

land and that the wicked would be utterly destroyed (Morm. 1:19; cf. Mosiah 12:7–8).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Welch, John W. “Judicial Process in the Trial of Abinadi.” Provo, Utah, 1981.

LEW W. CRAMER

ABORTION

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints considers the elective termination of pregnancy “one of the most . . . sinful practices of this day” (*General Handbook of Instructions*, 11-4), although not necessarily murder. The Lord has said, “Thou shalt not . . . kill, nor do *anything* like unto it” (D&C 59:6; emphasis added in Packer, p. 85).

Members of the Church must not “submit to, be a party to, or perform an abortion” (*General Handbook*, 11-4). The only exceptions are where “incest or rape was involved, or where competent medical authorities certify that the life of the mother is in jeopardy, or that a severely defective fetus cannot survive birth” (Packer, p. 85). Even these exceptions do not justify abortion automatically. Church members are counseled that they should consider abortion in such cases only after consulting with their BISHOP and receiving divine confirmation through prayer.

“Church members who encourage, perform, or submit to an abortion are subject to Church discipline as appropriate” to help them repent (*General Handbook*, 11-4). As far as has been revealed, the sin of abortion is one for which a person may repent and gain forgiveness (*General Handbook*, 11-4; Packer, p. 86).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

General Handbook of Instructions. Salt Lake City, 1989.
Packer, Boyd K. “Covenants.” *Ensign* 20 (Nov. 90):84–86.

MARY K. BEARD

ABRAHAM

Few biblical characters figure so prominently in LDS faith as does Abraham. Belief that he was a real person is shared by others, but the LDS ap-

proach is unique: Revelations received by the Prophet Joseph SMITH confirm the basic historicity of Genesis and add information echoed in ancient sources, many of which have emerged since his day.

The BOOK OF ABRAHAM as restored by Joseph SMITH autobiographically recounts Abraham’s early life, explaining why he was singled out as the pivotal recipient of divine promises for the blessing of mankind. Not only had he been foreordained in PREMORTAL LIFE (Abr. 3:23; cf. *Apocalypse of Abraham* 22:1–5), but as a young man in Ur he opposed idolatry and human sacrifice, ironically turning him into an intended victim (Abr. 1:5–20; cf. *Genesis Rabbah* 38:13). The irony increases when God’s last-minute rescue of Abraham foreshadowed what would transpire at Abraham’s offering of Isaac.

After marrying SARAH and learning of his lineal right to the PATRIARCHAL ORDER OF THE PRIESTHOOD as disclosed in the “records of the fathers” (Abr. 1:2–4, 26, 31; 2:2; *Jubilees* 12:27; cf. D&C 107:40–57), Abraham traveled to Haran, where he apparently received his ORDINATION (Abr. 2:9–11; *WJS*, pp. 245, 303). He also saw the Lord, who gave him remarkable promises: Abraham would be blessed above measure; his posterity would carry the gospel to all nations; and all who received it would bear his name, be accounted his posterity, and bless him as their father (Abr. 2:6–11; cf. Gen. 12:1–3).

Accompanied by their converts, Abraham and Sarah proceeded to Canaan (Abr. 2:15; *Genesis Rabbah* 39:14). Famine soon forced them to Egypt, but not before God commanded Abraham to ask Sarah to pose as his sister (Abr. 2:22–25; *Genesis Apocryphon* 19:14–21), and then showed him a vision of the cosmos and creation so that he could teach these things to the Egyptians (Abr. 3–5; cf. *Sefer Yetsirah*).

The book of Abraham narrative ends here, but the book’s last facsimile (no. 3) depicts Pharaoh—who traditionally claimed exclusive possession of priesthood and kingship (Abr. 1:25–27)—honoring Abraham’s priesthood by allowing him to occupy the throne and instruct the court in astronomy (cf. *Pseudo-Eupolemus*; Josephus, *Antiquities* 1.viii.2). Pharaoh’s recognition of Abraham’s priesthood was unknown in any other ancient source until the 1947 discovery of the *Genesis Apocryphon*, purporting, like the book of Abraham, to contain an autobiographical account of Abraham but continu-