

## D&C Lesson 12

### “THE GATHERING OF MY PEOPLE”

Prepared by Duane S. Crowther, April 2001

*“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.”* [Article of Faith 10]

#### 1. Two meanings of the word “gathering”

A. ***Spiritual Gathering***: “The spiritual gathering of Israel occurs as people learn the gospel, come unto Christ, are baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and keep their covenants. In this way they are gathered from the world into the Church, or the kingdom of God on earth.” [Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual, 1999, p. 64]

B. ***Physical Gathering***: “The physical gathering occurs as Church members come together in a particular location or in the stakes of Zion throughout the world.” [Ibid.]

#### 2. Purposes of the Gathering of Israel

A. ***D&C 29:1-2, 7-8***: “to prepare their hearts, and to be prepared in all things against the day when tribulation and desolation are sent forth upon the wicked.”

B. ***D&C 38:31-32*** (to Ohio): “that ye might escape the power of the enemy, and be gathered unto me a righteous people, without spot and blameless . . . there I will give unto you my law; and there you shall be endowed with power from on high.”

C. ***D&C 38:24-27***: “I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine.”

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

A. For many years after the Saints settled in Utah and the West, the call continued for Church members all over the world to gather to that area. That phase of the gathering has now ended. The change was first announced here in Mexico City, in an area conference held in 1972.

B. At that conference, 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 in 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. [Conference Report, Mexico and Central America Area Conference, 1972, p. 45]

C. In April 1973, President **Harold B. Lee**, the 11<sup>th</sup> President of the Church, quoted those words in General Conference. As Elder **Boyd K Packer** observed, 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.***” [Ensign, November 1992, p. 71.]

#### 4. Purposes of modern-day gathering to the Stakes of Zion

A. “One purpose of gathering to a central location during the pioneering phase of the Church was

so members could strengthen each other and find refuge and protection from the world.” [*Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual, op. cit.*, p. 67]

B. *D&C 115:6*: “And that the gathering together upon the land of Zion, and upon her stakes, may be for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth.”

C. **President Ezra Taft Benson**: “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*, January 1991, pp. 2, 4-5]

## 5. Four statements by the Prophet Joseph Smith

A. ***Salvation in the last days is linked to the gathering***: “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* [1976], p. 83.]

B. ***Temple building is an essential part of the gathering process***: “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 purposes 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*, vol. 5, pp. 423-24]

C. ***All of America is Zion***: “*The whole of America is Zion itself from north to south, and is described by the prophets, who declare that it is the Zion where the mountain of the Lord should be, and that it should be in the center of the land.* When elders shall take up and examine the old prophecies in the Bible, they will see it. [HC 6:318-19; Burton: *Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 188]

D. ***Two Zions, in America and Israel, will provide protection against an overflowing scourge***: “*The city of Zion spoken of by David, in the one hundred and second Psalm [Ps. 102:1-12, 13-16, 17-22], will be built upon the land of America, ‘And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.’ (Isaiah 35:10.) And then they will be delivered from the overflowing scourge that shall pass through the land. But Judah shall obtain deliverance at Jerusalem.* See Joel 2:32; Isaiah 26:20-21; Jeremiah 30:12; Psalm 1:5; Ezekiel 34:11-13. These are testimonies that the Good Shepherd will put forth his own sheep, and *lead them out from all nations where they have been scattered in a cloudy and dark day, to Zion, and to Jerusalem*; besides many more testimonies which might be brought.” [HC 1:315; Burton: *Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 188]

6. **Study about “Zion”** Read the definitions in the *Bible Dictionary*, pp. 792-793, and study the references in the *Topical Guide*, pp. 597-598, especially \*D&C 45:65-71; 64:41-43; \*115:5-6;

90:36-37; \*97:18-26; 103:15-20, and 133:9-16.

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