

Comments on 3 Nephi 16

This chapter continues (cf. 15:11-24) the scattered Israel theme (v. 1-3) to elaborate on the times of the Gentiles (v. 4-10) and the redemption of Israel (v. 11-20).

1 AND verily, verily, I say unto you that I have other sheep, which are not of this land, neither of the land of Jerusalem, neither in any parts of that land round about whither I have been to minister. 2 For they of whom I speak are they who have not as yet heard my voice; neither have I at any time manifested myself unto them. 3 But I have received a commandment of the Father that I shall go unto them, and that they shall hear my voice, and shall be numbered among my sheep, that there may be one fold and one shepherd; therefore I go to show myself unto them. 4 And I command you that ye shall write these sayings after I am gone, that if it so be that my people at Jerusalem, they who have seen me and been with me in my ministry, do not ask the Father in my name, that they may receive a knowledge of you by the Holy Ghost, and also of the other tribes whom they know not of,

v1-4 In addition to the present group of Lehites (cf. 15:11-24), there are other remnants of Israel scattered elsewhere (v. 1) who have yet to hear Jesus' teachings (v. 2). But, His Father has told Him to go and visit these other remnants of Israel as well so they may be taught (v. 3).

that these sayings which ye shall write shall be kept and shall be manifested unto the Gentiles, that through the fulness of the Gentiles, the remnant of their seed, who shall be scattered forth upon the face of the earth because of their unbelief, may be brought in, or may be brought to a knowledge of me, their Redeemer. 5 And then will I gather them in from the four quarters of the earth; and then will I fulfil the covenant which the Father hath made unto all the people of the house of Israel. 6 And blessed are the Gentiles, because of their belief in me, in and of the Holy Ghost, which witnesses unto them of me and of the Father. 7 Behold, because of their belief in me, saith the Father, and because of the unbelief of you, O house of Israel, in the latter day shall the truth come unto the Gentiles, that the fulness of these things shall be made known unto them.

v4-7 Jesus then tells them to document his teachings so that if the Jews at Jerusalem do not learn about the remnants of Israel (and it certainly doesn't seem likely they will given his comments in 15:14-18), then the Gentiles will bring the written word to all of scattered Israel so they will all learn about him (v. 4). Thus will Israel be gathered and the Abrahamic Covenant be fulfilled (v. 5).

Those Gentiles who believe Jesus' words by the Spirit will be blessed (v. 6). Jesus then explains that the truth, the fullness of His gospel, will come to the Gentiles in the last days because of their willingness to believe and Israel's unwillingness to believe (v. 7).

v4-7 On the times of the Gentiles, cp. 21:4-6, Luke 21:24, the JST on Luke 21:32, Rom. 11:25, D&C 45:24-35, JS-H 1:41.

v6 "in and of the Holy Ghost", as Jesus will never manifest himself personally to the Gentiles He will send the Holy Spirit to testify of Himself, cf. 15:23, 1 Ne. 10:11, 2 Ne. 26:13, John 15:26, John 16:7.

8 But wo, saith the Father, unto the unbelieving of the Gentiles--for notwithstanding they have come forth upon the face of this land, and have scattered my people who are of the house of Israel; and my people who are of the house of Israel have been cast out from among them, and have been trodden under feet by them; 9 And because of the mercies of the Father unto the Gentiles, and also the judgments of the Father upon my people who are of the house of Israel, verily, verily, I say unto you, that after all this, and I have caused my people who are of the house of Israel to be smitten, and to be afflicted, and to be slain, and to be cast out from among them, and to become hated by them, and to become a hiss and a byword among them-- 10 And thus commandeth the Father that I should say unto you: At that day when the Gentiles shall sin against my gospel, and shall reject the fulness 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 fulness of my gospel, behold, saith the Father, I will bring the fulness of my gospel from among them.

v8-10 Affliction and sorrow on those Gentiles who do not believe in Him, because they have abused His people (v. 8). The Lord has been merciful to the Gentiles and has judged Israel, causing them to be smitten by the Gentiles (v. 9). But when the Gentiles sin against the gospel and reject it, then He will take it from them (v. 10).

The scattering and abuse the remnants of Lehi suffer at the hands of the Gentiles was considerable. First the Spanish and Portuguese Conquistadores predominantly in Central America, then the post-Colonial era expansion into Western North America. Even to this day the descendants of the native American Indians generally suffer at the hands of the descendants of the European immigrants.

v10 The message is when the Gentiles become apostate and wicked and scattered Israel humbles itself, then the Lord will reject the Gentiles and accept Israel. It is a matter of reversal. The Gentiles are more accepting than Israel in v. 7, but here they are less accepting than Israel.

When exactly this event occurs is a matter of speculation. B. H. Roberts was of the opinion that when the Saints were

driven West out of the U.S. into what was then Mexican territory was when this prediction was fulfilled.

Forced to select a specific point in time, I would favor a yet future event given the various predictions in v. 14-20, which are typically cast as being associated with the Second Advent of Christ.

However, if we reflect on Enos' allegory of the olive Tree in Jacob 5 we will recall there was a gradual grafting in of the natural tame branches concurrent with a gradual removal of the wild branches which had gone bad (cf. Jacob 5:65-74). While over-literalizing allegories is problematic, Smith was tasked very early on to preach to the remnants of Lehi (D&C 3:18-20, D&C 10:45-55, D&C 28:8). And, that has persisted ever since and only expanded. So, I generally favor a more gradual fulfilment than some specific grand or catastrophic event.

11 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. 12 And I will show unto thee, O house of Israel, that the Gentiles shall not have power over you; but I will remember my covenant unto you, O house of Israel, and ye shall come unto the knowledge of the fulness of my gospel.

13 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. 14 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. 15 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.

16 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: 18 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. 19 Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. 20 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.

v11-20 When the Gentiles reject him (v. 8-10), Jesus will return to the covenant with Israel and reintroduce them to the gospel (v. 11), and show them the Gentiles will not have power over them (v. 12).

If the Gentiles do repent, then they will be numbered among Israel (v. 13) and not crushed underfoot (v. 14). If they do not, then Israel will abuse them just as they have abused Israel (v. 15).

The Father has told Jesus this land is for the inheritance of the remnants of Lehi (v. 16). When they ultimately inherit

it is when, in part, Isaiah's prediction of Zion will be fulfilled (v. 17-20).

v14 "tread them down", just as the Gentiles did to Israel in v. 8. The scattered (v. 8) become the scatterers (v. 15) when they repent and return to the Lord.

v15 "tread them down...as salt that hath lost its savor", a fulfilment of 12:13, implying deliberate apostasy on the part of the Gentiles.

v18-20 A quotation of Isa. 52:8-10, also partially quoted again in 20:32-35.

v19 "Jerusalem", in the Isaiah quote the primary contextual reading is that of ancient Jerusalem being redeemed and reestablished as Zion. However, in the present usage, Jesus is referring to the establishment of a new Jerusalem in the New World, another Zion, cf. 20:22.

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