

# The Book of Abraham

## Some Important Principles, Doctrines, and Events

- The Lord prepared the way for the Church to acquire a small collection of ancient Egyptian records written on papyrus (see 1 Nephi 13:39).
- The book of Abraham is the word of God and a powerful witness of the prophetic call of Joseph Smith (see D&C 21:1; 124:125).
- The book of Abraham contains writings of the Old Testament prophet Abraham, who traveled to Egypt about 2000 BC. These records tell about the earlier parts of Abraham’s life (see the introduction to the Pearl of Great Price; see also Genesis 11:27–32; 12:1–20; 15:1–7; 17:1–9).
- From the book of Abraham, Church members in Joseph Smith’s day learned several gospel doctrines and principles not previously known. The book of Abraham also helped clarify truths revealed in other books of scripture (see 1 Nephi 13:39–40).
- The Prophet Joseph Smith’s explanations of the three facsimiles in the book of Abraham are scripture and should be studied along with the rest of the book. There are no official Church explanations for the Abraham facsimiles besides the Prophet Joseph Smith’s explanations that accompany them.

## Suggestions for Teaching

### The Prophet Abraham

Review together the information about Abraham in the Bible Dictionary. Invite students to summarize what they learn about the places Abraham lived, the tests he faced, and his current status. You may want to draw a chart on the board of Abraham’s family, using Genesis 16:1–2, 15–16; 21:1–5; 25:19–26; 35:22–26. Invite students to use the lineage declared in their patriarchal blessings to determine where they fit into Abraham’s family.

### Records That Have “Fallen into Our Hands”

To help students understand the significance of the book of Abraham and how it came to be, review with them the material under “Who Is Abraham and When Did He Live?”; “How Did the Church Obtain the Book of Abraham?”; “What Did the Prophet Joseph Smith Do with His Translation?”; and “What Is the Significance of the Book of Abraham?” in the introduction to the book of Abraham in the student manual. You may want to ask questions that students can answer from the student manual material (for example: How did the Prophet feel about receiving these writings?).

### Translated from Papyrus

Write a simple sentence on the board, and ask for a volunteer to translate it into any foreign language. Then ask for a volunteer to translate a more difficult sentence (such as Abraham 1:2).

Discuss some of the challenges involved in translating writings from one language to another. Invite students to look at Abraham facsimile 1 and “translate” it into a story line, without looking at the explanation below it.



Discuss how one might try to “translate” drawings, such as the Egyptian hieroglyphics of the book of Abraham. Display and invite a student to read aloud the material under “How Did the Prophet Translate the Ancient Writings?” in the introduction to the book of Abraham in the student manual; then discuss the material as a class. You may want to refer to the Gospel Topics Essay “Translation and Historicity of the Book of Abraham” (available on LDS.org) as you help students understand the context and translation of the book of Abraham. Testify of the inspired work of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

### Contributions of the Book of Abraham

Write the following phrases on the board, and ask students what they know about these topics:

*The Abrahamic covenant*  
*Ham and Egyptus*  
*The Urim and Thummim*  
*The Lord’s time*  
*Planetary times of reckoning*  
*Kolob and Kokaubeam*  
*Spirits in the premortal existence*  
*The first and second estates*  
*Writings that cannot be revealed to the world*  
*The Gods*  
*Planning the Creation of the earth*

Explain to students that in the book of Abraham they will be studying these and other wonderful doctrines and principles of the gospel.

### **The Facsimiles**

Ask students what they know about Egyptian history, religion, and writings that may relate to the Abraham facsimiles. Point out that the explanations for facsimile 1, figures 2, 10; facsimile 2, figures 2, 7; and facsimile 3, figures 1, 3 demonstrate the link between these drawings and Abraham.

Explain to students that the facsimiles may be looked upon symbolically as follows: facsimile 1 shows that Abraham overcame the tests and trials of earth life; facsimile 2 shows that Abraham obtained the knowledge that would help him return to God's presence and become like Him; and facsimile 3 shows that Abraham entered the presence of God and obtained eternal life.