

The Gathering of Israel

Who Is the House of Israel?

“The house of Israel” generally refers to the descendants of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel in the Old Testament (see Genesis 32:27–28). In the Book of Mormon the Savior expanded this definition to include not only the literal descendants of Israel (see 3 Nephi 20:25–27) but also all Gentiles who repent, are baptized, and come unto Christ (see 3 Nephi 21:6).

Israel Will Be Gathered in Fulfillment of Covenant

The gathering of Israel in the last days is a fulfillment of the covenant Jehovah made with prophets of the Old Testament (see Isaiah 11:12; Jeremiah 31:10; Ezekiel 34:12; 1 Nephi 19:15–16; Abraham 2:9–11). Jesus Christ repeated this promise in 3 Nephi 20:12–13, 29, at which time He indicated that the covenant to gather Israel was first made with Abraham as part of the Abrahamic covenant (see 2 Nephi 29:14; 3 Nephi 20:25; Abraham 2:9–11).

The Role of the Book of Mormon in the Gathering of Israel

The Savior taught in 3 Nephi 21:1–7 that the coming forth of the Book of Mormon is a sign to the entire world that the Lord has commenced to gather Israel and fulfill covenants He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (see also 3 Nephi 29:1; Ether 4:17).

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that “the Book of Mormon is central to this work. It declares the doctrine of the gathering. It causes people to learn about Jesus Christ, to believe His gospel, and to join His Church. In fact, if there were no Book of Mormon, the promised gathering of Israel would not occur” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2006, 84; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 80).

The Gathering of Israel Is Both Spiritual and Physical

The spiritual gathering of Israel occurs when someone accepts the gospel of Jesus Christ and is baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day

Saints. Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles emphasized the importance of the spiritual gathering when he stated: “The spiritual gathering takes precedence over the temporal. . . . Men can be saved wherever they live, but they cannot be saved, regardless of their abode, unless they accept the gospel and come unto Christ” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [1985], 567).

Jesus Christ taught that there would eventually be two centers of gathering—the New Jerusalem and the Old Jerusalem (see 3 Nephi 20:21–22, 29). As Church membership expanded into other lands, President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught that the gathering place today is wherever someone lives: “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” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1975, 4; or *Ensign*, May 1975, 4).

Our Responsibility to Help Gather Israel

“Being an heir to the Abrahamic covenant does not make one a ‘chosen person’ per se, but does signify that such are chosen to responsibly carry the gospel to all the peoples of the earth” (Bible Dictionary, “Abraham, Covenant of,” 602). The promise to gather Israel is being fulfilled today as descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob bear the Lord’s name, His ministry, and His priesthood to all the families of the earth, thus offering them “the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal” (Abraham 2:11).

“It becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor” (D&C 88:81).