

# Who is Israel?

by David W. Allan

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But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen the seed of Abraham my friend. Isaiah 41:8

Israel the man, Israel the patriarch, Israel the nation, Israel scattered among all nations, Israel gathered in the latter days and Israel of the covenant have profound importance to all who care about God's dealings with man. The great covenant that the Lord made with Abraham is vital, in an eternal sense, to us today. Understanding what promises were made, how the Lord has, is and will fulfill them, and when and where they will be completed is enormously meaningful in understanding the great plan of our Heavenly Father. The covenant, promises and blessings made to Abraham were passed on to Isaac, and thence to Jacob (Israel). The name Israel takes on much more meaning than just the naming of this pivotal man. It is through his seed the Lord has, does and will bring his blessings to all nations of the earth. In fact, we will see that the story of and the scattering and gathering of Israel is back-bone to the history of the world. Participating in the Abrahamic covenant and being counted as ISRAEL is essential to our gaining Eternal Life.

The Lord often works through miraculous ironies. These workings then cause his children to marvel and focus on these events. Thus when viewing or hearing of these miraculous happenings, we are brought to say, "It is of the Lord!" If we are honest, we cannot say, "It would have happened in the natural course of events." Some examples of such miraculous ironies are: the naming of Abraham and the birth of Isaac; the birth of the King of kings in the most humble of circumstances; the work of the atonement performed "ALONE" -- on a secluded hillside -- being central to the salvation of ALL mankind; the name of probably the most fought over city in the history of man, Jerusalem (the city of peace), which will eventually become so; and the calling of an unlearned boy, tutored by the Lord and His angels, to head the most important dispensation of the gospel in the history of mankind -- this because Joseph received the Lord's wisdom, inspiration, and knowledge of the eternities (D&C 27:13). Thus called, "this unlearned boy," Joseph Smith, has done more for the salvation of Father's children than any other person save Jesus only (D&C 135:3).

Let us look a little more closely at the miraculous irony associated with Abram, whose name was changed to Abraham (the father of many nations). At age 99 he still had no birthright son, yet the Lord promised, in addition to being a father of many nations, that "I will make thee exceeding fruitful... and kings shall come out of thee... And I will give unto thee... all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God (Gen. 17:1-8). Born to 100 year old Abraham was Isaac, to whom the Lord promised, "I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him" (Gen. 17:19).

A further miraculous irony occurs, with great symbolism, as the Lord commands Abraham to "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (Gen. 22:2; this scripture is the first mention of love in the Bible). Abraham in perfect obedience "rose up early in the morning" to fulfill this most difficult of tasks. When Isaac asks where is the offering, Abraham prophetically replies -- looking to the ultimate sacrifice -- "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (Gen. 22:3-8). Jehovah led Abraham to the very mount where he himself (the only begotten Son) would be offered as the ultimate sacrifice. But in the Savior's case there was no "ram in a thicket." The Father's Son was "not

withheld" from performing this most difficult task -- to work out the infinite atonement (Gen 22:12-13). For Jehovah knew, as He proclaimed through Isaiah, "I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior" (43:3). Thus we see this Abraham-Isaac story, [known throughout most of the world -- even today](#) -- points to the most important event in the history of the world -- the [infinite atonement of Christ](#). In turn, this infinite atonement and incomprehensible act of love on the part of the Father and the Son provides immortality for all mankind and Eternal Life to all who will "come unto [Him]" (Matt 11:28-30).

Because of Abraham's perfect obedience, the Lord further promised, "because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Gen. 22:16-18).

And further the Lord promises, "thy seed... shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations; And I will bless them through thy name; for as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is, thy Priesthood), for I give unto thee a promise that this right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, even of life eternal." (Abr. 2:9-11).

Let us now look at how and why these ponderous blessings have been, are, and will be perpetuated. Important insight in this regard can be gained by addressing the fundamental question, "Who is man?" (Ps 8:4) We know from the scriptures and experience that we are what we are for four basic reasons: First, each of us has an intelligence, which is co-eternal with God (D&C 93:29). Inherit to our intelligence is our agency (D&C 93:30) – free choice. God respects that, and will do nothing to violate our agency. We can use our agency to keep the commandments and to follow light and truth -- providing the opportunity for us to progress until we receive a fullness and know "all things" -- thus receiving a fullness of joy (D&C 93:27-28). As we so use our agency we have the additional blessing of protection for "light and truth forsake that evil one" (:37). If we choose to move away from light and truth, who is Christ, then we will lose the blessing of eternal life. Herein "is the condemnation of man" (D&C 93:29-31).

Second, we are spirit off-spring of Deity, and hence gods in embryo (Acts 17:28-29; Ps 82:6). As we choose to do so, that spirit and intelligence can couple with the source of all light and truth to help us find our way in this probationary state called earth life. Our hope and promise is that, "He that keepeth his commandments receiveth truth and light until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things" (D&C 93:28-40).

Third, each spirit is tabernacled with a physical body at birth, which determines that person's genetics. As Abraham was fore-ordained as one of the "noble and great ones" (Abr. 3:22-23) in the premortal council in heaven, so has God "determined the times before appointed and the bounds of [our] habitation" (Acts 17:26). In other words, Heavenly Father in His infinite love and wisdom has determined the place and the time that is best for each of us to be born (and to whom) in the great economy souls in His perfect plan of happiness. We rejoiced with that choice as we were sent forth to the earth. (Job 38:4-7)

Being born as the seed of Abraham and/or into a covenant family brings with it the promise of great blessings, but more importantly comes a responsibility to share these blessings with as many of Father's children as will receive (John 15:8). Those holding the priesthood have the responsibility to take the gospel and offer a blessing to "all the families of the earth." (Abr. 2:11) The Lord is no respecter of persons and extends salvation to all. The responsibility then falls on the individual recipient of these glad

tidings. If they are faithful and obedient and follow the path that few will find (Matt. 7:13-14), they then become heirs of all the blessings of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, whether adopted into Israel or the literal seed (Gal. 3:25-29). Regardless of who we are, if we learn to love as He loves and are obedient to the teachings of the gospel we have the promise of being "joint-heirs with [Jesus Christ]" and will be recipients to every blessing (Rom. 8:16-17).

The fourth and last element determining who we are is our environment, the traditions (true or false) with which we were raised, the culture we inherit and learn, etc. The environment provides opportunities to see if we will use our agency to choose good or evil -- "For [there] must needs be, an opposition in all things" (2 Ne. 2:11). The false traditions of men can lead us away from light and truth (D&C 93:39). The beautiful part of the plan is that we are free to choose what we do with and how we react to the environmental influences around us. We can often choose -- in large measure -- what our environment will be -- the music we listen to, where and how we spend our time, etc. The Zion environment should be our aspiration. By Zion we mean "the pure in heart." We should reach for this in our personal lives, in our homes and ultimately in society. In so reaching, we bring all four elements, of which we are, in harmony with our creator so that we become one with him. Therein lies the potential for a "fullness of joy" (D&C 93:33). And we are all born with the Spirit of Christ to know good from evil. (John 1:9)

The problem is that Zion (the pure in heart) and Babylon don't mix. We cannot partake of a "little bit" of Babylon and be a Zion people. Hence, the importance of the parable of the wheat and the tares. The Lord will gather "first the wheat into my barn: and the tares are bound in bundles to be burned" (JST Matt. 13:29). As President Benson and the Book of Mormon clearly prophecies, "...the time speedily cometh that the Lord God shall cause a great division among the people, and the wicked will he destroy; and he will spare his people, yea, even if it so be that he must destroy the wicked by fire" (2 Ne. 30:10).

For this probationary "second estate," we move from Babylon toward Zion as we focus with faith on the Lord Jesus Christ and as we make and keep covenants. No unclean thing can enter his presence; He will have a repentant, pure people whom He can totally trust. Thus in the primordial councils, He fore-ordained those with whom he could make covenants to be sent forth as his "servants the prophets," those willing to take upon them the responsibility of the priesthood (Amos 3:7), and to be missionaries in sharing the gospel. These then were sent forth to the earth as the patriarchs and a select set of their seed to share the gospel with the world. The prime example of this is Abraham and his seed, and through the birthright, Israel and his seed. Those fore-ordained to come as their descendants represent essentially all the prophets, bearers of the priesthood, and missionaries for the world. The teachings and ordinances provided by these prophets, holders of His priesthood, and missionaries have, indeed, provided the opportunity for salvation and exultation to the nations of the earth. We see how literally the promise made to Abraham has been and is being fulfilled, and we are yet to see the gospel go to all.

In the detail, everything the Lord does is designed to lead us back to Him (2 Ne. 26:24). His work and His "glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man," (Moses 1:39). Hence, the single most important event in all of world history is the atonement of His beloved Son. In general, everything He has created is for our blessing and enjoyment -- to enliven the soul, to gladden the heart and to delight the eye (D&C 59:16-19). All good things come from God, and we can know with perfect surety that everything that inviteth and enticeth to come unto Christ, through whom we come unto the Father, is good and of God. The contrary is also true (Moroni 7:13-19).

Thus we see that agency is paramount in this grand plan of happiness given us of the Father. It is not God but Satan and "man's inhumanity to man that makes countless thousands weep." At the same time the Lord does and will use good and evil to bring about His eternal purposes. Consider, for example,

Lucifer in the Garden of Eden. Life would not be a growth opportunity if we did not have opposition; Satan was cast down to the earth with his angels for a very wise purpose. Whether we choose good or evil determines the direction we will move as we take advantage of life's opportunities.

An example, in the detail, of how the Lord leads us is in the names He gives His servants. They are given to help us keep a clear focus as we contemplate His dealings, to come back to Him. The naming of Israel is no exception -- mentioned more in holy writ (more than 2,500 times) than any other name save the name of the "Lord" Himself. From our Bible dictionary it means: "One who prevails with God or let God prevail." In the context of the Book of Revelations, "He who overcometh shall inherit all things." (Rev. 2:7,11,17; 3:5,12,21; 21:7) In other words let us put our hand in the hand of the Lord; in so doing we will overcome the world and prevail with God -- thus becoming part of Israel. As we are privileged to go through the marvelous temple experience, we can clearly see this is our opportunity and our goal. By way of perspective, listen to the context for the occurrences of the name "Israel" the next time you are privileged to participate in the various ordinances of the temple -- especially their significance as these occurrences tie to the hereafter. Specifically, as we participate in last day activities, the Lord has said: Mine indignation is soon to be poured out without measure upon all nations; and this will I do when the cup of their iniquity is full. And in that day all who are found upon the watch-tower, or in other words, all mine Israel, shall be saved. And they that have been scattered shall be gathered. And all they who have mourned shall be comforted. And all they who have given their lives for my name shall be crowned. Therefore, let your hearts be comforted concerning Zion; for all flesh is in mine hands; be still and know that I am God. Zion shall not be moved out of her place, notwithstanding her children are scattered. They that remain, and are pure in heart, shall return, and come to their inheritances, they and their children, with songs of everlasting joy, to build up the waste places of Zion— (D&C 101:11-18)

So we see that when we become a true Israelite, we take upon us the name of Christ. This is explained beautifully by King Benjamin and the prophet Abinadi in the Book of Mormon. (Mosiah 5:7-15; 15:7-23) It is interesting that in Strong's Concordance, number 3478, definition for Israel we find the meaning: "he will rule (as) God."

Israel in our modern vernacular is thought of as the State of Israel. But to the Lord it is so much more than that. Let us now look at who Israel is as best we can from the Lord's perspective. Jacob 5: is enormously helpful as Zenos goes through the parable of the olive tree describing the nourishing, righteousness, wickedness, pruning, scattering, gathering and the eventual redemption of the House of Israel. He talks of the mother tree, the natural and the wild branches, the grafting in, the planting of natural branches elsewhere, the pruning, nourishing and the digging. Because of the agency of man and his choosing to follow the adversary, wickedness corrupts the vineyard. And in all of this the Lord says, "What could I have done more" (:41, 47, & 49)? His ways are just and perfect. We only have ourselves and Satan to blame for the wickedness in the world. The Lord is the master in turning evil into good. Each of us can choose and should turn from the wickedness of the world with full purpose of heart -- feasting on light and truth at the Lord's Table -- pressing "forward with steadfastness in Christ..." Then, "thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life." (2 Ne. 31:20-21).

As noted, through the birthright lines come the greatest blessings and responsibilities. All the blessings of Abraham passed, through the birthright to Isaac and thence to Jacob (Israel). Reuben was the oldest of the 12 sons of Israel, but lost the birthright because of transgression (Gen 49:3-4). Hebrew tradition then gave the birthright to the first-born of the second wife (Rachel), who was Joseph. We see in the blessings given by Israel to his 12 sons that the greatest ones were to Judah and to Joseph (Gen 49:8-12, 22-26) -- with the greatest being given to Joseph. Through the loins of Judah (the Jews) came the kings, the Bible and, most importantly, the King of kings, the Messiah.

We find fascinating and very important promises in Joseph's blessing as the birthright son. The essential blessings given to Abraham, and passed on to Isaac and Jacob were given to Joseph, but then with the unusual promise that his blessing "prevailed above the blessings of [his] progenitors... In other words, Joseph's blessing was greater, in some way, than Abraham's, Isaac's, or Jacob's. How could that be, since any offspring Joseph had would simply add to those of his progenitors? The Lord explains to Joseph his blessing would prevail "unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills:" (the Americas) (Gen 49:22-26). So where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were promised the land of Canaan, Joseph was given all of the Americas! As we look at history and to Zenos's parable, we see the most interesting fulfillment of this promise (Jacob 5:).

As Zenos likens the House of Israel to an olive tree, he discusses at least four groups (natural branches) being led away into different parts of the vineyard. One to a poor spot of land, another to a poorer spot of land, another to a choice land and yet others with no mention of the quality of the lands. These "young and tender branches" were led away that the Lord of the vineyard "may lay up fruit thereof against the season" (:13). We see, in another grand irony, how the Lord in the extremities of the gathering of Israel brings about the maximum good to those who will come unto Christ and receive Him as the true Shepherd of Israel.

Lehi's and Ishmael's families, both descendants of Joseph, were the natural branches to be led away and planted in a "good spot of ground" (Jacob 5:25). This part of the parable was literally fulfilled as Lehi and Ishmael and their families left Jerusalem in 600 B.C., and with the Mulekites leaving shortly thereafter. [They all came to America](#) -- there to become two nations. With us today are a large population of American Indians (Lamanites) inhabiting America, the "Promised Land" spoken of in the Book of Mormon, and the land of the "everlasting hills" as the part of the promise that Joseph's blessing would "prevail... above the blessings of [his] progenitors..."

In 721 B.C. we have the very important event of the 10 Tribes of Israel being taken captive by the Assyrians. Apocryphal writings indicate they subsequently migrated into various of the lands of the North. Apparently these were the "poor" and/or "poorer" parts of the Lord's vineyard. We also know that the Savior visited the scattered tribes of Israel after visiting the Nephites and Lamanites (3 Nephi 11, 16:1-3). The records of these scattered tribes will yet come forth telling of God's dealings with them and the Savior's ministry among them. The Lord has promised that we will have their records, and they will have ours (the Bible and the Book of Mormon) (2 Ne. 29:13).

Another extremely important event in this whole Israel scenario is the Lord inspiring Columbus in the discovery of America. This opened the destined door for the Pilgrims and the European migration to the Americas -- also in fulfillment of prophecy (1 Ne. 13:12-16). We know from patriarchal blessings of members of the church that most of these immigrants were descendants of Ephraim and hence of Joseph in fulfillment of Jacob's promise to his birthright son. The European area was apparently where most of the descendants of the tribe of Ephraim, as part of the 10 Tribes, migrated after the Assyrian captivity. The Columbus, Pilgrims, etc. events are repeat examples of the descendants of Joseph coming "over the wall" (the ocean) to their promised land -- America.

From the above we see the remarkable fulfillment of the Lord's promise to Joseph in that essentially all the inhabitants of America are either descendants of Ephraim (Europeans) or Manasseh (North American Indians) and hence of Joseph. On the other hand, the rest of the 10 Tribes and "branches" to be grafted into their "mother tree" are elsewhere. There is ample other evidence indicating that some of the 10 Tribes were scattered among the Slavic and Oriental Nations. For example, today, all twelve tribes of Israel have been identified in patriarchal blessings for both Russia and Mongolia. Both apocryphal

writings as well as statements in the scriptures substantiate that a large part of Israel is in the land of the north (Isa. 49:12; Jer. 3:18; 16:15; 23:8; 1 Ne. 21:12; D&C 110:11; 133:26-34) – Europe and Asia.

When the Jews were last scattered with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. the survivors apparently went in all directions. We saw evidence of Israelites being scattered to the Ivory Coast, when we served our mission there in 1997-'99. We know of Ethiopian Jews. The Lord promised Abraham that "...in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. (Gen. 22:18) This in large measure came because Israel was scattered among all nations of the earth (1 Ne. 22:3, 5; 3 Ne. 28:29) – ironically because they had turned from the Lord.

In contrast to the word Israelites, the meaning of Gentiles is multiple in the scriptures. We see the opportunity for confusion is significant since the descendants of Israel have been scattered among the nations of the earth with much intermarriage. From before, we learned that we are each a function of four elements: intelligence, spirit, body, and environment. By fore-ordination and blood-line the Lord has told us that Israel will be gathered from the four-corners of the earth -- from among the Gentile nations. For many of the Book of Mormon scriptures we use here, it is clear that the Lord calls America (D&C 109:60) and other nations Gentile nations.

Let us next consider an incredibly important juncture in the scattering and gathering process of the Lord's covenant people Israel. The Lord promised that, "The first will be last, and the last will be first" (Matt. 19:30; 20:16; Mk. 10:31; Lk. 13:30; 1 Ne. 13:40-42; Ether 13:12; D&C 29:30). He explained this pivotal chiasmic sentence: Israel (the first to receive the gospel) rejected it and the Messiah. The kingdom was then taken from them and given to the Gentiles (the last) (Matt. 21:43). The Gentiles in this case -- mainly in the area of Asia -- blossomed and the gospel spread rapidly to most of the known world. In spite of the persecutors killing the Apostles, the powerful conversions with joy and rejoicing among them gave them a momentum that carried the work in righteousness for more than 200 years. The persecution from without and the apostasy from within drove the "woman (the church)... into the wilderness" (Rev. 12:6). Then the last (the Gentiles) were the first as the gospel was restored to them through the Prophet Joseph Smith. When the gentiles reject and turn from the purifying teachings of the gospel and take on the ways of Babylon, the gospel will be taken from them and given back to Israel (the first will be last) (1 Ne. 13:42; 3 Ne. 16:10).

We see in this FIRST, LAST, LAST, FIRST chiasmus five thousand years of the earth's history. The Zenos allegory in Jacob 5 explains this chiasmus profoundly and is the most [far reaching allegory, of which we know](#).

The Apostle Paul obviously had access to the writings of the Old Testament Prophet Zenos, for he said: I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid for I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles,... For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not

highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins (Rom. 11:1, 2, 8, 11, 13-27).

While visiting America and referring to our day, the Savior said, At that day when the Gentiles shall sin against my gospel, and shall reject the fullness of my gospel, and shall be lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations, and above all the people of the whole earth, and shall be filled with all manner of lyings, and of deceits, and of mischiefs, and all manner of hypocrisy, and murders, and priestcrafts, and whoredoms, and of secret abominations; and if they shall do all those things, and shall reject the fullness of my gospel, behold, saith the Father, I will bring the fullness of my gospel from among them. And then will I remember my covenant which I have made unto my people, O house of Israel, and I will bring my gospel unto them. (3 Ne. 16:10,11)

Addressing the Nephites and the Lamanites, yet sharing it with us, the Savior further tells when these things shall take place:

And verily I say unto you, I give unto you a sign, that ye may know the time when these things shall be about to take place--that I shall gather in, from their long dispersion, my people, O house of Israel, and shall establish again among them my Zion; And behold, this is the thing which I will give unto you for a sign--for verily I say unto you that when these things which I declare unto you, and which I shall declare unto you hereafter of myself, and by the power of the Holy Ghost which shall be given unto you of the Father, shall be made known unto the Gentiles that they may know concerning this people who are a remnant of the house of Jacob, and concerning this my people who shall be scattered by them; Verily, verily, I say unto you, when these things shall be made known unto them of the Father, and shall come forth of the Father, from them unto you; For it is wisdom in the Father that they should be established in this land, and be set up as a free people by the power of the Father, that these things might come forth from them unto a remnant of your seed, that the covenant of the Father may be fulfilled which he hath covenanted with his people, O house of Israel; Therefore, when these works and the works which shall be wrought among you hereafter shall come forth from the Gentiles, unto your seed which shall dwindle in unbelief because of iniquity; For thus it behooveth the Father that it should come forth from the Gentiles, that he may show forth his power unto the Gentiles, for this cause that the Gentiles, if they will not harden their hearts, that they may repent and come unto me and be baptized in my name and know of the true points of my doctrine, that they may be numbered among my people, O house of Israel; And when these things come to pass that thy seed shall begin to know these things--it shall be a sign unto them, that they may know that the work of the Father hath already commenced unto the fulfilling of the covenant which he hath made unto the people who are of the house of Israel (3 Ne. 21:1-7).

Tradition within the Church has led most to believe that Mesoamerica is the place setting for the Book of Mormon peoples. It seems that the Lord has allowed that tradition to persist so that the gospel could go to these humble and wonderful people in a major way. Recent DNA analysis has proven that they are not of Israelite descent. Using DNA research and [statements from the Prophet Joseph Smith and from](#)

[several prophets and the Book of Mormon itself](#), Rodney Meldrum, Wayne May, Jonathan Neville, and many others have demonstrated that the “Mound builders” on the Mississippi drainage were built by the peoples of the Book of Mormon; we know the cultures as Hopewell and Adena. They have the right DNA and the artifacts are numerous. This is most fascinating because now is the fullness of the gospel via the Book of Mormon helping them to know who they are and of their great opportunities as the Lord’s covenant people. The above scripture is now being fulfilled – making this a very important juncture time for when "I will bring the fulness of my gospel from among them [the gentiles]... And then will I remember my covenant which I have made unto my people, O house of Israel, and I will bring my gospel unto them" (3 Ne. 16:10-11). The "first" is now becoming the "last" to receive the gospel before the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior. We are seeing, before our very eyes, the gospel go in a miraculous way to European Eastern bloc nations and the Republics of the former Soviet Union. These are part of the "natural branches" the Lord of the vineyard led away that He might bring forth fruit in the season thereof.

Another important set of scriptures in conjunction with this transition time are the following. The phrase "set his hand again the second time" occurs six times in the scriptures (Isa. 11:11; 2 Ne. 6:14; 21:11; 25:17; 29:1; Jacob 6:2).

That this particular wording is significant is emphasized in that of the 425 verses of Isaiah cited in the Book of Mormon, over half of them are different than in the King James addition. Apparently, as the Lord inspired Joseph Smith in translating the Book of Mormon, He had him use nominally [King James Bible English to illustrate scriptural sacredness with corrections and differences as necessary](#). Those differences are often very significant -- pointing, in part, to the "many plain and precious things" taken from the Bible (1 Ne. 13:28-29). 2 Ne. 21:11 is identical with Isaiah 11:11 except for two commas, which have minor significance. In other words, the Lord intended this phrasing to remain.

The Lord set his hand the first time with Moses and the second time with Joseph Smith. Interestingly, the meaning of the word "Joseph" is "He who gathers or he who causes to return" (p.17 Isaiah and the Prophets, Religious Studies Center, BYU, 1984). Moses gave the priesthood keys to the Prophet Joseph for "the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north" (D&C 110:11). As the Lord set his hand the second time, he set it when the "last" became "first" to receive the gospel. That is when the gentiles received the restoration. Now he sets "his hand **again** the second time" as the "first" becomes the "last." That is, when "I will bring the fulness of my gospel from among them [the gentiles]... And then will I remember my covenant which I have made unto my people, O house of Israel, and I will bring my gospel unto them" (3 Ne. 16:10-11).

This is now being fulfilled, both with the Lamanites and among the other tribes and the remnant of Israel – other non-American nations of the Earth. This because the gentile nations have fulfilled in large measure the conditions of wickedness (3 Ne. 16:10-11). Again, the people of the "house of Israel" are the natural branches which were broken off and led away as outlined in Jacob 5: "...and this is for the last time that I shall prune my vineyard. ...begin at the last that they may be first, and that the first may be last... Wherefore, dig about them, and prune them, and dung them once more, for the last time, for the end draweth nigh" (:62-64).

How the “First (Israel)” received the gospel is explained in the Old Testament. How the “Last (the Gentile nations)” received the gospel is explained in the New Testament. How the “Last became the First through the restoration” is explained in the Book of Mormon (1 Ne. 13:42) and it is the major set of scriptures to bring the Gentile nations to the knowledge of the truth through the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price. How the “First becomes the Last” is happening now and will be brought about as true Israelites gather together in ONE in Christ and become a true Zion people. New scriptures will come forth

as they “shall be gathered in one,...” (2 Ne. 29:12-14) as a part of that great and exciting latter-day process in preparation of the return of Him, who is King over Israel.

Ironically, one of the ways in which the Lord "will bring the fulness of my gospel from among them" (the gentiles) is that:

I will suffer my people, O house of Israel, that they shall go through among them, and shall tread them down, and they shall be as salt that hath lost its savor, which is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of my people, O house of Israel (3 Ne. 16:15). Then shall ye, who are a remnant of the house of Jacob, go forth among them; and ye shall be in the midst of them who shall be many; and ye shall be among them as a lion among the beasts of the forest, and as a young lion among the flocks of sheep, who, if he goeth through both treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver (3 Ne. 20:16; 21:12). Yea, wo be unto the Gentiles except they repent; for it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Father, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots; (transportation systems) And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strongholds; (defense systems) And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thy land, and thou shalt have no more soothsayers; (new age religion, etc.) Thy graven images I will also cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee, and thou shalt no more worship the works of thy hands; (see D&C 1:16) And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee; so will I destroy thy cities. (see D&C 84:114-115) And it shall come to pass that all lyings, and deceivings, and envyings, and strifes, and priestcrafts, and whoredoms, shall be done away. For it shall come to pass, saith the Father, that at that day whosoever will not repent and come unto my Beloved Son, them will I cut off from among my people, O house of Israel (3 Ne. 21:14-20). And there shall be men standing in that generation, that shall not pass until they shall see an overflowing scourge; for a desolating sickness shall cover the land. But my disciples shall stand in holy places, and shall not be moved; but among the wicked, men shall lift up their voices and curse God and die. And there shall be earthquakes also in divers places, and many desolations; yet men will harden their hearts against me, and they will take up the sword, one against another, and they will kill one another (D&C 45:31-33).

2 Ne. 20 (Isa. 10:) gives us even more details as the Lord describes how the Assyrian (the remnant of Israel) shall come upon the hypocritical nation and shall destroy and cut off nations not a few, and shall burn and devour in one day. Several other scriptures tell of this critically important juncture in world history and of the Father's covenant keeping process (Isa. 52:1-15; 54:all; Jer. 4:6-11, 19-31; Lam 4:1-22; Dan. 7:1-27; Joel 2:1-32; Micah 5:8-14; 7:8-20; Hab. 1:5-13; Rev. 13:1-18; 1 Ne. 14:1-17; 22:8-20; 3 Ne. 16:10-20; 20:12-45; D&C 45:all; 87:4-8; 103:1-20; 112:23-26; 133:all verses).

But the Lord in His infinite mercy specifically promises the Gentiles: (3 Nephi 16:13-20)

But if the Gentiles will repent and return unto me, saith the Father, behold they shall be numbered among my people, O house of Israel. And I will not suffer my people, who are of the house of Israel, to go through among them, and tread them down, saith the Father. But if they will not turn unto me, and hearken unto my voice, I will suffer them, yea, I will suffer my people, O house of Israel, that they shall go through among them, and shall tread them down, and they shall be as salt that hath lost its savor, which is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of my people, O house of Israel. Verily, verily, I say unto you, thus hath the Father commanded me—that I should give unto this people this land for their inheritance.

17 And then the words of the prophet Isaiah shall be fulfilled, which say: Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing, for they shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his

people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God.

It is often hard for us mortals to understand the purposes of the Lord, but we can know with perfect confidence that his ways are just -- extending mercy, through his Son, to all those who will do their part to have faith in Him, repent, and receive the great gift of eternal life offered by our most benevolent Father. We see the great importance of the people of this "Promised Land" repenting because if they do not, they [will be "swept off."](#) Can we then tell the Lord, "You didn't tell us we were the "Promised Land!" In fact, He has told us plainly: <https://itsabouttimebook.com/book-of-mormon-geography/does-it-matter-where-the-book-of-mormon-took-place/>; <https://itsabouttimebook.com/americasgreatestneedrepentance/>; <https://itsabouttimebook.com/who-are-the-gentiles-message-from-ancient-prophet/>.

Because the people of America are, in general, not repenting and if we see these destructions come upon us, we can know they have a divine purpose. If we are prepared, he has promised we need not fear (D&C 38:30-31; 1 Ne. 22:17). A Zion society cannot exist intermingled with wickedness. A purging and cleansing must occur as the wicked destroy the wicked. "I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer" (2 Ne. 30:10; 3 Ne. 22:16, 8).

The great promises for the righteous that come out of this purging and cleansing are beyond our fondest dreams.

...but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer... For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted! Behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established; thou shalt be far from oppression for thou shalt not fear, and from terror for it shall not come near thee. Behold, they shall surely gather together against thee, not by me; whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake (3 Ne.22:8-15).

And as many of the gentiles that will repent shall assist my people, the remnant of Jacob, and also as many of the house of Israel as shall come, that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem. And then shall they assist my people that they may be gathered in, who are scattered upon all the face of the land, in unto the New Jerusalem. And then shall the power of heaven come down among them; and I also will be in the midst. And then shall the work of the Father commence at that day, even when this gospel shall be preached among the remnant of this people. Verily I say unto you, at that day shall the work of the Father commence among all the dispersed of my people, yea, even the tribes which have been lost, which the Father hath led away out of Jerusalem. Yea, the work shall commence among all the dispersed of my people, with the Father to prepare the way whereby they may come unto me, that they may call on the Father in my name. Yea, and then shall the work commence, with the Father among all nations in preparing the way whereby his people may be gathered home to the land of their inheritance. And they shall go out from all nations; and they shall not go out in haste, nor go by flight, for I will go before them, saith the Father, and I will be their rearward (3 Ne. 21:23-29).

From Doctrine & Covenants 45: and 133: we read:

And it shall be called the New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints

of the Most High God; And the glory of the Lord shall be there, and the terror of the Lord also shall be there, insomuch that the wicked will not come unto it, and it shall be called Zion. And it shall come to pass among the wicked, that every man that will not take his sword against his neighbor must needs flee unto Zion for safety. And there shall be gathered unto it out of every nation under heaven; and it shall be the only people that shall not be at war one with another. And it shall be said among the wicked: Let us not go up to battle against Zion, for the inhabitants of Zion are terrible; wherefore we cannot stand. And it shall come to pass that the righteous shall be gathered out from among all nations, and shall come to Zion, singing with songs of everlasting joy (D&C 45:66-71). And the Lord, even the Savior, shall stand in the midst of his people, and shall reign over all flesh. And they who are in the north countries shall come in remembrance before the Lord; and their prophets shall hear his voice, and shall no longer stay themselves; and they shall smite the rocks, and the ice shall flow down at their presence. And an highway shall be cast up in the midst of the great deep. Their enemies shall become a prey unto them, And in the barren deserts there shall come forth pools of living water; and the parched ground shall no longer be a thirsty land. And they shall bring forth their rich treasures unto the children of Ephraim, my servants. And the boundaries of the everlasting hills shall tremble at their presence. And there shall they fall down and be crowned with glory, even in Zion, by the hands of the servants of the Lord, even the children of Ephraim. And they shall be filled with songs of everlasting joy. Behold, this is the blessing of the everlasting God upon the tribes of Israel, and the richer blessing upon the head of Ephraim and his fellows. And they also of the tribe of Judah, after their pain, shall be sanctified in holiness before the Lord, to dwell in his presence day and night, forever and ever (D&C 133:25-35).

And from Doctrine & Covenants 84:96-102 we read:

For I, the Almighty, have laid my hands upon the nations, to scourge them for their wickedness. And plagues shall go forth, and they shall not be taken from the earth until I have completed my work, which shall be cut short in righteousness-- Until all shall know me, who remain, even from the least unto the greatest, and shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and shall see eye to eye, and shall lift up their voice, and with the voice together sing this new song, saying:

The Lord hath brought again Zion;  
The Lord hath redeemed his people, Israel,  
According to the election of grace,  
Which was brought to pass by the faith  
And covenant of their fathers.  
The Lord hath redeemed his people;  
And Satan is bound and time is no longer.  
The Lord hath gathered all things in one.  
The Lord hath brought down Zion from above.  
The Lord hath brought up Zion from beneath.  
The earth hath travailed and brought forth her strength;  
And truth is established in her bowels;  
And the heavens have smiled upon her;  
And she is clothed with the glory of her God;  
For he stands in the midst of his people.  
Glory, and honor, and power, and might,  
Be ascribed to our God; for he is full of mercy,  
Justice, grace and truth, and peace,  
Forever and ever, Amen

President Benson has said we live in that day which John the Revelator foresaw when ...the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (Rev. 12:17). The dragon is Satan; the woman represents the Church of Jesus Christ. Satan is waging war against the members of the Church who have testimonies and are trying to keep the commandments. And while many of our members are remaining faithful and strong, some are wavering. Some are falling. Some are fulfilling John's prophecy that in the war with Satan some saints would be 'overcome' (Rev. 13:7; Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, pp. 399-400).

[As the women \(the church\) goes through the birthing pains of bringing forth a child \(even Zion\)](#), let us labor with all of our heart might, might, minds and strength to assist in bringing about a Zion people. "To meet the difficulties that are coming, it will be necessary for you to have a knowledge of the truth of this work for yourselves. The difficulties will be of such a character that the man or woman who does not possess this personal knowledge or witness, will fall... The time will come when no man or woman will be able to endure on borrowed light. Each will have to be guided by the light within himself" (Life of Heber C. Kimball, pp449-450). President Russell M. Nelson [profoundly stated](#), "In coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost."

On 23 September 2017, we saw the scripture in Revelations 12 played out in the heavens for those who have eyes to see and hearts to feel this sign in the heavens. The Joseph Smith translation changes the verse order and the first verse reads differently: "And there appeared a great sign in heaven in the likeness of things on the earth, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." I explain the importance of the unique event in astronomical history in the following blog article: <https://itsabouttimebook.com/revelations-12-war-heaven/>. I took pictures the morning of this event with my cell phone app to share in this article. The same year we had a significant total solar eclipse cross over this "Promise Land," <https://itsabouttimebook.com/the-great-sign-in-heaven/>. It was an incredible experience to be part of it: <https://itsabouttimebook.com/our-total-eclipse-surreal-experience/>. I believe the Lord is giving us a fundamental message of our need to repent in the "Promise Land" as well.

In Satan's last hour, one of his main tools will be deceit. President Benson in quoting President Romney tells us how to not be deceived: '1. What do the standard works have to say about it?... 2. What do the latter-day presidents of the Church have to say on the subject, particularly the living president?... The third and final test is the Holy Ghost -- the test of the Spirit' (God-Family-Country, Our Three Great Loyalties, Deseret Book, 1974, pp. 337-340). In addition, we have the sure promise from the scriptures: "And whoso treasureth up my word, shall not be deceived, for the Son of Man shall come, and he shall send his angels before him with the great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together the remainder of his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (JS Matt. 37) And Christ is the Word. (John 1:1)

Incomprehensible are the rewards for those who thrust in their sickles with their mights and become part of "Israel" in the Lord's sense of the word (D&C 4). "For behold, this is the last time that I shall nourish my vineyard; for the end is nigh at hand, and the season speedily cometh; and if ye labor with your might with me ye shall have joy in the fruit which I shall lay up unto myself against the time which will soon come" (Jacob 5:71).

Let us be among the "few" who choose to follow the path of truth and light (our Savior) -- thus finding the greatest of all the gifts of God and therein the greatest joy.

It is our choice. Will we focus our minds on all that Christ has done for us -- seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness? (Matt. 6:33) Will we continually strive to tune our hearts and be worthy of the guidance of the Holy Ghost? Will we build Zion with all our might and work to protect the sacred agency of man? Or in contrast, will we follow the natural man -- tasting of the temporary pleasures of the tantalizing temptations in Babylon -- seeking after the things of this world? Will we ignore the poor, the needy, the father-less and the widow -- letting that be the responsibility of the government? Will we let the conspiratorial forces take away our freedoms and constitutional rights? If we answer affirmatively to the last three queries, we sell our souls into bondage and will lose the right to Eternal Life.

..the sword of my justice shall hang over them at that day; and except they repent it shall fall upon them, saith the Father, yea, even upon all the nations of the Gentiles. And it shall come to pass that I will establish my people, O house of Israel (3 Ne. 20:20-21). Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men.

Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life (2 Ne. 31:20). And then also cometh the Jerusalem of old; and the inhabitants thereof, blessed are they, for they have been washed in the blood of the Lamb; and they are they who were scattered and gathered in from the four quarters of the earth, and from the north countries, and are partakers of the fulfilling of the covenant which God made with their father, Abraham (Ether 13:11). How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings... that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings unto them of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion: Thy God reigneth (3 Ne 20:40)!

It is our glorious opportunity to follow truth and light, which leads to Christ, which leads to the making and keeping of covenants, which leads us to true freedom from sin and from bondage, which leads us to be the recipients of every blessing made to "the fathers," and which thus leads us to a fullness of joy and eventual Eternal Life with our loving Father-in-heaven and His Beloved Son. In this process we truly become part of Israel, the seed of Abraham and heirs according to the promise. We enjoy the protection of the Spirit. We receive the promise of peace in this world and Eternal Life in the world to come. These blessings we will receive with our loved ones as part of the family of Abraham if they live for it as well. We shall not fear in the midst of a world awry. We shall have the privilege of building Zion and being crowned in the mansions on high. Who would not want this the greatest of all the gifts of God? It is offered freely to each of us. Shall we not go forward in so great a cause and align our goals with those of the Father: to care, to share, to lift, to lead and to love, that we may be one with Him in our life's conduct, in our hope and in our faith (D&C 128:22-24).

And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost; and if they endure unto the end they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb; and whoso shall publish peace, yea, tidings of great joy, how beautiful upon the mountains shall they be." (1 Nephi 13:37)

Moroni gives the best summary of how to become a true Israelite so that by putting our hand in His -- totally trusting Him, Christ may present us "spotless" to the Father:

And awake, and arise from the dust, O Jerusalem; yea, and put on thy beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion; and strengthen thy stakes and enlarge thy borders forever, that thou mayest no more be confounded, that the covenants of the Eternal Father which he hath made unto thee, O house of Israel, maybe fulfilled. Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God. And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God,

through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot. (Moroni 10:31-33)

As we follow Christ, we become true Israelites – in the sharing of this “Message of Gladness” and as we are changed by Him as we internalize His marvelous message of faith, hope, and charity – learning to love as He loves. He is the way, the truth, and the life – bringing glory and honor to His Father as He helps us become true ISRAELITES – BORN AGAIN OF GOD. (Jn. 14:6). This is the greatest honor we can bring to Father, for then we are helping Him do His most important work: “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life” of His precious sons and daughters in eternal family relationships – kings and queens, priests and priestesses unto the most High God – the seed of Abraham and heirs according to the promise, joint heirs with Christ, and the elect of God. (Moses 1:39; D&C 128:20-25)