

Lesson #40

**“THEN WILL I GATHER THEM IN”**

3 NEPHI 16,20,21

by Ted L. Gibbons

**TEACHER’S NOTE:** As has occasionally (rarely!) been the case in the previous years, this lesson will not follow the precise outline given in the teacher’s manual for the Book of Mormon. If you are teaching these lessons in Sunday School, please make that lesson your first choice. It was prepared by devoted church members called and set apart to that task by General Authorities. It was reviewed and edited by skilled editors hired for that purpose. The final product was approved by Church Curriculum and a committee of General Authorities. This lesson should be studied and, if necessary, used only as a supplement to that one—perhaps as an unwashed window through which to view the content and messages of these chapters from a different perspective. TLG.

**QUOTE OF THE WEEK**

A few years ago as I began to practice law, members of my family were a little uneasy. They were afraid I would lose my faith. I wanted to practice law, but I had an even greater desire to keep my testimony, and so I decided upon a little procedure which I recommend to you. For thirty minutes each morning before I began the day’s work I read from the Book of Mormon—I read also from all the other standard works of the Church, but I am talking now about the Book of Mormon—and in just a few minutes a day I read the Book of Mormon through, every year, for nine years. I know that it kept me in harmony, so far as I did keep in harmony, with the Spirit of the Lord. (Elder Marion G. Romney , C.R., April 1949, p.36)

**INTRODUCTION:**

There are six words or phrases that outline the major points of the Savior’s teachings about the Father’s work in the latter-days. Those words are: ***Restoration, Gather, Land, Numbered, Lion, New Jerusalem.*** In 3 Nephi 16,20,21, the Lord teaches the same concepts three successive times. These words outlining the Savior’s teachings will be considered in order from all three chapters.

## **1. THE LORD WILL RESTORE THE TRUTH.**

Read selected verses from 3 Nephi 16,20-21

According to these chapters., there are three main purposes of the restoration. According to the Savior, what is the main purpose of the restoration? (3 Nephi 16:4; 20:13–1. Bring people to the knowledge of their Redeemer) What other purposes are there for the restoration? (3 Nephi 16:7,10,12; 20:28— **2.** To know the “fulness” of the gospel. 3 Nephi 16:11-12; 20:12,22,25-27; 21:4,7—**3.**To fulfill the covenant the Lord made with the House of Israel) Mark these purposes in your Book of Mormon.

What sign does the Father give to indicate that his work has begun in the last days? (3 Nephi 21:2-7--the coming forth of the Book of Mormon) Why will the restoration come through the Gentiles? (3 Nephi 16:6-7; 21:2-6. For an explanation of the term “Gentile”, see the Bible Dictionary, under *Gentile*.)

Who is the “servant” spoken of in 3 Nephi 20:43-44 and 21:9-10? (Joseph Smith) According to the footnotes 3 Nephi 21:10a and 10b what events in the life of Joseph Smith are being foretold? (The martyrdom and the effort to destroy the influence of the Book of Mormon through the loss of the 116 pages of manuscript.)

## **2. THE LORD WILL GATHER ISRAEL.**

Read selected verses from 3 Nephi 16,20-21

Once the truths and covenants of the gospel are restored, what will the Lord begin to do? (3 Nephi 16:5; 20:13,18; 21:1)

What role do we share with the Lord in helping him accomplish this great latter day work? (See Jacob 5:72—we labor with him) In what ways does the three-fold mission of the Church to proclaim the gospel, redeem the dead, and perfect the saints, contribute to the gathering of Israel?

The following quote about the gathering of Israel by President Spencer W. Kimball may be useful as you consider this.

The "gathering of Israel" is effected when the people of the faraway countries accept the gospel and remain in their native lands. The gathering of Israel for Mexico 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. We express our appreciation to the Lord for his goodness as we direct the activities of three and a half million people, ever growing more populous, and more independent, and, even more faithful. (Conf Report, April 1975, p. 4)

### **3. AMERICA--A LAND OF INHERITANCE**

Read selected verses from 3 Nephi 16,20-21

- ' What great promise does the Lord give to Lehi's children? (3 Nephi 16:16; 20:14; 21:22)
- ' What does the Lord say about the Americas as a land of promise? (Ether 13:2; Enos 10; 2 Nephi 1:5-7; 10:10-12) What responsibilities does the Lord indicate accompany this land of inheritance? How have members of the Church all over the world shared in the blessings that have been dispersed from this land of inheritance?

### **4. BELIEVING GENTILES WILL BE NUMBERED AMONG THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL**

Read selected verses from 3 Nephi 16,20-21

The Lord wants all his children to have the covenant blessings of the House of Israel. What promise does he give to the Gentiles, and what must they do to obtain that promise? (3 Nephi 16:13; 21:6; 21:22)

Why is it important to be numbered among the house of Israel? According to Nephi, the defining characteristic of a member of the House of Israel is not lineage. What is it? (2 Nephi 30:2)

Clearly lineage matters in the Kingdom of God. Being of the covenant race requires us to perform certain acts and to behave in certain ways, as it

entitles us to certain blessings. But lineage is not more important than righteousness. Simply put, true covenant people are those that make and keep covenants. Consider this from John the Baptist:

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that *God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.* (Matthew 3:7-9, *emphasis added*)

## 5. THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL . . . A LION AMONG SHEEP.

Read selected verses from 3 Nephi 16,20-21

- ' Turn to Micah 5:8. What does the Lion have to do with the “remnant of Jacob” or the House of Israel? The Savior quotes this passage from Micah three times in 3 Nephi 16, 20,21.
- ' What situation among the Gentiles will cause this condition described by Micah to take place? (3 Nephi 16:10, 13-15; 20:15-20; 21:11-21)
- ' What other image from Micah does the Savior quote to suggest the same truth? (3 Nephi 20:19—an ox threshing grain) What do these images suggest about the work of the Lord in the latter days. (In the ancient world, oxen were often used to thresh grain. They would walk over the grain, separate the chaff from the kernel. The chaff was blown away and kernel saved.)
- ' How does the following quotation from Joseph Smith help us understand one aspect of the fulfillment of this prophecy?

Our missionaries are going forth to different nations. The standard of truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it

has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the great Jehovah shall say the work is done. (Joseph Smith, *DHC*, Vol. 4: 535)

President Gordon B. Hinckley bore his testimony about this matter:

If we will go forward, never losing sight of our goal, speaking ill of no one, living the great principles we know to be true, this cause will roll on in majesty and power to fill the earth. Doors now closed to the preaching of the Gospel will be opened. The Almighty, if necessary, may have to shake the nations to humble them and cause them to listen to the servants of the living God. Whatever is needed will come to pass. (Ensign, November 1997, p. 68)

D&C 87 also alludes to Micah 5:8 and suggests that this prophecy may also have a more literal fulfillment. (D&C 87:5) Ponder the implications of the inclusion of this prophecy in the context of this section on war.

## **6. THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND GENTILES WILL BUILD ZION.**

Read selected verses from 3 Nephi 16,20-21

- ' Once the restoration has taken place, the House of Israel has been gathered, and the Gentiles invited to participate, what will they accomplish? (3 Nephi 16:18; 20:21,22; 21:23-25—They will build the New Jerusalem and help the Lord “bring again Zion.”) Reflect on the following quote which emphasizes the importance of preparing for Zion in every part of the world.

When Joseph first revealed the land where the saints should gather, a woman in Canada asked if we thought that Jackson County would be large enough to gather all the people that would want to go to Zion. I will answer the question really as it is. Zion will extend, eventually, all over this earth. There will be no nook or corner upon the earth but what will be in Zion. It will all be Zion . . . . We are going to gather as many as we can, bless them, give them their endowments, etc., preach to them

the truth, lay the principles of eternal life before them, inform their minds all we have power to do, and lead them into the path and righteousness . . . (Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, XIV, p. 138)

## **Conclusion**

The message of these chapters was so important to Mormon that he chose to conclude the book of 3 Nephi with it. It is also included as one of his final messages in the Book of Mormon. Read 3<sup>rd</sup> Nephi 30:1,2; and Mormon 5:22-24. Look for some of the key words used in the throughout the lesson.

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