

Gospel Doctrine Lesson 40: “Then Will I Gather Them In” (3 Nephi 16, 20-21)

LESSON GOAL: To help us understand the latter-day work of gathering Israel and establishing Zion.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

What is the house of Israel? 1 Nephi 15:14, 3 Nephi 20:25–26

Why was Israel scattered? 3 Nephi 16:4

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, 21:1–5

What is the gathering of Israel? 3 Nephi 16:4,12; 20:10–13

What sign has been given to show that the latter-day gathering of Israel has begun? 3 Nephi 21:2–7, 29:1-2

As members of the Church, what are our responsibilities in the gathering of Israel?

COVENANT: In the gospel sense, a **covenant is a binding** and solemn compact, agreement, contract or mutual promise **between God and a single person or a group** of chosen persons, promising certain blessings for obedience to his will.

- **Examples** of peoples with whom God has made covenants include members of the **house of Israel**, who were promised that they would ultimately be gathered and redeemed both spiritually and temporally.
- **Examples** of covenants God has made with individuals include the covenant God made with **Abraham**, which promised Abraham that through his posterity “all the kindreds of the earth” would be blessed (3 Ne. 20:25).

PROMISES TO ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB – Abrahamic Covenant

Category	Mortal Promises	Eternal Promises
1. Posterity	Abraham was promised a large posterity that would become a great nation.	Abraham was promised that he would have eternal increase.
2. Land	Abraham was promised that his posterity would have a special land to live in (a promised land)- a land where his posterity are free to worship God the way He intends.	Abraham was promised that he would have an eternal promised land known as the celestial kingdom.
3. Gospel/Priesthood	1. Abraham was promised that his posterity would have all the blessings of the gospel and priesthood. 2. Abraham was promised that through his posterity all nations would be blessed with the opportunity to have the gospel.	Abraham was promised that he would have eternal life or exaltation in the celestial kingdom (which is the ultimate blessing of the gospel and priesthood).

1. The Savior prophesies of the scattering of the house of Israel.

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).

2. The Savior prophesies of the spiritual gathering of the house of Israel.

President Joseph Fielding Smith: “**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).

Bruce R. McConkie: “... the great and mighty shall be so amazed at the Lord’s latter-day work that they shall not know what to say and shall feel impelled to consider the wondrous work which rolls before their eyes. So far there has been a small amount of this; what the future holds is limitless” (*The Mortal Messiah*, Book 4, 352).

Bruce R. McConkie: "Except for a few who are the humble followers of Christ, the Gentiles will not repent. They will revel in their abominations and sin against the restored gospel, and they will be burned by the brightness of our Lord's coming while the righteous -- here called the remnant of Jacob -- shall abide the day. **And then, in the prophetic imagery, it will be as though the remnant of Israel overthrew their enemies as a young lion among the flocks of sheep**" (*Millennial Messiah*, 248).

3. The Savior prophesies of the temporal gathering of the house of Israel.

Joseph Smith: "Our missionaries are going forth to different nations. The standard of truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but **the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the great Jehovah shall say the work is done**" (Joseph Smith, *DHC*, Vol. 4: 535).

President Gordon B. Hinckley: "If we will go forward, **never losing sight of our goal**, speaking ill of no one, living the great principles we know to be true, this cause will roll on in majesty and power to fill the earth. **Doors now closed** to the preaching of the Gospel **will be opened**. The Almighty, if necessary, may have to shake the nations to humble them and cause them to listen to the servants of the living God. **Whatever is needed will come to pass**" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 68).

4. Conclusion

Brigham Young: "When Joseph 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 that would want to go to Zion. I will answer the question really as it is. **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 and righteousness . . .**" (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, XIV, 138).

President Ezra Taft Benson: "The prophets likened latter-day Zion to a great tent encompassing the earth. That tent was supported by cords fastened to stakes. Those stakes, of course, are various geographical organizations spread out over the earth. Presently, **Israel is being gathered to the various stakes of Zion... Stakes are a defense for the Saints from enemies both seen and unseen. The defense is direction provided through priesthood channels that strengthens testimony and promotes family solidarity and individual righteousness**" ("Strengthen Thy Stakes," *Ensign*, Jan. 1991, 2,4).

Paul K. Browning: "Why is the gathering of Israel so important? 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 (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).

Bruce R. McConkie: "But let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter and recite the crowning reason for gathering to Zion or to her stakes. **It is to receive the blessings found in the temples of the Lord**. There and there only are the saints endowed with power from on high after the ancient pattern. **There and there only can they enter into the same eternal covenants that Jehovah made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that through celestial marriage they might have a continuation of the seeds forever and ever**" (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 574).

Brigham Young: "There is not another nation under heaven but this, in whose midst the Book of Mormon could have been brought forth. The Lord has been operating for centuries to prepare the way for the coming forth of the contents of that Book from the bowels of the earth... **It was the Lord who directed the discovery of this land** to the nations of the old world, and its settlement, and the war for independence, and the final victory of the colonies, and the unprecedented prosperity of the American nation, up to the calling of Joseph the Prophet. **The Lord has dictated and directed the whole of this, for the bringing forth, and establishing of his Kingdom in the last days**" (*Journal of Discourses*, 11:17 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, 444-5).