

Old Testament # 7
The Abrahamic Covenant
(Abraham 1:1-4; 2:1-11; Genesis 12:1-8; 17:1-9)
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(Here is inspirational background and evidences supporting the Restoration)

I. These scriptures also confirm **the Old Testament was written for Our Day.**

- A. The Lord Himself said **He knew the end from the beginning (Abraham 2:8).**
- B. And He did not hide that End, but continually revealed it from the beginning of time.

II. In fact, some of the greatest conflicts which threaten our peace today **have their roots in events of the Old Testament --- particularly from the time and life of Abraham.**

- A. Groups, each believing that God promised them certain lands, are engaged in continual conflict over its possession.
- B. And many Biblical prophecies say these conflicts will lead to the world-wide cataclysm preceding the second coming of Christ.
- C. There are *other significant* reasons, both physical and spiritual, why it is essential that we understand the covenants God made to Abraham.

III. Abraham confirmed the Old Testament record came down from the beginning.

- A. "I shall endeavor to delineate [the records from] the beginning of the creation... [which] have come into my hands." (Abraham 1:28; See also Abraham 1:31).
- B. This shows we can have confidence in the Old Testament writings! **Their writing was overseen by the Lord!**

IV. In Genesis, the focus in the Biblical record, moves from *all* His children, to just one people.

[I once knew an individual, struggling with his testimony, who asked why the Bible gives so much attention and preference to Israel. I suspect many are perplexed and bothered by this. But there is an answer, as follows]:

- A. After the flood, many separate nations arose. Jewish rabbis trace the beginning of seventy-two nations to Genesis 10:1-32, where seventy-two descendants of Noah are listed and it says "by these were the nations divided after the flood," v. 32.
- B. Hereafter, "seventy" became a symbol, used by the Jews and early Christians, as representing *all* the nations. [Wars and other influences have rearranged boundaries, but the symbol still stands as representative of all nations, for religious purposes].
- C. **The Lord chose one lineage out of all these many nations to receive His covenants, the priesthood, and greater knowledge of Him and of His works.**
- D. But the Lord did not mean that only these would receive His greatest blessings. Rather, that particular lineage, (Israelites), **were chosen to receive them first, and then to bear the responsibility of taking them to all others!**

V. The Lord first chose Abraham, **because of his obedience**, to be the Father of that special lineage (Abraham 1:15-18).

- A. Like Noah, his name has great significance. Abram means "**Exalted Father**" and Abraham, "**Father of a Multitude.**"

1. Elder Bruce R. McConkie added Abraham is the symbolic “father of the faithful” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Millennial Messiah*, p. 184).

B. So even **his names witness of the ultimate destiny of the faithful --- to become like God.**

C. After Abraham, the Lord narrowed down the first inheritors of that covenant to the lines of Isaac and then Jacob (Israel) when He renewed this same covenant with them.

1. But He repeatedly makes it clear, *that anyone outside this lineage can inherit His greatest blessings, just by accepting His covenants and being obedient to them.*

2. At His coming, Jesus the Christ confirmed that **any individual of any nation, who accepts His Gospel (For it makes anew the Abrahamic Covenant), can be heirs of the fullest measure of God’s blessings.**

3. After an apostasy through the Dark and Middle Ages, these covenants were once again restored in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints --- to be made available to anyone of any nation who will accept these covenants and keep them.

VI. The Abrahamic Covenant began with the promise of a land (Abraham 2:6, 18-19).

A. As Abraham was father to both Ishmael and Isaac, both groups of descendants feel they are heirs, thus causing the great conflict of today.

B. It is very important to understand that the true covenant God is making with Abraham doesn’t concern just a physical land.

C. Its **true fulfillment will be the inheritance of a Spiritual Dwelling (Eternal Life with Him)**

D. We must also recognize these blessings will come only through and because of Jesus Christ.

VII. Abraham was also promised **great multiplicity of seed.**

A. The main reason the Lord showed Abraham His Heavens and their vastness was to reveal that Abraham’s seed would be **as numerous as the stars** (Abr. 3:13-14).

B. For this promise too would ultimately be fulfilled **by a Spiritual, though real, blessing.**

C. Its fulfillment: an **Eternal, ever-expanding posterity (Eternal Lives) (D&C 132: 29-50).**

D. While many Christians have come to realize the *Promised Land* spoken of here will be fulfilled by inheritance of God’s Kingdom in Heaven, only the Latter-day Saints (through revelation), realize **the promise of Eternal Seed will also be fulfilled by a spiritual, though real, posterity in that Eternal Promised Land.**

E. The Lord had provided other witnesses of this great blessing.

1. Signs, such as the pomegranate, commanded to be sewn onto the bottom of the High Priest’s clothing --- bore witness that through Jesus Christ, the True High Priest, men would not only find the Way to Eternal Life, but to the promised “Seed without number.”

VIII. Abraham was also promised **His seed would bless all the earth** (Abraham 2:11.)

A. This significant blessing pointed to Jesus the Christ, who would be born through this lineage. This “literal seed of [Abraham’s] body” would truly bless “all the families of the earth” because of His atonement/death and resurrection.

B. But there are also those of Abraham’s seed, true Israel, who will also bless all nations, **by spreading Christ’s Gospel, through peaceful means, among the “seventy” nations.**

C. In our day, because ancient Israel has been scattered throughout the world, the Restoration of Christ’s Gospel continues to go to repentant descendants of that scattered lineage. And since they were literally “throughout the world” they would be, to a great degree, a “blessing to all the earth,” thus fulfilling a major promise of the Covenant --- becoming its “salt.”

IX. The Great Blessing of the Priesthood --- also of this lineage.

A. Abraham is also blessed that through him and his posterity would come the blessing of the Priesthood --- the Power to minister in the name of God.

B. So Abraham's descendants would have right to the priesthood, *if they proved worthy of it.*

C. Jesus Christ, the ultimate source of the Priesthood, would come through this line.

D. **All others** would be denied His priesthood, ***unless they were of this line or accepted the Gospel and became adopted into this line*** (Abraham 2:9–11; Genesis 17:7).

X. If the full meaning of the Lord's Covenants with Abraham were understood and accepted throughout the world --- **that God's ultimate promise of Land is an *Eternal Dwelling*, where there is room and full blessings for all, and not really about specific lands in the Middle East, consider how that might impact the religious conflicts that are causing the wars of today.**

A. Surely, those fighting over any particular land would comprehend they can *all* dwell in the real, Eternal Covenanted Land promised by God. Thus, peace would follow.

XI. We need to re-emphasize other important truths of this covenant.

A. **Any** who accept Christ's teachings, keep His covenants become as the "seed of Abraham." "For as many as receive this Gospel ... shall be accounted as thy seed..." (Abraham 2:10).

B. In confirmation, our prophets teach of those who come into The Church of Jesus Christ: "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 [can] become such, [for] when they are baptized and confirmed they are grafted into the tree and are entitled to all the rights and privileges as heirs" (Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, "How One May Become of the House of Israel," *Improvement Era*, Oct. 1923, 11, 49).

C. When we are baptized into the Church, the Abrahamic Covenant's promise of *Salvation* is personally renewed with us. When we do our own temple work in the temple, the Abrahamic covenant's promise of *Exaltation* is personally renewed with us.

D. **We have great responsibilities as heirs of the Abrahamic covenant.** To receive the blessings of the covenant we must live worthily. This includes our **willingness and efforts to take the Gospel and its blessings, especially the gift of its holy Priesthood powers, to persons of all other nations.** "... [Thy seed] shall bring this ministry [Gospel] and Priesthood unto all nations" (Abraham 2:9, 11; Gen. 18:19).

E. **This means that we are to give great effort to help all of God's children, living and dead, to receive the same, full blessings of the covenant** (Abraham 2:9, 11).

F. So to be "the Chosen People" after all, is simply to be the **People chosen to offer Christ's Covenants to all persons throughout the world.** (Even those who died without its knowledge).

G. And this is in fact what faithful members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are doing! Only members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are doing these works, thus testifying we are those spoken of in the prophecies as ultimate heirs of the Abrahamic Covenant.

H. But in doing so, we reveal *all* can become a part of this great Covenant and this Great Work.