

Denver Snuffer Podcast 179: Book of Abraham, Part 2

This is the second part of a series on the Book of Abraham, where Denver uses the text of the Book of Abraham itself to provide powerful proof of its authenticity.

DENVER: The best evidence of translation authenticity is the text itself. As Hugh Nibley put it, "...it is the Book of Abraham that['s] on trial, not Joseph Smith as an Egyptologist, nor the claims and counterclaims to scholarly recognition by squabbling publicity seekers..." (*Abraham in Egypt*, p. 3). The text of the Book of Abraham is compelling and adds important theological information I believe to be vital to understanding the religion I accept and Abraham's role in God's plan for this Creation. More importantly, I accept the idea that it adds information **vital to** salvation.

I believe it is also important that Joseph Smith intended the Book of Abraham **as** Scripture. He wrote on March 1, 1842:

In future. I design to furnish much original matter, which will be found of enestimable advantage to the saints,— &...all who— desire a knowledge of the kingdom of God.— and as it is not practicable to bring forth the new translation. of...Scriptures. & various records of ancient date. & great worth to this gen[er]ation in...<the usual> form. by books. I shall print [print] specimens of the same in the Times & Seasons as fast. as time & space will admit. so that the honest in heart may be cheered & comforted and go on their way rejoic[ing].— as their souls become exp[an]ded.— & their understand[ing] enlightend, by a knowledge of what Gods work through the fathers. in former days, as well as what He is about to do in Latter Days— To fulfil the words of the fathers.—

In the present [present] no. will be found the Commencement of the Records discovered in Egypt. some time since. as penned by the hand. of Father Abraham. which I shall continue to translate & publish as fast as possible till the whole is completed. (*JSP Documents, Volume 9, p. 206-7*)

That accompanied what got published. He wrote, and the first installment of the Book of Abraham in the *Times and Seasons* followed.

If Joseph Smith regarded the Book of Abraham as Scripture, I do not want to dismiss it because an Egyptologist cannot read it in the remaining papyrus fragments some claim as the source for the book.

It is not at all clear that Egyptology is **even relevant** to an analysis of the Book of Abraham. The narrative text begins in a location named **Ur** of the Chaldeans. The book states **32 times it does not cover events in Egypt**. There are 13 times the location is Ur. Another 16 times the events happen in Haran, Jershon, Sechem, Morah, or Canaan. Then before ending, it clarifies **3 times** the account is not about events **in Egypt**. Here is a brief review of the many times it clarifies it is **NOT** an account from Egypt:

- Facsimile No. 1 illustrates an event that took place in Ur, not in Egypt.
- Abraham's record begins: *In the land of the Chaldeans* (Abraham 1:1 RE).
- When Abraham was bound and put on the altar to be sacrificed—as illustrated in Facsimile 1—it was upon *the altar which was built in the land of the Chaldeans* (Ibid. vs. 3).
- It was constructed *after the form of a bedstead, such as was had among the Chaldeans* (Ibid. vs. 4). The record is silent about whether Egyptians had any similar altar. Scholarly critics explain the Egyptian funerary practice associated with the Chaldean altar with the customary lion-headed funerary bier on which embalming—not human sacrifice—is typically depicted by any similar Egyptian hieroglyphic. Again, however, that is not particularly helpful to understanding what happened in Ur of the Chaldeans. Nor does that criticism address Chaldean behavior, religious rites, or altar design.
- The Book of Abraham does not give us any Egyptian names but explains Chaldean (not Egyptian) terminology is used.
- The book explains that Facsimile No. 1 shows *the figures at the beginning, which manner of the figures is called by the Chaldeans Kahleenos, which signifies hieroglyphics* (Ibid.). This word is what the Chaldeans would call the vignette, not what an Egyptian would. The explanation is provided because the Chaldean word is different from the Egyptian word. On this point, an Egyptologist's criticism is of little help to authenticate or refute the Book of Abraham.

To the eye of an Egyptologist, the four figures under the lion couch in Facsimile No. 1 are canopic jars. They are the four receptacles used in Egyptian embalming practice for the liver, lungs, stomach, and intestines. The liver jar is, to the Egyptians, the human-headed Imseti. The lung jar is to them the baboon-headed Hapi. The stomach jar is the jackal-headed Duamutef. The intestine jar is the falcon-headed Qebehsnuef. **None** of the Egyptian names are used in the Book of Abraham by the Chaldeans.

But then again, the text is not about Egypt but about the local practice of those living in Ur of the Chaldeans. In **that** place, **nothing** Abraham understood about the four figures suggests they were jars. Instead, Abraham understood they were Chaldean idols before which human sacrifices were performed. The names of these idols in the land of the Chaldeans were Elkenah, Zibnah, Mahmackrah, and Koash. Abraham's account is not about the gods of Egypt. It's about the gods of the Chaldeans.

Egyptologists criticize the account that Abraham (as well as three virgins before him) was offered as a human sacrifice. Many scholars dispute Egyptians **offered** human sacrifices. To an Egyptologist, the mention of human sacrifice is evidence the Book of Abraham is **not** credible. But the book is not set in Egypt. Human sacrifice is **known** to have taken place in the land of the Chaldeans where the Abrahamic account is actually based. **Newsweek** reported the following:

Archaeologists have uncovered evidence that at least 11 children and young people were killed as a result of ritualistic sacrifice between 3100 and 2800 B.C.E. Their research was published Wednesday in the journal *Antiquity*. ...Some remains show [the]...stab wounds, but researchers aren't sure how all of the individuals lost their

lives. One male had violent injuries to his hip and head, similar to wounds reconstructed from other Mesopotamian ritual sacrifices. ...“It is unlikely that these children and young people were killed in a massacre or conflict,” the London Natural History Museum’s Brenna Hassett said in a statement. “The careful positioning of the bodies and the evidence of violent death suggest that these burials fit the same pattern of human sacrifice seen at other [locations] in the region.” (Katherine Hignett, *Newsweek*, “Ancient Mesopotamia: Ritual Child Sacrifice Uncovered in Bronze Age Turkey”)

This discovery puts Chaldean human sacrifice occurring at or near the conventional dating of Abraham’s life.

The *New York Times* reported on human sacrifices at an ancient location named “**Ur**” located in Iraq:

A new examination of skulls from the royal cemetery at Ur, discovered in Iraq almost a century ago, appears to support a more grisly interpretation than before of human sacrifices associated with elite burials in ancient Mesopotamia, archaeologists say.

Palace attendants, as part of royal mortuary [practices], were not dosed with poison to meet a rather serene death. Instead, a sharp instrument, a pike perhaps, was driven into their heads. (John Noble Wilford, *New York Times*, “At Ur, Ritual Deaths That Were Anything but Serene”)

(And he goes on from there. It’ll be in the published version of this.)

According to the Book of Abraham, **none** of the names of Chaldean gods—or **any** of the religious practices Abraham witnessed and experienced—were Egyptian. They were cultic practices and may have been entirely conducted in a locality that imitated their own incorrect understanding of the religion of Egypt. Chaldea’s Ur was populated by ‘Egyptophiles’ who were apparently imitating and practiced a local corruption of an ancient Egyptian religion. They clearly got some things about the Egyptian religion wrong (and may have gotten very many things wrong).

Robert Ritner’s book includes a chapter written by Christopher Woods addressing the location of Ur. The chapter is titled, “The Practice of Egyptian Religion at ‘Ur of the Chaldees’?” (Dude, you can tell from the title that this is laced with condescension and arrogance. Congratulations, Christopher Woods. You’ve proven your ego won’t fit into a normal human form.) The chapter begins by acknowledging that, “The location of ‘Ur of the Chaldees’...remains open for debate.” He explains, “Cuneiform sources attest a number of settlements bearing the name of Ur (or a name phonetically similar) in northern Syria, southeastern Turkey, and northern Mesopotamia, mostly small villages, and so making for unlikely candidates for biblical Ur...” (see Ritner, Robert K., *The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri: A Complete Edition*, pp. 73-74).

A discovery of an ancient library of **thousands** of cuneiform tablets in 1975 raised another possibility for Abraham’s Ur, this new one being located in ancient **Haran** rather than a thousand miles away, as previously thought.

Since Ritner's book is a collection of scholarly criticism of the Book of Abraham, the author does not leave it open-ended. Instead, he speculates Ur may have been at a specific Babylonian location. Based on that **assumption**, he concludes, "If we are correct in identifying Abraham's Ur with Babylonian Ur, this poses **grave difficulties** for the account given in the Book of Abraham" (*Ibid.*). **Obviously**, if the author is not correct, the **inverse** is also true: If we are incorrect in identifying Abraham's Ur with Babylonian Ur, then we don't know anything about the matter, and it poses no justifiable difficulty for the account in the Book of Abraham.

Hugh Nibley discusses Ur in *An Approach to the Book of Abraham* from pages 424 to 428. He writes on page 427:

What leaves the door wide open to discussion is the existence in western Asia of a number of different Urs. Ur in the south was a great trade center... and since Abraham was a merchant, one should expect to find him there. But on the other hand that same Ur had founded merchant colonies far to the north and west at an early date, and some of those settlements, as was the custom, bore the name of the mother city.

The angel of God rescued Abraham from being sacrificed on the altar. The angel killed the priest attempting to sacrifice Abraham. This resulted in *great mourning in Chaldea...* (Abraham 2:1 RE). Following this, *a famine prevailed throughout all the land of Chaldea* (*Ibid.* vs. 4). During the famine in Ur of Chaldea, the Lord commanded Abraham to leave, and the events in the Book of Abraham **finally** move **from** Ur: *Now the Lord had said unto me, [Abraham], get yourself out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house, unto a land that I will show you. Therefore, I left the land of Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of **Canaan*** (*Ibid.* vs. 5, emphasis added). The story moves but is still not in **Egypt**—nor is Abraham **heading** to Egypt in the account.

The next location must have been comparatively uninhabited when Abraham's family arrived. They name the location after Abraham's deceased brother, Haran. Abraham explains his family went *unto the land which we denominated Haran* (*Ibid.*, emphasis added). It apparently had no name before their arrival, since they denominated (or named) the place. We have no way to identify the location but only know that it was away from the earlier (also unknown) location called Ur.

At Haran, there is no mention of famine. Abraham's father, Terah, had repented of his idolatry in Ur, but in Haran, he returned to it. When God later told Abraham, "Depart from Haran," Terah remained behind.

Abraham's journey then takes him through Jershon in the land of Canaan. There—**still not in Egypt**—Abraham built an altar. Moving on again, he arrives in Sechem, *situated in the plains of Moreh* at a place described as *[on] the borders of the land of the Canaanites* (Abraham 4:2 RE). He is **still** not in Egypt. In that location the Lord promised Abraham, *unto thy seed I will give **this land*** (*Ibid.*). Abraham was **not** given Egypt.

Famine is mentioned again in the land given to Abraham's seed, and as a consequence of that, Abraham reports: *I, Abraham, concluded to **go down into Egypt**, to sojourn there, for*

the famine became very grievous (Ibid. vs. 3, emphasis added). Abraham's conclusion to go down into Egypt confirms for us that he had not yet reached Egypt during **any part** of his account to that point.

Abraham received a great revelation about the stars, the heavens, events among the pre-existent spirits of mankind, the fall of Satan, and the creation of the world. This great revelation comprises the remainder of Abraham's account in his book. **However**, the account clearly states that God told Abraham: *I show these things unto you, before you go into Egypt* (Abraham 5:4 RE, emphasis added). Accordingly, **nothing** in the Book of Abraham took place in Egypt. When it is added to the Genesis account, what happened following the conclusion of the Book of Abraham text is: *And it came to pass that when [Abraham] had come into Egypt...* (in Genesis [7:4 RE]) and goes on from there to explain about Sarai being accosted.

Willard Richards' introduction that claims the book is "purporting to be the writings of Abraham **while he was in Egypt**" is **demonstrably** wrong from the text itself—32 times the Book of Abraham states otherwise. When **nothing** in the text reckons from Egypt, it is questionable how useful criticism of the Book of Abraham from an Egyptological vantage point is. We should expect there to be some deviations from Egyptian religion, language, or culture in the book. The account only covers events among an ancient people, in an uncertain location called "Ur," located somewhere in Chaldea. Those people were only imitative of Egypt. They were not Egyptians. And the events in the book did not happen "while [Abraham] was in Egypt."

One **hieroglyph** appears in all **three** Facsimiles:

- It is figure 10 in Facsimile 1,
- At the bottom and adjacent to the figure 2 in Facsimile 2, and
- Figure 3 in Facsimile 3.

The hieroglyph is used to represent "Abraham in Egypt." The figure is a libation table (or "traditional offering stand") on which drink and food were offered. Since Abraham concluded to travel to Egypt because of famine, a **symbol** of drink and food for Abraham in Egypt would be altogether apt. But the table figure shows a lotus flower atop it. The lotus was a symbol of **ascent** to the throne of God. **That** concept is most clearly referenced in the explanation of panel 2 in Facsimile 2. It is **at least thought-provoking** that Joseph identified the food and drink offering stand and a symbol of ascending to God to be representing Abraham's presence in Egypt.

To be clear, because nothing in the Book of Abraham happened in Egypt, it is questionable how useful anything authentically Egyptian (**if** we're able to determine **that**) is to understand or to question the text. The names and practices Abraham encountered imitated—but did not correctly replicate—the religion of 9th Dynasty Egypt. The text explains that the place where Abraham was offered as human sacrifice is an unknown village located somewhere under Chaldean influence named "Ur." However, Ur could have been in **any** Mesopotamian location across thousands of square miles from Turkey, northern Syria, into Iraq, or Iran. There are **many** known villages contemporary with

Abraham known to have been named “Ur.” Of course, there may have been many others unknown to us with the same or similar name. The text ends before Abraham enters Egypt, and therefore, the continuation of an account involving Abraham picks up in Genesis. This begins halfway through Genesis 4 [7:4]. The account deals only briefly with the “princes” bringing Sarai to Pharaoh who was then plagued because of Sarai’s presence. Pharaoh then returns Sarai to ~~Abraham~~ [Abram], at which point ~~Abraham~~ [Abram] and Sarai were sent away.

Because nothing in the Book of Abraham or Genesis gives **any** detail about Abraham’s experiences **in** Egypt, we have no narrative account to help us give context to the facsimiles. We do not know if Facsimile No. 3—like Facsimile No. 1—is a scene that took place outside of Egypt. The footnotes explaining the scene end with this clarification: *Abraham is reasoning upon the principles of astronomy in the king’s court.* It is unclear which “king’s court” is being referenced. Clearly, the people of Ur involved in Abraham’s experience imitated Egypt. They sought to imitate the Egyptian’s “earnest imitation.” Therefore, we cannot be certain if Facsimile No. 3 is reporting an event that took place among people who imitated Egyptian religious rites or if they instead happened in Egypt. If it’s the former, it’s consistent with the rest of the text where nothing else has happened in Egypt.

The Book of Abraham explains the Egyptian Pharaoh could only imitate the Holy Order but had no right to claim that priestly position. In context, this exposes the Chaldean’s error in looking to Egypt for Divine guidance. These Urrian residents even anointed for themselves a “priest of Pharaoh” who practiced human sacrifice. Was this an innovation by Ur or imitative of an Egyptian rite? We do not know anything certain. But we know that it was distant from (and only imitating) an Egyptian imitation of the religion of the Fathers. We only have Abraham’s understanding of what these people were up to.

It is clear from the text that “before” his journey “into Egypt,” Abraham was shown a great revelation about the pre-existence, Creation, and organization of the stars. It raises the question of where Abraham tried to clear up people’s understanding in Facsimile No. 3.

The Book of Abraham clarifies many “mysteries” that are not otherwise to be found in Scripture. But Scriptures tell us there are many important truths that are withheld from us. Even if they are unknown to us, there are “mysteries” that are still part of the true religion first revealed to Adam.

We learn of God’s promise to the righteous in T&C 69:2:

Unto them will I reveal all my mysteries, yea, all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom. From days of old and for ages to come will I make known unto them the good pleasure of my will, concerning all things to come. Yea, even the wonders of eternity shall they know, and things to come will I shew them, even the things of many generations. Their wisdom shall be great and their understanding reach to Heaven, and before them the wisdom of the wise shall perish and the understanding of the prudent shall come to naught. For by my spirit will I enlighten them and by my power will I make known unto them the secrets of my will, yea, even those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor yet entered into the heart of man.

We're told in Alma 9:3 [RE] that those who give heed and are diligent are rewarded with understanding:

[It's] given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless, [they're] laid under a strict command that they shall not impart — only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give....therefore, he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word. ...He that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God, until they know them in full.

While Christ was among the Nephites, the greatest part of what He taught them is withheld from our record. We read in 3 Nephi 9:5 [RE]:

He went again a little way off and prayed unto the Father, and tongue cannot speak the words which he prayed, neither can be written by man the words which he prayed. And the multitude did hear, and do bear record, and their hearts were open, and they did understand in their hearts the words which he prayed.

There are many other references in Scripture to important things that are left out of our canon. The true religion contains many “mysteries” that are important, not yet known or taught, but which were to be restored to the faithful in the future.

The Book of Abraham helps us uncover some of the missing information about the religion of the first Fathers. The first verse of the Book of Abraham includes these remarkable words:

I sought for the blessings of the Fathers and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same. Having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and...possess a greater knowledge, and to be a Father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a high priest, holding the right belonging to the Fathers. It was conferred upon me from the Fathers: it came down from the Fathers, from the beginning of time, yea, even from the beginning (or before the foundations of the earth) to the present time, even the right of the firstborn (or the first man — who is Adam — or [the] first Father) through the Fathers unto me. I sought for [mine] appointment unto the Priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the Fathers concerning the seed. (Abraham 1:1 RE)

Abraham begins by explaining he “sought for the blessings of the Fathers,” the very thing Malachi prophesies will return before the great and dreadful return of the Lord. Abraham **obtained** what will be available again. Those blessings of the Fathers **will be** administered again before the end.

At the beginning of his record, Abraham mentions some of the specific things that are part of “the blessings of the Fathers.” This identifies Abraham, **not Joseph Smith**, as the writer of the book.

When the Holy Order is established in its fullness, there is one Patriarchal head appointed to stand as the husbandman-father, occupying the position of the first Father or Adam. When God set Adam at the head, “The tasks given to Adam are of a priestly nature: caring for sacred space. In ancient thinking, caring for sacred space was a way of upholding creation. By preserving order, non-order was held at bay” (John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, p. 106). This priestly responsibility was what Abraham sought. He explained that he wanted to *possess a greater knowledge, and to be a Father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a high priest, holding the right belonging to the Fathers* (Abraham 1:1 RE). The Lord offered to return this lost fullness in Joseph Smith’s day, but the required conditions were not met. Therefore, the fullness was not “restored again” and remains unrestored.

Abraham knew more about the Holy Order in **his** day than Joseph in 1842. After all, Abraham had the records of the Fathers. Much of what Joseph learned about the Holy Order (or as he termed it, the “fullness of the priesthood”) appears to have come as a result of him translating the Book of Abraham.

Abraham knew Adam was the Father of many nations. Likewise, the first Patriarchs all expected to have numerous posterity and to be Fathers of many nations. The line of the Patriarchs named in Scriptures is a list of those through whom the Holy Order descended and **does not name** all of the righteous. The residue of the righteous was also blessed. The original Holy Order meeting at Adam-Ondi-Ahman is described in Scripture:

Three years previous to the death of Adam, he called Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, and Methuselah, who were all high priests, with the residue of his posterity who were righteous, into the valley of Adam-Ondi-Ahman, and there bestowed upon them his last blessing. (T&C 154:19)

Those names, listed in order from Adam, were the first to hold the presiding Patriarchal priesthood from the oldest to the youngest holding that right.

The Holy Order in its fullness is a right of government or right of dominion. Anciently, it was always held in a line of descent. Abraham marks the first time that non-direct lineal descendant was sealed in the Holy Order to hold it in its fullness. Once sealed, Abraham became entitled to be a “Father of many nations, a rightful heir, holding the right belonging to the Fathers.”

This right **is not worldly**. Abraham’s record gives us a perfect vantage point to understand the difference between worldly government and the government of God. At the time of Abraham, **any** earthly king **did not have** the right to make that claim. The Pharaoh of Abraham’s day feigned to hold it, **claiming** it descended to him through Noah. Abraham explained the conflict:

Pharaoh, being a righteous man, established his kingdom and judged his people wisely and justly all his days, seeking earnestly to imitate that order established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first Patriarchal reign, even in the reign of Adam, and also Noah, his father, who blessed him with the blessings of the earth, and

with the blessings of wisdom, but cursed him as pertaining to the Priesthood. Now Pharaoh being of that lineage by which he could not have the right of Priesthood, notwithstanding the Pharaohs would fain claim it from Noah through Ham, therefore my father was led away by their idolatry. (Abraham 2:3 RE)

Pharaoh was “righteous” but still descended from a line that could not claim legitimate rule. He modeled his kingdom after the order established by the first Fathers, but it could only be an imitation. He claimed a lineal connection with Noah, which was true enough, but his ancestry gave him no heavenly acknowledgment for his rule. And because he descended from a line that usurped authority not given to them by God, all those who submitted to his earthly rule practiced idolatry.

Abraham, on the other hand, **was** given dominion, the right to rule over nations, Patriarchal status, and the rights belonging to the Fathers. But Abraham **made no attempt** to displace the Pharaoh. They were rivals, to be sure, but Abraham was content to hold the right, receive instructions, be a diligent follower of righteousness, be one who possessed great knowledge, be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge. He was content to teach his followers the path of righteousness. Unlike Pharaoh, he did **not** assert authority over others. Abraham was interested in eternity, not earthly recognition and control. Hugh Nibley described the circumstance:

The Book of Abraham brings out the main points of rivalry between the patriarch and the pharaoh in high relief: Each claims to possess the only true priesthood and with it the only true kingship. The earliest legends of Egypt and Mesopotamia introduce us to a scene repeated over and over again in apocalypses and testaments of the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, of a great and terrible monarch who feels his divinity threatened and his dominion challenged by an emissary of the true God. (*Abraham in Egypt*, p. 254)

Nibley has observed that “Pharaoh was always unsure of his authority over his own people” (*Ibid.* p. 233). There were many Pharaohs in later dynasties who investigated their claim to authority.

Of particular interest are those devout and sincere pharaohs who spent their days in the archives engaging in the constant search of Egyptian rulers for divine authority, such men as King Neferhotep in the Thirteenth Dynasty, [and] the great Amenophis I, “a wise and inspired man,” according to Manetho, who yearned to see the gods but feared to risk any force or trickery to get his wish, or Ptolemy the son of Glaucias, “the recluse of the Serapeum,” spending all his days in the library, as does the hero of the Khamuas story, searching in the House of Life for the book that bestows the knowledge of divine dominion and authority.

The trouble was that they lacked revelation. In Egypt, Henri Frankfort observed, “The actions of individuals lacked divine guidance altogether.” (*Ibid.*)

Egypt’s claims may seem arrogant after the Exodus of Israel. However, their civilization attempted to preserve something precious. As one writer put it, “Ancient Egyptians

inherited their great wisdom from a much earlier Elder culture which was able to pass on the flame of knowledge before its own apparent demise” (*Gods of Eden*, p. 17).

God has declared His intent to assert control over His Creation and overthrow all governments. The Christmas 1832 revelation states:

And thus with the sword and by bloodshed, the inhabitants of the earth shall mourn. And with famine, and plague, and earthquake, and the thunder of heaven, and the fierce and vivid lightning also, shall the inhabitants of the earth be made to feel the wrath, and indignation, and chastening hand of an Almighty God, until the consumption decreed has made a full end of all nations, that the cry of the saints, and of the blood of the saints, shall cease to come up into the ears of the Lord of [the] Sabaoth from the earth, to be avenged of their enemies. (T&C 85:3)

All nations, other than the Holy Order family-government ordained by God, will be brought to a full end. Or in the various iterations of the prophecy of Malachi, God *will smite the earth with a curse* (Malachi 1:12 RE), or *the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming* (Joseph Smith History 3:4 RE)—doesn't mean universal death. It means universal disillusion into chaos, with no governance possible apart from the one that **He** intends to establish, that **will** provide revelation, guidance, order, and preserve His people. The **only** surviving rule or dominion at that time will be the one tied to the Fathers. It will be the people whose one heart is like the one heart of the Fathers. They will possess the promises made to the Fathers, or in other words, they will have been **sealed** to the Fathers. It is phrased differently in different versions of Malachi's prophecy, but they all mean the same thing. Occasionally, God describes the same thing in different words. The purpose is to help us grasp His meaning.

There are many obstacles to overcome before the Lord returns in glory. Recovering the religion of the Fathers, becoming of one heart **with** the Fathers, and fulfilling the prophecy of Malachi are directly connected to Abraham. In a very real sense, it will not happen without a connection to Abraham.

The foregoing excerpts were taken from Denver's conference talk titled "The Religion of the Fathers", given in Aravada, Nevada on March 27, 2021.