

Rel A 304 Reading Questions for Thursday, September 14

“Thoughts to Keep in Mind: The Covenant,” in *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families: Old Testament 2022* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2021), 26–28.

Genesis 12:1–8; 13:14–18; 15:1–6; 17:1–8, 15–16

Abraham 1:1–19; 2:1–11

Genesis 26:1–5; 28:10–15; 32:24–30

Exodus 2:23–25; 3:1–10; 19:1–6

“Book of 1 Samuel Summary: A Complete Animated Overview” [video], BibleProject, <https://youtu.be/QJOju5Dw0V0>.

“Book of 2 Samuel Summary: A Complete Animated Overview” [video], BibleProject, <https://youtu.be/YvoWDXNDJgs>.

“Books of 1-2 Kings Summary: A Complete Animated Overview” [video], BibleProject, <https://youtu.be/bVFW3wbi9pk>.

“Books of Ezra-Nehemiah Summary: A Complete Animated Overview” [video], BibleProject, <https://youtu.be/MkETkRv9tG8>.

“Thoughts to Keep in Mind: ‘Jesus Will Say to All Israel, “Come Home,”’” in *Come, Follow Me*, 124–27.

In previous readings we learned that God’s covenant is “everlasting” because goes back to the premortal life and will continue into the eternities. Joseph Smith [taught](#), “Everlasting covenant was made between three personages before the organization of this earth. These personages ... are called God the first, the Creator; God the second, the Redeemer; and God the third, the Witness or Testator.” We have also seen that Adam and Eve entered into the covenant when they were baptized. We do not have detailed records for the generations that followed them, but the scriptures occasionally point out that God was still making covenants with people, including with Enoch (Moses 7:51; 8:2) and Noah (Genesis 6:18; 9:9, 11; the Joseph Smith Translation specifies that the covenant with Noah was the same as the one made with Enoch).

We start getting more detail when we arrive at Abraham and Sarah, who “sought for the blessings” given to their ancestors (Abraham 1:2). God offered them the everlasting covenant, and because of the special role they and their family began to play at this point in history, the covenant is now also referred to as the Abrahamic covenant. Today we’ll explore the origin of Abraham and Sarah’s covenant family—Israel—and quickly review their history up through their scattering among the nations of the earth.

“Thoughts to Keep in Mind: The Covenant,” in *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families: Old Testament 2022* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2021), 26–28.

1. In his [May 2022 address](#) to young adults, President Russell M. Nelson said that you should know the truth about who you are, including your three most important identifiers—you are a child of God, you are a child of the covenant, and you are a disciple of Jesus Christ. “Child of the covenant” (see 3 Nephi 20:25–26) is perhaps the least understood identifier. The *Come, Follow Me* manual explains, “You are a child of the covenant. You made a covenant with God when [-----]. You renew that covenant every time you [-----]. And you make sacred covenants in [-----]. Together, these covenants make you a participant in the Abrahamic covenant, the fulness of which is found in temple ordinances.... Through these covenants and ordinances, we become God’s people.” What are the three ordinances that allow us to become children of the covenant? (You don’t need to use the exact words from the manual.)

Genesis 12:1–8; 13:14–18; 15:1–6; 17:1–8, 15–16

Abram and Sarai (later renamed Abraham and Sarah) were introduced at the end of Genesis 11, so the opening of Genesis 12 contains the first significant development in their story. Jehovah (“the LORD” in the King James Version) instructs them to leave their native country and go to a new land, and He promises them significant blessings.

2. In Genesis 12:1–3, Jehovah makes two foundational promises. First, He promises Abraham and Sarah and their family, “I will bless _____ [one word]” (verse 2). Second, He promises Abraham and Sarah and their family, “And in thee shall _____ [two words] of the earth be blessed” (verse 3). These two interrelated promises are the foundation of what we call the Abrahamic covenant.

The Abrahamic covenant was revealed in stages. Genesis 12 explains that Abraham and Sarah’s family would be blessed and then in turn would bless every other family on earth, and Genesis 13 promises that their descendants would be as numerous “as the dust of the earth.” Genesis 15 reiterates this promise, comparing the number of their posterity to the stars in the night sky. Abraham then sacrifices various animals in a series of ordinances ratifying these covenant promises: “In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram” (Genesis 15:18). Genesis 17 gets into more detail about what Abraham and Sarah’s family was committing to do, and how God would help them along the way.

Abraham 1:1–19; 2:1–11

The book of Abraham is a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith containing an account of Abraham, some parts of which parallel biblical texts and some parts of which are new. At the time Joseph received this revelation, he was examining some Egyptian papyri that had come into

his possession. Scholars today are still exploring whether the revelation to Joseph represents a literal translation of text on some of the papyri (most of which were subsequently destroyed in a fire) or whether Joseph's examination of the papyri served as the catalyst for him to receive a revealed text about Abraham, even though that revelation is not directly related to the papyri Joseph had been examining. (For more background, see <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics-essays/translation-and-historicity-of-the-book-of-abraham>.)

3. Genesis 12:2 contains a declaration from Jehovah that Abraham and Sarah's "seed" (descendants) will "be a blessing." That is, unfortunately, rather vague. In the expanded version of this promise, recorded in Abraham 2:9, it explains that Abraham and Sarah's family will be a "blessing" by "bearing" (carrying/bringing) what unto all nations?
4. The promises in Abraham 2:8–11 are addressed to Abraham and Sarah's "seed" (descendants), who will later be known by the name of Israel. However, Abraham 2:10 explains that "as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name," meaning they will also be numbered among the house of Israel. Affirming their new family identity, as these non-Israelites are "accounted" (adopted as) Abraham and Sarah's seed, they will refer to Abraham "as their" what?
5. Genesis 12:3 contains a declaration from Jehovah that through Abraham and Sarah's family "shall all families of the earth be blessed." Unfortunately, Genesis 12:3 does not clarify what this means. Bless how? With what? In the expanded version of this promise, recorded in Abraham 2:11, it explains that "all the families of the earth [shall] be blessed" with what?

Genesis 26:1–5; 28:10–15; 32:24–30

Abraham and Sarah's descendants were born with a covenant inheritance and the promises and responsibilities that came with that, but each individual still had to personally enter the covenant of their own will. We see this starting with their son, Isaac, with whom God renewed the covenant, promising, "I will perform the [same] oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father" (Genesis 26:3). Later, God also appeared to Isaac and Rebekah's son Jacob and renewed the covenant, reiterating again that "in thee and in thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 28:14).

6. Abraham and Sarah's grandson, Jacob, wrestled all night with an angel. In this sacred setting, where Jacob testified that "I have seen God face to face," he was given what new, covenant name?

Exodus 2:23–25; 3:1–10; 19:1–6

The book of Exodus takes place many generations after Genesis, at a time when Jacob’s descendants—“the children of Israel”—had been enslaved in Egypt. “And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob” (Exodus 2:24). The first half of Exodus records how God called Moses to lead the Israelites out of captivity.

7. When Moses led the children of Israel out of captivity and camped them at the base of Mount Sinai, God revealed that the time had come to renew His covenant with them. “If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure [Hebrew *səgullā*] unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Exodus 19:5–6). We understand obedience, the covenant, the priesthood, and being holy, but what does it mean to be “a peculiar treasure [*səgullā*]”? See President Nelson’s explanation at [this link](#).

“Book of 1 Samuel Summary: A Complete Animated Overview” [video], BibleProject, <https://youtu.be/QJOju5Dw0V0>.

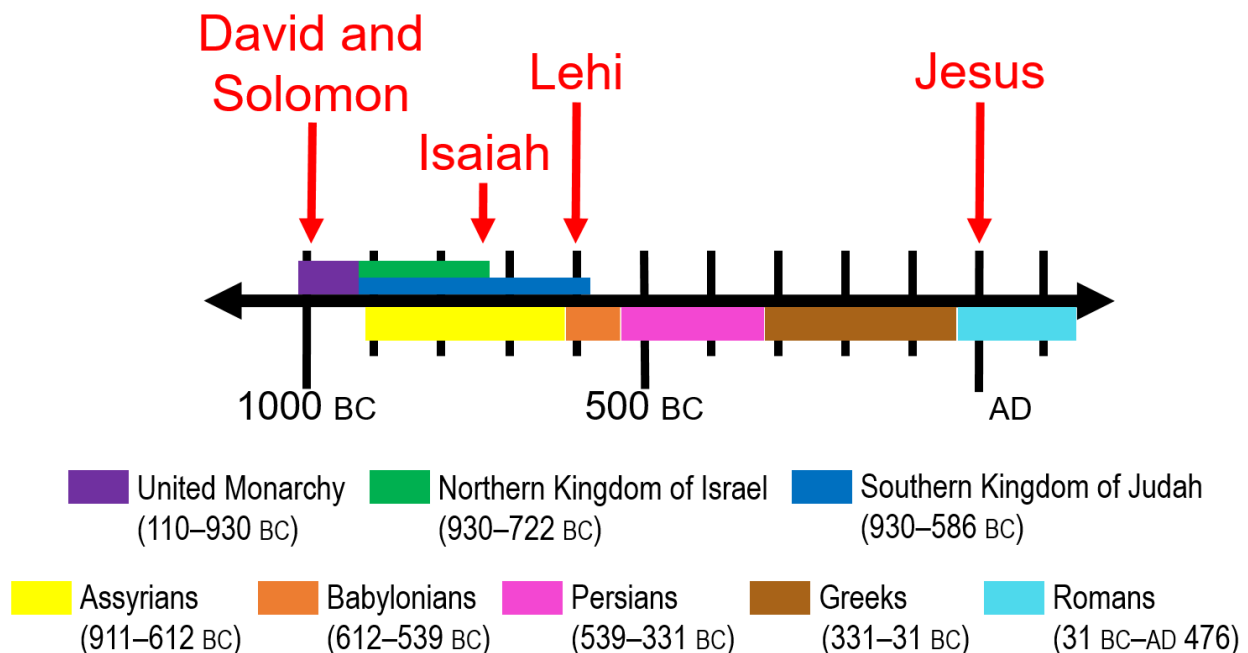
The Old Testament contains books covering more about the history of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness (Numbers), their entry into the land of Canaan (Joshua), and the first centuries of their living in the land, now called Israel (Judges). We're skipping past those to the book of 1 Samuel, since this book and the ones that follow set the stage for and tell the story of Israel's scattering. These videos are made by BibleProject, a non-denominational group that makes free online resources to help people understand the Bible.

“Book of 2 Samuel Summary: A Complete Animated Overview” [video], BibleProject,
<https://youtu.be/YvoWDXNDJgs>.

8. After David became king of all the Israelite tribes, what city did he conquer and make his capital? What did he rename it? (Note that Isaiah will refer to this city by both names, so knowing both names will help you recognize what city he's talking about.)

“Books of 1-2 Kings Summary: A Complete Animated Overview” [video], BibleProject,
<https://youtu.be/bVFW3wbi9pk>.

9. The Israelite tribes were united under the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon. However, after Solomon’s death, his son Rehoboam continued to mistreat the northern tribes, so a man named Jeroboam led them to secede from Rehoboam’s kingdom. From this time forward, the Israelites were split into two different political bodies, each with their own kings. The southern kingdom (where Rehoboam continued to reign) became known as _____, with its capital at _____. The northern kingdom became known as _____, with its capital at _____.



10. About 200 years after the Israelites split into two kingdoms (and about 100 years before the Book of Mormon opens), the northern kingdom (Israel) was destroyed by the Assyrian Empire. Many of the Israelites were taken into exile and scattered throughout the ancient world, becoming the “lost ten tribes.” In 2 Kings 17, the narrator offers a prophetic reflection on why this tragedy happened, blaming what factors?
11. About 100 years after the destruction of the northern kingdom (and soon after the Book of Mormon opens), the southern kingdom (Judah) was destroyed by the Babylonian Empire. Many of the Judahites were taken into exile in Babylon. Despite this great tragedy, 2 Kings ends with a short epilogue that describes a certain guy living in

Babylon—whom is he a descendant of? This story ends 2 Kings with a glimmer of hope that maybe, somehow, someday, the fallen kingdom might have a change of being restored, although the book does not answer the question of how God is going to do that.

“Books of Ezra-Nehemiah Summary: A Complete Animated Overview” [video], BibleProject, <https://youtu.be/MkETkRv9tG8>.

12. About 50 years after the destruction of the southern kingdom of Judah (which happened around the time the Book of Mormon opens), the Persian Empire conquered the Babylonians. After the Jews return from exile in Babylon, they successfully rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. Describe what happens over the course of the next century. Does the new golden age they were hoping for come to pass? Is the line of David restored to the throne? Does a unified Jerusalem become a light to the nations?

“Thoughts to Keep in Mind: ‘Jesus Will Say to All Israel, “Come Home,”” in *Come, Follow Me*, 124–27, <https://site.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/come-follow-me-for-individuals-and-families-old-testament-2022/29-thoughts>.

13. The *Come, Follow Me* manual describes waves of scattering that occurred over several centuries. Using its descriptions, fill in the three missing boxes below.

<i>Come, Follow Me</i> description	Year	Who was scattered
“Between about 735 and 720 BC, the Assyrians invaded the Northern Kingdom of Israel, home to ten of the twelve tribes, and carried away thousands of Israelites away captive into various parts of the Assyrian Empire. These Israelites became known as ‘the lost tribes.’”	720 BC	
“The Assyrians attacked and conquered most of the Southern Kingdom; only Jerusalem was miraculously preserved.”	[701 BC]	Most of the nation of Judah except Jerusalem
“Lehi’s family fle[d] Jerusalem in about 600 BC, ... taking their branch of the house of Israel and planting it on the other side of the world, in the Americas.”		Lehi’s family

“Between 597 and 580 BC, the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem, including the temple, and carried away captive many of the city’s inhabitants.”	580 BC	The nation of Judah
“In AD 70, Jerusalem and its temple were again destroyed, this time by the Romans, and the remaining Jews were scattered throughout many nations of the earth.”	AD 70	