

Lesson Highlights

- The Savior prophesies of the scattering of the house of Israel.
- The Savior prophesies of the spiritual gathering of the house of Israel.
- The Savior prophesies of the temporal gathering of the house of Israel.

A study of this lesson will help us understand the latter-day work of gathering Israel and establishing Zion.

Next Week

Lesson 41:

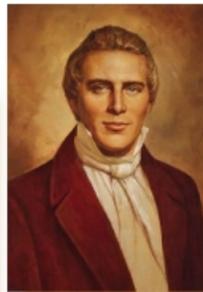
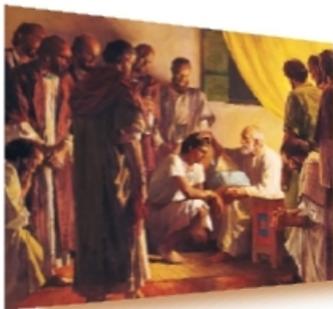
"He Did Expound All Things unto Them", 3 Nephi 22-26

Green Mountain 1st Ward
Lakewood, Colorado
Doug Simpson

Introduction

✓ What is the house of Israel?
 ✓ Why was Israel scattered?
 ✓ Who are the gentiles?
 ✓ What do gentiles have to with the scattering and gathering of Israel?
 ✓ What is the gathering of Israel?
 ✓ What signs have been given to show the latter-day gathering of Israel has begun?
 ✓ As members of the Church, what are our responsibilities in the gathering of Israel?

TODAY'S LESSON HELPS ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS



ELDER MULLER
THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Each of these objects represents an important part of today's lesson. Remember them during today's lesson and look for ways in which they relate to **3 Nephi 16**, **3 Nephi 20**, and **3 Nephi 21**.

The Savior prophesied of the scattering of the house of Israel.

What is the house of Israel? The titles "house of Israel" and "Israel" refer to the descendants of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. Members of the house of Israel have been referred to in scripture as "the covenant people of the Lord" (1 Nephi 15:14) and "the children of the covenant" (3 Nephi 20:25-26).

1 Nephi 5:14 The Nephites were of the house of Israel, as descendants of Jacob's son Joseph. The Savior taught of the scattering of Israel.

Why was Israel scattered? 3 Nephi 16:4 records that the members of the house of Israel were "scattered forth upon the face of the earth because of their unbelief."

Brother Robert J. Matthews:
"America, as is the case with Europe, has been peopled by those who have been without the fulness of the gospel for many centuries, yet they have much of the blood of Israel in their veins. They are not easily identified or recognized as Israelites and therefore are spoken of as Gentiles, in contrast to those of more recognizable Israelite identity such as the Jews and the Lamanites. Hence, the great American nation is spoken of in the Book of Mormon as a Gentile nation, even though we, as Church members, know we have the blood of Israel in us. This condition is described by the Prophet Joseph Smith in D&C 109:58, 60, saying we are 'the sons of Jacob' but are 'identified with the Gentiles'." (Studies In Scripture, 8:169)

The Savior prophesied of the spiritual gathering of the house of Israel.

Who are the Gentiles? In the scriptures, the term *Gentiles* is used to designate either people who were not born into the house of Israel or nations that are without the gospel. In the chapters discussed in this lesson, the term *Gentiles* refers to nations that are without the gospel, even though some individuals in those nations may be descendants of Jacob (Bible Dictionary, Gentile, 679).

What do the Gentiles have to do with the scattering and gathering of Israel?

3 Nephi 16:7-9; 3 Nephi 21:1-5. Scripture records that the Savior prophesied that the Gentiles would play a part in the scattering of Israel. The prophecy also states that it would be through the Gentiles that Israel would eventually receive the restored gospel and be gathered.

What is the gathering of Israel? 3 Nephi 16:4,12; 3 Nephi 20:10-13. We need to understand that Israel is gathered as people gain a testimony of the Redeemer and His restored gospel and join His Church. In the early days of the restored Church, part of the gathering of Israel was the Lord's command that members of His Church join the body of Saints in North America, whether in Missouri, Illinois, or the Salt Lake Valley. In the future, another temporal gathering will occur, as members of the house of Israel are gathered to the lands of their inheritance. However, the gathering now taking place is a spiritual gathering.

President Spencer W. Kimball explained: *"The 'gathering of Israel' is effected when the people of the faraway countries accept the gospel and remain in their native lands. The gathering of Israel for Mexicans is in Mexico; in Scandinavia, for those of the northern countries; the gathering place for the Germans is in Germany; and the Polynesians, in the islands; for the Brazilians, in Brazil; for the Argentines, in Argentina"* (Ensign, May 1975, 4).

3 Nephi 21:2-7 and 3 Nephi 29:1-2 Signs have been given to show that the latter-day gathering of Israel has begun because the Book of Mormon has been given to the Gentiles. The "sayings" and "works" of the Nephites have come forth to the Gentiles through the translation of the Book of Mormon.

For some examples of some roles that the Book of Mormon plays in the gathering of Israel, compare **3 Nephi 16:4,12; 3 Nephi 20:10-13** with **1 Nephi 6:3-4** and the **title page of the Book of Mormon**.

The Book of Mormon was written to teach of the covenants of the Lord and to convince all people that Jesus is the Christ.

3 Nephi 21:9-10 The Lord spoke of a servant who would help in the *"great and...marvelous work"* of bringing forth the Book of Mormon. This servant was Joseph Smith, Jr.

2 Nephi 3:3-8, 11-12 Joseph Smith was a literal descendant of Jacob, but he lived in a Gentile nation. His work in restoring the gospel and bringing forth the Book of Mormon was thus part of the fulfillment of the Lord's promise that *"the truth [would] come unto the Gentiles"* (3 Nephi 16:7).

3 Nephi 16:11-12 The Lord promised that after the fulness of the gospel was restored through the Gentiles, He would remember His covenant with the house of Israel.

3 Nephi 20:25, 27, 29; 3 Nephi 21:4; Mormon 5:20 The covenant that the Lord promised to remember was the Abrahamic covenant.

Genesis 17:1-8; Abraham 2:6, 9-11 These passages remind us of the blessings and responsibilities of the Abrahamic covenant.

2 Nephi 30:2; 3 Nephi 16:13; 3 Nephi 21:6, 22 The future of the Gentiles who repent and turn to God is obvious when we learn that all people who repent and come unto the Lord through baptism will be numbered among His covenant people.

President Joseph Fielding Smith said: *"Every person who embraces the gospel becomes of the house of Israel. In other words, they become members of the chosen lineage, or Abraham's children through Isaac and Jacob unto whom the promises were made. The great majority of those who become members of the Church are literal descendants of Abraham through Ephraim, son of Joseph. Those who are not literal descendants of Abraham and Israel must become such, and when they are baptized and confirmed they are grafted into the tree and are entitled to all the rights and privileges as heirs"* (Doctrines of Salvation, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954-56], 3:246).

As members of the Church, what are our responsibilities in the gathering of Israel? The mission of the Church is to invite all people to come unto Christ. We accomplish this mission by proclaiming the gospel, redeeming the dead, and perfecting the Saints. The mission of the Church contributes to the gathering of Israel as we reveal who the covenant people really are and invite them to partake of the blessings of the covenant.

The Savior prophesied of the temporal gathering of the house of Israel.

3 Nephi 16:16 and 3 Nephi 20:14; see also **2 Nephi 1:5-7**. According to these verses, a specific promise was extended by the Lord to the Nephites--a promise that they would be given the lands of the Americas as an inheritance.

Enos 1:10; Ether 2:8-9 Responsibilities to maintain righteousness and serve God accompany this promise granting their inheritance.

3 Nephi 21:22-29. In these verses, we see what will happen in this land of inheritance in the last days. A city called the New Jerusalem will be built.

3 Nephi 20:29-34 The original city of Jerusalem will also be restored. The Jews will be given this land as an inheritance.

3 Nephi 21:1 The Savior said that He would gather His people and establish Zion again among them. While the word Zion often refers to specific places, it is also a condition of heart and mind.

See **D&C 97:21 and Moses 7:18-19** for some examples of how Zion has been described in the scriptures. Ponder how you can begin to establish Zion in your home, ward, and stake today.

Conclusion

In the last days, the title *house of Israel* encompasses all those who repent, follow Jesus Christ, and are baptized into His Church. Live so as to be worthy to be part of the Lord's covenant people.

Why is the gathering of Israel so important?

Brother Paul K. Browning: *"To answer, we need only go back to Abraham's commission. His "seed"—both his literal posterity and all those who accept the gospel—was charged to bless all the families of the earth with the gospel and the priesthood. In 1834 the Lord emphasized through the Prophet Joseph Smith that the Latter-day Saints "are the children of Israel, and of the seed of Abraham" (D&C 103:17). In 1836 the Prophet Joseph Smith received from the ancient prophet Elias the keys of the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham (see D&C 110:12). Thus, the blessings and responsibilities of the Abrahamic covenant have been restored to us.*

"Whatever might have been the shortcomings of ancient Israel, today all Church members have the opportunity to carry out the assignment outlined so long ago. The assignment is inherent with their receiving gospel covenants. Latter-day Saints thus see themselves as performing some of the concluding scenes of an anciently prophesied plan that was put into motion thousands of years ago. As the seed of Abraham, all of us have the responsibility to gather both our kindred and all others who are willing to gather. By offering them a chance to accept the gospel of Jesus Christ, we help them receive the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant and the opportunity of exaltation, and we further prepare ourselves to receive the blessings of eternal life." (Paul K. Browning, "Gathering Scattered Israel: Then and Now," *Ensign*, July 1998, 54)

Gospel Doctrine

Notebook

Record your thoughts on prophecies discussed in this lesson.

- What can you do in your life to prepare for the times ahead?