

Book of Abraham Study Guide
Class Transcription of Pearl of Great Price Class
Bruce H. Porter

1 - Brief History of the Abraham Papyri

The Book of Abraham is one of the most important scriptures in our Standard Works. Not many of our teachers use the Book of Abraham very much. It is the only illustrated book in our Standard Works. Other than looking at the three facsimiles, the Book of Abraham is hardly ever referenced. The Book of Abraham contains one of the three creation epics described in our scriptures. We have Genesis, of course, and Moses 1-5, as the *Inspired Version*, which was used as the basis for the narrative in the very first endowment in the Nauvoo Temple. The other creation epic or drama is reenacted in our modern day Temples. Of the three sources, Abraham is the best in my opinion. Each of these creation epics depicts a different point of view, and in my opinion, Abraham's record is the most correct. It is unfortunate that this is the one hardly anyone reads or looks at. The thinking is: they have Genesis (Moses) and they have the Temple narrative, so Abraham is hardly ever read or studied. Joseph Smith quoted more from the Book of Abraham in the last years of his life than from any other source. His basic doctrines and the things he taught in Nauvoo before his death were based on the things he learned in the Book of Abraham and from the inspiration he received from the *Papyri* obtained in Kirtland back in 1835.

The Book of Abraham is important also because at the end of the first chapter, Abraham writes: “...*I shall endeavor to write some of these things upon this record, for the benefit of my posterity that shall come after me.*” (Abr 1:31) We are Abraham's posterity. We are told in chapter 2 of Abraham that whosoever accepts the Gospel becomes the posterity of Abraham:

“... 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;” (Abr 2:10)

For some teachers within the LDS community and even among those outside our community the Book of Abraham and the *Joseph Smith Papyri* have become troubling because a modern translation of the papyri seems to be different than what we have in the Book of Abraham. What needs to be kept in mind is that the Church does not have everything Joseph Smith had. The eleven fragments found in 1967 and now possessed by the Church represent (barely) one-tenth of what Joseph obtained in Kirtland. The church does not have it all, and we should not expect those fragments to contain what Joseph came to understand. As students of the Book of Abraham, we also need to realize that the Book of Abraham did not come forth from a translation as much as it did from revelation. Joseph called his writings from ancient records “translations,” no matter the source, if they once existed as a record. It was essentially all by revelation if what he provided came from an ancient record, or once existed as an ancient record, since he did not have the training or knowledge to translate it any other way. He got it the same way Moses received the *Book of Genesis*. When Moses came out of Egypt he did not possess any records that he could copy in order to provide the “*Book of Genesis*.” Moses received his information by revelation. Yet the *Genesis* text is a translation from ancient records, even if Moses did not himself possess them. Moses provided his record the same way Joseph Smith did — by revelation. Whether it is the Book of Mormon, the parchment hid up by John (D&C 7), Joseph's “Inspired Version of the Bible,” or the record from the Book of Abraham, they are all considered “translations,” because an ancient record that once existed has been rendered into English through the inspiration of God. It could

not have been accomplished any other way because Joseph did not possess the knowledge to do a word-by-word translation from languages that to that time had not even been cracked. The papyri that came into Joseph's possession provided the catalyst for Joseph to go to the Lord and inquire about those great prophets who were in Egypt.

We know that Abraham, Joseph (the son of Jacob), and Moses were all in Egypt. Joseph Smith also translated the Book of Joseph, along with the Book of Abraham. The papyri obtained from Michael Chandler in Kirtland were the catalysts that led to the translations of the Book of Abraham *and* the Book of Joseph. Only two-thirds of the Book of Abraham was published. Joseph had not prepared the last section of Abraham nor the Book of Joseph for publication before his death.

Kirtland, July 3, 1835

On July 3, 1835 a man came to Kirtland with a wagonload of mummies. His name was Michael H. Chandler. He had been trying to sell these mummies for a while. When he was in Harrisburg, Pa, he had six mummies, but by the time he arrived in Kirtland, he had only four mummies left. He had heard that a man lived in Kirtland who could translate ancient records, and he ended up taking some of the papyri to Joseph Smith. Joseph kept those papyri for three days. On July 6th, Joseph put up \$800, and two other brethren each put up \$800, thus the mummies and the papyri were purchased from Mr. Chandler for \$2,400. Mr. Chandler then took the \$2,400 and purchased a farm just outside of Kirtland. He then brought his wife and eleven children to Kirtland where they settled. Mr. Chandler stayed on that farm for the rest of his life and was buried in a plot just outside the city.

Mr. Chandler had a rather large cabinet or box that had multiple drawers built in that could hold or display the unrolled papyri. Joseph said those papyri could cover the floor of the parlor in the Mansion House in Nauvoo. What the church owns could fit on a regular office desk, but the original documents were much more extensive.

According from an article in the Messenger and Advocate, Oct, 1835, this is how the church came to possess the mummies and the scrolls (interspersed with my commentary):

These records were obtained from one of the catacombs in Egypt, near the place where once stood the renowned city of Thebes, by the celebrated French traveler Antonio Lebolo, in the year 1831.

There are two cities: Luxor is located on the east bank of the Nile, and Thebes is on the west bank. Luxor is a city of the living and Thebes is a necropolis, or a city of the dead.

Antonio Lebolo is French but is from the city of Castellemonate, in Northern Italy, at the base of the Italian Alps. Lebolo had worked for Napoleon when Napoleon conquered Northern Italy, and he also worked for Napoleon's Consulate General in Egypt.

He procured license from Mehemet Ali, then Viceroy of Egypt, under the protection of Chevalier Drovetti, the French Consul, in the year 1828;

Mehemet Ali became the local ruler or Viceroy of Egypt after Napoleon left Egypt, and he was under the protection of Drovetti, the French Consul. Ali was actually Turkish, and not being Egyptian, he really did not care how many antiquities he gave away to other governments, as he was solidifying relationships with the Consuls or Ambassadors from these other countries.

Drovetti plays an important role in the acquisition of the mummies because of his relationship with Lebolo and Mehemet Ali. Drovetti and Lebolo were both Gendarmes in the French Army and had both worked for Napoleon's army when he came into Northern Italy. Drovetti had found favor with Napoleon after saving the life of Napoleon's father-in-law in a battle. Drovetti lived in a town only 3 kilometers from where Lebolo lived. Drovetti hired Lebolo to become his personal antiquities collector, and at the same time, Lebolo ventured off and acquired his own antiquities to sell later, all under the protection and permission of Mehemet Ali. Drovetti gave his collection of antiquities to the embassy in Cairo, but Lebolo kept his personal collection in Thebes.

[Lebolo] employed 433 men four months and two days, (if I understood correctly, Egyptians or Turkish soldiers,) at from four to six cents per diem, each man; entered the catacomb June 7th, 1831, and obtained eleven Mummies . . . On his way from Alexandria to Paris he put in at Trieste, and after ten days illness, expired. This was in the year 1832. Previous to his decease, he made a will of the whole to Mr. Michael H. Chandler, then in Philadelphia, Pa. his nephew, whom he supposed to have been in Ireland. Accordingly, the whole were sent to Dublin, addressed according, and Mr. Chandler's friends ordered them sent to New York, where they were received at the custom house, in the winter or spring of 1833. In April of the same year Mr. Chandler paid the duties upon his Mummies, and took possession of the same. Up to this time they [the mummies] had not been taken out of the coffins nor the coffins opened.

There were more mummies found in the catacomb, but Chandler is speaking specifically about these eleven mummies. This is all in our Church History: History of the Church, Vol 2, p 235, 236, 348-350. See Also Messenger and Advocate, Vol 2 (Oct 1835 - Sept 1836, Vol 2, Dec, 1835 No 15, p 232-237.

This was the story as Joseph and Oliver Cowdery got it from Michael Chandler. Here, now, is the rest of the story:

The Rest of the Story

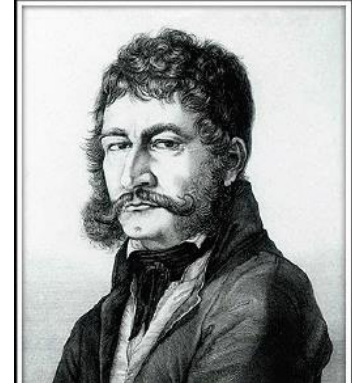
Drovetti, the Consul General is the key to the story. There was a man by the name of Belzoni with whom Lebolo worked in Thebes. Belzoni was nicknamed the strong man Egyptologist. He was a big man at 6 feet 7 inches. His hometown was near Venice, Italy. In 1803 he went to England. There he married an English woman and they both joined a traveling circus. While working in the circus he performed feats of strength. He could pick up six people and walk around holding them on his arms, three on each side.

He wanted to do something more with his life, and also being somewhat of an engineer, he went to Egypt to help create an irrigation system in Cairo. When he realized he wasn't going to change their irrigation methods he then began to collect his own antiquities.

Group Picture with Drovetti and possibly Lebolo behind.

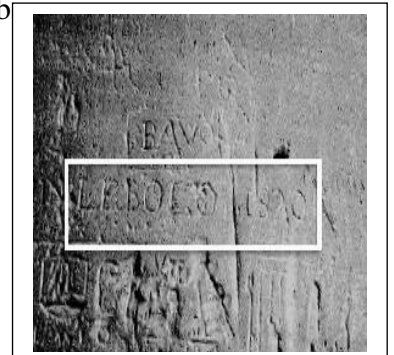


Drovetti



Belzoni actually worked for Henry Salt, who was the English Consulate General. He was doing the same thing for Salt that Lebolo was doing for Drovetti—collecting antiquities for their employers and also for themselves! Both Lebolo and Belzoni competed with each other over who could tie up all the antiquities in a given area before the other. On one occasion there was a confrontation between “Lebolo's renegades” (Belzoni's term for them) and Belzoni's workers. Belzoni, being a very strong man, picked up one of Lebolo's workers by his ankles and swung him around, using his body as a club to fight off Lebolo's workers. It's a great story! We don't know what Lebolo looked like, but we have seen his graffiti carved into some of the antiquities still remaining. The tomb that Lebolo used to store his personal collection is still standing, and in that tomb one can still see his name etched into the sandstone within the tomb.

If you were to go into the large pyramid in Giza, the Cheops Pyramid, and squeeze up into the King's Chamber, you would also see Belzoni's name carved into the stone in the chamber. His name is in there because he was the one who first opened



that pyramid. Belzoni was also the first to open the Abu Simbel Temple.

Keep in mind that at this time the discipline of archeology did not exist. Today we would call them tomb robbers or grave robbers, but at that particular time the science of archeology did not exist. Lebolo, Belzoni, Rifaud, and Cailliaud were the leading excavators / discoverers of Egyptian antiquities at this point in time.

What happened to the Mummies after Joseph Smith?

A number of years ago I was asked to assist H. Donl Peterson in research on the Book of Abraham because of my background in ancient languages. Working for the Religious Studies Center at BYU, I spent years working to find out the answer to the questions surrounding the mummies, the Joseph Smith Papyri and the Book of Abraham.

Sydney B. Sperry went to New York to determine when the mummies arrived in New York and tried to track them after Joseph's death. After spending some three months in New York, he found no information on the mummies. Since Sperry's efforts produced no concrete results, he remained doubtful that there had ever been eleven mummies!

The only way to find information about past events is to read all of the newspapers published at that time period. One would have to read all the newspapers to see if Chandler had been showing the mummies anywhere, or where they might have arrived in the first place. Knowing that Sperry had gone to New York, I decided to go to Philadelphia. While in that city, I discovered a newspaper repository for the east coast right across the street from the Philadelphia Library. This repository had papers that dated back to Colonial times. They also had back issues of papers from New York, Baltimore and Philadelphia. In this repository I found sixty-two (62) news articles about these mummies coming into the United States! From these articles I soon realized that what Chandler had told Joseph and Oliver about the eleven mummies was true. Eleven mummies did arrive, and upon taking possession at the customs house, he opened one of the coffins to see if anything of value was contained therein. That proved futile—he found nothing. So now he had ten mummies to transport and display during his travels. He left New York with ten mummies, went to Philadelphia, sold two of them to the Academy of Science. Possibly two other mummies were acquired by the Masonic Lodge. By the time he got to Baltimore and then Harrisburg he had six mummies. These mummies were put on display in a museum in Baltimore. The following advertisement was found:

“The citizens are respectfully informed that the manager has recently received from the vicinity of Thebes, the celebrated city of ancient Egypt, six strangers, illustrious from their antiquity, a thousand years anterior to the advent of our blessed Savior and contemporary to the first sovereigns of Israel, namely Saul and David. They are by no means insignificant inspiring the public's patronage in the present day from a country then unknown and whose trans-Atlantic ancestors were in a period of gloom, idolatry and paganism. All are invited: Adults: 25 cents Children: half-price.”

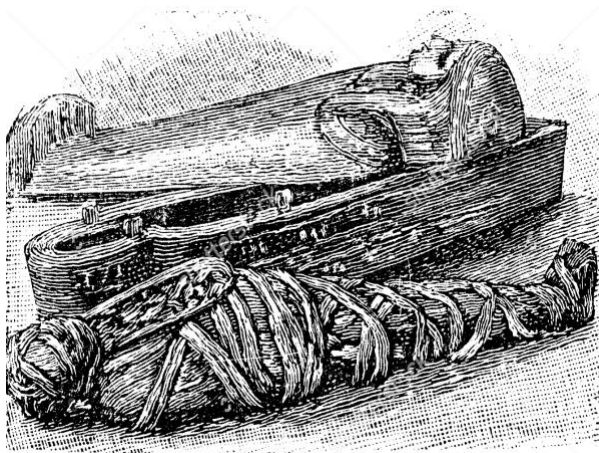
From the *US Gazette*, Philadelphia, 3 Apr 1833:

“The largest collection of Egyptian mummies ever exhibited in this city, is now seen at the Masonic Hall . . .

“They were found in the vicinity of Thebes, by the celebrated traveler Antonio Lebolo and Chevalier Drovetti, General Consul of France in Egypt.

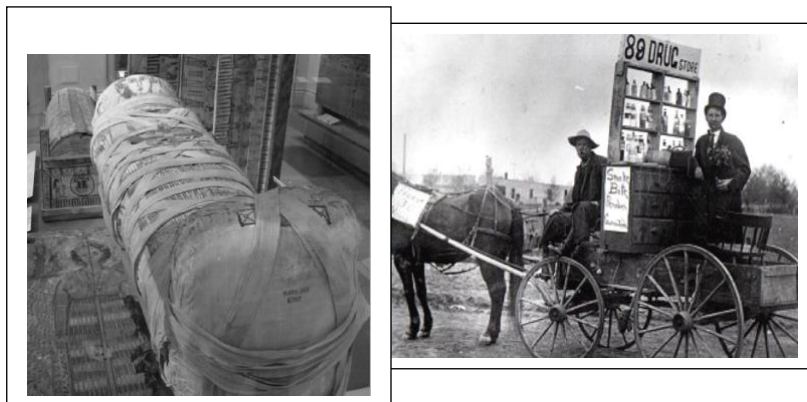
“Some writings on papyrus found with the mummies, can also be seen, and will afford, no doubt, much satisfaction to amateurs of antiquities.

“Admittance 25 cents. children half price.”



All along, Chandler is showing the mummies and trying to sell his collection of mummies. By the time he gets to Kirtland he has four left. I have not proven he was a Mason, but he seemed to frequently display the mummies in Masonic lodges. The research is still open on this point.

Below is a photo of a sarcophagus seen in the British Museum. Can you imagine having 10 of these? He would have needed two to three wagons to transport these things. This mummy was also found by Lebolo.



After Joseph's death, Emma and Lucy Mack Smith gave the mummies and the papyri to Joseph's brother, William. He tried to make money with them the same way Chandler did by taking them on the road in wagons. He charged 25 cents for adults and twelve and a half cents for children

William was not very successful in his traveling show so he ended up selling the artifacts to a man named A. Coombs, who had a riverboat museum. Coombs traveled up and down the Mississippi River showing his curiosities all over the place. Coombs wasn't making money any more successfully than William Smith or Chandler, and eventually the mummies and the papyri were sold to the St. Louis Museum. This museum ended up selling them to the Chicago Museum sometime before Mrs. O'Leary's cow kicked over the lantern that began the great Chicago fire. For years the assumption was that all of the mummies and the papyri were destroyed in the Chicago fire.

However, it was discovered that before Coombs disbanded his riverboat museum, he allowed his workers to choose items they wanted from the antiquities as payment for their services. There was a woman by the name of Alice Heusser who chose some the Joseph Smith Papyri. Alice moved to Long Island, New York, where she remained until her death sometime before the First World War.



The Remains of the Chicago Museum

Before her death she tried to sell the papyrus to the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Because of the uncertain times due to the war, the Met chose not to purchase it. After the war, and after Alice Heusser's death, her son John Heusser approached the Met with the papyrus one more time. This time they did purchase the papyrus for \$350.00.

When I examined the Museum records of this transaction, there was a memo in the file regarding the purchase of these fragments. The memo was from a man who was present when the fragments were brought in the first time, and he remembered “a round one” also being part of the fragments. As a good researcher I decided to call all of the Heussers in Long Island to see if anyone was

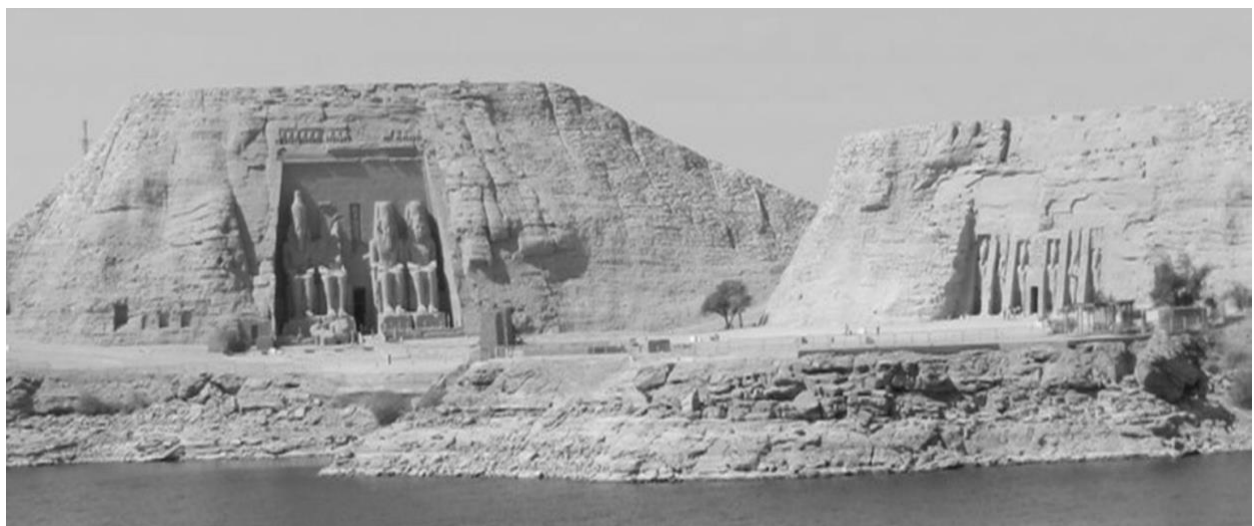
related to Alice or John Heusser. I did find a family, but they had no idea their grandma ever owned anything Egyptian.

In 1967, Professor Aziz Atiya, an expert Coptic Historian and expert in Islamic and Crusade Studies was visiting the Met, and while perusing their Egyptian files, came across a folder containing a series of Egyptian fragments. One in particular looked a lot like Facsimile #1 in the Pearl of Great Price. He called some LDS friends at the University of Utah where he had visited and been made aware of the Book of Abraham and the facsimiles. They called N. Eldon Tanner of the First Presidency and informed him that some fragments from the Joseph Smith Papyri had been “discovered” and were filed away at the New York Metropolitan Museum. In all there were eleven different fragments in that particular collection.

To prevent the fragments from falling apart, Joseph Smith had glued the fragments to pieces of paper. On the back of one of these fragments, on the paper, one can see a plot map of the city of Nauvoo. This proved these were the fragments Alice Heusser got from A. Coombs.

When the General Authorities become aware of the existence of the papyri, they of course wanted to purchase them from the Museum. There was a problem with that proposal. The Museum could not sell any artifact for more than they paid, or they would no longer retain their non-profit status. They didn't want to sell them to the Church for \$350, and they knew the Church would pay just about anything for them. Again, Aziz Atiya, because of his relationship with the Church and with the museums, universities, and the Department of Antiquities in Egypt, assisted the Church in acquiring the Joseph Smith Papyri fragments.

How was this feat accomplished? At this particular time, Egypt was building the Aswan Dam, and when completed, the waters behind the dam (in Lake Nasser) would rise and cover many of the temples and other archeological sites of the ancient Egyptians. An example is the famous dismantling and relocation of Abu Simbel Temples....Shown below is a temple for Ramses and his wife in Abu Simbel.



There was a desperate need for assistance in saving these antiquities. The United Nations became involved as well. I had the opportunity to sit down with Professor Atiya in his Cairo office to learn the facts about the assistance he and the Church gave to save the Dendur Temple.



The Temple
at Dendur

Because of his assistance and additional assistance from the Church, the Met traded the Joseph Smith Papyri for the Temple at Dendur. It was dismantled and brought to New York and reassembled in a newly donated wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. If you visit the Met's Egyptian collection, this temple will be the first thing you see in the atrium that was built especially for its display.

As mentioned previously, The Book of Abraham has become a target for the critics within the non-LDS community. Even today, many who are falling away from the Church point to the Book of Abraham (because of questions about its authenticity) as one of their reasons for leaving. In my opinion, they are leaving because of a lack of understanding. When I was working in the Religious Studies Center, the critics argued that there was no will that established a relationship between Chandler and Lebolo. "Since there is not much information on Lebolo, maybe he did not exist, or Chandler either," they argued.

When I was given the assignment by the Church, it took me two summers to prepare to go to Europe, and when I finally went, I was there for almost eight months.

Research Questions

Was there a will? Was Michael H. Chandler a nephew of Lebolo? How did Michael Chandler get the mummies? How many mummies came into the US? When and where did Lebolo die? Where, why, and how was Lebolo able to work in Egypt? Are there records of Lebolo's artifacts and discoveries? What was the trail of the Mummies to NYC?

My focus was on Michael Chandler and the trail of the mummies from New York to Kirtland. We needed to determine when the mummies came into the US and from where. The New York Custom House had burned so there were no records from there. Yet the Met had the JS Papyri in 1967. I decided to follow the trail of Chandler, a claimed nephew of Lebolo, who said he was from Ireland,

and who claimed that the mummies went to London and Dublin before he received them in New York.

I was working in the Religious Studies Center in the Pearl of Great Price Department, and before that I was in the Old Testament section. A lot of Chandler's background had to be established. I knew he came from Ireland so I learned how he got into the United States. I did his genealogy here in the US and in Ireland and in London. I even did his wife's genealogy. The research demanded this type of work and effort.



Next I focused on Antonio Lebolo. In order to determine who might have known Lebolo, I read all of the diary accounts of those who went into Egypt from 1790 – 1835 in all of the major museums and their library collections (British Museum and Library, The Louvre, and the Vatican Library and Museum).

I traveled to Lebolo's home territory, starting in Northern Italy: Castellemonete, Turino, Venice, Trieste, and then to Rome, Cairo, and Luxor. I even located the tombs that Lebolo excavated in Egypt.

From Provo I traveled to New York, then to Philadelphia, and from there to Ireland (Dublin). I even went to Liverpool, but just for fun because the first edition of the Pearl of Great Price was published on 15 Wolton Street, but I only found a vacant lot with two concrete steps leading up to it. I then ventured into London to try to track how the mummies came into the United States, whether by Chandler or Lebolo. I searched in Oxford, Paris, Rome, Jerusalem, Luxor, Cairo, and Thebes. This all took about 8 months!

2 - History of the Abraham Papyri, Part II

As I mentioned before, I had to find and read all of the diary accounts of any travelers / explorers who may have entered Egypt between 1790 and 1830. The British Museum Library is similar to the Library of Congress. To check out a book, it can take 24-48 hours before the requested item is made available. Interestingly enough, the material we needed about the English Consulate General was found in the Louvre in Paris.

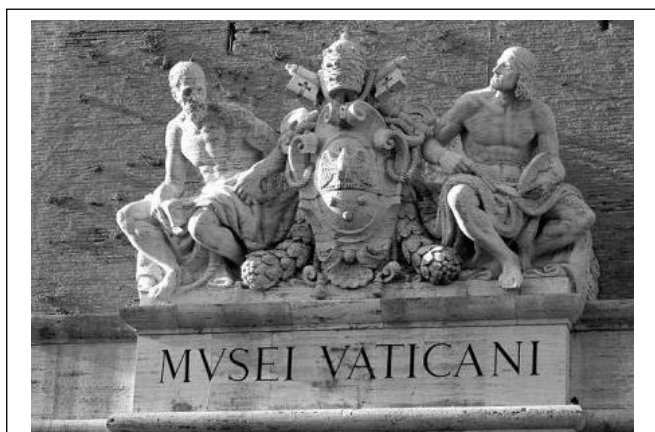


It was a very time consuming process. For example, a footnote found in one book would require a wait of 24 hours to read the reference in another book. This is why doing this kind of research can be very boring. I was in this Library for 45 days!

As it turned out, we were able to find quite a bit of information about Lebolo in this Museum even though he worked for the French Consul General, Drovetti.



The Louvre also has a very fine collection of Egyptian artifacts. At that time I was collecting photographs / copies of various hypocephali, and while waiting for my requested books to arrive I asked the staff there to make copies of some of their Egyptian Facsimiles.

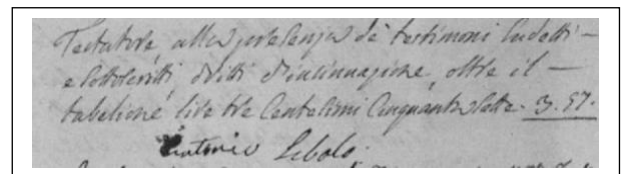
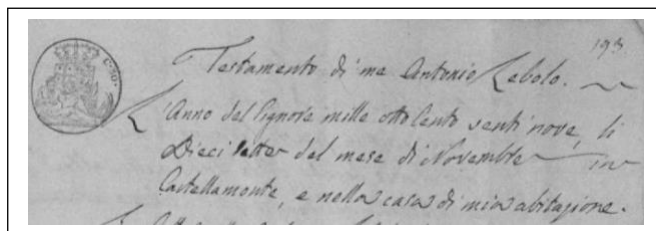


While at the Vatican Library and Museum, we discovered that an early part of their Egyptian collection was purchased from Lebolo for about 10,000 Crowns.

In our fact-finding journey we discovered that Lebolo did not die in Trieste; he actually passed away in Castellamonte. He also passed away on a different date than was previously stated by Chandler. We found a copy of his death certificate and his grave. The city of Castellamonte is at the Northwest base of the Italian Alps, whereas Trieste is located on the upper northeastern border. The city of Turin is not very far away from where Lebolo died. (You have heard of the Shroud of Turin?) We had the address of Lebolo's home in Castellamonte from the legal records—his descendants still live in the same home.

While in Egypt, Drovetti had purchased or acquired a slave girl. Before Lebolo left Egypt, Drovetti gave Lebolo this servant girl and her son or young brother. Lebolo took both the servant girl and her son back to Northern Italy. This girl and her son came out of the Darfur area of Africa. As Lebolo's first wife had died, he wanted to marry the servant girl and adopt the boy. While in Venice we discovered the record of this woman completing her catechism (a prerequisite for becoming a member of the Catholic Church), and where she became known as Anna Darfur. Lebolo then married Anna and adopted the boy.

A man named Giacomo Buffa, acting as his notary, signed all of Lebolo's legal documents that we discovered in the State Archives in Turin. Oddly, the documents were not filed under Lebolo's name, but rather under Buffa's name. It was in Buffa's files we discovered Lebolo's last will and testament!



Giacomo Zuffa

In these archives, we set up a camera on one of the empty tables and photographed all the pages pertaining to Lebolo's will. That added up to about 350 pages! However, there was no mention of Michael H. Chandler or any mummies.

After spending time in the State Archives, we happened upon the Academy of Science and its library. It was a building that seemed to have been built in the 1500's. When we walked in, it looked like no one had stepped foot in the place for at least a decade. The librarian was so excited to greet anyone who walked through his doors! He spoke a little English and when we told him of our quest to find diaries and other documents from anyone who had worked in Egypt from the late 1700's to 1830, he directed us to an area in their library where their archives were shelved. He said he was sure there were records from a traveler by the name of Giovanni Morro.



Morro knew of Drovetti and Lebolo and other Egyptian artifact "collectors." He (Morro) had willed all of his personal documents to this academy of science, and we found a trove of documents sent to and from Lebolo and Morro detailing his business affairs in Egypt and elsewhere. Lebolo became quite wealthy selling his antiquities to the museums in Germany, England, France, and Italy.

The Librarian helpfully allowed us to use his antiquated copy machine for some of the other documents. We even found among Morro's papers a parchment from Napoleon to the Pope. The parchment had been sealed at one time with Napoleon's wax seal. The Librarian was not even aware of the existence of this historical document.

After Lebolo passed away his estate needed to be settled. We found documentation that eleven mummies had been consigned to a Mr. Albano Oblasser in Trieste. The estate was suing to receive payment for the 11 mummies. So here's the connection! Lebolo had consigned his 11 mummies to be sold, and he then returned to Castellamonte where he died a year later. The executor of Lebolo's estate brought suit against Oblasser for payment of the mummies. However, at this time Egyptian mummies were very common and there was no market for them.

Lebolo's executor, Bertolla, had a son in Philadelphia who was a veterinary doctor. Bertolla was the brother of Lebolo's first wife, and he was trying to settle Lebolo's estate on behalf of Lebolo's two sons born to his first wife. Thus, Bertolla's son in Philadelphia was Lebolo's nephew. The plan was to send the mummies to the US, and for Bertolla's son to sell them and then send the money back to the estate.

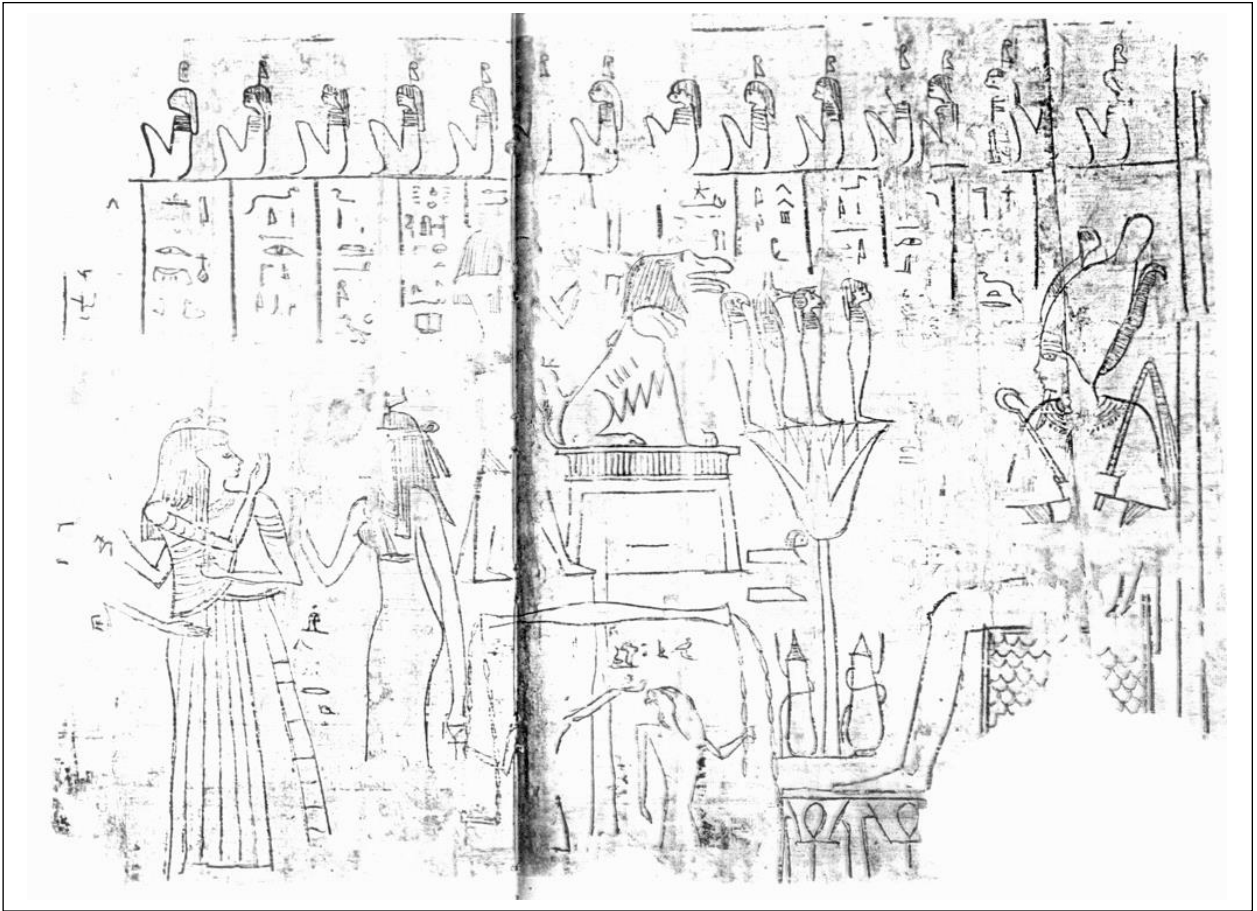
Somehow Michael Chandler found out about these mummies coming into Philadelphia, and when they arrived, he impersonated Bertolla's son and took possession of the mummies. As he traveled around showing these mummies, the story he told was that his rich uncle died and left these mummies to him; this is the story that ends up in our church history.

The Book of Joseph

Along with the Book of Abraham, Joseph Smith also translated the record of Joseph who was sold into Egypt. In the Messenger and Advocate, Oliver Cowdery wrote a description of a facsimile:

“In the inner end of the same roll (of Joseph’s record) presents a representation of the judgment: At one view you behold the Savior seated upon his throne (1), crowned and holding the scepters of righteousness and power, before whom also, are assembled the twelve tribes of Israel, the nations, languages, and tongues of the earth, the kingdoms of the world (2) over which Satan is represented as reigning (3). Michael the archangel, holding the key to the bottomless pit (4), and at the same time the devil is being chained and shut up in the bottomless pit. But upon this last scene, I am only able to give you a shadow, to the real picture.”

(Messenger and Advocate, Vol 2 (Oct 1835 - Sept 1836)



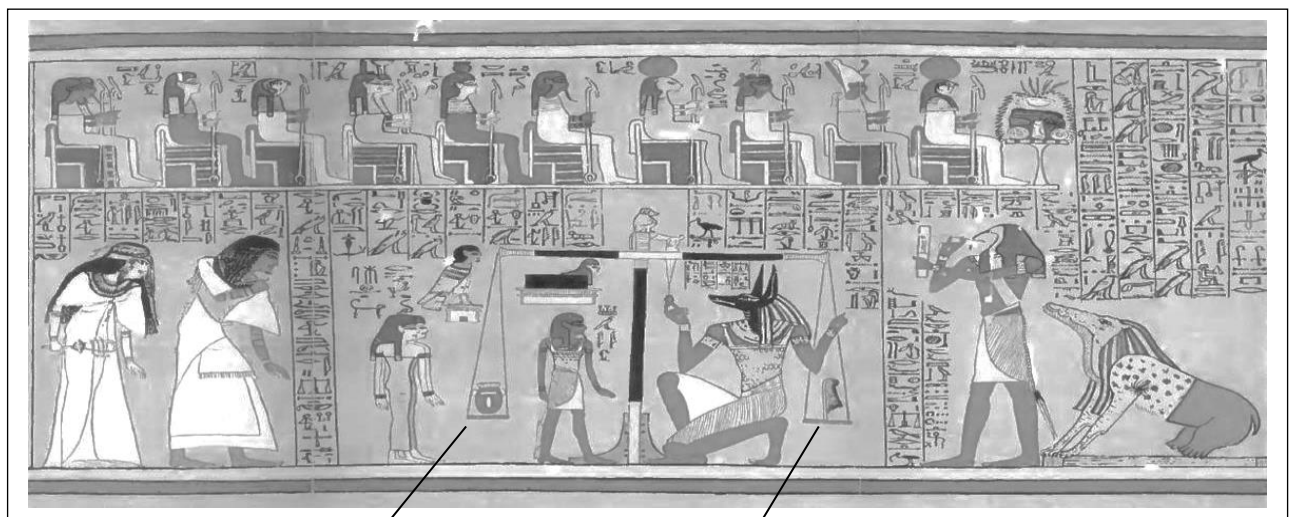
While doing research, I found that this is a copy of one the fragments obtained by the Church in 1967. I realized this description, written in the Messenger and Advocate, was actually describing the scene from the Book of Joseph Papyrus. At that time I was often working with Hugh Nibley, and while walking together across campus one day, I took out this copy in my files and asked if he thought it might be from the Book of Joseph. He took it out of my hands, looked at it for a brief time, handed it back to me and said, “Yes, it is.” I then asked, “If that is the case, why haven’t you

written anything about it?" He said, "I don't want to unless I have to." That was his polite way of telling me to keep my mouth shut!

Knowing a bit about Church history and the Egyptian religion I was able to put two and two together and deduce this came from the Book of Joseph.

Below is from the Papyrus of Ani, depicting the Symposium Scene. One has to be presented to God in order to come into the presence of God. The person is being judged, found worthy to progress and move forward through the different veils of the different kingdoms of glory, and then receive greater glory in order to enter into the presence of God.

The Twelve who sit at Judgment



Ani, the
deceased

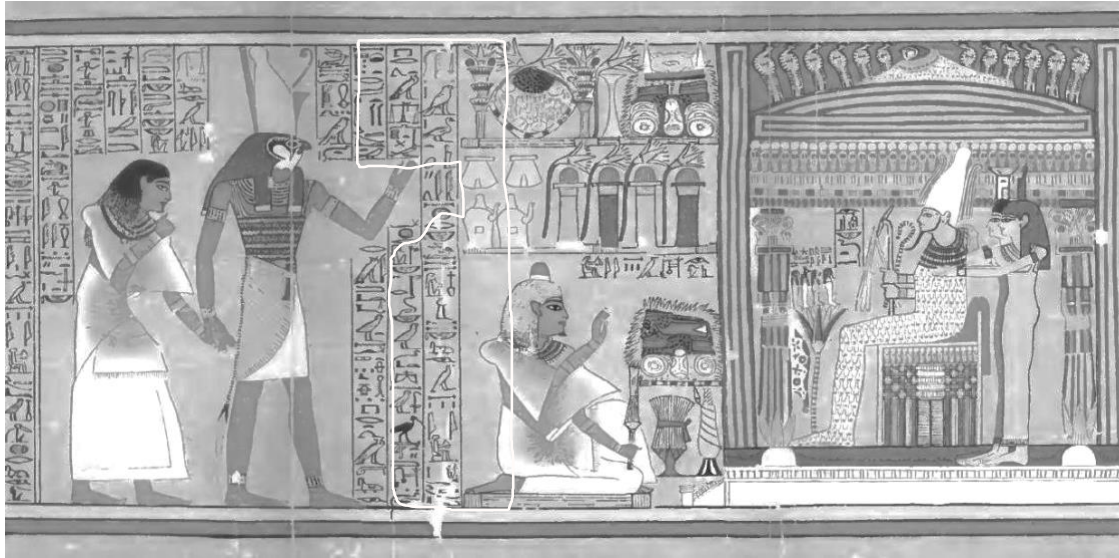
Thoth,
the scribe

The Great
Devourer

Ani's heart is being weighed against Maat, or truth and righteousness

When Ani is brought before the God, (who is behind the veil), Horus reports:

Thus, saith Horus the son of Isis, I have come to thee O great God and have brought the resurrected Ani. *His heart is pure and has come from the balance, he has not sinned against any god or goddess.* Thoth hath weighed it in according to the decree uttered by the council of the Gods unto him. It (Ani's heart) is *true and very righteous*. Grant that he may be given cakes and beer and *may he enter the presence of Osiris and be like the followers of Horus forever* (exalted). This translation is outlined in white below



Horus presents Ani before the God Ani in the Presence of Osiris

Osiris

This scene is found in Ani's Book of the Dead. The papyrus of Ani and is the largest and most complete Egyptian Book of the Dead.

***Question:** Why all the different gods in the Egyptian religion?*

Herodotus, a Greek historian, said all of the Greek gods came from Egypt. The older Egyptian gods come from the days of the Patriarchs. Thoth rules over knowledge, language, and understanding. In the Greek pantheon he is called Hermes. Thoth is also the scribe of the gods. This goes back to the traditions of Enoch. Enoch was always called the scribe of Jehovah. It was through Enoch that the Endowment *and* the language passed down through the Flood. So the traditions of Enoch have preserved these things. All of what we have been talking about is in the Book of Joseph.

As mentioned earlier, we only have two-thirds of the Book of Abraham. The last third and the Book of Joseph were not prepared for publication in Joseph's lifetime and were in Emma Smith's possession. In the early 1870's Elders Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith were sent back to Nauvoo on what was called the Mission to the States. When they were set apart, they were given the assignment to invite Emma to come west and to purchase the remaining manuscripts that Joseph had written. When Elders Pratt and Smith returned to Salt Lake right before the October conference of that year, they reported in General Conference: "we had a very successful mission."

Even though Emma did not come back with them, the fact that they reported that the mission was "very successful" indicated that they were able to get the unpublished manuscripts. Sidney B. Sperry, Elder Talmage, and Elder Bruce R. McConkie have all talked about the contents of the Book of Joseph, and they have all said that the contents are of such a sacred nature that they ought not to be published to the world. McConkie felt that the revelations Joseph Smith received from the manuscript of the Book of Joseph contributed to the restoration of the endowment at Nauvoo.

Comment: Brother Nibley's book* about the Egyptian Endowment contains full color reproductions of this fragment and all of the other fragments found in the Met back in 1967.

*[*The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri, An Egyptian Endowment*]

In 1975, in her research on the Greco-Roman-Egyptian Magical Papyri, Janet Johnson, unfriendly to the Book of Abraham, found a facsimile that represented Abraham on a Lion Couch and mentioned Abraham by name. The similarities between her discovery and our Facsimile #1 are remarkable.

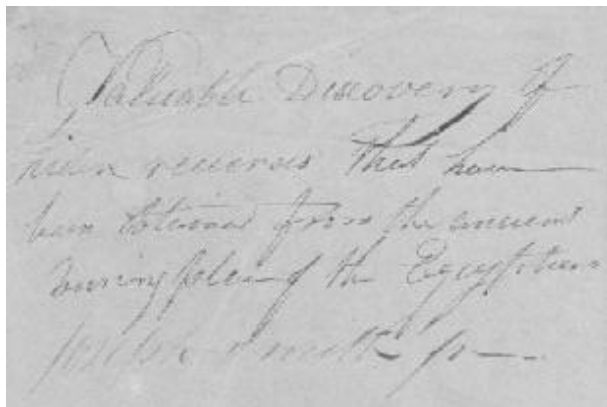


We will begin our discussion of Abraham 1 in our next session.

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 that 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.

4 - Covenants

Before we get started I've been asked to talk about the important covenants we make. Of course,

since we are talking about Abraham, the most important covenant we make is the covenant of exaltation. He not only wanted to receive the ordination to the Priesthood and receive the covenants of exaltation, he also wanted to administer those same ordinances to other people: his family and his posterity. As we saw in Abr 1:2, he was seeking for the Blessings of the Fathers, or the Rights of the Fathers. Those are covenants that are eternal.

A simple definition of a covenant is a promise to be obedient. The covenants we make in the Temple, for example, are promises to be obedient to certain laws. We are covenanting to be obedient to higher laws. If there is no law attached to those covenants, then the covenant remains empty and really means nothing. We enter into covenants to live the law of sacrifice, the law of the Gospel, the law of virtue and the law of consecration. Anciently when two parties entered into a covenant they would use the term *Karath B' rith*, which literally means to “cut a covenant.” Anciently there was always a cutting when a covenant was made. The cutting is always a symbol of death or sacrifice. In the Old Testament the covenant cutting process is seen at least 13 times. One of the most famous times is found in the Book of Ruth. Naomi is told by her daughter-in-law that she will remain with her:

16 And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:

17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: *the Lord do so to me, and more also*, if ought but death part thee and me. (Ruth 1:16-17)

Ruth is making a promise (i.e. a covenant) with Naomi to remain with her. In verse seventeen Ruth makes the statement, “*the Lord do so to me, and more*,” and then states that only death will part her from this promise to Naomi. This phrase, “Lord do so to me and more,” is, as Edward F. Campbell states in the *Anchor Bible Series on Ruth*, an “oath formulary.”

This solemn oath formulary appears only here and in eleven passages in Samuel and Kings. The first part of it was *presumably accompanied by a symbolic gesture, some-thing like our index finger across the throat*. Deep behind this lay, in all probability, a ritual act involving the slaughter of animals, to whom the one swearing the oath equated himself. The slaughtered and split animals represent what the oath-taker invites God to do to him if he fails to keep the oath.

(Campbell, Edward F. Jr., *Anchor Bible: Ruth*, Vol. 7, Doubleday, 1975. p.74, as sourced in Bruce H. Porter's book, *The Threshing Floor of Faith*)

In Hebrew the word for “oath” means a symbol for death or sacrifice when used in conjunction with making a promise of obedience (“Thus may the Lord do to me...”).

We see this also when Satan sets up his “Oath and Combinations” with Cain. In the Book of Mormon we see the same things being established in Helaman 6 and Ether Chapter 8. “Secret oaths and combinations” differ from the “oaths and covenants” of the priesthood in important ways. The Oath formulary for Satan’s covenants always involves secrecy: the participants are required to “swear by their heads and their throats that they tell it not.”

This ‘oath formulary’ has been passed down through the ages and has been participated in by almost all youth. The familiar juvenile promise of secrecy, accompanied with the well-known phrase, “*cross my heart and hope to die*,” is a prime example. The crossing of the heart is not the cross of Christianity, but the ‘dividing asunder,’ or the cutting in two – in other words, making a commitment to die before breaking the promise.

Zoram’s fears were silenced when Nephi promised “*with an oath* that he need not fear; that he should be a free man like unto us if he would go down in the wilderness with us” (1 Nephi 4:33). It would have been understood by Zoram that Nephi promised to put his life on the line with a symbolic act of death or sacrifice, ensuring Laban’s servant by oath and covenant of his safety.

This solemnizing of the “oath” by a cutting (an actual sacrifice or a symbolic act of death or cutting) is meant to indicate that the covenant or promise is more important than death. It did not necessarily mean that the individual could be slain if he didn’t keep the stipulations, but that the commitment was more important than life itself. You may remember the “Anti-Lehi-Nephi’s” who covenanted to lay down their weapons of war. They indicated that they would rather die than to break their covenants.

Alma 24:18

18 And this they did, it being in their view a testimony to God, and also to men, that they never would use weapons again for the shedding of man's blood; and this they did, vouching and covenanting with God, that *rather than* shed the blood of their brethren they would give up their own lives; and *rather than* take away from a brother they would give unto him; and *rather than* spend their days in idleness they would labor abundantly with their hands.

The oath they made or the covenant they made was so serious that they would rather die than break their covenant! An oath and covenant is made between you and God; a secret oath and combination is made between you and a group of people who have all taken the same oath of secrecy, and who all possess the right to kill anyone who breaks the oath of secrecy by revealing the group’s secret designs for power, gain, and unrighteous authority over others.

Here are insightful verses from **Ether 8**:

14 And it came to pass that they all swore unto him, by the God of heaven, and also by the heavens, and also by the earth, and *by their heads*, that whoso should vary from the assistance which Akish desired *should lose his head*; and whoso should divulge whatsoever thing Akish made known unto them, the same should *lose his life*.

15 And Akish did administer unto them the oaths which were given by them of old who also sought power, which had been handed down even from Cain, who was a murderer from the beginning.

Helaman 6:

21 But behold, Satan did stir up the hearts of the more part of the Nephites, insomuch that they did unite with those bands of robbers, and did **enter into their covenants and their oaths**, that they would protect and preserve one another in whatsoever difficult circumstances they should be placed, that they should not suffer for their murders, and their plunderings, and their stealings.

22 *They did have their signs, yea, their secret signs, and their secret words; and this that they might distinguish a brother* who had entered into the covenant, that whatsoever wickedness his brother should do he should not be injured by his brother, nor by those who did belong to his band, who had taken this covenant.

23 And thus they might murder, and plunder, and steal, and commit whoredoms and all manner of wickedness, contrary to the laws of their country and also the laws of their God.

Of the key covenants we make, Obedience is always the first law of heaven. Baptism is the first covenant of obedience that we all enter into. When we are baptized as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we covenant with God that we will be obedient and serve God and keep his commandments. Likewise, before we can participate in the Temple endowment (The Church of the Firstborn), the first covenant we enter into is a covenant of obedience. We cannot be *disobedient* to Gospel law until we have covenanted *to be* obedient to the same. This is why obedience is the first ordinance and covenant we receive or make in the Church and in the Temple. We are agreeing to be obedient in order to receive greater light and truth and enter into greater covenants. Both King Benjamin in Mosiah 5 and Moses in Exodus 19 put their people under covenant to be obedient, with the people all standing and declaring that they would be obedient in order to receive the blessings the Lord had promised them. But first they were given a chance to withdraw of their own free will and choice.

In the Temple you are also first given a chance to withdraw of your own free will and choice. If you do not want to take on those further obligations (necessary to receive greater knowledge), which then require greater obligations of obedience, you are given a chance to withdraw of your own free will and choice. That's what Israel did in D&C 84:23-25: As the Children of Israel stood at the base of Mt Sinai, they told Moses that they did not want to go before God, that they wanted Moses to be their intermediary between them and God. Because they withdrew, Moses was taken out of their midst along with the higher Priesthood.

The New Testament records the story of the Pharisees who approached Jesus and asked him to list the most important commandments of God. The Pharisees wanted to know which of all the commandments was the greatest. These Pharisees believed that the Law of Moses contained 613 commandments, and they wanted to know which of all the 613 commandments was the greatest. The High Priests wore robes with pomegranates dangling from the bottoms of their robes, symbolic of that, as each pomegranate was purported to contain 613 seeds.

Matthew 22:35-40

35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,
36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?
37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

When Christ answered the scribes and the Pharisees, he expressly said, “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” What Christ is saying is that every other commandment that exists is supposed to help you develop the character that loves God and loves your fellowman. All of the law = the commandments, and all the prophets = whatever a prophet of God teaches, hang on these two commandments. All that our Priesthood leaders teach is supposed to assist us in developing a character that loves God and loves our fellowman. If that is the case, then all judgment also hangs upon those two great commandments. And the great thing about it all is that we will judge ourselves!

So, to define “sin,” we can say that sin is anything that distracts us from developing the character that loves God and loves our fellowman. Life is a probationary state. It is a time for us to change our character (repent) and serve God.

Alma 42:4

And thus we see, that there was a time granted unto man to repent, yea, a probationary time, a time to repent and serve God.

Alma 12:24

... therefore this life became a probationary state; a time to prepare to meet God; a time to prepare for that endless state which has been spoken of by us, which is after the resurrection of the dead.

Alma 34:32

For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors.

On a side note, we have a tendency to rank sins according to how grievous we think they are, with higher tolerance for the ones we’re guilty of or most familiar with. (*class laughter*) In reality your worst sin is the one that will keep you out of the Celestial Kingdom, whatever it is.

A man who drank a lot of coffee asked President Marion G. Romney one time if he thought drinking one cup of coffee would keep him out of the Celestial Kingdom? President Romney replied, “I sincerely hope not!”

We often have the tendency to categorize or rank the severity of our sins. A friend of mind told me one time that if his son came home and announced that he was gay, he would not let him in his house. I asked him if he would allow the son in his house if instead the son confessed to committing adultery. My friend replied, “Of course!” This is a perfect illustration of how we might categorize the severity of sin according to our own subjective judgment.

You all remember the story about the woman brought to Jesus who had been taken in the very act of adultery. She had broken the law and the commandment, and she never denied it. The

consequence for breaking that law was to be stoned to death. The scribes and the Pharisees brought this woman to Christ to ask Him what should be done with her. They reminded Him of the Law of Moses, and what it said should be done. He stooped down to write something in the dirt, and then looked up and said, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” Those who brought the woman to Jesus were convicted by their own conscience and left the scene, one by one, from the eldest to the last. [The Old Testament law required that the witness to the breaking of this commandment was supposed to cast the first stone at the lawbreaker. Technically speaking, the witness against the accused was the only one who had a right to do that, because he would ostensibly be the only one there without sin.] Our text says:

John 8:10-11

10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

Do you think God will condemn us for using the same agency that He made sure we could have?

Think about this—Satan’s plan would insure that none of us would sin, in essence destroying the agency of man, that not one soul would be lost (Moses 4:1). God’s plan, when you get right down to it, ensured that everyone *could* sin. That’s how important agency is. As Christ tells the woman taken in adultery, “Neither do I condemn thee [*for using your agency*].” What *did* he say? “Go, and sin no more.”

Jesus is telling the woman to sin no more because by not sinning, she can become happy. Commandments are not restrictions of your agency; commandments are recipes for your happiness. So what Jesus is really saying to the woman is, “I am not going to condemn you for using your agency, but if you really want to be happy here and in the next life, you need to make some changes.”

It comes down to this: God does not condemn us for what we do; He does not judge us for what we have done. He does not judge us for the agency we use. ***We judge ourselves!*** That is why we need to repent, so that when we stand before God, our confidence will wax strong in God’s presence, and we will not shrink from it (D&C 121:45). In other words, when it’s time for the final judgment, it won’t be God who puts us in a kingdom, it will be us; we will put ourselves in the kingdom where we will be the most happy and the most comfortable. Again, God does not condemn us for using our agency; ***WE*** do.

All of the commandments fall into the two categories of loving God or loving your fellowman, even the Ten Commandments: half of them relate to our dealings with our fellowman and the other half relate to our relationship with God.

This brings us to the covenants we make in the Temple. There are temporal needs and there are spiritual needs. There is the Aaronic Order and the Melchizedek Order. Moses and Aaron led the children of Israel under these two Orders of the Priesthood. The laws pertaining to those orders are contained in our scriptures, so we can talk about them outside of the Temple. They are

contained in the Old Testament, New Testament, Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants.

Aaronic Order = A Temporal Order		Melchizedek Order = A Spiritual Order	
The Law of Sacrifice	Temporal Needs	Law of Chastity (Virtue)	Spiritual Needs
The Law of the Gospel		Law of Consecration	

The Law of Sacrifice is to assist in sustaining and defending the Kingdom of God. D&C 119 defines the purpose of tithing. Tithing is for the debts of the Presidency of the Church. The Fast Offering is our true free will offering and is used to help the poor and the needy.

The Law of the Gospel is also under an Aaronic Order. This law is mentioned in two places in our scriptures: D&C 88:78, and the one that defines it best, **D&C 104:18**:

18 Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, **according to the law of my gospel**, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment.

The Law of the Gospel is designed to take care of the poor and the needy in the Kingdom of God. As mentioned above, the Fast Offering is our true free will offering. Tithing is a requirement, but it's the Fast Offering that comes from the heart.

In the Dead Sea community of Qumran, their fast offering rule was to work one day per month for the poor. They would donate the equivalent of one day's wage to the poor and needy in their community. This wasn't just two meals or a box of cereal. Can you imagine the impact if each family donated the amount equaling one day's wage per month to our ward fast offerings?

The Law of Sacrifice and the Law of the Gospel are under the Aaronic Order because they pertain to sustaining and defending the Kingdom and the taking care of the poor and the needy, both temporal concerns. King Benjamin talked about this, too, in **Mosiah 4:26**:

26 And now, for the sake of these things which I have spoken unto you—that is, *for the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day*, that ye may walk guiltless before God—I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants. (Mosiah 4:26)

When King Benjamin taught his people the Gospel of Jesus Christ, he taught them not only how to receive a remission of their sins, but how to *retain* a remission of their sins from day to day – and that is by remembering the poor and the needy. He is distinguishing the Gospel of Jesus Christ from the Law of the Gospel (Alma 4:12-13; 34:28).

The Melchizedek Covenants address spiritual obligations, responsibilities, and commandments. The first one is the Law of Chastity. Elder James Talmage felt this law ought to be called the Law of Virtue. We even talk about it in our Temple recommend interviews when asked if we are honest in all business relationships with our fellowmen. This law is about being virtuous and chaste *in all of our relationships* and not just our relationship with our spouse.

Also, under the Melchizedek Order is the Law of Consecration. The Law of Sacrifice is a promise to sustain and defend the Kingdom of God while the Law of Consecration is a commitment to use what we have for the building up of the Kingdom and for the Establishment of Zion. Thus, we see that there are two laws and two covenants under each Order of the Priesthood. The Aaronic Order is a temporal Order, and the Melchizedek Order is a spiritual Order.

Notice that they all relate to loving God and loving our fellowman, upon which hang all of the Law and the Prophets. The covenants of the Temple, if lived, can bring us very near to having the character of God.

So when looking at sin and trying to categorize or label it in order of severity, the worst sin is whatever distracts you from loving God and loving your fellowman.

Lehi taught in **2 Ne 2:21**:

21 And the days of the children of men were prolonged, according to the will of God, that they might repent while in the flesh; wherefore, their state became **a state of probation**, and their time was lengthened, according to the commandments which the Lord God gave unto the children of men. For he gave commandment that all men must repent;

If life is a probationary state as Alma taught, then sin is the misuse of time! The misuse of time is that which distracts you from developing the character that loves God and loves your fellowman. This is why Paul and Moroni talk about having Charity. If we are obedient in everything and have not charity, we are nothing. Paul taught:

1 Cor 13:1-4, 8, 13

1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and *have not charity*, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and *have not charity*, I am nothing.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and *have not charity*, it profiteth me nothing.

4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Mormon's Letter to Moroni (**Moroni 7:45-48**):

45 And charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

46 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, if *ye have not charity, ye are nothing*, for charity never faileth. Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail—

47 But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him.

48 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure. Amen.

All Commandments, All Laws, All Prophets and everything they teach is to help us develop charity. If we don't develop it, even though we may be obedient in everything else, we are nothing. The character required to be and dwell in the presence of God is one of Charity, the love of God and our fellow man. The last commandment that Christ issued before His death was to 'love one another, as I have loved you'. Paul explains that without this love we are as 'tinkling symbol and sounding brass', just noise with no end purpose, no reward or glory.

5 - Facsimiles Explained, Part I

As we move further into the Book of Abraham it is necessary to provide some background on the illustrations, we see at the beginning of Chapter 1 and in Chapter 3 and in Chapter 5. These three facsimiles are Egyptian, and they are placed in the necessary and proper order as we see them.

Joseph Smith provided “*translations*” of the ancient records and texts. Included with the Book of Abraham are three Egyptian Facsimiles. These Facsimiles or vignettes are connected to the Abraham text in multiple ways. Abraham uses them as examples or “representations” as well as being used in a conceptual way within the text itself. The first four verses of Chapter 1 explain that this text is a record of Abraham’s desire to receive and bestow what may be called his endowment or the covenants and rights of the fathers with their associated blessings. The Three Facsimiles represent this very idea within the Egyptian Religion.

The Egyptians used four main types of records to maintain their rituals in their religion. The oldest of their records are called **Pyramid Texts**. Their rituals were carved into the stones outside and inside of their pyramids. These records date back to about 3,500 BC. These records centered around the Pharaoh, as he was the one who needed to become exalted and become like God. The concept of exaltation was limited to the leaders, Pharaoh in particular. It was his “right” to become the son of God on earth, and the one who could rule and reign over the common man.

These concepts date back to the time of the first Pharaoh, Menes. These texts are the oldest recorded information concerning their rituals and ceremonies that would get him from this life to the next life and achieve exaltation and be introduced into the world of the Gods. Those records were carved into the stone walls at the base of the pyramid, and thus they are called **Pyramid Texts**.

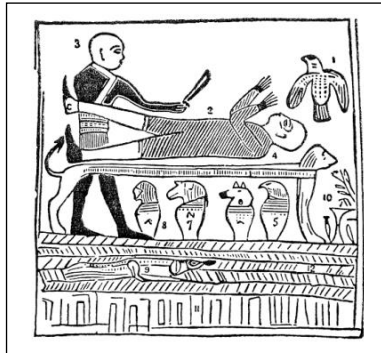
The next records are called the **Coffin Texts**. These contained the correct phrases and key words found in the Pyramid texts that allowed the participant to pass by the angels and sentinels and into the world of the gods. These texts were abridged and carved onto the sarcophagus of the individual, hence the **Coffin Texts**.

These **Coffin Texts** were further abridged and put on papyrus. Those same key phrases and key words needed to pass by the angels and enter into the world of the Gods became known as the **Book of the Dead**.

From these condensed texts the initiate would abridge further the needed key words and phrases necessary to pass by the angels and into the world of the Gods. They would write them onto to what is called the *sn sn papyrus*, or the **Book of Breathings**.

We have done the same thing. The Endowment Joseph Smith began in Nauvoo usually took over a day and a half to complete. Much later the process was reduced to just over two and one-half hours, and now our endowment process has been abridged down to 90 minutes. The key elements and information have been left intact, even if the timeline is sometimes out of order, allowing the participant to gain an understanding of what is going on.

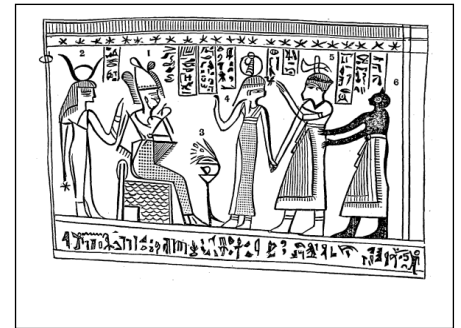
Abraham's record connects us very strongly to the religious patterns of ancient Egypt. The Facsimiles we see in our Book of Abraham actually come from the Book of the Dead. Those mummies Joseph purchased from Michael Chandler also contained some *sn sn papyri*.



#1 Death of a God



#2 Resurrection & Ascension



#3 Enthronement of the God

The First Pharaoh and the Kings in both Egypt and Mesopotamia tried earnestly to imitate the sacred ordinances of the true endowment from that first order established in the days of the first patriarchs, even from Adam. They turned them into the rituals of Kingship and Coronation, thus corrupting the endowment in order to legitimize their unrighteous dominion and kingship over their subjects. Both cradles of civilization became the centers of spiritual wickedness in our scriptures. Once the Gospel is understood, the Lord commands all to “Go ye out from Babylon” (D&C 133:5, 7, 14) and “flee unto Zion” (v 12).

Abraham was a very real, unwilling participant in the ancient coronation ceremonies in both Mesopotamia and in Egypt. These ancient ceremonies had three major components within the kingship rituals. These rituals were copied and ‘*earnestly imitated*’ from the religion of the earliest patriarchs. The three main elements of this ritual are:

1. The Death of the God,
2. The Resurrection and Ascension of the God, and
3. The Enthronement of the God.

In ancient Egypt these elements had to be in the order listed above in order to convey the meaning of the ritual and initiation into the world of the Gods. It is not a coincidence that the Facsimiles are presented in the Book of Abraham in just this order, *representing* the blessings and endowment of power (Knowledge) for which Abraham so earnestly sought.

First, I want to show a short clip from a DVD called, “*Faith of an Observer*,” an hour-long documentary about Brother Hugh Nibley, who devoted much of his life to writing about Abraham's life and experiences in Egypt. He provides a very unique perspective on how the writings of Abraham in Egypt relate to the Gospel today.

The first temple we see in scripture is the Temple of Solomon, which was constructed and operated under an Aaronic Priesthood Order, *not* a Melchizedek Order. It functioned under the Law of

Moses. The Temples in Egypt, on the other hand, were patterned after the Melchizedek Order that came from Noah. The Egyptian Temples were established and patterned after the patriarchal religion and Melchizedek authority that *preceded* the Mosaic Law. We can therefore gain a greater understanding of our temples by studying the Egyptian temples.



This clip shows the first and only time Brother Nibley ever went to Egypt. He used to tell me when I was working with him that one could learn more about Egypt in the libraries of the United States than one could in Egypt.

Transcript from the DVD

Whenever we look in these Egyptian monuments, the king has to follow one thing—Maat, “righteousness.” Maat. “Righteousness, justice, fairness, honor, a stable social order, things as they should be.” We would say the two things that cover everything are that. . . the Beloved Son (who) is “full of grace and truth.” (33) You see truth has nothing false about it. But grace says there is nothing negative about it. Self-interest, ulterior motives, scheming, gaining, trying to get ahead, influence, power game. None of that. Grace is the very opposite of that. It’s charis; our word “cheer” is also related to it. Also the Greek charis, Latin gratia. Gratia means “thanks,” it means “a free gift.” A gift you don’t ask anything in return for. You feel that way, just as we give things to children, not for what they can do for us, but because of love, you see. So grace is . . . the tendency is of course to render it in the new translations as “love,” which is right. So grace and truth . . . and this is Abraham. Right from the beginning here when he says where . . . “having been a follower of righteousness”—this is righteousness; this is Maat—desiring also to be the one to possess greater knowledge.” Always he wants to possess great knowledge and then he wants a greater knowledge too.

Here’s where we draw the line, you see; we don’t think that’s so important. We’ve lost interest in knowledge today, and it’s a very interesting thing. We want power, recognition, and things like that, but knowledge for its own sake doesn’t excite us very much. It’s surprising how many students will say, “Don’t tell us something we don’t already know.” I used to have students come up indignantly and say to me after class, “Brother Nibley, I’ve never heard of that before.” “Of course! That’s why you’re here, because you’ve never heard of that before!” But no, they just want to be told the same standard routine testimony and so forth. Desiring to be one to possess great knowledge and to be a greater follower of righteousness. Notice, there is your gospel of repentance, to be a greater follower. Always to be like the man Adam; he is ever seeking more light and truth or more light and knowledge, either one, you see.

Abraham not only had to take his wisdom to the Egyptians, but he had to acquire wisdom from them. This was the going concern. This was the center of—not just the intellectual, but the spiritual center of the world at the time. Abraham has to hack in, to use that expression now, on the whole world of his time because he is the father of the

faithful, and it's going to spread everywhere. He had to know the world, and the best place to get in on the ground floor was certainly Egypt. So he did and we have to do the same sort of thing.

Thanks to this prolonged drought that was on the world, as testified from literature in all directions there, the religious observances had degenerated into rites of a desperate and bloody nature to make the waters run, to bring prosperity, to bring fertility to the land and so forth. It was a time of famine. Remember the whole story of Abraham, the background, the first of the labors of Abraham. The plague for Abraham was famine. Abraham made himself very unpopular. For that reason he would be an ideal substitute for the king for the sacrificial rites. The king was responsible for the prosperity and fertility of the land as he was for the victory of the army. When those failed, he was supposed to be put to death. Even when they didn't fail, every thirty years at the Sed festival (34) he had to be put to death supposedly to renew his strength. But he found a substitute, and there's a lot said about these substitutes. And we are told that Abraham went through this routine too. That he was rescued at the last minute, rescued by an earthquake. The moment he is rescued, the angel takes him up to heaven and then the angel shows him a picture. He draws the whole thing for him on this round picture and points it out to him and says, "When you get back to earth you'll make a duplicate of that," you see. Well, he shows him this diagram of the cosmos, and it looks like our Facsimiles, and of course we see it as the hypocephalus, what it is. Then Pharaoh ordered all his court, 365 nobles, to bring their children to the court and had Abraham sit on the throne and teach them about the Sun and the stars. That's what it says here in Facsimile 3 (Book of Abraham). "Where Abraham seated upon the throne of Pharaoh is discoursing upon the heavens." Now here's an interesting thing. That figure on the throne is Osiris. Well, of course he's Osiris; he has to be. (35) Abraham would have to be Osiris in that capacity. And he is the king. But how it begins, it begins with the Figure One. Osiris is lying on the couch. And he cries out, "Come to my aid and rescue me!" When he reaches the depth, at the last extremities, he cries out, and the Angel of the Lord comes to deliver him. Now this is Horus, you'll notice. He is the Horus Hawk; and always the son of Osiris, is Horus. Horus comes in the form of a hawk and rescues him and takes him up and he delivers him and then he takes him on a guided tour through the heavens, and before you receive your final throne, you have this tour of the universe, and you see all this stuff, and then in the final scene you mount the throne. This is what you do. You come out in glory. And so this is the theme and is exactly the course, the sequence that we follow in the Pearl of Great Price. Facsimiles 1, 2, and 3 in that order.

(33 : John 1:14; 34: Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri, p 198; 35: *Ibid*, p 91-92)

We're going to proceed with the explanations of these three Facsimiles that Br. Nibley talked about. They have to do with the Coronation of the King or Pharaoh. Br. Nibley mentioned the *Sed* Festival. In Mesopotamia it was called the *Akitu* Festival. The Greco-Romans also had their coronation festivals. The Olympics can trace their origins to the Greco-Roman games symbolizing the ritual combat prior to the coronation of their king.

Abraham told us that he wanted to receive the "the blessings of the fathers" and the right to administer the same (Abr 1:2), and those rites are connected to what these three facsimiles represent.

As mentioned earlier, during the time periods of Pharaoh and Nimrod, they could not hold the Priesthood because of their Grandmother Egyptus, a descendant of Cain. They took the ordinances of the Endowment and turned them into the rituals of Kingship and Coronation, “imitating” that “Order established in the days of the first Patriarchs.” Officially they were unable to receive the rites of exaltation while on earth. They understood that the ordinances of the true endowment could make a worthy individual a “first-born” unto God. That is, they made the person a Prophet, Priest, and King unto God. Neither Pharaoh nor Nimrod could officially administer the rites to the Priesthood because of their lineage, so they took those ordinances that they knew were good and right and they turned them into public ceremonies for their own coronation. In the eyes of the people it made them a Prophet, Priest, and King, and son of God to the people. That is what Coronation Ceremonies are all about.

Every ancient history teacher will tell you that the two cradles of civilization are Egypt and Mesopotamia. The two grandsons of Ham who could not hold the priesthood settled both of these regions. These regions became civilizations because both Pharaoh and Nimrod imitated the sacred ordinances of the true endowment, transforming them into public ceremonies for their own coronations, thus legitimizing their reigns as sons of God on earth. Because of this, Egypt and Babylon are depicted in scripture as the two symbols of spiritual wickedness. They usurped the priesthood and exercised unrighteous control, compulsion, and dominion over the souls of the children of men.

Abraham tells us this in **Abr 1:26-27**:

26 Pharaoh, being a righteous man, established his kingdom and judged his people wisely and justly all his days, *seeking earnestly to imitate that order* established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first patriarchal reign, even in the reign of Adam, and also of Noah, his father, who blessed him with the blessings of the earth, and with the blessings of wisdom, but cursed him as pertaining to the Priesthood.

27 Now, Pharaoh being of that lineage by which he could not have the right of Priesthood, notwithstanding the Pharaohs would fain claim it from Noah, through Ham, therefore my father was led away by their idolatry;

If I wanted to start a new Church, I'd copy or imitate everything I knew to be true and right: I'd have a Sacrament meeting, Primary, Sunday School, Priesthood, Relief Society, Young Men and Young Women...but not Scouts. That's what Pharaoh and Nimrod did – they imitated “that order established in the first generations.”

Here's another short clip from the DVD of Truman G. Madsen

TGM: Nibley has been a ritualist. That is a man who not only sees that one way to study cultures is to look at their rites, but in addition is convinced that somehow these rites tie in to the ideas of the temple, and finally even to the foundations of civilization. Egypt seems to be the capital or the center related to many other cultures both temporally and spiritually. HN: The Egyptians realized, as we do, that all life comes from the Sun. Its energy reaches us—it's most immediate sensation is light. And if you are in Egypt, you know the Sun dominates the picture. Light and life are literally inseparable. That's a scientific fact of our own day. The light of the world is the life of the world, as the scriptures tell us. (24) (D&C 88:7-13)

As Br Nibley just said, he was convinced the rites of the Egyptian Culture and religion tie directly back to our ideas of the Temple. The Book of Abraham is a record of Abraham's endowment, as seen in chapter one, beginning in verse two. As with the coronation ceremony, there are three important aspects to the ancient endowment (coronation) of the individual that is connected to God. **(1) The Death of the God; (2) The Resurrection and Ascension; and (3) The Enthronement.** This probably doesn't mean much right now, but the life of Christ fulfills these things, and they also pertain to what we do in the temple.

Two (non-LDS) works stand out as the accepted sources for ancient coronation ceremonies: the research of Tor Irstram(i) and A. M. Hocart(ii). Irstram's research focused on sixty-two coronation ceremonies in various parts of Africa. Hocart looked at Kingship Rituals that included ancient and contemporary traditions around the world. Each came to the conclusion that there were common elements found in every ceremony. In fact, in the list of the common elements of each author, astounding parallels to our own rituals emerge.

- i Irstram, Tor, The King of Ganda: Studies in the Institutions of Sacral Kingship in Africa. (Stockholm, 1944).
- ii Hocart, A. M., Kingship, (London 1927).

The Witness of Christ

63 And behold, all things have their likeness, and **all things are created and made to bear record of me**, both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath: **all things bear record of me.** (Moses 6:63)

I have included an explanation here of the events taking place, along with the lists containing the numbers and letters of Irstram and Hocart's works on the ancient and modern coronation ceremonies. I believe you'll see that these rituals and ceremonies were and are connected to the temple and the ordinances and teachings performed there.

Porter	Irstram	Hocart
1. The coronation must symbolize (1) the Death of the God, (2) the Resurrection and Ascension, and (3) the Enthronement. These are the fundamental meanings of Facsimiles 1, 2, and 3 of Abraham	(1) Ceremonies that symbolized the King's death and rebirth. (Resurrection) These all bear record and are prophecies about Christ	A. The theory is that the king (1) dies; (2) is reborn, (3) as a god.
2. Participants must have an invitation or Recommend. See Psalms 15 and 24. "Who may ascend the hill of the Lord?"	(19) Not all were allowed to be present at the most important ceremonies. You need a recommend to be there.	C. (1) Persons not admissible to the sacrifice are not allowed to know anything; (2) an armed guard prevents prying eyes.

Porter	Irstram	Hocart
3. Must wear the robes and clothing of the Gods. The witnesses are the Angels and Gods.	(23) Those taking part dressed themselves as gods.	X. Those taking part in the rites are dressed up as gods. Y. Which may be those of animals.
4. Must be ready to continue both intellectually and spiritually.	(4) Entrance dialogue and proclamation.	B. By way of preparation he fasts and practices other austerities.

Facsimile # 1 - The Death



5. Must descend below all things in order to rise above all things.	(22) The King was made the butt of the people	H. The people indulge at one point in obscenities, or buffoonery.
6. The battle of good against evil, light and darkness, death and resurrection, Christ and Satan.	(5) Ritual fight. Our current election primaries are a type of ritual combat of who is to be King (President).	E. The King must fight a ritual combat (1) by arms, (2) by ceremony, (3) come out victorious.
7. The death of the God or King was often portrayed by a human substitute King during the ritual combat. The substitute could be the sacrifice of the King's enemy or those who may present a threat to the throne.	(24) Human sacrifices.	
	(25) The King's brothers were killed.	
	(26) Substitute King is killed	
Abraham was a substitute for Nimrod just as Christ became the sacrifice for all the world and for Caesar during the coronation rituals.		

Porter	Irstram	Hocart
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Facsimile # 2 - Resurrection and Ascension

On the Outside edge
it reads:

I am Djabaty, in the
House of Ben Ben,
So Exalted and so
Glorious. I am a mighty
God in the Temple of
Heliopolis, having been
redeemed.




After the symbolic combat and death of the King, he must go into the basement of the Temple for three days, representing being in the world of the dead.

8. The King (god) must go into the world of the dead for three days. This becomes a time of chaos before the recreation when darkness reigned upon the face of the deep. All fires are to be extinguished for the three days	(6) The King went into retirement for a certain period. (3 days)	D. A kind of Sabbath is observed; The people are silent and lie quiet as at a death.
9. During the three days there is no light, no creation chaos reigns.	(17) All fires are extinguished	

While in the Basement of the Temple or the World of the Dead, the King must prepare himself for the glorious resurrection.

10. The King must be cleansed from evil to come forth in the resurrection as the anointed King and God.	(8) The King was washed or baptized with water	<i>[This is the initiatory - being prepared for the resurrection.]</i>
11. The anointing is an ordinance of the resurrection as those parts of the body are anointed to function proper and perfect	(12) The King was anointed with oil.	K. He is anointed with oil,
12. Robes are changed to show the progression toward King and God.	(2) The King was dressed in special robes.	I. The King is invested with special garments.
13. Every new life or station requires a new name to signify the new creation and new creature. In exaltation you receive a new name that only the recipient knows.	(3) The King received a new name.	U. He receives a new name <i>[Whenever one enters into a new existence or new environment, one receives a new name.]</i>

Porter	Irstram	Hocart
14. The ritual and sacral meal. Life comes from death, sustenance and nourishment to both body and spirit comes from the sacrifice, death and resurrection of the God.	(7) The King receives a Communion or Sacrament	G. He receives communion
<p align="center">Coming out of the Temple or underworld after three days, order is now established. Life and light may continue. A new Son of God is the New King.</p> <p align="center">Facsimile # 3 - The Enthronement</p> 		
15. Part of the ritual dress to "trod upon the footstool of god" having your feet shod with the gospel.	(13) The King put on shoes as part of the coronation	P. He puts on shoes as part of the Coronation
16. The scepter, or "wa'as" scepter signifies the authority and power to rule and reign as king and the son of God on earth.	(14) The King received certain regalia. (Emblems of authority)	Q. He receives other royal regalia such as a sword, a scepter, and a ring.
17. The covenant making process must take place accompanied with the oath formulary, as with Abraham.	(11) Admonitions and promises.	F. The King is (1) admonished to rule justly and (2) promises to do so.
18. The crown signifies the acceptance of the King from the gods and the masses. It is an earthly and heavenly crown.	(16) The King was crowned.	O. The King is crowned

Regarding the Enthronement:

When the King comes out of the basement (underworld) of the Temple after three days, he is washed, anointed, receives a new name, is dressed and puts on his shoes. Now he moves onto the Enthronement aspect of his progression. When he receives his crown, the fires are rekindled after three days of darkness. In both Greece and Mesopotamia, the citizens would break into the Creation Hymn or *Poema*. *The creation hymn signifies the new order being established; a new*

year begins with the new reign of their 'resurrected' king. The Greek word, *Poema*, means Creation. The Creation needed to be rehearsed again. In the Book of Mormon, we see these same steps when Mosiah replaces his father Benjamin in the first few chapters of Mosiah. The Creation and our relationship to this world and salvation provided by the creator is rehearsed by King Benjamin. Anciently the first month of the new year was April, which became a common pattern for the gathering of the masses for the new year rites of coronation and other assemblies, like Passover and even our General Conference today.

6 - Facsimiles Explained, Part II

Before we continue, are there any questions from our last session?

***Question:** How did Pharaoh and Nimrod even learn about the sacred ordinances of the priesthood if they were not permitted to hold the priesthood?*

During the Patriarchal Age there were no Temples. The sacred ordinances were passed down in family rituals and sacral meals! When a son in a family was ready and prepared, the family took the worthy son up onto a high mountain where an altar had been constructed. The family would surround the altar and observe the worthy son receive those ordinances from his father. In D&C 107, we see where three years prior to his death, Adam gathered all of his righteous posterity into the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, where he bestowed upon them his last blessing (See v 41-57). Verse 41 states that “*this Order was instituted in the days of Adam, and came down by lineage.*” We also see in this section that Adam ordained *some* of his righteous posterity and others he *blessed*. **In this gathering the ordinances of exaltation are passed down to Adam's righteous posterity by and under the hands of Adam their patriarch.** That tradition continued through Noah, who then passed those ordinances down to Shem, who served as the Patriarch (Great High Priest) under his father (Alma 13:18) (See also D&C 138:41).

***Question:** Pharaoh was the son of Egyptus, who was a descendant of Cain. Did I understand that right?*

Yes. According to the pattern established in our scriptures, the mother is the one who chooses the next Patriarch for the family. Egyptus placed her eldest son on the throne. Thus, the right to be ordained as the next Patriarch/King comes from Matrilineal Authority rather than from Patriarchal Authority. Cain's posterity could no longer administer the ordinances of the Patriarchal Priesthood after he conspired to murder his brother Abel (D&C 84:16). In Abraham 1 we see that...

... this king of Egypt was a descendant from the loins of Ham, and was a partaker of the blood of the Canaanites by birth. From this descent sprang all the Egyptians, and thus the blood of the Canaanites was preserved in the land.

The land of Egypt being first discovered by a woman, who was the daughter of Ham, and the daughter of Egyptus, which in the Chaldean signifies Egypt, which signifies that which is forbidden; When this woman discovered the land it was under water, who afterward settled her sons in it; and thus, from Ham, sprang that race which preserved the curse in the land.

Now the first government of Egypt was established by Pharaoh, the eldest son of Egyptus, the daughter of Ham, and it was after the manner of the government of Ham, which was patriarchal.” (Abr 1:21-25)

Ham's wife was a descendant of Cain and her name was Egyptus. They named their daughter Egyptus also. It was this daughter who discovered Egypt after the flood waters receded. She then settled her sons in the land and put her eldest son, Per-Wer (which signifies *King by Royal Blood*, or Pharaoh) on the throne of the land she discovered.

Moving on in our discussion... Keep in mind, all of these common elements of a coronation ceremony show parallel agreement by Irstram and Hocart, two Non-LDS scholars who completed their research independently and in separate time periods from one another. These are the patterns we can recognize not only in our own LDS religious culture but also within our country's political traditions.

These ancient coronation ceremonies also fulfill the ancient prophecies of Christ, who the scriptures foretold would be the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, and who would rule with a sceptre of truth and justice and mercy. After three days in the underworld Christ steps out into the Garden and sees Mary. As she comes to Him, he bids her to “touch me, not, for I have not yet ascended unto my Father.” He indicates He needs to return and report to His Father that he has been true and faithful in all things His Father had asked him to do. Then He can sit on His Throne and take His rightful place and rejoice with all creation.

Three Days

The term “three days” in scripture always represents a movement from one environment into a new environment. Jonah spent three days in the belly of a whale; Jesus spent three days in the tomb; Moses pled with Pharaoh to allow the Children of Israel to travel three days into the wilderness so that they could make sacrifices unto the Lord their God (Exodus 3:18). If you do a word search on “three days” you will discover some interesting things. In most every case, you will see the movement from one environment to another. It's another pattern. Alma was out for three days; King Lamoni was out for three days; Paul was out for three days. Changes took place in all of them.

Porter	Irstram	Hocart
19. The throne is the “mercy seat” where justice and judgment are rendered. The throne is the primordial mound, the center of creation.	(15) The king sat on the throne.	R. Sits upon a throne.
20. The King cannot be crowned without a Queen. Ascension and exaltation can only come to the righteous pair.	(27) The Queen was crowned at the same time as the King.	The Queen is consecrated with the King. W. So are the vassals or officials.
21. The rising sun on the primordial mound. A new day, and a new creation as light fills the earth.	(9) The King mounted a hill	S. The King takes three ceremonial steps in imitation of the rising Sun

Porter	Irstram	Hocart
22. Only the King can plant, prune, harvest and dispense the fruit from the tree of life.	(10) The King planted his life tree.	
23. With the new King comes the New Creation, as all creation sings the creation hymn (<i>poema</i>). The heavens and the earth rejoice.	(21) Festivities were held.	N. A feast is given.
24. Blessings are given to the masses signifying that all life and health, prosperity, and fertility is dispensed by the King and god, as the multitudes scramble for the blessings. Christ sweat drops of blood: the gift of mercy.	(18) The King scattered beans, etc. among the people.	M. The people rejoice with noise and acclamations.
25. As Abraham traveled around his God-given inheritance, so the King must see and accept his kingdom as the kingdom accepts him.	(20) After the coronation the King traveled around his domain and received homage.	T. He goes the round of his dominion, and receives the homage of the vassals.
Commencement is progression, traveling up the scale or ladder of exaltation, being found true and faithful in one level and then progressing to the next. From Telestial to Celestial.		Z. The King may be consecrated several times, going up each time in the scale of kingship.

At a coronation the king always scattered gifts, which are called *sparsiones* (*spar-si-o-nēs*). They are the gifts of the king to the people of his kingdom, those whom he shall bless and protect. Anciently the king would scatter flour mixed with blood, signifying the symbols of fertility and life. In our day, when a couple gets married, that is a coronation. We don't toss little balls of blood and flour; instead we toss—rice! This tradition originates from the ancient practice of casting *sparsiones* following a coronation. Similar gifts are distributed on anniversaries, marriages, and on birthdays. In Latin cultures a *piñata* is strung up, and when it is broken, the gifts are scattered on the ground, and the people have to scramble to obtain those gifts. The scattering or spreading of the gifts extends to other events such as Halloween and Christmas. The gifts are supposed to come from God, the son of God, or the king who represents the son of God. The giver comes from the world of the Gods. We receiver cannot necessarily see the benefactor, like Santa Clause, Easter Bunny, Tooth Fairy, or being blindfolded. The giver of the gifts is to be hidden, and we are to scramble, search and work in order to receive the divine gifts.

The *sparsiones* that Christ gave were His great drops of blood! In the Garden of Gethsemane, He sweat great drops of blood for those who believe on his name. It was given freely, we may not see how or understand, but we have to scramble for His gifts by exercising faith and changing our character. We have to make ourselves worthy. We have to accept that atonement and create a relationship with our Savior and King! We have to work for those gifts in order for them to become efficacious in our individual lives.

All of these things are connected to the prophecies about Christ. We have a right to become a king or a queen, a priest or a priestess. At the Temple we participate in the ordinances of Kingship and coronation. We participate in ordinances to become a *first-born* unto God. The ritual combat we fight is around us all day long. We're going to die, but we have a substitute. Christ is our substitute sacrifice so that *we* can receive that coronation. The *sparsiones* He gives us are those great drops of blood, as our garments must be washed white in the blood of the Lamb.

The Ritual Combat and Substitute Sacrifice

What is going on at the time Christ is crucified is called the *ritual combat*. It is when the king in Rome is going to be chosen. As part of that, Caesar was to participate in his own coronation ceremony again. You may remember that after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (he had been dead four days) there were many who believed on Jesus after that event. Others went to the Pharisees to report what Jesus had done. John records what then happened:

John 11:47-51

47 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.

48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. [*They are worried about their own position more than anything else.*]

49 And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all,

50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. [*It's the time of the year for a substitute sacrifice.*]

51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, *he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;*

They then take Jesus to Pilate. Pilate finds no fault in Jesus that is worthy of death, as they had claimed. He says to them:

38 ... I find in him no fault *at all*.

39 But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? [*Substitute sacrifice*]

40 Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber. (John 18:38-40) [*Bar-abba means son of his father*]

Pilate was prepared to release Jesus rather than a known malefactor, but they all cried for Pilate to release Barabbas, not Jesus. They told Pilate that Jesus had claimed himself to be the king and the Son of God and should therefore be put to death. "But there's nothing wrong with him," said Pilate. He was all set to release Jesus, but the Jews (leading authorities) cried out and said,

12 ... If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.

14 ... he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

15 But they cried out, Away with *him*, away with *him*, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, **We have no king but Caesar.** (John 19:12, 14-15)

At the very same time Caesar was to be coronated in Rome, Jesus was made a substitute sacrifice for Caesar. Jesus' own priesthood leaders conspired to have Him put to death as a substitute sacrifice. Christ, in Jerusalem, was fulfilling the prophecies which Caesar's coronation represented. There were further elements that indicated the fulfillment of prophecy: The substitute must be a stranger in town (Christ was from Galilee); the stranger must have blonde or auburn hair and blue eyes. These were the same things that characterized Abraham when he was to be the substitute sacrifice for Nimrod at Nimrod's coronation. This is what was happening when Abraham and Sarah entered Egypt at the time of Pharaoh's coronation. It was only in the Roman Empire that the soldiers of the king could play the game of kings and cast lots for the substitute's clothes (John 19:24; Ps 22:18).

The scattering of the beans has historical significance from the time Cyrus, King of Persia. Before Cyrus became King of Persia he had been recognized as a very successful General in his king's army. He had the respect of his armies, he had a lot of power, and he had accumulated a lot of spoils. The King of Persia invited Cyrus to come be King for a Day. He was going to be the substitute sacrifice. When that day arrived, Cyrus had his armies distribute all of his spoils among the people (i.e. he cast out his *sparsiones* among his people). The voice of the people proclaimed him to be the real King and the old king then became the substitute for "King" Cyrus! This is how Cyrus came to the throne of Persia because of the Coronation ceremony.

Question: *Why does there have to be a substitute in the first place?*

Because they hadn't quite figured out the resurrection part just yet. (*laughter*) In Egypt one time the chief priests of a certain pharaoh convinced him that they did in fact have the resurrection figured out, and the pharaoh became the substitute, but he never did come out of the basement of the Temple again! In the actual ritual combat, the "king" has to die. So they choose a substitute to take the king's place for a day. In this combat, he dies and the real king goes into the Temple for the three days and then returns as a "resurrected" king and eternal son of God on earth.

After Christ fed the five thousand, he had to go into hiding.

15 When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, **to make him a king**, he departed again into a mountain himself alone. (John 6:15)

The bread and fishes that Jesus used to feed the five thousand was Christ giving out *sparsiones*, and because of that act they wanted to make him a king. The phrase, "*they wanted to make him a king*" also indicates exactly what time of year Jesus fed those five thousand! Coronations always took place at the beginning of the New Year in **April**.

Another part of a Coronation Ceremony is that a Queen has to be consecrated with the King. A King cannot be coronated without a queen. This is the story of Esther in our Old Testament. When Abraham and Sarah enter Egypt together, it is the time of the coronation, where the king will also take a wife. The Lord informs Abraham that he needs to instruct Sarah to tell the Pharaoh that

Abraham is her brother; otherwise Abraham's life would be forfeit. Sarah was the most beautiful, graceful, and talented among all the women in the kingdom. Sarah was indeed taken into Pharaoh and became his queen for three years. The story is told in the Midrash that one day Abraham's nephew Lot is standing around with the servants of the of Pharaoh, and overhears them saying among themselves that ever since Pharaoh married that new queen, he gets sick every afternoon and has consequently not ever been the husband to his queen. Lot tells the servants that if the Pharaoh had not taken the wife of Abraham, he would not have ever been sick! Of course, the servant runs to tell Pharaoh that his queen is actually the wife of Abraham. Pharaoh gets mad and returns Sarah to Abraham, including the dowry he had given Sarah (which included Hagar and many flocks and herds), and tells them to leave his kingdom! It was because of the coronation that Sarah is also tested and her sacrifice is recorded. Just as Abraham was tested when asked to sacrifice Isaac, Sarah's test was to marry Pharaoh. Her marriage was never consummated because Pharaoh was "sick" every single day, so the story goes. That was her test!

The Queen also has to be consecrated during the time of the king's coronation. This is why we have beauty pageants today. Such pageants date back to the time when the queen was chosen for the king during his coronation ceremony. Also connected to the coronation is the mention of his mother. It's the mother who legitimizes the right of her son to be king. During the coronation of the kings of Judah, the name of his mother is always mentioned. (See 1 Kings 14:21; 15:2; 2 Kings 12:1; 14:2; 15:2; 18:2; 21:1; 22:1; 23:31, 36; 24:8.)

The King then has to travel around his domain. When Abraham received his endowment, the Lord explained where the borders were to his kingdom, and he was to travel all around his domain. During this time, vassals or other officials are also consecrated. Our new president, after the inauguration, will make stops around the country and during this time will appoint various people to become part of president's cabinet, those who direct the president's policies and programs.

Just as the ancient kings had to be consecrated several times before moving onto further areas of the temple, we also cannot move from various places in our temples until we have received further instructions and ordinances.

***Question:** When a woman marries a king, she becomes a queen, but when a man marries a queen, he does not become a king...why is that?*

Because it is "matrilineal." It is the wife (queen) who legitimizes his authority to become the king. In the Old Testament it is always a Matrilineal-Patriarchy. The patriarch for the family is chosen by the matriarch. In a Matrilineal Patriarchy, only the mother can declare who the birthright son is (as in the case of Eve, Sarah, Rebekah, Tamar, etc.) since only the mother knows who her firstborn son is and who the father really is. This means that the birthright son and patriarch is chosen by the mother (the matriarch), and ordained and set apart by the father (or patriarch, as in the case of Jacob and Esau and many others).

The concept of matrilineal patriarchy is especially evident when it comes to Mary, the mother of Christ. In the prophecies of Isaiah, "a virgin shall conceive." In the Book of Mormon, "a virgin that is pure and white above all that is pure and white shall conceive and her name shall be called Mary." These stories verify that Christ really is the Savior because the prophecies declare who His

Mother is to be. Isaiah wanted his readers to know the sign of who the matriarch of the son of God was to be.

Our scriptures follow the pattern of naming the Mother of the Son of God and even declaring her name! The nativity story recited in the Book of Luke is not so much the story of the birth of Christ as the story of Mary and her Son.

It's the mother who legitimizes the son's right to rule. The stories and the genealogies in the Old Testament are not there just for fun and drama—those stories chronicle Christ's right to reign because of his ancestral mothers: Rahab, the harlot at Jericho; Tamar, who acts as the harlot; Ruth, who “uncovered the feet of Boaz,” which means she slept with him; and Bathsheba, and then Mary. All of these women in Christ's genealogy were of questionable character. Everyone has a skeleton or two in their closets, so don't worry about it too much!

The Olympics originated from the ritual combat in Greek Coronation ceremonies. The ritual combat was the competition that produced a victor who was made king. When Queen Elizabeth decides to step down, we will see elements of the coronation ceremonies that we have been discussing here today.

These facsimiles we have discussing are all placed in the proper order in our Book of Abraham:

(1) The Death of the God, (2) The Resurrection and Ascension and (3) The Enthronement.

Joseph placed them in the correct order, defining and explaining them as exactly what Abraham had been seeking for. Remember, he wanted the rights of the fathers and the blessings of the fathers. Abraham wanted his endowment of power and to become a prophet, priest, and king unto God. This is why these illustrations are in our Book of Abraham; they are what the book is about. They are there to represent what Abraham says was happening to him (Abr 1:12).

Final clip from Faith of an Observer: The Works of Abraham

We must do the works of Abraham. And then we are told specifically in the Doctrine and Covenants, that means sacrificing, if necessary, your own life. Abraham was willing to do that, and everyone at some time or another will have the opportunity to show that he'd be willing to do that. Remember we're told that Abraham was tested to the last extreme, to the ultimate extremity, as we are told in the Doctrine and Covenants. (36) Unless you are willing to give everything, you cannot claim eternal life. It's not to be cheaply bought. These are the great blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and must be bought. . . they must be willing even to give life itself, and so forth. There's a story told in the Midrash. It begins with Abraham sitting in the door of his tent in the plain of Mamre in the heat of the day. It's probably what inspired the story. It was a hot day. It said it was a day like the breath of Gehinnom. Like the breath of Hell was coming out, and you can see the kind of country it was, and is, when this is so, the heat and the dust and the sand . . . that's utter desolation.

And he was worried, of course, because he says some poor stranger might be lost out there. Someone might have lost his way, and be perishing, because you're not going to last an hour in this. So he sent his faithful servant Eleazer out to look everywhere. He sent him out in all directions and he came back, “No, I can't find anyone anywhere.” He was still worried.

He says, "There might be someone out there." You have these feelings. . . so he went out himself, though he was very sick at the time. He was sick and ailing, and old, and he went out into that Hell. And he looked and searched, but he found no one. And at the end of the day he came back exhausted toward his tent. As he approached the tent the three strangers were standing there. It was the Lord and the two with Him. . .because the Lord goes with His two counselors, so to speak. He throws himself down on his face, and then it is that He promises him Isaac, as a reward for what he had done. This supreme offering. It's a very moving story. (37) He'd gone out to look for his fellow man and ... out in that dusty hell, you see, all alone. Eleazer couldn't find anyone, and he said, "I think I can find someone." Well, he found something. He found the answer to the thing he'd prayed for all his life. His son Isaac. It's a beautiful story. But the desire of Abraham was that through him, his people and all mankind should be blessed. This Abraham who towers like a colossus is Every Man, as every man should be. In this world, remember what the Lord promised the Apostles: "In this world ye shall be tribulation. But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world." (38)

36: D&C 101:4; 132:36, 50-53

37: Bernard Beer, *Leben Abrahams nach Auffassung der Judischen Sage* (Leipzig: O. Leiner, 1859) pp 37-39-153-159, nn 367-409 {The Life of Abraham in the View of Jewish Legends}

38: John 16:33

7 - Abraham 1:5-15 – Facsimile #1

Finally, we're getting to our text in Abraham 1. We're starting in verse 5. But very quickly, to review: Abraham wanted to help other people; he loved people and he wanted to possess a greater knowledge than what he already had. He wanted to be more righteous and obtain that right of the firstborn, and the ability to confer it upon his posterity.

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 right of the firstborn was conferred upon Abraham. He would become the minister unto the people and administer the Gospel. This is the right of the firstborn! It was the lineage of the firstborn who became the ministers of the Gospel to mankind since the days of Adam.

A pattern we see in the Old Testament provides insight into the concept of the first-born:

Numbers 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;

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.

It was the Levites who administered in the Camp of Israel and in the Temple.

Joseph Taught:

Every man who has a calling to minister 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)

Joseph is referring to Prophets and Patriarchs, not the High Priests in our Wards and Stakes.

4 I sought for mine appointment unto the Priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the fathers concerning the seed.

Holding the Priesthood is the authority to administer the Gospel and be of service to one's fellowman. The seed are those who are worthy to administer the Gospel.

Abr 1:1-4 is a “colophon” – it explains what the record is about, and onward from v 5 explains how it all came to be.

5 My fathers, having turned from their righteousness, and from the holy commandments which the Lord their God had given unto them, unto the worshiping of the gods of the heathen, utterly refused to hearken to my voice;

The back story here: When Abraham was born, Nimrod, King of Babylon, knew from other prophecies that one would be born who truly had the right to reign. When Moses was born, Pharaoh instructed the midwives to kill all male babies born to the Israelites. Likewise, when Christ was born, Herod had all male children under two years old be put to death. Nimrod was doing the same thing for the same reason – attempting to eradicate the one who would grow up to possess the true authority to rule and reign. According to Jewish tradition, when Abraham was born he was spirited away to live with Noah and Shem for almost 50 years. (According to Biblical chronology, Noah and Shem were still alive.) After those 50 years, Abraham returned to his homeland and found his own father had begun worshipping the heathen gods of wood and stone.

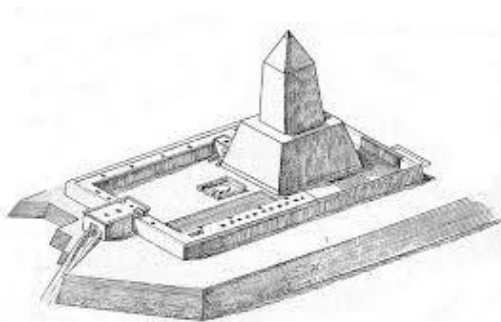
6 For their hearts were set to do evil, and were wholly turned to the god of Elkenah, and the god of Libnah, and the god of Mahmackrah, and the god of Korash, and the god of Pharaoh, king of Egypt;

7 Therefore they turned their hearts to the sacrifice of the heathen in offering up their children unto these dumb idols, and hearkened not unto my voice, **but endeavored to take away my life** by the hand of the priest of Elkenah. The priest of Elkenah was also the priest of Pharaoh.

Worse, Abraham discovered his own family and the subjects of Pharaoh were offering human sacrifices to those various gods. They even tried to offer *his* life up unto those same gods. Egypt at that time had control of all of the lands in Palestine, Ur, and Chaldea. The world around Abraham was rotten. Children were being killed (post-term abortions), and the worship of false and heathen gods was going on all over the place. Abraham was the lone voice “crying in the wilderness.” No one cared and no one listened.

8 Now, at this time it was the custom of the priest of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, to offer up upon the altar which was built in the land of Chaldea, for the offering unto these strange gods, men, women, and children.

9 And it came to pass that the priest made an offering unto the god of Pharaoh, and also unto the god of *Shagreel*, even after the manner of the Egyptians. Now the god of *Shagreel* was the sun. *[There are so many things in this verse alone that Joseph could not have known.]*



Abu Ghurab is an archeological site where a sun temple, built by the people of ancient Egypt, was found. It was excavated by Egyptologists between 1898 and 1901 by Ludwig Borchardt on behalf of the Berlin Museum and located near the city of Memphis. It was built to honor the sun god, Ra. (Shag-re-el means the ‘god of the sun.’)

This temple was constructed by the orders of Nyuserre Ini, the sixth king of the fifth dynasty of Egypt. The exact dates of his reign are unknown. It is estimated that he came to the throne between 2450 BC and 2430 BC. He is known for constructing a pyramid and burial chamber at Aby Sir. This temple was built solely for the purpose of honoring Ra and was not used as a burial place.

The Main temple was built on a natural hill that had been enhanced. Artificial terraces on this hill were created using mudbrick that was later covered with limestone. The temple was then built on top of these terraces. Which were known as the ‘hill of the sun’, The temple is rectangular. The entrance is on the east side. Inside the temple is a large, open courtyard. At the western end of the courtyard are the ruins of a large stone obelisk, symbolizing the resting place of the sun god, Ra.

An altar has been located in the center of the courtyard, near the eastern side near the obelisk. It was constructed from five large blocks of alabaster, which are arranged to form a symbol that can be translated, **“May Ra be satisfied.”**



This altar at Abu Ghurab seems to be exactly as Abraham describes in verse 10 below.

The plain of Olishem means the Plain of the Sun.

10 Even the thank-offering of a child did the priest of Pharaoh offer upon the altar which stood by the hill called *Potiphar's Hill*, at the head of the plain of *Olishem*.

“Po-ti-pha-ra” means: “That which Ra gives”

11 Now, this priest had offered upon this altar three virgins at one time, who were the daughters of Onitah, one of the royal descent directly from the loins of Ham. These virgins were offered up because of their virtue; they would not bow down to worship gods of wood or of stone, therefore they were killed upon this altar, and it was done after the manner of the Egyptians.

These daughters descended from the first Pharaoh who was a righteous man who established his kingdom and judged his people wisely all his days (Abr 1:26). These daughters of Onitah were still trying to remain true and faithful to the teachings of that first Pharaoh.

12 And it came to pass that the priests laid violence upon me, that they might slay me also, as they did those virgins [*for the same reason*] upon this altar; and that you may have a knowledge of this altar, I will refer you to the representation at the commencement of this record.

Facsimile #1 is not something to be read; instead it is a *representation* of what Abraham personally experienced. Abraham is explaining the political and religious climate at the time he was living:



the government is sacrificing men, women, and children, or anyone who is preaching righteousness, or anyone who would not bow down to gods of wood and stone.







13 It was made after the form of a bedstead, such as was had among the Chaldeans, and it stood before the gods of Elkenah, Libnah, Mahmackrah, Korash, and also a god like unto that of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

14 That you may have an understanding of these gods, I have given you the fashion of them in the figures at the beginning, which manner of figures is called by the Chaldeans Rahleenos, which signifies hieroglyphics.

15 And as they lifted up their hands upon me, that they might offer me up and take away my life, behold, I lifted up my voice unto the Lord my God, and the Lord hearkened and heard, and he filled me with the vision of the Almighty, and the angel of his presence stood by me, and immediately unloosed my bands;

Abraham is describing Facsimile # 1 in these 3 verses. As the Priest of Pharaoh is about to kill Abraham while he is on their altar, Abraham begins to pray.

30  man with arms out-
stretched (cf.  A 4)

Det. praise, exx.  var.  *inw* 'praise';  *dw*
'adore';  ¹ *sws* 'extol'; supplicate, ex.  ²
tw 'claim'; awe, in  ³ *tr* 'show respect for'.

¹ *Urk.*, iv. 141, 4. ² *Pt.*, 319. ³ *Sin.*, R 35.

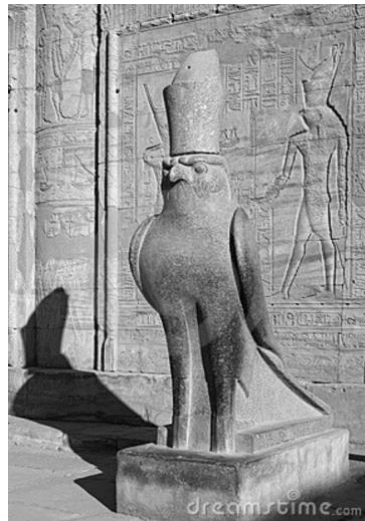
From an Egyptian grammar book, these symbols describe a man praying. Notice the figure in an up-right position with his hands outstretched and extended upward—this is the hieroglyphic for “prayer.”



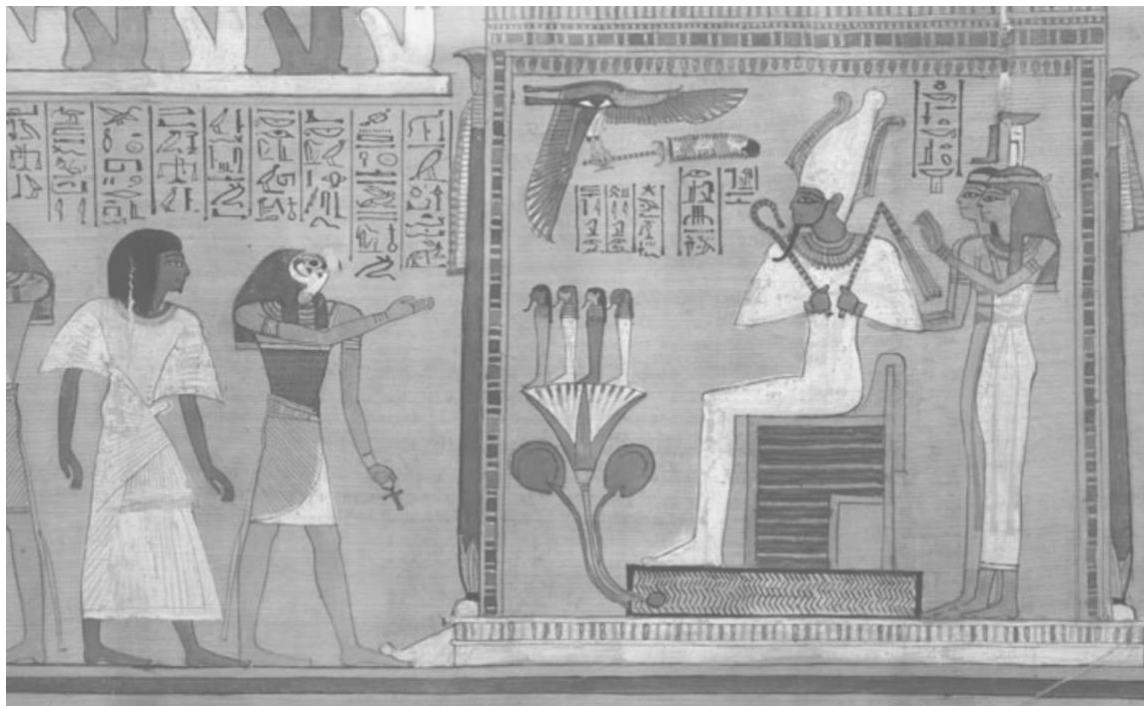
If the figure's feet are together, the person is dead; if the feet are apart, the person is alive. Abraham is alive and is lifting up his voice unto God.

The angel of the Lord's presence is Horus—signified by the bird in the upper right of Fac. # 1

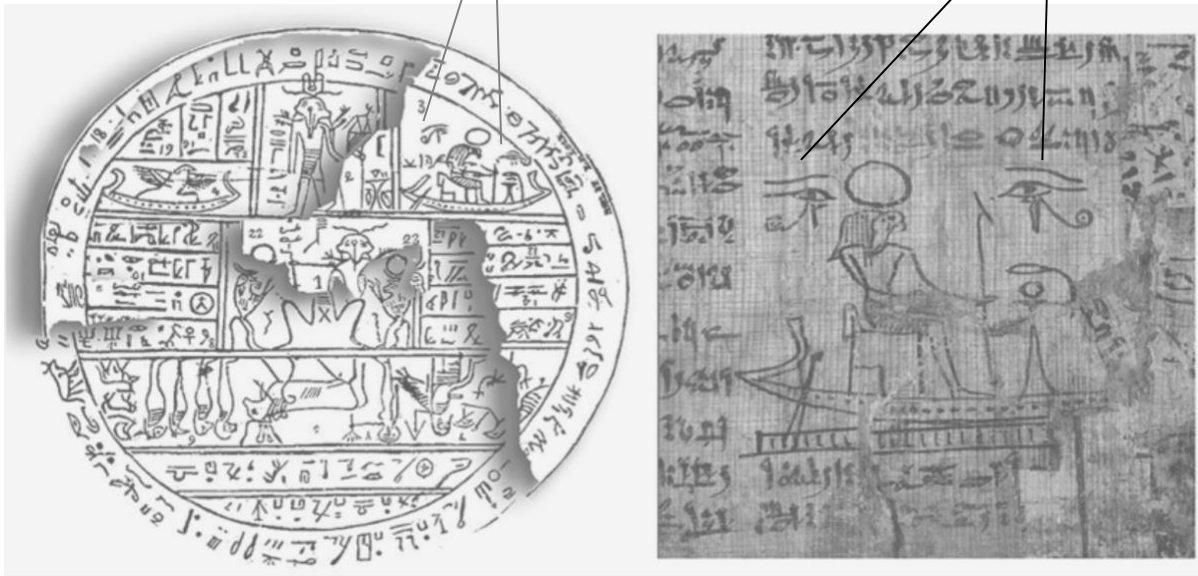
Abraham was to be the substitute sacrifice for Pharaoh, but the Egyptian Priest becomes the substitute sacrifice for Abraham. As we saw in one of the film clips, the angel of the Lord's presence is represented by Horus (see below).



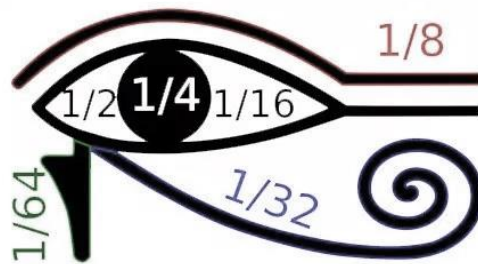
Horus is the escort who is presenting the dead person (*dressed in white and holy garments*) to the Lord behind the veil.



This next symbol is called the “Wdjat-eye.” It symbolizes perfection. It shows up in Fac. #2 multiple times.



The symbols within the Wdjat-eye below show their fractions and numerology.



This represents reaching Perfection, restoring that which is whole and complete.

Fac. #2 is full of the concept of reaching perfection, as shown above. The Wdjat-eye is the offering of perfection to the spirits who are traveling (progressing) through the spirit world, as symbolized by Ra sitting in the barq, traveling through the heavens. He represents that man on his way to perfection, and is holding the *wa'as* sceptre of priesthood.

As part of the Egyptian religion, they believed that Osirus was killed by his nasty brother Seth. Osirus represents the son of God who dies and is resurrected, giving everyone the power to be resurrected and everyone the power to become a god. Osirus, then, is the Christ.

H. Wallace Budge, the curator of the Egyptian section of the British Museum and Mormon hater, while doing his research on the ancient Egyptians, said there had never been a people more prepared to accept Christianity than were the ancient Egyptians. He had determined that all of their

ancient myths centered around the son of god who was killed by his wicked brother Seth, and was thereafter resurrected and exalted, giving everyone that same opportunity.

Again, Abraham tells us:

15 And as they lifted up their hands upon me, that they might offer me up and take away my life, behold, I lifted up my voice unto the Lord my God, and the Lord hearkened and heard, and he filled me with the vision of the Almighty, and the angel of his presence stood by me, and immediately unloosed my bands;

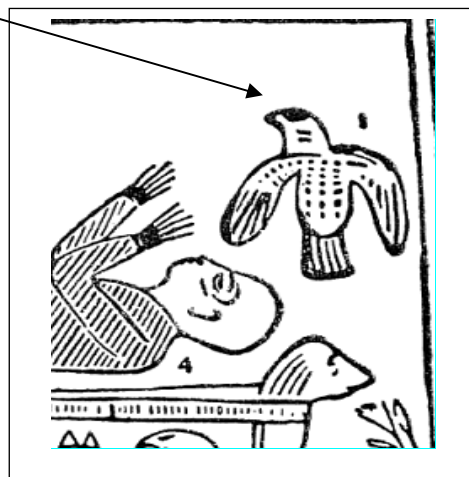
Joseph was the prophet of the restoration. He was inspired. He did not make these things up! These concepts have a connection to us; they have a connection to Christ and they have a connection to history. They also have a connection to prophecy. Prophecy is nothing more than history in reverse, and of the two, *prophecy is always more sure*. History is always written through the filters of the one recording the history. Prophecy is written by inspiration. These books and these scriptures are very important and they are connected to Abraham anciently and to God eternally.

Appendix

At this point I have chosen to go a little more in depth, and share with you the information found in *The Testament of Abraham* and *The Apocalypse of Abraham*, two ancient texts that were discovered long after Joseph Smith had died. Several Biblical scholars consider them to be from an Egyptian record or even Egyptian in origin. I have chosen the passages below that correspond to the Book of Abraham in order to show just how “lucky” Joseph Smith was in giving us the record of Abraham in the Pearl of Great Price before these texts were discovered and translated.

Abraham was talking about the angel of the Lord’s presence:
(Abr 1:15)

...the Lord hearkened and heard, and he filled me with the vision of the Almighty, and the angel of his presence stood by me, and immediately unloosed my bands; [*Abraham’s bands were loosed and the angel took him to see the visions of the Lord.*]



<i>Testament of Abraham</i> Made available about 1880	<i>Apocalypse of Abraham</i> First published in Russian 1863-1877
X. And the archangel Michael went down and took Abraham upon a chariot of the cherubim, and exalted him into the air of heaven, and led him upon the cloud together with sixty angels, and Abraham ascended upon the chariot over all the earth. And Abraham saw the world as it was in that day, some ploughing, others driving wains, in one	7. Stand up, Abraham! [<i>he had fallen down</i>] Go without fear; be right glad and rejoice, and I am with you! For age-lasting honour has been prepared for you by the Eternal One. Go, fulfil the sacrifices commanded.

place men herding flocks, and in another Abraham answered and said to Michael, I beseech thee, lord, if I shall depart from my body, I have desired to be taken up in my body that I may see the creatures that the Lord my God has created in heaven and on earth.	For lo! I have been appointed to be with you, and with the generations that will spring from you, and with me Michael blesses you forever. Be of good cheer and go!" <i>[Abraham wanted to see what things were like <u>before</u> the world was created]</i>
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Apocalypse of Abraham

1. Then a voice came to me speaking twice, "Abraham! Abraham!" and I said, "Here I am!" And He said, "Behold it is I, fear not for I am with you, for I AM before the ages, even the Mighty God who created the first light of the world. I am your shield and your helper.
2. Go, ... and bring me a pure sacrifice. And in this sacrifice I will lay before you the ages to come, and make known to you what is reserved, and you shall see great things which you have not hitherto seen: (These are the things Abraham wanted to know.)
3. ... **because you have loved to search me out**, and I have named you 'my friend.' ... set forth for me the sacrifice which I have commanded you, in a place which I will show you on a high mountain, and there **I will show you the ages which have been created and established by my word, and I will make known to you what shall come to pass in them on those who have done evil and righteousness in the generations of men.**"

The Lord is letting Abraham know how things came to be, what things will be, and what judgments that will take place if he remains true and faithful in doing the things asked of him. This is very similar to the Apocalypse of Paul; he not only sees all of the kingdoms, but he also sees the judgments. Joseph not only sees the judgments of the sons of perdition in D&C 76, he also sees how things will be. Abraham sees the same things; Moses sees the same things also.

Apocalypse of Abraham...continued.

Chapter 15

... And the angel took me with his right hand and **set me upon the right wing of the pigeon, and set himself on the left wing of the turtle dove**, neither of which birds had been slaughtered, and he bore me to the borders of the flaming fire, and we ascended upon many winds to the heavens which were above the firmament. **And I saw in the air on the heights to which we ascended, a strong light impossible to describe, and within the light a fiercely burning fire** of people, *[Abraham is seeing how stars are being created...he is seeing the creation taking place. He is seeing the fusion and the fission and what's going on.]* many people, of male appearance, all constantly changing in aspect and form, running and being transformed, and worshipping and crying with a sound of words that I could not recognize.

Chapter 16

17. And I said to the angel, "Why have you now brought me up here, because my eyes cannot now see distinctly, and I am growing weak, and my spirit is departing from me?" And he said to me, "Remain close by me and do not fear, for the One whom you cannot see is now coming towards us with a great voice of holiness, even the Eternal One who

loves you. But you yourself cannot see Him. But you must not allow your spirit to grow faint on account of the choirs of those who cry out, for I am with you to strengthen you.

Abraham is admitting he is seeing too much. He cannot comprehend it all. That's why there always has to be an escort when you travel through the heavens. In D&C 128, Joseph said Michael made him aware of Satan who was appearing as an angel of light (D&C 128:20). Satan tried to stop Joseph Smith, just as he tried to stop Eve, Moses, and even Christ. Michael is the angel who can detect Satan when he appears as an angel of light.

Apocalypse of Abraham	Book of Abraham
<p>24. And a voice came to me out of the midst of the fire, saying, "Abraham! Abraham!" and I answered saying "Here am I!" And he said, "Consider the expanses which are under the firmament on which you are now placed and see how on no single expanse is there any other than the One whom you have sought, even the One who loves you!"</p> <p>25. And while he was yet speaking, the expanses opened, and there below me were the heavens, ...</p>	<p>12 And he said unto me: My son, my son (and his hand was stretched out), behold I will show you all these. And he put his hand upon mine eyes, and I saw those things which his hands had made, which were many; and they multiplied before mine eyes, and I could not see the end thereof.</p> <p>13 And he said unto me: This is Shinehah, which is the sun. And he said unto me: Kokob, which is star. And he said unto me: Olea, which is the moon. And he said unto me: Kokaubeam, which signifies stars, or all the great lights, which were in the firmament of heaven. (Abr 3:12-13)</p>
<p>28. And the Eternal Mighty One said to me, "Abraham! Abraham!" And I said, "Here am I!" And He said to me, "Consider from above the stars which are beneath you, and number them for me, and make known to me their number." And I said, "How can I? For I am but a man of the dust of the earth." And He said to me, "As the number of the stars and their power, so will I make your seed a nation and a people set apart for me as my own inheritance, as distinct from that of Azazel."</p>	<p>9 And I will make of thee a great nation, ... that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations;</p> <p>10 ...for <u>as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name</u>, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father;</p> <p>11 And ... I give unto thee a promise that this right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) 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. (Abraham 2:9-11)</p>
<p>32. And I said, "O Eternal, Mighty One! What is this vision and picture of the creatures?" And He said to me, "This is my will for those who exist in the divine world-counsel, for thus it seemed well-pleasing in my sight, and so afterwards I gave commandment to them through my word."</p>	<p>24 ... We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;</p> <p>25 And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;</p> <p>26 And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same king-dom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever. (Abr 3:24-26)</p>

I wanted you to see for yourselves that ANCIENT TEXTS discovered 40-50 years after Joseph's death compare favorably with what Joseph has given us regarding the life and experiences of Abraham. The Book of Abraham has been a target of the anti-Mormons and others who have become vocal detractors of the church. Joseph provided these things through the gift and power of God. He could have done it no other way. In fact, the facsimiles are not translations at all – **they are explanations**. The renowned Egyptologist from the Oriental Institute of Chicago, Klaus Baer, told Br. Nibley that he could tell him what the facsimiles said, but he could not tell him what they meant. Joseph has explained what they mean, not what they say.

Revelation requires a catalyst and the ability to focus on the particular catalyst. The catalyst for the Book of Mormon was the Plates; the way to focus on that catalyst was the Urim & Thummin. After the U&T was taken away, it is reported that Joseph used a seer stone to assist him in that focus. The Bible became his catalyst for the Inspired Version of the Bible and the Book of Moses. The Egyptian Papyri became the catalyst for the writings of Abraham. It was those catalysts that allowed Joseph to focus his mind and allowed him to receive these restoration scriptures. Through all of these things, Joseph was schooled in the laws of revelation. He came to understand how revelation worked. We do the same thing when we pray; we focus our heart and mind on our *catalysts*, things we are seeking answers for. We may close the door, go into a quiet room, or find a quiet place where we can commune with God in personal prayer. We block out the rest of the world so we can focus on our cares of the day (catalysts).

Joseph calls the Book of Abraham a translation because it was an ancient text. Even if the translation was given to him by the gift and power of God, which could include revelation or inspiration, it was *still* a translation. The fact that it was an ancient record that existed at one time made it by definition a translation as it was rendered into English. Joseph Smith, with a fourth-grade education, did not have the education or training to translate from one language into another as do those trained in ancient languages. He could not have translated as they do. Nor did he claim to have the intellectual ability to do so. His own words verify his lack of ability. He states that it was “by the gift and power of God” that he was able to provide the translations of these ancient records. He was well aware of his lack of education and his limitations.

8 - Abraham 1:16-22 – Apocalypse of Abraham, Cont.

When we left off last month we were comparing the record of Abraham with some other ancient texts that were discovered in the 1880's, long after Joseph Smith had published the Book of Abraham (between 1835-1844). We will continue with our comparison. Abraham and the information contained in the Book of Abraham is probably much more important than we give it credit. It is through Abraham and *the seed of Abraham* that the Atonement is made available to mankind. That is what Abraham was told. It is because of Abraham that the Atonement and the Gospel are made available to mankind.

We talk about the covenant of Abraham and the Blessings of Abraham, or the “Blessings of the Fathers.” We talk about the Abrahamic Covenant, and we are told and counseled in the scriptures to “go and do the works of Abraham” (D&C 132:32). When God is spoken of in the scriptures, He is spoken of in the vernacular – as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (1 Ne 6:4; Alma 29:11; 36:2; 3 Ne 4:30; Mormon 9:11).

There are special **rites** given to Abraham and his posterity that will bless all the nations of the earth. Abraham is key to making the administration of the Gospel and the Atonement available to all mankind. Until we begin to understand this connection we may be tempted to dismiss or gloss over the importance of Abraham and the doctrines that are available to us because of him. It's the “blessings of the fathers” or “the covenants of the fathers” that is introduced in the opening verses of Abraham's record.

Even within the Title Page of the Book of Mormon we see references to the fathers and the covenants of the Lord made with them:

Which is to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done *for their fathers*; and that they may know *the covenants of the Lord*, that they are not cast off forever –

These are connected to Abraham. Even though Abraham tells us that these things came from the fathers from the beginning of time, even from Adam, they come down to Abraham because Abraham was a man perfect in his generation. Abraham is everyman as every man should be. In order to understand the book and the doctrines that are being taught in Abraham, we need to understand the importance of what is going on.

Continuing the comparison between the Book of Abraham and the ancient texts many years after the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith:

Apocalypse of Abraham	Book of Abraham
<p>28. And the Eternal Mighty One said to me, "Abraham! Abraham!" And I said, "Here am I!" And He said to me, "Consider from above the stars which are beneath you, and number them for me, and make known to me their number." And I said, "How can I? For I am but a man of the dust of the earth." And He said to me, "As the number of the stars and their power, so will I make your seed a nation and a people set apart for me as my own inheritance, as distinct from that of Azazel. (Satan)</p>	<p>9 And I will make of thee a great nation, ... that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations; 10 ...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; 11 And ... I give unto thee a promise that this right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) 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. (Abraham 2:9-11)</p>

In **Abraham 2:9** we begin to see the connection to Priesthood. Because of Abraham and his righteousness, the Atonement is made available to all mankind. "...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 (v10)." This connection to Abraham is extremely important...

Apocalypse of Abraham	Book of Abraham
<p>32. And I said, "O Eternal, Mighty One! What is this vision and picture of the creatures?" And He said to me, "<u>This is my will</u> for those who exist in the divine world-counsel, for thus it seemed well-pleasing in my sight, and so afterwards I gave commandment to them through my word.</p> <p><i>[This world-counsel is in the pre-earth life. The will of the Father is discussing the plan of salvation, and after they have received knowledge of the plan, they would come to earth to see if they would do all things the Lord would command them, as we see in v 25-26 of Abr 3.]</i></p>	<p>24 ... We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell; [<i>'these' means the spirits in the pre-earth life</i>]</p> <p>25 And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;</p> <p>26 And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever. (Abraham 3:24-26)</p>

Apocalypse of Abraham	Book of Abraham
<p>“And so it came to pass that whatever I had determined to be, was <i>already planned beforehand</i> in this picture-vision before you, and it has stood before me before it was created, as you have seen.”</p> <p><i>[This material in the Apocalypse is the same as what Joseph smith has given us in Abr 5:2-5. The Gods “counseled among themselves” as pertaining to the creation of this earth and everything that was to be placed on it. This Apocalypse is more important than we have previously thought.]</i></p>	<p>2 And the Gods said among themselves: On the seventh time we will end our work, which we have counseled; and we will rest on the seventh time from all our work which we have counseled.</p> <p>3 And the Gods concluded upon the seventh time, because that on the seventh time they would rest from all their works which they (the Gods) counseled among themselves to form; and sanctified it. And thus were their decisions at the time that they counseled among themselves to form the heavens and the earth.</p> <p>4 And the Gods came down and formed these the generations of the heavens and of the earth, when they were formed in the day that the Gods formed the earth and the heavens,</p> <p>5 According to all that which they had said concerning every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew; for the Gods had not caused it to rain upon the earth when they counseled to do them, and had not formed a man to till the ground. (Abraham 5:2-5)</p>

Apocalypse of Abraham	Book of Abraham
<p>1.(2.) And I said, "Eternal, Mighty One! What is this picture of creation?"</p> <p>And he said to me,</p> <p>"This is my will with regard to what is in the light and it was good before my face. And then, afterward, I gave them a command by my word and they came into existence. Whatever I had decreed was to</p>	<p>20 The Lord thy God sent his angel to deliver thee from the hands of the priest of Elkenah.</p> <p>21 I dwell in the midst of them all; I now, therefore, have come down unto thee to declare unto thee the works which my hands have made, wherein my wisdom excelleth them all, for I rule in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath, in all wisdom and prudence, over all the intelligences thine eyes have seen from the beginning; I came</p>

exist had already been outlined in this and all the previously created (things) you have seen stood before.	down in the beginning in the midst of all the intelligences thou hast seen. (Abraham 3:21-23)
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Apocalypse of Abraham	Book of Abraham
<p>33. And I said, " O Lord, Mighty and Eternal! Who are the people in this picture on this side and that?"</p> <p>And He said to me,</p> <p>"Those who are on the left side are all those, born before your day and afterwards, some destined for judgment and restoration, and others for vengeance and cutting off at the end of the age. But those on the right side of the picture, they are the people who have been set apart for me, and whom I have ordained to be born of your line and called my people,</p> <p><i>[These are those great and noble ones who have not yet been born, and who will become the descendants or posterity of Abraham.]</i></p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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;</p> <p>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. (Abraham 3:19, 21-23)</p>

A great website that has a tremendous amount of extra-Biblical texts is www.pseudepigrapha.com. I use this site all the time...I highly recommend it.

Getting back to our text in Abraham Chapter 1...we will continue with v 16.

16 And his voice was unto me: Abraham, Abraham, behold, my name is Jehovah, and I have heard thee, and have come down to deliver thee, and to take thee away from thy father's house, and from all thy kinsfolk, **into a strange land** which thou knowest not of;

Israel (the Land) is described by God as a "strange land." In the Jewish traditions of the *Midrash* and the Talmud, Abraham has ten trials, the first of which is *Lech Leha*, or "Get Up and Get Going!" This is what is going on...the Lord is having Abraham move to another place of residence that he has never been. So how will he know when he gets there? The Lord does not tell Abraham that he is to travel about 325 miles south and west and when he sees a big Oak tree in an oasis that "this is the place." The idea was for him to get up and get moving!

It would be nice if our patriarchal blessings specifically told us we would go to this school and major in that degree, and move to a specific place and marry a man or woman with a certain last

name and then get a job in this certain city for the next few years and on and on...but this is not the way it happens! The principle involved: Abraham would not know he was in the right place until he had done the work to get there. The Lord did not tell Brigham Young how many miles he would need to travel or what that valley would look like. It was not until he got to a certain spot that he received the revelation, “This is the place.”

It wasn't until Abraham arrived in the Land of Canaan that Lord told Abraham:

8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. (Gen 17:8)

This is the way it is in our lives, too. The Lord doesn't tell us the end. He doesn't give us the information to know exactly what we are supposed to do. He just gives us the inspiration to know that we should be doing something different. That's the whole reason we have guilt!

17 And this because they [*his father's household*] have turned their hearts away from me, to worship the god of Elkenah, and the god of Libnah, and the god of Mahmackrah, and the god of Korash, and the god of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; therefore I have come down to visit them, and to destroy him who hath lifted up his hand against thee, Abraham, my son, to take away thy life.

The Lord explains to Abraham that He has come down to protect him from “him who hath lifted up his hand against thee.” The reason Abraham needs to “find another place of residence” is because they are trying to kill him.

18 Behold, I will lead thee by my hand, and I will take thee, to put upon thee my name, even the Priesthood of thy father, and my power shall be over thee.

These are key verses: The Lord explains to Abraham that he will have Priesthood – the Lord's authority by taking upon him the Lord's name. The dispensation of Noah ends with the beginning of the dispensation of Abraham. Abraham realizes that he won't have to worry about other people trying to kill him because the Lord will protect him (“my power shall be over thee”).

19 As it was with Noah so shall it be with thee; but through *thy ministry my name* shall be known in the earth forever, for I am thy God.

Again, we see the importance of Abraham. The Atonement and the Gospel come to mankind through Abraham and his posterity (seed), and through no other way! The blessings and ordinances of the Gospel come through Abraham and his posterity because of this promise given to Abraham (more about this in chapter 2).

The concepts and doctrines we see in the Book of Abraham should not be ignored. Almost all of the doctrines Joseph talked about during the last four years of his life that expanded the Gospel came because of the Book of Abraham. The words he used and the doctrines he taught in the *King Follett Discourse* were all found in the Book of Abraham.

Abraham returns now to his narrative:

20 Behold, Potiphar's Hill was in the land of **Ur, of Chaldea**. And the Lord broke down the altar of Elkenah, and of the gods of the land, and utterly destroyed them, and smote the priest that he died; and there was great mourning in Chaldea, and also in the court of Pharaoh; which **Pharaoh signifies king by royal blood**.

There are a lot of interesting things taking place in this verse. (We talked about this last month.) *Ur* means ‘city’; thus, Ur of Chaldea means a city of Chaldea. In Hebrew the name for city is *Ir*. In Chaldean, Ugaritic, or Akkadian the name for city is *Ur*.

20 Behold, **Potiphar's Hill** was in the land of **Ur, of Chaldea**.
And the Lord broke down the altar of Elkenah,
and smote the priest that he died;
and there was *great mourning in Chaldea*,
and also in the court of Pharaoh;
which **Pharaoh signifies king by royal blood**.

The “mourning in Chaldea” was not because the priest died; the mourning was because of the great earthquake that broke down the altar that Abraham was on. The priest became Abraham's substitute sacrifice. A great many people had assembled to witness this sacrifice. Many people died because of this great earthquake.

Looking back in verses 8, 9, & 10:

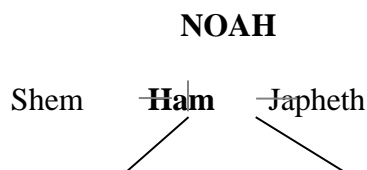
8 Now, at this time it was the custom of the priest of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, to offer up upon the **altar which was built in the land of Chaldea**, for the offering unto these strange gods, men, women, and children.

9 And it came to pass that **the priest made an offering unto the god of Pharaoh, and also unto the god of Shagreel**, even after the manner of the Egyptians. Now **the god of Shagreel was the sun**.

10 Even the thank-offering of a child did the priest of Pharaoh offer **upon the altar which stood by the hill called Potiphar's Hill, at the head of the plain of Olishem**. (Olishem = Plain of the Sun.)

Abraham also tells us some interesting things about the meaning of the word *Pharaoh*. He says, “**Pharaoh signifies king by royal blood**.” Pharaoh is a combination of two Egyptian words: *Per Wer*. *Per* is the word for “house” and *Wer* is the word for “great.” Pharaoh is the Greek translation of *Per Wer*, or “Great House.” Abraham is telling us that the ‘great house’ is the royal house...the “blue bloods.” Abraham and Joseph Smith were correct about the name / title of the word, Pharaoh. When the Book of Abraham was published, the Egyptian hieroglyphic symbols had not yet been deciphered—another lucky stab for Joseph Smith.

A little genealogy is in order as we continue on:



Pharaoh

Nimrod

Pharaoh and Nimrod are the grandsons of Ham (Gen 10:6-9). The two cradles of civilization are each settled by the Grandsons of Ham – Egypt and Mesopotamia. Each Cradle become the symbols of wickedness in scripture and each used the endowment and ordinances of the First Born, those of ‘kingship’ to become the incarnate son of god on earth to legitimize their rule over humanity.

As we talked about last month, these two grandsons of Ham, in each of their settlements, had taken the rituals that would make a person a son of god (we would call them the “endowment”) and turned them into their own ceremonies for their own coronations, thus giving them personal authority to rule and reign over their peoples. They made themselves a king and son of god on earth with those rituals in a public setting, thus exercising control, dominion, and compulsion on the souls of the children of men in every degree of unrighteousness. Because they misused those ordinances of exaltation to legitimize their control over mankind, both Babylon and Egypt became the symbols of spiritual wickedness in our scriptures.

21 Now this king of Egypt was a descendant from the loins of Ham, and was a partaker of the blood of the Canaanites by birth.

22 From this descent sprang all the Egyptians, and thus the blood of the Canaanites was preserved in the land.

Pharaoh rules because of his mother. It’s a Matrilineal Patriarchy, which means his right to rule is determined by who his mother is, not who the father is. The right of priesthood is based on that same thing. That is how the descendants of Cain get through the flood. Ham marries a woman who is a descendant of Cain. This pattern also shows up when Rebecca exclaims, “What value will my life be if Jacob ends up marrying one of the daughters of Heth”? (Heth was also a descendant of Canaan and Cain, and thus was not able to hold the Priesthood. (See Gen 27:46 – Gen 28:1-3)

I am working on a book right now called *The Gospel in Egypt and the Book of Abraham*. It will have a lot of pictures and explanations and will show the connections between the Book of Abraham and Egyptian history. It will be like a coffee table book. This past month I have been spending a lot of time going through Egyptian records and artifacts.

In this record, Joseph is telling us about things that nobody knew anything about at the time he acquired those papyri. We're reading about things that were unknown to any particular scholars at that particular time. There were no dictionaries or explanatory records of any kind that anyone could use to read Egyptian records at the time of Joseph Smith. He has given us tremendous insight into Egyptian history.

Egypt was settled by a descendant of Cain. Cain's descendants are preserved through the flood when Ham married Egyptus. She was a righteous descendant of Cain. She had enough faith to get on the ark with Ham.

23 The land of Egypt being first discovered by **a woman, who was the daughter of Ham, and the daughter of Egyptus**, which in the Chaldean signifies Egypt, which signifies that which is forbidden; [*in the Hebrew, Egypt is called Mizraim.*]

24 When this woman discovered the land it was under water, who afterward settled her sons in it; and thus, from Ham, sprang that race which preserved the curse in the land.

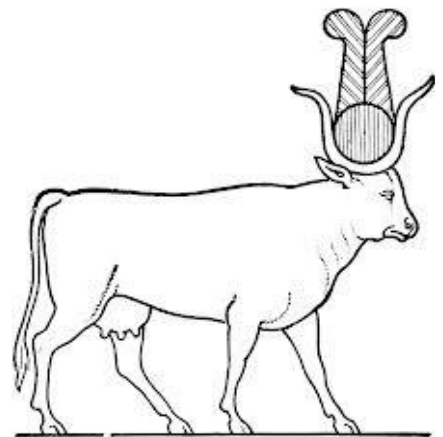
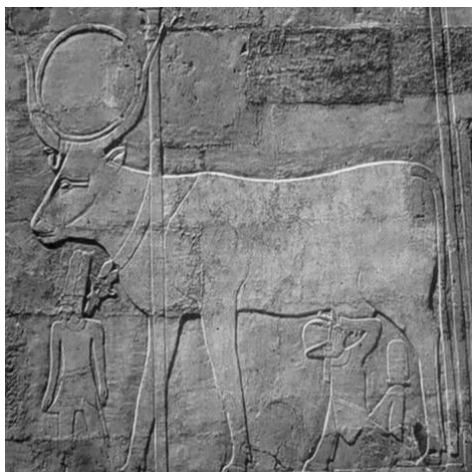
The curse in the land is dealing with Priesthood. Chapters 1 & 2 of Abraham deal with Priesthood. Abraham is giving us some additional history of the Egyptians. Cain and his descendants were restricted from administering the Gospel but not *participating* in the Gospel. This is why the religion of Egypt was founded on the doctrine and the truths the patriarchs taught.

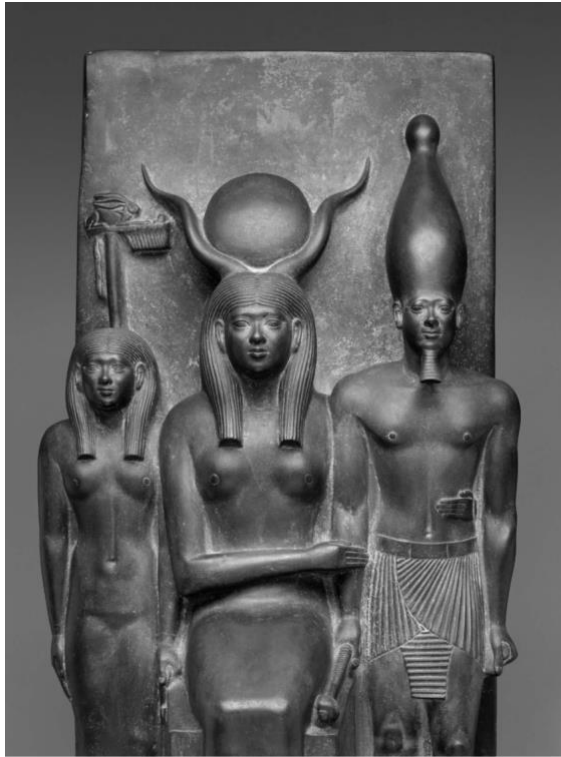
The Key Thing to Understand is that no one on earth can participate or receive the Gospel ordinances of salvation and exaltation except through Abraham and his descendants. This is the blessing promised Abraham by God. His posterity will hold this “right” of administration. We cannot begin to understand the Book of Abraham until we begin to understand this fundamental aspect. The curse that was preserved in the land was the loss of the rights of the priesthood or the ability to administer the Gospel. A woman discovered the land and she placed one of her sons to rule and reign in the land. The “Great House” (Per Wer – Pharaoh) comes because of Ham and from Noah. They imitate the patriarchal line of authority given to Ham as we see in the verse below.

25 Now the first government of Egypt was established by Pharaoh [*Per Wer*], the eldest son of Egyptus, the daughter of Ham, and it was after the manner of the government of Ham, which was patriarchal.

Pharaoh was the name of the first ruler of Egypt. In the Book of Mormon, the succeeding kings were called after Nephi. In Rome, the first ruler was called Caesar; anyone succeeding him was also call Caesar. In Germany the rulers were all called Kaiser; in Russia they were called Tsar. In other words, it became a very common practice and tradition to name all kings and rulers after the first king or ruler.

The woman who discovered Egypt, if you go back to the very earliest times, was called Hathor. She is almost always depicted as a Cow with a sun disc on her head. Also in these early, early records, her son is almost always depicted as having dark, or black, skin.





24 When this woman discovered the land it was under water, who afterward settled her sons in it;

The land could have been under water because of the flood of Noah, or because the Nile flooded every year.

Pharaoh standing on his throne with Isis / Hathor, and with his wife, Nephis

Isis always represents Hathor. She represents the mother who is supporting her son on the Throne. From the information Abraham is giving us, we see it is the mother who places her son on the throne to rule. It is the mother or his wife who legitimizes his authority to sit on the throne. It is the blood line of the matriarch who legitimizes the right to reign.

Throughout the Middle East, it is the matriarch who chooses her firstborn son to be the next patriarch. Only the mother knows who the father is and who her firstborn son is. It is the mother who chooses the patriarch!

This is the reason Rebecca tells Jacob that he is to do everything she tells him to do in order to receive the birthright blessing from Isaac, who is too blind to see that it is not Esau. Rebecca does not get in trouble either—it was her responsibility to choose. This is why Sarah tells Abraham that she wants Hagar and her son (Abraham's son, Ishmael) out of her camp. Abraham goes to the Lord and asks what is he supposed to do – he loves Hagar and Ishmael both. The Lord replies that he is supposed to do whatever his wife tells him to do. It's been the same ever since! (*laughter*) Hagar and Ishmael have to leave because it is Sarah's responsibility to choose who the next birthright son is going to be and who the next Priesthood Leader is going to be. This same pattern is seen in Egypt – it is a woman who places her eldest son in charge of the government of Egypt (Abr 1:25).

In Egypt it is the matriarch who chooses those who will become the next rulers. The wife legitimizes the rule. Because of this, we see Pharaoh marrying the wives of his father, often his mother, and even his sisters. The authority to become Pharaoh comes because of who the mother is. In the New Testament we are given insight into this practice as it relates to Moses. In **Hebrews 11:24** we see Moses refusing to become a son of Pharaoh's daughter, or refusing to become the leader of Egypt.

24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

Acts 7:20-23

20 In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months:

21 And when he was cast out, **Pharaoh's daughter** took him up, and **nourished him for her own son.**

22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.

23 And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.

Moses would have become the next Pharaoh of Egypt if only he had chosen to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. This pattern goes back to the time of Cain being born. Eve declares: **"I have gotten a man from the Lord; wherefore may he not reject his words"** (Moses 5:16). Cain was supposed to be the next patriarch after Adam. Eve declared that she has now gotten a man that would be righteous and could become the next patriarch. Cain was the firstborn after Adam and Eve received the Gospel. It was her right to choose the next patriarch. Back to Abraham 1:

25 Now the first government of Egypt was established by Pharaoh [*Per Wer*], the eldest son of Egyptus, the daughter of Ham, and it was after the manner of the government of Ham, which was patriarchal. [*Hence the order of government is a Matrilineal - Patriarchy*]

- The Government was set up "after the manner" of the Patriarchal Order.
- This was a system Pharaoh knew and was familiar with.
- Pharaoh knew that the patriarchal form of government was inspired.
- This system of Government was a Matrilineal – Patriarchy.

It's the mother who legitimizes the right of her son to be king. During the coronation of the kings of Judah, the name of his mother is *always* mentioned (See 1 Kings 14:21; 15:2; 2 Kings 12:1; 14:2; 15:2; 18:2; 21:1; 22:1; 23:31, 36; 24:8).

26 Pharaoh, **being a righteous man**, established his kingdom and judged his people wisely and justly all his days, **seeking earnestly to imitate** that order established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first patriarchal reign, even in the reign of Adam, and also of Noah, his father, who blessed him with the blessings of the earth, and with the blessings of wisdom, but cursed him as pertaining to the Priesthood.

- Pharaoh established his kingdom
- He sought "earnestly" to imitate the religion of the Patriarchs
- He "earnestly imitated" the religion of the Patriarchs (which was based on the blessings of the endowment and the ordinances of exaltation)
- He knew he had no priesthood authority but he knew it was the only true religion.

27 Now, Pharaoh being of that lineage by which he could not have the right of Priesthood, notwithstanding the Pharaohs would fain claim it from Noah, through Ham, therefore my father was led away by their idolatry; [*Abraham is explaining that his father was led to believe things that were once considered sins, but were now called "civil rights."*]



Here's a statue of Ramses who lived in Memphis (where Moses grew up, where Jacob was, and where Abraham lived). It was the capitol of lower Egypt at one particular time.

The rolled papyrus in Pharaoh's hand is his genealogy, or what we call today, his "line of authority," proving his right to reign as Pharaoh.

This is what Abraham is telling us: Pharaoh was of the lineage by which he could not have the right of the Priesthood, but that he would feign claim that right from Noah through Ham.

As mentioned earlier, everything that happened in ancient Egypt preceded the Mosaic Law. Pharaoh did not imitate the temple services and ordinances of Israel; he was imitating the ordinances and services of the Patriarchal Order, which was a higher order, even a fulness of the Melchizedek and Patriarchal Priesthood. The Old Testament provides a type and a shadow of the Melchizedek Priesthood, but it functioned under the Aaronic Order. We can learn more about Melchizedek Temple concepts by studying the most ancient Egyptian myths and traditions than we can by studying the Old Testament.

29 Now, after the priest of Elkenah was smitten that he died, there came a fulfilment of those things which were said unto me concerning the land of Chaldea, that there should be a famine in the land.

30 Accordingly a famine prevailed throughout all the land of Chaldea, and *my father was sorely tormented because of the famine, and he repented of the evil which he had determined against me, to take away my life.*

The Last Third

We only have two-thirds of the Book of Abraham. Joseph translated both the Book of Abraham and the Book of Joseph. He prepared the Book of Abraham to be published in installments in the *Times and Seasons*. He was working on the last third, preparing it to be published when he was martyred.

We don't have the last third of Abraham's record, **but we know what's in it**. Verse 28 Abraham tells us that he is going to start from the creation and then move forward. (I skipped this verse earlier.)

28 But I shall endeavor, hereafter, to delineate the chronology running *back from myself to the beginning of the creation*, for the records have come into my hands, which I hold unto this present time.

Chapter 3 is about the Pre-earth Council, Chapter 4 introduces the spiritual creation, and Chapter 5 covers the creation, but we don't have the remaining part that takes us up to the time of Abraham. Facsimile #3 is not talked about in the text like Fac # 1 and Fac # 2. The explanations and the references that surround Fac # 3 are missing and would have been in the third installment.

In v 31, he informs us:

31 But the records of the fathers, even the patriarchs, concerning the right of Priesthood, the Lord my God preserved in mine own hands; therefore a knowledge of the beginning of the creation, and also of the planets, and of the stars, as they were made known unto the fathers, have I kept even unto this day, and I shall endeavor to write some of these things upon this record, for the benefit of my posterity that shall come after me. [*We are the Posterity of Abraham. Have you benefitted?*]

The Book of Abraham is connected to the ordinances of the Temple that we participate in. Abraham tells us how to become one with God by way of the ordinances and knowledge that lead us into that relationship. Chapter One sets the stage by telling us why Abraham is making this record. Abraham 1:2 explains that the rights of the fathers are about Priesthood. He sought for the rights of the fathers and the ability to administer the same. Abraham received the records of the fathers concerning the creation and the planets and the stars – the patriarchal fathers and priesthood leaders knew and sought for these same things, just as each of us should do.

9 - Abraham 2, Abraham 3:1-9

We left off at Abraham 1:31, which offers plenty of things to ponder and consider. Verse 31 is linked to verse 2 at the beginning of his record. Because of Abraham we have knowledge concerning the rights of the Priesthood and the ordinances that enable us to become one with God. Abraham desired that his posterity receive the benefit of this record. Have we taken the time to read his record and understand it? He provides the knowledge concerning the rights of the

priesthood and the ordinances of salvation and exaltation. We need to take these things seriously! He is writing these things down for us – his posterity.

Abraham 1:31	Abraham 2:2
31 But the records of the fathers, even the patriarchs, concerning the right of Priesthood , the Lord my God preserved in mine own hands; therefore a knowledge of the beginning of the creation , and also of the planets, and of the stars, as they were made known unto the fathers , have I kept even unto this day, and I shall endeavor to write some of these things upon this record, for the benefit of my posterity that shall come after me.	2 I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; ... desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, [I sought for] the right belonging to the fathers ...

Abraham's journal contains the things our journals ought to contain for the benefit of our posterity! It becomes a pattern for us to ponder. Will our journals contain our day to day activities only, or will they contain our last will and testimony? Your 'last will and testament' is not about what you're planning to do with your estate when you're gone. Your last will is what you want your children to do with your testimony!

In 2 Nephi 1-2, Lehi gives his children his last will and testimony. He wanted to bless them with his personal knowledge of the truth of the Gospel. His desire was for them to wake up, arise from the dust, and shake off the chains by which they were bound and hear the words of their trembling parent (2 Ne 1:13-14).

Your will and testimony is not your bank account number! Abraham says he is writing this journal so that we can understand his relationship with the Atonement, the Priesthood and with the true and living God. This is the record of his endowment of power.

The thing that will be of lasting benefit to your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren is a record of **why** you have a testimony of Christ; **why** you thought these things were sacred. These are things that are important and what is going to endure. The things written on Facebook are not the things that will endure!

***Question:** Is there more information in scripture as to where or by whom he received these things?*

The scriptural record is somewhat obscure, but he informs us that he received these things from the fathers. In Genesis 14:18-19, Melchizedek meets Abraham at the base of Mt Moriah in the King's dale, and there Melchizedek blesses Abraham as they partake of the sacral meal of bread and wine. (See also Heb 6:20, 7:1-4.) I believe it is there he receives the Priesthood and those priesthood ordinances from Melchizedek (Shem). The dispensation of Noah ends with the beginning of the dispensation of Abraham. (D&C 138:41 informs us that Shem was the "great high priest.")

When the record mentions “the fathers,” it means his ancestors. Abraham's father, Terah, made idols as a business. But Shem was still alive, and Shem received these things from Noah. Noah received his ordination under the hand of Methuselah, and Methuselah was ordained under the hand of Adam (D&C 107:50, 52). A Patriarch is a prophet, priest, and king within his family; a matriarch is the same: a prophetess, a priestess, and a queen. The man has the opportunity to become a Priest and King unto God, and a woman also has the same opportunity to become a Priestess and a Queen unto God.

Keep in mind the record of Abraham is really about his endowment and the fullness of the Priesthood and how he receives the Priesthood. Chapter One ends with him saying he is writing these things for the benefit of his posterity.

Abraham Chapter 2

1 Now the Lord God caused the famine to wax sore in the land of Ur, insomuch that Haran, my brother, died; but Terah, my father, yet lived in the land of Ur, of the Chaldees.

2 And it came to pass that I, Abraham, took Sarai to wife, and Nahor, my brother, took Milcah to wife, who was the daughter of Haran. *[There were probably different wives]*

3 Now the Lord had 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 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 father followed after me, unto the land which we denominated Haran.

It looks like they named this place after his brother, who died from famine. It wasn't like they were just passing through – they also had their flocks and herds to care for. They would stay as long as the grass and rains remained, and then they might move somewhere else.

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 idolatry, therefore he continued in Haran.

Who better to sell idols to than a bunch of shepherders? In the Middle East every family of shepherders had their own god – that's why they were always fighting. When Mohammed started Islam around 600 A.D., he tried to convince all the tribes to throw their gods away, believing that if they all believed in one God it would promote unity among the tribes.

There's an old story about Terah, Abraham's father. According to Jewish tradition, Terah was not only involved with idol worship, he was also involved in the business of making them and selling them.

One day, while still living in Mesopotamia, Terah put Abraham in charge of his idol shop while he went to visit Nimrod. (Abraham had been living with Noah and Shem for the last 50 years, so

he knew and understood the Gospel.) Terah had several idols of wood and stone scattered around his shop in many different shapes and sizes. Abraham brought the largest into the center of the shop and proceeded to smash all of the other idols in the shop with a club. Abraham then placed a plate of food in front of the largest idol and placed the club next to the big idol. Terah returned soon thereafter to find his shop full of smashed and ruined idols. He confronted Abraham, demanding to know what had happened to all of his idols of wood and stone that he had made to sell. Feigning innocence, Abraham explained that all he did was bring a plate of food into the room and the large one took a club and smashed all of the other little idols in the shop! Terah said, “What do you mean? This idol has no power to do any such thing!” And Abraham replied, “Just remember, you are the one who said that, not me!” It’s a great story.

6 But I, Abraham, and Lot, my brother’s son, prayed unto the Lord, and the Lord 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 minister to bear my name in a strange land which I will give unto thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession,** *when they hearken to my voice.*

Key points: The Lord is taking Abraham & Lot out of Mesopotamia.
The Lord plans to have Abraham receive the Priesthood and bear the name of the Lord in a strange land.
This land will belong to him and his posterity for an everlasting possession...
WHEN they hearken unto the voice of the Lord. (That hasn't happened yet)

7 For I am the Lord thy God; I dwell in heaven; the earth is my footstool; I stretch my hand over the sea, and it obeys my voice; I cause the wind and the fire to be my chariot; I say to the mountains—Depart hence—and behold, they are taken away by a whirlwind, in an instant, suddenly. *[The Lord is the God of the heavens and the earth.]*

8 My name is Jehovah, and I know the end from the beginning; therefore my hand shall be over thee. *[Abraham does not need to worry – the Lord will protect him]*

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;*

Among the three key religions of the world, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, Abraham is the father of the faithful. He is the father of what the Koran calls the People of the Book. The people of the book are Jews, Christians, and Muslims. The Book is the Old Testament and the records of the prophets, and Abraham is the beginning of that.

As we just read, Abraham and his posterity will *bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations.* Keep in mind that the power of the priesthood is the *authority* to administer the Gospel.

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;

All those who accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ *become* the seed of Abraham. Those who do not accept the Gospel are not the seed of Abraham, even though they may literally be. This why Christ tells the Pharisees he could raise up stones to be the seed of Abraham (Luke 3:8). The Lord makes covenants with none but the penitent.

2 Ne 30:2

2 For behold, I say unto you that as many of the Gentiles as will repent are the covenant people of the Lord; and as many of the Jews as will not repent shall be cast off; for the Lord covenanteth with none save it be with them that repent and believe in his Son, who is the Holy One of Israel.

Abraham 2:11

11 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is, in thy Priesthood) [*that is, your authority to administer the Gospel*] and in thy seed (that is, thy Priesthood) [*in his seed is the authority to administer the Gospel*], for I give unto thee a promise that this right [*to administer the Gospel and the ordinances of salvation and exaltation*] shall continue in thee, and in thy seed [*those who have accepted the Gospel*] after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) [*who are the literal seed of Abraham*] 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.

The two main concepts in this verse are that (1) those who accept the Gospel can receive the authority to administer the Gospel. This is what we saw in v 10:

...for as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed... [*This is referring to adoption*]

The other concept (2) has to do with Abraham's literal seed:

...and in thy seed (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) shall all the families of the earth be blessed...

Why is there such a distinction? If everyone who accepts the Gospel can receive the authority to administer the Gospel, yet the blessings come only through his literal seed, **who are the literal seed of Abraham?**

Paul teaches the Galatians:

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, **“And to thy seed,” which is Christ.** (Gal 3:16)

On the question of adoption, everyone who accepts the Gospel has the right to administer the Gospel, but the real blessing of the administration of the Gospel is from the literal seed of Abraham – who is Christ! The scriptures are the best commentary on the scriptures. I hope this is making sense!

Who are the Literal Seed? Look again in the middle of verse 11:

...I give unto thee a promise that this right shall continue in thee, and *in thy seed* after thee (**that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body**) shall all the families of the earth be blessed...

In Jewish traditions there are **two** Messiahs—**Messiah ben Judah** and **Messiah ben Joseph**.

Hugo Odeburg, who translated the 3rd Book of Enoch, spends an entire chapter examining the two Messiah's talked about in the ancient traditions.

Christ is Messiah ben Judah:

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.
27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.
29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.
(Galations 3: 26-29)

Joseph Smith is Messiah ben Joseph:

3 Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it. In the short space of twenty years, he has brought forth the Book of Mormon, ... has sent the fulness of the everlasting gospel, ... to the four quarters of the earth ... for the benefit of the children of men ... and like most of the Lord's anointed in ancient times, has sealed his mission and his works with his own blood; (D&C 135:3)

No one else, except Christ, has done more for the salvation of mankind than Joseph Smith. **Messiah ben Judah** is a descendant of Judah; **Messiah ben Joseph** is a descendant of Joseph who was sold into Egypt, and also a literal descendant of Abraham.

D&C 86:8-11

8 Therefore, thus saith the Lord unto you, with whom the priesthood hath continued through the lineage of your fathers—
9 For ye are lawful heirs, according to the flesh, and have been hid from the world with Christ in God—
10 **Therefore your life and the priesthood have remained, and must needs remain through you and your lineage until the restoration of all things spoken by the mouths of all the holy prophets since the world began.**
11 Therefore, blessed are ye if ye continue in my goodness, a light unto the Gentiles, and *through this priesthood, a savior unto my people Israel*. The Lord hath said it. Amen.

D&C 113:1-4

1 Who is **the Stem of Jesse** spoken of in the 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, and 5th verses of the 11th chapter of Isaiah?
2 Verily thus saith the Lord: It is **Christ**. [*Messiah ben Judah*]

3 What is **the rod** spoken of in the first verse of the 11th chapter of Isaiah, that **should come of the Stem of Jesse**?

4 Behold, thus saith the Lord: **It is a servant in the hands of Christ, who is partly a descendant of Jesse as well as of Ephraim, or of the house of Joseph, on whom there is laid much power.** [*Messiah ben Joseph*]

These scriptures are helping us understand the references to the literal seed spoken of in Abraham 2:11, and that verse in Abraham helps us understand these verses in the D&C.

D&C 113:5-8

5 What is **the root of Jesse** spoken of in the 10th verse of the 11th chapter?

6 Behold, thus saith the Lord, it is a descendant of Jesse, as well as of Joseph, unto whom rightly belongs the priesthood, and the keys of the kingdom, for an ensign, and for the gathering of my people in the last days.

7 What is meant by the command in Isaiah, 52d chapter, 1st verse, which saith: Put on thy strength, O Zion—and what people had Isaiah reference to?

8 He had reference to those whom God should call in the last days, *who should hold the power of priesthood to bring again Zion,* and the redemption of Israel; and *to put on her strength is to put on the authority of the priesthood,* which she, Zion, has *a right to by lineage;* also to return to that power which she had lost.

All of these verses are connected to Abraham 2:9-12. Connected to the Priesthood is also the **LAW OF THE PRIESTHOOD**.

D&C 132:58-60

58 Now, as touching **the law of the priesthood**, there are many things pertaining thereunto.

59 Verily, if a man be called of my Father, as was Aaron, by mine own voice, and by the voice of him that sent me, and I have endowed him with **the keys of the power of this priesthood**, if he do anything in my name, and according to my law and by my word, **he will not commit sin**, and I will justify him.

60 Let no one, therefore, set on my servant Joseph; for I will justify him; **for he shall do the sacrifice which I require at his hands** for his transgressions, saith the Lord your God.

What is the sacrifice the Lord is referring to? Joseph's sacrifice was everything he did in order to establish Zion! Look at verse 8 in **D&C 113** again:

8 He had reference to those whom God should call in the last days, who should hold the power of priesthood to bring again Zion, and the redemption of Israel; and to put on her strength is to put on the authority of the priesthood, which she, Zion, has a right to by lineage; also to return to that power which she had lost. (D&C 113:8)

...I give unto thee a promise that this right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee... (Abr 2:1)

This is exciting to see these things in scripture; to see what Abraham was talking about. Joseph is giving us this information in the D&C and in Abraham in 1835 and in 1836. There is not even a Quorum of the Twelve yet.

D&C 132:7-14 (These verses are actually talking about Priesthood – not polygamy)

7 And **verily I say unto you, that the conditions of this law are these:** 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.

This is the authority that comes from Abraham through his lineage. It's the authority to administer the Gospel – the sealing ordinances are a part of the Gospel, and those keys and that authority come directly from Abraham. Joseph Smith is a direct descendant of Abraham and is the Prophet of the restoration who has the authority and the responsibility to establish Zion. He is the prophet of the dispensation of the fullness of times, the dispensation in which all prophets and all patriarchs have looked forward to. He is Messiah ben Joseph.

This is what we have been leading to during this lesson today. Abraham is told that there would be two literal descendants from the seed of his body; two Messiahs who would come through his lineage: **Messiah ben Judah** (Christ) and **Messiah ben Joseph** (Joseph Smith). It was so important that Joseph, who was sold into Egypt, wrote about it in **2 Ne 3:14-16**:

14 And thus prophesied Joseph, saying: Behold, that seer will the Lord bless; ... for *this promise, which I have obtained of the Lord, of the fruit of my loins*, shall be fulfilled.

15 And his name shall be called after me; and it shall be after the name of his father. And *he shall be like unto me*; for the thing, which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand, *by the power of the Lord shall bring my people unto salvation*.

16 Yea, thus prophesied Joseph: I am sure of this thing, ... for the Lord hath said unto me, *I will preserve thy seed forever*.

This account was on the Brass Plates and Nephi included it in his “small plates” – that’s how important it was. Isaiah talks about it also. It's exciting to study the lives of Abraham and Joseph Smith and to see how the message of the Atonement is being brought into the lives of the children of men. Joseph established the church and the authority of the priesthood to administer the Gospel and administer the Atonement via the ordinances.

When it comes to the Melchizedek ordinances, **Alma 13:16** provides this insight:

Now these [Melchizedek] 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.

It is only because of Abraham that the authority and the **right** to give the *rites* to mankind is available to us. It is only because of the authority coming through Abraham that we can participate in the Atonement. Joseph's mission, as that literal seed of Abraham, Messiah ben Joseph, was to

restore not only the Priesthood and the authority to administer it, but the fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as contained in the Book of Mormon – and only the Book of Mormon (D&C 20:9).

Back to our text in **D&C 132**:

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

9 **Will I 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 appointed?**

11 And will I appoint unto you, saith the Lord, **except it be by law**, even as I and my Father ordained unto you, before the world was?

This right has come down through the lineage of Abraham to Christ and to Joseph Smith. From Abraham the restoration of the Priesthood has come down to Joseph Smith and then to us. This is discussing who it was who would hold Priesthood authority even before the world was, again connecting to the Law of the Priesthood.

12 I am the Lord thy God; and I give unto you this commandment—**that no man shall 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 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 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.

This is why the authority to administer the Gospel is so important. This explains why ordinances are binding – they are ordained by His Law, by His word, and by His authority.

D&C 39:11

11 And if thou do this, **I have prepared thee for a greater work. Thou shalt preach the fulness of my gospel**, which I have sent forth in these last days, **the covenant which I have sent forth to recover my people, which are of the house of Israel.**

Joseph's work was to restore the gospel and priesthood authority in order to gather the house of Israel, which began with Abraham.

D&C 88:80-81

80 **That ye may be prepared in all things** when I shall send you again to magnify the calling whereunto I have called you, and the mission with which I have commissioned you.

81 Behold, I sent you out to testify and warn the people, and it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor.

Joseph's responsibility is to preach the Gospel and administer the ordinances. All ordinances are given that thereby we might look forward to Christ for the remission of our sins (Alma 13:16).

Abraham 2:12

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;**

In Abr 1:2, Abraham wanted to right to administer the Gospel to God's people on earth. This is the right belonging to the fathers from Adam until the time of Abraham. He obtained the desires of his heart as we saw in v 10-12]

***Comment:** So Abraham restored what Adam was given...yet there had been great apostasy from Adam's posterity down to the time of Abraham.*

That is correct. All of the righteous were taken up during the time of Enoch. Noah, Shem, Ham and Japeth remained. Abraham becomes the restorer. That is why there was a new dispensation with Abraham. He is the father of the faithful, and the father of the three people of the Book. Basically, Abraham is the father of our world today. Joseph Smith is connected to Abraham because he is the one who brings that all back together.

13 Thou didst send thine angel to 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 sixty and two years old when I 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, and all our substance that we had gathered, and the souls that we had won in Haran, and came forth in the way to the land of Canaan, and dwelt in tents as we came on our way;

16 Therefore, eternity was our covering and our rock and our salvation, as we journeyed from Haran by the way of Jershon, to come to the land of Canaan.

17 Now I, Abraham, built an altar in the land of Jershon, and *made an offering* unto the Lord, and prayed that the famine might be turned away from my father's house, that they might not perish.

In 1972, A. Theodore Tuttle of the Seventy gave a wonderful talk entitled "Altar, Tent, Well," taken from Genesis 26:25. It's worth reading again. [Easy to find on the internet]

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 Canaanites, and *I offered 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.

19 And **the Lord appeared unto me** in answer to my prayers, and said unto me: Unto thy seed will I give this land. *[A land occupied by idol worshippers]*

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 Beth-el, and pitched my tent there, Beth-el on the west, and Hai on the east; and there *I built another altar* unto the Lord, and called again upon the name of the Lord.

***Question:** Doesn't an altar represent "sacred space"?*

Yes. Wherever an altar is becomes sacred space because of the altar itself. When Jacob anoints the stone he sleeps on, that becomes sacred space. All covenants are made at an altar or *as if* you are at an altar. Beth-el means *there where God is*, or House of God. (“The Lord appeared unto me in answer to my prayers.”) We also see Beth-el showing up later in Genesis at the place where Jacob wrestles the angel.

21 And I, Abraham, journeyed, going on still towards the south; and there was a continuation of a famine in the land; and I, Abraham, concluded to go down into Egypt, to sojourn there, for the famine became very grievous.

The Test of Sarah

22 And it came to pass when I was come near to enter into Egypt, **the Lord said unto me:** Behold, Sarai, thy wife, is a very fair woman to look upon;

23 Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see her, they will say—She is his wife; and they will kill you, but they will save her alive; therefore see that ye do on this wise:

24 Let her say unto the Egyptians, she is thy sister, and thy soul shall live.

25 And it came to pass that I, Abraham, told Sarai, my wife, all that the Lord had said unto me—Therefore say unto them, I pray thee, thou art my sister, that it may be well with me for thy sake, and my soul shall live because of thee.

This becomes Sarah's test when she has to marry the Pharaoh of Egypt. It was during the time of coronation that we discussed last month. Abraham's life was spared because Sarah told the Egyptians she was Abraham's sister.

This story is also found in Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 1, Chapter 8. Josephus was a Jewish General at the time the Romans were coming to destroy all of the cities in and around Jerusalem in 68-70 AD. He was arrested by Vespasian, the Roman General in charge of the Roman armies. Josephus prophesied that Vespasian would become the next Emperor of Rome in due time. During the siege of Jerusalem, Vespasian received word from a courier he was to return to Rome immediately as he had been appointed the next emperor. Because of this, Josephus received special privileges from Vespasian, which enabled him to collect the Jewish records kept in the synagogues in the surrounding cities before they were burned or otherwise destroyed. He compiled those stories into two sets of records: *The Antiquities of the Jews* and the *Wars of the Jews*. *The Antiquities of the Jews* contain the records from the time of creation down to the times of the Romans. This story of Abraham and Sarah is found in Book 1, Ch 8.

1 NOW, after this, when a famine had invaded the land of Canaan, and Abram had discovered that the Egyptians were in a flourishing condition, he was disposed to go down to them, both to partake of the plenty they enjoyed, and to become an auditor of their priests, and to know what they said concerning the gods; designing either to follow them, if they had better notions than he, or to convert them into a better way, if his own notions proved the truest. Now, seeing he was to take Sarai with him, and was afraid of the madness of the Egyptians with regard to women, lest the king

should kill him on occasion of **his wife's great beauty**, he contrived this device: he pretended to be her brother, and directed her in a dissembling way to pretend the same, for he said it would be for their benefit. Now, as soon as he came into Egypt, it happened to Abram as he supposed it would; **for the fame of his wife's beauty was greatly talked of**; for which reason Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, would not be satisfied with what was reported of her, but would needs see her himself, and was preparing to enjoy her; but God put a stop to his unjust inclinations, by sending upon him a distemper, and a sedition against his government. And when he inquired of the priests how he might be freed from these calamities, they told him that this his miserable condition was derived from the wrath of God, upon account of his inclinations to abuse the stranger's wife. He then, out of fear, asked Sarai who she was, and who it was that she brought along with her. And when he had found out the truth, he excused himself to Abram, that supposing the woman to be his sister, and not his wife, he set his affections on her, as desiring an affinity with him by marrying her, but not as incited by lust to abuse her. **He also made him a large present in money, and gave him leave to enter into conversation with the most learned among the Egyptians; from which conversation his virtue and his reputation became more conspicuous than they had been before.**

2. For whereas the Egyptians were formerly addicted to different customs, and despised one another's sacred and accustomed rites, and were very angry one with another on that account, Abram conferred with each of them, and, confuting the reasonings they made use of, every one for their own practices, demonstrated that such reasonings were vain and void of truth: whereupon he was admired by them in those conferences as a very wise man, and one of great sagacity, when he discoursed on any subject he undertook; and this not only in understanding it, but in persuading other men also to assent to him. He communicated to them arithmetic, and delivered to them the science of astronomy; for before Abram came into Egypt they were unacquainted with those parts of learning; for that science came from the Chaldeans into Egypt, and from thence to the Greeks also.

Abraham was able to teach (restore) truths that had been lost from the time of the first Pharaoh who had judged his people wisely all of his days. More than that, he provided knowledge about the science of astronomy and math, knowledge they were unacquainted with.

Let's start Chapter Three!

Abraham 3	BHP
1 And I, Abraham, had the Urim and Thummim, which the Lord my God had given unto me, in Ur of the Chaldees;	There is more than one Urim & Thummim. The High Priest of Israel had one; The Brother of Jared had one also.
2 And I saw the stars, that they were very great, and that one of them was nearest unto the throne of God; and there were many great ones which were near unto it;	

<p>3 And the Lord said unto me: These are the governing ones; and the name of the great one is Kolob, because it is near unto me, for I am the Lord thy God: I have set this one to govern all those which belong to the same order as that <u>upon which thou standest</u>.</p>	<p>Kolob is not where God lives. If you can “<i>Hie Unto Kolob</i>,” you have not 'hied' far enough! It is only near unto Him.</p> <p>Kolob is a governing planet like the one Abraham lives on; it is one that sustains life and is populated with those who have the potential to become like God (the same order).</p>
<p>4 And the Lord said unto me, <i>by the Urim and Thummim</i>, that Kolob was after the manner of the Lord, according to its times and seasons in the revolutions thereof; that one revolution was a day unto the Lord, after his manner of reckoning, it being one thousand years according to the time appointed unto that <u>whereon thou standest</u>. This is the reckoning of the Lord’s time, according to the reckoning of Kolob.</p>	<p>Kolob governs planets like the ones we are on. Remember there are worlds without number; Adams there are many, and Eves there are many.</p> <p>A day on Kolob is like a thousand years to us, or a long, long, long time!</p>
<p>5 And the Lord said unto me: The planet which is the lesser light, lesser than that which is to rule the day, even the night, is above or greater than that upon which thou standest in point of reckoning, for it moveth in order more slow; this is in order because it standeth above the earth <u>upon which thou standest</u>, therefore the reckoning of its time is not so many as to its number of days, and of months, and of years.</p>	<p>There are different orders of planets, different levels, and different revolutions. Everything has a different time period, just like it says in D&C 88:37: “there are many kingdoms; for there is no space in which there is no kingdom; and there is no kingdom in which there is no space.” Everything is relative to something else. The sun rules the day, and the moon rules the night. One is greater than ours and another is greater than that...</p>
<p>6 And the Lord said unto me: Now, Abraham, these two facts exist, behold thine eyes see it; it is given unto thee to know the times of reckoning, and the set time, yea, the set time of the earth <u>upon which thou standest</u>, and the set time of the greater light which is set to rule the day, and the set time of the lesser light which is set to rule the night.</p>	<p>There is only one point in space in which the sun and the moon appear to be the exact same size –</p> <div> </div> <p>During an eclipse as viewed from planet earth. From our point of view they are the exact same size.</p>
<p>7 Now the set time of the lesser light is a longer time as to its reckoning than the reckoning of the time of the earth <i>upon which thou standest</i>.</p>	

<p>8 And where these two facts exist, there shall be another fact above them, that is, there shall be another planet whose reckoning of time shall be longer still;</p>	<p>This is setting us up to begin to see where God is. God is not only declaring to Abraham that he is real and that He lives, but also that he is locatable. He is somewhere – not everywhere!</p>
<p>9 And thus there shall be the reckoning of the time of one planet above another, until thou come nigh unto Kolob, which Kolob is after the reckoning of the Lord's time; which Kolob is set <u>nigh unto the throne of God</u>, to govern all those planets which belong to the same order as that <u>upon which thou standest</u></p>	<p>If you get back far enough, there is a place where God is.</p>

We're just getting into the fun stuff, and it's time to quit! The Church is true no matter what I say; that is always the case! You shouldn't put any faith in me. You put your faith in the scriptures and the words of the prophets. The scriptures are your source – not me! I just want to spark enough interest from the scriptures that you'll want to go read them and find out for yourself.

10 - Abraham 3:6-28 –Facsimile #2 – Kolob – The Nature of Spirits

Explanations of Facsimile #2

We're going to continue from where we left off last time. Abraham, you may remember, was gazing upon the stars and wanted to know all kinds of things. He inquired of the Lord, and he received the following answers:

Abr. 3:

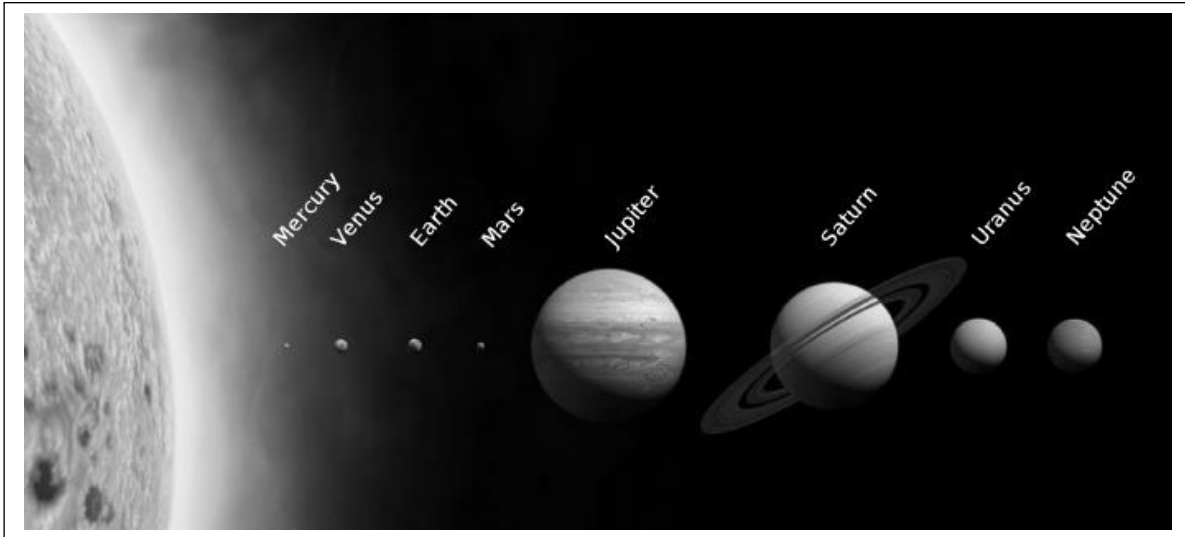
6 And the Lord said unto me: Now, Abraham, these two facts exist, behold thine eyes see it; **it is given unto thee to know the times of reckoning**, and the set time, yea, the set time of the earth **upon which thou standest**, and the set time of the greater light (**Sun**) which is set to rule the day, and the set time of the lesser light (**Moon**) which is set to rule the night.

7 Now the set time of the lesser light is a longer time as to its reckoning than the reckoning of the time of the earth upon which thou standest.

8 *And where these two facts exist, there shall be another fact above them, that is, there shall be another planet whose reckoning of time shall be longer still;*

9 *And thus there shall be the reckoning of the time of one planet above another, until thou come nigh unto Kolob, which Kolob is after the reckoning of the Lord's*

time; which Kolob is set nigh unto the throne of God, to govern all those planets which belong to the **same order as that upon which thou standest**.



What Abraham is learning in this conversation is that God not only exists, He is also locatable! Abraham is given to understand that Kolob is the governing planet that controls all other planets, and **it is of the same order as that of the earth** (upon which Abraham is standing), meaning it is inhabited with those who also have the potential to become like God. Among all the stars that we can see are all the other visible galaxies that have their own governing systems. We read in the D&C:

And there are many kingdoms; for there is no space in the which there is no kingdom; and there is no kingdom in which there is no space, **either a greater or a lesser kingdom**. And unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds also and conditions. (D&C 88:37-38)

Abraham is told concerning Facsimile # 2:

10 And it is given unto thee to know the set time of all the stars that are set to give light, until thou come near unto the throne of God.

11 Thus **I, Abraham, talked with the Lord, face to face**, as one man talketh with another; and he told me of the works which his hands had made;

Fig. 3. Is made to represent God, sitting upon his throne, clothed with power and authority; with a crown of eternal light upon his head; representing also the grand Key-words of the Holy Priesthood, as revealed to Adam in the Garden of Eden, as also to Seth, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, and all to whom the Priesthood was revealed.

Fig. 1. **Kolob**, signifying the first creation, **nearest to the celestial, or the residence of God.** First in government, **the last pertaining to the measurement of time.** The measurement according to celestial time, which celestial time signifies one day to a cubit. One day in **Kolob** is equal to a thousand years according to the measurement of **this earth**, which is called by the Egyptians **Jah-oh-eh.**

Fig. 4. Answers to the Hebrew word **Raukee-yang**, signifying **expanse, or the firmament of the heavens**; also a numerical figure, in Egyptian signifying one thousand; answering to **the measuring of the time of Oliblish**, which is equal with **Kolob** in its revolution and in its measuring of time.

Fig. 6. Represents this earth in its four quarters.

Fig. 8. Contains writings that cannot be revealed unto the world; but is to be had in the Holy Temple of God.

Fig. 9. Ought not to be revealed at the present time.

Fig. 10. Also. **Fig. 11.** Also. If the world can find out these numbers, so let it be. Amen.

Figures 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21 will be given in the own due time of the Lord.



Fig. 5. Is called in Egyptian **Enish-go-on-dosh**; this is one of the governing planets also, and is said by the Egyptians to be **the Sun**, and to borrow its light from **Kolob** through the medium of **Kae-e-vanrash**, which is the grand Key, or, in other words, the governing power, which **governs fifteen other fixed planets or stars**, as also **Floese or the Moon**, the Earth and the Sun in their annual revolutions. This planet receives its power through the medium of **Kli-flos-is-es**, or **Hah-ko-kau-beam**, the stars represented by numbers 22 and 23, receiving light from the revolutions of **Kolob**.

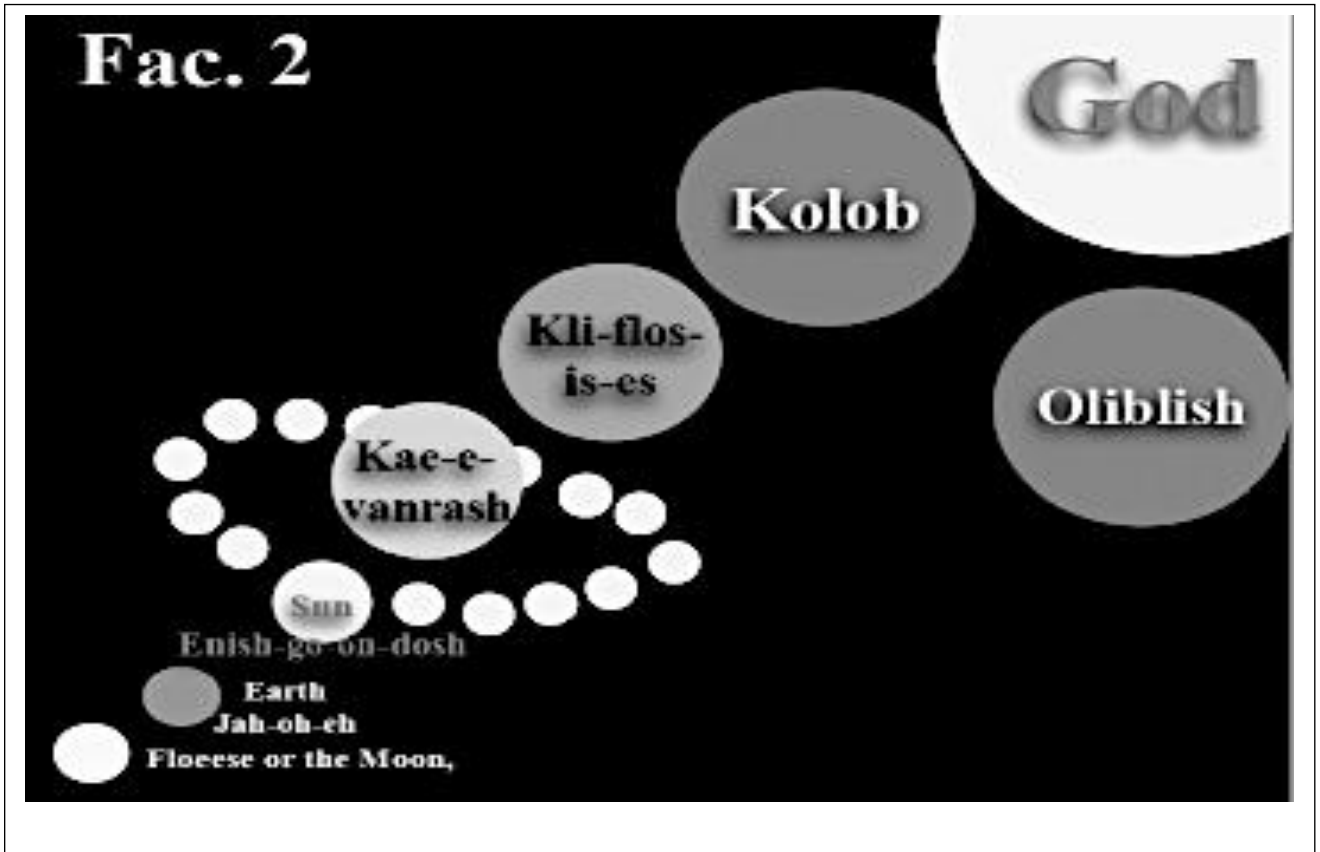
Fig. 2. Stands next to **Kolob**, called by the Egyptians **Oliblish**, which is the next grand governing creation **near to the celestial or the place where God resides**; holding the key of power also, pertaining to other planets; as revealed from God to Abraham, as he offered sacrifice upon an altar, which he had built unto the Lord.

Fig. 7. Represents God sitting upon his throne, revealing through the heavens the grand Key-words of the Priesthood; **as, also**, the sign of the Holy Ghost unto Abraham, in the form of a dove.

Joseph provides an explanation of what these things mean, *not* what they say.

Notice the words, “Signify” and “represent”

Abraham's Star Map



D&C 88:7-12 provides additional insight:

7 Which truth shineth. This is the light of Christ. As also he is in the sun, and the **light of the sun**, and the power thereof by which it was made.

8 As also he is in the moon, and is **the light of the moon**, and the power thereof by which it was made;

9 As also **the light of the stars**, and the power thereof by which they were made;

10 And the earth also, and the power thereof, even the earth *upon which you stand*.

11 And the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings;

12 Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space—

Abraham 3

12 And he said unto me: My son, my son (and his hand was stretched out), behold I will show you all these. And he put his hand upon mine eyes, and I saw those things which his hands had made, which were many; and they multiplied before mine eyes, and I could not see the end thereof.

13 And he said unto me: This is **Shinehah**, which is **the sun**. And he said unto me: **Kokob**, which is **star**. And he said unto me: **Olea**, which is the **moon**. And he said unto me:

Kokaubeam, which signifies **stars**, or all the great lights, which were in the firmament of heaven.

14 And *it was in the night time when the Lord spake these words unto me*: I will multiply thee, and thy seed after thee, like unto these; and if thou canst count the number of sands, so shall be the number of thy seeds.

15 And the Lord said unto me: Abraham, I show these things unto thee *before ye go into Egypt*, that ye may declare all these words.

Abraham is being taught these things before he goes into Egypt, thus preparing him to become a teacher and a prophet to the Egyptians. He was able to restore some ancient truths that had been lost since the time of the first Pharaoh, who was a righteous man and who judged his people wisely all his days.

We have talked before about the Shabbakah Stone – the oldest written text in the world. This was found in the Temple of Menes – the first Pharaoh or the eldest son of Egyptus. The text is a Temple Drama explaining the creation of the heavens and the stars. It's about the Father God who creates the world by the word of his mouth and which of his sons will be put in charge of this world. It tells of “His most beloved son” who battling with Seth (Set) and who is trying to take control of all of God's creation. This document is from 3500 BC. It is a temple drama, written with stage directions, concerning the Council in Heaven and who will be ruling this earth. If you'd like to learn more about this theology from this time period, Theodore Gastor has written a book called *Thespis*. His book contains a very good translation of the Shabbakah Stone.

These next verses are very interesting. The Lord begins teaching Abraham about relationships and patterns that compare stars to spirits, and spirits to leaders.

16 If two things exist, and there be one above the other, there shall be greater things above them; therefore **Kolob is the greatest of all the Kokaubeam** that thou hast seen, because it is nearest unto me.

17 Now, if there be two things, *one above the other*, and the moon be above the earth, then it may be that a planet or a star may exist above it; and there is nothing that the Lord thy God shall take in his heart to do but what he will do it. *[Don't think you already know it all!]*

STARS to SPIRITS

18 Howbeit that he made the greater star; **as, also** *[this is telling you this is a pattern, a comparison]*, 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.**

Abraham's narrative now shifts from information about the stars to information that sheds light on the eternal nature of our spirits.

The Lord is saying that just as one star or planet differs from another, so also can one spirit differ from another! Just as the light of the stars differ in magnitude, so can spirits differ from one another

in intelligence and light. Knowing that Abraham has learned the differences between the stars and the planets, the Lord begins to teach Abraham about the different levels of spirits, and his seed and generations yet to come, *all from a pre-existent point of view*.

18 ...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,
[they] have no beginning;
they existed before,
they shall have no end,
they shall exist after, for
they are gnolaum, or eternal.

Gee Whiz File

We have no beginning; We existed before, We shall have no end, We shall exist after, for We are eternal.
--

D&C 93 provides some additional clarification. Joseph received this revelation in May of 1833. (Abraham's record was not obtained until 1835.)

23 Ye were also in the beginning with the Father; that which is Spirit, even the Spirit of truth;

29 Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be.

30 All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence.

The following chart compares important verses pertaining to the eternal nature of our spirit and Christ's spirit.

D&C 93:21, 26 Christ	D&C 93:23 Man	D&C 93:29 Man
I was in the beginning with the Father; <i>I am more intelligent than they all (Abr 3: 19)</i> 26: The Spirit of Truth is of God. I am the Spirit of Truth.	Ye were also in the beginning with the Father that which is Spirit, even the Spirit of Truth	Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth,
"Spirits have no beginning; for they are eternal." (Abr 3:18)	...was not created or made, neither indeed can be.	...was not created or made neither indeed can be.

Christ is connecting His pre-earth life to our own pre-earth life.

Joseph's teachings may seem contrary to some of your traditions. I cannot ignore scripture or Joseph Smith. I'm not trying to teach anything contrary to your own traditions because you can believe anything you want to believe. The first rule in this class is, "Don't believe a word I say!" I'm only showing you these statements from the Prophet of the Restoration and how they compare with our scriptures. These things can always be filed away in your Gee Whiz File. Joseph taught:

The spirit of man is not a created being; it existed from eternity, and will exist to eternity. Anything created cannot be eternal; ... Our Savior speaks of children and says, Their angels always stand before my Father. The Father called all spirits before Him at the creation of man, and organized them. He (Adam) is the head ... (TPJS p 158) *[The Father organized the spirits into families, nations, tongues and people so that they could come to Him to see the body of the man he had formed from the dust of this earth, as we shall see. The spirit of man has no beginning.]*

If the soul of man had a beginning it would surely have an end. The first step in the salvation of man is the laws of eternal and self-existent principles. **Spirits are eternal.** At the first organization in heaven we were all present, and saw the Savior chosen and appointed and the plan of salvation made, and we sanctioned it. (TPJS p 181)

I have another subject to dwell upon, which is calculated to exalt man; but it is impossible for me to say much on this subject. I shall therefore just touch upon it, for time will not permit me to say all. It is associated with the subject of the resurrection of the dead, — namely, the soul—the mind of man—the immortal spirit. Where did it come from? All learned men and doctors of divinity say that God created it in the beginning; but it is not so: the very idea lessens man in my estimation. I do not believe the doctrine; I know better. Hear it, all ye ends of the world; for God has told me so; and if you don't believe me, it will not make the truth without effect. I will make a man appear a fool before I get through; if he does not believe it. I am going to tell of things more noble. (TPJS p 352)

We say that God himself is a self-existent being. Who told you so? It is correct enough; but how did it get into your heads? Who told you that man did not exist in like manner upon the same principles? **Man does exist upon the same principles.** God made a tabernacle and put a spirit into it, and it became a living soul. (Refers to the old Bible.) How does it read in the Hebrew? It does not say in the Hebrew that God created the spirit of man. It says "**God made man out of the earth and put into him Adam's spirit**, and so became a living body." (See Abr 5:7; 1 Cor 15:45)

The mind or the intelligence which man possesses is co-equal with God himself. I know that my testimony is true (TPJS p 352, 353); *[Our spirit has existed as long as God's spirit has existed.]*

Keep in mind most of these quotes are from *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. They also can be found in the Priesthood & Relief Society Manual, *The Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*; Chapter 17, p 209-211.

Joseph Continues:

I am dwelling on the immortality of the spirit of man. Is it logical to say that the **intelligence of spirits** is immortal, and yet that it had a beginning? The intelligence of spirits had no beginning, neither will it have an end. That is good logic. That which has a beginning may have an end. There never was a time when there were not spirits; for they are co-equal [co-eternal] with our Father in heaven. (TPJS p 353)

I want to reason more on the spirit of man; for I am dwelling on the body and spirit of man—on the subject of the dead. I take my ring from my finger and liken it unto **the mind of man—the immortal part, because it has no beginning**. Suppose you cut it in two; then it has a beginning and an end; but join it again, and it continues one eternal round. So with the spirit of man. **As the Lord liveth, if it had a beginning, it will have an end. All the fools and learned and wise men from the beginning of creation, who say that the spirit of man had a beginning, prove that it must have an end;** and if that doctrine is true, then the doctrine of annihilation would be true. But if I am right, **I might with boldness proclaim from the house-tops that God never had the power to create the spirit of man at all. God himself could not create himself.** (See Abr 3:18)

Intelligence is eternal and exists upon a self-existent principle. **It is a spirit from age to age, and there is no creation about it.** All the minds and spirits that God ever sent into the world are susceptible of enlargement. (TPJS p 354)

Joseph is teaching us that every spirit has the ability to be enlarged. There is an intelligence of spirit. The **definition of intelligence** is *the spirit's ability to seek for, receive, and be obedient to light and truth*. That is what constitutes the intelligence of spirit.

We consider that God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect; and that the nearer man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, and the greater his enjoyments, till he has overcome the evils of his life and lost every desire for sin; and like the ancients, arrives at that point of faith where he is wrapped in the power and glory of his Maker and is caught up to dwell with Him. But we consider that this is a station to which no man ever arrived in a moment: he must have been instructed in the government and laws of that kingdom by proper degrees, until his mind is capable in some measure of comprehending the propriety, justice, equality, and consistency of the same. (TPJS p 51)

This further reinforces the definition of the intelligence of Spirit. The exciting thing is that Joseph is teaching us what it takes to become like God! He is also teaching us how we can develop the character of God.

Our exaltation is dependent on the light and truth we receive AND OBEY, until we receive a fullness of light and truth (D&C 93:36). Going on in Abraham 3:

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. (Abr 3:19)

Using the definition of Intelligence, we see that the Lord, being “more intelligent than they all,” not only received a fullness of light and truth, He becomes a source of light and truth! Now if this is what it takes to become God, and we are spirits, we have to come to a point where we seek for,

receive, and are obedient to a fullness of light and truth so that we can become exalted and glorified in all things! (This is the whole concept of exaltation, the whole concept of the fullness of light and truth in Sec 93.)

***Question:** If that is what a spirit has to do in order to become God, what would Christ's spirit have to do to become God **before** He came to earth?*

The very same thing! He sought for, received, and was obedient to a fullness of light and truth **before** He ever came here; thus, He became the Firstborn unto God.

***Question:** Was He the only one?*

He was the first of all the spirits to seek for, receive, and be obedient to that fullness of light and truth, thus qualifying to become a God even before he came to earth. He was the only one worthy to become a God even before He came to this earth. *We* had to come to earth in order to learn this stuff! We have to learn how to seek for further light and truth.

Verse 19 is giving us an insight: there are some spirits that have a greater propensity to seek for light and truth than others. There are those with a greater propensity than them, and Christ says, "I am more intelligent than they all." The Lord is laying a foundation so Abraham can understand who will become the Prophets, Patriarchs, and Leaders on the newly created earth. We have moved from Stars to Spirits, and now we are going to move from Spirits to Leaders of Spirits. Why was Abraham one of these, or Moses, or Joseph Smith? This will be the basis of this next section.

These things are so much beyond what a farm boy with only a 4th grade education could ever conceive. I hope you can see that!

Have you ever stopped to ask yourself why you were born in America or why you were born into the Church or why you found the Church? Given what we have just discussed, how might you now answer these questions?

That is correct! You had a greater propensity to seek further light and truth and you were worthy to be placed in a sphere of existence where you could receive the same opportunity to continue seeking for greater light and truth (D&C 93:30). This is why God called all of the spirits before Him at the beginning and organized them (TPJS p 158). These are the "*things more noble*" that Joseph talked about.

20 The Lord thy God sent his angel to deliver thee from the hands of the priest of Elkenah.
[This is an "insert verse." It doesn't have much to do with the overall text we have been discussing, but it does indicate God's power to preserve His leaders.]

Abr 3:21-28

SPIRITS to LEADERS

21 I dwell in the midst of **them all**; I now, therefore, have come down unto thee to declare unto thee [Abraham] the works which my hands have made, wherein my wisdom excelleth **them all**, for I rule in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath, in all wisdom and prudence, over **all the intelligences** thine eyes have seen from the beginning; I came down in the beginning in the midst of **all the intelligences** thou hast seen.

The Lord is explaining to Abraham that he has power over all things His hands have made: stars, planets, intelligences (spirits), etc. Joseph Smith referred to minds, spirits, and intelligences as all being the same thing. He also reminds us that each has the capacity for enlargement as they seek for light and truth.

D&C 93:26-29

26 The **Spirit of truth** is of God. **I am the Spirit of truth**, and John bore record of me, saying: He received a fulness of truth, yea, even of all truth;

27 And no man receiveth a fulness[*of truth*]unless he keepeth his commandments.

28 He that keepeth his commandments receiveth **truth and light**, until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things. [*Speaking of our potential.*]

29 **Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence**, or the light of truth, **was not created or made, neither indeed can be.**

Our spirits progressed until a time where it was necessary to come to earth so that we could obtain a rotten, physical body. This physical body in a physical world makes us want to satisfy all of our desires, appetites, and passions. It's going to make us want to place spiritual things on the back burner and go for broke: "eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." (2 Ne 28:7-8) How better to train that spirit to overcome all things (like God did), than to give that spirit a sin machine like this body? Entering mortality with this sin machine gives us the opportunity to train our spirit to have mastery over the desires, appetites, passions, and pride that is an essential component of the body (2 Ne 2:29). What better way to train a spirit to seek for light and truth, or to teach it to be obedient to light and truth? This is why we are here! It's not just to obtain a physical body, like we often teach in Primary. We have been given something that will damn us; an obstruction as we continue on the pathway of seeking for light and truth. As we develop the character that no longer has the disposition to do evil our spirits obtain power.

When we are born we come with a perfect spirit. And what do we get? A rotten body! All of my genetic defects I blame on my parents and grandparents. I have a rotten body, but I came with a perfect spirit. I was whole from the foundation of this world (Moses 6:54), but because I got a rotten body from my parents, one that seeks to satisfy its desires, appetites, and passions, I began training my spirit not to seek for light and truth. But...when the light of the Gospel comes into my life, I learn that I not only need to be going to Church, I need to learn how to be meek, and love my fellowman, and I need to love God. Even though I still have this rotten, physical body, I can begin training my spirit in the things of truth and light. When I die, I will take that spirit into the next life—the one I have trained—and I will be either indifferent towards seeking for light and truth or I will continue onward seeking for further light and truth (Alma 34:34).

It all comes down to the type of character I have developed based upon the amount of light and truth I have obtained or rejected. So, if I die with a not so perfect spirit...? What can I expect in

the resurrection? A perfect body! But...I no longer have that perfect spirit anymore. I came with a perfect spirit and got a rotten body, and when I get to the other side, I'll have a not so perfect spirit and a perfect body! This is the reason for the Gospel and the Atonement, so that we can obtain the power to train our spirits *not* to yield to our imperfect bodies so that we can one day, on the other side, inhabit a perfect body with a perfect spirit (Mosiah 3:19; Mosiah 27:25-26). This is what it means when the scriptures say, "save it should be an infinite atonement this corruption could not put on incorruption" (2 Ne. 9:7; Mosiah 16:10; Alma 11:45; Alma 41:4; Morm. 6:21). Section 93 tells us that when a perfect spirit and a perfect body are inseparably connected, we receive a fullness of joy (D&C 93:33). To me this is exciting to imagine and contemplate!

D&C 50:24-25

24 That which is of God is light; and **he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light**; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day.

25 And again, verily I say unto you, and I say it that you may know the truth, **that you may chase darkness from among you**;

This is the whole concept. When we begin seeking, receiving, and being obedient to light and truth, that light and truth begins to train us to perfect our spirits. That light can grow brighter and brighter until the perfect day. There comes a point that we can actually chase darkness away from us, or in other words, "*have no more disposition to do evil*" (Mosiah 5:2). At the point we cannot "*look upon sin save it be with abhorrence*" (Alma 13:12). It's a perfect plan for our exaltation and salvation and happiness. It's truly a perfect plan!

D&C 84:43-47 (This is a warning that we very seldom ever read!)

43 And I now give unto you a **commandment to beware concerning yourselves**, to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life. *[light and truth]*

It's a warning to not allow our perfect spirits to be overruled by our imperfect bodies.

44 For you shall live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God.

45 For the word of the Lord is **truth**, and whatsoever is **truth is light**, and whatsoever is **light is Spirit**, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

46 And **the Spirit giveth light** to every man that cometh into the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, **that hearkeneth** to the voice of the Spirit. *[This refers to the intelligence of our spirits that seeks for light and truth.]*

47 And every one **that hearkeneth** to the voice of the Spirit cometh unto God, even the Father.

Again, this is referring to that intelligence of our spirits. **If** we hearken to the voice of the Spirit we will come unto God, even the Father.

Remember: Joseph taught us:

We consider that God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect; *[see above verses]* and that the nearer man

approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, [*receiving that light and truth that grows brighter and brighter*] and the greater his enjoyments [*The word, Joy, in the scriptures is always connected to redemption: “Men are that they might have joy” (2 Ne 2:25). Adam & Eve said their joy was directly linked to the knowledge of their redemption and the eternal life given to the obedient. (See Moses 5:10-11)*], till he has overcome the evils of his life and lost every desire for sin; and like the ancients, arrives at that point of faith where he is wrapped in the power and glory of his Maker [*like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*] and is caught up to dwell with Him. But we consider that this is a station to which no man ever arrived in a moment [*it will take time and it will take work*]: he must have been instructed in the government and laws of that kingdom by proper degrees [*Line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little*], until his mind is capable in some measure of comprehending the propriety, justice, equality, and consistency of the same. (TPJS p 51)

Joseph reasoned that we move from one small degree to another, from a small capacity to a greater capacity, from exaltation to exaltation until we arrive at the station of a God (TPJS p 346-348).

Question: *Was this intelligence an additional element of our spirits?*

According to scripture and the statements of Joseph Smith, I don't believe so. Joseph used the terms *spirit* and *intelligence* interchangeably. He used the term *intelligence of spirits*, as we saw in those quotes earlier. Every spirit has the ability to seek for, receive, and become obedient to light and truth according to the sphere into which it has been placed. That is the eternal nature of a spirit. We remained in the pre-existence until we were ready for a physical body, a body that would provide the restrictions that would give impetus to the spirit to overcome the desires, appetites, and passions of that physical body. We progressed to the point where it would be necessary to receive a physical body. Those who had a greater propensity to seek for light and truth had to be given a greater opportunity to receive light and truth, or that spirit would never grow or progress any further.

D&C 130:18-19

18 Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.

19 And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come.

Compare to Abr 3:19: “*there are two spirits, one being more intelligent than another, there shall be one more intelligent than they...*” This same principle exists on earth as it did in the pre-earth world of spirits. If we seek for light and truth here *more diligently* than another seeks for light and truth, so much greater will be the advantage on the earth side. What was going on before is still going on, and it is always connected to acquiring light and truth.

20 There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which **all** blessings are predicated—

21 And when we obtain **any** blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which [that blessing] is predicated. (D&C 130)

That means, when you ask God for a blessing in your prayers, it's not coming unless you are obedient to **the law** upon which **that blessing** is predicated. Maybe you don't need to ask for a blessing in your prayers if you are obedient anyway—it's predicated. That blessing is coming no matter what. **Any** blessing from God has to be – *has to be* – predicated upon obedience to law. Those who are wealthy beyond measure? —I want to know what commandment they are keeping!

Be aware: If we obtain light and truth by our obedience, we can also lose light and truth by our **disobedience** to the same. It's connected. Just as one spirit is more intelligent than another before we came here, when we leave here (on the other side), one spirit will likewise be more intelligent than another.

D&C 88:66-68

66 Behold, that which you hear is as the voice of one crying in the wilderness—in the wilderness, because you cannot see him—my voice, because my voice is Spirit; my Spirit is truth; truth abideth and hath no end; and if it be in you it shall abound. *[This is a promise of obedience]*

67 And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you; and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things. *[This is another promise]*

68 Therefore, **sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God,** and the days will come that you shall see him; for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will.

These are the promises given to those who seek for, receive, and are obedient to light and truth.
IT SHALL ABOUND!

D&C 93:38-39

38 Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning; and God having redeemed man from the fall, men became again, in their infant state, innocent before God.

39 And that wicked one cometh and *taketh away light and truth, through disobedience,* from the children of men, and *because of the tradition of their fathers.*

Joseph taught:

The first principles of man are self-existent with God. God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was **more intelligent** *[meaning He has received a fullness of light and truth]*, saw proper to **institute laws** whereby the rest could have a privilege to **advance like himself.**

One of those laws was to send us to earth to obtain a rotten, physical body so that the spirit could learn to be strong in its quest for obedience to light and truth. This is spiritual knowledge – not educational knowledge. All might have power to advance.

Power to Advance in Knowledge

The relationship we have with God places us in a situation to advance in knowledge. He has power to institute laws to instruct the weaker intelligences, that they may be exalted with him, so that they might have one glory upon another, and all that knowledge, power, glory, and intelligence, which is requisite in order to save them in the world of spirits (TPJS p 354).

3 For of him unto whom much is given much is required; and he who sins against the greater light shall receive the greater condemnation. (D&C 82:3)

Because we have been given much, it is required that we continue seeking for greater light, greater truth and greater spiritual knowledge.

No one's agency will be compromised. For those weaker intelligences that don't have this light and truth available to them, the plan is such that even those who know no law can still be saved by the atonement and the mercies of the Holy One, **but not in opposition to their agency** (2 Ne 9:25-26, Moroni 8:22-24).

Thus far we have been discussing the different kinds of stars and spirits and how there are different levels of spirits or intelligences. Now we get to see what distinguishes the leaders among the various levels of spirits.

LEADERSHIP

Abr 3:22-23

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*;

Q: What made them “**noble and great**”? Correct. They had been seeking for more light and truth. They wanted more; they desired to be obedient, and they wanted more light and truth.

Remember, if “*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.*”

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.

Why was Abraham chosen before he was born? He was chosen because he was one of those spirits who sought more light and truth than others. He was one of the “noble and great ones” that the Lord chose to be one of his rulers. I know that we as Latter-day Saints like to place ourselves in the position of being one of those noble and great ones, but are you like Abraham? Is it your responsibility to proclaim the Gospel to the world? Do your teachings become scripture for the remainder of mankind? I know for a fact that I am not in the same class as Abraham. I may be a descendant of Abraham by blood or by virtue of the Gospel, but I cannot even compare myself to Abraham. He is already a God, along with his son and his grandson (Isaac & Jacob). I'm not there

yet. I'm one of those 'weaker' ones that needed those noble and great ones, the prophets and the patriarchs.

Joseph teaches us:

Every man who has a calling to minister 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)

A reason we're born into the church or that we found the church is that our spirits were those who were seeking for light and truth. That doesn't mean the other spirits are bad. God has created a plan whereby all levels of intelligence can obtain the same glory He has *if they want it*. That is why it will take a long, long time even after life on this earth. Every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Christ is their redeemer even though there will still be those who don't want to be redeemed (Mosiah 26:26).

Question: Is that the reason why there are the three degrees of Glory?

Those who enter the celestial kingdom are worthy to be there and worthy to be in the presence of God. The different kingdoms, I believe, are different choices. Those who choose not be married or have a spouse may choose to become servants to those who are exalted.

A person who never had the opportunity to choose the Gospel on this earth will not be kept from the opportunity of receiving all the blessings of the Gospel if they truly want them. The great thing about judgment is that God does not judge us – we judge our own selves (Hel 14:29-30). When we stand in the presence of God, we will choose to go where we will feel the most comfortable; God does not place us because it is all done according to agency. That is how the judgment of God can be just. This is what the scriptures teach (Mosiah 3:18; 16:1; 27:31; 29:12; Alma 12:15).

Great and Noble Ones

Abraham was one of those noble and great ones, as was Joseph Smith and any others who are called to minister to the inhabitants of the earth. We're going to talk about the leaders Abraham was seeing. **Alma 13** provides some necessary insight.

Alma 13:1, 3, 5-9

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.**

To “cite your minds forward” means to look back to where you were before – to look back to the beginning of the beginning in this case.

This is talking about the Pre-earth Council. These verses are not talking about the high priests in your HP Quorums! That's another tradition. This refers to those early Patriarchs called to minister to mankind who were given the authority to teach, like Abraham (Moses 6:11-23; D&C 107:41-57).

Continuing on in Alma 13:

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 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.

5 Or in fine, **in the first place** *[in the pre-earth life]* 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— *[again, this is referring directly to the statements found in Abraham 3:22-23]*

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.

This is exactly what Abraham learned: There were different levels of spirits, some more intelligent than others, and these were to become the rulers—these were the noble and great ones, and Abraham was told he would be one of them. This is what Alma 13:1-9 is talking about.

This next part is talking about those who are going to be the leaders – the noble and great ones – those who had sought for greater light and truth and were more intelligent than others. Leaders were needed for the newly created earth.

The Noble and Great Ones

Abraham 3:24-28

24 And there stood one among **them** that was **like unto God** [*Mi-cha-el*], and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon **these** may dwell;

SPIRITS

25 And **we will prove them herewith**, to see if **they** will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command **them**; [*to see if they will make the effort to change their character by seeking for and being obedient to greater light and truth, or whether or not they will become eligible to dwell in the celestial kingdom.*)]

26 And **they who keep their first estate** [*our pre-earth life*] shall be added upon; and **they** who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with **those** who keep their first estate; and **they who keep their second estate** [*earth life*] shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever. [*This is why the earth was created, to provide a sphere of existence to prove, test, strengthen, and train our spirits to become celestial spirits that are worthy of a celestial body.*] (See D&C 88:28; 76:62- 69)

Those who refuse to keep their first estate shall not have the opportunity to come to this earth (second estate) in order to continue their progression. But if we continue to be as valiant in our second estate as we were in the first estate, we will have glory added upon our heads forever and ever. This life is where we start moving toward exaltation.

Who is going to be the first leader on this newly created earth? (It's not referring to Christ because Christ is God.)

27 And **the Lord said**: Whom shall I send? And one answered like unto the Son of Man: Here am I, send me. And another answered and said: Here am I, send me. And **the Lord said**: I will send the first.

28 And the second was angry, and **kept not his first estate**; and, at that day, many followed after him.

Q: Who is to be the first leader on this new earth?

A: Adam. *Mi-cha-el* means *like unto God* in Hebrew.

The ending verses of this chapter are about the noble and great ones. Abraham was told he would be one of those for whom the earth was being created. Verse 27 is talking specifically about who would be the first of all the spirits to be placed on the earth.

In Abraham 3:27-28 we talked about who would be the new leader for the earth, and that *Mi-cha-el* means “like unto God” in Hebrew. Adam was chosen, and Lucifer was not, and his rebellion ensued, leading to a third part of the spirits not keeping their first estate. Below are other Ancient Texts that discuss this same concept.

Vita Adae et Evae

(The Life of Adam and Eve)

(R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, Vol 2, Oxford, 1977, pp.136-137).

Adam said, Woe unto thee, thou devil. Why dost thou attack us for no cause? What hast thou to do with us? What have we done to thee? For thou pursuest us with craft? Or why doth with thy malice assail us? Have we taken away thy glory and caused thee to be without honour? Why dost thou harry us, thou enemy (and persecute us) to the death in wickedness and envy?

And with a heavy sigh, the devil spake: O Adam! All my hostility, envy, and sorrow is for thee, since it is for thee that I have been expelled from my glory which I possessed in the heavens in the midst of the angels and for thee was I cast out in the earth.

Adam answered, What dost thou tell me? What have I done to thee or what is my fault against thee? Seeing that thou hast received no harm or injury from us, why dost thou pursue us? [*The devil did not lose his memory of the pre-earth life like Adam did.*]

The devil replied, Adam, what dost thou tell me? It is for thy sake that I have been hurled from that place. When thou wast formed, I was hurled out of the presence of God and banished from the company of the angels. When God blew into thee the breath of life and thy face and likeness was made in the image of God, Michael also brought thee and made (us) worship thee in the sight of God; and God the Lord spake: Here is Adam. I have made thee in our image and likeness.

And Michael went out and called all the angels saying: Worship the image of God as the Lord God hath commanded. And Michael himself worshiped first; then he called me and said: Worship the image of God the Lord.

And I answered, I have no (need) to worship Adam. And since Michael kept urging me to worship, I said to him, Why dost thou urge me? I will not worship an inferior and younger being (than I). I am his senior in the creation, before he was made was I already made. It is his duty to worship me. When the angels, who were under me, heard this, they refused to worship him.

And Michael saith, Worship the image of God, but if thou wilt not worship him, the Lord God will be wrath with thee.

And I said, If He be wrath with me, I will set my seat above the stars of heaven and will be like the Highest. And God the Lord was wrath with me and banished me and my angels

from our glory; and on thy account were we expelled from our abodes into this world and hurled on the earth. And straightway we were overcome with grief, since we had been spoiled of so great glory. And we were grieved when we saw thee in such joy and luxury. And with guile I cheated thy wife and caused thee to be expelled through her (doing) from thy joy and luxury, as I have been driven out of my glory.

When Adam heard the devil say this, he cried out and wept and spake: O Lord my God, my life is in thy hands. Banish this Adversary far from me, who seeketh to destroy my soul, and give me his glory which he himself hath lost. And at that moment, the devil vanished before him.

Remember, Joseph Smith introduced us to the concept of the perfect plan of salvation that was known and understood before this earth was made and inhabited. These ancient texts are verifying and corroborating Joseph's teachings. These records are out there, but we are the only ones who teach about the pre-existence. This text we just read even contains the record of Adam and Eve being baptized. The only other record we have of this event is in Moses 5 in the Pearl of Great Price.

***Question:** Could you elaborate more on the preparation of the spirits who were to come to the earth? I'm not clear what was meant that 'Lucifer was one of those spirits that were prepared to come to this earth'.*

Joseph taught us that "all the minds and spirits that God ever sent into the world were susceptible of enlargement." (TPJS p 354) When they are ready (prepared), they can now be sent to the earth to continue to seek for further light and truth in order to become like God. We see in Abraham 3:18-19 that if there be two spirits and one is more intelligent than the other, there will be one spirit that is more intelligent than they all. Intelligence does not mean I.Q. It means they have the ability or propensity to obtain further light and truth. Those who had a *greater* propensity to do that became "the noble and great ones," the patriarchs. Abraham saw the Lord standing in the midst of all those spirits who were to be His rulers (His leaders) on the earth, and was told, "These I will make my rulers, and Abraham, thou art one of them," because that is what Abraham did. He sought for, received, and was obedient to further light and truth before he was even born. (Abr 3:21-22).

Lucifer at one time was an angel in authority, the same way Michael was in authority. Because of his pride, Lucifer lost the right to become the first man, the first patriarch for this earth. One 'younger' than he was chosen, therefore he rose up in rebellion. Abraham 3 brings this up. The name Michael or *Mi-cha-el* means, in Hebrew, "*one like unto God*." Michael is also a priesthood office or position. As we read in the text above, Michael summoned all of the spirits and angels to come and give homage to Adam once his spirit was placed in the body God had formed from the dust of the earth to which he would be coming. Lucifer was bitter because he had imagined, in his pride, that he would be given the position and honor of being the first man for this earth.

2 Enoch

*The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha
of the Old Testament in English,
R.H. Charles, editor, Vol 2, Oxford, 1977*

In **2 Enoch 29:4-6**, Enoch is viewing the creation with angelic assistance, much like Abraham and Moses in the Pearl of Great Price. Enoch, seeing the orders of angels, is told by God, that:

One from the order of the archangels deviated, together with the division that was under his authority. He thought up the impossible idea, that he might place his throne higher than the clouds which are above the earth, and that he might become equal to my power. And I hurled him out from the height, together with his angels. (p.148).

Why are these ones being tormented unceasingly? Enoch is answered that: **These are those who turned away from the Lord, who did not obey the Lord's commandments, but of their own will plotted together and turned away with their prince...** (p. 114)

What I hope you are seeing in these texts is that the story being told in the Pearl of Great Price is all over out there. These records are old, some of them written long before the time of Christ.

The Gospel of Bartholomew

*M.R. James, The Apocryphal New Testament,
Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980, p 175, 178*

Bartholomew wants to know about evil and death; how they came into the world and why evil is here. Christ tells Bartholomew that he can speak with Satan himself; he can ask Satan directly these questions. Christ reassures Bartholomew that Satan will have no power over him as he asks Satan his questions.

23 And Bartholomew saith unto him: Tell me who thou art and what is thy name. And he said to him: lighten me a little, and I will tell thee who I am and how I came hither, and what my work is and what my power is.

24 And he lightened him and saith to him: Say all that thou has done and all that thou doest.

25. And Beliar answered and said: If you wilt know my name, at the first I was called Satanael, which is interpreted a messenger of God, but when I rejected the image of God (Adam) my name was called Satan, that is an angel that keepeth hell (Tartarus).

26. And again Bartholomew saith unto him: Reveal unto me all things and hide nothing from me.

27. And he said unto him: I swear unto thee by the power of the glory of God that even if I would have aught, I cannot, for he is near that would convict me. For if I were able I would have destroyed you like one of them that were before you.

28. For, indeed, I was formed (al. called) the first angel: for when God made the heavens, he took a handful of fire and formed me first, Michael second [Vienna MS. Here has these sentences: for he had his Son before the heavens and the earth and we were formed (for when he took thought to create all things, his Son spake a word), so that we also were created by the will of the Son and the consent of the Father. He formed I say, first me, next Michael the chief captain of the hosts that are above], Gabriel third, Uriel fourth, Raphael fifth, Nathanael sixth, and other angels of whom I cannot tell the names.

There is another set of texts called the **Forty-Day Literature**. These texts deal with the time Christ taught the apostles during his forty-day period after his resurrection. One of the questions the Apostles had after going out into the world to proclaim the Gospel was why was there evil in

the world and why was there death. They wanted to know why bad things happen to good people. The people asked them these questions and they wanted to be able to provide the answers. This text and those that follow answer these questions about Satan and about death. The interesting thing is that they all deal with the same story.

52. But the devil said: Suffer me, and I will tell thee how I was cast down into this place and how the Lord did make man.

53 I was going to and fro in the world, and God said unto Michael: Bring me a clod from the four corners of the earth, and water out of the four rivers of paradise. [*The world has been created, and the council in heaven takes place along with the physical creation of Adam*] And when Michael brought them God formed Adam in the regions of the east, [*The east represents the pre-earth council in heaven, or the residence of God, the Savior will come from the east*] and shaped the clod which was shapeless, and stretched sinews and veins upon it and established it with joints; and he worshipped him, himself for his own sake first, because he was the image of God, therefore he worshipped him.

54. And when I came from the ends of the earth Michael said: Worship thou the image of God, which he hath made according to his likeness. But I said: I am fire of fire, I was the first angel formed, and shall I worship clay and matter?

55. And Michael saith to me: Worship, lest God be wroth with thee. But I said to him: God will not be wroth with me; but I will set my throne over against his throne, and I will be as he is. Then was God wroth with me and cast me down, having commanded the windows of heaven to be opened.

56. And when I was cast down, he asked also the six hundred that were under me, if they would worship: but they said: Like as we have seen the first angel do, neither will we worship him that is less than ourselves. Then were the six hundred also cast down by him with me.

Question: *Were these texts accepted as canon in the early church?*

No, because they contain concepts that the church after 425 AD did not believe, such as the council in heaven, the pre-existence of spirits, the Plan of salvation, and the role of Christ in that Council. These concepts are all contrary to Catholic and Protestant beliefs. These records I am sharing all date to the time period of Christ. They contain the same information that Joseph Smith introduced, but when he taught these concepts, these records had not yet been discovered. Most were not discovered and translated until much, much later.

The Book of John the Evangelist

*M.R. James, The Apocryphal New Testament,
Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980, p 188-189*

And I said: Lord, before Satan fell, in what glory abode he with thy Father? And he said unto me: In such glory was he that he commanded the powers of the heavens: but I sat with my Father; and he (Satan) did order all the followers of the Father, and went down from heaven unto the deep and ascended up out of the deep unto the throne of the invisible Father. And he saw the glory of him that moveth the heavens, and he thought to set his seat above the clouds of heaven and desired to be like unto the Most High.

The text explains how Satan convinced the other angels to follow him, promising them that “I will reign with you world without end,” thus seducing the angels of the invisible Father.

Then the Father commanded his angels, saying: Take away their garments. And the angels took away their garments and their thrones and their crowns from all the angels that harkened unto him.

And I asked of the Lord: When Satan fell, in what place dwelt he?

And he answered me: My Father changed his appearance because of his pride, and the light was taken from him, and his face became like unto heated iron, and his face became wholly like that of a man: and he drew with his tail the third part of the angels of God, and was cast out from the seat of God and from the stewardship of the heavens. And Satan came down into this firmament, and he could find (make) no rest for himself nor for them that were with his.

The Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan

*From: R. H. Platt Jr. ed. The Forgotten Books of Eden,
Bell Publishing Co., New York, 1980. pp. 36-37.*

This particular text discusses the many conflicts or confrontations that Adam and Eve have with Satan, who often appears as an angel of light. We begin after the fall of Adam and Eve. They are visited by the angels sent from the presence of God to give Adam instructions. Adam, asking about Satan, is given the following information.

Then the angels said unto Adam, “Thou didst harken to Satan, and didst forsake the Word of God who created thee; But now, O Adam, we will make known to thee, what came upon us through him, before his fall from heaven.

He gathered together his hosts, and deceived them, promising them to give them a great kingdom, a divine nature; and other promises he made them. His hosts believed that his word was true, so they yielded to him, and renounced the glory of God.

He then sent for us – according to the orders in which we were – to come under his command, and to hearken to his vain promise. But we would not, and we took not his advice.

Then after he had fought with God, and had dealt forwardly with Him, he gathered together his hosts, and made war with us. And if it had not been for God's strength that was with us, we could not have prevailed against him to hurl him from heaven. *But when he fell from among us, there was great joy in heaven, because of his going down from us.* For had he continued in heaven, nothing, not even one angel would have remained in it.

But God in his mercy, drove him from among us to this dark earth; for he had become darkness itself and a worker of unrighteousness. And he has continued, O Adam, to make war against thee, until he beguiled thee and made thee come out of the garden, to this strange land, where all these trials have come to thee. And death, which God brought upon him he has also brought to thee, O Adam, because thou didst obey him, and didst transgress against God.

In the next text, the Koran, we see the same story showing up. Mohamed married the widow of a caravaner. As a young man, Mohamed worked for this man in his caravan. On their trade route, Mohamed witnessed and observed the different warring factions of the tribes and clans out in the deserts. He wanted to stop the feuds between these families and clans. He began collecting both Jewish and Christian documents (This was in the 600s, after Christ). In his travels in the Middle East he traded with the Jewish and Christian communities that were scattered about. What he collected eventually ended up in the Koran. The names have been changed a little bit, but the stories are the same. The following are found in some of the Surahs (chapters) in the Koran.

The Koran

Surah 2:34

And when We said to the angels: Prostrate yourselves before Adam, they all prostrated themselves except Satan, who in his pride refused and became an unbeliever.

Surah 7:11-18

11 We created you (Adam) and gave you form. Then We said to the angels: Prostrate yourselves before Adam. They all prostrated themselves except Satan, who refused to prostrate himself.

12 Why did you not prostrate yourself when I commanded you? He asked. I am nobler than he, he replied. You created me of fire, but You created him of clay.

13 He said: Off with you hence! This is no place for you contemptuous pride. Away with you! Henceforth you shall be humble.

14 He replied: Reprieve me [*allow me my way*] till the Day of Resurrection.

15 You are reprieved, said He.

16 Because You have led me into sin, he declared, I will waylay Your servants as they walk on Your straight path,

17 and spring upon them from the front and from the rear, from their right and from their left. Then you will find the greater part of them ungrateful.

18 Begone! He said. A despicable outcast you shall henceforth be. As for those that follow you, I shall fill Hell with you all.

Surah 15:22-29 (note similarities)

22 We created man from dry clay, from black moulded loam, and before him, Satan from smokeless fire. Your Lord said to the angels: I am creating man from dry clay, from black moulded loam. When I have fashioned him and breathed of My spirit into him, kneel down and prostrate yourselves before him.

23 The angels, one and all, prostrated themselves, except Satan. He refused to prostrate himself with the others.
24 Satan, said God, why do you not prostrate yourself?
25 He replied: I will not bow to a mortal whom You created of dry clay, of black moulded loam.
26 Begone, said God, you are accursed. My curse shall be on you till Judgment day.
27 Lord, said Satan, reprieve me till the Day of Resurrection.
28 He answered: You are reprieved till the Appointed Day.
29 Lord, said Satan, since You have thus seduced me, I will tempt mankind on earth: I will seduce them all, except those of them who are your faithful servants.

See also Surahs 17:61-63; 18:50; 20:115-124; 38:67-88.

Discourse on Abbaton

This next text is the best one of them all. It was written down about 380 AD. Elder Russell M Nelson quoted from some of this text in the April 2000 General Conference. You may recognize Catholic influence in some of the wording and phrasing, but everything during this time period shows a Catholic influence.

What is important is the story. The earth has been created. Everything that Adam would need has been prepared. God sends the angel Mouriel down to the earth and to bring back sod of the dust that God would use to form the body of Adam. This document speaks of the Council in Heaven, The War in Heaven, the fall of Satan and his angels. These doctrines are some of the “plain and precious things” that have been taken out of the Bible, as Nephi reveals. The Discourse on Abbaton is the most complete and of the most ancient date, and may have been included in the scriptures at one time.

DISCOURSE ON ABBATON

By Timothy, Archbishop of Alexandria

“Discourse on Abbatôn by Timothy, Archbishop of Alexandria,” in *Coptic Martyrdoms etc. in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*, ed. and trans. E. A. Wallis Budge (1914), 482.

Timothy, archbishop of Alexandria, died in A.D. 385.

And He put breath into him in this way; He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life three times, saying, A Live! Live! Live! According to the type of My Divinity. And the man lived straightway, and became a living soul, according to the image and likeness of God. And when Adam had risen up he cast himself down before [My] father, saying, A My Lord and my God! Thou hast made me to come into being [from a state in which] I did not exist. *[We all got to see Adam and his physical body for ourselves.]*

Thereupon My Father set him upon a great throne, and he placed on his head a crown of glory, and he put a royal scepter [in his hand], and My Father made every order [of angels] in the heavens to come and worship him, whether angel or archangel. And all the hosts of heaven worshiped God first of all, and then they worshiped Adam, saying, Hail, thou image and likeness of God!

And He intended that the order of the angels who were fashioned [before Adam] should worship him, and My Father said unto him (i.e. their chief), “Come, thou thyself shalt worship my image and likeness.” And he, a being of great pride, drew himself up in a

shameless manner, and said, “It is meet that this [man Adam] should come and worship me, for I existed before he came into being.”

And when My Father saw his great pride, and that his wickedness and his evil-doing were complete, (had reached their highest pitch) He commanded all the armies of heaven, saying, “**Remove the writing** [which is] in the hand of the proud one, strip ye off his armor, and cast ye him down upon the earth, for his time hath come. For he is the greatest of them all, (the rebellious angels) he is the head over them and is like a king, and he commandeth them as the general of an army [who commandeth his] soldiers; he is the head over them, and their names are written in his hand.

Thus is it with this cunning one, and the [names of the] angels were written in his hand. And all the angels gathered together to him, and they did not wish to remove the writing from his hand. And my Father commanded them to **bring a sharp reaping-knife, and to stab him therewith on this side and that, right through his body to the vertebrae of his shoulders**, and he was unable to hold himself up. And straightway My Father commanded a mighty Cherub, and he smote him, and cast him down from heaven upon the earth, because of his pride, and he broke his wings and his ribs and made helpless, and those whom he had brought with him became devils with him.

This discourse is instructive on many fronts: we learned from our experience in the Grand Council just how bad earth life could be. We understood perfectly how bad things could be here on earth, and yet we chose to come to this hell, this rotten, terrible world, knowing that we could experience the loss of a child, a spouse, or another loved one. We understood perfectly that disease, cancer, leukemia, dementia, physical or mental handicaps could be a real possibility. We understood the possibility of living in poverty or in war-torn countries. Realizing these things gives us a power over such things. We do not have trials; we have a life that we chose to participate in. On the other hand, we see also that Lucifer and those that followed him would also experience the judgment and decree of never ever having the opportunity to experience a physical body. He knew and understood the consequences of his pride and his rebellion. His pride was complete. He would never, ever, ever, ever change.

We learned in Moses 4:6 that Satan “knew not the mind of God”; thus God, because of His foreknowledge, could use whatever Satan was doing in order to further His work for the benefit of mankind.

Conclusion

Our time is up today. We did not get to the good stuff yet. Next time we will further discuss Joseph’s statements about the eternal nature of our spirits. The question we will discuss next time is:

If our spirits never had a beginning, how do we become sons and daughters of God?

There are multiple verses in our scriptures that discuss this very subject, and they all say the same thing! The interesting thing is if the scriptures are right and our spirits were not created, but have always existed, then Satan never was a brother to Christ.

The Anti-Mormons have taken our traditional theological understanding of this doctrine and used it to accuse us of believing that Satan and Christ are brothers! With what you have learned today, and with what we will discuss next time, you will see that that concept is no longer an issue. What makes Satan a brother of Christ, according to tradition, is the belief that a Heavenly Mother gave birth to all spirits. We will see in scripture that Satan, because of his choice, never had the opportunity to become a son of God.

This is why the scriptures are to be our standard for doctrine. This class is to help you get into the scriptures so that you might see there is more in them than what you may have thought. There is more out there to learn than just traditions. Today we have read the statements of Joseph Smith and read from modern and ancient texts. We can only get a glimpse of what Abraham saw and understood by studying his record.

12 - Becoming Sons and Daughters of God

Becoming Sons and Daughters of God

Last time we were together we discussed the conflict between Satan and Adam as shown in various ancient texts. Those texts pave the way for us to begin talking about our topic today: Becoming Sons and Daughters of God. As a little groundwork for our discussion, when I was doing research for the Church I was specifically told that I could only use three sources: 1) the standard works; 2) the Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith; and 3) the words of the prophets while they were prophets – not when they were Apostles or held other offices. The words of the prophets had to agree with the words of the first two sources. I was told that any answers discovered in my research could only be answered from those sources. The scriptures were my primary source, for even the prophets have declared that if their words are not in harmony with the scriptures then we can assuredly know they are only speaking their opinion. The scriptures are our standards, and even the prophets are held accountable to them. Without a standard, then there is no standard for truth.

The 3 M's of Doctrine

Keep in mind there are also three types of **Doctrinal M's** we talk about in the Church and within scripture: The **Milk**; the **Meat**, and the **Mysteries**. The **Milk** is what we have to have. The Manuals would fall in the Milk category. The Church has to teach to the lowest common denominator, and that would include the newest baptized member and the primary youth. Therefore, Milk is what is offered at church by necessity and design. The **Meat** is extracted from the scriptures by personal initiative and study. It is found only by those who have expended the effort and sacrificed the time to seek and study more. The **Mysteries** are those things *revealed to you by God*. Those who receive the mysteries always have a restriction placed upon them: **Alma 12:9** says:

It is given unto many to know the **mysteries of God**; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which

he doth grant unto the children of men [*that which everyone already has*], according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him.

The restriction is that the mysteries are between you and God, and you are not to tell anyone else about them.

You will discover the **Meat** as you go to your scriptures. When you decide you want to know more, the **Meat** is waiting for you in the scriptures. This why Joseph emphasized that he wanted to “talk of things more noble,” which are greater things than the milk. The **Mysteries** come to you and you alone when you have done your research in the scriptures and want more answers, like Abraham. It was then he began to understand the stars, the heavens and the planets, spirits, light and truth.

Several years ago, the Ensign printed President Hinckley's admonition for Bishops and Stake Presidents to have their members get into the scriptures and the Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

“If I were a bishop or stake president today, what would I do? I think that I would try to put my major efforts on building the spirituality of the people. I would work as hard as I knew how to work in building their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, in God our Eternal Father, in the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Restoration of this work and what it means and what it is all about. I would encourage my people to read the scriptures, to read the Book of Mormon, to read the New Testament. I would urge them with all the capacity I have to read quietly and thoughtfully and introspectively, if you please. I would urge them to read the Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith.” (regional conference, Eugene, Oregon, 14 Sept. 1996). [Ensign, October 2003]

The **Meat** is something you, the individual, discovers on your own. The Church serves the milk that provides the foundation, but even Isaiah says:

“Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand doctrine? *Them that are weaned from the milk...*” (Isa 28:9)

The Church provides the foundational milk, and when you're ready to be weaned from the milk, the meat is found in the scriptures and in the Teachings of Joseph Smith!

In the King Follet Discourse, found in the *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, Joseph explained that he would be teaching concepts far and above what we normally see in our manuals. He said he wanted to “lift your minds into a more lofty sphere and a more exalted understanding than what the human mind generally aspires to” (p. 343). Later, in the same discourse, he said he wanted to “tell of things more noble” (p. 352). Joseph used scriptures to explain and distinguish the meat.

Today, on this topic of “Becoming Sons and Daughters of God,” I am going to use the scriptures and the statements of Joseph Smith. Just know and understand up front that these things are not found in the “milk department.” I'm not telling you that you have to go about trying to change

people's minds or that you have to believe these things, only that Joseph taught these things and they reconcile with the scriptures.

The things we are discussing today are answers to questions brought up in Provo at a Know Your Religion Series. These statements cannot be ignored because they were made by the Prophet Joseph Smith, and they are in the scriptures.

The 3 Types of Sons

There are three types of Sons found in our scriptures: **Sons of Men**, **Sons of God**, and **Sons of Perdition**. **Sons of men** are those who have not heard or have not accepted the Gospel. We are all sons of men until we accept the Gospel. Then, the Lord says, when we accept the Gospel and enter into certain covenants, we obtain the right, or the power, to become the **sons of God**. If we don't accept the Gospel we remain the sons and daughters of men. When you become a son of God (as did Cain) by accepting the Gospel and entering into all the covenants of exaltation, and are pronounced clean by the Father, but then "altogether turneth therefrom" (D&C 84:41), you become a **son of perdition**. These are the three sons talked about in scripture.

The Sons of Men Haven't heard or accepted the Gospel

Sons of God Accept the Gospel and receive all the ordinances, endure to the end

Sons of Perdition Accept the Gospel, enter into sacred covenants, pronounced clean by the Father, and then reject it or "all together turn therefrom".

We see in Genesis 6:2 and in the Book of Moses (Moses 8:20-21) that the sons of God came down and married the daughters of men. They then began to fall spiritually. Solomon was given warning as to who he married because men generally end up worshipping the god of their wife (1 Kings 11:1-8). In a part-member family, if the husband is a member and the wife isn't, the chances are higher that the man will become inactive. If the wife is a member and the husband is not, chances are greater that the man will become a member than the other way around. In the Book of Judges, "there arose another generation after them which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel" (2:10). The sons of God began to marry the daughters of men. There is always a warning in scripture concerning marrying outside of your covenants. Generally speaking, a man will almost always worship the god of his wife. What's the definition of God? It is the motivating force in your life. It's what gets you up in the morning; it's what you live for. The motivating force in your life is the definition of the god in your life. Your relationship with God should be the motivating force in your life. The first of the Ten Commandments states that we are to have no other gods before [Him]. The word *worship* is an old English word that means 'that which is of most worth to you.' That which is of most worth should be our relationship with God.

The Case for Religious Freedom

During this past presidential election, I had numerous discussions with many people asking my opinion of who to vote for or who not to vote for. The Book of Mormon contains insights about the preservation of faith and freedom for our families that many have not considered seriously. We

are more apt to worry about economics, public policies, foreign affairs, and foreign policies than to worry about our religion and the freedom to exercise it. The Book of Mormon has a large section right in the center of it that addresses this important issue. If you were to take the Book of Mormon and turn it into a Chiastic structure, you will find that Captain Moroni believed that the most important right to preserve was a person's right to religious freedom. He maintained that the freedom to worship God was important to one's faith and the preservation of one's family. **Faith, Freedom and Family** was the essence of the Title of Liberty (Alma 46:12-22). Later, when the Gadianton began to take control of their government, the people's religious freedoms eroded. Today, we are seeing certain sins or certain beliefs turned into civil rights. It's a sure sign that religious freedom is being eroded.

The most important issue facing our nation today is protecting your right to worship God according to the dictates of your own conscience. This should be of greater concern than any political party or platform. When certain sins become civil rights, or become protected under law, the voice of opposition and moral choice will be considered a hate crime. When the government can control what is said from the pulpit, religious freedom is lost. We see this toward the end of Helaman and the beginning of 3 Nephi. What matters to me is the winning candidate's view on religious freedom. Looking at history, when a nation falls it is *always* preceded by that nation's degenerate beliefs and practices. All of world history is nothing more than the battle that rages between Babylon and Zion. The goal of God in every dispensation is to establish Zion. The goal of every prophet of every dispensation is to establish Zion. But Zion has not been established because of Babylon (spiritual wickedness) and secret oaths and combinations – for those two reasons. All we have to do is decide which part we want to play in the history of the establishment of Zion. Are you trying to establish Zion within your own sphere? What matters is whether you are going to have the **freedom** of your **faith** to teach your **family**, or not!

The rising generation is being exposed to philosophies that demand that they be accepting of all lifestyles and personal choices. What is more important than Proposition 8 is whether a church has the freedom to teach the tenets of its faith to its own members, and can then determine if its members are in good standing within their faith and religion.

To Sin or Not to Sin – That Was the Question

Satan's plan was to make sure that no one could sin, that not one soul would be lost. God's plan was to ensure that everyone *could* sin if they wanted to. We don't want Satan's plan – we just want to establish Zion. Zion needs to be established in the ways outlined in the Doctrine and Covenants. The D&C is the rule book on how to establish Zion, but it must come from the heart. Satan's plan was to stop people from sinning, but God's plan was to make sure you can. He cannot condemn you for using the agency that he ensured when He kicked Satan out for trying to destroy that agency.

You all remember the story about the woman brought to Jesus who had been taken in the very act of adultery. She had broken the law and the commandment and she never denied it. The consequence for breaking that law was to be stoned to death. The scribes and the Pharisees brought this woman to Christ to ask Him what should be done with her. They reminded Him of the Law of Moses, and what it said should be done. He stooped down to write something in the dirt, and then looked up and said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Those who

brought the woman to Jesus were convicted by their own conscience and left the scene, one by one, from the eldest to the last. Our text says:

John 8:10-11

10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

Even though she had been caught breaking the law and never denied it, Christ told her that He was not condemning her for using her agency. This is coming from the God who gave the law to the children of Israel. What *did* he say? “Go, and sin no more.” Jesus is telling the woman to sin no more because by not sinning, she can become happy. So what Jesus is really saying to the woman is, “I am not going to condemn you for using your agency, but if you really want to be happy here and in the next life, you need to make some changes.”

Commandments are not restrictions. They are recipes for happiness in this life and in the next. They are given to us that we “may act in futurity according to the moral agency He has given us, that we may be accountable for our own sins in the Day of Judgment.” (See D&C 101:78)

Becoming a son or daughter of God is directly connected to our understanding of the Gospel. We’re going to go through several of these scriptures that expound and enlarge our understanding of this very important concept and doctrine.

Power to Become

In the opening verses of John’s record, we see him speaking to a more educated membership of the church. It is no accident that he begins his record similar to how Moses did in the opening chapter of Genesis. I’m quoting from the *Inspired Translation* of John.

1 In the beginning was the *gospel preached through the Son. And the gospel was the word*, and the *word* was with *the Son*, and the *Son* was with *God*, and the *Son* was of *God*.

2 The same was in the beginning with *God*.

14 And the *same word* was made flesh, and dwelt among us,...

John 1:12

12 But *as many as received him*, to them **gave he power to become the sons of God**, *even to them that believe on his name*:

Here begins the pattern for obtaining the power to become the sons of God. This is the pattern that shows up in these scriptures. This “power to become” is connected to either receiving Christ, and/or believing on His name. Christ has given everyone the “power to become the sons of God.” We are all sons and daughters of men to begin with. We’re not all Christians to begin with. For example, I was born into a Mormon family. There was no way that I could ever get out of being baptized at 8 yrs. old. My grandparents were active and there was no way that my baptism wasn’t

going to take place. Thus, I was born to be a Mormon. That baptism did not turn me into a Christian – that is something I had to learn to do. My baptism did give me power to become a Christian, and that takes work. With our agency guaranteed, Christ comes to give us power to become the sons of God. We have to receive Him and believe on His name.

D&C 11:30

30 But verily, verily, I say unto you, that as many as receive me, to them will **I give power to become the sons of God**, even to them that believe on my name. Amen.

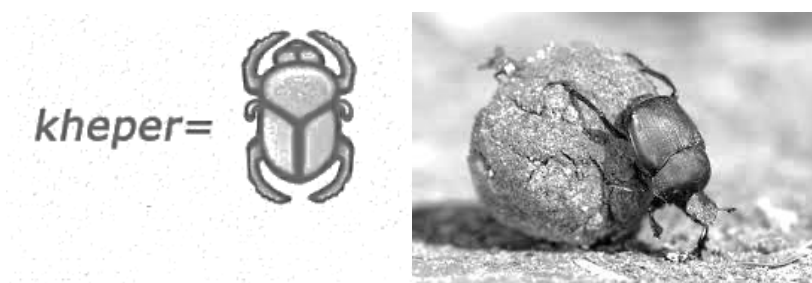
This verse is nearly the same as what we read in John's record.

D&C 45:8

8 I came unto mine own, and mine own received me not; but unto as many as received me **gave I power** to do many miracles, and to become the sons of God; and even unto them that believed on my name **gave I power** to obtain eternal life.

It doesn't say because you believe you *will* obtain eternal life; it doesn't say you *are* a son or daughter of God. What it does say is that because you do believe you have "the power to become" the sons of God. That's the whole concept.

One of the most recognizable symbols in the Egyptian hieroglyphics is the Kheper Beetle (hep'per) or scarab beetle.



Kheper means 'to be or to become.' It also conveys the meaning to change your form while at the same time retaining your identity. This is an eternal principle as one can change your existence and retain your identity. When the beetle lays an egg in camel dung, that egg becomes a larva, and when it emerges from the dung, moving from egg to larva and eventually a beetle, it is still a Kheper Beetle. It changes its form but retains its identity. This is also what these verses mean: we are not the sons of God by default, or by accepting Him, but we have power given to us **to become** the sons of God.

D&C 34:3

3 Who so loved the world that he gave his own life, that as many as would believe **might become the sons of God**. Wherefore you are my son;

D&C 39:4

4 But to as many as received me, gave I **power to become** my sons; and even so will I give unto as many as will receive me, power to become my sons.

Rom. 8:14-17

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, **they are the sons of God.**

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if it so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

When we accept the Gospel and enter into certain covenants, we obtain the right or the power to become the sons of God.

2 Cor. 6:17-18

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you.

18 And will be a Father unto you, and **ye shall be my sons and daughters**, saith the Lord Almighty.

Notice the future tense: “ye *shall* be my sons and daughters.” It’s coming back to that battle between Babylon and Zion. Sometimes we like to have a foot in Babylon and foot in Zion. That doesn’t work! You cannot live in Zion and have a condo or a time share in Babylon. It’s either one or the other. The Natural man cannot become a Saint if he is double minded.

Mosiah 3:19

19 For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.

The Book of Mormon tells us:

10 And he said unto me: Behold there are save two churches only; the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil; wherefore, whoso belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations; and she is the whore of all the earth. (1 Ne 10:14)

You are in one, or you are in the other – you cannot be in both.

Gal. 4:3-7

3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: *[before we put off the natural man]*

4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, *[because of the Atonement]*

5 To redeem them that were under the law, **that we might receive the adoption of sons.**

6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

7 Wherefore **thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.**

Paul is explaining that there is a process that we must follow in order to become a son of God – it is not a natural thing by birth.

1 John 3:1-3

1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, **that we should be called the sons of God**: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. *[we need to take our other foot out of Babylon and move it into Zion.]*

2 Beloved, **now are we the sons of God**, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. *[this verse is in the context of us accepting the Gospel; it is not referring to the birth of our spirits.]*

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Moroni expounds on the same concept:

Moro. 7:48

48 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, *[charity]* which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; **that ye may become the sons of God**; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure. Amen.

It is a process. Until it happens, we remain the sons of men. The beginning of that process is to develop the love that makes God *God*. Can you see that? If we don't love others as Christ loved us then we are not His disciples (John 13:34-35).

Key Point: All power within the Gospel of salvation and exaltation lies within our individual agency and not in anything else. There is no ordinance, miracle, or magic wand that can make you pure or give you the same love that Jesus has. There is no ordinance that can give you the Charity we must develop. It's all accomplished by the exercise of our agency. The ordinances we participate in have no power in and of themselves unless we change our character. This is where the power of the ordinance lies – not in the Priesthood leader who administers the ordinance.

Mosiah 5:7

7 And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called **the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters**; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your **hearts** are changed through faith on his name; therefore, **ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters**. *[this is talking about those who have coventanted to live the type of life the Gospel requires]*

Mosiah 27:25-26

25 And the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, must be born again; yea, born of God, changed

from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters; [Being born again is defined]

26 And thus **they become new creatures**; and unless they do this, they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God. *[again, referring to putting off the natural man and becoming a Saint]*

3 Ne. 9:17

17 And as many as have received me, to them have I given to become the sons of God; and even so will I to as many as shall believe on my name, for behold, by me redemption cometh, and in me is the law of Moses fulfilled.

Moro. 7:26

26 And after that he came men also were saved by faith in his name; and **by faith, they become the sons of God**. And as surely as Christ liveth he spake these words unto our fathers, saying: Whatsoever thing ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is good, in faith believing that ye shall receive, behold, it shall be done unto you. *[It is because of the atonement that we can place our faith in Christ.]*

Alma 34:15-17

15 And thus he shall bring salvation to all those who shall believe on his name; this being the intent of this last sacrifice, to bring about the bowels of mercy, which overpowereth justice, and bringeth about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance.

16 And thus **mercy** can satisfy the demands of justice, and encircles them in the arms of safety, while he that exercises no faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law of the demands of justice; therefore only unto him that has faith unto repentance is brought about the great and eternal plan of redemption.

17 Therefore may God grant unto you, my brethren, that ye may begin to exercise your faith unto repentance, that ye begin to call upon his holy name, that he would have **mercy** upon you;

Speaking to Emma Smith the Lord says:

D&C 25:1

1 Hearken unto the voice of the Lord your God, while I speak unto you, Emma Smith, my daughter; for verily I say unto you, all those who receive my gospel are **sons and daughters in my kingdom**. *[This implies that action is needed to participate in the Gospel.]*

In Moses 6:53, Adam asks the Lord why it is that men must repent and be baptized, and the Lord explains why and then lays out the plan of salvation to Adam (Moses 6:51-68). After the Lord explains everything Adam is to do, He closes with this statement in v 68:

68 Behold, thou art one in me, a son of God; and thus may all become my sons. Amen.

By participating in the Gospel, by exercising our faith (in Christ and in His atonement) unto repentance, and by being baptized and receiving the Holy Ghost – by doing all of these things, THUS may all become the sons of God!

Moses 7:1

1 And it came to pass that Enoch continued his speech, saying: Behold, our father Adam taught these things, and many have believed and *become the sons of God*, and many have believed not, and have perished in their sins, and are looking forth with fear, in torment, for the fiery indignation of the wrath of God to be poured out upon them. *[those who don't believe are still the sons of men]*

D&C 35:2

2 I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was crucified for the sins of the world, even as many as will believe on my name, that they may *become the sons of God*, even one in me as I am one in the Father, as the Father is one in me, that we may be one.

Notice what is being said: Becoming a son of God is directly connected with the atonement—being at-one-with God. To become a son or daughter of God, we need to become one with God. The atonement needs to be a reality in our lives. Believing is not enough—we need to become one with God, "even one in me as I am one in the Father, as the Father is one in me, that we may be one." This verse in D&C 35 is related to John 13-17. Those chapters in John ought to be read together as one discourse. This is the conversation Christ has with His disciples as he leaves the upper room and walks to the Garden of Gethsemane. Chapter 13 begins with the Last Supper in the upper room, and chapter 17 ends right before he is arrested by the High Priests. These chapters are about the atonement and how to become one with God.

John says at the beginning of his book that Christ is going to give mankind "power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12), and in chapters 13-17 Christ explains how to become one with Him and with the Father. Chapters 18-21 deal with his atonement, crucifixion, and resurrection. John is writing to members of the Church. He is not trying to convert people; he is trying to give members a little bit of meat!

This is how the Lord describes those in the celestial kingdom:

D&C 76:58

58 Wherefore, as it is written, *they are gods, even the sons of God*—

In the *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* we learn:

If you wish to go where God is, you must be like God, or possess the principles which God possesses, for *if we are not drawing towards God in principle, we are going from Him and drawing towards the devil*. Yes, I am standing in the midst of all kinds of people. Search your hearts, and see if you are like God. I have searched mine, and feel to repent of all my sins. (TPJS p 216)

In other words, we cannot dwell with God unless we have the character of God. That character can only be acquired through the exercise of our agency. It is not by a miracle, a magic wand, or ordinance. It is by our choices, using agency, that we can become a son or daughter of God.

Through His atonement and resurrection, through His Gospel and His teachings, He has given us "the power to become," and that power is our own agency. He has given us the knowledge and the opportunity, but that power lies within our agency. The ordinances mean nothing unless we use that agency. The endowment of power is always knowledge. The Good News is that the Gospel is here! The Bad News is that no one is listening. The question then becomes: Are we using our agency not only to listen, but to do (D&C 84:57)?

The Eternal Nature of Spirits

In this section we will talk about some of “the things more noble,” a phrase Joseph used when he wanted to leave the dairy department. Most of the following quotes are actually found in the Priesthood / Relief Society Manual we were all given for our study in 2008: *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church – Joseph Smith*. In Lesson 17 of that manual there is a section on pg. 209 that begins with: ‘We are eternal beings.’ We’re going to be discussing the “Eternal Nature of Spirits.” We just went through the scriptures that showed us the pattern for becoming a son or daughter of God.

There are scriptures that talk about the eternal nature of spirits; one is in D&C 93 and the other is in Abraham 3.

D&C 93:23, 29:

23 Ye were also **in the beginning with the Father**; that which is Spirit, even the Spirit of truth;

29 Man was also **in the beginning with God. Intelligence**, or the light of truth, **was not created or made**, neither indeed can be.

It’s interesting to note that most of Joseph’s teachings and doctrines during the last several years of his life came from the Book of Abraham. He spoke often about the plurality of Gods and the Councils of the Gods, as well as some of these other concepts.

In **Abraham 3:18** it says:

18 Howbeit that he made the greater star; as, also, **[for example]** 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**.

Look at **D&C 93:29** again. “Man was in the beginning with God. Intelligence or the light of truth, was *not created or made*.” In Abraham it says these two spirits, one being more intelligent than the other, have no beginning. They existed before; they shall have no end. They are eternal. *In other words, they have always existed!*

These verses sometimes create a problem in the minds of some members. We talked about the **3 M’s of doctrine** in our last session. As we discussed, the problem arises when people think there is nothing but the milk. Self-appointed guards sometimes bar the way to make sure no one gets out the dairy department even though they might smell a little Bar-B-Que going on. Those guards, with misplaced zeal, try to ensure no one gets out of the dairy department and no one comes in from the meat department. Joseph made an unusual statement about this tendency:

... when men open their lips against these truths they do not injure me, but injure themselves. When things that are of the greatest importance are passed over by the weak-minded men without even a thought, I want to see truth in all its bearings and hug it to my bosom. I believe all that God ever revealed, and **I never hear of a man being damned for believing too much; but they are damned for unbelief.** (TPJS p 373-374)

Concerning the next life, Paul said:

9 ... Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. (1 Corinthians 2:9)

Paul is letting us know that what is going on in the next world is *far beyond* what we are familiar with here. We cannot even conceive of what things are like in the next world. We have a tendency to filter our concept of the eternities through the lens of what we are familiar with here, thinking it will be the same. Paul's statement tells us otherwise. This is why Joseph said a man will be condemned more for what he doesn't believe than what he does believe. We need to keep an open mind if we are to prepare for the eternities.

As it says in D&C 93, Spirits are eternal. They had no beginning and they have no end, for they are eternal, as Abraham says. We often teach that our spirits were born, or just came into existence, but that is not what the scriptures or what Joseph taught us. We suppose these things because that is what we are familiar with. We imagine that the system that exists here is the same as in our pre-earth life, and that it will be the same in the next world.

Joseph's Teachings in lesson 17, p 209:

I have another subject to dwell upon, which is calculated to exalt man. ... It is associated with the subject of the resurrection of the dead,—namely, the soul—the mind of man—the immortal spirit. Where did it come from? All learned men and doctors of divinity say that God created it in the beginning; **but it is not so:** the very idea lessens man in my estimation. **I do not believe the doctrine;** I know better. Hear it, all ye ends of the world; for **God has told me so;** and if you don't believe me, it will not make the truth without effect. (TPJS p 352)

He is teaching that the spirit was never created. If you don't believe him, that is fine with me. He goes on...

I am dwelling on the immortality of the spirit of man. Is it logical to say that the intelligence of spirits is immortal, and yet that it has a beginning? The intelligence of spirits had no beginning, neither will it have an end. That is good logic. That which has a beginning may have an end. There never was a time when there were not spirits. (Ch 17, p 210, TPJS p 353)

...I take my ring from my finger and liken it unto the mind of man—the immortal part, because it had no beginning. Suppose you cut it in two; then it has a beginning and an end; but join it again, and it continues one eternal round. So with the spirit of man. **As the Lord liveth, if it (the spirit) had a beginning, it (the spirit) will have an end.** All the fools and learned and wise men from the beginning of creation, who say that the spirit of man had a beginning, prove that it must have an end; and if that doctrine is true, then the doctrine of

annihilation would be true. But if I am right, I might with boldness proclaim from the house-tops that **God never had the power to create the spirit of man at all.** God himself could not create himself. [*God has a spirit, too!*] (Ch 17 p 210, TPJS p 354)

Intelligence is eternal and exists upon a self-existent principle. It is a spirit from age to age and there is no creation about it. All the minds and spirits that God ever sent into the world are susceptible of enlargement.” (Ch 17 p 210, TPJS p 354)

***Comment:** Our spirits have been in the process of enlargement all along since we have existed eternally and forever.*

Yes. That enlargement is a consequence of being valiant in the pursuit of light and truth. The *intelligence of spirit*, a term Joseph used, *is the spirit's ability to seek for, receive, and be obedient to light and truth.* That's the enlargement that we are all susceptible to. That is our potential. That potential, realized, is exaltation, for he that receives a fullness of light and truth receives all things. Our goal is to seek for light and truth, receive light and truth, and be obedient to light and truth until we receive a fullness of light and truth and enter into that exaltation. That's the process and the goal. That's what Joseph talks about over and over again.

We couldn't come to this earth until we reached a point where we needed a physical body to hinder us so that our spirits could gain strength over our physical body, which occurs when we continue to seek for further light and truth. What happens is, we sometimes shut the door to light and truth and say, “I'm here...I don't want to know any more.” When people stick their fingers in their ears and choose not to listen to inspired truths, they will be condemned more for what they don't believe than for what they do. Joseph also taught that man can be saved no faster than he gains knowledge (TPJS p 217), or no faster than he seeks for light and truth. Our goal here on earth is to seek for, receive, and be obedient to light and truth. Those who willfully remain distant from these saving truths are spiritually damning themselves by their own ignorance. If they don't want to learn more here, the first thing they will have to learn on the other side is to learn to want to learn.

D&C 130:19 says:

And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come.

Nephi taught in **2 Ne 28**:

27 Yea, wo be unto him that saith: We have received, and we need no more!

29 Wo be unto him that shall say: We have received the word of God, and we need no more of the word of God, for we have enough!

30 ... for unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have.

***Comment:** So, our intelligence is not connected to our I.Q.?*

That's correct. The intelligence of our spirit is connected to its propensity, or susceptibility, to receiving and **being obedient** to the light and truth it seeks. Our progression is measured by our obedience to light and truth.

God-given Limitations

When God placed us in this physical environment, He placed some limitations on our minds that are necessary in mortality. One of those limitations is that we can only think of one thing at a time. Another one is that it cannot think of anything that it has not already seen, heard or read about before. You cannot think of anything that has not already been put in there. It even filters your experiences through the lens of what it has already experienced, looking for the familiar. For example, describe an alien who may happen to visit the earth. What words will you use to describe this life-form? You can really only draw upon the words you already know and the conceptions of life you already know. Because we can only think of one thing at a time, this life becomes a perfect probationary state. Given that you have your own agency, you have total control over everything you think. If you don't want to think about one thing, all you have to do is think about something else. That's why Alma said:

14 For **our words** will condemn us, yea, all **our works** will condemn us; we shall not be found spotless; **and our thoughts** will also condemn us; and in this awful state we shall not dare to look up to our God; and we would fain be glad if we could command the rocks and the mountains to fall upon us to hide us from his presence. (Alma 12:14)

The third limitation of our minds is that we have to have an answer to our questions. If we don't get an answer from a true source, we tend to either make up an answer or believe one that we can accept based upon our limited knowledge. This is what is causing the apostasy among the youth and even seasoned members in the Church. When confronted by hard questions, we can no longer respond to our youth by saying, "You don't need to know that right now," or, "That's not pertinent to your salvation." Or, "Just exercise a little more faith and don't think about that right now." When our youth have questions today, what do they do? They consult the god of the world — Google! It's so large it fills the universe (you can get Wi-Fi everywhere), yet it is so small it can fit in the palm of your hand! If we don't give correct answers to the Gospel questions they have, they will consult the 'new god' that is everywhere but nowhere, and so small it can dwell in your hand, and that new god will give them an answer.

The Will of the Flesh and Ignorance

According to the Book of Mormon there are two specific ways by which Satan gains control over mankind: the first is *the will of the flesh*, and the second is *ignorance*. After Lehi describes our dual natures and the need for opposition in all things, he concludes his discussion on agency and choice with this appeal:

...and not choose eternal death, according to the *will of the flesh and the evil which is therein, which giveth the spirit of the devil power to captivate*, to bring you down to hell, that he may reign over you in his own kingdom. (**2 Nephi 2:29**)

At birth we all inherit a physical sin-machine called a body, which in infancy is designed to seek satisfaction for every need and want of body and mind. In these sin-machine bodies, we learn how to manipulate everybody around us from day one to satisfy our every desire, appetite, and passion. The natural man becomes awakened and begins to develop a character that must be overcome. By the age of accountability, every trick in the book has been learned and perfected. When 8 years

old, the child of record is baptized, receives the Gift of the Holy Ghost and is confirmed a member of the Church of Jesus Christ. After years of sharpening their manipulative skills, newly baptized Christians will spend the rest of their life learning self control, restraint, and respect for others – putting their body in subjection to their spirit.

The second way Satan gains power over us is *ignorance*. Spiritual ignorance may be the result of our own choices. However, it can also be the result of evil designs by others who seek control over us. When Nephi sought to understand the vision his father had, it was revealed to him that Satan gains power over mankind when they are intentionally left ignorant of the truth. Speaking of spiritual ignorance, the verse below discusses the plain and precious things that were removed from the Bible:

And after these plain and precious things were taken away it goeth forth unto all the nations of the Gentiles...thou seest—because of the many plain and precious things which have been taken out of the book, which were plain unto the understanding of the children of men, according to the plainness which is in the Lamb of God—and *because of these things which are taken away out of the gospel of the Lamb, an exceedingly great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them.* (1 Nephi 13:29)

People who harden their hearts against the truth when it is presented (pride), believing they already know it all (the definition of ignorance), are described by Alma as being in the “chains of hell.”

11 And they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries; and then they are taken captive by the devil, and led by his will down to destruction. Now this is what is meant by the **chains of hell**. (Alma 12:11)

This is what happens when men do not seek for light and truth—they are led down to destruction. Through ignorance and the weaknesses of the flesh, Satan obtains the power to lead us captive. Back to our texts:

The first principles of man are self-existent with God. God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself. **The relationship we have with God places us in a situation to advance in knowledge.** He has power to institute laws to instruct the weaker intelligences, **that they may be exalted with himself**, so that they might have one glory upon another, and all that knowledge, power, glory, and intelligence, which is requisite in order to save them in the world of spirits. (Ch 17 p 210, TPJS p 354)

Our spirits have existed as long as God's has. Remember, God did not create spirits. These spirits are ready to move forward in their search for light and truth. This is what John was talking about when he said that Christ gave us power to become the sons of God (John 1:12).

He has given us power to understand light and truth if we choose to seek for it, which then gives us power to advance in knowledge. If we are obedient to that light and truth we can then become the sons and daughters of God.

***Question:** That quote makes it sound like we were already not equal in the beginning. How did we get not equal?*

As we read in **Abraham 3:22-23**, in that grand council, the one in which we were all present, we saw and heard that Abraham was among those who were already great and noble. They had distinguished themselves by their valiancy in seeking for greater light and truth. All of us had reached the point where we were ready to move forward and could go down to an earth to receive a body. We needed this physical world with this physical body to provide a means for our spirits to gain strength in our search for further light and truth. If we are obedient to the light and truth we receive, we can receive more until eventually we can receive a fulness of light and truth. The concept to keep in mind is that everything is a progression.

***Question:** Aren't we teaching the milk when we sing "I Am a Child of God"?*

Yes, we are, and that is Okay because that primary child needs to understand that basic foundation. In our discussion today we have moved out of the dairy department. Joseph said he wanted to talk about nobler things. He said *laws were instituted to instruct the weaker intelligences*—not that those laws were forced on anyone—*whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself. The relationship we have with God places us in a situation to advance in knowledge.* As we mentioned before, there is more to learn than just the milk.

Coming back to Christ, John said in **D&C 93:7**:

I saw his glory, that he was in the beginning, before the world was;

...and in v **21** Christ says:

And now, verily I say unto you, *I was in the beginning with the Father*, and am the Firstborn;

Speaking of Man, Christ says in v 23:

***Ye were also in the beginning with the Father**; that which is Spirit, even the Spirit of truth; [i.e., we have existed, the same as Christ has existed.]*

Verses 27-29 say:

27 And no man receiveth a fulness **unless** he keepeth his commandments.

28 He that keepeth his commandments receiveth truth and light, **until** he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things.

29 **Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be.**

We teach that the only way to become exalted is to keep all of the commandments. Keeping the commandments is associated with character change. If keeping the commandments does not change our character then the commandments have failed. In order to dwell with God we need to

develop the same character that God has (TPJS p 216). If we are truly obedient, it will lead to a character change. When Christ was asked which two of the commandments were the greatest, He replied that loving God and loving your fellowman were the two greatest commandments – for upon these two hang all of the Law and all of the Prophets (Matt. 22:35-40). ‘The Law’ is all of the commandments and ‘the Prophets’ is everything the prophets have taught. It is the same today. When we listen to General Conference, everything the prophets teach hang upon two laws: Loving God and loving our fellow man. How do we love God? We keep his commandments. If we are obedient in loving God and loving our fellow man, then by extension we are being obedient to all of the commandments. By the exercise of our own individual agency we can develop the character that loves God and loves our fellow man.

Hugh Nibley defined sin as the misuse of time. According to Christ, if all the Law and all of the prophets hang upon those two commandments, so will all judgment! Therefore, sin is anything that distracts us from developing the character that loves God and loves our fellow man. That's why it says in D&C 93:28: if we can develop that same character then we can become glorified in all things and we can know all things.

Remember our definition of intelligence: The Spirit's ability to seek for, receive and be obedient to light and truth.

Abraham 3:18-19

... 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. 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.

We see that some spirits have a greater propensity to seek for light and truth than others. However, God has set up laws where even the weaker intelligences can seek for, receive and be obedient to light and truth. That's also why we have a spirit world. Alma 40 informs us that there will be additional time for learning:

9 Therefore, there is a time appointed unto men that they shall rise from the dead; and **there is a space between the time of death and the resurrection**.

21 But whether it be at his resurrection or after, I do not say; but this much I say, that **there is a space between death and the resurrection of the body**, and a state of the soul in happiness or in misery until the time which is appointed of God that the dead shall come forth, and be reunited, both soul and body, and be brought to stand before God, and be judged according to their works. (Alma 40:9, 21)

There is a time for learning that needs to take place. Christ said that “he is more intelligent than they all.” In D&C 93:26 we read that Christ received a fulness of light and truth. This is why Christ could be exalted even before he received his physical body. In **93:19** it tells us:

I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and **in due time receive of his fulness**.

In **v 36** we learn that “The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, *[a fulness of]* light and truth. (See also D&C 93:12-14, 16, 19-20, 26-29, 36-37, 39-40.)

***Question:** Is intelligence connected to love, or to the manner in which God loves?*

It is connected to light and truth. Joseph said, and I'm quoting loosely, that man will progress to a point where he no longer has any more disposition to do evil. This is why we can be saved no faster than we gain knowledge. When we begin to see the whole plan, and understand it, we come to see that having a fulness of light and truth means we cannot do anything that would not be for the benefit of mankind, which is exactly like God's love. **2 Ne 26:24** says:

He doeth not anything save it be for the **benefit** of the world; for he loveth the world, even that he layeth down his own life that he may draw all men unto him.

God's love is beyond the conception of love we have. God *cannot*, by virtue of who He is and what He knows, do anything that would not be for our spiritual benefit. He just can't do it. We call that love, but that is His character. He possesses a fulness of light and truth; He has developed a character that *cannot* do anything unless it is for our spiritual benefit.

Let me put it in a way that will affect every one of us. To be exalted (and I have talked about this before), or to have the character of an exalted being, you cannot love a child you had here on earth to a greater extent than any other child born anywhere else in the world or in any other time period. If you do, you are not worthy to be in the celestial kingdom. See? I'm trying to bring it home to each of us. When we read in John 13:34 that Jesus gave a “new” commandment, “that ye love one another *as I have loved you,*” we think: how did God love us more than anyone else? If we're going to be in the celestial kingdom, we cannot love our own children any more than we love any other child born anywhere else or in any other time. I realize this is a concept that is sometimes hard to swallow.

***Question:** Is charity, that pure love of Christ, a gift given to us when we become sons and daughters of God?*

It is a character trait we have to develop on our pathway to becoming the sons and daughters of God.

In **Moroni 7:45-48** we read:

And charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own ... if ye have not charity, ye are nothing, for charity never faileth. Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all ... pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God;

Negative Confessions

When we develop those character traits mentioned above, we have charity. We need to ask God to help us develop that charity. How does he do that? By giving us commandments! In ancient Egypt when Pharaoh went up to the veil, there was a spot in which he was to stand and recite what was called his “negative confessions” before he could pass through. The Pharaoh would proclaim that he did not lie; he did not cheat, he was not unfaithful, and so on, running through a list of things he could not be accused of—hence his negative confessions. He had to recite this list before he could pass through the veil into the presence of God. This would prove that he obtained the character that gave him the right to remain in God's presence. Likewise, during our own temple endowment, when we stand at that veil and declare that we have been true and faithful in all things, we are in effect declaring that we have developed the character that makes God *God*. This is what enables us to pass through that veil. Remember, Joseph said we cannot dwell with God unless we have the same character that He has (TPJS p 216).

Purpose of Commandments / The Power to Become

We are given commandments in the Temple that we promise to keep by covenant. Those commandments are given to help us develop that character: The Law of Obedience and Sacrifice, the Law of the Gospel, the Law of Virtue, and the Law of Consecration. If we were take those laws and actually live them – really live them, where they become part of us – that would enable us to stand at the veil and say to God, “I have kept all these commandments that Thou hast given me, and I desire now to enter Thy presence.” This is coming back to where we started today: **By way of these commandments, God has given me the power to become His son and be admitted in His presence!** By giving me the Gospel, by giving me His commandments, He has given me power to become a son of God. When we develop the character that makes God *God*, we obtain power to become a son or daughter of God. This concept – the Power to become – is what is being taught in all of those verses we went through in our last hour.

The commandments are not restrictions – they are recipes for happiness because they help us develop that character and the power to become a son or daughter of God. This is connected to charity. It's not an isolated concept; it is real and it is obtainable. It's all connected. It's a beautiful plan. It could not be any better! I'm one of those weaker intelligences that was described.

The Quest For or Diversion from Light and Truth

***Question:** It seems to me that the more one rises in academia, the less likely they are to seek for more light and knowledge. Could you perhaps comment on that?*

What comes to mind is **2 Ne 9:28-29**:

O that cunning plan of the evil one! O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish. But to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God. (See also 2 Ne 4:34 ; 2 Ne 28:26, 31)

The tendency is, the more education a person obtains, the more they begin to trust in their own arm of flesh (their own education), which is really stupidity! Of all of the knowledge and truth that is available in the universe, of all that is out there, how much does academia really know? If we only know so much, the scholar will boast that he knows more than God knows, and boast that he can make a decision based on the eternities, a subject on which he knows almost nothing. Jacob says to be learned is good if we hearken unto the counsels of God. He says that the wisdom man has is just foolishness because he doesn't realize that real knowledge, real light and truth, is predicated on being obedient, which obedience creates the character that loves God and loves our fellow man.

Knowledge from the Beginning

31 Behold, here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man; because that which was from the [very] beginning [*in the pre-earth life*] is plainly manifest unto them, and they receive not the light. (D&C 93:31-32)

Before we chose to come to this earth, while in that Grand Council, we had to know exactly what the Plan of Salvation consisted of and what we were signing up for. God made known to all of us just how bad life on earth could be for us, both physically and spiritually. We came to a perfect understanding of what it meant to leave God's presence and receive a physical body. We had to understand perfectly how bad life could be before we agreed to come here so that our agency would not be compromised. We did not necessarily know how bad our life was going to be, but we understood perfectly how bad it could be, no matter where we would be living or in what time period. We knew and understood multi-dimensionally what it would be like to lose a loved one (a nearly universal experience); we knew and understood what it was going to be like to suffer illness and pain (also universal) and physical privation. We knew what it would be like to experience remorse for sin and a separation from God. We knew and understood these things perfectly. If we did not, our agency would have been compromised and any punishment would be unjust.

The same principle applies to Lucifer and his followers. In order for their agency not to be compromised, they would have had to have a perfect understanding of the consequences of their rebellion. Not only did they have to understand the plan of salvation perfectly, they also had to understand their judgment and their condemnation perfectly, or their agency would have been compromised, and God would cease to be God. Even with this perfect knowledge, they still rebelled against God and against the Plan of Salvation. God allowed Satan to do whatever Satan wanted to do; that is His love (TPJS p 187).

Now that we're here and the Gospel plan has been restored:

D&C 93:32, 36-37

32 And every man whose spirit receiveth not the light is under condemnation.

36 The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth.

37 Light and truth [will] forsake that evil one.

D&C 88:40

For intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence; ... truth embraceth truth; ... light cleaveth unto light;"

D&C 50:24-25, 27-28

24 That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day.

25 And again, verily I say unto you, and I say it that you may know the truth, that you may chase darkness from among you;

27 Wherefore, he is possessor of all things; for all things are subject unto him, both in heaven and on the earth, the life and the light, the Spirit and the power, sent forth by the will of the Father through Jesus Christ, his Son.

28 But no man is possessor of all things except he be purified and cleansed from all sin.

Joseph Said:

We consider that God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect; and that the nearer man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, and the greater his enjoyments, till he has overcome the evils of his life and lost every desire for sin; and like the ancients, arrives at that point of faith where he is wrapped in the power and glory of his Maker, and is caught up to dwell with Him. But we consider that this is a station to which no man ever arrived in a moment." (Ch 17, p 210-211, TPJS p 51)

This is why if a man gains more light and truth through diligence and obedience it will rise with him in the resurrection and give him a greater the advantage in the world to come (D&C 130:18-19). This is what it means concerning the intelligence of spirit: it is the spirit's ability to seek for, receive and be obedient to light and truth.

[Earlier in class a question was asked how the Atonement worked, and Br Porter took time to provide a brief answer.]

Question: *I know that the Atonement works but I am still trying to wrap my mind around how Christ could suffer for the sins of another?*

Justice and Mercy are intimately connected. When we begin to truly understand these concepts, Justice has his demands and the Mercy of Christ cannot rob Justice, or God would cease to be God. The Justice of God is that 'no unclean thing can be in His presence'. Not because He doesn't want us there, God has done all in His power, word, and plan to get us there with His same glory to be able to endure His presence and glory. If we cannot endure or are unworthy, we "shrink" from His presence. God does not cast us out we cast ourselves out. We don't sin against God, we, by our agency, reject the greater happiness and glory, we sin against ourselves, our potential, our exaltation. The Justice of God is that no unclean thing can be in his presence with a confidence that will wax strong unless we have exercised 'faith unto repentance' character change.

Turn to **Alma 42:13-15:**

13 Therefore, according to **justice**, the plan of redemption could not be brought about, only on conditions of repentance of men in this probationary state, yea, this preparatory state; for except it were for these conditions, **mercy** could not take effect *except it should destroy the work of justice*. Now the work of justice could not be destroyed; if so, God would cease to be God. *[This is telling us that even God is bound by laws that are even greater than He is, and Justice is one of those laws.]*

14 And thus we see that all mankind were fallen, and they were in the grasp of justice; yea, **the justice of God**, which consigned them forever to be cut off from his presence. **15** And now, the plan of mercy could not be brought about *except an atonement should be made*; therefore *God himself atoneth for the sins of the world, to bring about the plan of mercy, to appease the demands of justice*, that God might be a perfect, just God, **and a merciful God also**. (See also Alma 42:23-24)

There is a difference between Grace and Mercy. Grace is a free gift from God. When Adam fell he introduced physical death and spiritual death (separation from God). Those are the two elements of Adam's fall. Grace takes care of both of those types of death. *Everyone* is going to be resurrected and *everyone* will be brought back to the presence of God because the fall of Adam has been taken care of by Christ. By Grace everyone is redeemed from the fall of Adam; everyone is going to be brought back to the presence of God. But...in order to remain in the presence of God, and have our confidence “wax strong in the presence of God,” we have to exercise faith in Christ and in His atonement (D&C 121:45). This is where Mercy steps in as Amulek teaches in **Alma 34:15-17**:

15 And thus he shall bring salvation to all those who shall believe on his name; this being the intent of this last sacrifice, to bring about the bowels of mercy, which overpowereth justice, and bringeth about means unto men **that they may have faith unto repentance**.

16 And thus mercy can satisfy the demands of justice, and encircles them in the arms of safety, while **he that exercises no faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law of the demands of justice**; therefore *only unto him that has faith unto repentance is brought about the great and eternal plan of redemption*.

17 Therefore may God grant unto you, my brethren, **that** ye may begin to **exercise your faith unto repentance**, **that** ye begin to call upon his holy name, **that he would have mercy upon you**; (See Alma 36:18-21)

Alma 42:23-24

23 **and mercy claimeth the penitent**, and mercy cometh because of the atonement; and the atonement bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead; and the resurrection of the dead bringeth back men into the presence of God; and thus, they are restored into his presence, to be judged according to their works, according to the law and justice.

24 behold, justice exerciseth all his demands, and also mercy claimeth all which is her own; and thus, none but the truly penitent are saved.

What mercy does is satisfy the demands of justice and gives us the time to develop the character that makes God, *God*. Mercy comes because of the atonement, and if we exercise our faith in Christ and His atonement *unto repentance*, mercy then steps in to give us the time to develop the character that make God *God*. When we develop that character, God remembers our sins no more. God lives

in an environment where the past, present, and future are continually manifest before Him, and if God can't remember those sins any more, they don't exist! (See D&C 58:42) If sin does not exist, then justice has no claim.

***Question:** If Joseph taught that intelligence and spirit are the same thing, why is the distinction made between intelligence and spirit?*

The first thing to understand is that Joseph said intelligence and spirit is the same thing. D&C 77:2 says that the spirit of man (*i.e., the intelligence of that spirit*) is in the likeness of his physical body, and always has been.

In the church, there are two theories concerning the intelligence of spirits. The first is the 'globular theory' in which all spirits are in a pool and the larger the amount of intelligence that is used the greater the potential the spirit might have. The Globular view point is that you take a big handful of intelligence and it becomes a man. If only a little bit of intelligence is taken, it becomes a dog or a cat; less than that, perhaps an insect or cockroach. But...this is not the case. The second theory, more in line with scripture, is the individual intelligence of spirit. This would teach that each spirit has the intelligence to be what it is capable of becoming. In other words, there are spirits that can only be man, and spirits that can only be monkeys; likewise, cows, dogs, or even beetles.

The scriptures tell us that everything has its own intelligence:

30 All truth is independent **in that sphere in which God has placed it**, to act for itself, **as all intelligence also**; otherwise there is no existence. (D&C 93:30)

This is what Joseph Smith taught:

Intelligence is eternal and exists upon **a self-existent principle**. It is a spirit from age to age and there is no creation about it. (TPJS p 354)

The concept of *intelligence* and *spirits* being separate distinctions did not come about until after the turn of the century. An opinion and interpretation about what constituted spirits and intelligences was proposed and published even though it was contrary to the scriptures and what Joseph taught. This interpretation briefly stated that an intelligence animates the spirit and the spirit animates the body—but if that is the case, that would imply a pre-existence to the pre-existence. Even more issues arise from this point of view. But as we read in D&C 77, every spirit, either man or beast, has a particular level of intelligence that allows it to fulfill the full measure of its creation. The Lord created physical bodies for those intelligences to inhabit that will enable them to fulfill their full potential. As it says in Abraham 5:7:

7 And the Gods formed man from the dust of the ground, and took his spirit (that is, the man's spirit), and put it into him; and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

Joseph reasoned:

We say that God himself is a self-existent being. Who told you so? It is correct enough; but how did it get into your heads? Who told you that man did not exist in like manner upon the same principles? Man does exist upon the same principles. **God made a**

tabernacle and put a spirit into it, and it became a living soul. [Refers to the old Bible.]
How does it read in the Hebrew? It does not say in the Hebrew that God created the spirit of man. It says “God made man out of the earth and put into him Adam’s spirit, and so became a living body.” (TPJS p 352-353)

In order for each spirit to reach its full potential, it must have a physical body that will allow that spirit to act and react in the environment or ‘sphere’ in which it is placed. As an example, if the spirit of a dog was placed in the body of a beetle or bird, the dog spirit would not be able to reach its full potential and fulfill the measure of its creation. Likewise, if the spirit of a cockroach was put in the body of a dog, you’d never be able to train that cockroach to roll over, fetch a ball, yelp, or any other dog-like behavior.

What this means is: **The spirit is made up of the full intelligence that it is capable of having.** A fly will always be a fly; a beetle will always be a beetle. A dog will always be a dog; a cat will always be a cat. This would extend to man, who has the potential to become like God. With that potential, he must be created in the image of God *because the measure of his creation is to become like God*, who is an exalted man.

We have to keep in mind that Joseph used the phrase, “intelligence of spirits.”

I am dwelling on the immortality of the spirit of man. Is it logical to say that the **intelligence of spirits** is immortal, and yet that it had a beginning? The **intelligence of spirits** had no beginning, neither will it have an end. That is good logic. That which has a beginning may have an end. There never was a time when there were not spirits. (TPJS p 353; see also p 181)

A few years ago when Mitt Romney was running for President, I had been working with Glen Beck for a little while and visited him in his office and broadcasting studio in Dallas. The conversation leaned toward the feelings among the “born again” Christian community in the Bible Belt. Even though Romney may have been the best candidate at the time in their minds, many said they could not vote for him because he was a Mormon. The only reason they gave for not voting for him was their claim that Mormons believe in a different God or Christ than they do. The main supporting argument for this claim is their widespread belief that *we* believe Satan was a brother to Christ, an unacceptable viewpoint to them.

We have read the scriptures that explain what it takes to become a son of God, and we have learned from Joseph and scripture that spirits are eternal – they are not created or made. So now we come to the part in our discussion about Satan.

The War / Conflict / Contention in Heaven

Moses 4:1-3

1 And I, the Lord God, spake unto Moses, saying: That Satan, whom thou hast commanded in the name of mine Only Begotten, is *the same which was from the beginning [the pre-existence]*, and he came before me, saying—Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor. [*He wants to make sure we're all going to be saved*]
2 But, behold, my Beloved Son, which was my Beloved and Chosen from the beginning, said unto me—Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever.
3 Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him, and also, that *I should give unto him mine own power*; by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast down;

That beginning is talking about those spirits who were prepared to come to this earth. Every world has its own Council in Heaven. All have to be instructed in the laws that will govern that earth. We understood what those laws were and our relationship to that environment. Our understanding of these things is crucial as we learn to work out our own salvation.

Satan was cast out because he not only wanted to take away our agency, he also wanted God's glory, as he declared, “Surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor.” (See pages 114-117 for our earlier discussion on the ancient texts that describe the conflict between Adam and Satan.)

D&C 29:36-37

36 And it came to pass that Adam, being tempted of the devil—for, behold, **the devil was before Adam**, for he rebelled against me, saying, Give me thine honor, which is my power; and also a third part of the hosts of heaven turned he away from me because of their agency;
37 And they were thrust down, and thus came the devil and his angels;

When it says, “the devil was before Adam,” that tells us that he existed and was prepared early on for the earth which we now inhabit. Every earth has its own Council in Heaven, and every other earth could be different from our earth.

D&C 76:24-27

24 That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof [*of these worlds*] are begotten sons and daughters unto God.

25 And this we saw also, and bear record, that an angel of God who was in authority in the presence of God, who rebelled against the Only Begotten Son whom the Father loved and who was in the bosom of the Father, was thrust down from the presence of God and the Son,

26 And was called Perdition, for the heavens wept over him—he was Lucifer, a son of the morning.

27 And we beheld, and lo, he is fallen! is fallen, even a son of the morning!

Satan was one in authority in the presence of God; he was prepared early on.

Who is going to be the Leader?

In these next verses, The Lord is instructing Abraham in the distinctions between the various spirits as it relates to who is going to be chosen as His leaders, and in particular, who is to be the first leader on this newly created world.

Abraham 3:18-19

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.

Some spirits had a greater propensity to seek for light and truth than others, yet God is more “intelligent” than they all. This is how Christ qualified as a God *before* He even received a physical body – He sought for, received, and was obedient to a **fulness** of light and truth before He got a body. Christ was in the beginning, as also the spirit of man (D&C 93:29) and He (Christ) was the first of all the spirits to become a Son of God by obedience to light and truth, making Him the “Firstborn” unto God - the first worthy for Exaltation, even before birth. And because of the Father’s foreknowledge, He knew that Christ would not sin in mortality, thus making him worthy in every way to be the Savior of all spirits. Because of the Atonement, all spirits can become “begotten” sons and daughters *unto* God (D&C 76:24; 93:22).

Christ continues his instruction to Abraham:

21 I dwell in the midst of them all; I now, therefore, have come down unto thee to declare unto thee the works which my hands have made, wherein my wisdom excelleth them all, for I rule in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath, in all wisdom and prudence, over all the intelligences thine eyes have seen from the beginning; **I came down in the beginning in the midst of all the intelligences thou hast seen.**

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; *[Abraham comments on what God is telling him.]*

This organization of intelligences does not mean creation; rather, this is an organization of leaders. Look at the context of the passage. It is about choosing the priesthood leaders that will have the power and authority to administer the Gospel of Salvation to mankind.

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 *[those who had a greater propensity than others]*; 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. *[Abraham was told he would be one of the rulers on this newly created earth.]*

24 And there stood one among them that was “like unto God,” and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth **whereon these may dwell;**

That phrase in Hebrew, “like unto God,” is *mi-cha-el*. He is “like unto God” because he is created in the image of God (Moses 6:9). This scripture is often misunderstood.

25 And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them; *[doing all things is developing that character we have been talking about.]*

26 And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who *[do]* keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever.

Here we see that those who are valiant in the pre-earth life can receive their second estate (come to Earth for a body), and if they are valiant in their second estate they will receive glory added upon their heads forever and ever. A type of progression is taking place, but it hinges on being valiant enough in the pre-earth life to come to this earth life.

Now that the earth is created, and the spirits have been organized into groups (those who have been more valiant, and those who have been less valiant), the earthly leaders need to be chosen, and the Lord then asks:

27 And the Lord said: Whom shall I send? And one answered like unto the Son of Man *[again, Mi-cha-el]*: Here am I, send me. And another answered and said: Here am I, send me. And the Lord said: I will send the first.

28 And the second was angry, and **kept not his first estate**; and, at that day, many followed after him.

Now, back in Moses 4:1-2, who comes with the plan first, according to that narrative? That's right, it is Lucifer, who became Satan. Why is the order reversed here in Abraham? A: It is not the same event!

Who is going to be the first man? One *like unto God* says, “Here am I, send me. And another answered and said, Here am I, send me. And the Lord said, I will send the first.” This verse in Abr 3 is talking about who will be the first leader on this earth, not who is going to be the redeemer of mankind. Who was that first man? Adam – who was Michael, or in the Hebrew, *Mi-cha-el*, which means “*like unto God*,” as stated in verse 24.

In our October class we read through several of the ancient texts that discussed the conflict between Adam and Satan. In *The Gospel of Bartholomew*, Satan said he knew he could not take the place of Christ, for Christ had already been chosen from the very beginning. What Satan wanted to do was do away with *the necessity* of Christ, and the best way for him to do that is to become the first man – at least that is what he thinks. We see that in Moses 4:1 when he declares that he will be God's son and not one soul shall be lost.

In Abraham 3 the context is leadership: Here are spirits, some are more intelligent than others, and these are the noble and great ones who will be made rulers. An earth is going to be created, and the Lord wants to know, “Who shall [He] send?” One “like unto the Son of Man” says, “Here am I, send me.” And another said, “Send me.”

Moses 4: 1	Abr 3: 27-28
1 And I, the Lord God, spake unto Moses, saying: That Satan, whom thou hast commanded in the name of mine Only Begotten, is the same which was from the beginning, and he came before me, saying—Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor.	27 And the Lord said: Whom shall I send? And one answered like unto the Son of Man: Here am I, send me. And another answered and said: Here am I, send me. And the Lord said: I will send the first. 28 And the second was angry, and kept not his first estate ; and, at that day, many followed after him. [<i>These verses are talking about Michael and Lucifer, Lucifer being the one who kept not his first estate. Moses 4:1 is a different event altogether.</i>]

***Comment:** Satan was not upset at Christ's position of authority, but he was upset that Adam was chosen to become the first man for this earth?*

Yes. That is correct. The conflict or war in heaven had to do with Satan wanting to do away with the necessity of Christ and His atonement. He knew that he could not take the place of Christ (as Christ was the FIRSTBORN), but he wanted to do away with the necessity of Christ. It was not a battle between Christ and Satan; rather it was a battle between having agency and not having agency; atonement or no atonement; and Glory, whether it be God's or whether it be Satan's. Satan was also resentful that he was not chosen to be the first man to begin the whole thing.

Joseph taught:

The contention in heaven was—Jesus said there would be certain souls that would not be saved; and the devil said he could save them all, and laid his plans before the grand council, who gave their vote in favor of Jesus Christ. So the devil rose up in rebellion against God, and was cast down, with all who put up their heads for him. (TPJS p 357)

Satan was just one of the spirits who would be coming to this earth like the rest of us. He and that third part that followed him were part of that same Council in Heaven. As we read in Abraham (Abr 3:26), those who “keep their first estate shall be added upon.” This scripture makes it plain that Satan never has been, or ever will be, a brother to Christ—or your brother either! Lucifer did not keep his first estate; thus, he can never become a son of God, which means he can never become a joint-heir with Christ.

***Question:** Please explain further what it means when it says, “and [he] kept not his first estate”? Did he turn away from truth?*

He turned away from the Plan of Salvation. Christ said, “Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever.” It was God's plan, and Christ said He was willing to carry out God's plan. Satan proposed another plan. It's not wrong to have another plan, but when the priesthood leader says, “OK, this is what we're going to do,” it is wrong to then say, “I'm not going to do that!” That is considered rebellion. Satan was not cast out for having a different plan; he was cast out for rebellion. He is cast out for not accepting the decision.

When you look at those ancient texts, the same story is told in all of them. When God formed Adam's body from the dust of the earth and placed Adam's spirit into it, God then commanded every order of angels to pay honor and recognize Adam as the father of their future, physical bodies. All of them came except Satan and those who followed him. He reasoned that he need not recognize a being younger than him; he postured that he ought to have been chosen to become the first patriarch on the earth rather than Adam. He maintained he would not accept Adam as the patriarch; thus he was then cast out for rebellion. “...and [he] was angry, and **kept not his first estate**; and, at that day, many followed after him.”

When Lucifer said, “Send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it,” he is telling God that he wanted to hold all the keys of authority on the earth. God replied, “No, I will send one like unto God (Michael / Adam) for he is more righteous than you.” In all those ancient texts, we see that Lucifer rebels against God's choice. He refuses to participate in God's plan – if Michael is chosen instead of him, he does not want to have any part of it!

The Doctrinal Concept: A Spirit's Progression

For a spirit to reach the second estate it must also have kept its first estate, which demonstrates valiancy in seeking for and being obedient to light and truth. All of us here obviously kept that first estate. The question is: Now that we are in the second estate, are we going to be valiant in the testimony of Christ here? In order to become a son or daughter of God, a spirit must not only keep the first estate, it must also enter into the second estate. Furthermore, it must receive Christ

and accept His Gospel. (We went through all those scriptures at the beginning of our first session today.) Our spirits were not created or made, neither indeed can be (D&C 93:29). Our spirits have always existed. Given this background, was Satan *ever* a son of God?

We were in the beginning with the Father; that which is Spirit, even the Spirit of truth; our spirits were not created or made, neither indeed can be; (D&C 93:23, 29)

...they have no beginning, they existed before, they will have no end. (Abr 3:18)

These are the same concepts that Joseph taught:

– the immortal spirit. Where did it come from? All learned men and doctors of divinity say that God created it in the beginning; but it is not so: the very idea lessens man in my estimation. I do not believe the doctrine; I know better. Hear it, all ye ends of the world; for God has told me so; (TPJS p 352)

Is it logical to say that the intelligence of spirits is immortal, and yet that it had a beginning? The intelligence of spirits had no beginning, neither will it have an end. That is good logic. That which has a beginning may have an end. There never was a time when there were not spirits; (TPJS p 353)

So with the spirit of man. As the Lord liveth, if it had a beginning, it will have an end. ... God never had the power to create the spirit of man at all. Intelligence is eternal and exists upon a self-existent principle. It is a spirit from age to age, and there is no creation about it. (TPJS p 354)

To recap, according to scripture Satan *is not* a brother of Christ; he never has been, nor can be. He was a spirit prepared to come to this earth just like the rest of us, and he had the same opportunity to accept and keep his first estate. He rejected that privilege by choice and open rebellion against the Plan of Salvation, and in so doing, lost the possibility of ever becoming a son of God, along with the right to become an heir and joint-heir with Jesus Christ. Since “*spirits were not created or made, neither indeed can be*,” he was never a brother to Christ or to any of us. **This is what the scriptures teach.**

The True Nature of God

Question: *But hasn't God asked that we call him, Father?*

God is two people. When we become exalted, men don't go off to celestial Priesthood meetings to learn how to create and destroy worlds, nor do women go off to celestial Relief Society to create recipes that turn pinto beans into fudge. (*much laughter*)

In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]; (D&C 131:1-2)

The two become God. The two are God. That's why when God created man, the scripture says: “**God** created man in his *own image*, in the **image of God** created he him; male and female created he **them**” (Gen 1:27). God is two people—it's just that simple. God—that celestial couple, that

deity—has decided to be called “Father.” There is no better way to convey the idea to mortals who are organized in families. There is no better way to convey the concept that God is a loving, kind, protective, providing, and caring Father. A father embraces all those things. ‘Mother’ somewhat conveys that concept, but does not quite express the level of protection and the provision that the term ‘father’ does. So God, composed of two people, decided to be called “Father.” Does that make sense?

***Comment:** That makes sense to me. It's like a married couple who are one in purpose, but they are two.*

Yes, in that context, you are Parent! In the celestial context, you – man and wife – become Eloheim. *El* is the word for God, and *heim* is the plural ending of the word. (That's in the next part of Abraham when we get to it.) We sometimes have this idea that men go off to create and destroy worlds while the women remain behind in an eternal nursery raising billions and billions of spirit children. We have that idea, but that is not the case. The two are actually God. **They** are Eloheim. The new and everlasting covenant of marriage is the order of the patriarchal priesthood. The matriarch holds the same priesthood as does the patriarch.

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 Genesis 1:26, 27, 28. He had **dominion** given him over every living creature... and to him was given **the dominion**. (TPJS p 157)

This is the same priesthood that Adam and Eve were blessed with *before* the fall (Gen. 1:28).⁵² It is the same priesthood that they had after the fall, with divided responsibilities. This “order of the priesthood” is the order of heaven and inherent in the couple who have been sealed together, with the same commission in life as our first parents were given in the Garden of Eden. The main responsibility of this patriarchal priesthood, *which the married couple jointly holds*, is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of their children, by instruction and ordinance. (See *The Threshing Floor of Faith*, BH Porter, 1st Edition, p 372)

52 The Prophet Joseph Smith remarked in a marriage ceremony that —marriage was an institution of heaven instituted in the Garden of Eden. Following the ceremony, he pronounced them Husband and Wife and — in the name of God blessed them with the blessings that the Lord conferred upon Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden in Gen. 1:28 (*The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, Compiled and Edited by Dean C. Jesse, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), pp. 92, 132)

In exaltation (as explained in the Temple), men become Kings and Priests, and women become Queens and Priestesses, unto God. “Priestess” connotes priesthood.

A world has been created upon which we, as spirits, may progress and become His sons and daughters in reality. A Plan of Salvation has been set in motion for us and an opportunity given that allows us to become one with Christ, the first Son of God, and to become a joint-heir and to receive all that the Father hath (D&C 84:38). We can become His sons and daughters once we develop the same character as God and Christ and become worthy to be admitted into His family. The family that can be together forever is not my family here—it's God's *exalted* family.

God's Exalted Family

Let's talk about "sealing" for a minute. Most of you have heard this explanation.

Joseph never taught that children are sealed "to" their parents. In other words, I do not own my offspring on the other side. When I get to other side, I will be what I was before: a brother to the sons and daughters that I had here. I would hope that they would be exalted, the same way that I hope to be exalted, with our respective spouses. I would hope that my children and I can become gods and sons of Gods. Joseph taught that children are sealed "through" their parents, as everyone needs to be sealed to God. It is God's eternal family that we become members of, as His sons and daughters, becoming joint heirs with Jesus Christ. I am sealed to God through my parents, and they are sealed to God through their parents, and so on, until they are sealed to Adam, who is sealed to God. So, I am sealed to God through my parents. I do not own my kids on the other side.

What has been created in the minds of just about everybody in the Church is the notion that there will be this eternal, endless Family Home Evening. Everyone knows that a Family Home Evening is like a Church basketball game—a fight that begins and ends with prayer! An eternal Family Home Evening would be some people's definition of Purgatory. But we put it in those terms to make our kids feel comfortable, as well as ourselves. There is no better way to understand it for those just learning the Gospel. But the family that can be together forever is God's exalted family—not my exalted family! You have to begin to ask questions like: When my daughter is sealed to somebody else, whose eternal family home evening is she going to attend? What about my son and his wife? What about me and my wife? Do we attend the eternal family home evening of her parents or mine? And so on.

Children are not required for exaltation, but a spouse is. Adam fell because, he said, "The woman Thou gavest me and commandest that she should remain with me, she did give me of the fruit of the tree and I did eat (Moses 4:18).

Adam fell, not to have kids, but because he was commanded to remain with Eve. The Fall was an issue of eternal marriage, not an issue of children. An eternal marriage is required for exaltation, children are not.

In the **D&C 49:15-16** we read:

... for marriage is ordained of God unto man. Wherefore it is lawful that he should have one wife, and they twain shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might answer the end of its creation.

In D&C 76:58, speaking of those in the Celestial Kingdom it says, "Wherefore it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God." If we become a joint-heir with Jesus, it is all about equality. Christ said, "And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father; And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him" (D&C 84:37-38). This is what it means to be a joint-heir with Christ. And if He is a Son of God, and we become joint-heirs, then that means we also have become sons and daughters of God.

Comment: *Referring to that equality, at the veil, the sisters are given the exact same promises as the men.*

That is exactly right. This comes back to that statement of Joseph Smith when he performed that first marriage:

The Prophet Joseph Smith remarked in a marriage ceremony that marriage was an institution of heaven instituted in the Garden of Eden. Following the ceremony, he pronounced them Husband and Wife and — in the name of God blessed them with the blessings that the Lord conferred upon Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden in Gen. 1:28, and he said that dominion given to Adam and Eve was the Priesthood.

Adam and Eve jointly held the patriarchal priesthood before the fall, and their priesthood duties and responsibilities were divided after the fall. You can't have a patriarch without a matriarch. The matriarchal duties in the patriarchal priesthood are just as important as the patriarchal responsibilities. They are together; they are two. God is two people.

15 - Abraham 4 – Our Endowment of Power

Preview of Abraham 4

This completes our coverage of Abraham Chapter 3. We'll briefly go over a few things prior to Abraham 4. Chapter 4 gets into the creation. We discussed these things when we went through the Moses material. Both Moses and Abraham have accounts of the creation, and anytime there is a text about the creation, you need to think in terms of relationships between God, man, and the environment in which man is placed to work out his salvation. These creation accounts are written to establish relationships. They are not meant explain the science of creation, nor are they written to explain or even imply how long it took to create the world. They were given to mankind as part of an ordinance and an initiation, and always show up in this context. The Moses creation account is his endowment; the Abraham creation account is his endowment. The Temple creation account is your endowment. You and they received knowledge or an endowment of power that establishes a relationship between you and God and the environment in which you live.

In the 1828 Dictionary, the one that would have been current in Joseph Smith's time, we see the word "endowment" defined as:

That which is given or bestowed on the person or mind by the creator, gift or nature; any quality or faculty bestowed by the creator ... Natural vigor of intellect is an endowment of the mind.

An Endowment of Power lies not in an ordinance but in knowledge. When we say we're going to get our endowment in the Temple we usually think of the ordinances, but an endowment of power does not lie in the ordinances but in KNOWLEDGE.

An Endowment of Power lies in Knowledge; there are not that many ordinances that we enter into in the Temple. The knowledge we obtain is what gives us an endowment of power.

Joseph Smith said, "A man can be saved no faster than he gets knowledge," and, "he that keepeth his commandments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth and *knoweth all things*." (TPJS p 217; D&C 93:28)

President Kimball said:

Change comes by substituting good habits for less desirable ones. You mold your character and future by good thoughts and acts.

Without a change in our character, there is no **power** in the ordinances of salvation and exaltation. In other words, if you don't change your character, the ordinances you participate in have no power to save you or exalt you. The power lies in you and your agency, not in the officiator who administers the ordinances. Look at **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.

Alma 13:16 states very clearly that all ordinances are given so that the people *might look forward* to Jesus Christ for a remission of their sins. In other words, the ordinances we participate in provide a hope of a *future reality*. The ordinance does not guarantee the reality of the ordinance itself. The reality of the ordinance is ratified by the character change of the person who receives it. The real power behind every ordinance is your agency and your character change. If you are not striving to change your character, it means nothing – even if you have gone through the Temple a thousand times. Our hope lies in Christ. We look to Him for a remission of our sins, whereby we can become clean and be found worthy to enter God's presence.

Neither Satan nor God can control our agency. King Benjamin taught his people that:

...the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, **unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint** through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, **submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit**

to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father. (**Mos 3:19**)

“Yielding to the enticings of the Holy Spirit” is the process of changing our character by putting off the natural man and becoming a saint, becoming “submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things.” This is the character change that makes those ordinances a reality.

The Repentance Process

The Repentance process is the process of changing character. Repentance is evidently a terrible thing that no one wants to talk about. When was the last time you heard a good talk on repentance? It's hardly talked about because it makes us all uncomfortable. Nevertheless, we should all be striving to change our character, and that is what repentance is all about.



The more one knows and understands about life, the more perfect will be their decisions, actions, and nature.

This is why the endowment of power lies in KNOWLEDGE! The more we know and understand, the better our decisions will be. We are looking for truth. We want to know what eternal truth is. **D&C 93:24** talks about it.

And *[eternal]* truth is knowledge of things as they **are**, and as they **were**, and as they **are to come**;

Are = **Present**
Were = **Past**
Are to Come = **Future**

Three Creation Accounts

In the Church, we have three creation accounts available to us: The Temple Drama, Moses, and Abraham. Each provides a different point of view.

Temple	– Present	(We are the Man Adam or the Woman Eve)
Moses	– Past	(Moses provided a historical point of view)
Abraham	– Future	(Abraham sees what will come to pass)

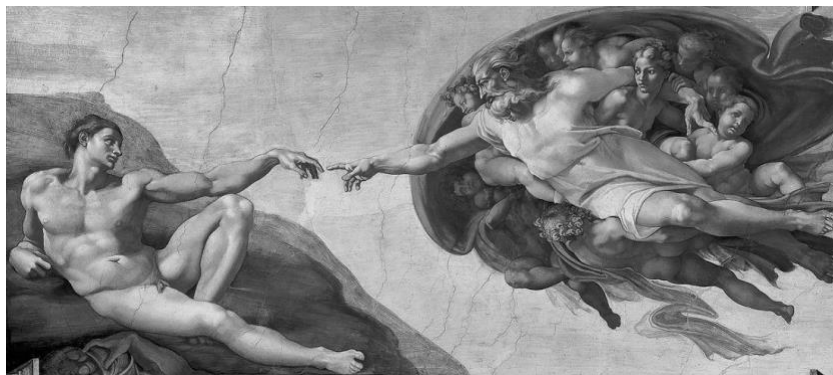
Our three creation accounts, because of their different points of view, offer us an expanded understanding of the creation. Of the three accounts, the one most neglected also happens to be the best—and that is Abraham. The insights Abraham provides, with his pre-existent point of view of the Council in Heaven discussion, are tremendous when compared to the other creation accounts.

These three accounts are different because they are given to different audiences for different purposes, even though the fundamental purpose is the same in all of them. Moses is trying to teach hardhearted, stiff-necked Israel the things of God from a historical point of view (things as they were). He received these things in order to teach the Children of Israel about the relationship between God and man and the environment of the Promised Land in which they were going to live. They needed to see it and understand it that way.

In the Temple, you are seeing and participating in things as they are in the present. You are the man Adam or the woman Eve. The creation is going on in real time. You are receiving this in real time so that you can work out your salvation in the environment in which you are now living.

Abraham is looking at the creation from the point of view of the Gods. He is one of those spirits who were “noble and great” in that Council and was chosen and foreordained to be a leader, a prophet, a Patriarch. Thus Abraham sees things from a pre-existent point of view, from the vantage point of *what will be*—that which is going to happen in the future.

A few days ago, I was at the Sistine Chapel in Rome. Michelangelo has depicted the creation on the ceiling of the chapel, and to me the most important scene is this one:



In this scene we see God trying his best to reach out to Adam, but the cherubs (angels) are holding him back. Adam seems to be making only a half-hearted effort to reach God. This painting seems to underscore the idea that the creation is about relationships, not about scientific fact.

D&C 49:15-17 says:

15... for marriage is ordained of God unto man.

16Wherefore, it is lawful that he should have one wife, and they twain shall be one flesh, and all this that the **earth might answer the end of its creation**;

17 And that **it might be filled with the measure of man, according to his creation** before the world was made.”

These verses are telling us that marriage between a husband and a wife is connected to the very purpose of the creation of the earth. Marriage is connected to the creation of the earth because there are a lot of spirits that need to come to the earth, and they need to come to a family. The spirits that were in that pre-earth council need to come to earth through those husbands and wives. As Isaiah tells us, the earth was created to be inhabited by mankind:

Isaiah 45:18

18 For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, *he formed it to be inhabited*: I am the Lord; and there is none else.

1 Ne 17:36

36 Behold, the Lord hath created the earth *that it should be inhabited*; and he hath created his children that they should possess it.

The creation accounts are explained in history, ritual, ordinance, and scripture to establish relationships between God, Man, and the Environment in which man must live to work out his salvation. Man is that being that has the potential to become like God. King Benjamin referenced the creation in his masterful discourse.

Mosiah 2:25

25 And now I ask, can ye say aught of yourselves? I answer you, Nay. Ye cannot say that ye are even as much as the dust of the earth; yet ye were **created** of the dust of the earth; but behold, it belongeth to him who **created** you.

We begin to establish our relationship with God as we begin to love and serve our fellow man. He taught (v 20, 22):

20 I say unto you, my brethren, that if you should render all the thanks and praise which your whole soul has power to possess, to that God who has created you, and has kept and preserved you, and has caused that ye should rejoice, and has granted that ye should live in peace one with another –

22 And behold, all that he requires of you is to keep his commandments; ...

A non-LDS scholar, Barbara Sproul, has published a book containing all the ancient creation accounts from around the world. In the introduction to her book she writes:

“The most profound questions give rise to creation myths.”

The word 'myth' originally meant "the true story of one's beginnings or origins." Today the word is commonly used as a synonym for 'fable', a false or fictitious story. But here it means the true story of something *real*, especially in regards to the creation epoch. Sproul continues:

Who are we?

Why are we here?

What is the purpose of our lives and our deaths?

How should we understand our place in the world in time and in space?

These are central questions of value and meaning, and, while they are influenced by issues of fact, they are not, in themselves, factual questions; Rather they involve attitudes towards facts and reality. As such, the issues that they raise are addressed most directly by myths. (*Primal Myths*, Introduction, p 1)

She is talking about these creation epics. These epics, she says, answers those questions concerning who we are, why are we here, and the purpose for our lives and our deaths, as well as how we understand ourselves in time and space. As she collected these accounts from all over the world from every ancient culture, this is what she has come up with.

I want you to understand what she is saying. Who are we? Why are we here? And what is the purpose of our lives and our deaths and how we understand ourselves in time and space? If you understood the truth about these statements, how would that affect the choices you make in this world?

Our Endowment of Power

In our search for light and truth, which includes participating in the Temple Drama, we begin to learn that our *real* Endowment of Power is **knowing**—

That God lives;

That God created the world for mankind;

That our separation from God can be reversed;

That we have an eternal nature and spirit;

That there is plan of progression towards God;

That there is purpose to this life that endures past death;

That our potential is as limitless as God's;

That the trials of mortality are purposeful and are necessary;

That we know where evil comes from and how to control it;

That death is not an end but a beginning;

That a Son of God provides an atonement and resurrection that makes all of this possible.

As you ponder these truths, can you begin to see the power it can give to your life as you come to understand them? Can you see that knowing these things can give you power over the trials, tribulations, and other issues of mortality that surround you every day? It is *this* knowledge that gives us an endowment of power, not the ordinances. The ordinances point us to Christ and the future reality that those ordinances promise.

The question now becomes: What if we did not know these things? Where would we be? What would we be doing?

Man is the only creature that can act in futurity. That means he can act or make decisions here that result in a blessing or a condemnation after death. No other creature is capable of that. Unless we understand the information that we receive in the endowment of power, there is no reason to act in futurity. Otherwise we might as well...

Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God—he will justify in committing a little sin; yea, ... there is no harm in this; and do all these things, for tomorrow we die; and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God. (2 Ne 28:8)

Abraham 4 deals with the creation epics. Remember, the creation accounts establish our relationship with God and answer WHY the world was created, not HOW.

Without a knowledge of these things we have no power over this life, but become as the beasts—to live and die, obsessed with, and consumed in, the worldly satisfaction of pride and the flesh.

This is why we have the creation epics in our scriptures, and it is why we rehearse the creation epic every time we participate in our Temples. They help us understand our relationship with our fellowman, with our God, and with the environment in which we are to work out our own salvation (See Mormon 9:27). All ancient cultures around the world have creation epics that explain the true story of their origin or beginning. These epics help us understand our place in this rotten world.

Historical Background

Anciently the Threshing Floor was a considered a central and sacred place that became important for the sustaining of both the physical life as well as the spiritual well-being of mankind. The most simple and practical purpose of the Threshing Floor was a place where the harvested grain would be broken down by animals that would tread on the collected grain, separating the inedible chaff from the grain. The animals would not only tread on the grain but drag wooden sleds impregnated with pieces of flint to cut and break away the undesirable and useless stems and chaff. Once broken apart, the chaff and grain would be thrown into the air together. The lighter chaff would be blown away in the winds while the heavier and more important grain would fall to the bedrock or stone floor for gathering. This process of separating of the grain from the chaff on the threshing floor is often used today to symbolize a separation of the good from the bad.

Because of its location on a high, prominent spot, the “threshing floor” became a central place for sacrifice, and a sacred site where the creation of the world by the gods was acted out, the purpose

of which was to explain the cultural beliefs and myths of the people and the community. The threshing floor became a place of education and understanding rather than a simple place of separation of good and bad. It was a place to understand the plan of God for the life and salvation of mankind, assisting all to faithfully endure mortality to the end.

Creating a perfect stage, the first theaters of Greece and Rome were fashioned around, and evolved from, the ancient threshing floors. The sacred nature of the threshing floor was so prevalent that altars were erected at the threshing sites and temples were often constructed near or over the threshing floors themselves. Multiple rows of seating were erected up and around the center floor so that large numbers of people could view the dramas being acted out upon the stone floor below. The amphitheater was born (See B. H. Stricker, “The Origin of the Greek Theatre” in the “The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology”).

Temple Texts

Our scriptures contain many of the great and instructive texts that convey temple truths. Genesis, Moses, and Abraham provide much of the script contained in the Temple narrative. 2 Nephi 2 is another great text that bestows an endowment of power – it conveys the knowledge Lehi wanted his son Jacob to understand as he lived out the remainder of his life. In this chapter the Creation is addressed. Adam and Eve are discussed, as well as the Fall, and our redemption from the Fall. Opposition in all things is explained, as well as agency – our freedom to choose liberty or death. In other words, Lehi teaches his son the very concepts that we are to glean from participation in our own Temples.

Remember – knowing these things is what separates us from the beasts, allowing us to act in futurity. We cannot act in futurity if we do not understand what lies in futurity! We can’t make decisions pertaining to our own exaltation if we are not aware that death is an event we live through.

We also need to understand that within the knowledge of these things we listed, there resides a power of damnation as well. Beginning in **2 Ne 9:25**, we read:

25 Wherefore, he has given a law; and where there is no law given there is no punishment; and where there is no punishment there is no condemnation; and where there is no condemnation the mercies of the Holy One of Israel have claim upon them, because of the atonement; for they are delivered by the power of him.

This is why the children of Adam and Eve could not sin until *after* they were taught the Gospel. We cannot be accountable to the Law unless we are under the Law. If we are not under the Law or don’t know the Law or do not understand the Law, mercy steps in to satisfy the demands of justice, satisfying a Law we did not even know about. But...here’s the stipulation:

27 But **wo unto him that has the law given**, yea, that has all of the commandments of God like unto us, and that transgresseth them, and that **wasteth the days of his probation, for awful is his state.**

What this verse is saying: if the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as taught by the Church, is true, only Mormons can sin. Everyone else does not have all of the law. Others cannot be held accountable for what we, as Latter-day Saints, know to be true because they have not made the same agreements or covenants. Others do have light and truth and the Spirit of Christ to a certain extent, but they cannot be held accountable to the Word of Wisdom; they cannot be held accountable for what has been revealed in the D&C, or our other revealed scripture, or to the moral codes we have been given. All will be judged according to the light and knowledge they have. He who has more light and knowledge is more accountable.

For of him unto whom much is given much is required; and he who sins against the greater light shall receive the greater condemnation. (D&C 82:3)

If we do not live up to the covenants we make and act according to the knowledge we acquire, that endowed power can become a power of condemnation.

The Will of God

Christ has said, “For I came down from heaven, **not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me**” (John 6:38). In the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed, “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless **not my will, but thine, be done**” (Luke 22:42). In the Sermon on the Mount, as Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he used the phrase, “**Thy will be done** in earth, *as it is in heaven*” (Matt 6:10).

In pondering these verses and others, I have come to wonder: just *what* is God's will? I don't think He cares what I eat or which direction I drive my car to get home. We tend to link sinning with not doing the will of God. The question then arises: can we be condemned for exercising the very agency God made sure we could have in that Grand Council in Heaven?—The same agency that Lucifer was kicked out for wanting to destroy? You will recall that when the woman was taken in adultery and was brought to Jesus, he did not get mad at her, nor condemn her, but said, “[if you truly want to be happy], go and sin no more” (John 8:11).

The scriptures make plain that Christ was most upset by people who spent their time trying to get other people to commit sin, or who kept others from coming unto Him and His Gospel. Most of His condemnation was directed at the Pharisees, who created rules that most others could not keep, and who made people feel guilty and hopeless about their chances for salvation. If Christ did not condemn the woman taken in adultery for using the very agency He ensured would be ours in the pre-existence, can we be condemned for using our agency here on earth? NO! It was preserved for us. Joseph Smith taught that God would not, and Satan cannot, control our agency (TPJS, p 187).

The Three Pillars of the Gospel

In the Book of Mormon, Aaron and Ammon teach King Lamoni and his father the Gospel. They both start with **the Creation, the Fall** and **the Atonement**. These are the three pillars of the Gospel.

Ammon: Alma 18: 36, 39	Aaron: Alma 22: 12-14
36 Now when Ammon had said these words, he began	12 And it came to pass that when Aaron saw that the

at the creation of the world, and also the creation of Adam, and told him all the things concerning the fall of man, and rehearsed and laid before him the records and the holy scriptures of the people ...

39 But this is not all; for he expounded unto them the plan of redemption, which was prepared from the foundation of the world; and he also made known unto them concerning the coming of Christ, and all the works of the Lord did he make known unto them.

king would believe his words, he began from the creation of Adam, reading the scriptures unto the king 13 And Aaron did expound unto him the scriptures from the creation of Adam, laying the fall of man before him, and their carnal state and also the plan of redemption, which was prepared from the foundation of the world, through Christ, for all whosoever would believe on his name.

14 And since man had fallen he could not merit anything of himself; but the sufferings and death of Christ atone for their sins, through faith and repentance, and so forth;

King Benjamin also taught his people about Christ and His atonement (Mos 3:11, 15-16, 19). This is also taught in 2 Nephi 2 (See v 10). Alma 40-42 is another great discourse on the fall, the resurrection, and the atonement.

We need to understand the creation so that we can understand the relationship between God, mankind, and the environment in which we have to work out our own salvation. We need to understand the Fall in order to understand why we need the atonement.

King Benjamin was extremely successful in teaching these things to his people. His teachings generated a profound spiritual awakening in the hearts and minds of his people. I have pondered his discourse for a long time, trying to distill what it was he taught that so successfully changed their hearts. I have asked myself, what can we do to teach our families to also return and come unto Christ as did Benjamin? What do I need to teach my family that will produce the same result in the hearts and minds of my children and grandchildren? The conclusion I've come to is that he taught a very powerful concept: He taught them to retain in remembrance the greatness of God and their own nothingness before Him (See Mos 4:5, 11). I believe he got his people to understand just how much they needed God, Christ, and the Atonement in their lives.

And again I say unto you as I have said before, that as ye have come to the knowledge of the glory of God, or if ye have known of his goodness and have tasted of his love, and have received a remission of your sins, which causeth such exceedingly great joy in your souls, even so I would that ye should remember, and always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God, and your own nothingness, and his goodness and long-suffering towards you, unworthy creatures, and humble yourselves even in the depths of humility, calling on the name of the Lord daily, and standing steadfastly in the faith of that which is to come, which was spoken by the mouth of the angel.

And behold, I say unto you that if ye do this ye shall always rejoice, and be filled with the love of God, and always retain a remission of your sins; and ye shall grow in the knowledge of the glory of him that created you, or in the knowledge of that which is just and true. (Mos 4:11-12)

We cannot, cannot, CANNOT—it is impossible—be saved without a reliance upon Christ, His atonement and the resurrection!

I've read and studied Benjamin's address many, many times, and I have concluded that what my children and grandchildren need to know and understand is how much they need Christ and that atonement. I believe that knowledge and understanding is what caused the massive conversion at the time of King Benjamin.

Benjamin wanted to know if his people believed what he had to say. The report he received was *by acclamation*:

And they had viewed themselves in their own carnal state, even less than the dust of the earth. And **they all cried aloud with one voice**, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified; for **we believe** in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, and all things; who shall come down among the children of men. (Mosiah 4:2)

And **they all cried with one voice**, saying: Yea, **we believe** all the words which thou hast spoken unto us; and also, we know of their surety and truth, because of the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually. (Mosiah 5:2) *[Notice their new character traits]*

The Gospel is new to every generation. It is new to our children and our grandchildren. Everyone has to come unto Christ. We sometimes get so involved in the culture, traditions, and organizations of the Church that we forget to come unto Christ. Our sacrament meeting ought to be the most important of our meetings, according to Brigham Young. He considered the ordinance of the sacrament even more important than the endowment we receive. The sacrament prayer is for you. The Bread and the Water are “blessed to the souls who partake of it or drink of it.” It is blessed to be sanctified (become holy) to all those who partake or drink of it. Each week we are given the opportunity to renew our covenant of obedience. It is part of the process of repentance and the changing of our characters. If we are exercising our faith unto repentance, we will want to come before God each week and declare our desire to improve and become better. This is why partaking of the sacrament is so vital to our lives.

16 - Abraham 4 Continued – The Council of the Gods – Creation Epics

As we have said before, our creation accounts exist to establish relationships between God, mankind, and the environment in which man must live and die. Each relationship is intimately connected to the salvation and exaltation of the children of God. The greatest of the commandments is to love God and to love our fellowman. Upon these two commandments hang all of the law and the prophets. All of the commandments and everything the prophets teach are designed to help us love God and love our fellowman. If all commandments hang upon these two commandments, so too will all judgment.

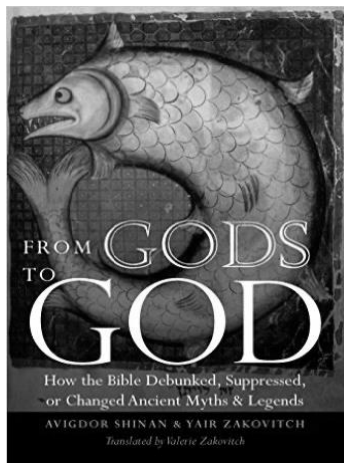
Establishing Personal Relationships

The Lord tells Moses, “no man can behold all my works, except he behold all my glory; and no man can behold all my glory, and afterwards remain in the flesh on the earth” (Moses 1:5). God is telling Moses he would have to become a god to comprehend all these things. Near the end of

Moses 1, in verse 40, the Lord speaks with Moses and says: “And now, Moses, my son, I will speak unto thee concerning **this earth** upon which thou standest; and thou shalt write the things which I shall speak.” And in Moses 2:1, the Lord says, “Behold, I reveal unto you concerning **this heaven**, and **this earth**; write the words which I speak.”

Moses is given a glimpse of the big picture, and then the Lord reduces it all down just to *this* earth in *this* cosmos. We learn the historical view point from Moses, and we see the future viewpoint from Abraham. In Moses, **God** creates the heavens and the earth; in Abraham, **the Gods** organize and form the heavens and the earth. Abraham's record provides insight that will help his modern-day posterity begin the process of increasing in light and truth rather than relying on an historical event.

Many ancient cultures – Egypt, Rome, Greece, Babylonia, and others – have records that discuss “a council of the gods.” The research in the book below says that all ancient cultures told of “A Council of the Gods.” The Mosaic account only tells of one God. Abraham, however, discusses a plurality of Gods.



Even in the D&C we see the mention of the Council of the Eternal Gods: (D&C 121:28, 32)

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

What the Prophet Joseph taught regarding the Council of the Gods

Here, then, is eternal life—to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you, namely, by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead, and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power. And I want you to know that God, in the last days, while certain individuals are proclaiming his name, is not trifling with you or me. (TPJS p 346-347)

“The head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods.” That is the true meaning of the words. Baurau signifies to bring forth. If you do not believe it, you do not believe the learned man of God. Learned men can teach you no more than what I have told you. Thus the head God brought forth the Gods in the grand council.

“The head God called together the Gods and sat in grand council to bring forth the world. The grand councilors sat at the head in yonder heavens and contemplated the creation of the worlds which were created at the time.

“In the beginning, the head of the Gods called a council of the Gods; and they came together and concocted a plan to create the world and people it. When we begin to learn this way, we begin to learn the only true God, and what kind of a being we have got to worship. Having a knowledge of God, we begin to know how to approach him, and how to ask so as to receive an answer. When we understand the character of God, and [know] how to come to him, he begins to unfold the heavens to us, and to tell us all about it. When we are ready to come to him, he is ready to come to us.” (TPJS p 348-350)

“An unlearned boy must give you a little Hebrew. Berosheit baurau Eloheim ait aushamayeen vehau aurait, rendered by King James’ translators, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” I want to analyze the word Berosheit. Rosh, the head; Sheit, a grammatical termination; the Baith was not originally put there when the inspired man wrote it, but it has been since added by an old Jew. Baurau signifies to bring forth; Eloheim is from the word Elo, God, in the singular number; and by adding the word heim, it renders it Gods. It read first, “In the beginning the head of the Gods brought forth the Gods,” or, as others have translated it, “The head of the Gods called the Gods together.” (TPJS p 371)

I will transpose and simplify it in the English language. Oh, ye lawyers, ye doctors, and ye priests, who have persecuted me, I want to let you know that the Holy Ghost knows something as well as you do. The head God called together the Gods and sat in grand council to bring forth the world. The grand councilors sat at the head in yonder heavens and contemplated the creation of the worlds which were created at the time. (TPJS p 348-349)

Now, I ask all who hear me, why the learned men who are preaching salvation, say that God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing? The reason is, that they are unlearned in the things of God, and have not the gift of the Holy Ghost; they account it blasphemy in any one to contradict their idea. If you tell them that God made the world out of something, they will call you a fool. But I am learned, and know more than all the world put together. The Holy Ghost does, anyhow, and He is within me, and comprehends more than all the world: and I will associate myself with Him. (TPJS 349-350)

Joseph is telling us how he is getting this information—by the Holy Ghost. In the last years of Joseph's life, his doctrinal teachings came more from the Book of Abraham than any other source. On **June 16, 1844**, Joseph talked further about the plurality of the gods:

The head God organized the heavens and the earth. I defy all the world to refute me. In the beginning the heads of the Gods organized the heavens and the earth. Now the learned priests and the people rage, and the heathen imagine a vain thing. If we pursue the Hebrew text further, it reads, “Berosheit baurau Eloheim ait aushamayeen vehau aurait.”—“The head one of the Gods said, Let us make a man in our own image.” I once asked a learned Jew, “If the Hebrew language compels us to render all words ending in heim in the plural, why not render the first Eloheim plural?” He replied, “That is the rule with few exceptions; but in this case it would ruin the Bible.” He acknowledged I was right. I came here to

investigate these things precisely as I believe them. Hear and judge for yourselves; and if you go away satisfied, well and good.

In the very beginning the Bible shows there is a plurality of Gods beyond the power of refutation. It is a great subject I am dwelling on. The word Eloheim ought to be in the plural all the way through—Gods. The heads of the Gods appointed one God for us; and when you take [that] view of the subject, it sets one free to see all the beauty, holiness and perfection of the Gods. All I want is to get the simple, naked truth, and the whole truth. (TPJS, p 372; p 370-373)

Here is something to think about. Be forewarned: It's not doctrine! It's for your "What If?" file only!

What if...the beginning of our exaltation is to be on one of those councils?

What if...we become members on one of those councils before we receive our full exaltation?

***Question:** Does that include women too?*

Most certainly! God is two people – an exalted man and his exalted wife. The Two are deity.

***Question:** Does Christ's atonement cover all the worlds that have been created?*

Yes, as **D&C 76:24** informs us:

24 That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God.

Christ's atonement is infinite and eternal and applies to all of our Father's in Heaven's worlds that he has or will ever create.

***Question:** Is there a way for Christ to be the Father of not only all those who have accepted the Gospel but also everyone else on the earth?*

OK, here's more to put in your Gee Whiz File!

We have talked about how, in all ancient cultures, there is a supreme God, and there is a council of Gods that sits with that 'Head' God. Joseph Smith, in those quotes we just went through, is telling us the same thing. Let's compare John 1 with the JST Translation of **John 1:1-4**.

John 1	JST John 1	BHP Commentary
1 In the beginning was the Word , and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.	1 In the beginning was the <i>gospel preached through the Son. And the gospel was the word, and the word was with the Son, and the Son was with God, and the Son was of God.</i>	In the Greek, ‘Word’ is translated as <i>Logos</i> . <i>Logos</i> can mean ‘Gospel,’ it can mean ‘Plan,’ and it can mean ‘Council.’
2 The same was in the beginning with God.	2 The same was in the beginning with God. <i>[This indicates Christ was on that Council in Heaven.]</i>	“The Gospel was the Plan, it was the Council.”
3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.	3 All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made which was made.	“The same” can mean the Word, the Gospel, the Plan, or Christ.
4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.	4 In him was the gospel, and the gospel was the life, and the life was the light of men; 16 For in the beginning was the Word, even the Son, who is made flesh, and sent unto us by the will of the Father, ...	Christ is the Creator of all things. In Christ was the Gospel; He is the Gospel. The JST is telling us that the life and the light are in the Gospel. The Gospel is made flesh.

Here’s another “What If?” for your Gee Wizz file: What if The Council could be called the FATHER? Christ, being on that Council, could then be the Father and the Son, the Son because of the Flesh and the Father because He is the Council of Gods. If you look at Joseph’s inspired words carefully, all these verses begin to make sense. (Just for thought... Put it in your Gee Whiz File, not your doctrine file.)

Astrogeologic and Geologic Creations

Each creation account begins with the general geologic information (water and dry land) and then moves into the astrogeologic (the sun, moon and stars) creation. These geologic and astro-geologic creations are generally defined as the creation of the “heavens and the earth.” This creation of the heavens and the earth are mentioned as fundamental facts without any detail about how, when, or how long the geologic and astrogeologic creation took place, forming the general framework or setting for what follows. As the biologic creation begins (the creation of the plants and animals),

the detail, though sparse, is expanded a hundredfold compared to the generality of “heavens and earth.” This expansion in discussion and detail is found in scripture for a specific reason.

In Abr. 4 we see a description of a general creation and a specific creation. The general creation, as mentioned, is always centered on the astrogeologic creation and the geologic creation. After this *general creation information* (establishing the setting) the reader then begins to learn the specifics of the environment in which he is going to live. You are not going to live before the time you are going to live so you will not need, nor will you ever have, a relationship with anything that existed prior to Adam arriving on this earth. The creation of the heavens and the earth is spoken about in very general terms because it is here at all times.

We now get to the Biological phase of creation in Moses 2 and Abraham 4. Moses is given a glimpse of the big picture, and then the Lord reduces it all down just to this earth in this cosmos. We get the historical view point from Moses and we get the future viewpoint from Abraham. Abraham provides more insight than Moses.

Remember that we are dealing with relationships in these creation epics. We are seeing the biological things that are going to be on the earth while man is going to be on the earth. We are dealing with the plants and the animals, the fowls and the fishes, and all creeping things that are going to be on the earth when Adam is placed on the earth. We are not being told about anything that might have been on the earth before Adam was there. The children of Israel did not need to know how things were formed, or how long it took for the earth to be created before Adam was placed on it, and neither do we. But the Lord is going to give us insights in these scriptures for our benefit so that we can understand them in our day, with our education, in order that we can deal with the problems that exist in our day and age.

Keep in mind, these accounts do not establish scientific fact, nor do they contain all the detail. Creation accounts are given in ordinance and ritual to help establish relationships between God, man, and the environment in which man must work out his salvation.

Below we see a comparison between Moses and Abraham: Moses provides an historical account and Abraham is seeing things from a future point of view (things as they will be.)

Moses 2	Abraham 4
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<p>1 And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Moses, saying: Behold, I reveal unto you concerning this heaven, and this earth; write the words which I speak. I am the Beginning and the End, the Almighty God; by mine Only Begotten I created these things; yea, in the beginning I created the heaven, and the earth upon which thou standest.</p>	<p>1 And then the Lord said: Let us go down. And they went down at the beginning, and they, that is the Gods, organized and formed the heavens and the earth.</p> <p><i>[Almost every ancient culture depicts a council of the Gods; there is a Supreme God and there is a council that sits with that God.]</i></p>
<p>2 And the earth was without form, and void; and I caused darkness to come up upon the face of the deep; and my Spirit moved upon the face of the water; for I am God.</p>	<p>2 And the earth, after it was formed, was empty and desolate, because they had not formed anything but the earth; and darkness reigned upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of the Gods was brooding upon the face of the waters.</p>

Abraham gives us a little more insight: “The Spirit of the Gods was *brooding* upon the face of the waters.” What does a chicken do when she is brooding? She is protecting and nurturing and incubating—watching what is going on. Something has been set in motion that is going to change everything.

<p>3 And I, God, said: Let there be light; and there was light.</p>	<p>3 And they (the Gods) said: Let there be light; and there was light.</p>
<p>4 And I, God, saw the light; and that light was good. And I, God, divided the light from the darkness.</p>	<p>4 And they (the Gods) comprehended the light, for it was bright; and they divided the light, or caused it to be divided, from the darkness.</p> <p><i>[notice the distinction in Abraham]</i></p>
<p>5 And I, God, called the light Day; and the darkness, I called Night; and this I did by the word of my power, and it was done as I spake; and the evening and the morning were the first day.</p>	<p>5 And the Gods called the light Day, and the darkness they called Night. And it came to pass that from the evening until morning they called night; and from the morning until the evening they called day; and this was the first, or the beginning, of that which they called day and night.</p>

Again, Abraham is providing a little more insight into Day & Night. How did they have a morning and an evening if the sun was not there? In v 4, Abraham says the Gods **caused** the light to be divided from the darkness. These opening verses are the preview of the show that is about to come.

<p>6 And again, I, God, said: Let there be a firmament in the midst of the water, and it was so, even as I spake; and I said: Let it divide the waters from the waters; and it was done;</p> <p><i>[Waters, in Hebrew, is called Miyam, and the word for Heavens = Ha-sha-Miyam. The waters above and the waters below, and there is an expanse in between.]</i></p>	<p>6 And the Gods also said: Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and it shall divide the waters from the waters.</p> <p><i>[Firmament and Expanse mean the same thing. In Fig 4 of Fac #2, we see the Hebrew word, Raukeeyang, signifying firmament or expanse of the heavens.]</i></p>
<p>7 And I, God, made the firmament and divided the waters, yea, the great waters under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament, and it was so even as I spake.</p> <p><i>[In Moses, God is telling us what He did.]</i></p>	<p>7 And the Gods ordered the expanse, so that it divided the waters which were under the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so, even as they ordered.</p> <p><i>[In Abraham, the Gods are ordering things to happen, see v 18]</i></p>
<p>8 And I, God, called the firmament Heaven; and the evening and the morning were the <u>second day</u>.</p> <p><i>[In Abr v 5, the light and darkness was just called day and night. It is just a designation of light and darkness or in v 8, night and day.]</i></p>	<p>8 And the Gods called the expanse, Heaven. And it came to pass that it was from evening until morning that they called night; and it came to pass that it was from morning until evening that they called day; and this was <u>the second time</u> that they called night and day.</p>
<p>9 And I, God, said: Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and it was so; and I, God, said: Let there be dry land; and it was so.</p>	<p>9 And the Gods ordered, saying: Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the earth come up dry; and it was so as they ordered;</p>

Abraham is explaining the Gods ordered things, they set things in motion, and what was ordered was obeyed (*"the waters were gathered together unto one place and the earth came up dry."*). We're still talking about generalities because we're still talking about the creation of the heavens and the earth. These are things that are going to be here no matter how long man is going to be here. These are things that have to be here even before man is placed on the earth.

<p>10 And I, God, called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters, called I the Sea; and I, God, saw that all things which I had made were good.</p>	<p>10 And the Gods pronounced the dry land, Earth; and the gathering together of the waters, pronounced they, Great Waters; and the Gods saw that they were obeyed.</p> <p><i>[Notice the wording - additional insight]</i></p>
<p>11 And I, God, said: Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, the fruit tree yielding fruit, <u>after his kind</u>, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed should be in itself upon the earth, and it was so even as I spake.</p>	<p>11 And the Gods said: Let us prepare the earth to bring forth grass; the herb yielding seed; the fruit tree yielding fruit, <u>after his kind</u>, whose seed in itself yieldeth <u>its own likeness</u> upon the earth; and it was so, even as they ordered.</p>

12 And the earth brought forth grass, every herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed should be in itself, after his kind; and I, God, saw that all things which I had made were good;

12 And **the Gods organized** the earth to bring forth grass from its own seed, and the herb to bring forth herb from its own seed, yielding seed after his kind; and the earth to bring forth the tree from its own seed, yielding fruit, whose seed could only bring forth the same in itself, after his kind; and the Gods saw that **they** were obeyed.

You will notice the pattern of repetition in these two verses: In ancient languages the repetition is for emphasis. The Lord makes clear that the grass and the vegetation and fruit trees all have seed within themselves in order to produce after their kind. What God is saying is that evolution is not an aspect of creation. Each class of vegetation had seed within itself to produce “after its own kind.” For the children of Israel, at the time of Moses, evolution was not an issue. But it is an issue today. Therefore God gives scripture to be read in the time that it is read. Under inspiration, and knowing the end from the beginning, knowing the issues that will be relevant in our day, he teaches concepts that will be important for us to understand in our day.

What Abraham is saying in verse 11 is that the Gods were setting things in motion. “Let us prepare the earth...” This preparatory period could take as long as was necessary. It may have been millions and millions of years before the earth was ready for Adam to be placed on it. “Let’s prepare the earth for the plants and the animals that are going to be on the earth for the time when Adam and all his posterity are going to be here.”

The Gods organized the earth in such a fashion that this preparation could take place. Look at the end of v 12. After the earth was prepared and organized, it says, “...the Gods saw that they were obeyed.” That means the program is working according to their plan. If it wasn’t working they would do something else. They “ordered” in v 9; they “prepared” in v 11; they “organized” in v 12, and they saw that everything was working and that they were “obeyed.”

The ordering, the preparation, and the organizing is repeated for our benefit to help us see the relationship we have with God and our environment, and to help us see that God does not do anything unless it will be for our benefit. (See 2 Ne 26:24; Ether 3:4)

13 And the evening and the morning were **the third day**.

13 And it came to pass that **they numbered the days**; from the evening until the morning they called night; and it came to pass, from the morning until the evening they called day; and **it was the third time**.

These first 13 verses are the movie trailer – setting the scene for the presentation yet to come. Verses 1-10 cover the astrogeologic portion of the creation, and 11-13 depict the biologic creation. Verse 14 adds more detail about the lights in the heavens that were introduced in v 3-4. Going back....

4 And they (**the Gods**) comprehended the light, for it was bright; and **they divided** the light, **or caused it to be divided**, from the darkness.

5 And the Gods called the light Day, and the darkness they called Night. And it came to pass that from the evening until morning they called night; and from the morning until the evening they called day; and this was the first, or the beginning, of that which they **called day and night**.

We see the Gods dividing the light or causing it to be divided: there was a morning and an evening, and an evening and a morning. Verses 4 & 5 were the preview, now here is the show!

Abr 4:14-15:

14 And **the Gods organized the lights** in the expanse of the heaven, and **caused them to divide the day from the night**; and **organized them** to be for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years;

15 And **organized them** to be for lights in the expanse of the heaven to give light upon the earth; and it was so.

Verses 3-5 describe in very rudimentary terms the beginning of the astrogeologic creation. This is the preview of upcoming events. Verses 14-18 add the details – how light is divided from the darkness, and how the sun, moon, and stars give light to the earth. Those first few verses introduce what is going to be taking place in the rest of the chapter, and in that regard could be considered colophonic verses. In essence God says there is going to be light and there is going to be darkness. When it is light it is going to be called Day, and when it is dark it is going to be called Night. We’re going to divide the light from the darkness ... how? Look at verse 14 again:

And the Gods organized the lights in the expanse of the heaven, and ***caused them to divide*** the day from the night; and organized them to be for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years;

The earth now begins to spin, causing the light to be divided from the darkness. The sun is bright, and the earth needs to rotate in order to divide the light from the darkness.

The Astro-geologic creation is not in linear time. The Gods caused the lights to be divided, and organized them to be for signs and for seasons. It took as long as was required to accomplish these things. Remember...you are not going to live during this time. You do not need to know the details of what is going on. All you need to know is that God caused the light to be divided from the darkness. The sequence of these events in Moses has been traditionally taught to be somewhat chronological, but Abraham gives us another point of view with added insight.

16 And I, God, made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night, and the greater light was the sun , and the lesser light was the moon ; and the stars also were made even according to my word.	16 And the Gods organized the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; with the lesser light they set the stars also;
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17 And I, God, set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,	17 And the Gods set them in the expanse of the heavens, to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to cause to divide the light from the darkness.
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We're not dealing with science, we're dealing with relationships. This earth has been created for us. It doesn't matter how long it took, only that there is an Earth, a Heaven, a Sun, a Moon and Stars. It's a general explanation. The endowment of power in the creation epic is described so that we might have a relationship with God, our fellowman, and the environment on which we are to work out our salvation.

What relationship does the earth have with the sun? It is holding us in its orbit. Not only is the earth spinning on its axis, it is also spinning around the sun. That relationship is what causes the division between light and darkness.

Remember—there's only one sunset and it has been going around the earth for billions of years—it just depends on where you are when you see it. It's all connected.

In our last session we saw the Gods dividing the light or causing it to be divided: there was a morning and an evening, and an evening and a morning.

There are a number of people who teach that when the earth fell, it fell from Kolob and came all the way down to where it is presently, and to make the stars fall, as prophesied in scripture, the earth is going to go all the way back to Kolob. That is not the case! Long before the fall, the stars were already set for time, for seasons, and for days and for years. The sun and the moon were already set in place before the Fall. The prophecy about the stars falling in the sixth seal in the Book of Revelation (**6:13**) occurs long before the earth is celestialized. If the earth was going fast enough to look like the stars were falling, we wouldn't be able to survive anyway.

In the last session we saw the previews of the coming attraction—now we're going to see the start of the movie. We have a tendency to read every verse from a chronological point of view, but that is not the case. We are still in **Abraham 4**:

15 And *organized them* to be for lights in the expanse of the heaven to give light upon the earth; and it was so.

16 And *the Gods organized* the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; with the lesser light they set the stars also;

17 And the Gods set them in the expanse of the heavens, to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to cause to divide the light from the darkness.

18 And *the Gods watched* those things which they had ordered *until they obeyed*.

If the Gods prepared, organized and ordered these things, how long could it have taken to complete the process? Right... As long as it needed to take, or in Carl Sagan's words, “Billions and Billions of years!”

19 At it came to pass that it was from evening until morning that it was night; and it came to pass that it was from morning until evening that it was day; and it was the fourth time.

Abraham's record allows as much time as is needed for the plants and animals and all creatures and fossil fuels to be prepared and in the earth when Adam is placed on it. The earth has to be ready for the advent of man—for Adam and his family after him. Everything that he will need has to be in or on the earth before he is placed on it—the oil, the gas, and the coal is already there when Adam is placed on it. This is not a scientific explanation—we're dealing with God's relationship with man, and man's relationship with the earth. What the general Astrogeologic creation is telling us is that it could take as long as required: God prepared it to happen, He set things in order for it to happen, and then He watched until He saw it was obeyed.

The Biologic Creation

The biologic creation is dealing with the things that are going to be on the earth while Adam and his posterity are there. What existed *prior* to Adam doesn't have anything to do with how *we* are supposed to work out *our* salvation in this environment. What existed *before* Adam is not an aspect of *our* relationship.

Moses 2	Abraham 4
20 And I, God, said: Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl which may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.	20 And the Gods said: Let us prepare the waters to bring forth abundantly the moving creatures that have life; and the fowl, that they may fly above the earth in the open expanse of heaven.
21 And I, God, created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, <u>after their kind</u> , and every winged fowl <u>after his kind</u> ; and <u>I, God, saw that all things which I had created were good</u> .	21 And the Gods prepared the waters that they might bring forth great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters were to bring forth abundantly after their kind; and every winged fowl after their kind. And the Gods saw that they would be obeyed, and that their plan was good .
22 And I, God, blessed them , saying: Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the sea; and let fowl multiply in the earth; <i>[They were "blessed" – not commanded – it was an aspect of their creation.]</i>	22 And the Gods said: We will bless them , and <i>cause them to be fruitful and multiply</i> , and fill the waters in the seas or great waters; and cause the fowl to multiply in the earth.
23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day. <i>[What's important to see is the Gods did not move forward <u>until they saw they would be obeyed</u>, then they moved on...in this case, after the 5th time.] → → →</i>	23 And it came to pass that it was from evening until morning that they called night; and it came to pass that it was from morning until evening that they called day; and it was the fifth time .
24 And I, God, said: Let the earth bring forth the living creature <i>after his kind</i> , cattle, and creeping things, and beasts of the earth <i>after their kind</i> , and it was so;	24 And the Gods prepared the earth to bring forth the living creature <i>after his kind</i> , cattle and creeping things, and beasts of the earth <i>after their kind</i> ; and it was so, as they had said.
25 And I, God, made the beasts of the earth <i>after their kind</i> , and cattle <i>after their kind</i> , and every-thing which creepeth upon the earth <i>after his</i>	25 And the Gods organized the earth to bring forth the beasts <i>after their kind</i> , and cattle <i>after their kind</i> , and every thing that creepeth upon the earth <i>after its kind</i> ; and the Gods saw they would obey.

<i>kind</i> ; and I, God, saw that all these things were good.	
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Notice again the repetition of words, emphasizing that all creatures have seed in themselves to multiply “after their kind.” All of these things are going to be on the earth **before** Adam is placed on it.

26 And I, God, said unto mine Only Begotten, which was with me from the beginning: Let us make man in our image, <i>after our likeness</i> ; and it was so. And I, God, said: Let them have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.	26 And the Gods took counsel among themselves and said: Let us go down and form man in our image, <i>after our likeness</i> *; and we will give them dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. * [“ <i>After our likeness</i> ,” in Hebrew, means “in looks and in substance.”]
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God says that after all these things that have been created, man would be created in the image of God, and man would then have the capability, as an aspect of his creation, to have dominion over every living thing on the earth. The birds, the fish, and the animals cannot exercise dominion over anything else—only man can do this. Dominion does not mean to harm or control, it means to bless and to train. When Joseph Smith referenced Genesis 1:26-28 or Moses 2:26-28, he said the dominion given to Adam and Eve was the [patriarchal] priesthood (see TPJS, p 157). They were living under the patriarchal order of the priesthood at that time. This was before the Fall and also in the context of their creation. God is only explaining that man would have the ability to have dominion...there have not been any commandments given yet.

27 And I, God, created man <i>in mine own image</i> , in the image of mine Only Begotten created I him; <i>male and female</i> created I them.	27 So the Gods went down to organize man in their <i>own image</i> , in the image of the Gods to form they him, <i>male and female</i> to form they them.
28 And I, God, <i>blessed them</i> , and said unto them: (1) Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and (2) subdue it, and (3) have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.	28 And the Gods said: <i>We will bless them</i> . And the Gods said: We will <i>cause them</i> (1) to be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and (2) subdue it, and (3) to have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Man is now created, and God “Blesses them.” This is not a command. As an aspect of creation, they have the potential to replenish the earth (just like the animals), subdue it, and have dominion over it (Priesthood).

As we discussed earlier, the Abrahamic Covenant consists of Priesthood, Posterity, and Inheritance. The “Blessing” God gives to the first man Adam is what Abraham is referring to, because it came from Adam. We see this clearly in these scriptures: God “caused them” to be fruitful (Posterity), and to subdue the earth (Inheritance), and to have dominion over all the earth

(Priesthood). They don't see a realization of this blessing—posterity, subduing the earth, and having dominion—until after the Fall in Chapter 5 of Moses.

We need to allow the scriptures speak for themselves. In the context of creation they were not commanded to have children. The first time the command to multiply shows up in scripture is with Noah:

Genesis 9:14 (JST)

And a commandment I give unto you, be fruitful and multiply; bring forth abundantly on the earth, and multiply therein.

***Question:** But we are expected to have children, are we not?*

Yes. In this context, though, Abraham is describing man's creation and their potential for posterity.

Abr 4:29-31

29 And the Gods said: Behold, **we will give them** every herb bearing seed that shall come upon the face of all the earth, and every tree which shall have fruit upon it; yea, the fruit of the tree yielding seed to them we will give it; it shall be for their meat.

30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, behold, we will give them life, and also **we will give to them** every green herb for meat, and all these things shall be thus organized.

31 And the Gods said: **We will do everything that we have said, and organize them; and behold, they shall be very obedient.** And it came to pass that it was from evening until morning they called night; and it came to pass that it was from morning until evening that they called day; and they numbered the sixth time.

This creation account is to establish relationships—our relationship with God, our fellowman and our environment where we are to work out our salvation.

The Spiritual Creation

We're looking at Moses 3 and Abraham 5 in this next part. I cannot stress enough – let the scriptures speak for themselves. The concepts taught to Adam in the very beginning are concepts that many in the Church do not understand because they rely on tradition (rather than the scriptures) for understanding. The scriptures are your standard for truth!

If a person says he does not believe what is in the scriptures, the conversation is over. The scriptures are my standard for truth. If someone's education is their standard, we cannot have a coherent conversation about a given scriptural topic. But once we allow the scriptures to speak for themselves, our understanding will open up tremendously. There are no contradictions when we use the scriptures as our standard. The contradictions arise only when we rely on tradition, opinion, or interpretation for doctrine.

Abraham's record through Chapter 4 is the minutes of the Council when they met to contemplate the forming and populating of this earth. We are now starting **Abraham 5, where we will see the spiritual creation from a different point of view.**

Moses 3	Abraham 5
1 Thus the heaven and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.	1 And thus we will finish the heavens and the earth, and all the hosts of them.
2 And on the seventh day I, God, ended my work, and all things which I had made; and I rested on the seventh day from all my work, and all things which I had made were finished, and I, God, saw that they were good; [past tense point of view]	2 And the Gods said among themselves: On the seventh time <i>we will end our work, which we have counseled;</i> and <i>we will rest</i> on the seventh time from all our work <i>which we have counseled.</i> [future tense point of view]
3 And I, God, blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it I had rested from all my work which I, God, had created and made.	3 And the Gods concluded upon the seventh time, because that on the seventh time <u>they would rest</u> from all their works <i>which they (the Gods) counseled among themselves</i> to form; and sanctified it. And thus were their decisions at the time that they counseled among themselves to form the heavens and the earth.
4 And now, behold, I say unto you, that these are the generations of the heaven and of the earth, when they were created, in the day that I, the Lord God, made the heaven and the earth,	4 And the Gods came down and formed these the generations of the heavens and of the earth, when they were formed in the day that the Gods formed the earth and the heavens,

Remember what Joseph said:

The head God called together the Gods and sat in grand council to bring forth the world. The grand councilors sat at the head in yonder heavens and contemplated the creation of the worlds which were created at the time. (TPJS p 348-349)

In the beginning, the head of the Gods called a council of the Gods; and they came together and concocted a plan to create the world and people it. (TPJS p. 349)

The spiritual creation was a planning meeting, not a creation of spirits.

5 And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew. For <i>I, the Lord God, created all things, of which I have spoken, spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth.</i> For I, the Lord God, had not caused it to rain upon the face of the earth. <i>And I, the Lord God, had created all the children of men;</i> and not yet a man to till	5 According to all that which they had said concerning every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew; for the Gods had not caused it to rain upon the earth when they counseled to do them, and had not formed a man to till the ground.
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the ground; for in heaven created I them; and there was not yet flesh upon the earth, neither in the water, neither in the air;	
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Abraham 5:1-5 is telling us what the spiritual creation was: it was the Gods counseling among themselves to do all these things. **The Council was the spiritual creation. Their Plans** were the spiritual creation. **Their discussions** were the spiritual creation!

6 But I, the Lord God, spake, and there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.	6 But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.
7 And I, the Lord God, formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul, the first flesh upon the earth, the first man also; nevertheless, all things were before created; but spiritually were they created and made according to my word.	7 And the Gods formed man from the dust of the ground, and <u>took his spirit (that is, the man's spirit)</u> , and put it into him; and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. <i>"How does it read in the Hebrew? It does not say in the Hebrew that God created the spirit of man. It says "God made man out of the earth and put into him Adam's spirit, and so became a living body." (TPJS, p 353)</i>
8 And I, the Lord God, planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there I put the man whom I had formed.	8 And the Gods planted a garden , eastward in Eden, and there they put the man, whose spirit they had put into the body which they had formed.
9 And out of the ground made I, the Lord God, to grow every tree, naturally, that is pleasant to the sight of man; and man could behold it. And it became also a living soul. For it was spiritual in the day that I created it; for it remaineth in the sphere in which I, God, created it, yea, even all things which I prepared for the use of man; and man saw that it was good for food. And I, the Lord God, planted the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and also the tree of knowledge of good and evil.	9 And out of the ground made the Gods to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the tree of life, also, in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. <i>[We can now see that the Gods are doing all that they had counseled to do in Abraham 4:27-31. Consider that prior to Ch 5, we were reading the minutes of their Council.]</i>

Verses 10-14 in Moses are 'insert verses' about the rivers running out of Eden. Verse 10 in Abraham 4 is also an insert verse about rivers. Insert verses add details but do not contribute to the story line here so we are skipping them.

15 And I, the Lord God, took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it.	11 And the Gods took the man <i>and put him in the Garden of Eden</i> , to dress it and to keep it. <i>[Adam was not born in the Garden—he was</i>
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	<i>placed there.]</i>
16 And I, the Lord God, commanded the man , saying: Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat,	12 And the Gods commanded the man , saying: Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat,
17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but, remember that I forbid it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.	13 But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the time that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. Now I, Abraham, saw that it was after the Lord's time , which was after the time of Kolob ; for as yet the Gods had not appointed unto Adam his reckoning.

As we see here in Abraham, Adam exists in an a-temporal environment, or without time. The dimension of time is required for death to exist.

18 And I, the Lord God, said unto mine Only Begotten, that <i>it was not good that the man should be alone</i> ; wherefore, I will make an help meet for him.	14 And the Gods said: Let us make an help meet for the man, for it is not good that the man should be alone, therefore we will form an help meet for him.
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Moses gives us a direct statement: "it was not good that the man should be alone," but in Abraham we see a subtle but significant word change: "Let us make an help meet for the man, for [because] it is not good that the man should be alone, therefore we will *form* an help meet for him."

The Gods said that it was not good for the man to be alone in this environment; therefore they would form a help meet for him. In Hebrew there are two words that "help meet" are derived from: the word "ezer" and the word "k'enegdo." Ezer means to help, and k'enegdo means "like unto him." Or in other words, "a helper like unto him," a helper equal to him.

21 And I, the Lord God, caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam; and he slept, and I took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in the stead thereof;	15 And the Gods caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam; and he slept, and they took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in the stead thereof;
22 And the rib which I, the Lord God, had taken from man, made I a woman , and brought her unto the man.	16 And of the rib which the Gods had taken from man, formed they a woman , and brought her unto the man.

23 And Adam said: This I know now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman , because she was taken out of man.	17 And Adam said: This was bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; now she shall be called Woman , because she was taken out of man; (Adam named this new creature, “Woman.”)
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The word for Man in Hebrew is ‘ish.’ The word for Woman is ‘isha.’ Isha is the feminine of man. So what Adam is saying is that Woman is a feminine ‘man.’ The word ‘rib’ in Hebrew means ‘side’; the female half of Adam is what it signifies.

One of Adam's last responsibilities was to give names to all of the animals. We learn in the temple that Adam is included in the creation presidency. He is on the committee of inspection. He goes down to see if things are all right. His last act as a member of that creation presidency is the naming all of the animals. Technically speaking, nothing exists until it has been given a name because giving it a name brings it into existence. A name identifies it into existence. She is called Woman. Why is she not called Eve at this time? Because the Fall has not yet taken place. Once the Fall takes place, she is placed in a new environment, one in which she can become the “mother of all living.” At that point she receives a new name, Eve. In scripture, she is called Woman *before* the Fall; *after* the Fall she is called Eve.

Question: *Why do you suppose that Woman was taken out of man as opposed to also being formed from the “dust of the earth”?*

You will remember from earlier in the text that when the Gods went down to organize man in their own image, they specifically said that the image of God was “male and female.”

Moses 2:27 - And I, God, created man in mine own image, in the image of mine Only Begotten created I him; *male and female* created I them.

Moses 6:9 - In the image of his own body, male and female, created he them, and blessed them, and *called their name Adam*, in the day when they were created and became living souls in the land upon the footstool of God

Abraham 4:27 - So the Gods went down to organize man in their own image, in the image of the Gods to form they him, *male and female* to form they them.

We see from these verses and from the others we have discussed that Man is created in the image of God’s own body, and woman is also created from the image of God, and they were called Adam.

The Lord says:

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh.	18 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh.
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Notice, it does not say the woman has to leave her father and mother; rather, it says the man has to leave his father and mother and all of his high school buddies and cleave unto his wife and her family and all her friends, whether he likes it or not (*much laughter*). Most of the time when a couple marry they will end up living closer to her parents. Not always, but most of the time.

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.	19 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.
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This verse plainly explains that they were married and that *sexuality* did not exist for them, the clue being the wording, “and they were not ashamed.” Sexuality is a mindset and is something that is understood. They did not have that mindset before the fall. The potential to multiply and fill the earth that they had been blessed with at the time of creation was there, but it was not until after they fell that they were capable of fulfilling that blessing and potential. Look at **Moses 5:11** and see what Eve has to say:

11 And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and [Were it not for our transgression we] never should have known good and evil, and [Were it not for our transgression we should never have known] the joy of our redemption, [or] the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient.

She did not have an awareness of having posterity until after the Fall.

19 And out of the ground I, the Lord God, formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and commanded that they should come unto Adam, to see what he would call them; and they were also living souls; for I, God, breathed into them the breath of life, and commanded that whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that should be the name thereof.	20 And out of the ground the Gods formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that should be the name thereof.
20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but as for Adam, there was not found an help meet for him. Adam was a lone man in the dreary world.	21 And Adam gave names to all cattle, to the fowl of the air, to every beast of the field; and for Adam, there was found an help meet for him. The account in Moses is not the same time period as in Abraham

As we just learned, Abraham 5 is basically the same as Moses 3. Abraham 5 is the end of that book. We do not have the rest of the Book of Abraham, or the Book of Joseph. There is more to the Book of Abraham than we currently have; we only have about the first two-thirds of the book. Joseph translated the whole record but was martyred before he was able to publish the last third. The portion of Abraham that we have contains very little about the introduction of evil that we see at the beginning of Moses 4. Our record of Abraham ends before we get to this point in Moses 4.

These scriptures are exciting. I read Abraham all the time, and I get excited by what is in this book. What Abraham has given us is so important. Abraham, Issac, and Jacob are already Gods. According to the D&C, they are already exalted (D&C 132:37). Isaac and Jacob knew and understood what Abraham knew and understood. Abraham became a friend of God because he truly loved God. Abraham is everyman as everyman should be.

Christ taught that all of the law and prophets hang upon loving God and loving your fellowman. We cannot dwell with God unless we have the character of God, and that is the process we call repentance – changing our character that we might develop the same character that God has. We are here on earth to separate ourselves from worldly desires, the lusts of the flesh, and ignorance. We are to seek for further light and truth. As that great scripture says:

D&C 130:18-19

18 Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.

19 And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come.

Like Abraham, we are to be continually seeking for light and truth. We find that light and truth in the scriptures!

Know that I know that Jesus is the Christ. He is the Son of the living God. These scriptures testify of Him. Alma put it best when he said, “this life is a probationary state; a time to prepare to meet God” (Alma 12:24). We prepare to meet God by repenting or changing our character (See Alma 42:4). Benjamin taught that we serve God by serving our fellowmen (Mosiah 2:17). Our life here is a time to repent and to serve God.

I know that God lives. I know that we have an opportunity to be resurrected to a celestial resurrection if we will make the effort to come unto Christ and begin that process of changing our character by exercising our faith in Him unto our repentance (Alma 34:15-17). His is the only name whereby we may be saved.

18 - Remaining Questions – Priesthood & Satan

Are there any questions before we move on?

Question: *In the Temple endowment, Satan asks, “why cursest Thou me for doing the same things that have been done on other worlds?” What does that statement mean?*

You will remember, when the Lord asks, “What is that?” Satan replies, “Giving some of the fruit to them (pointing to Adam and Eve).” Joseph Smith taught that it was not given for Adam and Eve to partake of the fruit, but it was given unto them to die (*Words of Joseph Smith*, Ehat and Cook, p 63). And they did die by disobeying the commandment to not partake of that fruit. Alma taught that it was appointed unto Adam to die (Alma 42:6). Just as Joseph Smith said, Adam needed to die.

We know that there are many Adams and many Eves, but we do not know what might precipitate the partaking of the fruit in other worlds, or whether mortality is introduced another way. Satan is not of other worlds. He was a spirit prepared to come to *this* earth, just as we were. It does not mean that there aren't other "Satans"; only that the nature of the spirit is such that some gravitate toward the ultimate expression of pride and others don't. We see this even in our own families. The Pearl of Great Price, the book that answers all the questions, reminds us that Satan "knew not the mind of God" (Moses 4:6) when he sought to beguile Eve. Even though he knew not the mind of God, he was still being useful to God in furthering the work of bringing to pass the immortality and eternal life of man (Moses 1:39).

In the pre-earth Council, you remember, Satan wanted to have control. He wanted to make sure that not one soul would be lost, and surely, he said, he would do it. And for that, he wanted to be given even the honor and glory of God. He wanted to do away with the necessity of Christ and His atonement (See Moses 4:1-4). He was cast out, and was already on earth before Adam arrived. He thought to control how and when Adam and Eve would die, thinking that in doing so, the world would be destroyed before it ever began. No matter what Satan does, God is smarter than Satan. God can use whatever Satan does in order to further His work.

Adam and Eve had to have a choice even if there might have been another way to get the plan rolling. Their choice to die had to be based on their own agency. Adam chose to die.

Moses 4:17-19

17 And I, the Lord God, said unto Adam: ... Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat, if so thou shouldst surely die?

18 And the man said: The woman thou gavest me, and commandest that she should remain with me, she gave me of the fruit of the tree and I did eat.

19 ... Eve said, "The serpent beguiled me, and [I ate it!]"

It was still an aspect of their agency and choice. Could it have been different? Maybe after being in the Garden of Eden for 500 years, they got a little bored, and wanted something else to do. If Eve was on her way out of the Garden, Adam reasoned he had been commanded to remain with Eve, and also knowing that she would die, he chose to join her. It became a matter of eternal marriage; otherwise he would be left a lone man in the lone and dreary world.

There is a Council in Heaven for every single world. We saw at the end of Moses 1 and the beginning of Moses 2 that the Lord was only going to talk about this earth and this heaven, and then the Lord began explaining the pre-earth Council to Moses. Whether the same kind of rebellion occurred on other worlds is not for us to know. All we know is that on *this* earth, as the Lord tells Moses, Satan was cast out for rebellion, and in that day, "a third part of the host of heaven turned he away because of their agency" (see D&C 29:36). Satan knew mortality had to be introduced on other worlds, but he was not the cause of it. He belongs to this earth. Adam and Eve might have chosen another way. Either way Adam had to die.

***Question:** Could Satan have been also one of those "great and noble ones" that was given priesthood in the pre-existence? We see in the Temple endowment that Satan responds to*

Adam's question concerning Satan's apron that "this is an emblem of my power and priesthoods." I'm wondering if you think Satan also had received priesthood?

That's a good question. Priesthood is an authority – it is not a power. We have a tendency to link a specific power to priesthood, as if the priesthood has the ability to heal or to move mountains. We often hear the phrase, “the healing power of the priesthood.” In scripture, that is not the case. Priesthood is an authority to act in the name of God. On earth, priesthood is the authority to administer the Gospel to mankind. It's an authority to bless other people with the Gospel. We see that in Abraham 2:9-11. The Melchizedek Priesthood is an administrative authority. The Patriarchal Priesthood is a little bit different, and the Aaronic Priesthood is an appendage to the Melchizedek authority.

We know from ancient texts and also our scriptures that there are several archangels: Michael (Adam), Gabriel (Noah), Uriel, Raphael, Peniel, and Moriel, and each is given different responsibilities. We learn what Gabriel's and Michael's responsibilities are from our standard works. In the Catholic *Apocrapha*, we learn of the responsibilities of Raphael. In the discovered texts of *I Enoch* and *II Enoch*, we learn the responsibilities of the other archangels. Michael or Adam has a lot of authority by virtue of being chosen to be the first man on this newly created earth. He is Michael, and Michael is an archangel.

In scripture, Adam has several different responsibilities: He is a member of the creation presidency; He's on the committee of inspection; He is chosen to become the first man placed on earth; He is the first immortal man on the earth; After the Fall, he becomes the first Mortal man on the earth; He is the Patriarch of all human flesh; Adam has a responsibility over Satan. Not only did he cast Satan out in the pre-earth life, he also holds the keys to the bottomless pit in the end. When Satan appears as an angel of light, it is Michael who detects him (D&C 128:20). When Satan appears as an angel of light to Abraham in *The Testament of Abraham*, it is Michael who is there to detect him. Each of these archangels has different responsibilities.

Many view the priesthood as a miraculous God-like “power” that is invested or bestowed upon an individual that can move mountains and raise the dead. Man cannot actually hold the power that makes God *God*, let alone view His works.

5 Wherefore, no man can behold all my works, except he behold all my glory; and no man can behold all my glory, and afterwards remain in the flesh on the earth. (Moses 1:5)

The power that belongs to God is inherent in God himself (D&C 121:36), but there is an authority (“rights of the priesthood”) that is “connected to the powers of heaven,” which “right” is to serve and bless others as an authorized ambassador of God. The authority that exists in the church must be provable by a certificate of ordination and worthiness through record keeping and the church organization. The Priesthood has no inherent power in and of itself, for “*no power* or influence *can* or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood” (D&C 121:41) or priesthood position.

Nowhere in scripture is the priesthood invoked as a power to initiate a miracle or healing. All miracles are done in the name of Jesus Christ and by faith. It is by faith that one is healed or may heal; it is power of faith that moves the mountain. The vocal mention of the authority of the priesthood holder in the administering of an ordinance is for the *record keeping* that is required

within the organization of the church and its community of saints (D&C 20:63-64). An individual that performs a gospel ordinance within the church must vocally recognize (state) their authority as part of the record keeping process, but the authoritative power behind that ordinance is faith and the name of Jesus Christ.

Your question comes back to that first question: Satan wanted to get things going, he wanted to be in charge, he wanted to get Adam kicked out of the Garden. He wanted to take control in the pre-earth life, and that is what he is trying to do here. He is trying to convince Adam that he has all of the authority or priesthoods to get things done the way he wants them done. That's why he also said that he would reign from the rivers of the earth, and that no one would molest or make afraid. What he is telling Adam is that he is the god of this world.

When we invoke a priesthood blessing, we are to use the phrase, “by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood,” **not** “by the power of the Melchizedek Priesthood.” As mentioned, every priesthood ordinance needs to be recorded and a written record kept. If the ordinance or ordination is going to be recorded then we must invoke the priesthood authority required to perform that ordinance. That is what we see in D&C 20:64. This is one's “line of authority.” One can verify he has authority to perform an ordinance or function in a particular office by virtue of the authority given him. Without every ordinance or ordination being recorded, there would be confusion throughout the church. There must be order in the church.

Again, Priesthood is not a power that moves mountains – it is **faith** that moves mountains! Moreover, faith is not a function of priesthood. That's why a woman can be a faith-healer. Righteous people can obtain inspiration without being a member of the church because we (members) have no monopoly on righteousness or faith, or on goodness or kindness. We have no monopoly on spiritual gifts or spiritual experiences either. Members of other Christian faiths have just as many as we do. The blessings and gifts of the spirit are free to all who are obedient to the laws upon which those blessings are predicated (D&C 130:20-21).

Priesthood is the authority to administer the Gospel. In all of our standard works, the injunction given to the Apostles is that they now have the “power,” i.e., authority, to go out into the world to baptize and to give the Holy Ghost. They are to make sure that everyone who wants to participate in the Gospel and its ordinances may do so if they can.

Let's look at **D&C 84:19-22**:

19 And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God.

The greater priesthood is the authority to administer the Gospel.

20 Therefore, in the ordinances [*of the priesthood*], the power of godliness is manifest.

The power of godliness is manifested in the ordinances of the priesthood. Alma 13:16 says that all Melchizedek ordinances are given so that one *might look forward* to a future reality of being cleansed from all sins and enter into the rest of God. When we receive a remission of our sins, the

power of godliness is manifested unto man in the flesh. In other words, the priesthood ordinances provide the hope of a future reality.

21 And without the ordinances [*of the priesthood*], **and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness** is not manifest unto men in the flesh;

Important Point!! What this verse is explaining is that the priesthood has to be there in order for the ordinances to be administered. Not everyone who receives the ordinances has to have priesthood, only that the priesthood has to administer them. Verse 19 explains that the priesthood administers the Gospel and its ordinances (mysteries).

22 For without [**the authority to administer the ordinances of the priesthood**] no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live. [**or...no one can pass through the veil**]

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*;

These verses have been used to justify restricting priesthood because it was thought one had to hold the priesthood in order to participate in its ordinances...but that is not what these verses are saying. The descendants of Cain were restricted from the administration of the Gospel, but their participation in the Gospel and its ordinances was *not* restricted. One must have authority to administer the Gospel and its ordinances. Look at **Abraham 1:2**:

2 ... **I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; ... I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers.**

Priesthood is the authority necessary to administer the ordinances of salvation and exaltation. The authority to administer the ordinances of the Gospel, and the responsibility for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the family, lies in the patriarch. The patriarch of the family is responsible for the temporal and spiritual welfare of his family. But when the children of Israel came out of Egypt, and “Moses sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God” (D&C 84:23), they rejected that higher law and the Holy Priesthood that would authorize the administration of those higher ordinances.

Moses came down off Mount Sinai after 40 days to find Aaron and the people having a disco around the golden calf. After a day or so, Moses came back and sought to bring order and control back into the ranks, and he wanted to know who was going to be on the Lord's side. Only the Levites answered the challenge to be on the Lord's side. The other tribes withdrew of their own free will and choice. This is the situation that led to that verse we just read in D&C 84:23.

Let's go to **Numbers 8** in the Old Testament. Starting with verse 15 we see the Levites are to be ordained and set apart and sustained for their service in the Tabernacle.

15 And after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them for an offering.

16 For they are wholly given unto me from among the children of Israel; instead of such as open every womb, even instead of the firstborn of all the children of Israel, have I taken them unto me.

17 For all the firstborn of the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast: on the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself.

18 And I have taken the Levites for all the firstborn of the children of Israel.

Before this event, it was the first-born son of each family in the house of Israel who would be responsible for the temporal and spiritual welfare of his father's family (think of the Father and Christ). Now, however, after the children of Israel rejected the higher law Moses introduced to them, priesthood responsibility and service was given to the Levites. From this time forward, everyone was restricted from the priesthood except the Levites. The first-born son was no longer a priesthood holder unless he was a descendant of Aaron or a descendant son of Levi.

This is where the distinction was drawn between the Aaronic and the Levitical Priesthoods. In ancient Israel, the sons of Aaron were to be the High Priests of the Temple, and the sons of Levi were to be the ones who served in the temple and performed all the work needed for it to function properly. They gathered the wood, they kept the oil ready, they performed the sacrifices of the animals on the altar, they kept the Menorah lit at all times, they cleaned out the ash bins, and they made sure incense was stocked. Aaron's descendants were to be the High Priests of the temple. You could tell them apart by which shoulder they wore their robes on. The High Priests (Aaron and his first-born descendants) wore their robes on their right shoulder, and the Levites wore their robes on their left shoulder, thus allowing their right arm to be free when performing the animal sacrifices and other temple ordinances. In our day we have combined the two – we now have a Presiding Bishop who represents a descendant of Aaron. If a literal descendant of Aaron comes along, he can become the Presiding Bishop and act in his office without counselors (D&C 107:76). His authority is an inherent right because of his lineage.

From this point on, when the Levites were chosen, it becomes evident that the children of Israel lost the Higher Law, and what remained was “the lesser priesthood.”

D&C 84:24-27

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.

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

26 And the lesser priesthood continued, which priesthood holdeth the key of the ministering of angels and the preparatory gospel;

27 Which gospel is the gospel of repentance and of baptism, and the remission of sins, and the law of carnal commandments, which the Lord in his wrath caused to continue with the house of Aaron among the children of Israel until John, whom God raised up, being filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb.

This is the whole point: The Lord was prepared to have the Children of Israel qualify to receive the necessary ordinances that would allow them to pass through the veil and enter His presence or His rest. But they withdrew, or rejected that opportunity, and thus, the Higher Law was removed, and the Holy Priesthood authority was no longer had in Israel until John the Baptist and Christ in

the Meridian of time. Christ fulfilled the Law of Moses. There was no more animal sacrifices after Christ Himself completed the atonement.

The authority to administer those higher ordinances was removed or taken away because the children of Israel did not want to live up to that higher level of obedience. It was because of their agency and their choice that this Higher Law was removed from them. From the time of Adam this High Priesthood was called *the Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God*, and then it was called, *the Holy Priesthood after the Order of Enoch*, and then it was called *the Holy Priesthood after the Order of Melchizedek*. Neither Christ nor the Father have Priesthood – they have an inherent power within themselves, and when they delegate their authority to man, that authority is called priesthood, which is the right to administer the Gospel. The Melchizedek authority is Christ's authority. He is responsible for the temporal and spiritual salvation of all the spirits that have ever come or will yet come to all of the Father's creations. That's why Christ told Adam after his fall, “I am the Only Begotten of the Father from the beginning, henceforth and forever, that as thou hast fallen thou mayest be redeemed, **and all mankind, even as many as will**” (Moses 5:9).

As we saw in Abraham 1:2, Abraham sought for the right to be ordained to administer the Gospel. He said, “I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same.” In Abraham 2:6, he received what he sought for. The Lord appeared to Abraham, and said unto Abraham, “Arise, and take Lot with thee; for I have purposed to take thee away out of Haran, and to ***make of thee a minister*** to bear my name in a strange land...” The Lord explains further:

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 [*the authority to administer the Gospel*] unto all nations; (Abr 2:9)

Abraham was not looking for a bunch of kids to run around at Thanksgiving and Christmas; he wanted a posterity that would be worthy to administer the Gospel of salvation and exaltation for all who would accept it. He wanted a posterity capable and willing to be ministers of the Gospel, worthy to administer all of its blessings to the families of the earth.

And I will bless them [*thy posterity*] 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; (v 10)

Those who accept the Gospel will now be called “the seed of Abraham.” The seed of Abraham has the responsibility to bear that ministry and priesthood. The Lord says:

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 the Gospel*]
and in thy seed (that is, thy Priesthood), [*the authority to administer the Gospel*]

for I give unto thee a promise that this right [*to administer the Gospel*] shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) **

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. (v 11)

**** Question:** Of the “literal seed” of Abraham, who has the power of salvation residing within them? Who are the literal descendants of Abraham who lay claim to this power and authority? In Jewish tradition, there are two Messiah's: *Messiah ben Judah*, and *Messiah ben Joseph*. The two literal descendants of Abraham who have this authority are Christ **and** Joseph Smith. This right of priesthood resides in Joseph Smith because of his lineage (See 2 Ne 3:15-16). That Melchizedek authority is after the Order of the Son of God.

Who is responsible for the gathering of Israel in these latter days? Joseph, who was sold into Egypt. He is a birthright son. It is his responsibility to administer the Gospel to all the other tribes. Because of that, who is to be gathered out of the world before the ten tribes of Israel? Right – both Ephraim and Manasseh. He has the right, through those two sons, to gather the rest of the 10 tribes, both temporally and spiritually. *Messiah ben Judah* and *Messiah ben Joseph* both come from Abraham. What the Lord is explaining to Abraham is that the authority of the priesthood will be in him and his posterity (v 11).

The first-born of a father in the patriarchal order of the priesthood has an inherent right to assist his father in the administration of the Gospel to all of his father's posterity. In our traditions we usually invoke the priesthood when naming and blessing a child. The reason we invoke the priesthood is because it needs to be recorded in the records of the church. Otherwise there is no scriptural reason why a father shouldn't be able to stand in that circle. That father has an inherent responsibility for the temporal and spiritual salvation of his children. But if it is going to be recorded in the records of the church then that naming and blessing must be voiced by someone who has been given that authority from Abraham.

In the patriarchal priesthood of the Patriarchal Order, both the patriarch and the matriarch hold the patriarchal priesthood within an immediate family. The patriarch and the matriarch have a responsibility for the salvation of their own direct line. That is why Rebecca could choose Jacob and instruct him to do what needed to be done when he received his blessing from Isaac.

The authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood can be exercised when there is no father in a home because the Melchizedek Order is without father or mother. This is the order of Christ, and it functions accordingly. The common element among the “fatherless, widows, and orphans” is the absence of a patriarch to physically and spiritually provide and protect. Thus the Melchizedek authority and responsibility is to provide for the temporal and spiritual needs of those who are without a patriarch or priesthood leader in the home. For this reason, the Melchizedek priesthood is given to the male, as this responsibility is to become an assistant—and a replacement if necessary—for the authority and responsibility of the father of the family. (This is another reason why women are not ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood.)

29 - F.A.Q.s

Sons of God, Sons of Men, Sons of Perdition

***Question:** Would you please distinguish again the differences between the sons of God, the sons of men and the sons of perdition?*

If you will turn to **Moses 8:13-15**, you will see references to the sons of God and the sons of men. The sons of God are those who know and have accepted the Gospel, and the sons of men are those who have not.

13 And Noah and his sons hearkened unto the Lord, and gave heed, and **they were called the sons of God.**

14 And when these men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, the **sons of men** saw that those daughters were fair, and they took them wives, even as they chose.

15 And the Lord said unto Noah: The daughters of thy sons have sold themselves; for behold mine anger is kindled against **the sons of men**, for they will not hearken to my voice.

We see the daughters of the sons of God began to marry the sons of men. The sons of men have **not** accepted the Gospel; they “hearkened not” to the voice of the Lord.

When you see the phrase “**Son of Man**,” that has reference to Christ; Son of Man is his name. The word *Man* means “King.” In the King James version of the New Testament, in John 19, we see Pilate referring to Christ as “the man”:

5 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, **Behold the man!**

This phrase means, “Behold the King!” When he used that phrase, the Jewish people understood he was referring to their King. In v 15, the Jews answered, “Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, **Shall I crucify your King?** The chief priest answered, We have no king but Caesar. As Christ was being crucified, Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH **THE KING OF THE JEWS** (John 19:15, 19).

The phrase “Behold the Man” was the Roman shout of acclamation if Caesar or the Emperor were to come within their midst.

The **sons of men** are those who have not accepted the Gospel; **the sons of God** are those who have accepted it, and **the sons of perdition** are those who have accepted the Gospel and received all of the ordinances for their exaltation and have then “altogether turneth therefrom,” as seen in D&C

84:41. The D&C describes them as those “who have known my power and have been made partakers thereof” (D&C 76:31-38). To become a son of Perdition you have to become a son of God, know His power, and “altogether turneth therefrom” as did Cain.

Polygamy

Question: Can a man have multiple wives in the next life?

The tradition in the church is that polygamy exists in the next world, and many have said or taught that man will need a wife for every world or perhaps multiple wives for each world because they will have children without number. This means the women would only be pregnant for 850 Billion years or so! (*much laughter*) Those are traditions, not doctrine, and those traditions have been taught so strongly that many believe that multiple wives are a requirement in the celestial kingdom. **Those ideas are not in scripture.** They are traditions.

In scripture, one requirement for exaltation is the sealing ordinance of one man to one woman. Nowhere in scripture does it state that polygamy is a necessary requirement for exaltation. This position may be contrary to many of the traditional teachings that Latter-day Saints are familiar with. My intent here is to present a point of view that is based on the scriptures rather than commentary or tradition.

D&C 49:15-17 says:

15 And again, verily I say unto you, that whoso forbiddeth to marry is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God unto man.

16 Wherefore, it is lawful that **he should have one wife**, and they twain shall be one flesh, and all this **that the earth might answer the end of its creation**;

17 And that it (the earth) might be filled with the measure of man, according to his creation before the world was made.

The scriptures give only two reasons for polygamous marriages and relationships. The first is found in the Book of Jacob. The Nephites wanted to have more than one wife like many of the peoples and cultures in the ancient near east. Because of the brass plates, the Nephites knew that the patriarchs of Genesis and also the kings of Israel had multiple wives and concubines. In **Jacob 2**, the Lord addresses this:

26 Wherefore, I the Lord God will not suffer that this people shall do like unto them of old.

27 Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord: For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none;

28 For I, the Lord God, delight in the chastity of women. And whoredoms are an abomination before me; thus saith the Lord of Hosts.

29 Wherefore, this people shall keep my commandments, saith the Lord of Hosts, or cursed be the land for their sakes.

30 *For if I will*, saith the Lord of Hosts, *raise up seed unto me, I will command my people*; otherwise they shall hearken unto these things. (Jacob 2: 26-30)

Here the Lord states that *if* He determines that it is necessary to live the law of polygamy to raise up a righteous seed on earth, He will command it for that time period. Otherwise all are to live the monogamous doctrine and law.

In 1832 the Prophet Joseph, speaking to Levi Hancock, told him: “Brother Levi, the Lord has revealed to me that it is his will that righteous men shall take righteous women even a plurality of wives that a righteous race may be sent forth upon the earth preparatory to the ushering in of the Millennial Reign of our Redeemer.” (Levi Hancock Diary). Notice that Joseph Smith explains that the plurality of wives was for this temporal life and time “preparatory” to the coming of Christ. Not many years ago if someone asked in a Sacrament meeting (in the Mormon axis of Idaho, Utah, and Arizona) for a raise of hands of those who descended from polygamist families, almost 80% would raise their hands. What would be the membership of the church today if that righteous seed and not been raised up during the early days of the Church?

Question: Since one man was often sealed to multiple women, what happens to them?

In this dispensation, in Section 132:63 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord reaffirms the use of polygamy for raising up a righteous posterity and adds a second reason:

...for they (multiple wives) are given unto him to *multiply and replenish the earth (raise up seed unto me)* according to my commandment, and to fulfil the promise which was given by my Father before the foundation of the world, and for ***their exaltation in the eternal worlds***, that they may bear the souls of men; for herein is the work of my Father continued, that he may be glorified. (D&C 132:63)

This verse, like the one in Jacob, indicates that the law of polygamy could be instituted to raise a righteous people unto the Lord, and also for the woman’s “exaltation in the eternal worlds.” This second reason is for ordinance only. This is true because no person, male or female, can be exalted without the ordinance of eternal marriage (D&C 131).

This does not mean in any way that the numerous women sealed to a particular man will be his wives in the hereafter. A righteous woman who has had the opportunity to receive the ordinance of eternal marriage, and is worthy of celestial glory, will be sealed “by the holy spirit of promise” to a man who is equally qualified and worthy of her. They together, the two, will become God.

The important thing to keep in mind is that exaltation is being sealed to someone who is worthy of the same glory. Statistics indicate that many more males than females die before the age of eight. We know that those who die before the age of eight are immediately taken into the presence of God. In order for those persons to receive their exaltation, they must participate in a sealing. Women sealed in the earthly ordinance to a man are now prepared, if found worthy, to be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise to an eternal mate and companion into the “image of God.” It doesn’t really matter to whom at this point, as it will be an easy task for a perfect man to love a perfect woman perfectly, and vice-versa, even if they have never met.

Many have been taught that polygamy is a requirement for exaltation, believing that all in the celestial kingdom must be willing to live in polygamous and eternal relationships; however, this

is not doctrine according to scripture and the statements of Joseph Smith. So the question must be asked:

Question: *How did this notion get entrenched in Mormon tradition?*

After the westward movement of the saints, polygamist unions were outlawed for those living in the governed territories of the United States. There were many saints living in Canada and Mexico who were still living in polygamist marriages, so a code word was used when the leaders wanted to speak to those still living a polygamist lifestyle. This code word was “celestial marriage.” During conference, when a leader would say something like: “I would like to talk about celestial marriage,” it would be the code phrase indicating that they were about to address those who were still living in polygamy outside the United States. After a generation, polygamy and “celestial marriage” became synonymous, and it was just a matter of time before this idea took on the weight of doctrine.

If polygamy were necessary for exaltation, only a few people throughout time would be exalted. Polygamy, in scripture, becomes necessary only “to raise up seed unto the Lord” and to provide the ordinances necessary for exaltation in the next life. Polygamy was a dispensational policy and therefore could be changed according to the needs of the church.

This law is difficult to understand fully without keeping in mind that God is two people—the “twain” become sealed, or “cleave” unto each other. The sealed husband and wife are equal in all aspects, working for their own immortality and eternal life. The word “help meet,” which Eve was called, means “one equal to and worthy of in every respect.” This concept would disallow more than one wife to one husband *in the exalted sphere* unless the woman is not and could never be equal to her husband—which is not so. As it is stated in scripture:

Then shall **they** be gods, because **they** have no end; therefore shall **they** be from everlasting to everlasting, because **they** continue; then shall **they** be above all, because all things are subject unto **them**. Then shall **they** be gods, because **they** have all power, and the angels are subject unto **them**. (D&C 132:20)

Why Are Jews a Chosen People?

Question: *A Catholic friend of mind asked me recently why it is that the Jews are a chosen people when all they did was crucify the Lord and have the Apostles stoned or otherwise killed? I did not know how to answer his question very well from the scriptures.*

Probably the best way to answer from the scriptures is from the Book of Deuteronomy. In chapter 9 the Lord, through Moses, told the children of Israel (ALL the Children of Israel, not just the tribe of Judah), as they were coming into the land of Caanan:

Deuteronomy 9:4-7; 13, 24

[4] Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the LORD thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, “For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land:” but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee.

[5] Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (See **Gen 15:18-21**)

[6] Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people.

[7] Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the LORD.

[13] Furthermore the LORD spake unto me, saying, “I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people:”

[24] “Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you.”

The Lord is explaining that the Promised Land they will be entering was NOT given to them because *they* were righteous; rather it was because the people dwelling therein were *more wicked*. The only reason they could possess the Promised Land was because God made a promise to Abraham that his seed would dwell therein, and Abraham was a friend to God!

2 Chronicles 2:7-8:

[7] Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy **friend** forever?

Isaiah 41:8:

[8] But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my **friend**.

The Lord covenanted with Abraham that through his worthy seed the blessings of the Gospel would be taken to all the earth, that all of the families of the earth might be blessed. Look at **Abr 2:9-11:**

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; [*Priesthood is the organization that administers the Gospel*]

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;

11 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is, in thy Priesthood) and in thy seed (that is, thy Priesthood), for I give unto thee a promise that this right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal

seed, or the seed of the body) 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.

The Lord is telling Abraham that because he is so faithful, the rights of the Priesthood will be held by him and his posterity after him for all generations of time and even throughout the eternities.

That means the right to administer the Gospel will be held by him and his posterity after him. His posterity are those who accept the Gospel. Not only will his literal seed have this right to administer the Gospel, but also those who are adopted into the family of Abraham.

The right to administer the Gospel means we will be the servants to other people. We shall minister unto them and shall **administer** the Gospel to all those who are willing to accept it by covenant. Abraham was promised he would have posterity without number – even as the sands on the seashore. Abraham did not want children just for the sake of having a lot of children; he loved God so much that he wanted a righteous posterity who would serve God and serve mankind. Because of that desire he was blessed with Isaac. The Jews are chosen (as all the children of Jacob [Israel] are) because they are descendants of Abraham. Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph who was sold into Egypt, are also chosen. They are the patriarchs and have to be gathered out first in order to assist in the gathering of the rest of the tribes of Israel—not just the physical gathering but also the spiritual gathering. It was because of Abraham, not because of our own good works.

2 Ne 30:2

For behold, I say unto you that as many of the Gentiles as will repent are the covenant people of the Lord; and as many of the Jews as will not repent shall be cast off; **for the Lord covenanteth with none save it be with them that repent and believe in his Son**, who is the Holy One of Israel. *[All who repent and receive the Gospel become the seed of Abraham, referring back to Abr 2:10]*

Birthright & Patriarchal Priesthood

Question: *Under the patriarchal priesthood, all of the first-born sons were given priesthood, is that right?*

In the old days under the patriarchal order, the father had an inherent responsibility for the spiritual welfare of his direct line posterity (See D&C 107:40). There also needed to be a priesthood authority, a right that could function outside of the direct family line, to assist the father's posterity if a given family's father is absent or unworthy or dead. This right was given (usually) to the first-born son of the father, as he becomes the “birthright son”; and this birthright is then given to his first-born son and then to his first-born son, and so on. This right to administer the Gospel outside of one's direct lineage was the Melchizedek Priesthood. It was the first-born's responsibility to administer the Gospel, both temporally and spiritually, to all his father's posterity. The Melchizedek authority (Christ's authority), you remember, is without father or mother, and it is rightly called *the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God* (D&C 107:3; Heb 7:1-3).

Question: *What about Ishmael and Esau? They were Abraham's posterity too.*

They were, and they each received their own individual blessings from their fathers. However, they each married wives who were descendants of Ham's wife, Egyptus, which restricted them from *administering* the Gospel, but it did not restrict them from participating in the Gospel.

Another example where priesthood authority is restricted was after the children of Israel lost the rights to the Melchizedek authority. After that, only the first-born sons of Aaron and the first-born sons of Levi could administer and function in the Aaronic and Levitical Priesthoods (see Numbers 8:16-19). This restriction remained in effect until Christ came and restored the 'greater priesthood' that was lost (see D&C 84: 19-27).

Question: *If a first-born son is not worthy, to whom does the priesthood responsibility go?*

You remember Jacob had twelve sons. Reuben was Jacob's first born through his first wife, Leah, but through his own wicked actions, he lost his right to become the "birthright son." That right was then given to Joseph, the first-born son of the 2nd wife, Rachel, even though technically he was Jacob's 11th son. The line of authority goes not from first born of the first wife to the second born, but from the firstborn of the first wife to the firstborn of the second wife. Concubinal children follow the natural children. Joseph, the one sold into Egypt, became the eventual savior of their family, both temporally and spiritually. Reuben was the first born, but he did not become the birthright son. This is the way priesthood responsibility was given in the Old Testament. We even see this in our Book of Mormon, with the ever-present conflict between Laman and Nephi. Laman, as Lehi's first born, became angry when Nephi was given the birthright authority for the temporal and spiritual welfare of his father's family (2 Ne 1:23-25, 28). "Our younger brother thinks to rule over us," they said. (2 Ne 5:3). This is essentially what Cain said about his younger brother, Abel, who became Cain's priesthood leader.

26 And Cain was wroth, and listened not any more to the voice of the Lord, neither to Abel, his brother, who walked in holiness before the Lord. (Moses 5: 26)

Question: *Regarding Ishmael, was he not a son of a concubine (Hagar), and therefore could not become a birthright son, even though he was Abraham's first born son?*

Yes and No. Hagar belonged to Sarah. Hagar was Sarah's concubine, and any children born to her were Sarah's. Hagar's first son, Ishmael, did not belong to Hagar, he belonged to Sarah. A concubine is nothing more than a surrogate mother. In a concubinal relationship, the concubine belonged to the head of the house, the wife. When children were born through the concubine, they would be named, not by the concubine, but by the wife, the concubine's owner or mistress. Hagar was a slave given to Sarah by Pharaoh when Sarah became Pharaoh's wife while she and Abraham were in Egypt. Hagar was given to her to be her slave. Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham so that she [Sarah] could have children through Abraham.

Anciently, when it came time for the concubine to give birth, the concubine would sit on the knees of her mistress as though the mistress was giving birth to that child. In this case Sarah has a son through Hagar named Ishmael. Ishmael begins to grow into a lad. Hagar loves him and Abraham loves him too. Sarah later has a son named Isaac. He is Sarah's first-born son.

The next Patriarch is not chosen through patrilineal lines, but rather through matrilineal lines. When it comes time to choose a new Patriarch, Sarah tells Abraham to cast out the bondwoman and her son, in part because Hagar had begun to take glory in herself, talking as though she were a wife, making references to “her son,” which he wasn't. Sarah then told Abraham to expel both Hagar and her son out of camp.

10 Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.

11 And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son.

12 And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. (Gen 21:10-12) *[Abraham is told he must do whatever Sarah tells him to do, because she is the one who chooses who the birthright son is to be.]*

Another important point: Hagar was an Egyptian (Gen 16:1), and thus none of her descendants could hold the rights of priesthood administration. The same thing occurs with Judah and his wife, Shuah, a Canaanite. Canaan was the fourth son of Ham and Egyptus, and as such his descendants could not administer the rights of the priesthood either (Abr 1:23-24, 26).

If you remember the story of Judah and Tamar, Tamar married Judah's oldest son, Er, but he died before he had any descendants. According to the Levirate Law of Marriage, Er's brother, Onan, was to marry Tamar so that her first born could become the next birthright son. Onan didn't want the double portion of Judah's inheritance to pass to that son instead of his own and decided to make sure Tamar didn't become pregnant. Onan was killed for his misconduct, and Judah's next youngest son, Shelah was too young – he was not even out of high school. It's a long story, but eventually Judah becomes the father of Tamar's first born son, a son who had the right to receive the birthright and priesthood. Judah's other sons, because of who their mother was, would not have had the right to administer the Gospel anyway, so we can see how the Lord is making sure all things occur in the way they need to come together. You can read more in Genesis 38 (Also Matt 22:23-24). Below is from the Jewish Encyclopedia:

According to Gen. xxxviii., he married the daughter of the Canaanite Shuah, by whom he had three sons, Er, Onan, and Shelah. Er married Tamar, but died childless. According to custom his widow was given in marriage to his brother Onan, who was slain for misconduct; and she was then promised to the third son, Shelah. This promise not having been fulfilled, she resorted to stratagem, and became by Judah the mother of Pharez and Zarah. Pharez was ancestor of the royal house of David (Ruth iv. 12, 18-22; I Chron. ii. 3-16). (<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/8954-judah>)

The concern over maintaining the patriarchal priesthood line is voiced by Rebekah after Jacob receives his father's birthright blessing. Rebekah tells Isaac:

[46] ... I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: **if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth**, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, **what good (value) shall my life do me?** (Gen 27:46)

Rebekah realized that the priesthood blessing just given by Isaac would have no effect and be invalid "if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth," as Esau did. If Jacob married a daughter of Heth, he would not be able to pass the patriarchal priesthood to his posterity, thus losing the

birthright and patriarchal authority that Rebekah prepared him for. She was determined to have Jacob marry into a family that could have the right to administer the Gospel. Heth was the second born son of Canaan, and Ham was his grandfather (see Gen 10:6-15).

***Question:** Where do Keturah's descendants fit in? She was Abraham's wife after Sarah died.*

Keturah was a descendant of Shem, the birthright son of Noah, and therefore, could hold the rights of the priesthood. Abraham and Keturah had 6 children, one of which was Midian. When Moses fled Egypt, he went into the land of Midian, and there married the daughter of Jethro, a descendant of Midian. It was from Jethro that Moses received the Melchizedek Priesthood. It was Jethro who gave Moses wise counsel concerning the governance of the Children of Israel, explaining that he could set up leaders over 50's and 100's, thereby delegating much of the responsibilities to others besides himself. The governing of Israel was under the Melchizedek Order rather than the Patriarchal Order. Jethro held the Melchizedek priesthood because he was a descendant of Keturah and Abraham.

Coming Unto Christ – Our Responsibility

***Question:** How would you describe a person who has come unto Christ?*

The Lord has established His Priesthood organization to administer His Gospel so that *you* might have everything *you* need to have a personal relationship with Christ. The Church is His Priesthood organization. When the Bishop or Stake President reads a letter to the congregation from “the Church,” we understand that the letter is coming from the First Presidency, not from all the members of the Church. It is their (the Priesthood Leadership) responsibility to make sure the sacrament is on the table when you get there on Sunday, and that the baptismal font is filled when you choose to be baptized, all to assist you in developing a personal relationship with Christ. In order to help you come to a better understanding of the scriptures and the Gospel, and to help you develop the character of God, they have set up auxiliaries for that purpose.

The Church leadership cannot ‘repent’ you, or give you faith, or atone for you. What they can do and have done is provide everything *you* need to develop **your own** personal relationship with Christ and His atonement. When you understand that, it doesn't matter what, if anything else, they do. For example: If the sacrament is prepared when I get there on Sunday so that I can make a covenant with God, it doesn't matter to me if every one of those priests were stone drunk on Saturday night. It is my responsibility to develop my own relationship with God – not theirs. It doesn't matter to me if the Bishop does not know what he was talking about in his talk the week before. It doesn't matter to me how the tithing money is spent in Salt Lake. Their responsibility is to make sure I have every opportunity to develop a relationship with Christ and His atonement.

The Church is a Priesthood Organization that has the responsibility of making sure you have everything you might need to develop a relationship with Christ and His atonement. You cannot blame the Priesthood or the local church or any of its leaders if you don't have a relationship with Christ. You cannot say they kept you from having a relationship with Christ, for if that were so you could not be judged according to your own works (Mos 16:10; Alma 9:28; 11:44; 33:22; 42:23; 3 Ne 27:15). You cannot say they kept you from developing your own relationship with

Christ or that the devil made you do it. Developing a relationship with Christ is your responsibility and yours alone. It is a function of agency. The church leadership and the church organization is there to assist you in developing your relationship with Christ, but the responsibility is yours, not theirs.

There is a great thing we do that is key to coming unto Christ. First turn to **D&C 27:2**. This is what we get to participate in. It is the great secret to coming unto Christ. We talk about the bread and water being blessed, but that is not really what is going on.

2 For, behold, I say unto you, that it mattereth not what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink when ye partake of the sacrament, if it so be that ye do it with an eye single to my glory—remembering unto the Father my body which was laid down for you, and my blood which was shed for the remission of your sins.

The priests are not really pronouncing a blessing on the bread or the water; rather, they are blessing the people who partake of those emblems. It's a prayer for you, the individual. Let's turn now to **D&C 20:77**:

O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread *to the souls of all those [us] who partake of it*, **that** they [we] may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, **that** they [we] are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them; **that** they [we] may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.

The priesthood is praying that everyone who partakes of the sacrament will be able to do those things they need in order to create a relationship with Christ and be born again.

Understanding that, what does it mean to partake of the sacrament unworthily? It means to partake of it without being willing to do those things. No one is coerced. The sacrament prayer is for those who are willing and who want to develop that relationship with Christ and that atonement. As we remember his body and his blood and take upon ourselves His name, the Lord is willing to have his Spirit to always be with us. And we promise to always remember Him and to keep His commandments.

All the Priesthood leaders in the Church, from the Prophet to the Primary worker, work for the members, to assist them in developing a relationship with God and Jesus Christ, His Son. I'm not there to determine whether or not they are doing their job right – they are there to make sure I can partake of the sacrament. They are there so that there is a Sunday school where I can learn more about Christ and His atonement. We don't work for them – they work for us. He that is the greatest in the Kingdom shall be the servant of all. They are there to assist me.

I show my love of God and my fellowman by also doing the things I covenant to do in that sacrament prayer and in the Temple. I show my love of God and my fellowman by assisting others

to come unto Christ as others have assisted me to do the same. The key to it all, the secret to being born again, the secret to coming unto Christ, is something we have an opportunity to participate in every Sunday. It's a wonderful, wonderful thing!

The first thing Christ did after He introduced himself to all of the people in Bountiful was teach them to have faith in Him, repent, be baptized and receive the Holy Ghost (3 Ne 11:32-40). The next thing He did in Chapter 18 was to make sure they all had an opportunity to partake of the sacrament (3 Ne 18:1-12). He then began to bless them and teach all those who wanted to know more.

If I feel I have been cheated out of a personal relationship with Christ or out of any other spiritual experience, there is only one person to blame, and that is myself. I cannot blame any of the priesthood leadership, no matter how good or how bad they are. No matter what they know, what they think they know, or what they don't know, the responsibility to have a relationship with Christ and that atonement falls upon me, the individual, and not on anybody else. No leader can lead me astray insofar as those ordinances and my relationship with Christ goes. In order for a leader to lead me astray they would have to come and prevent me from partaking of the sacrament or from partaking of the other ordinances, thereby failing in the responsibility they have been given. The Gospel is true and the Church is the only authorized organization to administer the Gospel of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost to its members. This is the Church's (the priesthood leadership's) only responsibility.

Your responsibility in partaking of the sacrament is “to always remember him.” I've mentioned this before, but when I travel to places like the sacred grove, or the Garden Tomb, I'll often hear someone say, “I really felt the Spirit there.” The reason they felt the Spirit in the sacred grove or the Garden Tomb is not because the Holy Ghost has set up residence in the sacred grove or the Garden Tomb so that He can pounce on people and bear witness to them. The Holy Ghost does not live in the sacred grove or have a winter home in Jerusalem – no, the reason these people say they felt the Spirit in these places is because the door to the residence of the Holy Ghost is only opened by our hearts and minds “as we always remember Him.” The reason these people say they felt the Spirit is because, for that moment, they have pushed out the worldly distractions and focused their minds on the events that happened in those places. For a moment they begin thinking about and remembering those events that occurred, and begin thinking about Christ and that atonement. This is what opens the door into their hearts and minds for the Spirit to slip in and bear witness to them that the events they are thinking about actually happened and are true. That's why they felt the Spirit there. “That they might always remember Him, that they may always have His Spirit to be with them.” That is my responsibility and your responsibility.

When I discovered this, I realized I can have just as a significant and just as a spiritual experience sitting in my pew in my sacrament meeting in my ward building as I can sitting on the stones where Christ bled in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Our scriptures use three prepositions when talking about the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost can come **on** you; He can be **in** you, and He can be **with** you. Joseph Smith explained that there is a difference: The Holy Ghost came **on** Cornelius, a non-member, to inspire him to send messengers down to Joppa in order to get Peter to come minister to him. The Holy Ghost can be **with** you as

a Comforter, to assist and comfort your heart when needed. For the Holy Ghost to be **in** you, an ordinance is required. When you receive the gift of the Holy Ghost it can become a sanctifier or cleanser of your sins, as the Book of Mormon teaches (See Moroni 6:4, Alma 13:12; 3 Ne 27:20). A careful reading of the scripture teaches us that the Holy Ghost is the one who actually forgives our sins (Read carefully 2 Ne 31:13-17). This is *after* we have been baptized and *after* we have demonstrated our willingness to take upon ourselves His name and to keep His commandments and to always remember Him. *This is what the sacrament is all about – it gives us the opportunity to learn to be born again.* It is the process we get to participate in every week as we *learn* to come unto Christ and *learn* to have that relationship with Him. It is our opportunity to act, not just to say, but to do those things spoken in that prayer by the Aaronic Priesthood as they kneel before that symbolic sacrificial altar every Sunday.

What do we have to do to be Born Again? Witness unto the Father that we are willing to take upon ourselves his name, remembering His body and His blood, and keep His commandments – and then always remember Him that we might have his Spirit to be with us. This is a great opportunity and a great ordinance, and we get to participate in it on a regular basis, week after week!

Remember, when we are baptized, we are entering into a covenant of obedience to keep the commandments of God. Baptism is not a washing away of sins, it is a covenant of obedience, and then we are promised the gift of the Holy Ghost. Being cleansed from our sins and being sanctified is not the same thing. Look at **Moses 6:60**:

60 For by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified, and
by the blood ye are sanctified;

Moroni 6:4 sheds light on this topic:

And after they had been received unto baptism, and were wrought upon and **cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost**, they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ;

When God forgives the sins of those who have truly repented, He says, “I, the Lord, remember them no more” (D&C 58:42). When you have repented and those sins beset you no more, if He remembers them no more, did they ever exist? IF God lives in an environment where the past, present, and future are continually manifest, and He remembers them no more, then those sins never existed.

There are four fundamental factors why this apostasy is going on in the church at the present time, and there are two fundamental reasons for this: **1)** We're not using the standard for truth and doctrine, which is the scriptures. We do not realize that the scriptures are our standard. A standard is something that cannot change, and the scriptures are to be our standard. Even the prophets are held accountable to the doctrine contained in the scriptures. The Brethren are not our standard. They are there to point us toward Christ. The youth and adults who are falling away today are trusting in the arm of flesh – their own - and are trusting in that god who is everywhere but nowhere – *Google* is the name of this god. (*lots of laughter*) They are trusting in something other than the scriptures for their standard.

For the last two generations, sacrament meeting topics have been assigned based on talks in the *Ensign* rather than the scriptures, with the result that the rising generation may forget that our doctrines are to come from the scriptures. They don't know where to turn for truth, and now, whoever they believe becomes their standard, whether it may be their own arm of flesh, their professors, teachers, or social media.

(2) The second reason for this apostasy is that many lack an understanding of how much they need a relationship with Christ and His atonement. How and why did King Benjamin convince his people to enter in their covenants in those opening chapters of the Book of Mosiah? What did he say to convince them to be born again? He taught them that they must remember and retain in their remembrance their own nothingness before God, for they were nothing without that atonement and Jesus Christ. He taught them to realize just how much they needed to place their trust and faith in Christ and in His atoning blood (Mosiah 4:2, 6-7). The whole Church organization is there to assist us in getting and maintaining that relationship. King Benjamin was successful in getting his people to realize how much they needed Christ and that atonement. In **Chapter 5** we see a connection to our sacrament prayer.

Mosiah 5:8

And **under this head ye are made free**, and **there is no other head whereby ye can be made free**. **There is no other name given** whereby salvation cometh; therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives. *[Google is not going to save anybody!]* (See also D&C 18:22-25)

Over the last two months in my ward, forty seven members have got up in our fast and testimony meetings to share their testimonies. Of the forty seven, only seven of them mentioned Christ, and **only two bore a testimony of Christ**. My point is that somehow the emphasis of Jesus Christ and his atonement has been pushed into the background, and the focus is off. I'm pleased to say that there are signs that there is movement to bring it back around...it's coming.

[In Chapter 5 of Br Porter's book, The Threshing Floor of Faith, he writes about the perfect storm of four converging cultural elements that are influencing both young and old to question their faith and the faith of their fathers: Education, the Linear View of Time; the Saeculum, and the Internet (See pp 45-57)]

The great thing about the Gospel is—no matter how you were brought up, no matter how many times you were beat by your parents, or should have been beaten by your parents—no matter what has happened in your life, the Gospel is there to make sure that you don't have to be a victim. Because there is a Christ, a Savior, and an atonement, we need not feel as though we are a victim. A victim never progresses, especially a spiritual victim. Victims are always pointing their finger at somebody else, or casting fault at the feet of someone other than themselves. Agency can't work if you are always placing blame on others. The Gospel makes sure that no one has to be a victim to any circumstance.

Question: *Why does the Universal Church (Catholics) consider Peter to be their first Pope?*

According to tradition, Peter was considered to be the Bishop of Rome. The way those Bishops were called at that time is the same way we call our leaders today: The Quorum of the Twelve would have to get together and approve the new leadership. Anciently, when the Quorum of the Twelve were out and about in different places, if new Bishops needed to be approved, time and distance or death prevented them from meeting as a Quorum to make those approvals. That is what began the separation and apostasy from authority. When Peter died, someone took over the position as Bishop of Rome as Peter's successor.

Peter was not the Bishop of the Church; he was actually the President of the Melchizedek Priesthood organization of the Church. Again, according to tradition, after Peter's death, each "bishop" would name his own successor, and that successor would name his own successor, and so on, even though the Catholic Church was not formally organized until the 3rd Century. For over 200 years after Peter died, Christianity was dominated by a multitude of other pagan or non-Christian religions, but when Constantine became Emperor of the Roman Empire in the 3rd Century, he decreed that Christianity become the state's religion. It is only then that a Bishop in Rome was actually called (About 325 AD). Their traditional claim is that their authority comes from Peter when he was in Rome. Well, by the end of the 1st Century all of the Apostles had died or had been killed, and there was no one to pass on the rightful authority held originally by the Quorum of the Twelve.

According to Catholic tradition, Peter is supposed to be buried directly beneath the altar in St Peter's Basilica. We know Peter is not there because, as a resurrected being, he, along with James and John, appeared to Joseph Smith. It wasn't until Helena, the mother of Constantine, that these traditions began to spread. She made the decisions as to where those sacred events took place. Everything is based on tradition. As you know we also teach a lot of things that are tradition.

***Question:** How did Christianity get started in Egypt?*

After the time of Christ, the Apostles go in several different directions. Thomas goes into India and the Far East. Paul goes up through the Roman Empire, as he is a Roman citizen. Peter and James generally hang around Jerusalem because that is the religion's capitol, or the "Salt Lake" of ancient Christianity. Phillip goes to Egypt and teaches in Egypt. Egypt became the first country in the world to become totally Christian. The teachings of Phillip become very important in understanding New Testament Apocrypha. The Gospel of Phillip is found in that volume. Christianity was the sole religion in Egypt.

The curator of the Egyptian Collections in the British Museum, A.E. Wallis Budge, said "there was never a people more prepared to accept Christianity than were the Egyptians because their myths centered around Osiris, who was a son of God, and was killed by his wicked brother, Seth. He was resurrected and gave everyone the opportunity to become resurrected and exalted." That's the basic Egyptian myth (story of their origins). The entire country remained Christian until the Persians invaded, and then the Muslims, after 600 AD. When the Islamic religion took over the government of Egypt, they made it impossible for any non-Muslim to conduct business, and they were also taxed at a higher rate. Basically they were cut out of the economy and their taxes were increased. In order to survive and provide for their families, many of those early Egyptian Christians became Muslim. Today the population of Egypt is only about 5% Christian. Egyptian

Christians are called Copts or the Coptic Church. *Coptos* is the Greek word for Egypt. The true Egyptian Christians all come from a heritage of Christianity.

Question: *In your future book about the Gospel in Egypt, will you be incorporating the teachings of Abraham as well?*

Oh Yes! It is about Abraham and Joseph Smith. I'll show the verses in Abraham that will show what is going on in Egypt. It will show that Joseph was correct in his translation of Abraham.

Question: *Is there a connection with the Jewish community in Elephantine and their Temple?*

There is, but remember that there were Jewish communities all over the world. The oldest of these is in Cairo where Joseph and Mary took Jesus when they were warned to flee from the death decree of Herod. Elephantine was one of those other communities that had established themselves outside of Israel.

Question: *How would you compare the book, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, compiled and arranged by Joseph Fielding Smith and the Priesthood / Relief Society Manual, The Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith?*

They are close. Joseph Fielding Smith changed the tense in a number of entries, and he also relied on the footnotes and opinions of others before him, namely BH Roberts, who was also a Church Historian. I refer to my copy on a regular basis. Since its publication new diary accounts have come forward and have been published, and we are seeing many of them being incorporated into the *Joseph Smith Papers* project. In the Priesthood manual, for instance, the King Follett Sermon is referenced in Chapter 17, but it does not contain his entire remarks. The entries in the manual are excerpts from many different sources. The best sources for the actual teachings of Joseph Smith are **1) *The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith***, just mentioned, **2) *The Words of Joseph Smith***, by Andrew Ehat and Lyndon Cook [It's is now a rare book...selling for several hundreds of dollars if you can find one] and **3) *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith***, by Dean Jesse. These are the three best sources of the Teachings of Joseph Smith. About 10 years ago, Larry Dahl and Donald Q Cannon compiled Joseph's teachings, calling it *The Encyclopedia of Joseph Smith's Teachings*. All topics are arranged according to subject, and they include the source or reference related to each topic. It's a pretty good resource when searching various subjects or topics.

Calling and Election

Question: *Back where we read that God “will seal us his”...is that connected to what Joseph taught about having your calling and election made sure?*

This is my opinion only, but I think it is connected with what we see in John 1:12, where those who truly believe in Christ are given power to become the sons of God. In all references in scriptures, it is always written that we can either “become the sons and daughters of God,” or power is given us to become such (Mosiah 27:25; Ether 3:14; D&C 11:30; 34:3; Moses 6:68).

When we speak of sealing families together here in this life, we are actually talking about the process of becoming sons and daughters of God. It is His family we are sealed to, which makes us an heir and joint-heir with Jesus Christ, able to inherit all that the father hath (D&C 84: 38). As individuals, being born again and creating the character that is worthy of being His son or daughter is our main objective here. When we embrace God and He embraces us, that is the fulness of the atonement – we are becoming one with Him!

The calling and election that takes place is an ordinance that is sometimes called the second anointing, the more sure word of prophecy, or the Second Comforter. Joseph said we need to be striving for it and be able to receive it in this life, but it will not necessarily happen here. It can come by ordinance or by manifestation. Both Joseph Smith and Enos experienced a washing and a cleansing, not by ordinance, but by manifestation. What we call a *calling and election* or second anointing can come by either way. It does not have to be both. You can receive it from God the same way the Brother of Jared or Abraham did. Neither of them participated in what we call an ordinance. Christ Himself can declare unto a person that his salvation is sure (2 Ne 1:15; Enos 1:5-8; Mosiah 26:20; Ether 3:13; Moroni 10:34). I believe it is at the time we are guaranteed exaltation that we are sealed to God.

Comment: The devil tries to seal us his, too.

Yes, just as someone can have their calling and election made sure, so also can they have their destruction made sure and be sealed to the devil (Alma 34:35; 40:21-26; Hel 13:38).

When an individual is washed and pronounced clean, the atonement is now fulfilled for that person, and if he commits any sin after that point, he will have to suffer for his own sins. Such a person is ‘delivered over the buffetings of Satan only *until* the day of redemption’. That means those buffetings will end at that person’s resurrection. We read in D&C 132:26 that unless innocent blood is shed, those persons will still receive their exaltation and come forth in that first resurrection, after suffering for their own sins (D&C 19:17).