

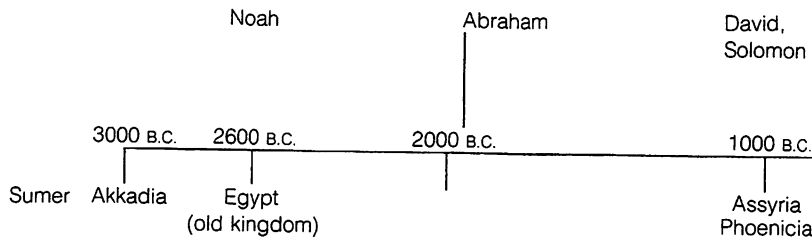
GOSPEL DOCTRINE LESSON 8: Living Righteously in a Wicked World

(Genesis 13, 14, 18, 19)

LESSON GOAL: To strengthen our resolve to hold fast to righteous standards during times of increasing wickedness.

Breck England: “What we call the Old Testament, Jesus referred to as “the law and the prophets.” **The Lord intends everything in the Old Testament to bring us to Christ.** As our goal in life is to “come unto Christ and be perfected in him” (Moroni 10:32), **the Old Testament becomes a precious and invaluable guidebook**” (Meridian Magazine, Feb. 2014).

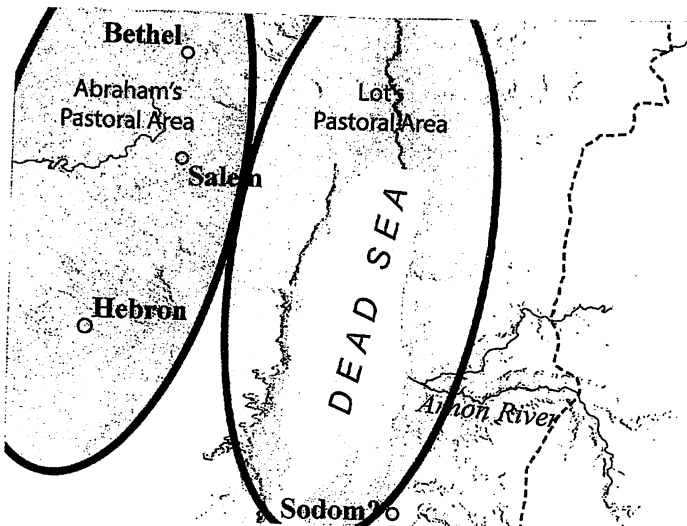
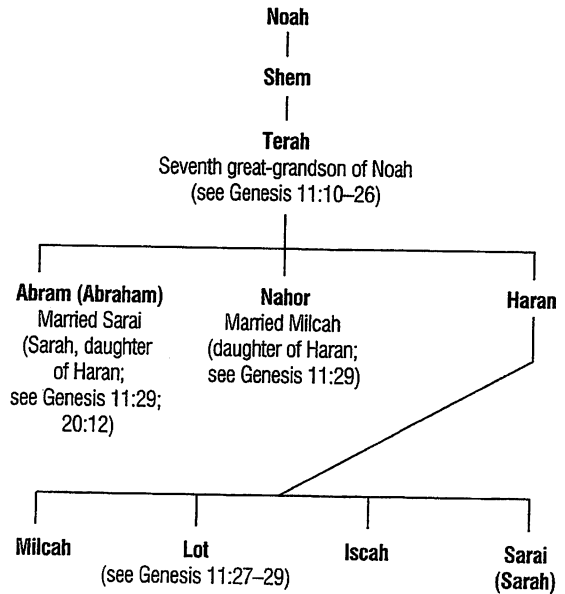
Abraham lived approximately as many years prior to Christ’s birth as we live after Christ’s death, and just ten generations following Noah in the direct family line of Shem.



1. Abram and his family settle in Hebron, and Lot and his family settle near Sodom.

Genesis 11:10-32—The Genealogy of Abraham

Genesis 13:5-7: And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. **And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.** And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram’s cattle and the herdmen of Lot’s cattle.



Genesis 13:8-12: And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; **for we be brethren.** Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: **if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.** And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where . . . Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. **Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.**

Bruce R. McConkie: "Those portions of it (the Abrahamic covenant) 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" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 13).

Our challenge is to realize the importance of marrying in the covenant and living worthily so that we may receive the birthright blessings. Wisdom dictates that we should not trade our eternal blessings for temporary pleasure or satisfaction—especially when marriage is the subject.

2. Esau sells his birthright to Jacob.

The principle of Birthright: At this time in Biblical history there were two birthrights.

Birthright inheritance:

- The firstborn son had the first right to receive the **birthright inheritance**.
- It dealt with **physical property**, such as flocks and herds.
- Unless the father determined otherwise, at his death **the physical property was to be divided** into balanced portions equal to the number of sons, plus one
 - The **eldest son** received the double portion, assuming responsibility for his mother unmarried sisters.
 - He usually served as the **social-political leader** of the family.
- After the time of Moses, the birthright inheritance automatically went to the eldest son, regardless of whether or not his mother was the first or favored wife.

Birthright blessing:

- This was a **spiritual blessing**.
- It included the **keys of the priesthood** and the authority to preside as the **religious leader of the family**.
- It did not automatically belong to the oldest son, but **fell to the most righteous**. Examples: Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim, Nephi.
- Even though we may be richly blessed because of the actions of our forbears, we are not granted callings nor do we receive additional blessings based on that heritage. **We are judged, called on our own merits.**

Breck England: "It [the birthright] was a **token of the covenant God made with Adam, that a Savior—the Firstborn Son—would come into the world to provide salvation for us**, to deliver us from death and to atone for sins we could not pay for ourselves. . . **So the birthright blessing was a constant reminder of the Atoning Savior who would come**" (*Meridian Magazine*, March 9, 2014).

H. Ross Workman: "**So why should you be interested in this birthright**, Esau being long-dead? **Because God has offered the birthright to you**. Through **temple ordinances** every man and woman can receive the birthright blessing.

"Lest the women in this gathering think this applies only to the men, think again. The blessing of posterity cannot be achieved by man alone and **no man will realize the birthright blessings unless he is accompanied with an equally faithful and capable wife**, sealed in the New and Everlasting Covenant. The birthright blessings are conferred in the temple upon all who take upon them the New and Everlasting Covenant and keep it. This is your birthright. It is promised to you and Satan will do everything in his power to get you to trade it away.

"So, what will you trade for it? Will you defile your ordinances like Cain? Will you trade for a mess of pottage like Esau? You say absolutely not! But Satan never sleeps. Consider the slippery path downward represented by Satan's whisper that "God will justify in committing a little sin" (*Devotional Talk, BYU-Hawaii, Oct. 28, 2008*).

R. Val Johnson: "**You may not realize it, but you have a birthright**. . . Today, Jacob's posterity, by direct descent from him or by adoption into the house of Israel through baptism, have the right to every blessing of the gospel, including the ordinances of the temple. **But they receive these blessings only if they prove worthy** (D&C 121:34–46). Those who receive these priesthood ordinances and keep their covenants become, through and with Jesus Christ, joint heirs with Him of all that Heavenly Father has.

"**The birthright given anciently to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is also yours**. Your patriarchal blessing identifies your lineage in the house of Israel and describes many of the blessings and responsibilities you will receive **if you live worthy of your birthright**" (*New Era*, November 2005).

OUR WORDS AND ACTIONS SHOW WHAT VALUE WE PLACE ON OUR BIRTHRIGHT.

Janet G. Lee: "Esau, in giving up his birthright for a single meal, **becomes the poster child for sacrificing his future to the immediate needs of the body**. He wasn't really going to die; it just seemed that way at the moment. For one mess of pottage, he loses his birthright. A million times over in a million subsequent tragedies, men have done the same thing—whether for a mess of pottage, a drink, a cigarette, one night of indulgence, one peek at pornography, or one more hit of heroine—the **eternal inheritance is relinquished for a momentary pleasure**. "If only we could realize that the momentary pleasure we might feel by an act of disobedience can never be equal to the feelings of peace and happiness that result from obedience" (*New Era*, Feb. 1994, 49).

1. Catch a glimpse of who we really are
--We are more than our weaknesses
2. Daily figuring out who we are
3. Willing to be foreordained
4. Light will expand our capacity to be spiritual
5. Love will be our only motive