The following is the story of the beginning of the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. Write-up instructions: There are several scriptural readings with questions to watch for. Also, look at the very end of this paper and note the final write-up instruction:

A. Israel Becomes a People of Size and a Slave Nation

1. The descendants of Abraham become a people of large size.
   
   Recall that when Jacob and his sons came from the promised land to dwell with Joseph in the land of Egypt, the house of Israel consisted of “seventy souls” (Ex. 1:1-6).
   
   After four hundred years (Gen. 15:13-16; Ex. 12:40; Acts 7:6), “the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them” (Ex. 1:7). Now, Israel had become a people of large size, a prerequisite to becoming a “great nation” as promised in the Abrahamic Covenant (Abr. 2:6-11; Gen. 12:1-3). This was good news! But bad news was to follow.

2. Israel loses the gospel and generally become a wicked people.
   
   The Egyptians fearing the size of Israel yet finding them valuable in building their cities, enslaved Israel bringing them into a state of bondage for many years. Further, during those years they lost the fullness of the everlasting gospel administered by the “greater priesthood” (D&C 84:19). They became “a people that [did] err in their heart, and they [did] not know [the Lord’s] ways” (Ps. 95:6-11).

3. God Remembers “the Promises Made to the Fathers” Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
   
   The Lord was not going to allow this situation to continue. The account reads:

   “Read Exodus 2:23-25. There are at least two promises of the Abrahamic Covenant being referred to in these verses. Which two?”

B. Moses and the Exodus of Israel from Egypt

1. The Early Years of Moses
   
   Sometime, probably in the 14th or 15th centuries B.C., the man foreordained ordained of God (see JST Gen. 50:24-36) to restore the gospel to Israel and free them from bondage was born. His name was Moses. Bruce R. McConkie (1915-85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles declared: “Moses, the man of God, continued the work of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in standing as a father and friend and founder of the family of Israel.” (A New Witness for the Articles of Faith [1985], p. 522)
   
   Moses was born a Israelite but raised an Egyptian in Pharaoh’s court. The scriptures teach he “was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds” (Acts 7:22). He fled into the wilderness when he was forty to escape Egyptian punishment for defending an Israelite who was being beaten by an Egyptian. Crossing through the Sinai peninsula he found himself the land of Midian (Ex. 2:11-15). He was taken in by Jethro, the priest of Midian and a descendent of Abraham through his third wife, Keturah. Moses married Zipporah, a daughter of Jethro (Ex. 3:16-22; Gen. 25:1-4). We are told in the Doctrine and Covenants that Moses received the priesthood from Jethro (D&C 84:6). Moses lived with Jethro for forty years where he “kept the flock of Jethro” (Ex. 3:1).

2. Moses called to redeem Israel from bondage and bring them back to the promised land.
   
   While tending the flocks in the wilderness of Sinai, Moses “came to the mountain of God, even Horeb” where he saw the Lord “in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush.” Calling Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Lord directed Moses to go to Egypt and bring back his people, the house of Israel, to Mt. Sinai where they were to “serve God upon this mountain” (Ex. 3:11-12). This had reference to Israel entering into a covenant relationship with God wherein Israel would become the people or nation by whom God would bless all nations of the world (Es. 19:3-6; Deut. 28:1, 9-10).

3. The Exodus from Egypt.
   
   Returning to Egypt, Moses came before and said, “Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness” (Ex. 5:1). To no surprise, Pharaoh refused the request. Under the direction of God, Moses levied ten plagues upon Egypt (Ex. 7-12) which were intended to accomplish two things: (1) to prove to both the Egyptians and Israelites that the gods of Egypt were fallacious (Ex.12:12), and thus (2) to soften Pharaoh’s heart and allow the children of Israel to leave Egypt.
   
   The final plague was the death of the first born of: at midnight, the destroying angel would come into the land of Egypt and take the life of every firstborn Pharaoh down to the lowliest person and beast (Ex. 11:5). For Israel to escape this plague, they were to participate in a special in a special ordinance that has become known as the Passover (Ex. 11-12). This ordinance consisted of killing a lamb and in a special dinner eating it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.
   
   This ordinance would eventually become part of three annual pilgrimages to the temple (see Ex. 23:14-19). These pilgrimages were full of symbols that would remind them of the exodus, receiving the law of God at Sinai, and the wilderness journey to the land of promise and entering into the promised land. These three pilgrimages were also to cite their minds forward to the coming of the Messiah to free them from the bondage of sin, receiving the law of God by covenant, and the great millennium.

Moses and the First Gathering of Israel: 
The Begins to Fulfill the Covenant Made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
C. Israel at Mt. Sinai.

1. “An Holy Nation”

In the third month of their journey from Egypt, the children of Israel arrived at the base of Mt. Sinai where they “camped before the mount” (Ex. 19:1). Their stay lasted for eleven months.

Coming out of Egypt, Israel was now a people of size. They now needed to become a “covenant people.” It was the Lord’s intent to establish the descendants of Abraham as a unified people with one God and one religion.

*Read Exodus 19:1-6.*

*Read the article entitled, “Peculiar,” in LDS Bible Dictionary. According to what you have read, what did the Lord want to make of the slave nation of Israel? What must Israel do to become this?*

*Read Exodus 19:7-11. According to these verses, what was going to happen in three days?*

To understand what happened next, we must turn to some verses found in the Doctrine and Covenants.

*Read D&C 84:19-22. According to these verses, what does the “greater priesthood” administer, and what key does it hold?*

The Melchizedek Priesthood ordinances give us access to spiritual rebirth through the Gift of the Holy Ghost and to the temple ordinances through which the greatest knowledge of God may be obtained.

*Read D&C 107:18-19. What keys are held by the greater priesthood according to these verses?*

*Read D&C 84:23-27. According to these verses, what happened at Mt. Sinai.*

2. Israel Enters into the Preparatory Gospel

We see that the Lord’s desire to make them “an holy nation” would require that they receive the first principles and ordinances of the gospel. This would include entering into a covenant relationship which is done at baptism. We see in Exodus 20-23 that Moses received from the Lord the various commandments that Israel covenant to keep. These include what has become known as the 10 commandments. Then in Exodus 24, we are told of the covenant ritual Israel wherein all of Israel covenanted to keep the laws of God.

3. Moses Receives the Higher Law and Ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood Order

After entering into covenant into the preparatory gospel, the next step for Israel to become “an holy nation” involved entering into higher covenants or ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood. In preparation for this, the Lord informed Moses to up to the top of Mt. Sinai where he would receive tables of stone upon which these higher ordinances and laws would be written (Ex. 24:12).

For forty days and nights, Moses was in the presence of God upon the mountain. Against common belief, this is the first time Moses was on the mountain for 40 days and nights. During this time, Moses received the higher law. Then the details of both the preparatory and higher gospel were written on the tables of stone “with the finger of God” (Ex. 31:18).

At this time, Moses was told to construct a portable temple wherein the ordinances of the higher law could be performed. The details on how to construct this temple are
found in Exodus 25-31. This temple is called by the Lord various names. One the *ohel mo’ed*, which is translated, Tabernacle, in the King James Version of the Bible literally means, “tent of meeting,” or “tent of feast,” or “tent of reunion.” The *ohel mo’ed* is an appropriate name or this structure because the Tabernacle was the place where the Israelites were to prepare to meet God and live in his presence.

It appears from D&C 84:19-24, that the Lord initially intended that the children of Israel would pass through the ordinances of both the preparatory gospel (performed in the courtyard) and higher gospel (performed in the holy place) thus qualifying them to come into his presence symbolized by the passing through the veil into the most holy place (where God's presence was represented by the Ark of the Covenant). However, as we will now see, Israel lost their right to the Melchizedek priesthood portion of the temple.

4. Israel Breaks the Covenant

During the 40 days Moses was on the mount, the children of Israel broke the covenant they had made by fashion a golden calf and worshipping it (Ex. 32:1-6; also see Psalms 106:19). This was a clear violation of several of what has become known as the 10 commandments.

5. Moses Mediates Between Israel and God.

Breaking the laws of God places the Lord, who wanted to bring Israel into His presence—as he had done with the cities of Enoch and Melchizedek—into the position of executing justice. Alma explains that justice demands consequences: good for good and evil for evil (see Al. 41:3-4). So instead of obeying the covenant and having the blessing of living with God in His celestial realm, Israel was now doomed to suffer the eternal consequences of their disobedience.

At the moment God was going to satisfy justice, Moses interceded in behalf of his people, reminding God of the covenant he made with Abraham, saying, “Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever” (Ex. 32:13). In response, the Lord said: “If they will repent of the evil which they have done, I will spare them, and turn away my fierce wrath; but, behold, thou shalt execute judgment upon all that will not repent of this evil this day” (JST Ex. 32:14).

We find within this story Moses as a type of Christ wherein he demonstrates the mediatorial role of Christ. Further, this story illustrates the powerful role of the Abrahamic covenant in the salvation of Israel.

When Moses came off the mount he found the children of Israel participating in the fertility cult worship. He threw down the tables of stone breaking them as a sign of the broken covenant and the loss of the higher law they would have received (Ex. 32:19). He then stood outside of the camp and cried, “Who is on the Lord’s side?” (Ex. 32:26). Those repenting of their actions came to where Moses was standing while the rest were executed by the tribe of Levi (Ex. 32:27-29).

5. Law of Moses Given in Place of the Higher Law

Moses returned to Mt. Sinai once again for another forty days and forty nights (Ex. 34:28). During this time he received divine assurance that the Lord would once again own his people and bring them to the promised land (Ex. 32:31-33:23).

The Lord then commanded Moses to “new two other tables of stone” wherein the terms and conditions of a new covenant were written. This included everything that was written on the first set of tables “save the words of the everlasting covenant of the holy priesthood” or the higher ordinances of the temple (JST Deut. 10:2; see also JST Ex. 34:1-2 and D&C 84:23-27). In other words, the higher gospel or Melchizedek Priesthood order was removed thus denying the children of Israel the ordinances that would enable them to come into the presence of the Lord.

Brigham Young said of this: “If they had been sanctified and holy, the children of Israel would not have travelled one year with Moses before they would have received their endowments and the Melchizedek Priesthood. But they could not receive them, and never did. Moses left them, and they did not receive the fulness of that Priesthood.” (Journal of Discourses, 6:100-10).

In place of the higher gospel, Moses received what became known as the “law of Moses” (much of which is found in the Books of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy).

The prophet Abinadi said that the law of Moses was “a law of performances and ordinances, a law which they [Israel] were to observe strictly from day to day, to keep them in remembrance of God and their duty towards him” (Mosiah 13:30). The Apostle Paul taught that the law was intended to be a “schoolmaster” that would “bring [Israel] unto Christ” and the higher law (Galatians 3:24).

Essentially, the law of Moses was a set of laws that were given to the Israelites that might be thought of as object lessons that illustrated the importance of the preparatory gospel and explain how it functioned. Hence, the preparatory gospel was the focus of the law of Moses. This law was not only to be the religious code of the Israelites but also their civil code.

6. Israel Enters into a Covenant to Keep the Law of Moses

After returning from the mount with the new set of stone tablets, Moses explained the new law and covenant to the children of Israel (Ex. 34:29-35:19). Then the children of Israel entered into a covenant to keep the law of Moses (Ex. 34:27-28). This covenant replaced the covenant the children of Israel had made in Exodus 24.

D. Israel Travels to the Promised Land

1. The Tabernacle is Constructed.

Though the higher ordinances of the Melchizedek priesthood (those which would have been performed in the sanctuary or temple) were excluded from the law of Moses, thus essentially cutting the people off from the sanctuary or presence of the Lord, the building of the portable temple or Tabernacle was nevertheless necessary.

The reason was this: the altar of sacrifice and laver located in the outer courtyard, which were essential in performing the ordinances associated with the preparatory gospel, would naturally play an essential part in the performances and ordinances of the law of Moses. Further, the fact that the common Israelite was cut off from the sanctuary should have been a constant reminder that higher laws and ordinances were necessary in order for man to come back into the presence of God. The law of Moses did not provide those ordinances and laws. These must come at a future time.

After its completion, the cloud of smoke and fire (which led the children of Israel out of Egypt and which rested upon Mt. Sinai) descended upon the portable temple indicating God’s acceptance (Ex. 40:34-38). Further, the Tabernacle would
be the residence of Jehovah and no longer Mt. Sinai. Wherever Israel went, their God would be with them.

However, Israel would never be able to behold God's presence for they remained cut off from the presence of God. This was dramatically symbolized by the veil that separated the holy place from the most holy place for according to the law of Moses the common Israelite could not pass through the veil into the most holy place.

2. The Forty Years of Wandering

Having entered into a covenant with the Lord and built a portable temple, Israel was now ready to inherit the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The "camp of Israel" dissembled and began their march to the promised land (Num. 9).

The Book of Numbers recounts Israel's travels from Mt. Sinai to the promised land. Having left Mt. Sinai, Israel traveled northward until stopping at Kadesh, just south of the land of Canaan, the promised land. From there, twelve spies were sent to spy out the land (Num. 13:1-25).

Upon their return, they gave a report saying that the land is a fruitful land, "Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great" (Num. 13:27-28). This caused a stir among the Israelites. Caleb and Joshua, two of the spies, tried to convince the people that they could defeat the inhabitants of Canaan. But the other ten spies said, "We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we."

The children of Israel believed the words of the ten spies and would not go into the land (Num. 13:30-14:10). The Lord then declared that Israel would remain in the wilderness until that generation of Israelites (those twenty years and older) passed away hoping the next generation would have the faith to follow the Lord into the promised land (Num. 14:26-39).

The Book of Numbers records Israel's "wandering" in the wilderness which lasted forty years. During that time, the children of Israel were led by Moses until they came to rest east of the Jordan River near the north end of the Dead Sea.

3. Moses is Translated

While there, Moses delivered three discourses reviewing the history of Israel from the exodus from Egypt through the forty years of wandering. These discourses comprise The Book of Deuteronomy. In these discourses, the terms of the covenant or law of Moses were reviewed after which the children of Israel renewed their covenant with the Lord (Deut. 29:1).

Moses' mission was now complete. He departed from the children of Israel, ascended Mount Nebo where the Lord showed him all the land of Canaan, saying, "This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying I will give it unto thy seed" (Deut. 34:1-4). Moses was then translated and taken from the earth (See JST Deut. 34:5-7; Alma 45:19). This was done in order that he could return to deliver priesthood keys to Peter, James, and John (Matt. 17:1-13).

*Throughout this reading assignment, the various roles of Jesus Christ have been symbolized. Make a brief list of as many roles Jesus Christ played as you can find.*