

An aerial, isometric view of a vast ancient city, likely representing Sodom and Gomorrah. The city is enclosed by a high, multi-tiered wall. In the center, a prominent ziggurat with a blue-tinted top rises above the other structures. The city is divided into numerous courtyards and buildings, some with flat roofs and others with more complex architectural details. A river flows along the bottom left edge of the city. The overall color palette is dominated by earthy browns, tans, and greens, with a blue sky visible in the upper right corner.

Genesis 11-17; Abraham 1-2 Abraham and Sarah

Come Follow Me



The Tower is a Polemic

The temple of Marduk in Babylon was supposed to have been built by the Annunaki gods with specially prepared bricks. Its name, “house with the uplifted head,” reflects its claim to have reached the heavens. But Genesis unmercifully batters these claims. (Gordon Wenham, *Genesis World Biblical Commentary*, p. 244)

“Let us make our name great” versus “I will make your name great”

Genesis 11.4

Genesis 12.1-2

Ether 1.38-43





The blessing of Abram and Sarai

Bless them that bless thee – Gen. 12.1-5.

“I will put upon thee my name” – Abr. 1.18.

“Through thy ministry my name shall be known...” – Abr. 1.19.

“I will put upon thee my Priesthood.” – Abr. 1.18.

“My power shall be over thee.” – Abr. 1.18.

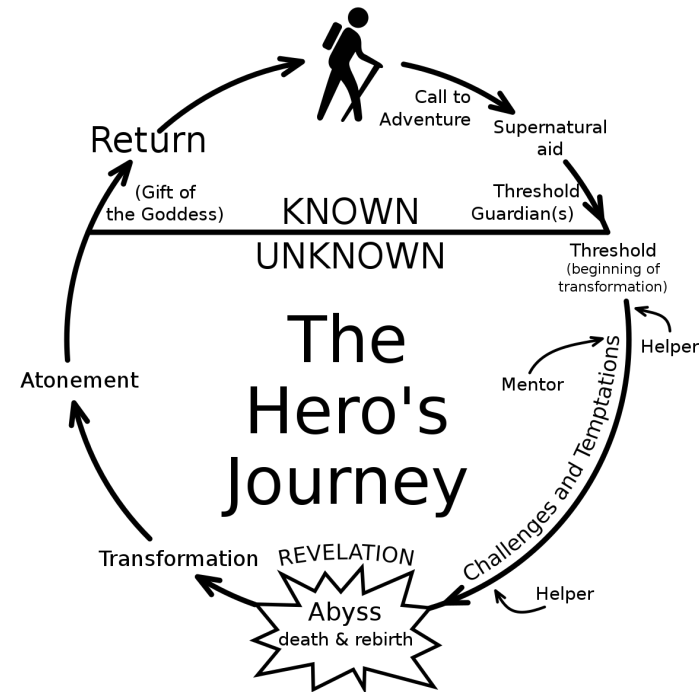
I will make thy name great! – Abr. 2.9.

Your seed will have the Priesthood and “this ministry” ... - Abr. 2.9.



Abram descended down into
Egypt וַיֵּרֵד אַבְרָם מִצְרַיִמָּה
(Gen. 12.10)

The descent “down” into Egypt can be read
typologically. This is a representation of the
“Heroes Journey.”





The Sacrifice of Sarah – Genesis 12

The Wife/Sister Motif

The book of Genesis contains a trilogy of incidents in which the wife/sister motif was used by either Abraham or Isaac. The first account describes Abraham's journey into Egypt after a famine enveloped the land of Canaan (see Genesis 12:10–13:4). Similar situations arose later when both Abraham and Isaac dwelt in the city of Gerar (see Genesis 20:1–2; 26:7–8).

The Wife/Sister Motif

Although in each instance the patriarch identified his wife as his sister to avert a potentially dangerous situation, these accounts have puzzled many readers and scholars because of the apparent deception involved. Why did the patriarchs resort to such action?

That is a difficult theological issue. In attempting to justify the patriarchs' actions, writers have proposed a number of different explanations that offer some significant insights into the three episodes...



The Wife/Sister Motif

We can gain a still greater understanding, especially of the episode of Abraham's sojourn in Egypt, if we take into account the insights provided by the book of Abraham and the [Genesis Apocryphon](#) (1QapGen), one of the scrolls from the Dead Sea corpus. By doing so, we see the hand of God in Abraham's request of Sarah, for Abraham's actions initiated a confrontation between himself and Pharaoh.

(Image: *The Genesis Apocryphon*, source: [Wikipedia](#))



The Wife/Sister Motif

Because of Abraham's obedience, God was able to introduce Himself to the Egyptian Pharaoh in power and glory. Even though it was only the first of a series of such encounters, it is clear that the God of Abraham was announcing His jurisdiction over all the families of the earth and not just over Abraham and his descendants. That concept is fundamental to our understanding of all of Jehovah's subsequent dealings with humankind throughout the Old Testament.

Strathearn, Gaye, "The Wife/Sister Experience: Pharaoh's Introduction to Jehovah" in *Sperry Symposium Classics: The Old Testament*, ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson (Provo and Salt Lake City: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, and Deseret Book 2005), 100–116.

The Dead Sea Genesis Apocryphon

74

ARAMAIC TRANSCRIPTION WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATION

COLUMN 20

A New Text and Translation with Introduction and Special Treatment of Columns 13-17 by Daniel A. Machiela, Brill, 2009.



[]]]	.1
ל	ל	ל	ל	.2
ל	ל	ל	ל	.3
ל	ל	ל	ל	.4
ל	ל	ל	ל	.5
ל	ל	ל	ל	.6
ל	ל	ל	ל	.7

1. []...[]
2. ...[]... []... how irresistible and beautiful is the image of her face; how
3. lovely h[er] foreh[ead, and] soft the hair of her head! How graceful are her eyes, and how precious her nose; every feature
4. of her face is radiating beauty! How lovely is her breast, and how beautiful her white complexion! As for her arms, how beautiful they are! And her hands, how
5. perfect they are! Every view of her hands is stimulating! How graceful are her palms, and how long and thin all the fingers of her hands! Her legs
6. are of such beauty, and her thighs so perfectly appportioned! There is not a virgin or bride who enters the bridal chamber more beautiful than she.
7. Her beauty surpasses that of all women, since the height of her beauty soars above them all! And alongside all this beauty she possesses great wisdom. Everything about her

Discovered 1946 in Cave 1 near Qumran, dated to 300 BCE- 100 CE.

8. יאא וכדי שמע מלכא מלי חרקנוש ומלי תרין חברוהי די פם חד תלתוהון ממללין שני רחמה ושלו
 9. לעובע דברהא וחזוהא ואחמה על כול שפיהא ונטבהא לה לאנתא ובעא למקטלי ואמרת שרי
 10. למלכא דאחוי הוא כדי הוית מתגר על דילהא ושביקת אנה אברם בדילהא ולא קטילת בכית אנה
 11. אברם בכי תקיף אנה ולוט בר אחי עמי בליליא כדי דביית מני שרי באונס *vacat*
 12. בליליא דן צלית ובעית ואחחנת ואמרת באחעצבא ודמעני נחון בריך אנתה אל עליון מרי לכול
 13. עלמים די אנתה מרה ושליש על כולא ובכול מלכי ארעא אנתה שליט למעבד בכולוהון דין וכען
 14. קבלתך מרי על פרעו צען מלך מצרין די דברת אנתחי מני בתוקף עבד לי דין מנה ואחוי ירך רבתא
 15. בה ובכול ביתה ואל ישלט בליליא דן לטמיא אנתחי מני וידעוך מרי די אנתה מרה לכול מלכי
 16. ארעא ובכית וחשית בליליא דן שלח לה אל עליון רוח מכדש למכתשה ולכול אנש ביתה רוח
 17. באישא והואת כתשא לה ולכול אנש ביתה ולא יכל למקרב בהא ואף לא ידעהא והיא עמה
 18. תרתין שנין ולטוף תרתין שנין תקפו וגברו עלוהי מכתשיא וגדיא ועל כול אנש ביתה ושלו
 19. קרא לכול ח'ל'מ'ן [י] מצרין ולכול אשפיא עם כול אסי מצרין הן יכולון לאסיוהה מן מכתשא דן ולאנש
 20. ביתה ולא יכלו כול אסיא ואשפיא וכול חכימיא למקם לאסיוהה ארי הוא רוחא כתש לכולוהון

8. is lovely! Now when the king heard the words of Herqanosh and his two companions—that the three of them spoke as one—he greatly desired her, and sent someone
 9. to be quick in acquiring her. When he saw her he was dumbfounded at all of her beauty, and took her for himself as a wife. He also sought to kill me, but Sarai said
 10. to the king, “He is my brother,” so that I would benefit on account of her. Thus I, Abram, was spared because of her, and was not killed. I,
 11. Abram, wept bitterly—I and Lot, my brother’s son, with me—on the night when Sarai was taken from me by force. *vacat*
 12. That night I prayed and entreated and asked for mercy. Through sorrow and streaming tears I said, “Blessed are you Most High God, my Lord, for all
 13. ages; for you are Lord and Ruler over everything. You are sovereign over all the kings of the earth, having power to enact judgment on all of them. So now
 14. I lodge my complaint before you, my Lord, concerning Pharaoh Zoan, king of Egypt, for my wife has been taken from me forcefully. Bring judgment against him on my behalf, and reveal your mighty hand
 15. through him and all of his house, that he might not prevail this night in rendering my wife unclean for me! Thus, they will come to know you, my Lord, that you are Lord over all the kings
 16. of the earth.” So I wept and was deeply troubled. During that night the Most High God sent a pestilential spirit to afflict him, and to every person of his household an evil
 17. spirit. It was an ongoing affliction for him and every person of his household, so that he was not able to approach her, nor did he have sexual relations with her. She was with him
 18. for two years, and at the end of two years the afflictions and hardships grew heavier and more powerful over him and every person of his household. So he sent
 19. a message to all the wise me[n] of Egypt, and to all the magicians, in addition to all the physicians of Egypt, (to see) if they could heal him and (every) person
 20. of his household of this affliction. But all of the physicians and magicians and all of the wise men were not able to succeed in curing him, for the spirit began afflicting all of them (too),

21. וערקו *vacat* באדין אתה עלי חרקנוש ובעא מני די אתה ואצלה על
 22. מלכא ואסטוך ידי עלוהי ויחה ארי בח'לם ח'ן [ני] ואמר לה לוט לא יכול אברם כדי לצליא על
 23. מלכא ושרי אנתוה עמה וכען אול אמר למלכא וישלח אנתה מנה לבעלהא ויצלה עלוהי ויחה
 24. וכדי שמע חרקנוש מלי לוט אול אמר למלכא כול מכתשיא וגדיא *vacat*
 25. אלן די מכתש ומחנגד מרי מלכא בדיל שרי אנתח אברם יח'בו נה לשרי לאברם בעלה
 26. ויחד מנכה למכתשא דן ורוח שחלמיא וקרא [מ]ל[כ]א לי ואמר לי מא עבדתה לי בדיל [מא] הוית אמר
 27. לי די אחתי היא והיא הואת אנתחך ונטבהא לי לאנתה הא אנתחך דבר'ה אול ועדי לך מן
 28. כול מדינת מצרין וכען צלי עלי ועל ביחי ותתגר מננה רוחא דא באישתא וצלית על[ה]ן [די] ארפא

21. so that they fled the scene! *vacat* At this point Herqanosh came to me asking that I come pray over
 22. the king and lay my hands upon him, so that he would live. This was because he had seen [me] in a dream... But Lot said to him, “Abram, my uncle, cannot pray over
 23. the king while his wife Sarai is with him! Now go and tell the king that he should send his wife away from himself to her husband; then he (Abram) will pray over him so that he might live.”
 24. *vacat* Now when Herqanosh heard the words of Lot, he went (and) said to the king, “All these afflictions and hardships
 25. that are afflicting and troubling my lord the king are due to Sarai, the wife of Abram. Just return Sarai to Abram her husband
 26. and this affliction and the spirit of foulness will depart from you.” So the [k]i[ng] called me and said to me, “What have you done to me?! Why were you saying
 27. to me ‘she is my sister’ when she was your wife, so that I took her as a wife for myself?! Here is your wife. Take her, go and get yourself out of
 28. every district of Egypt! But now pray over me and my household, that this evil spirit may be driven away from us. So I prayed over [hi]m, that I might heal



Lessons learned from Sarai

Gen. 12.10-20 (J)

Gen. 20.1-18 (E)

Gen. 26.6-14 (J)

ANE Motifs regarding Gods and Kings

Leaving safety - Adam/Eve, Noah, Nephi, Moses, Jesus Christ

Tasks – dress & keep it (Adam/Eve – Gen 2.15), boat building (Noah & Nephi), law writing, gathering (Moses), Atonement – Jesus Christ

Ritual Combat – Adam/Eve v. “Serpent”, Noah, Nephi, Moses v. Combat w/ “The Sea” – Jesus v. “The Serpent” ...

Sacrifice – All heroes do this as part of their story

Victory – The Fall was a “victory” in LDS teaching, Noah is victorious against the “Sea”

Enthronement – Adam & Noah are “kings” in a sense, Nephi is enthroned, Jesus = King

Temple Building on the Mount – Noah (Gen. 8.20-9.17), Nephi (2 Nephi 5.16), Moses (Ex. 19-31)

Order is Established – Noah renews peace, Nephi separates from chaos, Jesus establishes cosmic order & renewal

Sarai's Journey

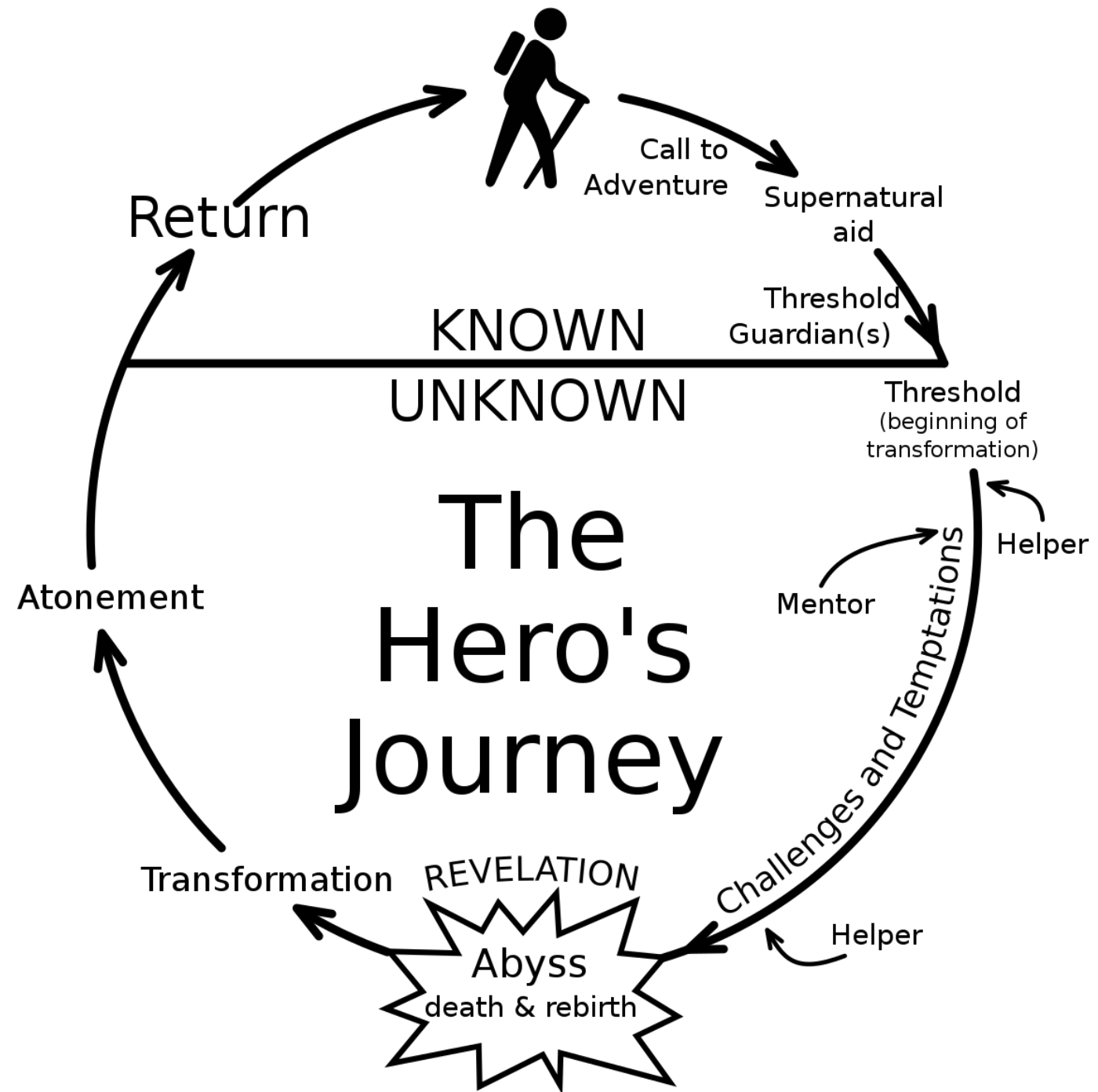
Three accounts of this battle:

Gen. 12.10-20 (J)

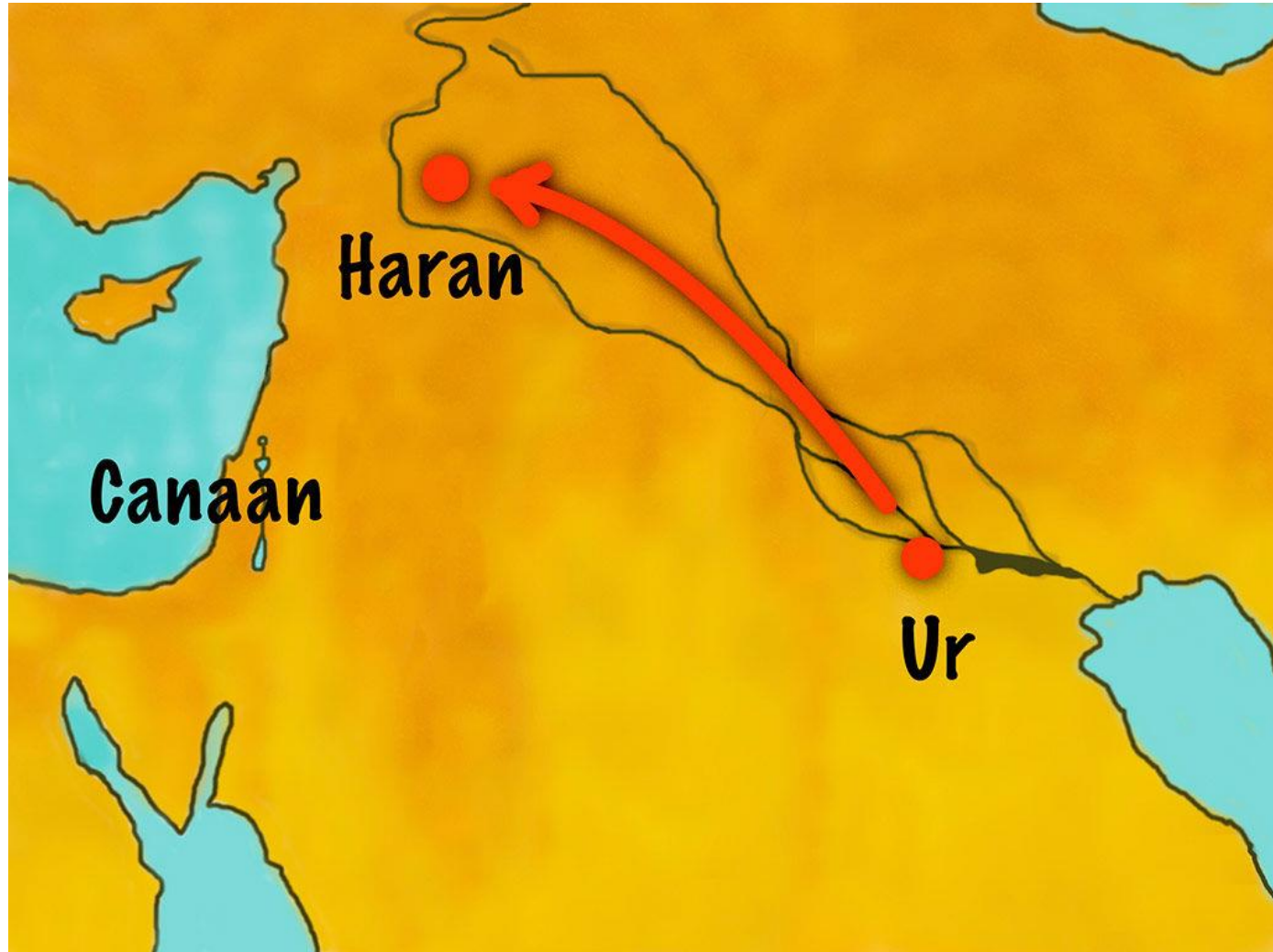
Gen. 20.1-18 (E)

Gen. 26.6-14 (J)

These legends contain Sarai's combat with the cosmic serpent, or the enemy. In each of these encounters, she overcomes the forces of evil, and with God's help, is triumphant. The completion of the temple and takeover of the land in David and Solomon's day are one way to see her victory and return in the arc of her story. Abraham's story is Sarah's story, and vice versa. Israel is the fulfilment of the promises given to Sarah and Abraham.



A famine in
the land
Genesis
12:10-13:4



Genesis 12 “She is my sister”

Two midrashic traditions identify (See Lech Lecha 41.2 and Vayera 52.13 in Midrash Rabba: Genesis, 3rd ed., trans. Rabbi Dr. H. Freedman (New York: Soncino Press, 1939), 1:334, 460.) the plague as leprosy. **Hugh Nibley**, in *Abraham in Egypt*, **argues that Pharaoh was afflicted with impotence**. That both these incidents should be associated with the creation of offspring is important, given the nature of the Abrahamic covenant that should pass through Abraham’s lineage. During these accounts Abraham and Sarah were still awaiting the time when they would be given a son to carry on the covenant. It should also be noted that although many scholars believe that the incidents with Pharaoh and Abimelech are **two versions of the same story** (see W. W. Sloan, *A Survey of the Old Testament* [New York: Abingdon Press, 1957], 43–44; and Robert Davidson, *Genesis 12–50*, *Cambridge Bible Commentary*, ed. P. R. Ackroyd, A. R. C. Leane, and J. W. Packer [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979], 2:4), it is clear from the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible that the Prophet **Joseph Smith considered them to be two separate events**: “and when Abraham said again of Sarah his wife, She is my sister” (Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 20:2; emphasis added).

Genesis 12 Application

When Abraham responded to God's commandment to call Sarah his sister, **he acted with immediacy and unquestioned obedience**. One of the great characteristics of such individuals as Abraham, Nephi, and Peter was their commitment to God's current commandments, not just his previous ones. As we go through life, we also encounter times when we are given commandments that seem strange or that are difficult to understand. **We may not always see their immediate purpose, but if we respond as Abraham did, then we can also experience the power of God in our lives** and in the lives of those around us. Surely that is one of the great lessons to learn from our mighty ancestor, Abraham.

(Strathearn, Gaye, "The Wife/Sister Experience: Pharaoh's Introduction to Jehovah" in Sperry Symposium Classics: The Old Testament, ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson (Provo and Salt Lake City: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, and Deseret Book 2005), 100–116.)



Why?

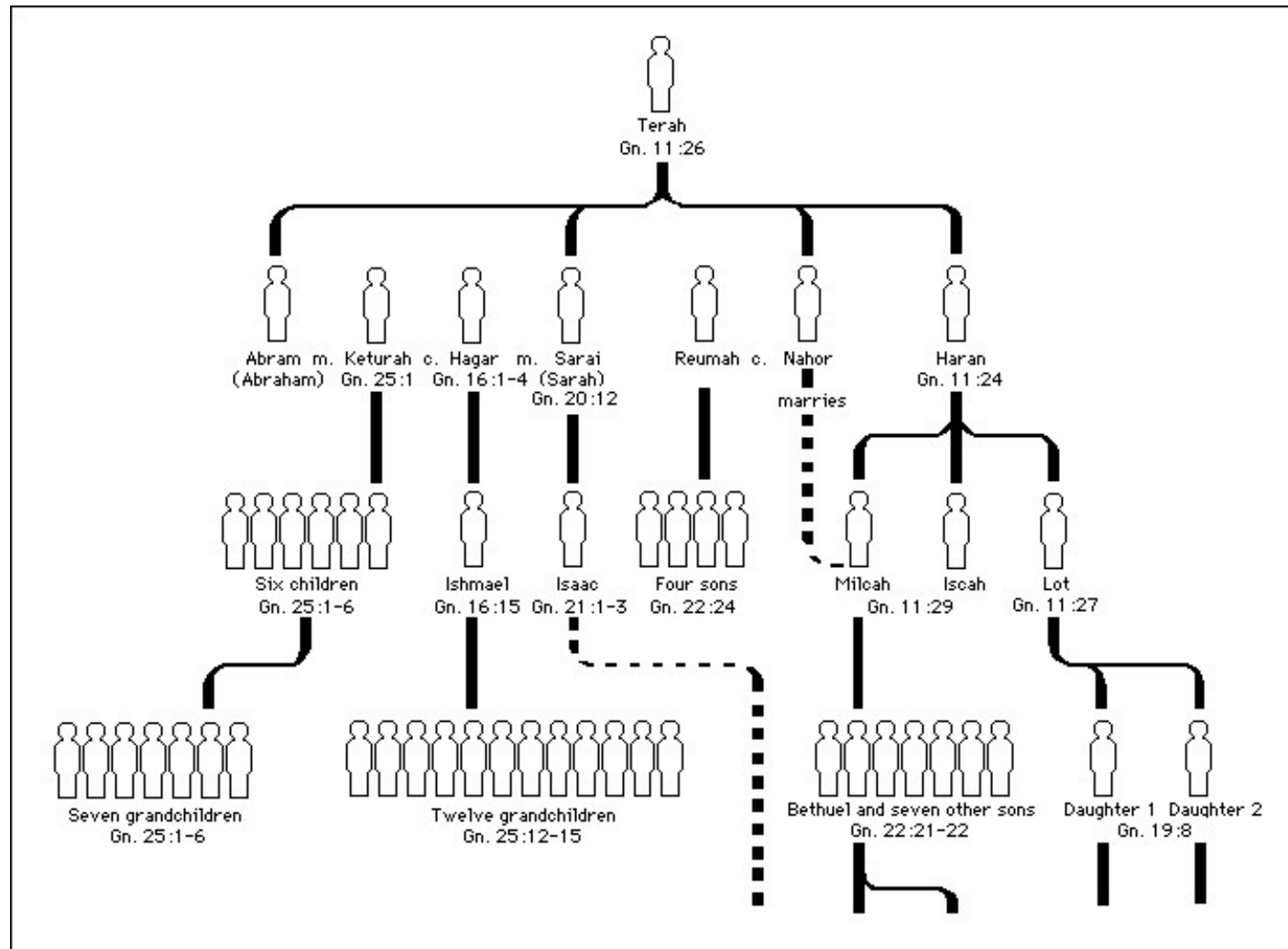
Why did the patriarchs resort to such action? That is a difficult theological issue. In attempting to justify the patriarchs' actions, writers have proposed a number of different explanations that offer some significant insights into the three episodes; however, we can gain a still greater understanding, especially of the episode of Abraham's sojourn in Egypt, if we take into account the insights provided by the book of Abraham and the *Genesis Apocryphon* (1QapGen), one of the scrolls from the Dead Sea corpus.



Why?

By doing so, we see the hand of God in Abraham's request of Sarah, for Abraham's actions initiated a confrontation between himself and Pharaoh. Because of Abraham's obedience, God was able to introduce Himself to the Egyptian Pharaoh in power and glory. Even though it was only the first of a series of such encounters, it is clear that **the God of Abraham was announcing His jurisdiction over all the families of the earth and not just over Abraham and his descendants.** That concept is fundamental to our understanding of all of Jehovah's subsequent dealings with humankind throughout the Old Testament. (Strathearn, Gaye, "The Wife/Sister Experience: Pharaoh's Introduction to Jehovah" in Sperry Symposium Classics: The Old Testament, ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson (Provo and Salt Lake City: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, and Deseret Book 2005), 100–116.)

Genesis
20:12 She is
my sister



Is it okay to marry your sister?

Posted on [September 12, 2017](#)

A good question! (Genesis 20:12 vs Leviticus 18:11, 20:17)

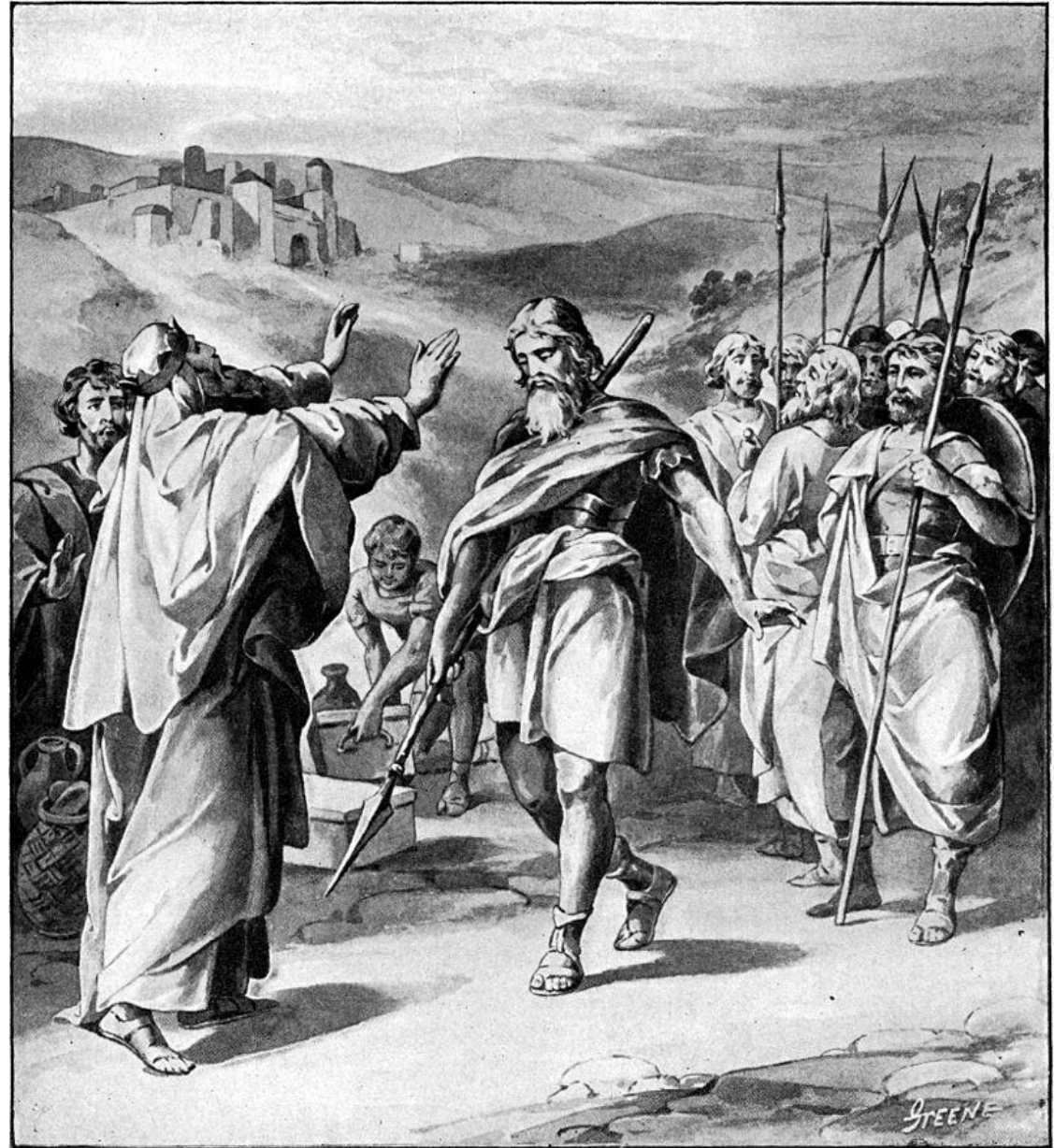
If we assume that the Bible is a perfectly orchestrated book, in the words of some believers, “infallible”, something that is error free, written by the pen of an author who is basically quoting God from heaven, without his own views as he writes, then the Bible is full of some serious problems. All you have to do to prove that these problems exist is to read the Bible. It doesn't take a knowledge of Hebrew or very much time. Just read it for yourself, and you will see what I mean. You will read it and have many questions.

One of these questions that the Bible addresses that should be simple to answer is whether or not it is okay to marry your sister. If we read the text of Genesis, and the story of Abraham, we come to the conclusion that Abraham married his sister. From Genesis 20:12 we read these words from the mouth of Abraham:

And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.

It is likely that these verses by the Priestly author were written after Israel had been exposed to the morals of those that they had lived among – the Egyptians, the Canaanites, and perhaps even those in Babylon. The prohibition of relations with your sister would have set the Israelites apart from the practices of these peoples, people that from the perspective of the author of Leviticus, were unholy and impure. By not participating in these practices, Israel was maintaining a distance from the world, and therefore striving to be found worthy of the calling that the Lord had put upon them (see Exodus 19:6). It is unlikely that the author who penned the story of Abraham marrying his sister had such views. It was an earlier time, and these views had not yet crystallized in the minds of the authors of the Priestly text. At any rate, this is a tenable explanation for the discrepancy in the text, and as far as inconsistencies go, this one is certainly prodigious. (Mike Day, Is it okay to marry your sister? 9.12.17 LDSScriptureteachings.org)

The battle
with the kings
Genesis 14





Breadcrumbs in the text

Textual clues

“Abraham the Hebrew” – Gen. 14.13

“He pursued them unto Dan” – Gen. 14.14

מֶלְכִי־צֶדֶק Melchizedek – a priest of “El Elyon”



מַלְכֵי-צֶדֶק

Genesis 14.18

Psalms 110

Hebrews 7

Psalms 2

Alma 13

Psalm 110 – The Coronation of the King

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.



MELCHIZEDEK SERVES AS A PREFIGURING, OR SYMBOL, OF CHRIST

MELCHIZEDEK		CHRIST
Called the prince of peace or king of peace (see Alma 13:18; Heb. 7:2)	Symbolizes	Called Prince of Peace (see Isa. 9:6)
Melchizedek—Ruled under his father (see Alma 13:18)	Symbolizes	Ruled under His Father and did only what His Father did (see John 5:19)
Was king over the land of Salem (Jerusalem) (see Alma 13:17)	Symbolizes	Was king of all the earth (see Ps. 47:7); Jerusalem is the city of the great King (see Matt. 5:35)
Was king of righteousness (see Heb. 7:2)	Symbolizes	Is a king who reigns through righteousness (see Rom. 5:21)
Administered the sacrament (see Gen. 14:18–19)	Symbolizes	Administered the sacrament (see 3 Ne. 18)
Priesthood is called after him (see D&C 107:2–4)	Symbolizes	The priesthood was first named after Him (see D&C 107:3)
Brought a wicked, iniquitous, and straying people to repentance (see Alma 13:18)	Symbolizes	Brought forgiveness to a wicked people who had gone astray (see Isa. 53:6)
Was a high priest (see Alma 13:14; Heb. 7:15)	Symbolizes	Christ is the high priest (see Heb. 6:20)

Josephus on Melchizedek

And thus was Jerusalem taken, in the second year of the reign of Vespasian, on the eighth day of the month Gorpeius [A.D. 70]. It had been taken five times before: though this was the second time of its desolation. For Shishak, the King of Egypt; and after him Antiochus, and after him Pompey, and after them Sosius and Herod, took the city; but still preserved it. But before all these, the King of Babylon conquered it, and made it desolate: one thousand, four hundred, sixty eight years, and six months, after it was built. But he who first built it was a potent man among the Canaanites: and is **in our own tongue called [Melchisedek], The righteous King. For such he really was. On which account he was [there] the first priest of God; and first built a temple [there]; and called the city Jerusalem: which was formerly called Salem.** However, David, the King of the Jews, ejected the Canaanites, and settled his own people therein.

(Josephus, War, book VI, chap. 10, Emphasis added.)

In the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, the figure who appeared to Abram immediately after he met Melchizedek was named Yahwehel (Jaoel-“The restrainer of the Leviathan ~ The Serpent”). He told Abram he had been appointed to guard him and his heirs, and to reveal secret things. Yahwehel was a glowing human figure dressed as a high priest with turban, purple garments and a golden staff. The radiant figure then led Abram up into heaven to receive a vision of the future. (*The Apocalypse of Abraham* 9-32)



Genesis 15

Abram: Can the promise of seed apply to my steward Eliezer?

God: NO!

Genesis 15

Abraham gives God the benefit of the doubt – Gen. 15.1-4. By the way, this is the J version of the Abrahamic Covenant, known as “The Jahwist” – note that in this version God reveals his name YHWH to Abraham!

SHOW CANTILLATION MARKS Masoretic Text SHOW VOWEL POINTS

15:7 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם הִנְנִי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאוּר כַּשְׂדִּים לְתֵת לְךָ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת לְרִשְׁתָּהּ:

Septuagint Reverse Interlinear

English (KJV) [?]	Strong's	Root Transliterated	Parsing
And he said	H559	אָמַר 'amar	PARSE
unto him, I am the LORD	H3068	יְהוָה Yĕhovah	
that brought thee out	H3318	יָצָא yatsa'	PARSE
of Ur	H218	אוּר 'Uwr	
of the Chaldees	H3778	כַּשְׂדִּימָה Kasdiy	
to give	H5414	נָתַן nathan	PARSE
thee this land	H776	אָרֶץ 'erets	
to inherit	H3423	יָרַשׁ yarash	PARSE
it			

Genesis 15

The ritual of cutting animals in half and passing between them is found both in the Bible and in Mesopotamia. The parallel in Jeremiah 34.17-22 makes it likely that the essence of the ritual is a self curse: Those walking between the pieces will be like the dead animals if they violate the covenant. In the case at hand, remarkably, it is the Lord, symbolized by the “smoking oven” and “flaming torch” (15.17) who invokes the self curse... (*The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 33)



Genesis 15

A curse like this is attested in eighth-century treaties (700s BC – *ANESTP*, 532). In Genesis, of course, it is God himself who walks between the pieces, and it is suggested that here God is invoking the curse on himself, if he fails to fulfill the promise. (Gordon J. Wenham, *World Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1-15*, Volume 1, p. 332. *ANESTP* = *Ancient Near Eastern Supplementary Texts and Pictures*, by J. B. Pritchard)

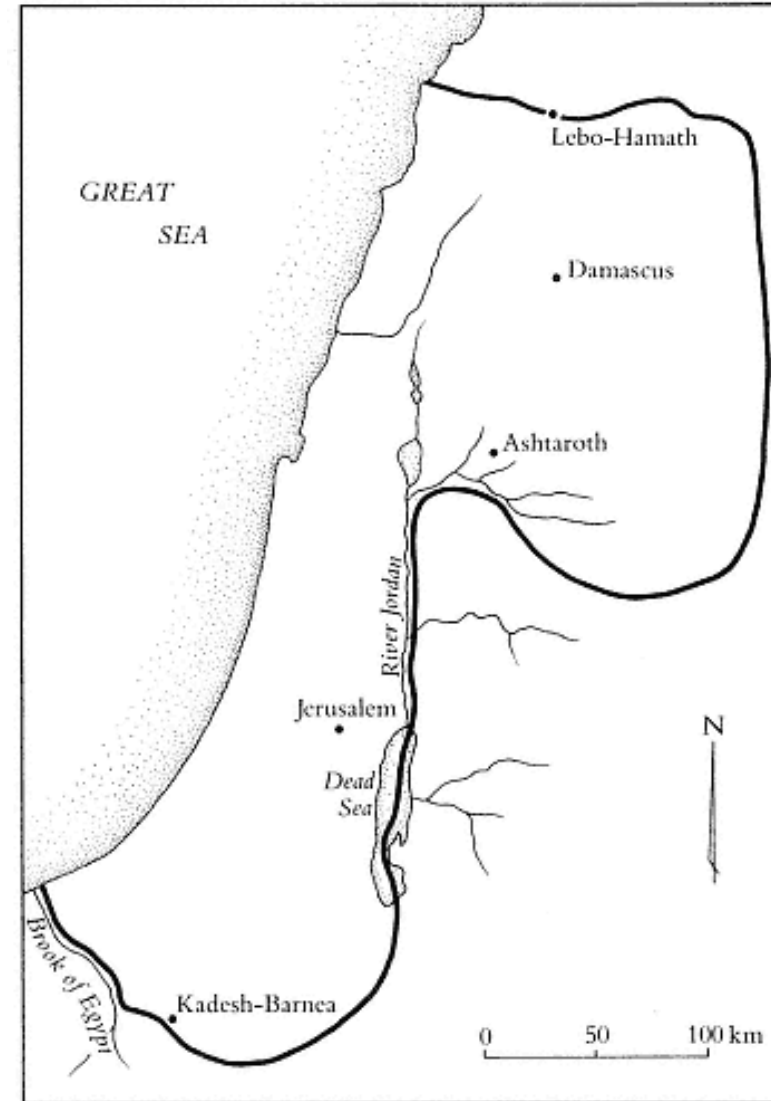


From the Nile
to the
Euphrates –
Gen. 15.18



New Boundaries for the Promised Land

Numbers 34.1-11 will severely restrict this boundary



The Works of Abraham – John 8.39-40

What kind of person was Abraham?

Abram was very rich – Gen. 13.1-2

The land was not able to bear them both – Gen. 13.5-6

Let there be no strife – Gen. 13.8

Always looking at the best in others – Gen. 15.1-4



Genesis 16 & 21 –
Sarai introduces
Hagar



Hagar the Oppressed

The flight of the oppressed slave into the wilderness, only to meet a divine being there, foreshadows again the experience of the Exodus, prophesied in chapter 15. But this time the oppressor is Israelite, the slave is an Egyptian, and the angel of the Lord commands the escapee to return to her cruel mistress and submit to her harsh treatment.

(Jewish Study Bible, p. 37)



Genesis 17

This is the **Priestly version of the Abrahamic Covenant**. The Jahwist version is Genesis 15, and Genesis 22 is E's version of the covenant.

Three P's of the Abrahamic Covenant:

1. Genesis 17.1-7
2. Genesis 17.8
3. Abraham 2.9-11

El Shaddai and Abraham – Genesis 17.1

It is important to note a trend in the text of the Old Testament when it comes to understanding the God of the Israelites. There is a general agreement among Biblical scholars that the ways that the Israelites viewed God changed over time.

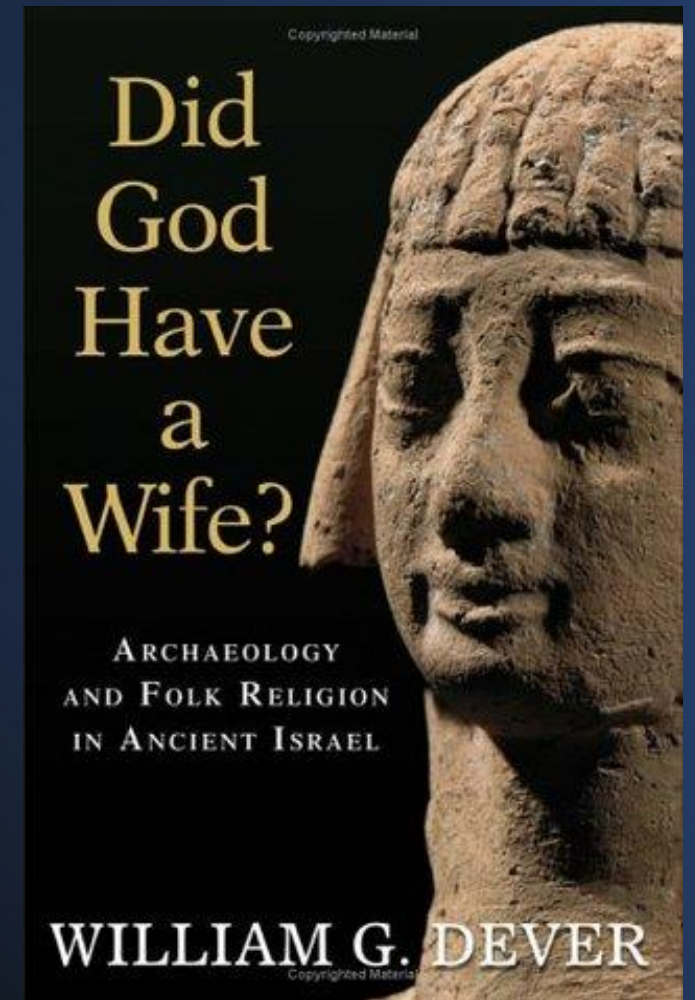
Image: Gilded statue of El from Megiddo. Exhibit in the Oriental Institute Museum, University of Chicago.



A development of thinking about God

I contend that the pattern went as follows (these are very loose dates): from a polytheistic view (3000-1500 BCE) towards henotheism or monolatry (1500-700), finally to monotheism in the 7th century BCE with the Deuteronomistic Reform.

After centuries and with the rise of Christianity, a new theological perspective arises. The Christians begin to understand God in a different way from the Deuteronomists. These early Christians move towards a view of understanding God as having a Son and the existence of a Divine Mother, as well as the Holy Ghost.





By the time of the 4th century CE a new view of God arises. This view of the Trinity worked to encapsulate monotheistic ideas while maintaining the essence of the New Testament texts that were being canonized which emphasized a Most High God, the Savior Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost.

Many Christians by the time of Joseph Smith were in the space of reading the anthropomorphic descriptions of God in their Bibles as figurative expressions of God.

Image: The First Council of Nicaea, with Arius depicted beneath the feet of emperor Constantine the Great and the bishops



Heavenly Mother

The most notable expression of the idea is found in a poem by Eliza R. Snow, entitled “My Father in Heaven” and now known as the hymn “O My Father.” This text declares: “In the heav’ns are parents single? / No, the thought makes reason stare; / Truth is reason—truth eternal / **Tells me I’ve a mother there.**”

(“My Father in Heaven,” in “Poetry, for the Times and Seasons,” *Times and Seasons* 6 (Nov. 15, 1845): 1039; “O My Father,” *Hymns*, no. 292; see also Jill Mulvay Derr, “The Significance of ‘O My Father’ in the Personal Journey of Eliza R. Snow,” *BYU Studies* 36, no. 1 (1996–97), 84–126.)

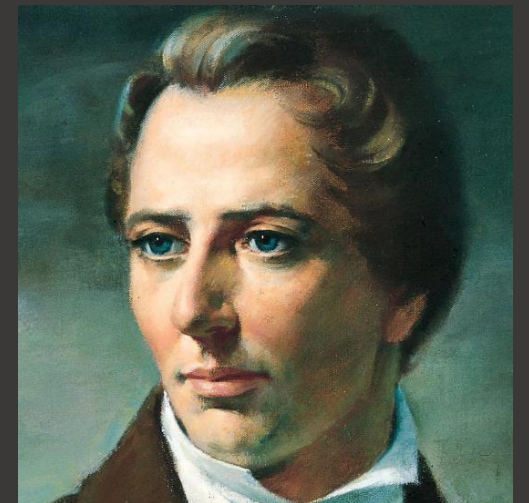
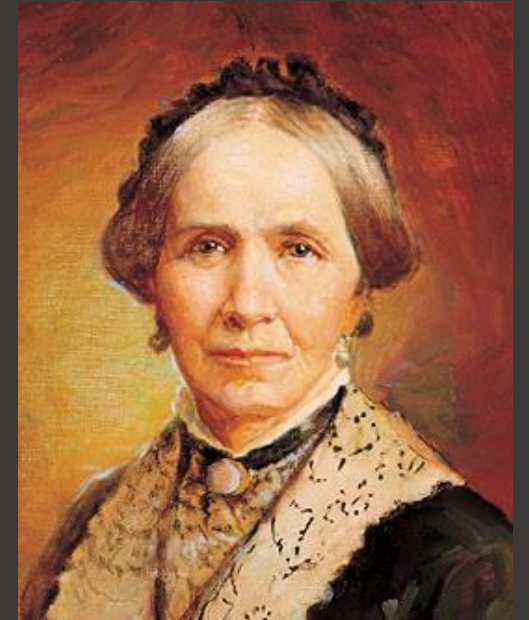
Heavenly Mother

The prophet Joseph Smith spoke about our Heavenly Mother to the third Relief Society president of the Church, **Zina D. Young**. After losing her mother to "the most trying of circumstances," Zina was speaking to the prophet about her intense grief and asked the question: "**Will I know my mother as my mother when I get over to the Other Side?**"

To which Joseph Smith responded:

"**Certainly you will.** More than that, you will meet and become acquainted with your eternal Mother, the wife of your Father in Heaven"

(History of the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association of the Church of Jesus Christ of L.D.S., from November 1869 to June 1910, 16).





Linguistics: Textual flexibility

Genesis 1.26

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ
בְּדְמוּתֵנוּ

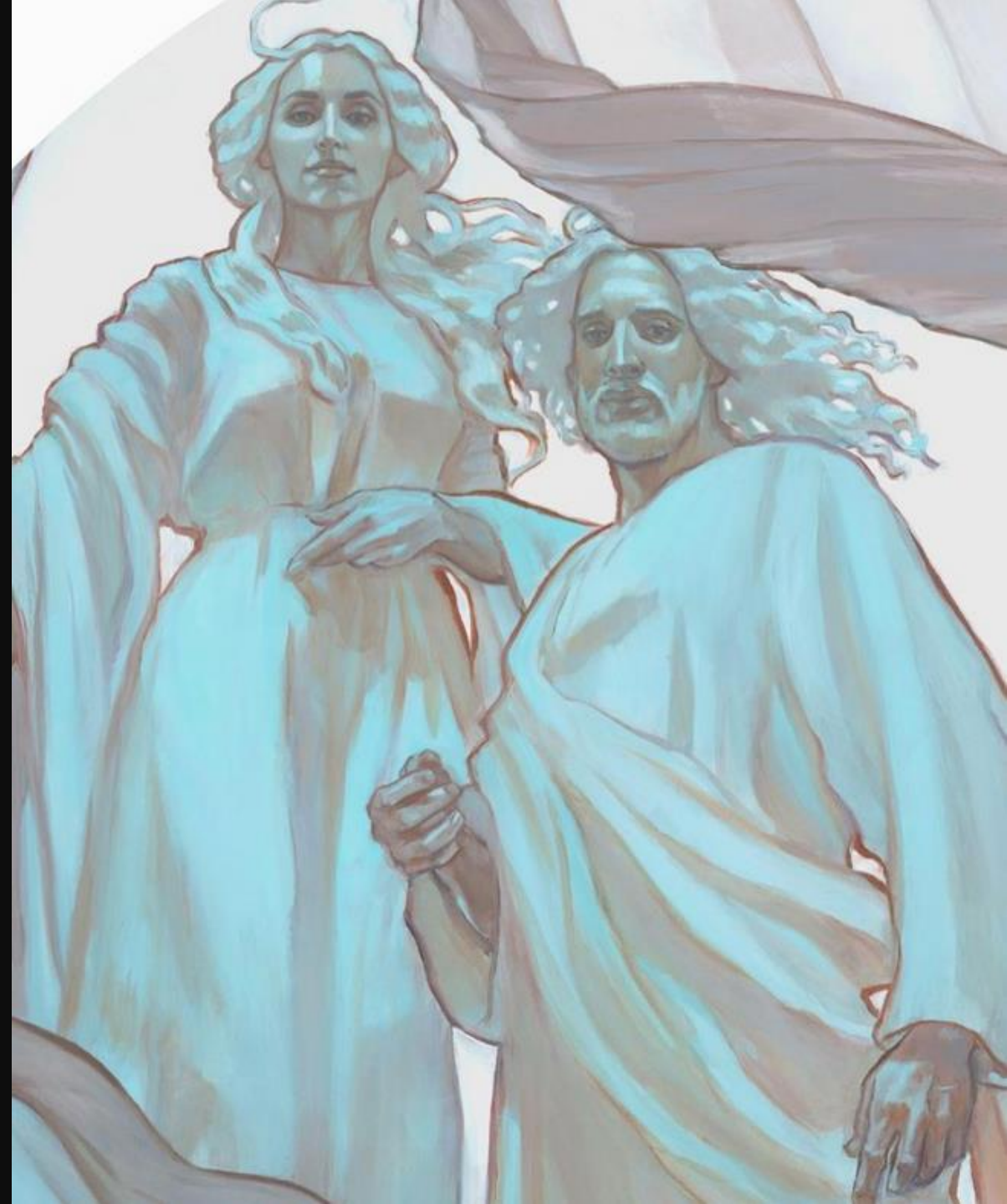
And he said, **Elohim** (gods),
na-aseh (lit: we will make)
Adam (mankind) in our
image in our similitude

אֲנִי - אֵל שַׁדַּי "I am El Shaddai!" - Gen. 17.1

See also Genesis 28.3, 35.11, 43.14, 48.3,
49.25

All of the passages using El
Shaddai in Genesis, with one
exception, are fertility
blessings.

(Biale, El Shaddai in the Bible, *History of Religions*, Feb.,
1982, Vol. 21, No. 3, p. 247. The exception is Gen. 43.14)




Why Circumcision?

Elon Gilad, Haaretz Magazine

The answer may be from their farming habits. Archaeological evidence shows that the farming of grapevines and olive trees was spreading through the region during this period. These plants require regular pruning to increase yields. Maybe some ancient Semitic sage came up with the idea that if pruning vines increases yields, why not prune (men) too?

In fact, there is evidence in the Bible that the ancient Hebrews tied circumcision to pruning “And when ye shall come into the land, and shall have planted all manner of trees for food, then ye shall count the fruit thereof as uncircumcised [literally: ye shall foreskin their foreskins]: three years shall it be as uncircumcised [literally: foreskins] unto you: it shall not be eaten of” (Leviticus 19:23).

Accessed from: <https://www.haaretz.com/jewish/.premium-why-do-jews-circumcise-their-sons-1.5418569>

A close-up photograph of a person's hands wearing teal and orange work gloves, using silver pruning shears to cut a dark brown tree branch. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green. A large, semi-transparent white circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing text.

If this is all true, Jews circumcise their sons because an ancient tribe converted an agricultural innovation into a questionable method to increase male fertility, and later a small group of their descendants bestowed this practice with a national meaning, which endures to this day.

Accessed from: <https://www.haaretz.com/jewish/.premium-why-do-jews-circumcise-their-sons-1.5418569>

Genesis 17 JST

“And it came to pass, that Abram fell on his face, and called upon the name of the Lord.

“And God talked with him, saying, My people have gone astray from my precepts, and have not kept mine ordinances, which I gave unto their fathers;

“And they have not observed mine anointing, and the burial, or baptism wherewith I commanded them;

“But have turned from the commandment, and taken unto themselves the washing of children, and the blood of sprinkling;

“And have said that the blood of the righteous Abel was shed for sins; and have not known wherein they are accountable before me. ...

“And I will establish a covenant of circumcision with thee, and it shall be my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations; that thou mayest know for ever that children are not accountable before me until they are eight years old.” (JST, Genesis 17:3–7, 11.)

With the fulfillment of the Mosaic law under Jesus, the token of circumcision was no longer required of God's covenant people (see Acts 15:22–29; Galatians 5:1–6; 6:12–15).



Abraham and the Covenant

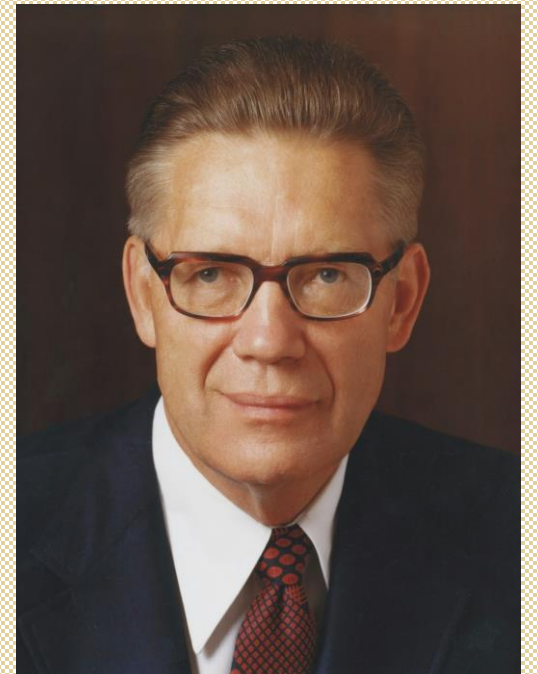
Though we know from modern scripture that the covenant-making process began with Adam and the other patriarchs (see Moses 6:65–68; 7:51; 8:2), **it is from the Abrahamic covenant that we get a fuller idea of what is involved in covenant making.** Since righteous members of the Church become the seed of Abraham and thus part of the covenant people (see D&C 84:34), we should understand what is involved in the covenant made with Abraham. Abraham’s part of the covenant, which is the same as for us, is that he “walk uprightly before me, and be perfect” (JST, Genesis 17:1). If he would do so, then the Lord’s part of the covenant, or His promises to Abraham, constitute what is known as the Abrahamic covenant.

Abraham and the Covenant

“Abraham first received the gospel by baptism (which is the covenant of salvation); then he had conferred upon him the higher priesthood, and he entered into celestial marriage (which is the covenant of exaltation), gaining assurance thereby that he would have eternal increase; finally he received a promise that all of these blessings would be offered to all of his mortal posterity. (Abra. 2:6–11; D. & C. 132:29–50.) Included in the divine promises to Abraham was the assurance that Christ would come through his lineage, and the assurance that Abraham’s posterity would receive certain choice, promised lands as an eternal inheritance. (Abra. 2; Gen. 17; 22:15–18; Gal. 3.)

Abraham and the Covenant

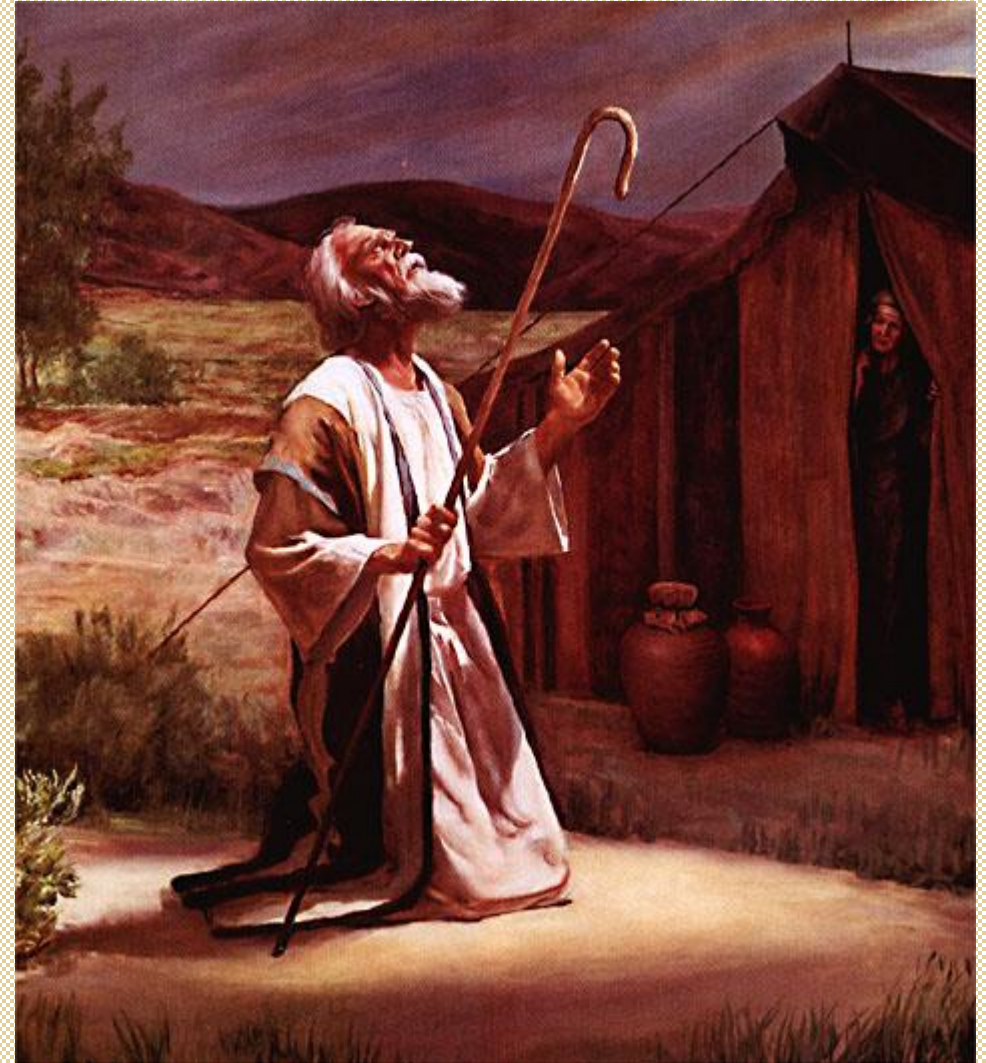
“All of these promises lumped together are called the Abrahamic covenant. This covenant was renewed with Isaac (Gen. 24:60; 26:1–4, 24) and again with Jacob. (Gen. 28; 35:9–13; 48:3–4.) **Those portions of it which pertain to personal exaltation and eternal increase are renewed with each member of the House of Israel who enters the order of celestial marriage;** through that order the participating parties become inheritors of all the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (D. & C. 132; Rom. 9:4; Gal. 3; 4.)” (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 13.)



The Abrahamic Covenant

1. Property – Land – Genesis 13:15
2. Seed – Posterity – Genesis 13:6
3. Power – Priesthood – Abraham 2:8-11

Other scriptures: D&C 132:28-31; Genesis 17:1-8. This was renewed with Isaac (Gen. 26:1-4, 24) and again with Jacob (Gen. 28; 35:9-13; 48:3-4).



What about the age of man?

The Yahwist – “Man will only live to 120 years after the flood!” (Genesis 6:3)

The Priestly author – Clearly a different view is present here.

1. Genesis 9:29
2. Genesis 11:10-26
3. Genesis 23:1
4. Genesis 25:7
5. Genesis 35:28
6. Genesis 47:28