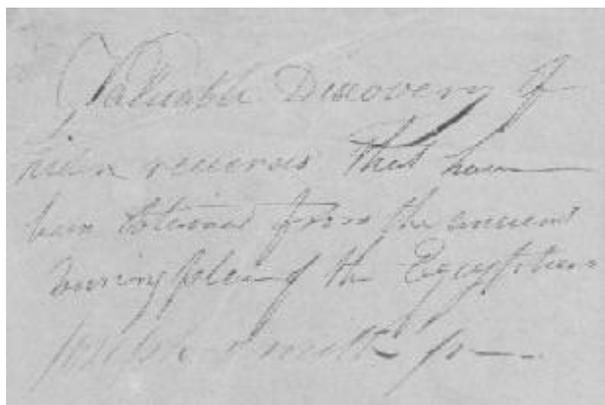


3 - Abraham 1:1-4 – Abraham and the Blessings of the Fathers

THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM

TRANSLATED FROM THE PAPYRUS, BY JOSEPH SMITH

A Translation of some ancient Records, that have fallen into our hands from the catacombs of Egypt.—The writings of Abraham while he was in Egypt, called the Book of Abraham, written by his own hand, upon papyrus. See History of the Church, vol. 2, pp. 235, 236, 348—351.



Valuable Discovery of
hidden records that have
been obtained from the ancient
burying place of the Egyptians
Joseph Smith Jr.

The above copy shows Joseph Smith's signature pertaining to the "hidden records" that were discovered, or the writings of Abraham. This could be the very first sentence as the Book of Abraham was being translated. Below is from the introduction of the record as published in our current edition of the Pearl of Great Price.

The writings of Abraham while he was in Egypt, called the Book of Abraham, written by his own hand, upon papyrus.

This is a typical Egyptian format called a Colophon. When unrolling a scroll, whether from the end of the scroll or from the beginning, a Colophon would indicate what that particular scroll contained, thus enabling the reader to determine what was contained in the scroll. A Colophon is that which describes what is in the record. Verses 2, 3 and 4 are what the record is about, and we will see that as we get into this text.

1 Ne 1:1-3 is also a Colophon: It explains who wrote it; what it is about; He knows the record is true, and then it starts with the story.

1 I, NEPHI, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father; and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days, nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days; yea, having had a

great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God, therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days.

2 Yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians.

3 And I know that the record which I make is true; and I make it with mine own hand; and I make it according to my knowledge.

The papyrus Joseph obtained is not necessarily the original scroll Abraham used to record his story. When the Egyptians made copies of an original, they would copy it and attribute the original author of that particular document. That means that each copy would still say, “Written by his own hand upon papyrus,” because the original one was written that way. This is a typical Egyptian preservation method.

The Representative Man

Abraham represents every man as every man should be. We are told to “go ... and do the works of Abraham.”

D&C 132:32

32 Go ye, therefore, and do the works of Abraham; enter ye into my law and ye shall be saved.

John 8:39

39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

Because of that command, Abraham becomes every man as every man should be. In the Jewish *Midrash* it states that everything Adam did, Abraham did, and everything Abraham did, we should do. If Abraham had a fault, it was that he loved people *too much*. Abraham was known as a Friend of God; he loved God, and he loved his fellowman. **See James 2:23:**

And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the **Friend of God**.

***Question:** Don’t the Muslims claim Abraham as their father? (BHP: Yes, they do.) Why don’t they go and do the works of Abraham?*

They don’t have our scriptures for one thing. They don’t recognize our scriptures, but they do recognize Abraham as their father because of Ishmael, born of Hagar. The Arabs come from Ishmael. They also spring from Esau, who married one of Ishmael’s daughters.

As we start from the first chapter, we will be discussing the doctrine concerning the **The Right of the Firstborn**: We will begin to see the workings of the Patriarchal Priesthood.

Abraham 1:1-4

1 In the land of the Chaldeans, at the residence of my fathers, I, Abraham, saw that it was needful for me to obtain another place of residence;

Why did Abraham need to leave his home? What did Abraham do that became a threat to his own life? As we answer these questions, we will begin to understand the importance of this record and discover his character traits. We will come to recognize the “works of Abraham.”

2 And, finding there was greater 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 righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers.

It’s important to see what Abraham sought for:

He “sought for the blessings of the fathers.”

He sought for the right to administer them.

He sought for the actual realization of that right and those blessings.

He is explaining to his posterity the desires of his heart pertaining to his relationship with God. You will remember that the Brother of Jared received his endowment in Ether 3. The Lord redeemed him from the Fall, and he was able to return to the presence of the Lord. His experience was not a future realization of that blessing; his was the actual fulfillment of that blessing!

Whenever you see the following phrases in scripture: the “Blessings of the Fathers,” the “Rights of the Fathers,” or the “Covenants of the Fathers” – they all mean the same thing. It is what we call an “endowment of power.” He sought for the reality of those blessings, not a representation of that reality. The Brother of Jared was not looking for an ordinance, and neither was Abraham. They both were seeking for that reality that an ordinance represents. An ordinance “to become such through your faithfulness” is not part of scripture. It is always described as a reality. All ordinances provide a hope of a future reality. See **Alma 13:16**:

Now these ordinances were given after this manner,
that thereby the people *might look forward on the Son of God, it* being a type of his order,
or it being his order, and this
that *they might look forward* to him for a remission of their sins,
that *they might enter into the rest of the Lord.*

Abraham explains how he obtained his endowment. These are his works. If we want the same blessings Abraham received, he explains how they can become our works too. Look again in verse 2:

...having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge...

Abraham said he was a follower of righteousness, and he wanted to be a greater follower. He desired to possess a greater knowledge than what he already possessed. He also desired:

...to be a father of many nations, [and] a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God...

Abraham is giving us the pattern on how to do the works of Abraham. He then rejoices that he obtained the desires of his heart. At the end of verse 2 he says:

... I became a rightful heir, [I became] a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers.

He tells us he obtained what he had been seeking. Abraham's character traits provide a pattern for us. His character is what separated him from others. He is showing us the way. We are also commanded to seek for further light and truth. This is why it was said earlier – Abraham is as every man, as every man should be.

After Adam was expelled from the Garden, he was commanded to offer sacrifices. “After many days” the angels visit Adam and ask if he knows why he is offering those sacrifices. He replies that he knows not, only that the Lord commanded him. The angel of the Lord says:

Moses 5:7-8

This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth. Wherefore, thou shalt do all that thou doest in the name of the Son, and thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore.

The lesson Adam learns is that obedience precedes knowledge, and then knowledge, once obtained, commands greater obedience in order to receive even greater light and knowledge, which then requires even greater obedience ... and so on, and so on. This is known as the **law of revelation** for receiving more light and truth.

In D&C 132:3, the Lord instructs the Saints that if they were to receive His law, they would have to be obedient to it.

In Moses 1, after Moses receives much instruction from God, he is left unto himself to see if he will be obedient to that which he had learned. Satan comes to him and announces that he is the Son of God and that Moses is to worship him. Moses dismisses Satan and says, “I will not cease to call upon God, I have other things to inquire of him” (Moses 1:9, 18). It's a rule of revelation – in order to receive more, we have to be obedient to what we have received.

When Moses prepared the children of Israel to come up into the presence of God at Mt. Sinai, they were told that they would have to keep various higher laws (show greater obedience), but they rejected the higher law. This is further explained in **D&C 84:23-24**.

23 Now this Moses plainly taught to the children of Israel in the wilderness, and sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God;
24 But they hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence; therefore, the Lord in his wrath, for his anger was kindled against them, swore that they should not enter into his rest while in the wilderness, which rest is the fulness of his glory.

The Children of Israel rejected the required obedience to receive the higher law, and Moses and the Priesthood was taken out of their midst (v 25).

25 Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst and the Holy Priesthood also ...

Abraham has given us a key. If we want to do the works of Abraham, we are to seek for the blessings of the fathers by seeking for greater light and truth. This was Abraham's character.

3 It was 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 firstborn**, or the first man, who is Adam, or first father, through the fathers unto me.

The “It” that was conferred upon Abraham was “the blessings of the fathers.” The “It” was the endowment conferred upon the first fathers. He says the “right of the firstborn” was conferred upon him. This is taking the endowment a little farther. The “right of the firstborn” has to do with his desire to be able to administer the same to his posterity and others. He did not just want the ordinances of the firstborn, by which everyone can become a firstborn unto God; he wanted the right to administer the same (that endowment) to his posterity, which is the “right” of the firstborn that he received. That right requires keys. The right of the firstborn is more than the right of Adam (being the firstling of the flock, the “first man”) – it is the right of Christ, being the firstborn. There are firstborns and there are firstlings. The firstborn is the very first-born, and a firstling is the very firstborn of that season. Adam is a firstling and Christ is a firstborn.

Adam's responsibilities were to provide the blessings of the Gospel to as many of his posterity that desired to receive them. This is why all of those Keys have to be returned to Adam at Adam-ondi-Ahman. This is what Abraham wanted – he wanted to be able to give those same blessings to mankind. He wanted the same right Adam held and the same Keys that Adam received.

Num. 3:12-13

12 And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of **all the firstborn** that openeth the matrix (womb) among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine; *[this is giving us insight into what the right of the firstborn is.]*

13 Because **all the firstborn are mine**; for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: *I am* the LORD.

When the Children of Israel rejected the higher law, they rejected being obedient to the higher law. Moses drew a line in the sand and challenged any and all who accepted the Lord to come on his side of the line – and only the Levites stepped over the line (Ex 32:26). In consequence of this, the Lord restricted all of the Tribes of Israel from holding the Priesthood except for the Tribe of Levi. The Old Law was that the firstborn male in every family would become the priest to administer the Gospel and the ordinances of salvation. After the Lord restricted the Priesthood to only the Levites, the old law was done away. The Priesthood would descend only through the family line of the Levites.

Abraham wanted **the right of the firstborn**, which is the right to administer the ordinances of salvation and exaltation. This right is a privilege; it's a responsibility for service to mankind. Joseph Smith taught: "every man who has a calling to administer to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was. I suppose I was ordained to this very office in that Grand Council" (TPJS, p 365). He is saying that individuals are ordained to this position to have the right of the firstborn, or the right to administer. This is what Abraham is asking for. Abraham not only wanted the blessings of the fathers but also the right to administer the same.

He explained that this right belonged to the fathers, even Adam, the very first father. He said this right "was conferred upon me from the fathers."

4 I sought for mine appointment unto the Priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the fathers [*in that pre-earth council*] concerning the seed. [*The Priesthood is the right to administer the Gospel to the inhabitants of the earth, given to those in that Grand Council of heaven before the world was.*]

In Abraham 2:8-10 we see what the Lord promised Abraham.

8 My name is Jehovah, and I know the end from the beginning; **therefore** my hand shall be over thee.

9 And I will make of thee a great nation, **and** I will bless thee above measure, **and** make thy name great among all nations, **and** thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, **that** in their hands they shall bear **this ministry and Priesthood** unto all nations;

This is important. This is a key distinction.

"In their hands they shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations." The Lord is promising Abraham his will be a great nation, and in his posterity (in their hands) they will bear this ministry unto all nations. The Lord will bless them through the name of Abraham.

10 **And** I will bless them through thy name; for as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father;

Abraham wanted to have posterity not to just have a bunch of kids, but to have those who would become worthy to bear this ministry and Priesthood because he loved God so much. He desired that his posterity would be that group, or that people, that would provide and administer the ordinances of salvation and exaltation. See? He "sought for the blessings of the fathers and the right to administer the same..." Continuing with v 11:

11 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is, in thy Priesthood [**the authority to administer**]) and in thy seed (that is, thy Priesthood [**the authority to administer**]), for I give unto thee a promise that this right [**of administration**] shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) [**the power / authority of the Priesthood will be upon Abraham and his posterity and by their administration**] shall all the families of the

earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal **[exaltation]**.

Then Abraham says:

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 sought thee earnestly; now I have found thee;

Abraham began his record by seeking for the blessings of the fathers and the right to administer the same. Here we see Abraham receiving that right for himself **and** for his posterity. Abraham wanted a righteous posterity who would love God and love their fellowman enough to become worthy ministers of salvation and exaltation for all nations of the earth.

***Question:** That phrase in the parentheses concerning the literal seed of the body — was that in the original, or was that added later?*

It's in the original. That which pertains to the seed of the body also has a connection to Christ. See below:

Moses 7:51- 53

51 And the Lord could not withhold; and he covenanted with Enoch, and sware unto him with an oath, that he would stay the floods; that he would call upon the children of Noah;

52 And he sent forth an unalterable decree, that a remnant of his seed **[Enoch's]** should always be found among all nations, while the earth should stand;

53 And the Lord said: **Blessed is he through whose seed Messiah shall come**;* for he saith—I am Messiah, the King of Zion, the Rock of Heaven, which is broad as eternity; whoso cometh in at the gate and climbeth up by me shall never fall; wherefore, blessed are they of whom I have spoken, for they shall come forth with songs of everlasting joy.

**[Here is that connection of the literal seed as it connects to Christ.]*

This right of the Firstborn, this right to administer, was also given to Enoch, and it passed down to Noah. This is what Abraham desired – that right that passed down from the fathers. This right can be traced back from Abraham to Shem; from Shem to Noah; from Noah to Enoch, and from Enoch to Adam. This is all part of the Patriarchal Priesthood.

Moses 8:2-3, 19-20

2 And it came to pass that Methuselah, the son of Enoch, was not taken, that the covenants of the Lord might be fulfilled, which he made to Enoch; for he truly covenanted with Enoch that Noah should be of the fruit of his loins.

3 And it came to pass that Methuselah prophesied that from his loins should spring all the kingdoms of the earth (through Noah), and he took glory unto himself.

19 And the Lord ordained Noah after his own order, *[this order is the right to administer]* and commanded him that he should go forth and declare his Gospel unto the children of men, even as it was given unto Enoch.

20 And it came to pass that Noah called upon the children of men that they should repent; but they hearkened not unto his words;

Enoch administered the Gospel; Noah was also given the responsibility to declare the Gospel. No one listened! The Good News is the Gospel is here. The Bad News is no one is listening. Concerning this succession of the right of the firstborn, we see three examples or a pattern depicting true authority versus that of an imposter. The pattern begins before these true priesthood leaders are born.

Abraham vs. Nimrod

In Abraham's case, the King's palace was turned into a gigantic maternity ward. All of the women who were about to give birth were locked away. If a lucky woman gave birth to a girl, mother and child were laden with gifts and sent home. But if a male baby was born, they took her "gift" and sent her home, and the baby boy was put to death without mercy. (This is one of the reasons Abraham's mother fled—she did not comply with the orders of the king.)

Moses vs. Pharaoh (Exodus 1:15-16)

15 And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, ...

16 And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see *them* upon the stools; if it *be* a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it *be* a daughter, then she shall live.

Christ vs. Herod

Herod learned of the prophecies that said that one whose right it was to rule would be born in his kingdom, so after the wise men departed out of the land, Herod commanded that all children within Bethlehem under two years old be slain (Matt 2:16).

Alma 13:1-4 (This is not talking about the High Priests in your HP Quorums!)

1 AND again, my brethren, I would cite your minds forward to the time when the Lord God gave these commandments unto his children; and I would that ye should remember that the Lord God ordained priests, *after his holy order*, which was *after the order of his Son*, to teach these things unto the people. **[This is the right to administer the Gospel]**

2 And those priests were ordained after the order of his Son, in a manner that thereby the people might know in what manner to look forward to his Son for redemption.

3 And this is the manner after which *they* were ordained—being called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of *their* exceeding faith and good works; *in the first place [in the Grand Council of Heaven]* being left to choose good or evil; therefore *they* having chosen good, and exercising exceedingly great faith, are called with a holy calling, yea, with that holy calling which was prepared with, and according to, a preparatory redemption for such.

4 And thus they **[these patriarchs]** have been 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 blindness of their minds, while, if it had not been for this they might have had as great privilege as their brethren.

This pertains to Abr 1:2. Abraham sought for the blessings of the fathers, and Alma is explaining how the administration of the Gospel by the Patriarchs came to be. We see in vs 4 that there were those in the grand council who did not want to search for greater light and knowledge or exercise great faith as did those who did choose them. Abraham 3 adds further insight.

Abraham 3:18-19, 22-23

18 Howbeit that he made the greater star; as, also, **if there be two spirits, and one shall be more intelligent than the other**, yet these two spirits, notwithstanding one is more intelligent than the other, have no beginning; they existed before, they shall have no end, they shall exist after, for they are gnolaum, or eternal.

19 And the Lord said unto me: These two facts do exist, that there are two spirits, **one being more intelligent than the other; there shall be another more intelligent than they; I am the Lord thy God, I am more intelligent than they all.**

Abraham is being shown that there are different levels of valiancy within the organization of spirits. This corresponds to what we just read in Alma 13; some exercised greater faith than others. The intelligence of spirits is the ability to seek for, obtain and be obedient to light and truth.

22 Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones; *[Again, this corresponds to those foreordained in Alma 13.]*

23 And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: **These I will make my rulers**; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: **Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born** *[to receive the right of the firstborn].*

Continuing with Alma 13:

5 Or in fine, **in the first place** they were on the same standing with their brethren; 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**, to teach his commandments unto the children of men, **that** they also might enter into his rest— *[This is what Abraham wanted; He wanted to become a high priest, even a prince of peace, holding the right belonging to the fathers or that right to administer the Gospel to the children of men.]*

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 **without beginning of days or end of years**, being prepared from eternity to all eternity, according to his foreknowledge of all things—

8 Now they were ordained after this manner—being called with a holy calling, and ordained with a holy ordinance, and taking upon them the high priesthood of the holy order, which calling, and ordinance, and high priesthood, is without beginning or end—

9 **Thus they become high priests forever**, *after the order of the Son*, the Only Begotten of the Father, **who is without beginning of days or end of years**, who is full of grace, equity, and truth. And thus it is. Amen. *[They obtained the same responsibilities as Christ, i.e., the Right of the Firstborn, to teach the commandments and administer the ordinances of salvation and exaltation. This is what Abraham sought for.]*

Christ's authority is inherent within Himself. His responsibility as the Firstborn and birthright son is to provide for the temporal and spiritual welfare of all of His Father's posterity, not just on this earth but on worlds without number. On this earth Abraham is seeking for the right of the Firstborn and to administer the same. He loved God so much that he wanted to take upon himself the same

responsibilities as Christ. He wanted to provide and administer the ordinances of salvation and exaltation to all of his father's posterity on earth. God loved Abraham so much that He told Abraham that this right would continue in him and in his posterity.

Question: This right of the Firstborn was also called after the Order of Enoch, yes?

Before it was called the Order of Melchizedek, it was called the Order of Enoch. The Lord promised Enoch, because he was also righteous, that his seed would be on the earth until the very end. Noah receives the same blessing. Abraham gets the same blessing. Abraham was one of the noble and great ones. I'm not an Abraham. The Bishop is not an Abraham; neither is the Stake President. These verses are not talking about the high priests in our HP groups. The spirits in the pre-earth council who were already seeking for greater light and truth were recognized as the noble and great ones, and the Lord declared that "These I will make my rulers." This why Christ could be God *before* He came to the earth. He was worthy to be a Son of God before he came to this earth because his spirit sought for and was obedient to a fulness of light and truth. He received a fulness of light and truth and His character was such that He would be obedient to that light and truth. Therefore, He could become a Firstborn unto God – the First Begotten. (This is beyond what we are discussing today.)

Question: Will there be a point also in the next life where all will be able to learn and understand more of these things?

Most certainly! We cannot progress to any kind of judgment until we understand the Gospel perfectly, without any misunderstanding. If you are judged and go into a kingdom without a perfect understanding then your agency has been compromised, and if that happens, God would cease to be God!

As we have said before, if we are not seeking for further light and truth in this life, then the first thing we are going to have to do on the other side is to learn to want to learn. That might be harder than we think.

Summary:

Everything we discussed in verses 1-4 is a colophon – it tells us what the book is about! Abraham is seeking for the right of the fathers, or the blessings of the fathers. He says he is seeking for what it will take to allow him into the presence of God. That's what the remainder of the book is about. Verse 5 begins the story! We will pick this up next time.

We will learn more about why Abraham had to find another place of residence, why Nimrod and Pharaoh in Egypt wanted him dead. The book only gets better and better. We needed to go through this introduction first so we can understand the other things that Abraham talks about. We will learn why the creation account is included, how it allows us to establish a relationship between God, man, and the environment in which man was placed.

Remember, you have the scriptures. Go to them to find out what's there...don't rely on me! That's the first rule in this class! My job is to have you go back to your own scriptures and find out for yourself. I'm hoping you'll begin to see that there is more to the scriptures than what we generally

think. What we have here in Abraham is the pearl of great price, and is to only to be had among those that believe (Moses 1:42). Abraham, in my opinion, even takes us a step further into the meat of the Gospel and opens the door to what D&C 121 promises for those who seek for further light and truth

26 God shall give unto you knowledge by his Holy Spirit, yea, by the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost, that has not been revealed since the world was until now;

27 Which our forefathers have awaited with anxious expectation to be revealed in the last times, which their minds were pointed to by the angels, as held in reserve for the fulness of their glory;

28 A time to come in the which nothing shall be withheld, whether there be one God or many gods, they shall be manifest.

29 All thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, shall be revealed and set forth upon all who have endured valiantly for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

30 And also, if there be bounds set to the heavens or to the seas, or to the dry land, or to the sun, moon, or stars—

31 All the times of their revolutions, all the appointed days, months, and years, and all the days of their days, months, and years, and all their glories, laws, and set times, shall be revealed in the days of the dispensation of the fulness of times—

32 According to that which was ordained in the midst of the Council of the Eternal God of all other gods before this world was, that should be reserved unto the finishing and the end thereof, when every man shall enter into his eternal presence and into his immortal rest.