

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM



Edited by
Daniel H. Ludlow

*The History, Scripture, Doctrine, and Procedure
of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

Macmillan Publishing Company
New York

Maxwell Macmillan Canada
Toronto

Maxwell Macmillan International
New York Oxford Singapore Sydney



Copyright Brigham Young University, 1992.

Archived at Book of Mormon Central by Permission.

ity of the land will be overcome (36:8–11), the Dead Sea will support fishing (47:1, 7–10), and Israel, as well as the nations, will know that the Lord is with them and “They shall know that I am the Lord” (34:23–28, 30).

Chapters 35–36 reflect the tensions that will develop when returning Israelites find their land inhabited by others who claim it as their own (35:10, 12, 15; 36:2–5). The Lord, however, promised that he would divide the land “by lot” among the returning Israelites for their inheritance, at the same time assuring any non-Israelites living in their midst that they, too, would be granted an “inheritance . . . among the tribes of Israel” (47:22 [13–23]).

The Lord emphasized how real this gathering would be (37:1–14). As in the Resurrection, scattered Israelites, like individual dry bones, might still hope to be formed into one body—with sinews and flesh, breath, and spirit—once more in their own land. The Resurrection thus serves as a metaphor of the gathering as well as a means whereby it will be accomplished, as promised by the Lord: “I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel” (37:12).

After Israelites gather and prosper, they will live peacefully in “unwalled villages,” “at rest,” dwelling “safely,” “without walls” (38:11). At this point, they will be attacked by Gog, whose goal is to plunder their prosperous land. In the battles that follow, the Lord will refine Israel while bringing judgment against the nations—both those who attack Israel and those who live in distant lands (cf. Isa. 4:4; Zech. 12:2–3; 14:2–3; Zeph. 3:8; Ezek. 39:2–4, 6, 11, 21–24). Jerusalem will be rebuilt as a divine center, God’s temple will be erected in their midst (chaps. 40–47), and he will reside there, so that Jerusalem will be “called Holy, for the Lord shall be there” (JST Ezek. 48:35).

In this gathering context, Ezekiel spoke of the

unification of the so-called “sticks” of Judah and Ephraim (i.e., Israel), a joining that signals not only the beginning of the gathering of Israel (Ezek. 37:15–22; cf. 3 Ne. 20:46; 21:1–3, 7–13) but also the means by which the ultimate gathering—of peoples back to God—will be accomplished (cf. 1 Ne. 22:12; 2 Ne. 6:11).

Latter-day Saints identify Judah’s record as the Bible and Ephraim’s record as the Book of Mormon (D&C 27:5). They understand that when the Book of Mormon was translated and published, it became possible to join the two records. And since the stated purpose of the Book of Mormon is to convince “Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations” (title page of the Book of Mormon), they see this joining of testimonies as being a principal means whereby Israel will be brought back to God (*see* BOOK OF MORMON, BIBLICAL PROPHECIES ABOUT).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Meservy, Keith H. “Ezekiel’s Sticks and the Gathering of Israel.” *Ensign* 17 (Feb. 1987):4–13.
- Sperry, Sidney B. *The Voice of Israel’s Prophets*, pp. 218–37. Salt Lake City, 1952.

KEITH H. MESERVY

EZIAS

Ezias was a prophet of Old Testament times whose prophecies were apparently recorded on the PLATES of brass, a record brought to the Western Hemisphere by the Book of Mormon prophet LEHI. Ezias was mentioned by NEPHI₂ (c. 22 B.C.) in a list of prophets who testified of the coming ministry and redemption of Christ (Hel. 8:13–20).

MELVIN J. THORNE