

#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)

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)

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 (38:24–27)

Let every man esteem his brother as himself, and practise virtue and holiness before me. And ... let every man esteem his brother as himself. 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? 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.

4. Instructions (38:34–42)

I give ... a commandment, that certain men among them shall be appointed ... by the voice of the church; 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. And they that have farms that cannot be sold, let them be left or rented as seemeth them good. ... 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. ... And go ye out from among the wicked. Save yourselves. Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.

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

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

6. Blessings of gathering in Ohio

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 1st 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).

June 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).

8. Restoration of keys of the gathering of Israel (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).

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 prophecies 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)

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)

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” (HC 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 12th 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)

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. 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).

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” ^{JD 9:138}

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).