Promises Made to Enoch and Abraham

We live in the last gospel dispensation called “the dispensation of the fulness of times” where the Savior will “gather in one all things... both which are in heaven, and which are on earth” (Eph. 1:10). The Lord’s work of salvation commenced in earlier “times” or dispensations but not completed because of apostasy will be brought to a completion. It will see the “the gather[ing] together in one the children of God” from Adam to the very last, who will, into “a whole and complete and perfect union” –a world-wide “kingdom of God” or “kingdom of Zion” with Jesus Christ as their King (John 11:52; D&C 27:13; 65:2; 105:32; 128:18; Moses 7:53).

Promises Made to the Fathers: At the beginning of this dispensation Moroni appeared to Prophet Joseph Smith to train him in his role initiating the this last dispensation. He was told that the Old Testament prophet Elijah would return and “plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers” and then the children shall “turn to their fathers” (JS Hist. 1:38-39).

Who were the fathers? Who are the children? What does it mean to “turn” their hearts? What are the promises?
The “fathers” are “the chosen seed” or “elect” whom God foreordained as His servant seed by which He would bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of His children (see D&C 107:40; “Election” in the Bible Dictionary).

The “children” are the latter-day remnants of the house of Israel (the chosen seed).

The word “turn,” the Prophet Joseph noted, should in this context should be translated bind, or seal.” (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith [2007, 472].

What are “the promises”? All who accept “the everlasting gospel” by entering into “the everlasting covenant” (D&C 101:39-40) –all the ordinances from baptism through sealing of marriage in temples—receive a number of eternal promises: (1) they will be heirs with Jesus Christ (D&C 76:54; Rom. 8:17), of all the Father has (D&C 76:55, 59); (2) and as heirs they will inherit the earth in its celestial state (D&C 88:16-19), (3) where they will dwell eternally with their Heavenly Parents as equals (D&C 76:92-95; 88:107), (4) having been resurrected with a glorified, exalted bodies the same as their Heavenly Parents (D&C 76:70-71; 132:19; 76:5, 132:19).

In the scriptures, however, we find in the scriptures that at various times God made specific promises, with an everlasting covenant, to individuals that would be fulfilled during the earth’s “temporal existence.” These promises are always concerned with the individuals posternity. And they always affect all of God’s children from the days of Adam to the end. Though these promises are to be fulfilled in the temporal existence of the earth, they are essential in fulfilling God’s eternal purposes (see 1 Ne. 22:1-3).

Indeed, the fulfilling of these promises are in preparation of fulfilling the eternal promises stated in the above paragraph.

Since these promises are concerned with the posterity of the those to whom they were made, they are called “the promises made to the fathers.”

The scriptures reveal four groupings of promises, three with individuals. They comprise those made with –

- Enoch (and Noah), known as the Enochian Covenant;
- Abraham (and Isaac, and Jacob) – called the Abrahamic Covenant;
- the house of Israel;
- King David, the Davidic Covenant.

Promises Made to Enoch—The promises made to Enoch by covenant are found in Moses 7:51-53, 58-67; JST Gen. 9:15-25; and 14:25-35. In Moses 7, we are told these promises:

- God will not destroy the posterity of Noah with a flood of water (Moses 7:51; JST Gen. 9:15-20)
- God will “call upon the children of Noah” (Moses. 7:51); that is, He will ensure that every descendant of Noah should receive gospel opportunities.
- God made “an unalterable decree” that a “remnant” of Enoch’s seed (the “chosen” or “servant” seed) should “be found among all nations while the earth should stand” (Moses 7:52).

These three promises form the hub of the covenant. God made with Noah the same covenant. Noah’s version adds some details to the above promises. The JST Gen. 9: adds this promise:

“that, when men [all Noah’s seed] should keep all my commandments, Zion [Enoch’s city] should again come on the earth, the city of Enoch which I have caught up unto myself. . . that when thy posterity shall embrace the truth, and look upward, then shall Zion look downward, and all the heavens shall shake with gladness, and the earth shall tremble with joy;

“and the general assembly of the church of the firstborn shall come down out of heaven, and possess the earth, and shall have place until the end come ” (JST Gen. 9:21-23)

When will this happen? God both told and showed Enoch how this would be fulfilled. In the “last days” the Lord would “flood” the earth with righteousness and truth. This would be the means of gathering out the chosen seed “from the four quarters of the earth (where the Lord promised Enoch his seed would be found) to an Holy City” called Zion, or New Jerusalem (Moses 7:60, 62).

However, Enoch was promised that his posterity would “always be found among all nations. So how could they gather to the city of Zion and still be among all nations?

Isaiah foresaw that the gather of the chosen seed, now called Israel, would be to “stakes” of Zion. He likened Israel to a tent that would covering the whole earth. The elect will gather to “stakes” of tent of Zion (Isaiah 54:1-2; 3 Ne. 22:1-2).

The accompanying picture shows the process of pitching a tent like Isaiah had in mind. First, a suitable spot would be chosen for the central gathering place.
Promises Made to Abraham—Abraham was a descendant of Shem, the son of Noah through whom the chosen seed was to descend. His father, however, had turned from the “order” to the worship of other gods (Abr. 1:5). However, “the records of the fathers, even the patriarchs, concerning the right of Priesthood” was still available for Abraham to read (Abr. 1:31). From the record he learned of the eternal and temporal promises made to those who received the “everlasting covenant.”

Abraham “sought for the blessings of the fathers” (Abr. 1:2). To find them, he would have to leave the city of his birth and inheritance, and, being guided by God, go to another land. Before he left, the Lord made promises with Abraham that would have a profound affect upon all of God’s children. These promises can be found in Abraham 2:6-11. They are best understood if divided into four categories. Abraham was promised—

- that he would have a posterity that would become “a great (or large) nation” (Abr. 2:9)
- that his posterity would have the Gospel and Priesthood by which it could be ministered “unto all nations” (Abr. 2:9)
- that his posterity would be given a land (where they could worship God freely) “when they hearken to my voice” (Abr. 2:6)
- that “in thy seed, or posterity, shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even life eternal” (Abr. 2:11)

Abraham was also promised that he would “a blessing unto [his] seed after thee” (Abr. 2:9). That is, it would be because of Abraham that the posterity of Abraham would be blessed with the Gospel to be taken to all nations (Gentiles) of the world.

Abraham was tried and tested to see if he would keep his part of the covenantal agreement (see Gen. 12-22). He always proved his obedience to God. The greatest test he faced was the command to offer up his only son, Isaac (Gen. 22:1-14). Because He was willing to do so, the Lord promised that His posterity would receive their promised land and blessings (Gen. 22:15-18). In other words, the promises made to Abraham are a done deal—the Lord will bring them about. As the Lord said to Abraham’s son, Isaac, his seed would inherit the land promised them through Abraham, “Because that Abraham observed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws” (Gen. 26:5).

These promises made to Abraham speak of how the promises made to Enoch will come about. The chosen seed are promised that they will receive the Gospel and then minister it to all nations. The first example of this is the story of Israel’s bondage in Egypt. We are told that because of the Abrahamic covenant that God intervened in their bondage and brought them back to the promised land (Ex. 2:23-25). After Israel made a covenant with the Lord, Israel broke their covenant. The Lord would have “consumed” or destroyed them, but for the covenant made with Abraham promising that he would bless his posterity with the Gospel (Gen. 32:10-14).

The Work of Elijah—The Gospel of Jesus Christ makes it possible for us to be redeemed of the bondage of sin and return to the presence of God in the promised land—the earth in its celestial state. Because of the Fall we must be adopted back to the family of God. But Jesus Christ “was crucified for the sins of the world, even as many as will believe on my name, that they may become the sons of God, even one in me as I am one in the Father, as the Father is one in me, that we may be one” (D&C 35:2). Through the priesthood ordinances of salvation we become adopted to Jesus Christ and “become sons of God” or heirs to the eternal promises.

However, that adoption first took place with Adam (Moses 6:65-68). The descendants of Adam must be adopted through their “fathers” who have been adopted to Adam. Moroni told Joseph Smith the Elijah would come to turn the scattered remnants of Enoch’s seed back to the promises made to the fathers. This dispensation would fulfill all the work of this salvation begun in all former dispensations and fulfill that work. This will be done by “welding together” the children to their fathers all the way back to Adam. The dispensation of the fulness of times began with the restoration of the Gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith and will continue into the Millennium until all have been brought back to God who will (D&C 128:18).

After the house of Israel had entered into the promised land, they struggled living the commandments of God. The Lord worked with them, sending them prophets to help guide and direct them. In the days of the divided kingdom—when Israel divided into two separate nations—Israel, the northern ten tribes, continued to struggle in keeping God’s covenant. Elijah was sent to help them return to Jehovah. With his sealing powers, he sealed the heaven shut that it didn’t rain for three and a half years. When the were humbled, he gathered them to show them that Jehovah is the only true and living God. In their hearing, they heard him pray to God, saying:

“LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel [Jacob], let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

Hear me, O LORD, her me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou has turned their heart back again” (1 Kings 18:36-37).
That prayer states the work of Elijah, to turn Israel’s heart back to God through their fathers. The promises made to Enoch and Abraham ensure that will be done.