

OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

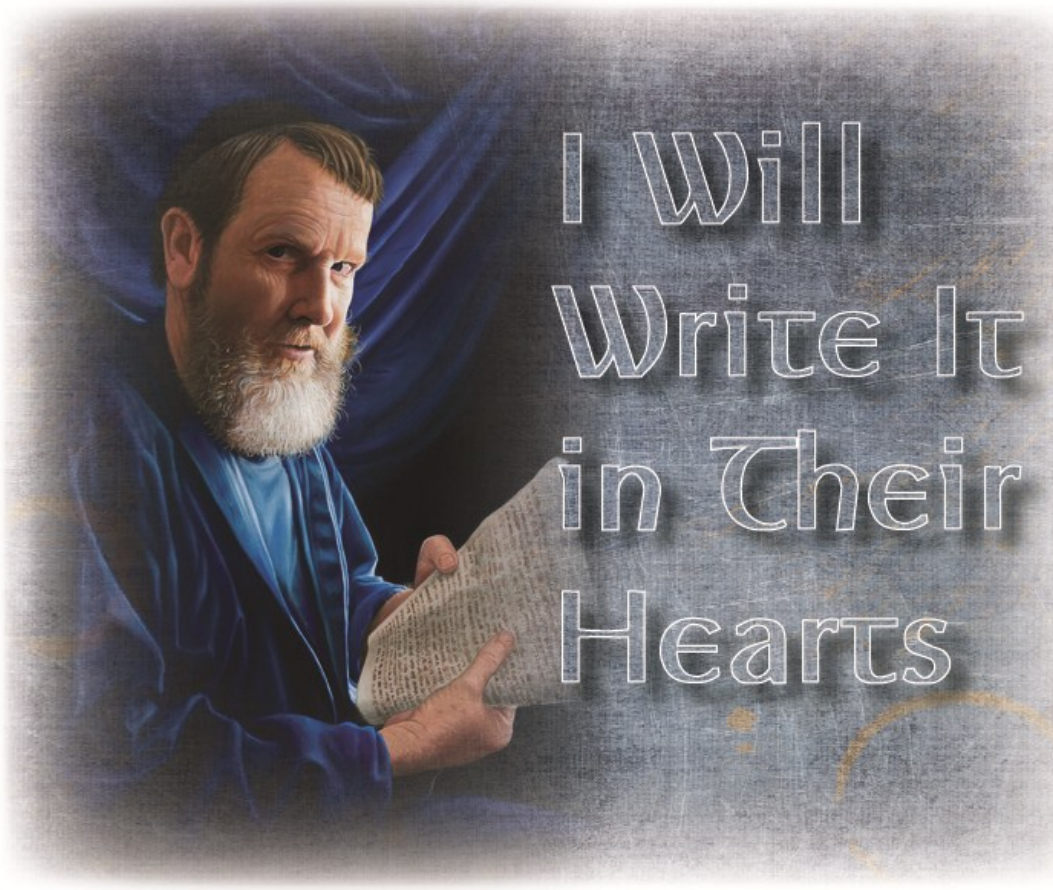
Green Mountain 1st Ward, Lakewood, Colorado

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Lesson 42: "I Will Write It in Their Hearts" (Jeremiah 16; 23; 29; 31)

Introduction



Lesson Highlights

- Jeremiah foresees the latter-day gathering of Israel.
- God will write his law in the hearts of his people.

A study of this lesson will help encourage us to participate in God's great latter-day work and to have his law written in our hearts.

If you could have witnessed or participated in any story or event in the Old Testament, which one would you choose? Why would you like to have witnessed or participated in that particular event? What is happening in the Church today that might be comparable to some of the events you have chosen?

Although Jeremiah had few messages of hope for the people of his day, he foresaw a time of hope during the latter-day gathering of Israel. This lesson discusses Jeremiah's prophecies of the great latter-day gathering that we are participating in today.

Background: Jeremiah is generally considered to be Judaism's second most important prophet (Abraham is the first). The prophet Jeremiah was living in Jerusalem during the city's destruction by the Babylonians. Jeremiah prophesied during the reigns of various kings, viz.: Josiah

(626 BCE), followed by Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah, and Gedaliah ben Ahikam. The latter's assassination in 585 BCE signaled the last days for the few remaining Jews in Judah and is seen as the final chapter of the First Temple period.

Jeremiah prophesied the inevitability of the impending catastrophe. He initiated his visionary mission in his home town of Anathoth. Predictably, he was not well received by his peers. Jeremiah censured the idolatrous townsfolk for forsaking both God as well as the law.

Next Week

#43The Shepherds of Israel (Ezekiel 18; 34; 37)

President John Taylor:

"There is no man that believes in the literal fulfilment of the revelations of God through the prophets who does not believe that the Lord will in the latter days gather a people together out of every nation under heaven, and that he will also gather the dispersed of Judah—the Jews—that have been trodden under the feet of the Gentiles for the last 1,800 years." (Discourses of Wilford Woodruff, p113)

Ultimately, he was viewed as a traitor and declared an outlaw during the reign of

Zedekiah and imprisoned until the destruction of the city by Nebuchadnezzar.

Jeremiah foresees the latter-day gathering of Israel.

The story of Israel's exodus from Egypt is one of the most miraculous events in the Old Testament. It is referred to in the book of Jeremiah and in other books of the Old Testament, as well as in the Book of Mormon.

Deuteronomy 4:32-35 - Moses felt that the importance of the Exodus was unparalleled.

Obviously, it would have been a great experience to have been part of Israel's exodus from Egypt.

Many generations later, Jeremiah saw visions of a latter-day event that the Lord said would be as great as the Exodus (see Jeremiah 16:14-16; Jeremiah 23:3-8). Elder LeGrand Richards said that the fishers and hunters described in Jeremiah 16:16 are missionaries of the Church (Ensign, June 1971, 98-99). Think about what fishers and hunters have in common with missionaries – see Matthew 4:18-19.

Jeremiah 16:15 and **Jeremiah 23:3** - The event described here is the gathering of Israel and the growth of the Church.

Jeremiah 23:4 - The shepherds spoken of here are priesthood leaders and other Church leaders.

Jeremiah 23:5-6 - The King spoken of here is Jesus Christ.

These events are as great as the Exodus.

God will write his law in the hearts of his people.

The children of Israel relied on Moses to receive revelation for them during their sojourn in the wilderness.

Numbers 11:29 - Moses expressed great longing because he wanted the people to learn God's law and learn to listen to the Spirit for themselves.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 - The Lord promised to establish his covenant in the latter days and everyone would know him. (See also Ezekiel 11:17-20; Ezekiel 36:24-28; 2 Corinthians 3:2-3.)

Our behavior is affected when we have God's law written in our hearts. This helps us obey specific commandments, such as:

- Loving our neighbors.
- Honoring our parents.
- Being morally clean.
- Keeping the Sabbath day holy.
- Choosing appropriate movies, television programs, books, and magazines.
- Wearing modest clothing.
- Selecting suitable music.

Joseph Smith was once asked how he successfully governed so many people. He said, *"I teach the people correct principles and they govern themselves"* (quoted by John Taylor, in Journal of Discourses, 10:57-58). This statement relates to having God's law written in our hearts.

Jeremiah 29:10-14 - Jeremiah prophesied that 70 years after the people of Judah would be taken captive into Babylon, they would return to their homeland and once again live in harmony with God (NOTE: the fulfillment of this prophecy is discussed in lesson 47).

Jeremiah 29:12-14 - According to these verses, we can draw close to God as we call upon him, pray to him, seek him, and search for him. The words call, pray, seek, and search imply something about the attitude we should have as we strive to draw near to God. We must be humble, diligent, and sincere if we wish to draw closer to heavenly Father.

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- Record your thoughts on the prophecies of Jeremiah regarding the gathering of Israel.
- How can you help fulfill this prophecy?

Conclusion

Jeremiah saw our day and the great gathering of Israel and Judah. We are part of that gathering and we can actively participate as we share the gospel with our neighbors and prepare our children to serve missions. But first, we must seek to have the law of the Lord written in our hearts. As we do so, our testimonies will burn brightly and we will have a desire to share the great gospel message.