

## #12: The Gathering of My People

Monte F. Shelley, 19 Apr. 2009

### Quotes

- A good friend is someone who thinks that you are a good egg even though he or she knows that you are slightly cracked.
- If you want the rainbow, you must put up with the rain.



### 1. Saints commanded to gather in Ohio (Dec. 1830)

In December 1830, just eight months after the Church was organized, the Lord gave the first call in this dispensation for the Saints to gather physically. He revealed to Joseph Smith that the Saints should leave New York and gather in Ohio (D&C 37:3)

Behold ... it is not expedient in me that ye should translate any more until ye shall go to the Ohio, and this because of the enemy and for your sakes. And ... ye shall not go until ye have preached my gospel in those parts, and have strengthened up the church whithersoever it is found, and more especially in Colesville; for, behold, they pray unto me in much faith. And again, a commandment I give unto the church, that it is expedient in me that they should assemble together at the Ohio. (37:1–3)

### 2. Purposes of Gathering to Ohio (Conference, Jan. 1831)

**General conference in Fayette. Somewhat hesitant to obey.**

The enemy in the secret chambers seeketh your lives. ... You say that there will soon be great wars in far countries, but ye know not the hearts of men in your own land. ... And that ye might escape the power of the enemy, and be *gathered unto me a righteous people*, without spot and blameless— ... for this cause I gave unto you the commandment that ye should go to the Ohio; and there I will give unto you *my law*; and there you shall be *endowed with power* from on high. (38:28–31)

### 3. Be one

Let every man esteem his brother as himself, and practise virtue and holiness before me.<sup>25</sup> And ... let every man esteem his brother as himself.<sup>26</sup> For what man among you having twelve sons, and is no respecter of them, and they serve him obediently, and he saith unto the one: Be thou clothed in robes and sit thou here; and to the other: Be thou clothed in rags and sit thou there—and looketh upon his sons and saith I am just?<sup>27</sup> Behold, this I have given unto you as a parable, and it is even as I am. I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine. (38:24–27)

### 4. Instructions (38:34–42)

I give ... a commandment, that certain men among them shall be appointed ... by the voice of the church;<sup>35</sup> And they shall look to the poor and the needy, and administer to their relief that they shall not suffer; and send them forth to the place which I have commanded them. ....<sup>37</sup> And they that have farms that cannot be sold, let them be left or rented as seemeth them good. ...<sup>39</sup> And if ye seek the riches which it is the will of the Father to give unto you, ye shall be the richest of all people, for ye shall have the riches of eternity; ... but beware of pride, lest ye become as the Nephites of old. ...<sup>42</sup> And go ye out from among the wicked.

Save yourselves. Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord. (38:34–42)

### 5. Gathering of Saints to Kirtland, Ohio (Jan.–May 1831)

Between January and May 1831, most Church members in New York sold, rented, or left their farms and made the 300-mile journey to Ohio. Many of these Saints made great sacrifices to heed the Lord's call to gather.

Sacrifices of Newel Knight and Joseph Knight Sr.; Lucy Mack Smith led Saints from Fayette; and Brigham Young.

### a. The sacrifices of Newel Knight and Joseph Knight Sr. (18)

While a few members chose not to dispose of their properties and make the long journey from New York to Ohio, the majority of the Saints heard the voice of the Shepherd to gather Israel.

**#1: Newel Knight** said: "Having returned home from conference, in obedience to the commandment which had been given, I, together with the Colesville Branch, began to make preparations to go to Ohio. ... As might be expected, we were obliged to make great sacrifices of our property. The most of my time was occupied in visiting the brethren, and helping to arrange their affairs, so that we might travel together in one company." **Joseph Knight Sr.** put a notice in the newspaper: "The farm lately occupied by Joseph Knight, situate in the town of Colesville, near the Colesville Bridge—bounded on one side by the Susquehanna River, and containing about one hundred and forty two acres. On said Farm are two Dwelling Houses, a good Barn, and a fine Orchard. *The terms of sale will be liberal.*" Some 68 members from Colesville were on their way to Ohio by mid-April 1831.

**#2:** In early May 1831, **Lucy Mack Smith** was asked to take charge of the exodus of 130 members from Fayette. When they arrived at Buffalo, New York, the harbor on Lake Erie was clogged with an ice field, and the steamboat was unable to leave port. Lucy Mack said: "Now, brethren and sisters, if you will all of you raise your desires to heaven, that the ice may be broken up, and we be set at liberty, as sure as the Lord lives, it will be done." At that very moment a noise was heard "like bursting thunder." The ice parted and the boat was able to move through a narrow passage. They had barely passed through when the avenue again closed. Following this miraculous escape, the company offered up their thanks to God for his mercy on their behalf.

**#3: Brigham Young** said: "When we arrived in Kirtland [in September 1833], if any man that ever did gather with the Saints was any poorer than I was—it was because he had nothing. ... I had two children to take care of—that was all. I was a widower. 'Brother Brigham, had you any shoes?' No; not a shoe to my foot, except a pair of borrowed boots. I had no winter clothing, except a homemade coat that I had had three or four years. 'Any pantaloons?' No. 'What did you do? Did you go without?' No; I borrowed a pair to wear till I could get another pair. I had travelled and preached and given away every dollar of my property. I was worth a little property when I started to preach. ... I had traveled and preached until I had nothing left to gather with; but Joseph said: 'come up;' and I went up the best I could."

Why do you think these Church members were willing to suffer financially and in other ways to obey the Lord's call to gather in Ohio? What can we learn from their example? What sacrifices does the Lord ask us to make to help build His kingdom?

## 6. Blessings of gathering in Ohio

Purposes: Escape power of enemies, law, endowed

PROTECTED: 1831–1838 in Kirtland

THE LAW: While the Prophet Joseph was living in the Kirtland area, he received 77 revelations, 65 of which are included in the Doctrine and Covenants. The revelations taught the Lord's will in connection with welfare, sign seeking, moral conduct, dietary principles, tithing, priesthood authority, the role of a prophet, the three degrees of glory, missionary work, the Second Coming, the law of consecration, and many other subjects.

(D&C 42:Heading) *It was received in the presence of twelve elders, and in fulfillment of the Lord's promise previously made that the "law" would be given in Ohio.. The Prophet specifies this revelation as "embracing the law of the Church."*

TEMPLE: endowed with power, 1832-1836 Kirtland Temple

And inasmuch as my people shall assemble themselves at the Ohio, I have kept in store a blessing such as is not known among the children of men, and it shall be poured forth upon their heads. And from thence men shall go forth into all nations. (39:15)

How were these purposes later fulfilled?

(95:8) I gave unto you a commandment that you should build a house, in the which house I design to endow those whom I have chosen with power from on high;

(105:33) it is expedient in me that the first elders of my church should receive their endowment from on high in my house, which I have commanded to be built unto my name in ... Kirtland.

(110:9) Yea the hearts of thousands and tens of thousands shall greatly rejoice in consequence of the blessings which shall be poured out, and the endowment with which my servants have been endowed in this house.

## 7. Saints gathered in Missouri (July 1831)



Sept. 1830 (New York): The Lord revealed that the city of Zion would be built "on the borders by the Lamanites," with the precise location to be identified later (D&C 28:9).

Sept.–Oct. 1830 (New York): The Lord called four missionaries to preach the gospel to the Lamanites (D&C 30:5–6; 32:1–3). These missionaries were the first members to go to Missouri.

Feb. 1831 (Kirtland): The Lord said He would reveal the location of the New Jerusalem in His own due time (D&C 42:62).

June 1831 (Kirtland, after 1<sup>st</sup> conference): The Lord called Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and other elders to go to Missouri. The Lord also promised to consecrate the land of Missouri to His people as the land of their inheritance (D&C 52:2–5, 42–43).

July 1831 (Kirtland): The Lord revealed that the Saints from the Colesville Branch in New York, who had journeyed to Ohio, should continue on to Missouri (D&C 54:8).

July 1831 (after Joseph went to Missouri): The Lord revealed that the city of Zion would be in Missouri, and a temple would be built in Independence (D&C 57:1–3).

With this revelation, Missouri became a second gathering place for the Church in this dispensation (D&C 63:24, 36–48). From 1831 to 1838, the Church maintained centers of population in both Ohio and Missouri.

#4: When the Colesville Saints arrived in Ohio, they found that the land set aside for them was not available. Joseph Smith had just received the revelation directing himself and other elders to go on a mission to Missouri. The Lord instructed that the Colesville Saints also journey "unto the land of Missouri" (D&C 54:8). President Newel Knight immediately gathered his people and they traveled by steamboat to Jackson County, Missouri. Joseph Smith and Bishop Partridge acquired land for the Colesville Branch about 12 miles west of Independence. In August, the Saints began to receive parcels of land from Bishop Partridge. They were very poor and did not even have tents to protect them from the elements while building cabins. They were also almost entirely without farm implements until teams were sent more than 200 miles east to St. Louis to obtain them.

What impresses you about these accounts of the Colesville Saints? (You may want to review some of the good qualities these Saints exhibited in very challenging circumstances.) What can we learn from their example?

## 8. Restoration of keys of the gathering of Israel

Kirtland Temple: commandment 1832, completed 1836

On 27 March 1836, in the dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple, Joseph Smith prayed that the gathering of the Jews and the redemption of Jerusalem might begin (D&C 109:62–67).

Apr. 3, 1836, Kirtland Temple

(110:Heading) *Visions manifested to Joseph Smith the Prophet and Oliver Cowdery in the temple at Kirtland, Ohio, April 3, 1836. ... The occasion was that of a Sabbath day meeting.*

Moses appeared before us, and committed unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north. (110:11)

## 9. Moses prophesies of scattering and gathering

When all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day. ... Then the LORD thy God will ... have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee. (Deut. 30:1–3)

Jacob and Olive Tree

### The Scattering of Israel

Anciently when the twelve tribes of Israel fell into apostasy, they were taken captive by their enemies and scattered among the nations of the earth, just as the Lord had warned. Although the prophets grieved over the wickedness of the people, they rejoiced as they foresaw the time in the latter days when Israel would be gathered again (see Topical Guide, "Israel, Gathering of").

## 10. The Gathering of Israel

We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; ... (Articles of Faith 10)

A few decades after the Savior's death, the Jews were "scattered among all nations" (2 Ne. 25:15). However, the scriptures record many prophecies that in the latter days the scattered Jews will be gathered again and be given Jerusalem "for the land of their inheritance" (3 Ne. 20:33).

Orson Hyde said that when he joined the Church, Joseph Smith prophesied, "In due time thou shalt go to Jerusalem ... ; and by thy hands shall the Most High do a great work, which shall prepare the way and greatly facilitate the gathering together of that people" (*History of the Church*, 4:375). In the April 1840 general conference, Elder Hyde, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, was called on a mission to Palestine (*HC*, 4:106). About 18 months later he arrived at his destination.

Early on Sunday morning, 24 October 1841, Elder Hyde ascended the Mount of Olives and offered a prayer. In his prayer he dedicated and consecrated the land "for the gathering together of Judah's scattered remnants, according to the predictions of the holy Prophets—for the building up of Jerusalem again ... and for rearing a Temple in honor of [the Lord's] name." He also prayed that the Lord would remember the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob forever and "give them this land for an everlasting inheritance" (*HC*, 4:456).

As a witness of the deed, Elder Hyde erected a pile of stones on the top of the Mount of Olives. He also erected a pile of stones "on what was anciently called Mount Zion [possibly Mount Moriah], where the Temple stood" (*HC*, 4:459).

**Jews Await a Latter-day Joseph and David:** "According to the Talmud, the Messiah will be a descendant of the House of David and will be preceded by a secondary Messiah, from the House of Joseph . . ." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*) When the Chief Rabbi, Avraham HaKohen Kook, was appointed in Palestine in the 1920's, he was asked if the Jews could now build the Temple (destroyed since year 70 A.D.). His response was that the priestly rights were gone and referred to the great 12<sup>th</sup> century rabbi Moses Maimonides, who said, in effect, "We are waiting for a Messiah Ben-Joseph, to him will be given the keys of the gathering of Israel, he will restore Temple worship." (Rona, BofM Lesson 7 Summary)

### Tom Rogers: Patriarch in Russia (patriarchal blessings to all 12 tribes)

## 11. Saints gathered to Utah

Church members maintained a strong presence in Ohio and Missouri from 1831 to 1838, when persecution forced most of them to leave (see lessons 26–28). In 1839 they gathered in Illinois and established the city of Nauvoo. They were forced to leave Nauvoo in 1846, and in 1847 President Brigham Young led them to a new gathering place in the Rocky Mountains near the Great Salt Lake. For many years after the Saints settled in Utah, the call continued for Church members all over the world to gather to that area.

In the early days of the Church, members demonstrated their loyalty by gathering to a central location, usually the headquarters of the Church, for the purpose of strengthening the Lord's kingdom. Thus, in the 19th century, converts relocated to designated gathering places such as Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, or Utah. During its first four decades in Utah, the Church even

sponsored a systematic program that assisted converts from the eastern United States and Europe in relocating to Church headquarters in the Intermountain West. This program, called the Perpetual Emigrating Fund, helped tens of thousands of Europeans to immigrate. This was such a dominant movement that, as the 1870 Utah census indicates, more than one-third of the people living in the territory were foreign born. (Arnold K. Garr, "Growing with a Living Church," *Ensign*, Oct 1996, 25)

## 12. Current instructions for the gathering of Saints

By the 1890s, however, circumstances began to change. The United States government put greater restrictions on immigration. At the same time, the Latter-day Saint stronghold in the West had grown and solidified. The leaders of the Church began to work toward "an expanded vision ... of the distant stakes of the tent of Zion (see Isa. 54:2; D&C 82:14)." As a result, in 1898 President George Q. Cannon, First Counselor in the First Presidency, made the Church's first formal statement discouraging European converts from immigrating to Utah. They were admonished to "remain quiet for a while; to not be anxious to break up their homes to gather to Zion." By the 1920s, the First Presidency specifically admonished the missionaries to cease preaching emigration; the converts in foreign countries could do more to build the kingdom if they would remain in their own lands. The great movement to gather to a central location had been an important phase in our church's history, the First Presidency said, "but we must realize that times and conditions *change* and that therefore the application of the principles and teachings must *change*." (Arnold K. Garr, "Growing with a Living Church," *Ensign*, Oct 1996, 25)

In 1972, Elder Bruce R. McConkie said: "[The] revealed words speak of ... there being congregations of the covenant people of the Lord *in every nation, speaking every tongue, and among every people* when the Lord comes again. ... The place of gathering for the Mexican Saints is in Mexico; the place of gathering for the Guatemalan Saints is in Guatemala; the place of gathering for the Brazilian Saints is in Brazil; and so it goes throughout the length and breadth of the whole earth. Japan is for the Japanese; Korea is for the Koreans; Australia is for the Australians; every nation is the gathering place for its own people" (in Conference Report, Mexico and Central America Area Conference 1972, 45). In April 1973, President Harold B. Lee ... quoted those words in general conference. In doing so, he "in effect, announced that the pioneering phase of gathering was now over. The gathering is now to be out of the world into the Church in every nation" (Boyd K. Packer, *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 71).

Spencer W. Kimball emphasized this in 1978: "Now the gathering of Israel consists of joining the true church and ... coming to the knowledge of the true God. ... Any person, therefore, who has accepted the restored gospel, and who now seeks to worship the Lord in his own tongue and with the Saints in the nations where he lives, has complied with the law of the gathering of Israel and is heir to all of the blessings promised the Saints in these last days." Any adjustments to the current policy will come through the First Presidency.

What conditions in the Church brought about the change that members should gather in their own nations rather than to a central location? (... the Church's membership and resources became sufficient to establish stakes and build temples in many areas of the world.)

One purpose of gathering to a central location during the pioneering phase of the Church was so members could strengthen each other and find refuge and protection from the world. How are these same purposes fulfilled by gathering to the stakes of Zion today? (See D&C 115:6 and the following quotation. Invite class members to share how they have felt protected and strengthened through the stakes of Zion.) What can we do to ensure that our stakes are a refuge and a defense against evil?

(115:6) And that the gathering together upon the land of Zion, and upon her stakes, may be for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth.

Temple building was an essential part of the gathering in Kirtland, Missouri, Nauvoo, and Utah. It continues to be essential as the Saints today gather to the stakes of Zion throughout the world. Why is temple building an essential part of the gathering? How does temple work contribute to the great work of the gathering on earth and in the spirit world?

### 13. Conclusion

<sup>1</sup> Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Redeemer, ... <sup>2</sup> Who will gather his people even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, even as many as will hearken to my voice and humble themselves before me, and call upon me in mighty prayer. ... <sup>7</sup> And ye are called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect; for mine elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts; <sup>8</sup> Wherefore the decree hath gone forth from the Father that they shall be gathered in unto one place upon the face of this land, to prepare their hearts and be prepared in all things against the day when tribulation and desolation are sent forth upon the wicked. (29:1-2,7-8)

The Lord's promises to gather Israel are being fulfilled in our day. This great work is hastening as people join the Church and worship together in the stakes of Zion in more than 160 nations throughout the world. We have been asked to labor diligently to gather people into the Church and to build up and strengthen the Church wherever we live. Testify of the promised blessings that come through the gathering.

(45:71) And it shall come to pass that the righteous shall be gathered out from among all nations, and shall come to Zion, singing with songs of everlasting joy.

a. *Spiritual gathering.* The spiritual gathering of Israel occurs as people learn the gospel, come unto Christ, are baptized into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and keep their covenants. In this way they are gathered from the world into the Church, or the kingdom of God on earth.

b. *Physical gathering.* The physical gathering of Israel occurs as Church members come together in a particular location or in the stakes of Zion throughout the world.

### Quotes

Joseph Smith: "What was the object of gathering ... the people of God in any age of the world? ... The main object was to build unto the Lord a house whereby He could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation. ... It is for the same purpose that God gathers together His people in the last days, to build unto the Lord a house to prepare them for the ordinances and endowments, washings and anointings" (*HC*, 5:423–24).

Brigham Young: "When Joseph [Smith] 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. ... I will answer the question. ... 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 of truth and righteousness" <sup>JD 9:138</sup>

Spencer W. Kimball, 1978: "Now the gathering of Israel consists of joining the true church and ... coming to the knowledge of the true God. ... Any person, therefore, who has accepted the restored gospel, and who now seeks to worship the Lord in his own tongue and with the Saints in the nations where he lives, has complied with the law of the gathering of Israel and is heir to all of the blessings promised the Saints in these last days." (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 439)

Ezra Taft Benson: "Presently, Israel is being gathered to the various stakes of Zion. ... A stake has at least four purposes: "1. [Stakes are] to unify and perfect the members who live in [their] boundaries by extending to them the Church programs, the ordinances, and gospel instruction.

"2. Members of stakes are to be models, or standards, of righteousness.

"3. Stakes are to be a defense. They do this as stake members unify under their local priesthood officers and consecrate themselves to do their duty and keep their covenants. ...

"4. Stakes are a refuge from the storm to be poured out over the earth" ("Strengthen Thy Stakes," *Ensign*, Jan. 1991, 2, 4–5).