, they can exercise those keys only under the direction of their president, who is referred to repeatedly in this revelation as "him who is anointed." Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1060) are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead.

8 Behold, mine house is a house of <sup>a</sup>order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion.

9 Will I <sup>a</sup>accept of an offering, saith the Lord, that is not made in my name?

10 Or will I receive at your hands that which I have not <sup>a</sup>appointed?

11 And will I appoint unto you, saith the Lord, except it be by law, even as I and my Father <sup>a</sup>ordained unto you, before the world was? (Having announced that his house is one of order, the Lord here asks three questions to illustrate the point. "Will I," he asks, "accept of an offering that is not made in my name?" Were he to do so, he would negate the purpose of priesthood authority. Priesthood authority is either necessary or it is not, we cannot have it both ways. If everyone had the right to act in the name of the Lord, then salvation would simply be an individual matter. There could be no collective salvation, or kingdom of God, in the worlds to come, for there would be no universal standard as to who could be admitted and who must be excluded. There could be neither good nor evil, right nor wrong. The idea denies the very existence of God for, as Lehi explained, "If ye shall say there is no law, ye shall also say



there is no sin. If ye shall say there is no sin, ye shall also say there is no righteousness. And if there be no righteousness there be no happiness. And if there be no righteousness nor happiness there be no punishment nor misery. And if these things are not there is no God. And if there is no God we are not, neither the earth; for there could have been no creation of things, neither to act nor to be acted upon; wherefore, all things must have vanished away" (2 Nephi 2:13). In the second of his three questions, the Lord asks, "Will I receive that . . . which I have not appointed?" To respond in the affirmative would be to liken the system of salvation to a flea market where we barter and trade for the blessings of salvation. The price of such blessings would be subject to inflation or deflation; one man could pay for them with his life, while another might obtain them for simply saying, "Praise the Lord, I believe." The third question emphasizes the eternal nature of the gospel. The Lord asks, "Will I appoint unto you anything that did not accord with the laws and ordinances of the gospel as they have existed since before the world was created?" If God were at liberty to change the terms that constitute the covenant of salvation as he may choose, we would be without any sure knowledge that the course we were following was approved by him. The example of one man would be of no value to another in such a circumstance, nor would there be any particular value in scripture, for the word of the Lord may prove to be of no more worth than that of a scheming scoundrel. Only the knowledge that God is constant, that he changes not, that all principles that flow from him are everlastingly the same, enables us to exercise faith in him. If God is not a God of order, he is no God at all. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1060-61)

12 I am the Lord thy God; and I give unto you this commandment—that no man shall <sup>a</sup>come unto the Father but by me or by my word, which is my law, saith the Lord.

13 And everything that is in the world, whether it be ordained of men, by <sup>a</sup>thrones, or principalities, or powers, or things of name, whatsoever they may be, that are not by me or by my word, saith the Lord, shall be thrown down, and shall <sup>b</sup>not remain after men are dead, neither in nor after the resurrection, saith the Lord your God.

14 For whatsoever things remain are by me; and whatsoever things are not by me shall be shaken and destroyed.

15 Therefore, if a <sup>a</sup>man marry him a wife in the world, and he marry her not by me nor by my word, and he covenant with her so long as he is in the world and she with him, their covenant and marriage are not of force when they are dead, and when they are out of the world; therefore, they are not bound by any law when they are out of the world. (Harold B. Lee: The one officiating by authority of the law of the land pronounced you legally and lawfully husband and wife "Until death do you part." There they stand clearly before you—Death and Separation. You who are parties to a civil ceremony are to be married only during the period of your mortal lives. At death your marriage contract is to be dissolved and you are to be permanently separated or divorced from each other in the next life. Not only must this thought be a startling consideration, but if there be children and family life that too must end with death.

According to the Lord's revelation, all manmade "covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations . . . are of no efficacy, virtue or force in and after the resurrection from the dead . . . and have an end when men are dead." (D&C 132:7.) D&C 132

15 Even though the legal officer or minister had declared you to be husband and wife for "time and all eternity," unless he had the authority so to speak, then that promise or contract would "not be valid, neither of force when they are out of the world." (Ibid., 132:18.) The Master told Peter and the other apostles of a power beyond that of man which he called the "keys to the kingdom of heaven," and by this power he said, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." (Matt. 16:19.) That power and authority, by which holy ordinances are administered, is known as the holy priesthood and is always to be found in the Church of Jesus Christ in every dispensation of the gospel upon the earth. (Youth and the Church, 1945, pp. 125-26.)

16 Therefore, when they are out of the world they neither marry nor are given in <sup>a</sup>marriage; but are appointed angels in <sup>b</sup>heaven, which angels are ministering <sup>c</sup>servants, to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory. (Orson Pratt: You will clearly

perceive, from the revelation which God has given, that you can never obtain a fulness of glory, without being married to a righteous man for time and for all eternity. If you marry a man who receives not the gospel, you lay a foundation for sorrow in this world, besides losing the privilege of enjoying the society of a husband in eternity. You forfeit your right to an endless increase of immortal lives. And even children which you may be favored with in this life, will not be entrusted to your charge in eternity, but you will be left in that world without a husband, without a family, without a kingdom, without any means of enlarging yourselves, being subject to the principalities and powers who are counted worthy of families, and kingdoms, and thrones, and the increase of dominions forever. To them you will be servants and angels—that is, provided that your conduct should be such as to secure this measure of glory. [Sec. 131:1-4.] Can it be possible that any females, after knowing these things, will suffer themselves to keep company with persons out of this Church? It matters not how great the morality of such persons may be, nor how kind they may be to you, they are not numbered with the people of God; they are not in the way of salvation, they cannot save themselves, you cannot be justified, for one moment, in keeping their company. (MS, September 3, 1853, 15:584.) Wilford Woodruff: A man has married a woman, and they have a family of children. The man lays [sic.] down in death without ever hearing the Gospel. His wife afterwards hears the Gospel and embraces it. She comes to the temple and she wants to be sealed to her husband, who was a good man. . . . Why deprive a woman of being sealed to her husband because he never heard the Gospel? What do any of us know with regard to him? Will he not hear the Gospel and embrace it in the spirit world? Now, suppose that any of these [Joseph Smith's relatives] had died before they had the opportunity of entering into the covenant with the Lord through the Gospel, as his brother Alvin did; they would have been in the same position as Alvin, concerning whom the Lord, when Joseph saw him in the celestial kingdom, said: "All who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God; Also all that shall die henceforth without a knowledge of it, who would have received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of that kingdom; for I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts." [Joseph Smith—Vision 7-9.] So it will be with your fathers. There will be very few, if any, who will not accept the Gospel. (MS, March 5, 1894, 56:339-40.))

17 For these angels did not abide my law; therefore, they cannot (They are limited by their own choices.) be enlarged, but remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity; and from henceforth are not gods, but are <sup>a</sup>angels of God forever and ever.

18 And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife, and make a covenant with her for time and for all eternity, if that <sup>a</sup>covenant is not by me or by my word, which is my law, and is not sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, through him whom I have anointed and appointed unto this power, then it is not valid neither of force when they are out of the world, because they are not joined by me, saith the Lord, neither by my word; when they are out of the world it cannot be received there, because the angels and the gods are appointed there, by whom they cannot pass; they cannot, therefore, inherit my glory; for my house is a house of order, saith the Lord God. (Le Grand Richards: The following statement by Jesus has been very much misunderstood: The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him, Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren; and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven: For they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. (Matt. 22:23-30.) The late Dr. James E. Talmage of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained the Savior's answer to the question of the Sadducees, who deny there is any resurrection: The Lord's meaning was clear, that in the resurrected state there can be no question among the seven brothers as to whose wife for eternity the

woman shall be, since all except the first had married her for the duration of mortal life only, and primarily for the purpose of perpetuating in mortality the name and family of the brother who first died. Luke records the Lord's words as follows in part: "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels: and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." In the resurrection there will be no marrying nor giving in marriage; for all questions of marital status must be settled before that time, under the authority of the Holy Priesthood, which holds the power to seal in marriage for both time and eternity. (James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, p. 548.) To this explanation add the Lord's own words in a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith at Nauvoo, Illinois, recorded July 12, 1843, relating to the new and everlasting covenant of marriage: [Sec. 132:15-18, quoted.] Jesus must have had this very thought in mind when he answered the Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection and whose marriage vows were for this world only. (A *Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, 1950, pp. 172-73.) Spencer W. Kimball: How final! How frightening! Since we know well that mortal death does not terminate our existence, since we know that we live on and on, how devastating to realize that marriage and family life, so sweet and happy in so many homes, will end with death because we fail to follow God's instructions or because we reject his word when we understand it. It is clear in the Lord's announcement that righteous men and women will receive the due rewards of their deeds. They will not be damned in the commonly accepted terminology but will suffer many limitations and deprivations and fail to reach the highest kingdom, if they do not comply. They become ministering servants to those who complied with all laws and lived all commandments. He then continues concerning these excellent people who lived worthily but failed to make their contracts binding: "For these angels did not abide my law; therefore, they cannot be enlarged, but remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity; and from henceforth are not gods, but are angels of God forever and ever." (D&C 132:17.) How conclusive! How bounded! How limiting! And we come to realize again as it bears heavily upon us that this time, this life, this mortality is the time to prepare to meet God. How lonely and barren will be the so-called single blessedness throughout eternity! How sad to be separate and single and apart through countless ages when one could, by meeting requirements, have happy marriage for eternity in the temple by proper authority and continue on in ever-increasing joy and happiness, growth and development toward godhood. Are you willing to jeopardize your eternities, your great continuing happiness, your privilege to see God and dwell in his presence? For the want of investigation and study and contemplation; because of prejudice, misunderstanding, or lack of knowledge, are you willing to forego these great blessings and privileges? Are you willing to make yourself a widow for eternity or a widower for endless ages—a single, separate individual to live alone and serve others? Are you willing to give up your children when they die or when you expire, and make them orphans? Are you willing to go through eternity alone and solitary when all of the greatest joys you have ever experienced in life could be "added upon" and accentuated, multiplied, and eternalized? Are you willing, with the Sadducees, to ignore and reject these great truths? I sincerely pray you stop today and weigh and measure and then prayerfully proceed to make your happy marriage an eternal one. Our friends, please do not ignore this call. I beg of you, open your eyes and see; unstop your ears and hear. *Ensign*, Aug 1974, p. 6)

19 And again, verily I say unto you, if a man <sup>a</sup>marry a wife (We don't have to live in plural marriage to be exalted. This says that a man is married to a wife.) by my word, which is my law, and by the new and <sup>b</sup>everlasting covenant, (Bruce R. McConkie: **Baptism is the gate to the celestial kingdom; celestial marriage is the gate to an exaltation in the highest heaven within the celestial world.** (D. & C. 131:1-4.) To gain salvation after baptism it is necessary to keep the commandments of God and endure to the end (2 Ne. 31:17-21); to gain exaltation after celestial marriage the same continued devotion and righteousness is required. Those who have been married in the temples for eternity know that the ceremony itself expressly conditions the receipt of all promised blessings upon the subsequent faithfulness of the husband and wife. Making one's calling and election sure is in addition to celestial

marriage and results from undeviating and perfect devotion to the cause of righteousness. Those married in the temple can never under any circumstances gain exaltation unless they keep the commandments of God and abide in the covenant of marriage which they have taken upon themselves. Mormon Doctrine, p. 118) and it is <sup>c</sup>sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of <sup>d</sup>promise, by him who is anointed, unto whom I have appointed this power and the <sup>e</sup>keys of this priesthood; and it shall be said unto them—Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection; and if it be after the first resurrection, in the next resurrection; and shall inherit <sup>f</sup>thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths—then shall it be written in the Lamb's <sup>g</sup>Book of Life, that he shall commit no <sup>h</sup>murder whereby to shed innocent <sup>i</sup>blood, and if ye abide in my covenant, and commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood, it shall be done unto them in all things whatsoever my servant hath put upon them, in time, and through all eternity; and shall be of full force when they are out of the world; and they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their <sup>j</sup>exaltation and glory in all things ("Your endowment is to receive all those ordinances in the House of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the Holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell" (Journal of Discourses, 2:31).), as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the <sup>k</sup>seeds (The explanation of this text as it applies to faithful women was given by President Joseph F. Smith: "Some of you will understand when I tell you that some of these good women who have passed beyond have actually been anointed queens and priestesses unto God and unto their husbands, to continue their work and to be the mothers of spirits in the world to come. The world does not understand this—they cannot receive it—they do not know what it means, and it is sometimes hard for those who ought to be thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the gospel—even for some of us, to comprehend, but it is true" (Gospel Doctrine, 461).) Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1063) forever and ever. (Elder Bruce R. McConkie referred to verses 19 and 26 as the "most difficult and least understood" verses among all the revelations of the Restoration. These verses speak simultaneously of eternal marriage and having one's calling and election made sure. The promised blessings require both. The chain of thought is as follows: a man and woman must be married according to the law of the Lord, meaning they must enter into the eternal covenant of marriage. They must then go forth and so live that they can receive the promise through the Lord's anointed that they will come forth in the first resurrection to inherit thrones and kingdoms. Having received that promise, which is certainly not given to them at the time of their marriage, their salvation is sure, unless they so transgress that they become perdition (v. 26). With that promise, they have received all that is necessary to their exaltation as long as they do not commit the unpardonable sin (v. 26). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1062)

**20 Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from <sup>a</sup>everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be <sup>b</sup>gods, because they have <sup>c</sup>all power, and the angels are subject unto them.** (Brigham Young: After men have got their exaltations and their crowns—have become Gods, even the sons of God—are made King of kings and Lord of Lords, they have the power then of propagating their species in spirit; and that is the first of their operations with regard to organizing a world. Power is then given to them to organize the elements, and then commence the organization of tabernacles. (JD, August 28, 1852, 6:275.))

21 Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye abide my <sup>a</sup>law ye cannot attain to this glory. (Since the law of celestial marriage is Christ's law, then He was married in an eternal marriage, too.)

22 For <sup>a</sup>strait is the gate, and narrow the <sup>b</sup>way that leadeth unto the exaltation and continuation of the <sup>c</sup>lives, (eternal increase) and few there be that find it, because ye receive me not in the world neither do ye know me.

23 But if ye receive me in the world, then shall ye know me, and shall receive your exaltation; that <sup>a</sup>where I am ye shall be also.



24 This is <sup>a</sup>eternal lives—to <sup>b</sup>know the only wise and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath <sup>c</sup>sent. I am he. Receive ye, therefore, my law. (By obedience to the law we come to know Christ.)

25 <sup>a</sup>Broad is the gate, and wide the way that leadeth to the <sup>b</sup>deaths; and many there are that go in thereat, because they <sup>c</sup>receive me not, neither do they abide in my law.

26 Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man marry a wife according to my word, and they are sealed by the <sup>a</sup>Holy Spirit of promise, according to mine appointment, and he or she shall commit any sin or transgression of the new and everlasting covenant whatever, (This verse is a brief restatement of what was said in verse 19. A superficial reading of the verse has led some to suppose that it is saying that those who have entered into the eternal covenant of marriage are assured salvation as long as they do not commit murder wherein they shed innocent blood. This simply is not the case. The promises here given apply exclusively to those who, having been married for time and eternity, advance to that station wherein they have had their calling and election made sure. On this matter, President Joseph Fielding Smith observed, "Verse 26, in section 132, is the most abused passage in any scripture. The Lord has never promised any soul that he may be taken into exaltation without the spirit of repentance. While repentance is not stated in this passage, yet it is, and must be, implied. It is strange to me that everyone knows about verse 26, but it seems that they have never read or heard of Matthew 12:31-32, where the Lord tells us the same thing in substance as we find in verse 26, section 132" (Doctrines of Salvation, 2:95). "The Lord said by his own mouth: And he that endureth not unto the end, the same is he that is also hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence they can no more return, because of the justice of the Father. And this is the word which he hath given unto the children of men. And for this cause he fulfilleth the words which he hath given, and he lieth not, but fulfilleth all his words. And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end. "So we must conclude that those spoken of in verse 26 are those who, having sinned, have fully repented and are willing to pay the price of their sinning, else the blessings of exaltation will not follow. Repentance is absolutely necessary for the forgiveness, and the person having sinned must be cleansed" (Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, 2:95-96). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1064-65) and all manner of blasphemies, and if they <sup>b</sup>commit no murder wherein they shed innocent blood, yet they shall come forth in the first resurrection, and enter into their exaltation; but they shall be destroyed in the flesh, (Joseph Fielding Smith: "To be 'destroyed in the flesh' means exactly that. We cannot destroy men in the flesh, because we do not control the lives of men and do not have power to pass sentences upon them which involve capital punishment. In the days when there was a theocracy on the earth, then this decree was enforced. What the Lord will do in lieu of this, because we cannot destroy in the flesh, I am unable to say, but it will have to be made up in some other way" (Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, 2:96-97).) and shall be <sup>c</sup>delivered unto the buffetings of <sup>d</sup>Satan (Bruce R. McConkie: "To be turned over to the buffetings of Satan is to be given into his hands; it is to be turned over to him with all the protective power of the priesthood, of righteousness, and of godliness removed, so that Lucifer is free to torment, persecute, and afflict such a person without let or hindrance. When the bars are down, the cuffs and curses of Satan, both in this world and in the world to come, bring indescribable anguish typified by burning fire and brimstone. The damned in hell so suffer" (McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, 108). Commenting on this verse, Joseph Fielding Smith said, "Here is something which those who contend that the Lord has granted immunity from their sins to some [the claim is made by some who have been married in the temple], if they have received certain sealings by the Holy Spirit of promise, have overlooked in this passage. I call attention to these two things. If covenants are broken and enormous sins are committed, but not unto death, there are certain punishments to be inflicted. The mere confession is not enough; the sinners are: 1—to 'be destroyed in the flesh'; and 2—to 'be delivered unto the buffetings of Satan unto the day of redemption.'"Who in the world is so foolish as to wish to sin with the hope of forgiveness, if such a penalty is to be inflicted? No one but a fool! . . . "Who wishes to endure such torment? No one but a fool! I have seen their anguish. I have heard their pleadings for relief



and their pitiful cries that they cannot endure the torment. This was in this life. Add to that, the torment in the spirit world before the redemption comes—all of this, mark you, coming after severe and humble repentance!" (Doctrines of Salvation, 2:96-97.) unto the day of <sup>e</sup>redemption, (resurrection) saith the Lord God.

27 The <sup>a</sup>blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which shall <sup>b</sup>not be <sup>c</sup>forgiven in the world nor out of the world, is in that ye commit <sup>d</sup>murder wherein ye shed innocent blood, and assent unto my death, after ye have received my new and everlasting covenant, saith the Lord God; and he that abideth not this law can in nowise enter into my glory, but shall be <sup>e</sup>dammned, saith the Lord. (What is "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost"? Having quoted this verse, Elder Bruce R. McConkie said: "The unpardonable sin consists in denying Christ, in fighting the truth, in joining hands with those who crucified him, knowing full well, and with a perfect knowledge, that he is the Son of God; it means pursuing this course after gaining a perfect knowledge, given of the Holy Ghost, that he is Lord of all. The innocent blood thus shed is his blood; those who so sin become murderers by assenting unto his death, an assent that is given with a full and perfect knowledge of his divinity. "Paul tells us that these rebellious ones who choose to become sons of perdition (or angels of the devil) cannot repent. 'It is impossible for those who were once enlightened,' he says, 'and [who] have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame' (Hebrews 6:4-6). And also: 'If we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?' (Hebrews 10:26-29)" (New Witness, 232-33). Not being in a position to crucify Christ, those of this spirit seek the blood of those upon whom he has placed his name, that is, his anointed servants. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1067))

28 I am the Lord thy God, and will give unto thee the <sup>a</sup>law of my Holy Priesthood, as was ordained by me and my Father before the world was. (The law of the priesthood centers in the promise that a man and his wife are to be sealed together for time and eternity and that they have claim upon the promise of eternal increase. From the days of Adam, this has been the order of things among all who possessed the holy priesthood. The question is often asked, Did the prophets and Saints in the Book of Mormon have eternal marriage? To suppose that they had the holy priesthood without eternal marriage would be akin to supposing that someone could have the gospel without faith, repentance, and baptism, or without the knowledge and testimony of Christ. Affirming this conclusion, the heading given to these verses in the chapter summary at the beginning of the revelation reads, "Promises of eternal increase and exaltation made to prophets and saints in all ages." No other explanation can be given to explain the concern of the Book of Mormon prophets for their posterity, generations unborn to whom they wrote and with whom they had undoubtedly made covenants in the premortal councils. So it was that Samuel prophesied that unless the Nephites repented, their descendants some four hundred years later would be smitten with "the sword and with famine and with pestilence" (Helaman 13:9). Unless there was some understanding of the importance of the family unit, it would sound strange to be warned by a prophet that unless they repented their children's children, some four hundred years removed, would be destroyed. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1067)

**29 <sup>a</sup>Abraham received all things, whatsoever he received, by revelation and commandment, by my word, saith the Lord, and hath entered into his exaltation and sitteth upon his throne.**

**30 <sup>a</sup>Abraham received promises concerning his seed, and of the fruit of his loins—from whose <sup>b</sup>loins ye are, namely, my servant Joseph—which were to continue so long as they were in the world; and as touching Abraham and his seed, out of the world they should continue; both in the**

world and out of the world should they continue as innumerable as the <sup>c</sup>stars; or, if ye were to count the sand upon the seashore ye could not number them.

**31 This promise is yours also, because ye are of <sup>a</sup>Abraham, (The promises to Abraham apply to us so long as we remain worthy of them.) and the promise was made unto Abraham; and by this law is the continuation of the works of my Father, wherein he glorifieth himself. (At this point in the revelation, the Lord turns Joseph Smith's attention to the covenant or promises that He made anciently with Abraham. Given that all "covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows," are part of the new and everlasting covenant, it naturally follows that the new and everlasting covenant embraces the covenant made with Abraham. The Abrahamic covenant, or "dispensation of the gospel of Abraham" as it was described when it was restored to the Prophet (D&C 110:12), centers in the principle of eternal marriage and the endless continuation of the family unit. The Lord, in effect, says to Joseph Smith, I appeared to you because you are a descendant of Abraham and as such are a rightful heir of the priesthood and promises given to that ancient patriarch. The two great witnesses of Christ for this dispensation are Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. Christ appeared to Joseph Smith, and he appeared to the peoples in the Book of Mormon. Joseph Smith is the source through which the purity of the gospel of Christ has been restored to us, and so is the Book of Mormon. Joseph Smith received these privileges because he was a descendant of Abraham, and those privileges were accorded the peoples of the Book of Mormon because they were Abraham's seed. When Christ appeared among the Nephites, he said, "Ye are the children of the prophets; and ye are of the house of Israel; and ye are of the covenant which the Father made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham: And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. The Father having raised me up unto you first, and sent me to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities; and this because ye are the children of the covenant" (3 Nephi 20:25-26). Earlier he had explained that they were those of whom he said, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice" (John 10:16). In the Old World, he said, they had supposed that he was making reference to the Gentiles, but "The Gentiles," he explained, "should not at any time hear my voice— that I should not manifest myself unto them save it were by the Holy Ghost. But behold, ye have both heard my voice, and seen me; and ye are my sheep, and ye are numbered among those whom the Father hath given me" (3 Nephi 15:23-24). As the seed of Abraham, Joseph Smith was a rightful heir to the blessings of the priesthood and the manifestations of heaven. This heirship, is eternal, meaning that it cannot be dissolved by death. Those unable to lay claim to its blessings in this life will have the opportunity to do so in the world to come, for, as the revelation states, these promises continue "both in the world and out of the world." Revelations of the Restoration, p.1068-69)**

**32 Go ye, therefore, and do the <sup>a</sup>works of Abraham; enter ye into my law and ye shall be saved.**

**33 But if ye enter not into my law ye cannot receive the promise of my Father, which he made unto Abraham. (The law referred to was referred to earlier as "the law of my Holy Priesthood" (v. 28). It is the new and everlasting covenant of marriage. No reference has been made to this point in the revelation to the plurality of wives. It would be to seriously misunderstand all that has been said in the first thirty-three verses of this revelation to impose on them something they have not said. The purpose of the revelation to this point is to declare as plainly and as emphatically as it possibly can be done that a man and his wife can only receive the promise of eternal life in and through the ordinance of marriage. The cultist idea that such a promise can only be obtained in plural marriage finds no justification in the text. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 1069)**

D&C110: 12 After this, <sup>a</sup>Elias appeared, (The identity of Elias – whether he be Noah, Abraham himself, or a prophet named Elias from the days of Abraham – is not clearly known. Studies in Scripture, 1:425. Discussions about the identity and mission of Elias demand attention and a careful reading of the texts involved. Two doctrines and a number of prophets are involved. First, Elias is a title properly given to a prophet whose office or calling is that of a forerunner, that is, one who prepares the way for something

greater. The Aaronic Priesthood, for instance, could be called the Priesthood of Elias because it is a preparatory priesthood. It prepares the way for that which is greater (JST Matthew 17:11, 13). Second, there is a doctrine of Elias that pertains to restoration rather than preparation (JST Matthew 17:9-10). Scripture speaks of John the Baptist as an Elias of preparation (Luke 1:16-17; JST John 1:21-22) and Christ as an Elias of restoration (JST John 1:26-28). The name Elias can also be a title for those prophets who play a part in the restoration of all things. For instance, John the Revelator is referred to as Elias in section 77 (vv. 9 and 14); in the present text another prophet is identified as an Elias restoring keys from the dispensation of Abraham. In section 27 we are told that Gabriel (whom the Prophet Joseph Smith identified as Noah) holds the keys of the restoration of all things (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 157; D&C 27:5-6). **The identity of the Elias in the present text is not entirely certain. It could have been Abraham himself or Melchizedek, either of whom could have restored keys from that dispensation. It is frequently said that it was Noah,** because he is identified as an Elias in Doctrine and Covenants 27:5-6. This, however, seems unlikely, as Noah's life did not overlap that of Abraham (Bible Dictionary, 636). **It is something of a strain on the order of heaven to suppose that Noah would restore the keys of a dispensation in which he did not live.** Further, the text from which this conclusion is made identifies Noah as holding the keys of the restoration of all things. This seems to mean that all the Eliases who came to restore keys in this dispensation (or in the meridian of time) did so under Noah's direction, not that he restored all the keys (McConkie, Millennial Messiah, 103-4, 115-21; McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, 219-22). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 891-92. Joseph Fielding Smith: Elias came and restored the gospel of Abraham. Who was Elias? Well, Elias was Noah, who came and restored his keys. "The priesthood was first given to Adam; he obtained the First Presidency and held the keys of it from generation to generation. He obtained it in the Creation, before the world was formed, as in Gen. 1:26, 27, 28. He had dominion given him over every living creature. He is Michael the Archangel, spoken of in the scriptures. Then to Noah, who is Gabriel; he stands next in authority to Adam in the priesthood; he is called of God to this office, and was the father of all living in his day, and to him was given the dominion. These men held keys first on earth, and then, in heaven." [HC 3:385-86.] It was Gabriel who appeared to Zacharias and promised him a son, and who appeared to Mary and announced the coming of the Son of God as recorded by Luke. It was also Gabriel as an Elias who is mentioned in the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 27, verse 7, and was Gabriel or Noah, who stands next to Michael or Adam in the priesthood. (CR, April 1960, p. 72.) and committed the <sup>b</sup>dispensation of the <sup>c</sup>gospel of Abraham, **(The gospel of Abraham is that power and authority distinctive to Abraham and the covenant that God made with him. A "dispensation" of that gospel is the giving of it anew, or its restoration to those willing to enter into a like covenant. Thus all promises made to Abraham relative to his seed—the endless continuation of his family and his eternal relationship with his wife Sarah—are granted to all who receive that same gospel. The keys to perform the ordinances were restored by the Elias spoken of in this verse; the keys to seal this and all gospel ordinances were restored by Elijah.** Revelations of the Restoration, p. 892) saying that in us and our seed all <sup>d</sup>generations after us should be <sup>c</sup>blessed.

### **How do we make sure that the blessings of Abraham are passed on to us and our posterity?**

**Be sealed in the temple to our spouse, and preach the gospel to others, and perform temple ordinances for our deceased relatives. Teach our children the gospel so that they can pass it along to their children, etc. Obtain your patriarchal blessing.**

**Who was Melchizedek? Shem.** In ancient Jewish traditions Melchizedek is often thought to be Shem, the son of Noah. Melchizedek is a title meaning "king of righteousness," even though it is also used as a proper name. A modern writer examined the question of whether Shem and Melchizedek could be the same person and concluded that, while we cannot say for sure, the possibility is clearly there. He said:

Let us examine first what we know about Shem. Although the Bible names Shem as the eldest son of Noah (Gen 5:32), modern-day revelation places Japeth as the eldest (Moses 8:12). Both reports, however, are harmonious in naming Shem as the progenitor of Israel and in the fact that the priesthood descended through Shem to all the great patriarchs after Noah. In this patriarchal order of priesthood, Shem stands next to Noah. He held the keys to the priesthood and was the great high priest of his day. Living contemporary with Shem was a man known as Melchizedek, who was also known as the great high priest. The scriptures give us the details of Shem's birth and ancestry but are silent as to his ministry and later life. Of Melchizedek, however, the opposite is true. Nothing is recorded about his birth or ancestry, even though the Book of Mormon states that he did have a father. Concerning his ministry and life we have several interesting and important facts. All of this provokes some questions and calls for answers. Were there two high priests presiding at the same time? Why is the record silent concerning Shem's ministry? Why is nothing known concerning Melchizedek's ancestry? Because of this state of knowledge on our part many Saints and gospel scholars have wondered if these men were the same person. The truth is, we do not know the answer. But an examination of the scriptures is fascinating, because it seems to indicate that these men may have been one and the same. For example, here is the case for their oneness; 1. The inheritance given to Shem included the land of Salem. Melchizedek appears in scripture as the king of Salem, who reigns over this area. 2. Shem, according to later revelation, reigned in righteousness and the priesthood came through him. Melchizedek appears on the scene with a title that means "king of righteousness." 3. Shem was the great high priest of his day. Abraham honored the high priest Melchizedek by seeking a blessing at his hands and paying him tithes. 4. Abraham stands next to Shem in the patriarchal order of the priesthood and would surely have received the priesthood from Shem; but D&C 84:5-17 says Abraham received the priesthood from Melchizedek. 5. Jewish tradition identifies Shem as Melchizedek. 6. President Joseph F. Smith's remarkable vision names Shem among the great patriarchs, but no mention is made of Melchizedek. 7. Times and Seasons speaks of Shem who was Melchizedek. [15 Dec 1844, p. 746] On the other hand, there is a case for their being two distinct personalities. Many persons believe D&C 84:14 is proof that there are perhaps several generations between Melchizedek and Noah. The scripture says, "Which Abraham received the priesthood from Melchizedek, who received it through the lineage of his fathers, even till Noah." If it does turn out that Shem and Melchizedek are the same person, this scripture should prove no stumbling block, because it could be interpreted to mean that priesthood authority commenced with Adam and came through the fathers, even till Noah and then to Shem. Alma E. Gygi, Is it Possible That Shem and Melchizedek Are the Same Person? Ensign, Nov 1973, p. 15-16.

**I return where we started. Are we seeking the blessings of the fathers? Are we being followers of righteousness? Are we desiring to be one who possessed great knowledge? Are we greater followers of righteousness? Do we possess a greater knowledge? Are we keeping the commandments? Are we worthy of reaping the blessings of Abraham?**

**Abraham 1: 2 And, finding there was greater <sup>a</sup>happiness 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 <sup>b</sup>righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great <sup>c</sup>knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many <sup>d</sup>nations, a prince of peace, and <sup>e</sup>desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a <sup>f</sup>High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers.**

I pray that each of us will be as Mormon says it: That we land our souls, yea our immortal souls, at the right hand of God in the kingdom of heaven, to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and with Jacob, and with all our holy fathers, to go no more out. Helaman 3:30. Then we will be home at last.