

## LESSON 23

# The Scattering and Gathering of Israel

### Introduction

The Lord scattered the house of Israel because they hardened their hearts against Him, but He promised that they would be gathered in the last days. Prophecies in the Book of Mormon

make clear that the long-promised gathering has begun. Members of the Church have the responsibility to bless the families of the earth by sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### Background Reading

- Russell M. Nelson, “The Gathering of Scattered Israel,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 79–82.
- C. Scott Grow, “The Book of Mormon, the Instrument to Gather Scattered Israel,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2005, 33–35.

### Suggestions for Teaching

**1 Nephi 22:3–5; 2 Nephi 25:15–17; 3 Nephi 5:24–26; 20:13, 29–31; 30:2**

#### *The scattering and gathering of the house of Israel*

Invite a student who is a convert to the Church or has helped someone else join the Church to share his or her experience. Encourage students to think about someone they know who might be open to hearing the message of the gospel. Ask students to look for gospel truths throughout today’s lesson that can encourage and help them in their efforts to share the gospel with others.

Ask students to read 1 Nephi 22:3–5 to see what Nephi prophesied about the house of Israel.

- What does it mean that the house of Israel was “scattered”?

Explain that the scattering of the house of Israel was an important subject to Nephi because his family was part of the scattering. They were scattered to the Americas from Jerusalem because of the wickedness of the people in the land of Judah.

Tell students that many Book of Mormon prophecies contain the comforting assurance that in the latter days the house of Israel will be gathered again. Write the following references on the board, and assign each student to read one of the passages. Make sure each passage is read. Ask students to look for what individuals need to learn and do in order to be gathered with the house of Israel.

*2 Nephi 25:15–17*

*3 Nephi 5:24–26*

*3 Nephi 20:13, 29–31*

3 Nephi 30:2

- What are some of the things individuals need to learn and do in order to be gathered with the house of Israel? (Several truths might be identified by students, including the following: **The Lord gathers members of the house of Israel when they believe in Him, repent, and come unto Him.**)

To help students better understand this truth, you may want to read the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:



"Why was Israel scattered? The answer is clear; it is plain; of it there is no doubt. Our Israelite forebears were scattered because they rejected the gospel, defiled the priesthood, forsook the church, and departed from the kingdom. ...

"What, then, is involved in the gathering of Israel? The gathering of Israel consists in believing and accepting and living in harmony with all that the Lord once offered his ancient chosen people. ... It consists of believing the gospel, joining the Church, and coming into the kingdom. ... It may also consist of assembling to an appointed place or land of worship" (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [1985], 515).

- According to Elder McConkie, what must a person do to be gathered with the house of Israel?

Invite students to ponder how they themselves have been gathered into the house of Israel as they have believed in the Savior, repented, and come unto Him.

### 1 Nephi 15:12–16; 22:8–12

*In the last days, members of the Church will bring the gospel to the families of the earth*

Remind students that Lehi used the metaphor of an olive tree to teach his family about the scattering and gathering of Israel (see 1 Nephi 10:12–14). Laman and Lemuel told Nephi that they could not understand the meaning of their father's teachings (see 1 Nephi 15:7).

Ask a few students to take turns reading 1 Nephi 15:12–16 aloud. Invite the class to look for what we can learn from Nephi's explanation of the house of Israel.

- How does the metaphor of the olive tree help us understand the scattering and gathering of Israel?
- According to verse 13, who will take the fulness of the gospel to the remnant of Lehi's seed? (Gentiles who have received the fulness of the gospel.)

Explain to students that in the Book of Mormon, the word *Gentiles* usually refers to those who are not from the tribe of Judah or from the land of Judah. The Book of Mormon contains prophecies that in the last days some of these Gentiles will receive the fulness of the gospel (see 1 Nephi 15:13) and become members of

Christ's Church. Book of Mormon prophets teach that these Gentiles will have the responsibility to bring the gospel to all the earth.

To help students understand this definition of the word *Gentiles*, display and read the following explanation from Elder Bruce R. McConkie:

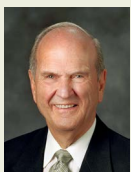


"We have heretofore identified the Jews as both [those who live in] the kingdom of Judah and as their lineal descendants. ... And we have said, within this usage of terms, that all other people are Gentiles, including the lost and scattered remnants of the kingdom of Israel. ... Thus Joseph Smith, of the tribe of Ephraim, ... was the Gentile by whose hand the Book of Mormon came forth, and the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ... are the Gentiles who carry salvation to the Lamanites and to the Jews" (*The Millennial Messiah* [1982], 233).

Ask several students to take turns reading from 1 Nephi 22:8–12 while the class identifies those people who will be blessed and nourished by the Gentiles (members of the Church) in the last days. As students read, it may be helpful to explain that the phrase "make bare his arm in the eyes of all the nations" in verses 10–11 refers to the Lord showing His power throughout the world.

- Who will be blessed and nourished by the Gentiles in the last days? (Lehi's posterity, all the house of Israel, and "all the kindreds of the earth.")
- According to verses 9–11, how will the Lord bless the "kindreds" (families) of the earth in the last days? (Help students identify the following truth: **In the last days, the Lord will work through members of His Church to bless the families of the earth with His gospel and covenants.**)

Display the following statement by President Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and ask a student to read it aloud:



"Ours is the responsibility to help fulfill the Abrahamic covenant. Ours is the seed foreordained and prepared to bless all people of the world. ... After some 4,000 years of anticipation and preparation, this is the appointed day when the gospel is to be taken to the kindreds of the earth. This is the time of the promised gathering of Israel. And we get to participate! Isn't that exciting? The Lord is counting on us and our sons—and He is profoundly grateful for our daughters—who worthily serve as missionaries in this great time of the gathering of Israel" ("Covenants," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 88).

- How do you think those who are gathered (converts) feel about those who gather them (those who have shared the gospel with them)?
- What are some ways in which we can participate in God's work by sharing the gospel with the families of the earth?

### 3 Nephi 16:4–5; 21:1–7

#### *The role of the Book of Mormon in the gathering of Israel*

Invite students to silently read 3 Nephi 21:1–7 and look for the sign that signals the beginning of the latter-day gathering of Israel.

- The Savior spoke of “these things which I declare unto you” (verse 2). Where would His words to the Nephites be recorded? (In the Book of Mormon.)
- What is the sign that signals the beginning of the latter-day gathering of Israel? (Students should identify the following truth: **The coming forth of the Book of Mormon is a sign that God is fulfilling His covenant to gather Israel in the latter days.**)

Ask a student to read 3 Nephi 16:4–5 aloud, and invite the class to look for the effects of the Book of Mormon and the gospel message in the last days.

- How does the Book of Mormon help bring about the gathering of God’s people in the latter days? (One of the truths that might be identified by students is the following: **The Book of Mormon helps bring people to the knowledge of the Redeemer so that they can be gathered to Him.**)

Invite a student to read aloud the following statement by President Russell M. Nelson. Ask students to listen for the role of the Book of Mormon in the gathering of Israel.



“The coming forth of the Book of Mormon is a sign to the entire world that the Lord has commenced to gather Israel and fulfill covenants He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We not only teach this doctrine, but we participate in it. We do so as we help to gather the elect of the Lord on both sides of the veil.

“The Book of Mormon is central to this work. It declares the doctrine of the gathering. It causes people to learn about Jesus Christ, to believe His gospel, and to join His Church. In fact, if there were no Book of Mormon, the promised gathering of Israel would not occur” (“The Gathering of Scattered Israel,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 80).

Ask students to share any experiences they have had with seeing the Book of Mormon help other people learn about Jesus Christ and be gathered to His Church.

Challenge students to help in the process of gathering Israel by sharing the Book of Mormon with someone who is not of our faith.

### Student Readings

- 1 Nephi 15:12–16; 22:3–5, 8–12; 2 Nephi 25:15–17; 3 Nephi 5:24–26; 16:4–5; 20:13, 29–31; 21:1–7; 30:2.
- Russell M. Nelson, “The Gathering of Scattered Israel,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 79–82.