
Rain in Due Season

“What was the object of gathering the Jews, or 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” —Joseph Smith the Prophet, HC 5:422

The subject of the gathering is a thrilling and glorious one and has occupied my mind for much of the last few decades, especially as I embarked on writing *Isaiah Testifies of Christ*. The Book of Mormon, according to the Old Testament (as well as the Book of Mormon itself), will play a vital role in the gathering of Israel in the latter days. Here we look at a few of the prophecies regarding the gathering of Israel as they relate to the Book of Mormon. The Old Testament has much to say about the Book of Mormon and these words are but a brief overview.

In order to understand the promises made to the twelve tribes of Israel we will set off on an exciting journey with some terrain that must first be traversed in order to come to a better understanding of these glorious prophecies. We will review some of the most pertinent aspects of the history of Israel, come to an understanding of multiple prophecies as well as the prophetic voice. I have come to love the Holy Scriptures, Hebrew Bible or Tanakh, as the Old Testament is called by the Jews. As we begin, some of the topics will not immediately seem connected. I will attempt to tie the loose ends before we are done.

Truth is *one eternal round* (D&C 35:1) and so we shall begin with the quote given by the Prophet Joseph Smith, above, about the importance of temples, and end with this very concept as it relates to the Book of Mormon as an instrument to help Israel (1) gather back unto Christ, (2) be restored to the Abrahamic covenant, and (3) be brought to the temples of our God. The Holy Scriptures truly testify of Jesus Christ. The Hebrew Bible also testifies of the role the Book of Mormon would play in the gathering of Israel from spiritual Babylon unto Zion.

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6).

Ellipses

A few years before I retired from the University of California, my supervisor and I were both putting our lunches in the office refrigerator. Noting there was little space she laughingly commented: “It must be the end of the month.” It took me a moment to realize what she was saying before I could join in the laughter.

An *ellipsis* is something that is understood even though it is not said. They are present in all of our conversations and in everything we read or hear. Much of humor relies on people understanding the gap between what is expressed and what is implied. An ellipsis consists of an omission of one or more words. It is sometimes reflected in writing by three points (...). In Spanish, they are called *puntos suspensivos*.

Martha Kolln suggested, “When well used, ellipsis can create a bond of sorts between the writer and the reader. The writer is saying, in effect, I needn’t spell everything out for you; I know you’ll understand” (*Rhetorical Grammar*, 5th ed. Pearson, 2007).

As we fall in love with the scriptures, we begin to see more and more of these elliptical points that are not

written, but whose meanings we must prayerfully discern ourselves. Not just words, but often much more.

The elliptical expressions included in my supervisor’s humor required an understanding that: (1) people often go out to lunch; (2) individuals are paid at the beginning of the month; (3) people live from paycheck to paycheck; (4) individuals have less disposable money towards the end of the month because few budget carefully; (5) going out to lunch is more expensive than bringing something from home; and *therefore*: (6) people have brought in their lunches because it is the end of the month. This is a cultural ellipsis.

Someone in a biblical agrarian society might not get this at all. And conversely, there are many cultural ellipses in Scripture that we do not easily understand—especially if we have been raised far removed from an agrarian society.

New wine in new bottles

In Matthew 9:17 we read: “Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.”

To understand this verse we must comprehend that (1) grape juice turns into wine through a primary and a secondary fermentation process; (2) new wine has not totally finished fermenting (i.e., the secondary fermentation has not yet taken place); (3) and that old bottles (rather, animal skins or leather used as containers) have previously been expanded to their limit.

If new wine is put in these old wineskins that cannot stretch any further, they burst, spilling out all of their contents. New skins, on the other hand, can stretch along with the secondary fermentation process, and are well suited to new wine.

It has been said that Joseph Smith, the young boy prophet of the restoration, was like a new bottle into which the Lord's doctrine could be poured.

To understand ellipses, then, we must understand the culture, the theology, and the language. When the Bible was translated from the ancient languages into our modern texts, such as the King James Version, they did much to fill in the gaps for us. In other words, the translators gladly provided much of the missing text we would need to understand. Even so, there are plenty of areas that require further understanding.

Italics in the Bible

We can open our KJV of the Bible to almost any page and find that some of the text is in italics. (Some Biblical translations do not show these italics in the text but rather give the illusion that the whole text is part of the original. Other versions provide additional expansions, such as the Amplified Version.)

Without the ellipsis being filled in for us, ISAIAH 2:12 would read: "For the day of the LORD of hosts upon every proud and lofty, and upon every lifted up; and he shall be brought low." With the ellipsis filled in, we have: "For the day of the LORD of hosts *shall be* upon every *one that is* proud and lofty, and upon every *one that is* lifted up; and he shall be brought low."

Genesis 30:30 would read: "For little which thou hadst before I, and it is increased unto a multitude; and the LORD hath blessed thee since my coming: and now when shall I provide for mine own house also?" With the ellipses filled in: "For *it was* little which thou hadst before I *came*, and it is *now* increased unto a multitude; and the LORD hath blessed thee since my coming: and now when shall I provide for mine own house also?"

There are many ellipses in the Bible and the book *Figures of Speech used in the Bible* by Ethelbert W. Bullinger, D.D. is quite interesting and instructive.¹ The problem, of course, is that ellipses are subject to interpretation. Not all of the ellipses, as they are filled

in our KJV, are correct. The same can be said of other Biblical translations. Furthermore, even though I have recommended Bullinger, I have filled the margins of the book with differences of opinion.

The Prophet Joseph Smith approved many of the elliptical expressions we find in our KJV, but not all. Ellipses may be completely misunderstood and become false ellipsis. There really is a danger that translators and interpreters of Scripture will misunderstand ellipses. Even though the *Inspired Version* is not the official Bible for English speakers, gladly we can lean heavily on the Joseph Smith Translation (JST) as we study the word. In some instances, we may even think of the JST as elliptical expressions used by the Prophet to help us understand the text.

Theological ellipses

Besides missing words or expressions there are also theological ellipses. In these cases, instead of a few words that are missing, only a few are provided. These expressions are codes for expanded meaning. In prophecy, one often sees the development of ideas, line upon line, and precept upon precept. We will be particularly interested in these theological ellipses that are loaded with meaning, as they appear throughout the Holy Scriptures, especially as touching the Abrahamic covenant and the ingathering of Israel.

Abrahamic Covenant

The Lord offered Abraham many wonderful blessings. These would include a large posterity as well as an inheritance in the Holy Land. Among the many promises made to Abraham, particularly mark the following: "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, *to be a God unto thee*, and to thy seed after thee" (Genesis 17:7, emphasis added).

I am your God, ye are my people

We will be particularly interested in the chapters I have nicknamed *Rain in Due Season*. Oftentimes, when one verse of these chapters is quoted or alluded to, *these stand for all of the blessings and cursing promised therein*. And most importantly, they are a reminder of some very special promises associated with the gathering in the latter days. Throughout Isaiah, these blessings and cursing are alluded to.

The *Rain in Due Season* promises associated with the scattering and gathering of Israel are found in the Pentateuch, in their most extensive detail, in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 4, 28–30, and 32. I urge you to read and re-read these chapters and become intimately acquainted with them: an understanding of these will greatly facilitate an understanding of a large portion of the Holy Scriptures. At the very least, ponder Leviticus

¹ <https://ia800204.us.archive.org/1/items/cu31924029277047/cu31924029277047.pdf> (Internet Archive free download).

26 and the first six verses of Deuteronomy 30 before continuing.

* * *

The Lord invites us to keep His commandments—and especially to *avoid idolatry* and *keep the Sabbath*. The most serious type of idolatry today is *intellectual idolatry*. It is a leaning on the philosophies of men rather than on the word of the Lord.

Such idolatry and pride go hand in hand. President Ezra Taft Benson taught: “The proud cannot accept the authority of God giving direction to their lives (see Helaman 12:6). They pit their perceptions of truth against God’s great knowledge, their abilities versus God’s priesthood power, their accomplishments against His mighty works . . . The proud wish God would agree with them. They aren’t interested in changing their opinions to agree with God’s.”² In that same memorable talk President Benson quoted present-day revelation as a warning voice: “. . . beware of pride, lest ye become as the Nephites of old” (D&C 38:39). Some, then, favoring the wisdom and philosophies of man, have set aside godly counsel. Let us ever remember, instead, to “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5–6).

We also live in a day when Sabbath day observance is all but lost among professing Christians. President Russell M. Nelson has encouraged us to remember our covenant to *keep the Sabbath day holy*, and to *make the Sabbath a delight*.³ Keeping the Sabbath and avoiding idolatry, as we shall see, are two key topics in Isaiah. But returning to Leviticus . . .

The Lord promises, if we heed the invitation to remove ourselves from idolatry and to make the Sabbath a delight: “Then I will give you *rain in due season*, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit” (Leviticus 26:4, emphasis added). Rain is often associated with blessings in the Holy Scriptures.

In today’s agriculture we often have great reservoirs of water that are accumulated from the winter rains and melted snows in order to water orchards and other agricultural lands during the growing season. In my mother’s farm in San Javier, Chile, we were very blessed to have small water canals to water our vineyards. My uncle, on the other hand, owned property in the nearby town of Villa Alegre, and his watering system was called “*regadio a rulo*,” or non-irrigated

land. The only water that falls in this land is the rain the Lord provides.

During Biblical times, much of Israel’s rain was provided in this way. Depending on the crops, there are specific times when rain is needed. Vineyards and orchards also need rain at specific intervals; grains and annuals need rain to soften the soil for tillage and then at intervals once the plants are growing.

When the Lord says that He would provide *rain in due season*, then, He is blessing us with rain at the precise moment when the plants have a need for it.

In the ancient agronomical societies, then, rain in due season meant the difference between plentiful crops and famine. Rain and blessings are closely associated with each other.

So it is that the Lord promises: “prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:10b).

It requires tremendous faith to plant or grow crops under such a method, especially under *Mediterranean climates*—such as portions of Chile, California and the Holy Land.

I am always touched by the movie, *Windows of Heaven*, which depicts a time of severe drought and the revelation received by President Lorenzo Snow. President Snow was promised that if the Saints would pay their tithing, the windows of heaven would open and rain would come down to bless the crops. The early Saints had to trust this prophecy and plant and then wait for the rain. Their faith was amply rewarded with exquisite rain.

Beside the rain given to those involved in agriculture, rain in due season also implies blessings in general. The Lord’s timing in providing these blessings is always perfect. These miracles, of course, are not only material but spiritual. Above all things, rain in due season represents *revelation*. This is a priceless gift, to have the Lord speak to us through our Prophets, Seers and Revelators and also, for personal matters, through direct personal revelation and divine inspiration.

The Lord promised the children of Jacob rain in due season if she would walk in His paths and turn her heart towards the Holy One of Israel.

“Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out” (Deuteronomy 28:6). The complete list of blessings is extensive and beautiful.

The assurances, in essence, are a review of the promises made to Abraham: “For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you” (Leviticus 26:9).

None of the assertions are more profound and magnificent than the following: “I [the Lord] will *walk among you*, and will be *your God*, and ye shall be *my*

² President Ezra Taft Benson, Beware of Pride, April 1989 General Conference.

³ President Russel M. Nelson, The Sabbath is a Delight, April 2015 General Conference.

people” (Leviticus 26:12b, emphasis added). These words bring tears of joy. Can you sense the greatness of these promises?

These *Rain in Due Season* verses are pregnant with meaning, and are a theological ellipsis for the Abrahamic Covenant, as we saw in Genesis 17:7: “And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a *God unto thee*, and to *thy seed after thee*” (emphasis added).

Disobedience would bring cursings

If the children of Jacob would be disobedient, on the other hand, unspeakable curses would befall her. As you read about these curses carefully, you will see that these are multiplied to bless Israel, and help her return unto the Lord.

In Leviticus 26 the Lord announces a set of blessings, and then tells us that if these are not sufficient to soften our hearts, then “I will punish you *seven* [שֶׁבַע] times more for your sins” (Leviticus 26:18b). The next set of consequences is then given and once again the warning of a seven-fold punishment. This happens multiple times throughout this chapter. When we consider that the word *seven* stands for perfection, then we know that the Lord’s punishment will be perfect, or in other words, just right for our needs. Just right to bless us.

For the purposes of this introduction, we shall focus on two of the cursings. First, “And the LORD *shall scatter thee* among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods” (Deuteronomy 28:64a, emphasis added).

Second, there would be a cessation of revelation and the heavens would be shut down: “And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass” (Deuteronomy 28:23a). Elsewhere we read a similar sentiment: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD” (Amos 8:11).

Drought of rain is a physical manifestation. Drought of revelation is a spiritual one. They both indicate that things are not well between us and the Lord—especially the latter.

After the blessings and the cursing

In his mercy, and foreknowledge, the Lord made provisions for the repentance of the children of Jacob. In one of the most moving verses in Scripture we read: “And it shall come to pass, 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” (Deuteronomy 30:1), or in other words,

when we are brought to a remembrance of these promises after we have been scattered throughout the nations. While we have been scattered by the hand of the nations, we should note that the Lord permitted this scattering.

The Lord is speaking to Israel, regarding what would happen *after* the great majority of the blessings and cursings would take place: in other words, to the time when the gospel would be restored again upon the earth.

“And shalt *return* (שָׁבָתָ) unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul” (Deuteronomy 30:2).

At every moment we continually make the decision to שׁוּב (SHUV), that is, to *turn* or *return* towards the Lord, or to give Him our back. In the Holy Scriptures, this is the word that is used to invite people to *return unto Christ* or repent. שׁוּב is a frequently utilized word to speak about *repentance* as well as *apostasy*, turning toward the Lord—or away.

Continuing with Deuteronomy 30:2, note that we first come in remembrance of these covenants and then are moved with a great desire to obey and to enter into the waters of baptism to show our determination to obey. Furthermore, we will have a great desire to share these things with others, especially with our families and children. We will prepare our children for baptism at the age of accountability, whenever possible.

“That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee” (Deuteronomy 30:2). To turn thy captivity means to put an end to it. The captivity here mentioned is not just a physical one, but also a spiritual one. We will leave spiritual Babylon and come unto Zion.

The Lord will be filled with His *tender mercies* [חַסְדֵי] and have compassion toward us. It would not matter where we would have been scattered to, the Lord would have compassion upon us: He will find us even when we did not know we wanted to be found.

“If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee” (Deuteronomy 30:4). None would be forgotten, none would be rejected from coming, and none would be uninvited. No matter where or how far away we would be scattered, it would not be so far that the Lord could not find us—even to the outermost parts of heaven. Either on this side of the veil or the other.

“And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it” (Deuteronomy 30:5a). The Lord would bring Judah

back to the Holy Land. The other tribes would have their special lands elsewhere. For instance, Joseph would inherit the American Continent, North and South.

Finally, there is an implication of spiritual Zion—regardless of what nation we find ourselves in, we can leave Babylon and become a Zion people.

“And he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers” (Deuteronomy 30:5b). Those gathered from Israel in the last days will receive blessings even greater than those in former times.

“And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live” (Deuteronomy 30:6). Our hearts will be circumcised as a token of this new covenant—that is, our hearts of stone will be replaced with a heart of flesh. “That thou mayest live” is an allusion to receiving exaltation and eternal lives.

A few weeks after my first posting of this chapter, I found a number of allusions to *Rain in Due Season* in the words of the Savior to His disciples in the American Continent: “And behold, this people will I establish in *this land*, unto the *fulfilling of the covenant* which I made with *your father Jacob*; and it shall be a New Jerusalem. And the powers of heaven shall be in the midst of this people; yea, *even I will be in the midst of you*” (3 Nephi 20:22, emphasis added, note the land, the Abrahamic covenants as well as the Lord walking in the midst of the Saints). Note that the Book of Mormon was written to come forth in the end of days, to us—the followers of Christ regardless of whether they are direct descendants of the Lamanites or of Judah or of any of the other tribes of Israel.

You are of Israel

Few missionaries—or even members—realize that we are gathering Israel back: *literal* Israel. That is, the children of Jacob as scattered throughout the world. Most of Israel—except for the tribe of Judah—does not realize her heritage. And even within Judah, there are other tribes mixed in as we shall see, especially that of Benjamin and Levi.

The gospel of Jesus Christ will be accepted first by Ephraim (and Manasseh is implied also) and eventually by all of the other tribes of Israel, and finally, by Judah. The book of Zechariah speaks much about this.

Brigham Young (*Journal of Discourses* 2:268–269, 8 April 1855) and Joseph Fielding Smith (*Doctrines of Salvation* 3:246) have made it clear that the majority who accept the Gospel are literal descendants of Israel. Is it not thrilling to know, as we do missionary work, that we are literally gathering Israel back in fulfillment of the promises in Deuteronomy 30:1–6? So also as we do vicarious work for the departed?

President Joseph Fielding Smith taught: “The Lord said he would scatter Israel among the Gentile nations, and by doing so he would bless the Gentile nations with the blood of Abraham. Today we are preaching the gospel in the world and we are gathering out, according to the revelations given to Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other prophets, the scattered sheep of the House of Israel. These scattered sheep are coming forth mixed with Gentile blood from their Gentile forefathers. Under all the circumstances it is very possible that the majority, almost without exception, of those who come into the Church in this dispensation have the blood of two or more of the tribes of Israel as well as the blood of the Gentiles.” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 5 vols., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1957–66, 3:63.)

President Joseph Fielding Smith also declared: “The great majority of those who become members of the Church are literal descendants of Abraham through Ephraim, son of Joseph” (Improvement Era, Oct. 1923, p. 1149). While this was especially the case in 1923, the number of converts from other tribes is beginning to grow.

The rare person who is *adopted* into Israel—and I would not assume adoption unless the patriarchal blessing says so—will be just as much a partaker of the blessings given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as those who are direct descendants.

Gentiles, Gentile Nations, Heathen

Words can have multiple meanings. A few have the philosophy that words need to be translated in the same way throughout the Bible. Although this at first sounds quite laudable, the premise is flawed. Words in Hebrew also have multiple acceptations as do words in English, Spanish or any language.

Oftentimes, there are multiple words needed to provide a good translation—this is not an issue limited to biblical translation. Certainly this is the case where words do not have an equivalent in the target language. For instance, the word *sobremesa* in Spanish has no equivalent in English. It means the time spent sitting at the table and chatting even after people have stopped eating. Even where there are translations for a word, where there are multiple choices, the translator has to truly understand the context.

That is why the approach taken by the Amplified Bible (AMP) makes sense in that multiple acceptations of the original word are often used in the target language. But let us return to our topic.

The Hebrew expression **הַגּוֹיִם**, *HA-Goyim*, is variously translated as **the heathen**, **the Gentiles**, or **the nations**. Each of these words—heathen, Gentiles and nations—has a different meaning. The *context* of the word in Hebrew dictates the best translation into English.

The word *heathen* is often thought of as a strange, barbarian, uncivilized people or those who do not accept the God of the Bible (see Webster). A *Gentile* often means someone who is not a Jew, or someone who is a heathen or pagan (Webster). A humorous archaic definition of *Gentile*—as it is not used in real life among the Latter-day Saints—is “a non-Mormon.”⁴ I will use the term to distinguish those who represent both non-Jewish and non-LDS authors cited in this book.

There is a difference between *Gentile* and *Gentile Nations*. The word *nation* is often elliptical or implied when the word *Gentile* is used.

We read about the Gentiles taking the Gospel to Israel, but what is really meant is that the *Gentile Nations* will take the Gospel to Israel. The Prophet Joseph Smith was a pure Ephraimite (*Journal of Discourses* 2:268–69.), on the one hand, and a Gentile, on the other. Once again, to understand this we must comprehend that the Prophet Joseph Smith was born in a Gentile Nation. But the Prophet was a descendant of Israel through Joseph of Egypt. Or, when something positive is said about the *Gentiles*, it seems to exclude Judah as a translation. In some instances, I would prefer if it said that these positive things would come upon the *nations*. It seems to me, at least, that it is more inclusive as the *nations* includes both Jew and *Gentile*. Please remember, once again, that it is up to the English translator to decide how to render the word גֵּוִי. This is, for instance, where I appreciate Leiser’s translation. Lest I be misunderstood, there are times when wonderful things are intended for the Gentiles, but more often than not, the *Gentile nations* are intended. And these are the descendants of Israel from the other tribes who are also scattered throughout the nations—but unless they have joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints they know it not.

In the Title Page of the Book of Mormon we read that the Book of Mormon was: “Sealed by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the Lord, to come forth in due time by way of the Gentile.” Meaning, by way of the *Gentile Nations*. Joseph Smith was the one who was to bring forth the Book of Mormon to the world.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, after being restored, mostly sent missionaries from the Gentile Nations to the Gentile Nations. But these missionaries would be descendants of Israel who lived among the nations. And who would they go to? To the descendants of Israel among the nations, beginning with the tribe of Ephraim and ending with the tribe of Judah.

The most important point, once again, is that missionaries are going out to the nations of the world to

gather Ephraim and his companions first and Judah and his companions next. All of the children of Jacob are to be invited to come unto Christ.

What tribes do the Lamanite nations come from?

According to Elder Erastus Snow, Joseph Smith taught that in the 116 pages of the lost manuscript, that Ishmael was a descendant of Ephraim (JD 23:184). From Alma 10:3 we find that Lehi was a descendant of Manasseh. “And Aminadi was a descendant of Nephi, who was the son of Lehi, who came out of the land of Jerusalem, who was a descendant of Manasseh, who was the son of Joseph who was sold into Egypt by the hands of his brethren” (Alma 10:3).

The American Continent, then, was populated by at least three tribes, Ephraim, Manasseh and Judah. The latter, by way of Mulek, who left Jerusalem eleven years after Lehi had done so, and who formed the community of Zarahemla.

Because the sons of Lehi married the daughters of Ishmael, it follows that the descendants of the Lamanites might receive their blessings through either Ephraim or Manasseh but have both of these bloods running through their veins. The third most common tribe in South America seems to be that of Judah. The tribe of Manasseh seems to predominate in Mexico and the tribe of Ephraim in Chile.

There are at least two sources of Ephraimite blood; that which the Saints receive from (1) the Gentile nations and that which they receive from the (2) Lamanite peoples.

The blood of Ephraim from the Gentile Nations was that which was spread forth after Assyria captured the Lost Tribes. The blood of Ephraim from the Lamanite nations was that which goes back specifically to the descendants of Lehi and Ishmael and their wives—which includes peoples from the American Continent as well as many of the isles of the sea.

In terms of our own patriarchal blessings, as has already mentioned, we most likely have multiple tribes running through our veins. We receive our blessings, however, through the tribe mentioned in our patriarchal blessing.

Israel’s Civil War

For the longest time, the children of Jacob were disobedient to the Lord “for they have turned their back unto me, and not their face” (Jeremiah 2:27b). The Lord even reminds them of the broken Abrahamic covenant: “But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and

⁴ Merriam-Webster, I. (2003). Merriam-Webster’s collegiate dictionary. (Eleventh ed.). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc.

went backward, and not forward. Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending *them*: Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers (Jeremiah 7:23–26, emphasis added).

Likewise, in the Psalms: “Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God” (Psalm 50:7).

At the time of King David’s grandson, that of King Rehoboam, Israel was split in two by a civil war. This sad turn of events was a result of the iniquity that existed from the very top down, from king to dignitary, from the common man to the false prophet. In the words of Isaiah, “Therefore the LORD will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day. The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail” (ISAIAH 9:14-15).

The story of the actual split is fascinating. Jeroboam came to King Rehoboam and demanded better treatment on behalf of the northern ten tribes. Jeroboam said: “Thy father [i.e., King Solomon] made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee” (1 Kings 12:4).

King Rehoboam acted wisely in asking for three days to think things over and give a proper response. He first sought the advice of the older men. They provided wise counsel: “If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever” (1 Kings 12:7).

Rehoboam forsook the advice of the older men for those of his younger contemporaries. The latter advised that he speak to the people roughly, saying: “My little finger shall be thicker than my father’s loins. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions” (1 Kings 12:10b–11). Some have suggested that scorpions were whips with sharp flesh-tearing objects embedded in them.

The forceful answer was disastrous: “So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David” (1 Kings 12:16a).

Thus, the united nation composed of twelve tribes ceased to be. The ten tribes to the north were now governed by King Jeroboam, and they retained the title of Israel. They were also known by their most prominent tribe, *Ephraim*, as well as by their capital, Samaria (according to Rabbi Ibn Ezra, another reason

for this honor is that **Jeroboam**, its first king, was an Ephraimite).

Meanwhile, King **Rehoboam** was able to retain the remaining two tribes (Judah and Benjamin and part of Levi). They were referred to by the name of *Judah*, their most preeminent tribe, and sometimes by *Jerusalem*, their capital. A hatred and jealousy developed between the northern and southern tribes.

In ISAIAH 9:21, we read of the hatred felt by the north for Judah, as well as the internal squabbles between Ephraim and Manasseh. Truly Ephraim hated Manasseh and Manasseh, Ephraim. Both hated Judah and Judah hated them back. The outlook was bleak, to be sure.

Jehovah rejected as King

The downward spiral could be traced to an earlier time. Saul was made king over the twelve tribes during the times of the judges, because the children of Jacob rejected Jehovah as her King in preference for an earthly sovereign. The people wanted to be like all the nations who surrounded them.

Samuel the Prophet felt rejected by the children of Israel in this thing. The Lord permitted the people to have their agency: “And the LORD said unto Samuel, Harken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee [i.e., give them the king that they think they want]: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them” (1 Samuel 8:7).

Why did Lehi and Ishmael live in Jerusalem?

While both nations did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, at first the Ephraimites (northern ten tribes) were much more evil than Judah (southern two tribes). Jeroboam, King of Ephraim, built a false altar and ordained a false priesthood (1 Kings 12:26–31).

Both Lehi and Ishmael belonged to the northern tribes of Israel yet they lived along with the tribes of Judah in Jerusalem. As we said, Lehi’s family heritage was of the tribe of Manasseh (Alma 10:3) while Ishmael’s was of the tribe of Ephraim (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 1:141).

Why is it that they were living in Jerusalem among Judah and Benjamin?

The most righteous who lived within the territories of Ephraim began to migrate south to Jerusalem, and thus we read: “Out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the LORD God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the LORD God of their fathers” (2 Chronicles 11:16b).

We likewise read: “Nevertheless divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem” (2 Chronicles 30:11).

Also, we read: “And in Jerusalem dwelt of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin, and of the children of Ephraim, and Manasseh” (1 Chronicles 9:3).

The Bible, then, gives us a very good reason why Lehi and Ishmael were found in Jerusalem. The exodus of the righteous down to Judah left Ephraim (speaking of the ten tribes) in an even more idolatrous state.

Hosea Principle

Among the prophets sent to warn Ephraim (northern tribes), was Hosea. The Prophet Hosea was asked to call his son **לֹא אֲמִי** *Lo-ammi* (**לֹא**, *Lo, not; אֲמִי*, *am, people, ammi, my people*): “Then said God, Call his name **Lo-ammi**: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God” (Hosea 1:9).

Mark the words, “for ye are *not my people*, and I will *not be your God*.” This theological ellipsis takes us back to *Rain in Due Season*, and the promise that the Lord would honor our covenant keeping by making us His people and be our God. But now the Lord is telling us that He is withdrawing because the children of Jacob broke the covenant. As much as the original promise makes me full of joy, these words are like a painful sword cutting through me.

There is good news, however, as not all is lost. In the very next paragraph the Lord tells us that in the last days, after the blessings and cursing had taken place (all of this elliptical), the Abrahamic Covenant would once again be instituted:

“Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, *Ye are* not my people, *there* it shall be said unto them, *Ye are* the sons of the living God” (Hosea 1:10).

I call it the *Hosea Principle*. Any time that the Lord speaks with strong admonition, it is followed by His **tender mercies** [רַחֲמֵי].

Christ taught His disciples to follow this very approach, “... showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved” (D&C 121:43b). The Savior repeatedly gives us the example in the scriptures.

The Lord reprimands: “They were slow to hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God; therefore, the Lord their God is slow to hearken unto their prayers, to answer them in the day of their trouble. In the day of their peace they esteemed lightly my counsel; but, in the day of their trouble, of necessity they feel after me” (D&C 101:7–8). This admonition is followed by a very tender: “Verily I say unto you, notwithstanding their sins, my bowels are filled with compassion towards

them. I will not utterly cast them off; and in the day of wrath I will remember mercy” (D&C 101:9).

We might say with Alma, “My soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain!” (Alma 36:20b). The day would come when once more the Lord would say, “Ye are the sons of the living God.”

Scattering of Israel & Judah: Aholah & Aholibah

Ezekiel speaks of Ephraim and Judah as two wicked sisters, competing to outdo each other. He calls Samaria (capital of Ephraim) Aholah, and Jerusalem (capital of Judah), Aholibah (Ezekiel 23:4 ff.).

Ephraim was now at the verge of being taken captive by Assyria and being scattered all over Europe, Asia and Africa. These individuals would not be returning to the Holy Land but would be scattered all over. They would come to be called the *Lost Tribes*.

So it is that we read that “In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abelbethmaachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria (2 Kings 15:29).

Judah’s capture by Babylonia would follow about 120 years later and last for seven decades. Much of Judah would remain in Babylon and yet a remnant would return to the Holy Land. The promised Messiah would be born from within this returning remnant of the tribe of Judah, even Jesus Christ.

Of the Babylonian captivity of Judah we read: “The cities of the south shall be shut up, and none shall open *them*: Judah shall be carried away captive all of it, it shall be wholly carried away captive” (Jeremiah 13:19).

These scriptures in 2 Kings and Jeremiah are accompanied by many others. These events took place over a number of years.

After Christ’s death, Judah continued to be scattered, yet she was in part able to retain her national identity. Many of Judah—like her sister Ephraim—have lost their identity, however.

From the Book of Mormon, we read that there is a portion of the Lost Tribes who have also kept a record (2 Nephi 29:12–13): one which we will have in due course of time.

Lehi’s family escaped Jerusalem just before Judah was taken captive, and with the help of God, made sea vessels to travel to the American continent.

One way or the other, then, the children of Jacob were scattered to every continent, island of the sea, and corner of the earth. Her blood would be mingled with those of all the people upon the earth.

In Genesis 22:18a Abraham was told: “And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” One

of the ways this would take place is that Israel's blood would run through all the nations.

Early Patriarchal Blessings

The Holy Scriptures contain the patriarchal blessings of Joseph, as well as those of his brothers. We find a very important portion of Joseph's patriarchal blessing in Genesis 49:22–26. Much less often, do we speak of his blessings given by Moses and found in Deuteronomy 33:13–17. I wish to quote the last of these verses: "His glory *is like* the firstling of his bullock, and his horns *are like* the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they *are* the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they *are* the thousands of Manasseh" (Deuteronomy 33:17).

These horns were to be used to gather Israel from all the nations of the earth. One Elder who served in Llanquihue, Chile, and with whom I shared these thoughts added, "Yes, one horn represents Ephraim and the other Manasseh."

It would be the thousands of Manasseh and the ten thousands of Ephraim who would begin this great work. Certainly, with time, missionaries from all of the tribes would be united in this effort. And the work of gathering is taking place on both sides of the veil.

Blessings for Ishmael

The Lord, in his great love, will not leave anyone unblessed. We are told that Ishmael, Isaac's half-brother, would not be left without a blessing: "And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac ..." (Genesis 17:20–21a).

Writing to your posterity

If you were given an opportunity to write a letter to your great, great grandchildren and share your testimony of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—at a time when they had lost knowledge of Him—would not that be wonderful? And would not that be even more wonderful if your readers would be blessed with the Holy Ghost to know of the truthfulness of your testimony? In essence, this is what the Book of Mormon is to the Lamanite nations. But this book is not just a blessing to those of Lamanite heritage, but to the whole world, to all the nations, to both the Jew and the Gentile nations—for the convincing of all that Jesus is the Christ.

Prophets speak of the gathering

The Jews, as we have said, divide the Holy Scriptures or Tanakh (תנ"ך) into three discrete

categories: The *Law*, the *Prophets*, and the *Writings*. The Prophets, נביאים or NEVI'IM, are full of allusions, especially to the Law or Torah, תורה.

Both the law and the prophets particularly testified of Christ. When the Lord visited the American continent He said: "And this is the law and the prophets, for they truly testified of me" (3 Nephi 15:10b). The Prophetic books are particularly important in this respect:

"Verily I say unto you, yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have testified of me. And behold, ye are the children of the prophets; and ye are of the house of Israel; and ye are of the covenant which the Father made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham: And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed" (3 Nephi 20:24–25).

"And whosoever will hearken unto my words and repenteth and is baptized, the same shall be saved. Search the prophets, for many there be that testify of these things" (3 Nephi 23:5).

"AND now, behold, I say unto you, that ye ought to search these things. Yea, a commandment I give unto you that ye search these things diligently; for great are the words of Isaiah. For surely he spake *as touching all things concerning my people which are of the house of Israel*; therefore it must needs be that he must speak also to the Gentiles (3 Nephi 23:1–2, emphasis added).

ISAIAH 18

There are a number of chapters in Isaiah that speak of the Book of Mormon, and we shall see in more detail as we enter our study. One of them is ISAIAH 18:7. We read of ambassadors of truth that have a great work to perform:

"In that time shall the present be brought unto the Lord of hosts." The *present* that is brought to the Lord are the converts from the twelve tribes of Israel.

"Of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled." These people who have been scattered and peeled, or removed from their land, are the children of Israel.

"To the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, the mount Zion." This place, clearly, is the House of the Lord, even the Temple of our God. Mount Zion stands for the Temple Mount in Jerusalem—and by extension, probably all the temples.

One of the greatest gifts we can give the Lord is to share His word with others and help others come unto Christ. Just as a baptism without confirmation is not complete, missionary work is not completed until the converts partake of the ordinances of salvation in the

House of the Lord. Of course, each person has to also endure to the end in righteous living.

A vital part of the gathering of Israel, then, is to help people go to the temple, and as the Prophet Joseph Smith said in our opening quote, to “prepare them for the ordinances and endowments, washings and anointings” (HC 5:422).

Your God, My People

There are multiple references throughout the Holy Scriptures where the Lord reminds His people Israel of the Abrahamic covenant which was reiterated in *Rain in Due Season* and elsewhere. Here are but a few examples. In each of these cases it can be assumed that the readers of the scriptures were intimately aware of the theological ellipsis involved:

“And I will take you *to me for a people*, and I will be *to you a God*: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians” (Exodus 6:7, emphasis added).

Speaking of a day to come: “But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and *will be their God*, and *they shall be my people*” (Jeremiah 31:33, emphasis added).

“That the house of Israel may go no more astray from me, neither be polluted any more with all their transgressions; but that they may *be my people*, and I *may be their God*, saith the Lord GOD” (Ezekiel 14:11, emphasis added).

“And ye shall know that I *am* in the midst of Israel, and *that I am* the LORD your God, and none else: and *my people* shall never be ashamed. And it shall come to pass afterward, *that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh*; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions” (Joel 2:27–28, emphasis added).

“And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they *shall be my people*, and I *will be their God*, in truth and in righteousness” (Zechariah 8:8, emphasis added).

Allusion is made to other portions of the *Rain in Due Season* scriptures, also. For instance, in Daniel 9:7–11, we read Daniel’s acknowledgement that the children of Jacob had failed to keep the covenant and had thus suffered the promised consequences or curses:

“O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. O

Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; Neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore *the curse is poured upon us*, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him” (Daniel 9:7–11, emphasis added).

Ezekiel 36

I find Ezekiel 36:16 ff. particularly interesting, because it is as if the Lord is reminding the children of Jacob about *Rain in Due Season* before speaking about the vital role to be played by the Book of Mormon in helping to gather Israel from every corner of the globe: a role which is again spoken off in ISAIAH 66, and elsewhere.

“Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man” (Ezekiel 36:16–17a). The Lord shares His titles with His servants. The Savior is the SON OF MAN, for His Father is the MAN OF HOLINESS (Moses 6:57; 7:35). “When the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman” (Ezekiel 36:17b). In other words, the Lord is telling them that they did not keep the covenant.

“Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols *wherewith* they had polluted it: And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them” (Ezekiel 36:18–19). Because of Israel’s apostasy, she was scattered as promised.

“And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I *am* the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land” (Ezekiel 36:23–24). The Lord is here speaking of the gathering that would come to pass after the blessings and cursing as mentioned in Deuteronomy 30:1–6, *Rain in Due Season*.

Numerous spiritual blessings are enumerated next: “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean [compare to the temple ordinance in Numbers: ‘And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them’ (Numbers

8:7a)]; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you [possibly an allusion to being confirmed and the reception of the Holy Ghost—GB] : *and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh*, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*” (Ezekiel 36:25–27).

Among the promised blessings will be a return to the lands consecrated to Israel, including the Holy Land, “And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be *my people*, and I will be *your God*” (Ezekiel 36:28, emphasis added).

In the next verses the Lord touches upon other promises made in *Rain in Due Season*, such as crops instead of famine, the reconstruction of the waste places, etc.

The promised Book of Mormon

We finally come to the glorious punchline. How will Israel be gathered in fulfillment of the many promises made in *Rain in Due Season* and elsewhere in the Jewish Bible? Let us move on to Ezekiel 37:15, an often quoted scripture which I hope we will better understand.

“The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man” (Ezekiel 37:15–16a). Once again, the Lord shares His own title with Ezekiel. “Take thee one stick, and write upon it” (Ezekiel 37:16b). The prophets of God were often asked to act out the prophetic word: for instance, by cooking on cow dung (Ezekiel 4:12, 15); going ‘naked’ or wearing only the undergarments (ISAIAH 20:3); burying a sash or girdle in the river (Jeremiah 13:4) and so on.

Now the Prophet Ezekiel is asked to take a stick, or rather, a piece of wood, and literally write upon it. The word עֵץ translated as stick in our KJV, means tree, or in this context, rather, wood (Gesenius, BDB, HALOT) or tablet {Targum (ט)}.

The LHI Bible (see also 1587 Geneva Bible) translates the word עֵץ as “[a piece of] wood.” In the Targum of Ezekiel the meaning is even clearer, “take one tablet [לִיְהוָה] and engrave upon it” {Targum Jonathan to the Prophets (ט)}.

It is clear that we have a piece of writing material here, whether wood, metal, or something else. So, “take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions” (Ezekiel 37:16b) is to symbolize that most precious book that would come down to us through Judah, the Holy Bible.

Judah, here, stands for the southern kingdom, or the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, called Judah for the prominent role of that tribe. *His companions* makes it

clear that it was not to be for Judah alone, but Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, and eventually, all of Israel.

“Then take another stick [עֵץ, or once again, tablet in the Targum (ט), לִיְהוָה], and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and for all the house of Israel his companions” (Ezekiel 37:16c).

Beside the Bible we have another book that would be engraved, one that would proceed from Joseph—or *Ephraim*. His companions expands the importance of this book beyond the literal tribe of Ephraim to all of the northern tribes of Israel, and eventually, to the two and a half tribes of the south, named after Judah.

This is the second priceless book mentioned, the Book of Mormon. “And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand” (Ezekiel 37:17). This second book comes with a blessing so powerful, that all who read from its pages—and ask God the Eternal Father in the name of Christ about its truthfulness—will *know* it is from God.

These two books, the Bible and the Book of Mormon would become as one witness. Yes, these two engraved holy books would also come to be carried together. When I joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the 1970s people literally carried these books together, in one hand.

The time will come—and is already here—when electronic versions of these books will replace the physical copies. People in future days may not understand this scripture unless they understand the cultural ellipsis, that people in the old days actually *carried books in their hands*. People who have everything in an electronic or virtual version will need to be told that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries people carried actual physical copies of these books, the Holy Bible and the Book of Mormon, joined together, in their hands.

When the missionaries introduce the Book of Mormon, they are often asked, “Why do we need another book beside the Bible?” We recognize both the question and the answer here in Ezekiel. “And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou *meanest* by these?” (Ezekiel 37:18). What they are really asking is, once again, “Two books?” The Lord answers through Ezekiel, “Yes, indeed, two books joined together and supporting of each other: two books that do not contradict each other: two united witnesses.”

Note the expression בְּנֵי עַמָּךְ, the *children of thy people*. This is because the Book of Mormon will be taken to the literal children of Israel—both Ephraim and Judah. Can you feel the increasing thrill of the narrative?

The answer comes in a further repetition of what has already been said. “Oh yes, indeed, you heard

correctly. There will be two books: one written by Judah; the other by Ephraim!”

“Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which *is* in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, *even* with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one **in mine hand** (כִּי־בְיָדִי)” (Ezekiel 37:19). In whose hand shall these two books be? In the hands of the Lord, for He shall use these as instruments for the gathering of His people, as we shall see.

“And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes” (Ezekiel 37:20). The prophet Ezekiel is commanded to carry these two tablets made out of wood before the people—in representation of these two books that would come forth, the Bible and the Book of Mormon.

The idea is that the people around the Prophet Ezekiel would ask him the meaning of his walking around with two pieces of wood pressed against each other in his hand. The very question, as we saw above, was prophetic of the inquiry in the mouth of those who would listen to the missionaries in the latter days and ask “why do we need two Bibles?”

I have friends and scholars who belong to other churches and they recognize that the Bible can be interpreted in multiple ways. The Prophet Joseph Smith wanted to know which Church was right but concluded that “... the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible” (JS-History 1:12).

Now we come to the triumphant message, the thrilling message of the Hebrew Bible. Throughout the Holy Scriptures the Lord has promised that He would gather Israel in the latter days. Now the Holy One of Israel is telling us that the gathering will take place through these two books.

These records are the means whereby Israel will be gathered from among all the nations. Both of them are full of wonderful promises to the children of Jacob. The very purpose of the Book of Mormon, as explained by the ancient prophet who inscribed its title page, is for “the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST.”

That is also the very message of the Bible even if it has been transmitted to us in an imperfect form. The Prophet Joseph Smith explained, “I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors” (DHC, 6:57).⁵ These two records—or at the

mouth of two witnesses—testify of Christ and of His divinity.

The coming forth of the Book of Mormon, intended to work in unison with the Bible, would indicate that the gathering of Israel was about to begin. Elder M. Russell Ballard taught: “I love the Bible, its teachings, its lessons, and its spirit. I love the Old Testament’s compelling, profound stories and its great prophets testifying of the coming of Christ. I love the New Testament’s apostolic travels and miracles and the letters of Paul. Most of all, I love its eyewitness accounts of the words and the example and the Atonement of our Savior Jesus Christ. I love the perspective and peace that come from reading the Bible... Brothers and sisters, I am sure many of you have had the experience of hearing people say that ‘Mormons are not Christians because they have their own Bible, the Book of Mormon.’ To anyone harboring this misconception, we say that we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and the author of our salvation and that we believe, revere, and love the Holy Bible. We do have additional sacred scripture, including the Book of Mormon, but it supports the Bible, never substituting for it. We love the Bible and other scriptures. That may be surprising to some who may not be aware of our belief in the Bible as the revealed word of God. It is one of the pillars of our faith, a powerful witness of the Savior and of Christ’s ongoing influence in the lives of those who worship and follow Him. The more we read and study the Bible and its teachings, the more clearly we see the doctrinal underpinnings of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ... Those who join this Church do not give up their faith in the Bible—they strengthen it. The Book of Mormon does not dilute nor diminish nor de-emphasize the Bible. On the contrary, it expands, extends, and exalts it. The Book of Mormon testifies of the Bible, and both testify of Christ... I bear solemn witness that we are true and full believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and in His revealed word through the Holy Bible. We not only believe the Bible—we strive to follow its precepts and to teach its message. The message of our missionaries is Christ and His gospel and His Atonement, and the scriptures are the text of that message.”⁶

The resurrected Lord spoke to a remnant of Joseph in the American continent: “Ye remember that I spake unto you, and said that when the words of Isaiah should be fulfilled—behold they are written, ye have them before you, therefore search them—And verily, verily, I say unto you, that when they shall be fulfilled then is the fulfilling of the covenant which the Father hath made unto his people, O house of Israel. And then shall the remnants, which shall be scattered abroad upon the

⁵ Robert J. Matthews, “Joseph Smith’s Inspired Translation of the Bible.” December 1972 *Ensign*.

⁶ Ballard, M. Russell. The Miracle of the Holy Bible. April 2007 General Conference.

face of the earth, be gathered in from the east and from the west, and from the south and from the north; and they shall be brought to the knowledge of the Lord their God, who hath redeemed them” (3 Nephi 20:11–13).

Furthermore we read: “And I will remember the covenant which I have made with my people [i.e., all of Israel]; and I have covenanted with them that I would gather them together in mine own due time, that I would give unto them again the land of their fathers for their inheritance, which is the land of Jerusalem [for the tribes of Judah], which is the promised land unto them forever, saith the Father” (3 Nephi 20:29).

Here in Ezekiel, the Holy One of Israel ties the gathering, the Book of Mormon and Holy Bible together. These concepts are joined as closely as Ezekiel was to carry the two pieces of wood in his hand, in representation of these future books.

“And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen [הַגּוֹיִם], whither they be gone.” As we said earlier, the heathen, הַגּוֹיִם can also be translated as the nations [הַגּוֹיִם].

The scattering and gathering among the nations is the same as that which is mentioned in *Rain in Due Season*: “And it shall come to pass, 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 [הַגּוֹיִם], whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee (Deuteronomy 30:1).

In *Rain in Due Season*, right after this verse, the Lord speaks of gathering Israel from among the nations, “... then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations [הַגּוֹיִם], whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee.”

Here, however, the word nations is a translated from a Hebrew synonym, literally, “gather thee from all the peoples [הַעַמִּים].” The Lord is speaking of gathering and fetching Israel back.

“And will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land” (Ezekiel 37:21b). Such words reaffirm what has already been promised, that the Lord would gather Israel from every quarter of the earth and bring them back to the Promised Land. Judah would be especially brought back to the Holy Land, the land of Israel; Ephraim and Manasseh, the children of Joseph, would be especially brought back to Zion, both North and South America. [The word Zion has numerous meanings, depending on the context, and includes Zion in America as well as Zion in representation of Israel.]

The enmity between the tribes of Israel will cease and shall once again become one nation. “And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of

Israel” (Ezekiel 37:22). Instead of being divided, as they were after the civil war,⁷ where Ephraim and Manasseh hated each other, and where both hated Judah and Judah hated them back, there would be great unity between the tribes. Is this not the case in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints today? There is great love between Ephraim and Manasseh and between these tribes and Judah. Not only is there a great abiding love between all the tribes, but also toward the children of Ishmael and to the whole world.

And Messiah their King

“And one king shall be king to them all” (Ezekiel 37:22b). Israel’s true King had been rejected and Saul had been called to be king. At that time Israel had a human king just like all the surrounding nations. The civil war brought two kingdoms and two kings, the kings of Judah in the south, and the kings of Ephraim in the north.

Christ would now once again be Israel’s King and the King of all the nations. “And they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all” (Ezekiel 37:22b).

The next verse speaks of the grace that would be poured upon the children of Jacob, so that they would be able to combat sin and be cleansed and saved through the expiatory sacrifice of the Messiah.

“Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned” (Ezekiel 37:23). Through the cleansing of baptism and the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost, the Lord has blessed the children of Israel with much strength. His Grace is sufficient for all those who wish to be His disciples.

Note here a spiritual gathering from the “dwelling places wherein they have sinned.” Not only are the children of Israel gathered from every corner under the heavens, but they are gathered away from idolatry and every manner of sin, invited to leave spiritual Babylon and come to spiritual Zion, regardless of where they live.

And now the words which all who have embraced the Gospel of Jesus Christ have been waiting for, the Holy One of Israel says to all His disciples: “And will cleanse them: so shall they be *my people*, and *I will be their God*” (Ezekiel 37:23b, emphasis added, and see also Ezekiel 36:25–27). Note the baptismal cleansing that takes place before the gift of the Holy Ghost is

⁷ I often speak on this subject, and at a fireside yesterday, at the Alerce Ward, Puerto Montt Stake, Sister Marisol Cornejo de San Martín wisely suggested that these mountains themselves also represent the temples of the Lord, where perfect harmony is expected of those who enter therein. 12 June 2017.

imparted, wherein the Holy Ghost can become our constant companion and we can feel that the Lord is truly our God and we are His people. Is this not at least one way in which the promise is fulfilled wherein the Lord walks among us? We can then be cleansed by the Holy Spirit of Promise as we become partakers of the Abrahamic covenant. Do you hear the invitation, oh Israel?

This refers to the principal theological ellipsis we have been speaking off throughout this paper. The person who is familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures will immediately make the connection with the Scriptures which speak about the great blessings and cursing that was to come upon the children of Israel as a result of their obedience or disobedience.

“And David my servant *shall be* king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them” (Ezekiel 37:24). David is here put for one of the many titles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When we read of this *second David*, we know at once it refers to no ordinary man, but to the Messiah. In Jeremiah we read, “In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land (Jeremiah 33:15, see also 23:5). Furthermore, “But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them” (Jeremiah 30:9); “And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it” (Ezekiel 34:23); “Afterward shall the children of Israel return (שָׁבוּ), and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days” (Hosea 3:5). This שָׁבוּ is not only a physical one, but a spiritual one in which people return to the Lord.

Why David? King David of old was the first, after Moses and Joshua, to bring the hearts of all the tribes together knit as one. More importantly, of the Davidic line would be born Messiah. Jesus the Christ was often called, “Son of David.” All of these references to a latter-day David who would reign over Israel, then, are allusions to Messiah.

“And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children for ever: and my servant David *shall be* their prince for ever” (Ezekiel 37:25).

So this wonderful promise is repeated, the children of Israel would be restored to their promised lands and they would have the Holy One of Israel or the Holy

Messiah, the very Son of God, to be their Prince and their King.

The land spoken of here is the land of Israel, of course. But the land of Israel shall “be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants” (ISAIAH 49:19b). In addition, the Lord would give to Joseph another choice land, in the “everlasting hills” that would be found “over the wall” or the ocean, even the American continent (see Joseph’s patriarchal blessing, Genesis 49:22–26).

Other prophets also bear witness of the same gathering: “Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and *they shall be my people*, and *I will be their God*, in truth and in righteousness” (Zechariah 8:7–8, emphasis added).

It is the thousands of Manasseh and ten thousands of Ephraim who will have the great blessing and responsibility for beginning the process of gathering the rest of the tribes, including Judah. In ISAIAH 18 and 66 we will read in great detail how missionaries will leave the American continent and help gather Israel and Judah back to the land of Israel and back to the temple: “In that time shall the present be brought unto the LORD of hosts of a people scattered and peeled [i.e., scattered and removed], and from a people terrible from their beginning [i.e., this is what Israel was called by the surrounding nations after its return from Egypt] hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled [i.e., a reference to armies that invaded Israel, e.g., see ISAIAH 8:7–8], to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the mount Zion [i.e., here a reference to the temple and to *the land of Israel*]” (ISAIAH 18:7).

“Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them” (Ezekiel 34:23). The word *peace* [שָׁלוֹם] is an interesting one. Peace, in Hebrew, means much more than the cessation of war. Among its meanings the idea of salvation is included. So it is that through the Holy Ghost we can be filled with calm and peace and joy, but that is not all, we are lead through this covenant to the way of salvation and eternal lives.

“It shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them” (Ezekiel 37:26b). In the last days the Lord would establish His Church for the last time. It would never fall, as a Church, into apostasy. It would be the last dispensation, or the dispensation of the fullness of times.

“And will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them” (Ezekiel 37:26b–27a).

The Holy One of Israel would establish the House of the Lord, His temple, among the people so that when this gift of a converted scattered Israel would be

gathered, they could enter the House of the Lord to make special covenants there.

“Yea, *I will be their God*, and *they shall be my people*” (Ezekiel 37:27b). This is a double blessing, a sure blessing—one that is repeated twice in these verses.

“And the heathen [or the nations] shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore [לְעוֹלָם]” (Ezekiel 37:28). Once again, the House of the Lord is mentioned and a promise that the Church would not fall away, ever, לְעוֹלָם.

All of the nations shall know that Israel was not discarded by Her Lord, “And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.” So, “In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established” (2 Corinthians 13:1). The witness of the Book of Mormon loudly proclaims the divinity of the Savior, and help us better understand many of the promises found in the Bible.

Amidst a world who is attacking the divinity of our Lord, I came across this wonderful quote from Assistant Professor of Ancient Scripture, Shon D. Hopkin, of Brigham Young University, “There is no space in the Book of Mormon for any debate over His identity. He is the Son of God; He is the Savior of the world.”⁸

I cherish my testimony of God, the Eternal Father, and His beloved Son, even Jesus Christ, above all things. It is the Book of Mormon that led me to this testimony. With the Psalmist I exclaim: “Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever (לְעוֹלָם)” (Psalm 106:1).

*I was gathered by the Book of Mormon*⁹

I was born in Chile in 1954. My parental grandfather was a Lithuanian Jew and my grandmother a German Jew. My mother’s side of the family is Chilean. I was raised Catholic. When I was about thirteen, our religion teacher at Saint George’s College¹⁰ in Santiago taught us that the Trinity was a mystery; that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit

were one and three in a way that could not be explained. In fact, she explained that it would be easier to empty the Pacific Ocean with a bucket, into the sand by the beach, than to understand this great mystery.

As I rode the trolley bus on the way home, I was inspired by the Holy Ghost whose words came to me something like this: “It is really a simple thing: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are three distinct beings but one in purpose.” While I was still thinking about what all this meant, I saw myself at home, asking my Father for permission to go to the farm in San Javier (then about five hours south of Santiago by train) for the long weekend. While my parents always gave permission, on this occasion my father explained that I could not go and gave several reasons. Then he invited me to ask my mother if I did not like his answer. I turned around to do exactly that, to go and ask my mother, and remembered that she had given me the same answer and invited me to ask my father if I was not satisfied with her response. It was made clear to me, that just as my parents were two distinct individuals yet one in purpose, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost were one in perfect purpose and unity.

I was so excited I could not wait to share my newly gained knowledge with my parents. When I burst with my newly acquired news, my father had been sitting on a rocking chair and had been chatting with my mother while she was in her bed. “If I told you this was the greatest blasphemy against the Catholic Church, would you still say this?” he asked. As much as I looked up to my parents and did not want to offend them I could not deny what I had felt. Later I came to know that I had received a witness from the Holy Ghost. Some of the words that came to me were the same as those expressed by the Prophet Joseph Smith when he said he could not deny that which was of God. So much so, that when years later I read the Joseph Smith account of the first vision, my first reaction was, “He copied me!” No sooner had this thought crossed my mind, I realized that the Prophet had lived over a century before.

In 1970, when I was fifteen, a religion teacher gave us an assignment to write about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our school was being bought by the Mormons and we were moving to another location in Santiago. This American priest told us, “You Chileans think that the only church is the Catholic Church.” Even though I had once accompanied my father to a synagogue in New York, I thought to myself, “Yes, of course.” “Well,” the Priest continued: “I want each of you to write a report on the Mormons.”

I told my father about this report. He said that I was in luck as the LDS Mission Home was only two blocks from our home. But, he warned, “Be careful, they will try and convert you.” The Elder who answered the door was polite, but to my surprise had me wait

⁸ R. Scott Lloyd, “Sperry Symposium speaker: Book of Mormon written ‘to the convincing of Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ.’” Sidney B. Sperry Symposium (24 October 2015). *Deseret News*, Faith, 12 November 2015.

⁹ See my Mormon.org profile, <http://www.mormon.org/me/G5Y8> and <http://www.mormon.org/spa/me/G5Y8> (English and Spanish, respectively); as well as *On Sacred Ground*, February 1993 Liahona <https://www.lds.org/liahona/1993/02/on-sacred-ground?lang=eng> and January 1992 Ensign: <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1992/01/mormon-journal/on-sacred-ground?lang=eng>.

¹⁰ I attended this school from first grade in Elementary School to tenth grade in High School, in Santiago.

outside and did not preach the Gospel to me (later, I found out that it was because of my young age and the Church's desire not to split families). The Elder soon returned and gave me some nice magazines with photographs, as well as a book. I cut and pasted the photos and wrote a report. I also opened the book but I found it less interesting as it was mostly print matter with little art or photos.

I finished the report and turned it in. To my surprise the Catholic Priest announced to the whole class—in a bitter voice—that because I had done such a good job on the report that I would get a 7 (perfect score in Chile, where 4 is passing) and the rest of the class would get no more than a 5. When I got back home I discarded the magazines and was about to do the same with the book, but I felt prompted to open it one more time.

At that time the Book of Mormon paperbacks had the Angel Moroni on the cover and the promise from Moroni 10:4–5 inscribed in the first inside page. I read: “And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.”

As I read these words I was filled with the Spirit of the Holy Ghost. I instantly knew it was the Holy Ghost that was testifying to me of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. The warmest and sweetest feeling overcame me, and enveloped me from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet. Sadly, my reaction was, “But I don't want to be religious.” I really did not comprehend the joy of discipleship. I had a stony heart.

This episode was one of my last memories in Chile before my whole life would be thrown into chaos. Salvador Allende was elected president of Chile and shortly thereafter and my father, as an American born Jew, did not feel we could stay in Chile. Years later I found out that my father's first choice was to go to Portugal but we ended up going to the USA because he could not find a flight to Portugal.

We settled in New Canaan, Connecticut, and after finishing High School I moved to California, to study agriculture. At the University of California, Davis, I met an interesting Latter-day Saint student, Randy Homrig. He gave me another copy of the Book of Mormon which I filed along with my many books. I remember not agreeing with anything Randy had to say—except when he spoke about the Church. Then, the Spirit would bear witness of the truthfulness of my friend's comments.

During the Christmas vacation of my sophomore year (1973-1974) I returned to Connecticut to spend the holidays with my family. I packed my hand baggage

with lots of dressage books (one of the equestrian disciplines). Then I added some textbooks in case I would finish the horse books. As I was leaving my dormitory, out of the corner of my eye the Book of Mormon caught my eye as if to say, “Take me!” In my mind I thought, “Fine, if I read my horse books, and my textbooks, I will read the Book of Mormon and added it to my carryon handbag.

Once on the plane I pulled out a book, all excited with the prospect of reading about dressage. But the last would be first (Matthew 20:16). As I contemplated what seemed like a mistake, the Spirit said, “Read me!” After four days I finished the Book of Mormon.

My stony heart of three years earlier was softened in the process and I was filled with indescribable joy and a heart of flesh. At one point I felt the presence of the Savior and I imagined Him with outstretched arms beckoning me to come unto Him. His message was something to the effect that He would show me the truth of all things if I would become His disciple. But He also warned me that it would be better if I had never known Him than to follow for a while and then get bored of the Gospel. At that very moment I made the choice of following Christ. I was so thrilled that I ran into my brother Nicolás' room with the Book of Mormon in my hand, telling him this was a true book. My parents later told me that I scared my brother into being a good Catholic.

I called the Stake missionaries when I got back to California. I received the discussions from Randy Homrig and Phil On: two on Tuesday, two on Wednesday, and two on Friday. When they taught me the LDS view on the Godhead and I immediately consented, they exchanged surprised glances. I asked to be baptized, but was informed that I needed to first meet with the Branch President of the UCD Branch. President Hill asked me what my parents thought about my joining the Church. I told him that they had asked that I talk to a Catholic Priest. President Hill invited me to be obedient to my parent's request.

I made the appointment and the Catholic Priest told me that it was so obvious that I believed that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was true, that I was a hypocrite if I did not join the Church.

So, I was baptized and confirmed a member of the Church on 9 March 1974, at the age of 19. My parents returned to Chile soon after. My father went all over Chile saying that the worst thing that could have possibly happened had taken place, that his son had joined the Mormon Church. A year later he told me that he went back and told the same people that this was the best thing that ever happened, so big was the change for good that he saw in me.

My fiancée Linda Marsing and I were married in the Oakland Temple in 1976. And what happened to my school in Santiago, where I had been given the

assignment to study about the LDS Church? There, today stands the Santiago, Chile Temple (it was dedicated in 1983 and became the 24th operating temple).

I worked for the University of California for almost 34 years and my specialty was labor productivity and mediation of deep-seated interpersonal conflicts. I developed several models which I felt were inspired by the Lord. As an academic of the University of California and visiting Professor of the *Universidad de Chile*, I had many opportunities; including travel to speak in all continents save Antarctica. I suppose the penguins did not need any help in either labor productivity or *conflict management*. Linda and I had the opportunity to spend all three of my career Sabbaticals in Chile. After retiring in 2014, I was able to return back to Chile with Linda.

I have loved each one of my jobs and my life's work. I have been a dressage rider and instructor, an amateur radio operator, and a soccer referee. I have always loved the scriptures, but since about 1996 my love for the scriptures has occupied much of my free time.

It was while reading the Book of Mormon that I was prompted to turn to my Jewish roots and search Isaiah and the Hebrew Bible. I am slowly working on both my Biblical and Modern Hebrew skills. My wife and I love traveling together.

As I write this I can look out the window and see Lake Llanquihue and multiple snow covered volcanoes and a rainbow. I feel as if I live in the Garden of Eden. I can see the hand of the Lord and His *tender mercies* [תְּדַבֵּר] and how they have blessed my life.

The Book of Mormon originally led me to Christ and to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. No book has had as great an impact for good in my life. Its positive influence has been on-going, most especially since I accepted President Ezra Taft Benson's 1986 challenge to sup daily from its pages.

Today, my most treasured possession is the knowledge that Jesus is the very Messiah that my Jewish ancestors had been waiting for; that Christ has restored His Church once again upon the earth. That it is through Christ that we can return once again to live with our Father in Heaven. As I read the Book of Mormon and see the promises made to my Lamanite ancestors, I am also filled with gratitude untold. I count myself as one who lived "unto the outmost parts of heaven" (Deuteronomy 30:4), when the Lord found me and gathered me. I found Christ while reading the Book of Mormon. God found me when I was not looking.

FIRST POSTED: 5 December 2016
