Abraham and Sarah and the blessings promised to them. For example, anyone who is not a descendant of Abraham but receives the Holy Ghost becomes the seed of Abraham (TPJS, pp. 149–50; Abr. 2:10; cf. Gal. 3:29), while each man magnifying the Melchizedek Priesthood likewise becomes Abraham’s seed (D&C 84:33–34). And each couple married eternally in the temple is promised the blessings of Abraham—posterity as the stars of heaven and sand of the seashore, meaning an eternal increase of posterity in the celestial kingdom (D&C 132:30; JD 11:151–52; 15:320).

Such blessings of innumerable posterity were promised to Abraham on several occasions (Abr. 3:13–14; Gen. 13:16; 15:5; 17:2, 6), but it was not until he demonstrated his willingness to offer Isaac as a sacrifice that the Lord guaranteed the promises (Gen. 22:16–18), showing, explains Joseph Smith, that any person who would attain eternal life “must sacrifice all things” (TPJS, p. 322). Accordingly, the Lord’s people must be “tried, even as Abraham,” to become sanctified through Abraham’s descendant Christ (D&C 101:4–5; Moro. 10:33) in preparation to “sit down in the kingdom of God, with Abraham” and Sarah (Alma 5:24) on thrones of glory to inherit the same blessings of exaltation already enjoyed by that exemplary couple (D&C 132:34–37; cf. Testament of Isaac 2:5–7).

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ABRAHAM, GOSPEL OF
See: Gospel of Abraham

ABRAHAMIC COVENANT
The divine archetypal covenant, of which Abraham’s covenant is an example, is the everlasting covenant of the GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST. By accepting the gospel, humankind can be redeemed from the doom of death and the blight of sin to enjoy eternal life with God.

Abraham’s mission was not new; it was like the mission of Adam, Enoch, and Noah. The same divine power—or priesthood—that gave them authority to promulgate the covenant of divine redemption for God’s children in their time was renewed with Abraham and his seed; it was explicitly to be perpetuated by him and his literal and spiritual heirs for all time (Gen. 12:1–3; Abr. 1:18–19; 2:6, 9–11).

ABRAHAM’S IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COVENANT MISSION From the records of his forefathers, Abraham learned of the true and living God and the saving priesthood powers. Although his immediate ancestors had fallen away from the gospel, he desired and received that true priesthood from Melchizedek, with its powers and responsibilities (Abr. 1:1–7, 18, 19, 31; D&C 84:14; Alma 13:14–19; Gen. 14:18–20).

The idolatrous Chaldeans had rejected Abraham and placed him to be sacrificed on an altar (Abr. 1:5–12); but the Lord rescued him and directed him to leave his home in Ur for a new land of promise (Gen. 11:27–32; 12:1–3; Abr. 1:1, 17; 2:1–5). Abraham took other family members with him to a place they named Haran, where he won additional converts to the way of the Lord. With them he departed to undertake his ministry in the land promised to him and to all his descendants who would hearken to the voice of the Lord (Abr. 2:6, 14–20; Gen. 12:4–8).

Abraham and his company settled first in the Bethel area, built an altar, and proclaimed the name of the Lord—a procedure he perpetuated in the homes he established thereafter (Gen. 12:8; 13:4, 18). Near Bethel, the covenant promises and responsibilities were renewed, and circumcision was the token of the covenant, to remind all bearers to keep themselves pure and free from sin (Gen. 17). Abraham became a man of good repute (Gen. 14:13, 18–20; 23:1–16) and was trusted by God, who commended him, saying, “I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment” (Gen. 18:19). The ultimate test and a revelation of the meaning of the redemptive covenant came to him in the divine requirement that, in anticipation of the sacrifice of the Savior, he be willing to sacrifice his own birthright son. He passed the test, his son was
saved, and he learned how all may be saved by the
divine Redeemer (Gen. 22:1–18; John 8:56; Jacob
4:5; Gal. 3:8).

Perpetuation of the Mission by Abraham’s
Heirs  Abraham’s lineal and spiritual successors
learned to keep the covenant by the things they
suffered. Their efforts sometimes prospered and
their neighbors were impressed (Gen. 17:1–7;

A Patriarchal Blessing given by Abra-
ham’s grandson Jacob (Israel) to his twelve sons
indicated future covenant roles for his descen-
dants, particularly those through Judah and Joseph
(Gen. 49:10, 22–26).

In addition to Jacob’s progeny, Abraham had
descendants through Ishmael, the son of Hagar—
Sarah’s handmaid. Of Ishmael’s family, “twelve
princes” are named who established “towns” and
“nations” (Gen. 25:12–16). Six sons by Abraham’s
wife Keturah are also named among his families:
Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and
Shuah (Gen. 25:2). To all these, he promised gifts
before his death (Gen. 25:1–7), including spiritual
gifts. One descendant, Jethro (or Reuel), priest of
Midian, provided Moses with a wife, ordained him
to the priesthood, and advised him in organizing,
governing, and judging Israel (Ex. 2:16–22; 18:12–
27; D&C 84:6–16). Scores of descendants of Esau,
with their tribal leaders and kings, are also named
(Gen. 36).

Today, millions claim Abraham as their father.
All may have his covenant privileges if they will
but do the works of Abraham. The Lord never told
Abraham that he alone would be blessed by the
covenant or that it would bless only his birthright
seed; the charge was that in him and his seed all
families of all nations should be blessed. All who
accept the covenant of the divine Redeemer be-
come Abraham’s seed spiritually and receive the
same blessings as his biological descendants (Gen.
12:1–3; Abr. 2:8–11; Gal. 3:7–9, 26–29; cf. John
8:33, 37, 39; Rom. 9:6–8).

The Abrahamic Heritage Through Moses
and the Prophets  The mission of Moses was to
deliver the children of Israel from the bondage of
slavery and death in Egypt and return them to the
promised land. They were to enter the land only
after the iniquity of the prior inhabitants had be-
come so excessive that they were no longer worthy
to retain it (1 Ne. 17:35; Gen. 15:13–16; 17:7–9;
JST Gen. 17:4–7; Ex. 4:22–23; 6:1–8). Through
Moses, the Lord gave the Israelites laws, ordi-
nances, statutes, and commandments to help them
remember their duties to God and to make them a
kingdom of priests, a holy people, and a peculiar
thure as God’s exemplary servants (Ex. 19:1–6,
20ff; Deut. 4:1–6; Mosiah 13:27–30).

Israel did well in living according to the cova-
nent in the last days of Moses and in the time of his
successor, Joshua; but in the days of the judges and
beyond, the Israelites lapsed into the ways of
neighboring nations instead of following the moral
and religious laws of the true God (Judg. 2:7–13;
17:6; 21:25). Because cycles of apostasy were re-
peated throughout Israel’s history, the Israelites
were periodically castigated by the prophets for
their sins and called to repentance (e.g., Isa. 1:1–
4; Hosea 4:1–6; Amos 3; Micah 3; Jer. 2; Ezek. 2).

Two themes dominate the messages of the Old
Testament prophets: (1) the promised Redeemer
would come, and though he would suffer rejection
by many, he would establish the promised way of
salvation for all; (2) in the last days the covenant of
Abraham would be reestablished (Isa. 2:2–5, 11;
37:11–28; Dan. 9:21–27; Micah 5:2–5; Zechar. 9:9–

Fulfillment and Perpetuation The Re-
deeemer did come, and the laws and prophecies
prepared the faithful to receive him (Gal. 3:16–24,
25–29; Acts 2:47; 5:14; 1 Cor. 15:6). He accom-
plished his mission of personal teaching and sacri-
fice on earth and then commissioned the new
Christian heirs of the covenant to make it known
unto all the world (Matt. 24:14; 28:19–20; Mark
16:15–16). However, over a period of centuries,
the priesthood power to administer the proper
ordinances of the covenant and some vital facets of
discipline were lost. All these have now been re-
stored in the latter-day dispensation of the gospel
(D&C 110:11–16) and are again available to all
families and nations of the earth.

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