

D&C Lesson # 12
The Gathering of My People
D&C 29, 33, 37, 38, 52, 57, 110
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(Here is inspirational background and evidences supporting the Restoration)

I. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not just “any other church.”

A. The basic sources and the continuing growth of this church have occurred because this Church is, as prophesied by nearly all the ancient prophets, *the gathering together of a scattered Israel in the Latter-days*. (See “Israel: Gathering of,” BD.)

II. The place to which they were “gathered” kept changing. But **it was not** because Joseph Smith kept changing his mind about where the gathering of Zion was to occur.

A. It was *the Lord* who set the gathering places. **He had His purposes** and there were no inconsistencies, **just limited understanding on our part**.

B. The gathering now is into the wards and stakes of Zion throughout the world. **But when we examine carefully all the prophecies, this was always meant to be so**.

(2 Nephi 29:14 revealed all of Israel will be “gathered into the lands of their possessions”].

C. Our current understanding is just **a fuller understanding**.

III. **The first gathering needed to be where it was --- to the United States. This was necessary to establish a strong base in a land where freedom of religion would eventually prevail.**

A. It was also important to gather **to a land of great financial resources so the Saints would have the means to send missionaries throughout the world** (D&C 29.8.).

IV. Why didn’t the Lord say we would eventually be gathered into places *throughout* the world?

A. Because who would have made the sacrifices to go to America if they knew they could wait and eventually gather in England or in Denmark or Germany, etc.?

B. Furthermore, the gathering had to be in stages, as the current strength of the church allowed.

Stage One. The first gathering was to Ohio (D&C 37). They were to be “gathered to “one place” “to prepare their hearts.” **The Lord had prepared a people in Ohio through the ministry of Sydney Rigdon.** He told Sydney “Behold thou wast sent forth, even as John, to prepare the way before me, and before Elijah which should come, and thou knewest it not (D&C 35:4).”

Rigdon had formed several congregations there. After he was converted and Joseph Smith came to Ohio, the church quickly enlarged **because of the many groups that Sydney Rigdon had formed** (See my lesson # 7) as well as the branches which came from New York with Joseph.

They were not only being gathered to a place, but **to “Oneness” and “Righteousness”** (D&C 38:27, 31). A major purpose of this gathering was to build a temple --- to experience the power of the Spirit and receive essential keys to carry on the great work of the Last Days (D&C 38:32).

Stage Two. It was also important there be a temporary gathering to Missouri.

On June 17, 1831, **even before the gathering in Ohio was complete**, the Lord revealed Missouri would be the “land ... I will consecrate unto my people, which are a remnant of Jacob, and those who are heirs according to the covenant” (D&C 52:2; 57:1.) It was to be on the borders of the Lamanites.

A major purpose of the gathering there was to establish **the foundations** for the “Center Place,” the place where the New Jerusalem will eventually be built. While that gathering was only partial and brief, **the foundations of what will become the “Center Place” of a worldwide Zion** was set up: for Zion was meant to spread throughout the world, as it is now (D&C 52).

“I the Lord will hasten the city **in its time**” (D&C 52:43). [Note the Lord did not say the final gathering there would occur immediately. Nor did He say all saints will live there).

Stage Three: It was also important to gather to Nauvoo. The Saints were able to gain strength as a growing number of converts were obtained and immigrated from Europe, etc. Here they received the temple ordinances. **Its position, on the banks of the Mississippi, was a good jumping off place for their eventual journey across the plains into the West.** The Mississippi was a challenge for them to cross, but it also prevented most enemies from following after them.

Stage Four: It was actually God’s plan from the beginning to gather the Saints into the mountains of Utah. Many prophecies had been given that Latter-day Zion would be established in **“the top of the mountains” (Isaiah 2:2). “Utah” actually means, “top of the mountains.”**

Here the great distances, the barrenness, the mountains, would give the Saints protection from their enemies. No one else wanted it so they would not lose it. Here they could grow to great strength so they eventually would have the means to send missionaries throughout the world.

Stage Five: We are in this stage now, where Saints are now encouraged to stay in their own countries and build up wards and stakes within those countries. For **the current “gathering” was intended all along to be into a “world-wide church and kingdom”** with headquarters in Utah.

Stage Six: This will occur when the Savior comes. He will rule as the civil and ecclesiastical leader of the earth. He **will speak from Old Jerusalem and New Jerusalem** (The Center Place in Missouri). His saints will complete their work of inviting all others to gather into His True Church (D&C 29:9, 11).

Stage Seven: **Eventually the whole earth will be Zion.** The inheritance of the truly righteous will be the Celestialized Earth. Only then will “the gathering” be complete. People **of all ethnic backgrounds** can inherit this Zion, if they are willing to accept Christ’s covenants and keep them.

V. The prophets actually spoke of two main groups to be regathered: the Jews to their homeland, and the ten tribes who were scattered. Both gatherings are being fulfilled, though most people are not aware of the gathering of the lost tribes.

A. Most people seem to have lost faith that the gathering of the “lost tribes” will occur.

B. The very fact that many Jews have returned to their **homeland is witness that the other gathering has also begun.** [In fact, it began *before* the Jews began to return to their homeland, and Joseph Smith was instrumental in seeing that both gatherings began. See GD Manual 68).

C. Some Latter-day Saints also do not recognize the gathering of the lost tribes is occurring. **For the seed of Ephraim and Manasseh were among those lost tribes, and these make up the majority of the current Church.** We are the first to be gathered. **Our work is to gather the rest.**

D. The gathering of the other tribes is also happening. Persons of the other ten tribes are continually being identified by patriarchal blessings. They are receiving their temple blessings at the hands of Ephraim in our temples, just as was prophesied.

VI. The gathering of the ten tribes was to be from the **lands of the North**; and from **the four quarters of the earth** (D&C 110:11). Both are being fulfilled.

A. We should recognize that most of the Church membership originally came from **the North Countries ---** that is the **northern parts of Europe and Scandinavia**.

B. Now Israel's blood scattered in "the four quarters of the earth" is being gathered in.

1. There are many ways the scattering occurred: From Asiatic tribes taking captives, etc., back to their lands; from Greek and Roman armies conquering and taking captives, etc. and scattering them throughout their domains, even into Africa; from famines like the Potato famine in Ireland which sent its desperate people throughout the world; from colonizations by the English, French, Spanish, Portugese, Dutch; and from many other personal and great causes.

2. Today, the scattered are being regathered. (Gentiles may also be gathered if willing)

C. They are being gathered in Africa. The full teachings of Jesus Christ give them hope. Many are drawn to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints because the church "answers their questions," as they told Elder Russell Osguthorpe who visited there.

D. Elder David Bednar recently (2016) visited the saints in The Democratic Republic of Congo. He reported in a stake conference in January 2017, in Orem, UT that the growth there remains astonishing. They were concerned that they spend so much time in their sacrament meetings confirming new members that they have little time left to have "talks."

Their faithfulness is shown by the fact they have the **highest sacrament attendance and convert retention in the world**. Their attendance is in 90th percentile; 95% are still attending in first year.

Their faithfulness is so great that when they fast and give fast offerings, rather than keep the offerings for their own people, who usually eat only one meal a day and are always hungry, they send the money to Church Headquarters "to help the poor and the needy.

E. Elder Quentin L. Cook just reported on visiting Peru and Bolivia. Not only is Church growth strong in those areas, but the faithfulness of the members also exemplary. Peruvian saints often take 12 to 24 hour bus rides to the temple, spending two to three days doing work thereafter.

A previous visit made to the Ivory Coast in 2012 showed maturation. Three of the then five Ivory Coast stakes were among the top 25 in the Church in the percentage of adults who submitted family names for temple ordinances. One stake, the Cocody Stake **had the highest percentage of adults** who have, at one time or another, submitted names for temple work.

The percentage of Ivorian young people doing indexing work was more than twice as high as the Church average, in spite of the fact that virtually none of them have personal access to a computer and the Internet but must go to a stake family history center to do it.

F. Growth has slowed in numbers in some areas, but still shows strengthening through **formation of new stakes**. This was prophesied by Isaiah: "Strengthen your stakes." (Isaiah 54:2).

G. Often the gathering is of one here and two there, also prophesied by Jeremiah (Jer. 3:14). I personally know of one young woman from Afghanistan, named Zohra, converted by my son in Washington D.C. I already spoke of two Chinese converted by my brother in Provo, UT.

The faithfulness of those gathering is being rewarded. The Church is actively providing new educational and other skills to those throughout the world. Above all, Temples are blossoming in their lands, bringing them the hopes of an Eternal and glorious life.

"The Gathering" is not just an idle wish, but a reality. It is occurring exactly as prophesied: Jews to their homeland, and the ten tribes from the North and from the four quarters of the Earth.

This Latter Israel is being **gathered to become a pure and righteous people prepared for Christ**.