Translated Beings – The Ministry of the 3 Nephites

D&C 130:5. “There are no angels who minister to this earth but those who do belong or have belonged to it.”

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pg. 191. “Translated bodies are designed for future missions.”

Joseph Fielding Smith, Seek Ye Earnestly, pg. 419-420. “The Lord has never surrendered this world to Satan. He tells us that. And there has never been a time when he did not have somebody on the earth to contend for righteousness. You do not know what I am referring to, but I am going to tell you. John the Revelator was given the promise that he should remain until the second coming of Christ. He is here on the face of the earth.

There were a number of men among the Nephites, whom he chose to be among his Twelve for those people, who also wished to have the privilege given to them to remain here until the second coming of Christ. They have been here on the face of the earth from that day until now and will be until Christ comes. I am not acquainted with them. Neither are you. Maybe there will never be an occasion when any of them will come to me and tell me who they are—or you—but they are here, nevertheless, and will be until the time of Christ.

“The Lord has never withdrawn or permitted his authority to be withdrawn absolutely from this earth; and so down through years and through the great apostasy, which developed until the so-called Christian era, there have been individuals on the face of the earth holding divine authority. But it has not been their privilege to go forth among the people proselyting or baptizing. They have been here on the face of the earth to contend against Satan and his followers, adversaries of righteousness, and to hold them in check.

“We understand that John the Revelator asked for the privilege of remaining on earth until the coming of Christ, and that was granted to him. Three Nephites asked for the same privilege and it was granted. They have been here on the face of the earth—advocates of righteousness and contending against Satan and his adversaries.

“I think we have largely—that is members of the Church—almost universally believed the Lord fully surrendered this world to Satan, and there were hundreds of years when there was no representative on the face of the earth with authority to contend against Satan and his adversaries. The Lord has never permitted Satan to have absolute control, so there were individuals who were granted the privilege of continued life or the privilege of living until Christ should come the second time. They might come to you door and you would not know them. But they have been here through all these years. They were not authorized to organize the Church. They were authorized to contend against Satan and hold him in check; but they do not have the privilege to organize wards and stakes and set up upon the face of the earth these organizations.—(Remarks at Ensign Stake Conference, January 30, 1966.)”

John W. Taylor, Conference Report, October 1902, pg. 75. “You will find that many districts where the Elders of Israel cannot reach will be penetrated by these men who have power over death; ... My testimony is that these men are going abroad in the nations of the earth before the face of your sons, and they are preparing the hearts of the children of men to receive the Gospel. They are administering to those who are heirs of salvation, and preparing their hearts to receive the truth, just as the farmer preparers the soil to receive the seed. The Lord has promised that He would send His angels before the face of His servants, and He does so.”

Bruce R. McConkie, The Millennial Messiah, pg. 285. “But thereafter [after the city of Enoch] except in a few isolated instances—those of Moses, Elijah, Alma the son of Alma, John the Beloved, and the Three Nephites are the only ones of which we know—except in these cases, each involving a special purpose, the Lord ceased translating faithful people. Rather, they were permitted to die and go into the spirit world, there to perform the ever-increasing work needed in that sphere.”
The Purpose of Translated Beings on Earth — Moses 7:52.

Harold B. Lee, “Priesthood,” address to Seminary and Institute personnel, BYU, 17 July 1958. “I would ask you if Jehovah has not in all ages tried His people by the power of Lucifer and his associates; and on the other hand, has He not tried them and proved them by His prophets? ... The grand object in view was to try the people of God, to see what was in them....

“My prayer is that the Saints may understand that they are safe as long as they listen to the Priesthood authorized of heaven, are united in one, and not divided into clans, but become one great clan, under one head.... (Jedediah M. Grant, Journal of Discourses, 2:11-16.)

“I have always wondered what the purpose was for translated beings on earth. You remember it is recorded that in the days of Enoch the promise was given to him that there should be a remnant of his seed always to be found among nations while the earth should stand.... [Moses 7:52.]

“Now why were these [remnants of the seed of Enoch, John the Revelator, the Three Nephites] permitted to tarry until Jesus comes? I remember a few years ago, one of the brethren in a general conference made a statement that caused quite a flurry among the brethren. He said, ‘That gospel plan he gave, and when he gave it, he said it would never be taken away until the end of the world. It is my faith that the gospel plan has always been here, that his priesthood has always been here on the earth, and that it will continue to be so until the end comes.’

“Now, there were those who doubted that, who thought he made a mistake; and when questioned, in order to clarify it he put this in parentheses: ‘While through the apostasy since the time of Christ the priesthood was lost to the people generally and to the Christian churches, yet there have always been on the earth from the beginning servants of the Lord who had held the priesthood.’

“After that sermon was delivered I walked over to the Church Office Building with President Joseph Fielding Smith, and we were discussing this discourse. He said this: ‘I believe that God has never for one moment of time since the creation abandoned the earth to Satan without having someone holding the priesthood to check him.’ To me that was the answer to why translated beings have always been here on the earth among men and will be until the coming of the Savior.”

Melchizedek & Translated Beings


“Enoch and his people were translated, probably just a few years after Adam’s death. (Moses 7:18 21, 31, 63, 69; D & C. 38:4; 45:11-14; 84:99-100; 1 Cor. 5:22-24; Heb. 11:5.) It is apparent from the abbreviated account of the Lord’s dealings with Enoch and his people that Zion was a very great and populous city, having perhaps many thousands or even millions of inhabitants. (Moses 7.) Methuselah, the son of Enoch, was not translated, ‘that the covenants of the Lord might be fulfilled, which he made to Enoch; for he truly covenanted with Enoch that Noah should be of the fruit of his loins.’ (Moses 8:2.) But during the nearly 700 years from the translation of Enoch to the flood of Noah, it would appear that nearly all of the faithful members of the Church were translated, for ‘the Holy Ghost fell on many, and they were caught up by the powers of heaven into Zion.’ (Moses 7:27.)

“That this process of translating the righteous saints and taking them to heaven was still going on after the flood among the people of Melchizedek is apparent from the account in the Inspired Version of the Bible. Speaking of the faith and righteousness of those holding the Melchizedek Priesthood in that day, the account says: ‘And men having this faith, coming up into this order of God, were translated and taken up into heaven. And now, Melchizedek was a priest of this order, therefore he obtained peace in Salem, and was called the Prince of peace. And his people wrought righteousness, and obtained heaven, and sought for the city of Enoch which God had before taken, separating it from the earth, having reserved it unto the
latter days, or the end of the world.’ (Inspired Version, [JST] Gen. 14:32-34.)

“As far as we know, instances of translation since the day of Melchizedek and his people have been few and far between. After recording that Enoch was translated, Paul says that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their seed after them (they obviously knowing what had taken place as pertaining to the people of Melchizedek and others) ‘looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God’ (Heb. 11:5-10), that is, they ‘sought for the city of Enoch which God had before taken.’ (Inspired Version, [JST] Gen. 14:34.) But as Paul said, and as the Lord confirmed by latter-day revelation, even these ‘holy men … found it not because of wickedness and abominations; And confessed they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth; But obtained a promise that they should find it and see it in their flesh.’ (D. & C. 45:11-14; Heb. 11:11 16.)” (Mormon Doctrine, 2nd ed., pp. 804-505.)

This promise that the City of Zion shall return, and that holy men of all ages, in their resurrected state, shall dwell therein, will have millennial fulfillment. Of that glorious day, ‘the Lord said unto Enoch: Then shalt thou and all thy city meet them there, and we will receive them into our bosom, and they shall see us; and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks, and we will kiss each other; And there shall be mine abode, and it shall be Zion, which shall come forth out of all the creations which I have made; and for the space of a thousand years the earth shall rest.” (Moses 7:63-64.)

In giving revealed direction to Noah, the Lord said: “Remember the everlasting covenant, which I made unto thy father Enoch; that, when men should keep all my commandments, Zion should again come on the earth, the city of Enoch, which I have caught up unto myself. And this is mine everlasting covenant, that when thy posterity shall embrace the truth, and look upward, then shall Zion look downward, and all the heavens shall shake with gladness, and the earth shall tremble with joy; And the general assembly of the church of the first-born shall come down out of heaven, and possess the earth, and shall have place until the end come. And this is mine everlasting covenant, which I made with thy father Enoch.” (Inspired Version, [JST] Gen. 9:21-23.)