

The Gathering of Israel

In March, 1842, Joseph Smith wrote the inspired thirteen Articles of Faith of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in which the tenth Article proclaims, "We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory."

To add current context President Nelson has stated that this gathering on both sides of the veil is *"the greatest challenge, the greatest cause, and the greatest work on earth today."*

Description of Israel

1. God said; "thy name shall not be any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name." (Genesis 35:10)
2. The twelve sons/tribes of Israel established a kingdom in their father's name.
3. A revolt led to a division whereby ten tribes located 40 miles north of Jerusalem and retained the title Kingdom of Israel. The other two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, became known as the

Kingdom of Judah and stayed in Jerusalem.

Ephraim was the dominant tribe in The Kingdom of Israel and was blessed with the "birthright in Israel." (Genesis 48:5-22) In the latter days, descendants of Ephraim were gathered first to prepare the way for the gathering of the rest of Israel. (Doctrines of Salvation, Joseph Fielding Smith, Volume 3, p.252)

Dispersion of the Kingdom of Israel

The ten tribes went into apostasy, in spite of the inspired ministries of Amos, or Elijah. This northern kingdom was eventually scattered over all the earth (1 Nephi 22:3-5). However, a large grouping located in the "north countries." (Jeremiah 3:18, D&C133:26) Because of this dispersion the Kingdom of Israel was lost to history and became known as the "Lost Ten Tribes."

However, they were not lost to God. During the Savior's appearance to the Nephites He mentioned "the other tribes of the house of Israel, whom the Father hath led away out of the land." (3 Nephi 15:15) would "hear His voice" and be "numbered among (His) sheep." (3 Nephi 16:1-5) These "lost sheep" were members

of the “Lost Ten Tribes” who, along with their prophets, were visited by the resurrected Savior. (Articles of Faith, by James E. Talmage, p. 326 and D&C 133:26)

Spiritual Gathering of Israel

In 1836 Moses appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple and “committed ...the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north.” (D&C 110:11)

1

In 1972, Elder Bruce R. McConkie of The Quorum of the Twelve, provided inspired instruction which was subsequently endorsed by President Harold B. Lee.

Said Elder McConkie: “In the early years of the Church specific places to which the Saints were to be gathered together were given... but He gave one qualification: “Until the day cometh when there is found no more room for them; and then I have other places which I will appoint unto them... and they shall be called stakes.” (D&C 101:21) “Of this glorious day of restoration and gathering, a Nephite prophet said: ‘The Lord ... has covenanted with all the house of Israel (that) the time will come that they shall be restored to the

true church and fold(s) of God; and that they shall be gathered home to the lands of their inheritance, and shall be established in all their lands of promise.’ (2 Ne. 9:1-2.)

“Now I call your attention to the facts, set forth in these scriptures: that the gathering of Israel consists of them individually joining the true church; of them coming to a knowledge of the true God and of His saving truths; and of them worshiping Him in the congregations of the Saints in all nations and among all peoples. Please note that these revealed words speak of the *folds* of the Lord; of Israel being gathered to the *lands* of their inheritance; of Israel being *established in all their lands of promise*; and of there being congregations of the covenant people of the Lord in *every nation, speaking every tongue, and among every people* when the Lord comes again.”

Elder McConkie then powerfully concluded: “The place of gathering for the Mexican Saints is in Mexico; the place of gathering for the Guatemalan Saints is in Guatemala; the place of gathering for the Brazilian Saints is in Brazil; and so it goes throughout the length and breadth of the whole earth. Japan is for the Japanese; Korea is for the Koreans; Australia is for the Australians; every nation is the gathering place for its own people.” (see President Harold B. Lee, April 1973 General

Conference Report; and, Articles of Faith, p. 353)

Spiritual Gathering of Israel Precedes Temporal Gathering

Why is the spiritual gathering of Israel in this last gospel dispensation before the Savior's Second Coming so important?

Babylon was the ancient Babel, where wickedness and perversions of God's laws led to its destruction. (Jeremiah 51:37; Revelations 17:5, 18:2, 18:21) Ever since, in the scriptures, Babylon has been associated with wickedness and worldliness. Accordingly, so that He might have a righteous people prepared for His return, the Lord has warned His children to separate themselves from the sinful ways of the world and depart from this spiritual Babylon. (D&C 1:13-16)

To accomplish the Savior's direction and warning, His children must be provided a

2

place where they can learn the ways of God, As taught by Elder McConkie, these designated places of spiritual safety are the stakes of Zion, which serve as a "defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be

poured out...upon the whole earth.” (D&C 115:6) Temples; which are being constructed at an ever increasing pace, to serve an ever increasing number of stakes, in an ever increasing number of countries; play a critical role in this ongoing spiritual gathering.

Isaiah and Micah both prophesied of the “mountain of the Lord’s house being established in the top of the mountains, and...all nations (flowing) unto it,” They saw the construction of the Salt Lake Temple, (Dedicatory prayer of Salt Lake Temple by Wilford Woodruff) and the gathering of descendants of Ephraim to the “mountains.”

Eventually the Ten Tribes, as noted in the Article of Faith, will be physically “restored” their lands of promise. (1 Nephi 19:13-16 and 2 Nephi 9:2) This temporal gathering will not be completed before the Savior’s Second Coming. (see Joseph Smith, Matthew, 1:37) And, as taught by Elder McConkie, saints around the world will be gathered to their own countries, where stakes have been created and temples built.

Gathering the Kingdom of Judah

Judah is now known as “Jews” and all “Jews” are Israelites. Many Jews will eventually believe in Jesus Christ (D&C 133:35). Since

World War I and the creation of the nation of Israel in 1948, many Jews have gathered to Jerusalem. However a significant majority of the tribe of Judah remain scattered throughout the world. (D&C 45:42-44) The spiritual gathering of Judah will occur as they acknowledge that the God they crucified was and is the true and promised Messiah. (2 Nephi 25:15-17) It is apparent that much of the spiritual gathering of the Jews will not occur until after the second coming. (D&C: 45:51-53 and tenth Article of Faith) when they will witness the resurrected Savior.

“Zion (the New Jerusalem) and Jerusalem

In the tenth Article of Faith, “Zion (the New Jerusalem) equates the name “Zion” with the “New Jerusalem.” As to Zion being the New Jerusalem, there are a number of Bible references to Zion being separate and distinct from “old” Jerusalem.

Both Isaiah and Micah taught of two locations for the temporal gathering of Israel and Judah. “But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob;

and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” (Micah 4:1-2; see also Isaiah 2:2-3)

3

Joel taught that “In mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance,” (Joel 2:32) and that “the Lord shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem.” (Joel 3:16-17)

Zechariah taught that “the Lord shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.” (Zechariah 1:17 and see 2: 7-12)

John the Revelator spoke of “the name of the city of my God, which is the New Jerusalem...” (Revelation 3:12) and later, “I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven... (Revelation 21:2)

As would be expected, The Book of Mormon provides clarity that the location of the New Jerusalem is separate from “old” Jerusalem. “Behold, Ether saw the days of Christ, and he spake concerning a New Jerusalem upon this land. And he spake also concerning the house of Israel, and that the Jerusalem from whence Lehi should come (would) be built up again, a holy city unto the Lord; wherefore, it could not be a

new Jerusalem for it had been built in times of old..." (Ether 13:3-5)

Latter day Apostles have taught that there will be two world capitals during the millennial reign of the Savior and that He will administrate and minister from both capital cities. (see Joseph Fielding Smith's *Doctrines of Salvation*, volume 3, p. 68-71) The administrative "law" of the Lord will go forth from Zion, the New Jerusalem, and the spiritual "word" of the Lord will go forth from Jerusalem.

Where is Zion?

The resurrected Lord confirmed earlier prophecies of the establishment of a New Jerusalem in the western continents. (see 3 Nephi 20:22) The Book of Mormon effectively teaches that both North and South America is Zion, the "choice land above all other lands." (see discussion by President Joseph Fielding Smith in *Doctrines of Salvation*, volume 3, p. 72 and of Elder Talmage's use of the term "hemisphere" in *Articles of Faith*, p.349-350) The previously quoted teaching of Ether also mention that the New Jerusalem would be built "upon (the) land" where the descendants of Lehi were established (and they were established in both South and North America.)

In 1831 the Lord commanded that the elders of His church should “go forth to the western countries...build up churches unto me...(and)...purchase an inheritance which shall hereafter... be called the New Jerusalem...and Zion.” (D&C 45:64-67)

Independence, Missouri was designated the “center place” or center stake. (see D&C 57:1-3)

On August 3, 1831 the temple site and surrounding region were dedicated by the Prophet Joseph Smith, to be a gathering place for the people of God. (See James E. Talmage, Articles of Faith, p. 353)

4

Who Will Gather to Zion and Who Will Gather to Jerusalem

As Elder McConkie taught, the spiritual gathering of all of Israel is into the stakes of Zion being created across the earth. The tribe of Judah is, and will be, temporally gathered to Jerusalem, and the ten tribes, particularly Ephraimites to Zion, and the “top of the mountains” of western America.

Because of his faithfulness, Joseph received a double portion of blessings from Jacob. (Genesis 48:20-22) While the land of Zion (North and South America) was given to Joseph and his descendants, (Genesis 49:22-26 and D&C 133: 31) Joseph and his descendants also received,

with his brothers, an inheritance in ancient Palestine.

After the restoration of the gospel, Ephraimites were charged to lead the effort to gather Israel and to assign the other tribes to their place of gathering. (D&C 133:29-32) It is also important to note that the Book of Mormon speaks of the role of Gentiles in the gathering. "Gentiles" in the Book of Mormon are often "of Israel." (see "Gentiles" in Bible Dictionary)

Zion (the New Jerusalem), the center place, or center stake, is for the temporal gathering of Joseph and "all the house of Israel, his companions," and Jerusalem for Judah and "the children of Israel, his companions." (Ezekiel 37:16) Except for the tribe of Joseph, who will be mostly gathered to Zion, stakes, with their associated temples across the earth, will be the final place for the temporal gathering of much of Israel.

Conclusion

President Nelson stated in October, 2018 "Tonight I'm extending a prophetic plea to ...shape the future by helping to gather scattered Israel." To help us better prepare he asked that we read the Book of Mormon and establish a pattern of regular temple attendance, which "may require a little more sacrifice in

your life. More regular time in the temple will allow the Lord to teach you how to draw upon His priesthood power with which you have been endowed in His temple...Seek to *know* more, to *understand* more, to *feel* more about temples than you ever have before. He concluded, *“together we can do all that our Heavenly Father needs us to do to prepare the world for the Second Coming of His Beloved Son.”*

President Nelson’s focus on temple worship was predictable. But why the Book of Mormon? It has more than 100 references to the gathering, including that when The Book of Mormon comes forth (188 years ago) the gathering will have already commenced (see 3 Nephi 21:1-7 and 29:1) President Nelson has also taught: “As you ... read daily from the Book of Mormon, you will learn the doctrines of the gathering...not found in the Bible. The Book of Mormon is central to the gathering of Israel. In fact, if there were no Book of Mormon, the promised gathering of Israel would not occur.” (See title page of The Book of Mormon)

5

The Savior taught the Nephites, and if He were here today would say the same thing to every member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Ye are the children of the prophets; and ye are of the house of Israel; and ye are of the covenant which the Father made with your

fathers...and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.”(Nephi 20:25) We bless all “kindreds of the earth” on both sides of the veil as we respond to President Nelson’s “plea” to fully involve ourselves in the gathering. Those who accept the gospel, on both sides of the veil, who then receive their saving and exalting ordinances, live or by proxy, inherit the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant and literally become “of Israel” regardless of what their blood ancestry may have been. (See “Israel” in Bible Dictionary; Abraham 2:10; 3 Nephi 20:26-27)

Every ordinance performed for the living and the dead, whether baptism, confirmation, or the receipt of temple blessings, plays an essential role in the gathering. Since becoming the Prophet, President Nelson has consistently and constantly directed us to 1) read and study The Book of Mormon; 2) commit ourselves to regular, worshipful temple attendance; and, 3) involve ourselves in family history work.

Our initial view of this prophetic instruction may have been that its ultimate purpose is the Lord’s concern for our own, and our families, spiritual protection in this increasingly wicked world. That is certainly the case. However, President Nelson has now provided a significantly broadened view of the Lord’s

purposes. Each of the three encouraged actions will lead us to an increased awareness of, and desire to be involved in, the gathering of Israel.

President Nelson holds, and bears singular responsibility to exercise, the keys given to Joseph Smith in 1836, for the following work: First, Moses restored the keys for “the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north;” Second, Elias, a prophet in the days of Abraham “committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed”; And third, Elijah “committed the keys of this dispensation” to “turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse,” and Elijah then added “by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors.” (D&C 110:11-16)

It has now been 182 years since these keys were restored and Elijah declared that the Lord’s triumphant return is “at the doors.” As part of our personal preparation for the second coming, each of us should enlist in “the greatest challenge, the greatest cause, and the greatest work on earth today.”

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