



DOCTRINE & COVENANTS & CHURCH HISTORY GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

* GREEN MOUNTAIN 1ST WARD * LAKEWOOD, COLORADO * 03/29/09 * PAGE 1 *

Lesson 12: “The Gathering of My People”

Introduction

A key element of this, *the dispensation of the fulness of times* is the gathering of Israel. Many sacrifices have been made by the Saints since the restoration. The Lord's promises are being fulfilled in our day. This lesson focuses on the gathering and our part in it.

Joseph Knight, Sr. Sale of Property in Order to Gather to Kirtland, OH:

“The farm lately occupied by Joseph Knight, situate in the town of Colesville, near the Colesville Bridge—bounded on one side by the Susquehanna River, and containing about one hundred and forty two acres. On said Farm are two Dwelling Houses, a good Barn, and a fine Orchard. The terms of sale will be liberal.”

Newell Knight on the Gathering to Kirtland, OH:

“Having returned home from conference, in obedience to the commandment which had been given, I, together with the Colesville Branch, began to make preparations to go to Ohio. . . As might be expected, we were obliged to make great sacrifices of our property. The most of my time was occupied in visiting the brethren, and helping to arrange their affairs, so that we might travel together in one company.”

Brigham Young on the Gathering to Kirtland, OH:

“When we arrived in Kirtland [in September 1833], if any man that ever did gather with the Saints was any poorer than I was—it was because he had nothing. . . I had two children to take care of—that was all. I was a widower. ‘Brother Brigham, had you any shoes?’ No; not a shoe to my foot, except a pair of borrowed boots. I had no winter clothing, except a homemade coat that I had had three or four years. ‘Any pantaloons?’ No. ‘What did you do? Did you go without?’ No; I borrowed a pair to wear till I could get another pair. I had travelled and preached and given away every dollar of my property. I was worth a little property when I started to preach. . . I had traveled and preached until I had nothing left to gather with; but Joseph said: ‘come up;’ and I went up the best I could.”

The Colesville Saint's on Settlement in Missouri:

“We enjoyed many happy seasons in our prayer and other meetings, and the Spirit of the Lord was poured out upon us, and even on the little children, insomuch that many of eight, ten or twelve years of age spake, and prayed, and prophesied in our meetings and in our family worship. There was a spirit of peace and union, and love and good will manifested in this little Church in the wilderness, the memory of which will be ever dear to my heart.”

Lesson Highlights

- The Lord is gathering His people.
- The Saints gathered in Ohio.
- The Saints gathered in Missouri.
- The Saints now gather to the stakes of Zion in their own lands.

A study of this lesson will help us understand how latter-day Israel was gathered in the early days of the Church, how it is being gathered today, and how we can participate in this gathering.

Next Week

GENERAL CONFERENCE

The Lord is gathering His people.

The gathering of Israel is a prominent theme in the Doctrine and Covenants. Anciently when the twelve tribes of Israel fell into apostasy, they were taken captive by their enemies and scattered among the nations of the earth, just as the Lord had warned. Although the prophets grieved over the wickedness of the people, they rejoiced as they foresaw the time in the latter days when Israel would be gathered again (see Topical Guide, "Israel, Gathering of").

This great process commenced with the restoration of the gospel and the calling of missionaries to "declare glad tidings of great joy unto this generation" (D&C 31:3).

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** said, "*All that the prophets ... have written, from the days of righteous Abel, down to the last man that has left any testimony on record for our consideration, in speaking of the salvation of Israel in the last days, goes directly to show that it consists in the work of the gathering*" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 83).

The Saints gathered in Ohio. (1831-1838) (1839-1846)

The first direction that the Lord gave to latter-day saints to physically gather was given in December 1830, eight months after the Church was organized.

D&C 37:3 The Lord told Joseph to have them leave New York in favor of settling in Ohio. (For maps see pgs. 29, 31 in *Class Member Study Guide*)



D&C 38:31-32; 39:15 reveal the purpose of the Ohio gathering.

D&C 95:8; 105:33; 110:9 provide insight on how the Saints were "endowed with power from on high" while in Ohio.

D&C 45:71, 10th Article of Faith—both indicate that the gathering has a physical and a spiritual component to it.

- **Spiritual:** Learning the gospel, coming unto Christ, baptism, reception of the Holy Ghost, keeping the covenants—gathered from the world to the Church.
- **Physical:** gathering in specific locations (Ohio, Missouri, Utah) and in the various stakes of Zion that now extend throughout the world.

D&C 29:1-2, 7-8 tells us more about the purposes of gathering that included assembling the Lord's elect "to prepare their hearts and be prepared in all things against the day when tribulation and desolation are sent forth upon the wicked".

D&C 110:11 (and the section heading) explain that the authority to direct the gathering is vested in specific keys of the priesthood and that those keys were restored to the earth at a specific time and place. What began with the gathering of a few people in New York has grown to a worldwide gathering process involving millions.

D&C 33:7; 38:40; 39:11; 88:81 specify our responsibilities to assist in this great and glorious work.



In part, endowments were given through appearances of the Lord and the restoration of priesthood keys in the Kirtland temple.

D&C 38:24-27 His people were counseled to prepare for the gathering by being virtuous, loving each other, and becoming unified as a people. The Lord has often stressed that His people must be one.

D&C 38:34-39 The Lord gave other counsel on the Ohio gathering concerning the appointment of brethren to look after the temporal welfare of the poor and needy Saints, administer to their relief, and govern the affairs of the property of the church. Verse 39 includes a promise of "riches" and a warning about becoming prideful like the Nephites of old.

President Brigham Young said:

"When Joseph [Smith] first revealed the land where the Saints should gather, a woman in Canada asked if we thought that Jackson County would be large enough to gather all the people. ... I will answer the question. ... Zion will extend, eventually, all over this earth. There will be no nook or corner upon the earth but what will be in Zion. It will all be Zion..."

"We are going to gather as many as we can, bless them, give them their endowments, etc., preach to them the truth, lay the principles of eternal life before them, inform their minds all we have power to do, and lead them into the path of truth and righteousness" (in Journal of Discourses, 9:138).



During the January–May period in 1831, the majority of the Saints traveled the 300 miles to Ohio after disposing of their farms. The changes required great sacrifice, financially and in other ways, on their part as they obeyed and helped build the kingdom on earth.

(For more on the challenge—including the Knights, Lucy Mack Smith, and Brigham Young, see *Our Heritage*, pgs. 18, 19, 23)

The Saints gathered in Missouri. (1831-1838)



The early Saints had read prophecies about the city of Zion, or New Jerusalem, being established in the latter days (Isaiah 2:2–3; 3 Nephi 20:22; 3 Nephi 21:22–28; Ether 13:2–12; Moses 7:61–62). Locating and establishing this city was one of the prime objectives of these Church members.

A few months after the Saints began gathering in Ohio, Joseph Smith traveled to Missouri and received a revelation designating Missouri as the place for the city of Zion (**D&C 57:1–3**). With this revelation, Missouri became a second gathering place for the Church in this dispensation (**D&C 63:24, 36–48**).

From 1831 to 1838, the Church maintained centers of population in both Ohio and Missouri. (Refer to maps 2 and 3 on pages 30 and 31 in the *Class Member Study Guide*.)

Time line summary of the early revelations about the land of Zion and the establishment of the Church in Missouri:

a) **September 1830 (in New York):** The Lord revealed that the city of Zion would be built “on the borders by the Lamanites,” with the precise location to be identified later (**D&C 28:9**).

- b) **September and October 1830 (in New York):** The Lord called four missionaries to preach the gospel to the Lamanites (**D&C 30:5–6; 32:1–3**). These missionaries were the first Church members to go to Missouri.
- c) **February 1831 (in Kirtland, soon after the Saints began arriving there):** The Lord said He would reveal the location of the New Jerusalem in His own due time (**D&C 42:62**).
- d) **June 1831 (in Kirtland, after the first conference there):** The Lord called Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and other elders to go on a mission to Missouri. The Lord also promised to consecrate the land of Missouri to His people as the land of their inheritance (**D&C 52:2–5, 42–43**).
- e) **June 1831 (in Kirtland):** The Lord revealed that the Saints from the Colesville Branch in New York, who had journeyed to Ohio, should continue on to Missouri (**D&C 54:8**).
- f) **July 1831 (after the Prophet had traveled to Missouri):** The Lord revealed that the city of Zion would be located in Missouri, with Independence as the center place. A temple would be built in Independence (**D&C 57:1–3**).

The Saints now gather to the stakes of Zion in their own lands.

Church members maintained a strong presence in Ohio and Missouri from 1831 to 1838, when persecution forced most of them to leave. In 1839 they gathered in Illinois and established the city of Nauvoo.

They were forced to leave Nauvoo in 1846, and in 1847 President Brigham Young led them to a new gathering place in the Rocky Mountains near the Great Salt Lake. (Refer to map 3 on page 31 in the *Class Member Study Guide*.)

Elder Russell M. Nelson:

“The choice to come unto Christ is not a matter of physical location; it is a matter of individual commitment. People can be “brought to the knowledge of the Lord” without leaving their homelands. True, in the early days of the Church, conversion often meant emigration as well. But now the gathering takes place in each nation. The Lord has decreed the establishment of Zion in each realm where He has given His Saints their birth and nationality.”

(General Conference – October 2006)





For many years after the Saints settled in Utah, the call continued for Church members all over the world to gather to that area. However, that phase of the gathering has now ended, and Church members are counseled to gather to the stakes of Zion wherever they live. In an area conference held in Mexico City in 1972, **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** said:

"[The] revealed words speak 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. ...

"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" (in Conference Report, Mexico and Central America Area Conference 1972, 45).

In April 1973, **President Harold B. Lee** quoted those words in general conference. In doing so, he *"in effect, announced that the pioneering phase of gathering was now over. The gathering is now to be out of the world into the Church in every nation"* (Boyd K. Packer, in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 99; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 71).

Conclusion

The Lord's promises to gather Israel are being fulfilled in our day. This great work is hastening as people join the Church and worship together in the stakes of Zion in more than 160 nations throughout the world. We must labor diligently to gather people into the Church and to build up and strengthen the Church wherever we live.

In times past, the Saints needed to gather together to strengthen each other and find refuge and protection from the world. Those objectives can now be met through the established stakes of Zion.

President Ezra Taft Benson said:

"Presently, Israel is being gathered to the various stakes of Zion. ... A stake has at least four purposes:

"1. [Stakes are] to unify and perfect the members who live in [their] boundaries by extending to them the Church programs, the ordinances, and gospel instruction.

"2. Members of stakes are to be models, or standards, of righteousness.

"3. Stakes are to be a defense. They do this as stake members unify under their local priesthood officers and consecrate themselves to do their duty and keep their covenants. ...

"4. Stakes are a refuge from the storm to be poured out over the earth"

("Strengthen Thy Stakes," *Ensign*, Jan. 1991, 2, 4-5)

Temple building was an essential part of gathering in Kirtland, Missouri, Nauvoo, and Utah. It continues to be essential. Temple work makes its own special contribution to the gathering of the Saints.

The **Prophet Joseph Smith** taught:

"What was the object of gathering...the people of God in any age of the world?... The main object was to build unto the Lord a house whereby He could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation...It is for the same purpose that God gathers together His people in the last days, to build unto the Lord a house to prepare them for the ordinances and endowments, washings and anointings" (*History of the Church*, 5:423-24)

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- What responsibilities do you have to help gather people to the Lord's Church?
- How has feeling united with other Church members been a blessing in your life?
- What have you learned from studying the examples of sacrifice made by the Saints in the early gatherings in this dispensation?

