THE CONQUEST AND THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES

Israel Enters into the Promised Land

At the end of the forty years of wandering, a generation had been raised who were willing to follow the Lord’s new leader into the promised land. That leader was Joshua. The Book of Joshua (c. 1230-1200 B.C.?) records the events of Israel’s settlement into the Land of Canaan. Joshua brought the children of Israel into the promised land by passing through the Jordan River which was miraculously parted similar to the dividing of the Red Sea (Josh. 4:1-24). After coming into the land, the children of Israel were all circumcised (Josh. 5:1-9), the token of the Abrahamic covenant. This should have reminded Israel that if anyone broke the covenant God made with them, they and their posterity would be cut off from God’s presence. After the circumcision, the children of Israel celebrated the passover in remembrance of the exodus from Egypt (Josh. 5:10-11). They were then ready to conquer the land under the direction of the Lord.

The Land of Canaan consisted of a variety of peoples living in several city states having a common language base and religious ideologies but not united politically. Their religious practices were abominable in the sight of God. Therefore God commanded Israel: “When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it . . . thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them” (Deut. 7:1-2). Further, Israel was to keep themselves “from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed” (Joshua 6:18). In other words, Israel was not to have anything to do with Canaanite practices lest those practices would be the means of spiritually destroying Israel.

The first Canaanite cities the Israelites conquered were the strategic sites of Jericho and Ai (Joshua 1-8). These guarded the entrance way into the heart of the land.

An Important Covenant is Made at Shechem

After the conquering of Jericho and Ai and before proceeding to conquer more of the land, Joshua led the children of Israel to Shechem (Ex. 8:30-35) where God had first told Abraham that the land of Canaan was the land promised to his posterity (Gen. 12:6-7). There Joshua fulfilled a command given by Moses in his final discourse (Deut. 27-28). Moses wanted Israel to go to the very place where the promised land was first revealed and enter there into a covenant with God that they would remain faithful to Him and the law. In so doing, they would secure the Lord’s help in conquering the land of Canaan.

Shechem was situated between two mountains, Mt. Ebal on the north and Mt. Gerizim on the south. Moses charged Israel that once they arrived at Shechem, they were to set up the ark of the covenant between the two mountains (Joshua 8:33). Then six of the tribes of Israel were to place themselves on Mt. Gerizim while the other six were to ascend Mt. Ebal (Deut. 27:11-13). Upon large stones, the law of Moses was to be written in the presence of the children of Israel (Deut. 27:1-8; Joshua 8:32). The law was then to be read to all the Israelites (Joshua 8:33). This was to be followed by the Israelites renewing their covenant that they would honor the law of Moses.

As part of the covenant renewal, the six tribes on Mt. Gerizim would shout out all the blessings that Israel would receive if they were obedient to the law (see Deut. 28:1-14). These included blessings over their cities, fields, crops and the blessing of rain for water. They were also promised that the land would remain theirs and that the Lord would fight their enemies for them.

The other six tribes would then pronounce the curses (see Deut. 28:15-68) that would result if they were disobedient to the covenant including the loss of their cities, fields, crops and rain. When their enemies would attack, the Lord would not fight their battles. The ultimate curse Israel would experience would be the loss of the promised land. This would be accomplished by the Lord scattering Israel among the gentiles “from the one end of the earth even unto the other.” Israel would live among the gentiles and serve their gods. In this condition, Israel would continue to wander among these nations (Deut. 28:64-68). As the prophet Amos would later prophesy, after the Lord sifts “the house of Israel among all nations” (Amos 9:9) they would “wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it” (Amos 8:12).

The significance of this sacred setting is enhanced when the proper orientation of the ancient Hebrew map is understood. Instead of north being the primary direction for orientation as in western societies, east was the primary direction. Therefore, south is on the right hand of the map...
while north is on the left. (This orientation can be seen in the famous sixth-century A.D. floor mosaic map of ancient Israel at Medeba, near Mt. Nebo in Jordan.) The Hebrew word for south is yamin, or right hand. This is also the Hebrew word for blessing. The Hebrew word for north is smol, or left hand. Though smol is not the same word for curse in Hebrew, often left hand or north is associated with curses (see, for example, Matthew 25:31-46 and Mosiah 5:12). To the Hebrew mind, then, the southern mountain, Mt. Gerizim, was the appropriate mountain to yell out the blessings while the northern mountain, Mt. Ebal, was the appropriate side to yell out the curses.

In light of this it is interesting to note that eventually, as we shall see, Israel broke their covenant with God and he used the nations of Assyria, Babylon, and Rome as instruments to scatter Israel. Curiously enough, when these warring nations came upon Israel, they came from the north or cursing side. Further, captive Israel was taken to the north before being scattered among the nations of the world. The symbolism of this is obvious. Having broke their covenant with God, Israel experienced the full brunt of the curses by losing the land and being taken captive to the north; that is, they were placed under the burden of the curse by being taken to the north. Regardless of where Israel has been scattered among the nations, they are under the curse of the broken covenant and thus are in the “north.”

The covenant renewal at Shechem is comparable to the “cutting” of the covenant between God and Abraham recorded in Genesis 15 where God promised Abraham that his posterity would inherit the land after they were enslaved for four hundred years. It should be remembered that in that covenant ceremony, animals were cut in half and laid side by side. Then God passed through the severed animals upon making his covenant with Abraham. There is no record of animals being cut in half and passed between in the covenant ritual at Shechem. However it appears that the land of Canaan itself became symbolic of a severed animal. This was represented by the two mountains that stood adjacent to each other. The placing of the ark between the two mountains symbolized God passing between severed animals promising to bless Israel if they were obedient. Israel identified themselves with the land by standing on the two mountains. If Israel kept their covenant with God, they would keep the land. But if they broke the covenant, they, like the two mountains, would be split apart and scattered among all the nations of the earth.

Joshua fulfilled the command of Moses and led the children of Israel in the covenant renewal at Shechem before continuing the conquering of the land of Canaan (Joshua 8:30-35). Then before he died, he once again gathered Israel to Shechem where he delivered his final discourse encouraging the children of Israel in their obedience to the covenant. He then led the people once more in a covenant renewal (Josh. 24).

The Period of the Judges

After the death of Joshua, the Israelite tribes were left without a strong leader. The tribes of Israel were loosely allied but with no central government. For the most part each tribe became autonomous, fending for itself. Adding to this precarious condition was the fact that the Canaanites had not been entirely driven out of the land as the Lord had commanded (Judges 1). Therefore the Israelites and Canaanites cohabited. During the period of the Judges, the Israelites struggled with honoring their covenant, especially in relation to the first three commandments. Consequently, a pattern developed wherein Israel forsook the worship of Jehovah while adopting the Canaanite religion of Ba’al worship. According to the terms of the covenant, the Lord allowed neighboring nations to overtake Israel bringing them into subjugation. This curse would humble Israel causing them to return to Jehovah. To free Israel from these “spoilers,” the Lord at various times called certain individuals to unite Israel and lead them in battle against these nations in order to lift the yoke of oppression. These leaders were called “judges.” However, their authority was not passed on to their posterity.

The Book of Judges (roughly between 1200 - 1000 B.C.) records the events of this time period. The first half of the book (chapters 1-11) tells the stories of several judges (Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Tola, Jair, and Jephthah) who, by placing their trust in God, led the Israelites in victorious battles against their enemies. The second half of Judges (12-21), highlighted by the story of Samson, shows the tribes of Israel rapidly declining, trusting less and less in God.

The Philistine Threat

About the same time that Israel was invading the Land of Canaan, the Canaanites were being invaded by another group of people. Sometime towards the end of the 13th century B.C., a movement of several eastern Mediterranean tribes, known as the Sea Peoples, spread havoc throughout the Mediterranean world. These confederate tribes were in search for new land to conquer and settle. In their wake, many prominent empires and city states fell such as the Hittites in Asia Minor. One of the goals of the Sea Peoples was Egypt. They came both by land (down the Syrian and Canaanite coast) and by sea. Though Egypt successfully repelled the Sea People onslaught, Egyptian power in the Near East was severally hurt.

Failing to conquer Egypt, some of the tribes settled in various areas along the Syrian and Canaanite coast. One
tribe settled in the southwest portion of the Land of Canaan. They would play a significant and continuous role in the biblical story. These people called themselves the \textit{Plst}. In the Bible they were known as the Philistines. Eventually, the Romans would rename the land of Judea to Palestine for the Philistines still living in the area. Archaeology has shown that early Philistine culture was Aegean. But as the Philistines continued to conquer Canaanite territories they adopted more and more of the Canaanite culture. As the Philistines continued their expansion, they became one of the major enemies of Israel as both were trying to conquer the same land.

The Philistine hold on the southwest portion of the Land of Canaan was formidable. Their power base lay within five cities: Gaza, Askelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath. Though the five cities formed a league, each was independent. The first real confrontation between Israel and the Philistines took place in the days of Samson. (It appears that the references to the Philistines in Genesis are anachronistic.) The story of Samson is one of several stories in the last half of the Book of the Judges that reveal how the various tribes of Israel struggled in placing the worship of Jehovah at the center of their life. Samson’s mission was to “begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines” (Judes 13:5). The mission of Samson was in effect the mission of all Israel. Samson was to be given the strength to defeat the Philistines through a fully consecrated life to God demonstrated by his lifelong Nazarite vow (concerning Nazarite vows see Numbers 6). The life of Samson was to demonstrate to Israel that only by complete adherence to the covenant would Israel receive divine help to conquer their enemies. Unfortunately, the life of Samson reflected the children of Israel in the days of the Judges: instead of a life single to God and separate from the world, Samson married a Philistine and eventually broke his Nazarite vow. Thus he lost the opportunity to squash the Philistine threat.

**THE UNITING, DIVIDING, AND SCATTERING OF ISRAEL**

The books of \textit{1 and 2 Samuel} and \textit{1 and 2 Kings} tell the story of Israel from the end of the period of the Judges to the scattering of the children of Israel among the nations of the world by the Assyrians and Babylonians. These books explain to the reader why the Lord allowed His people whom He was going to make an “holy nation” to be taken captive and scattered by foreign nations. The answer in a nutshell: Israel forsook the covenant made with God at Shechem and consequently experienced the full brunt of the curses. Leading the way in this apostasy were Israel’s kings.

**Samuel, the Last Judge of Israel**

The last of the judges was Samuel (c. 1060-1020 B.C.). He was more than a judge, he was also a prophet, priest, and a leader of Israel. Though an Ephramite by birth, he had been consecrated to the Lord by his mother through a lifetime Nazarite vow and, consequently, became a priest in the Tabernacle which was housed in the Israelite city of Shiloh during the time of Eli who was the high priest (1 Sam. 1-2). The high priest had the responsibility of overseeing the temple rituals of the Mosaic law.

During Samuel’s early days while he lived in the Tabernacle, Eli’s sons became corrupt and perverted the rituals of the law of Moses mixing them with Canaanite fertility rituals (1 Sam. 2:22). Eventually, the Philistines made war against Israel. Eli’s sons took the ark of the covenant and led the Israelites in battle against the Philistines. The Israelites were defeated, Eli’s sons were killed, and the ark was taken captive (1 Sam. 4). When Eli, who was responsible for the care of the ark, heard that the ark had been taken captive he died of shock and fear. Most likely the Tabernacle was destroyed in this war for archaeological evidence reveals that Shiloh was destroyed during the war with the Philistines (?). The Lord plagued the Philistines and they returned the ark of the covenant to Israel (1 Sam. 5-6). The ark was kept in the house of Abinadab (1 Sam. 7:1-2) and the Tabernacle was not rebuilt.

The loss to the Philistines had bumbled Israel. In place of Eli, Samuel became the high priest and leader of the Israelites. Seeing Israel humbled, Samuel tried to get Israel to repent and turn to God (see 1 Sam. 7). The attempt was successful but only during the days of Samuel.

**The United Kingdom of Israel**

**Saul, First King of Israel**

When Samuel was old, the children of Israel desired to be ruled by a king “like all the nations” (1 Sam. 8:5). Thus Israel once again began to show their lack of trust in God. Though Samuel felt he was rejected, the Lord told him to give Israel a king “for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them” (1 Sam. 8:7). In giving Israel a king, the Lord was trying to work with the weakness of his people.

The first man to be chosen king of Israel was Saul (c.
1030-1010 B.C.), a Benjaminite (1 Sam. 9:31). He was able to unite the autonomous tribes of Israel and establish an Israelite state. Further, he began the subjugation of Israel’s enemies. However, though humble at first, Saul eventually began to disobey the commands of the Lord given through Samuel (1 Sam. 15:1-23). Eventually, the Lord rejected him as king (1 Sam. 15:24-31). Upon his death, the kingdom was given to David (c. 1010-975 B.C.), the head of the Israelite army.

David, Second King of Israel

The kingdom David inherited was fractured by internal strife. Further, the worship of Jehovah and the law of Moses among the Israelites was almost non-existent as evidenced by the fact that the ark of the covenant was not even in an established sanctuary. David desired to unite the twelve tribes of Israel and reinstitute Jehovah worship and the law of Moses as the governing law of Israel. He did this by first capturing Jerusalem, a Canaanite city that was not controlled by any of the tribes of Israel (2 Sam. 5:6-9). He made the neutral site of Jerusalem the capital of Israel. He then in two different battles subdued the Philistines forcing them to give up the expansion of their kingdom and confine themselves to their pentapolis (2 Sam. 5:17-25).

David desired to build a temple to the Lord but this was not his divine mission. David was to subdue Israel’s enemies (1 Kings 5:1-3) However, David was told that the building of the temple would be left to his son (2 Sam. 7:1-13). However, the Lord promised David that the kingship of Israel would continually come through his loins (2 Sam. 7:12-17).

After establishing peace, he invited all Israel, including both men and women, to Jerusalem. He then retrieved the ark of the covenant from its dubious location and brought it to Jerusalem. He placed it in a new Tabernacle that he had made on the highest point of the hill upon which Jerusalem was built (2 Sam. 6:17; 1 Chron. 16:1). (Jerusalem was built on the southern end of Mt. Moriah where the water source was located. The highest point of the hill was outside the wall of the city to the north.) As the ark was brought into Jerusalem, David danced before the ark without his royal robes, showing to all Israel that their real king was Jehovah (2 Sam. 6:14-16).

With the ark in place in the new Tabernacle, David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings in behalf of Israel. These were offerings of the law of Moses that demonstrated the reconciliation of God with those who had sinned. Then David gave to each man and woman a loaf of raisin or date bread (see Hebrew version of 2 Samuel 6:17-19). Bread is symbolic of life and the raisins and dates are symbolic of eternity. This last gesture suggested that by reuniting with Jehovah, Israel would have eternal life.

Through these actions David brought Israel and God at one with each other. This was prophetic of two important events associated with the work of the Messiah in Jerusalem. First, the atoning sacrifice was performed at that very location. Second, after the Savior’s second coming, he will reunithe scattered Israel (the ten tribes) and Judah into one kingdom in Jerusalem (see Ezekiel 37:20-28). [The importance of this last event is lost until it is remembered that the kingdom David united eventually divided into two nations. Both nations were scattered among the nations of the world.]

Sadly, even David violate the covenant with God: he fell to the lusts of the flesh and committed adultery and even murder (2 Sam. 11). However, David exhibited true contrition as was forgiven except for the sin of murder (Psalms 51; D&C 132:39). Further, though he committed personal sin, David always encouraged Israel in the worship of Jehovah. It seems that because of this, the Lord continued the promise of kingship through his loins.

Solomon, Last King of United Israel

David’s son, Solomon (c. 975-953 B.C.), became the last king of united Israel (1 Kings 3-11). During his reign, a permanent temple, now known as the Temple of Solomon, was built in Jerusalem. It was built over the spot where David placed the ark of the covenant. Upon its completion, Solomon had the ark of the covenant placed within the most holy place. The temple was then filled with the glory of the Lord as it was when the Tabernacle had been built and dedicated by Moses (1 Kings 8:1-11).

During his reign, Solomon entered into several political marriages contrary to the law of Moses. Towards the end of his life, his foreign “wives turned away his heart after others gods” (1 Kings 11:4). The Lord was angry with Solomon and told him that the kingdom of Israel would be taken from him upon his death and divided into two separate nations. For David’s sake, Solomon’s son would rule over Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah but the rest of Israel would be ruled over by another (1 Kings 11:9-13).

The Divided Kingdom

The Kingdom of Israel Divides into Two Nations

Rehoboam, the son of Solomon who was to succeed his father to the throne, gathered Israel to Shechem for his coronation. But when the northern tribes saw that he would continue in many of the unjust policies of Solomon, they withdrew their support for Rehoboam (1 Kings 12). The kingdom split in two. The northern ten tribes united together making Jeroboam (c. 953-927 B.C.) their king.
They became known as Israel, though sometimes they are also called Ephraim, after the head tribe of the north, or Samaria after the city which eventually became the capital of the northern kingdom. Judah made up the southern kingdom and Rehoboam (c. 953-932 B.C.) became their king. Eventually the buffer state of Benjamin which lay between the two kingdoms was annexed by Judah thus becoming part of the southern kingdom. Those living in Judah became known as Jews, regardless of what tribe they came from.

The splitting of the kingdom was the beginning of the final curses that the children of Israel experienced as a result of their continual breaking of the covenant their fathers had made at Shechem. Eventually both kingdoms would feel the ultimate curse of the broken covenant: the scattering of the twelve tribes of Israel among the nations of the world.

The Scattering of Israel

The northern kingdom was the first to feel the full weight of the curses of the broken covenant. It began when Jeroboam established his own form of Jehovah worship by establishing temples to Jehovah in Bethel and Dan (1 Kings 12:25-33). This action became known as the “sins of Jeroboam” because (1) he had not received divine approval, (2) he made golden calves for the throne of Jehovah which was expressly forbidden in the Mosaic code, (3) the priesthood used to officiate in the temples was non-Levitical, and (4) the ordinances were a corruption of the Mosaic ordinances performed under the law of Moses. A poor beginning for a new kingdom!

The kings who succeeded Jeroboam were no better. As a result, many from the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon left the northern kingdom and fled to Judah “when they saw that the Lord his God was with” Judah, who at that time had a righteous king (2 Chron. 15:9). This would explain why Lehi, a descendant of Manasseh, was living in Jerusalem. In the days of Ahab (c. 875-853 B.C.), who married Jezebel from Tyre, the Tyrian form of Ba’al worship was introduced and adopted on a national level. In an attempt to cause Israel to repent and turn back to the worship of Jehovah the Lord sent the prophet Elijah, c. 873-851 B.C., (1 Kings 17-2 Kings 2) whose specific mission was to get Israel to “turn their heart back again” to the covenant made with the “Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel” (1 Kings 18:36-37). As a second witness, Elisha, c. 851-830 B.C. (?) was called (2 Kings 2-13). Though the Tyrian Ba’al worship was eventually eradicated, the sins of Jeroboam as well as other forms of Ba’al worship continued. During these years, Israel experienced several disasters such as drought and famine as promised in the curses shouted from the slopes of Mt. Ebal.

Yet, Israel was not sufficiently humbled and did not repent.

In the days of Jeroboam II (c. 790-749 B.C.), the wickedness of Israel reached its zenith. The Lord sent Hosea and Amos to give a final warning to Israel in order to make their calling and destruction sure. These warnings were rejected and consequently, Israel experienced the final curse of the broken covenant. In 722 B.C., Israel fell to the expanding Assyrian empire, a vicious people living in northern Mesopotamia. This army came from the north (or cursing side) and destroyed Israel. Those who were not killed were taken captive through a series of deportations and scattered throughout the Assyrian empire (see 2 Kings 15, 17). From there, eventually, Israel became lost among the nations of the world (Lev. 26:33; Deut. 4:27; 32:26; Jer. 9:16; Ezek. 20:23; 22:15; 36:19; Amos 9:9, 17; 1 Ne. 22:3-5; 3 Nephi 5:24; 20:12-13).

Not all of Israel, however, was scattered by the Assyrians. The peons, the laboring class consisting mostly of farmers, were left. The Assyrians imported peoples from other parts of the empire to intermarry with the remaining Israelites. This mixed group became known as the Samaritans, taking their name after the capital city of Israel, Samaria.

The Exile of Judah to Babylon

The downfall of the southern kingdom was more gradual than that of the northern kingdom. Though Judah had its share of wicked kings, there were also a few righteous kings as well. It appears that the righteous kings learned from the mistakes made by the northern kingdom. Under the influence of Isaiah and Micah, Hezekiah, 715-697 B.C.  (2 Kings 18-20) made major religious reforms. However, these were reversed by his son, Manasseh (c. 697-642 B.C.) who, according to tradition, had Isaiah killed. However, in the days of Josiah, 640-609 B.C.  (2 Kings 22-23), Judah briefly returned to the Lord and renewed their covenant with him. However, during the years following the death of Josiah, Judah’s kings led the Jews to reject Jehovah, thus breaking the covenant. Consequently, the Jews suffered a fate similar to the northern kingdom.

In the latter part of the 7th century B.C., the Assyrian empire began to crumble. At that time, Babylon, a kingdom in the southern part of Mesopotamia began to rise in power. As Assyria began to collapse, Babylon attacked and conquered many regions of Assyria. Egypt, who would rather have a weak Assyria controlling Mesopotamia than a strong Babylon, decided to side with Assyria. In 609 B.C., Pharaoh Neco decided to rush to the aid of Assyria in a battle against the Babylonians. In so doing, he crossed through Judah. King Josiah made an attempt to check
In a battle at Megiddo, Josiah was killed and Judah was made a vassal state of Egypt. Neco placed Josiah’s son, Jehoiakim, on the throne for it appears that Jehoiakim loyalties were with Egypt. Jehoiakim did not follow in his father’s righteousness but “did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord” (2 Kings 23:37).

In 605 B.C., the Babylonians defeated the Assyrian/Egyptian coalition in a major battle in northern Mesopotamia. The Egyptians began a retreat to Egypt. As Babylon pursued the retreating Egyptians all the Assyrian/Egyptian vassal states in Syria and Palestine were at the mercy of Babylon. As Babylon drew closer to Judah, Jehoiakim quickly changed loyalties and Judah became a Babylonian vassal. At that time, several Jews were taken into Babylon including Daniel.

In 601 B.C., the Egyptians fought the Babylonians to a stand off on the Egyptian border and the Babylonians retreated back to Babylon. Observing this, Jehoiakim decided to changed his loyalties back to Egypt. His decision was disastrous. In 598 B.C. (600 B.C. in Book of Mormon chronology), King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon sent his armies to besiege Jerusalem. Once again, many Jews were taken captive to Babylon including Ezekiel, the prophet. Nebuchadnezzar placed Zedekiah on the throne as a puppet king. He was to keep the Jews loyal to Babylon.

When Zedekiah was placed on the throne, there were many prophets who prophesied of Jerusalem’s destruction if the Jews would not repent. Chief among these prophets was Jeremiah (c. 628-586 B.C.). The warnings of the prophets went unheeded. It was during this time that Lehi began to prophesy against Jerusalem (1 Nephi 1); thus the record of the Book of Mormon was begun.

During the next ten years, the loyalties of Zedekiah and the Jews were turned back to Egypt. This would prove to be the last straw that broke the camel’s back for Babylon’s patience would not be tried anymore. Finally in 587 B.C. Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians. Those Jews who were not killed were exiled into Babylon (2 Kings 24-25). This period has become known as the Babylonian exile. The Babylonians hoped that with the loss of their homeland, the Jews would be absorbed in Babylonian society and thus suppress their rebellious spirit. However, many of the Jews retained their identity due to a commitment that is best expressed in Psalm 137:1-6: “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. . . If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.” Therefore, many of the Jews remained loyal to the institutions of their fathers.

The Scattering a Blessing to the Gentiles

The scattering of Israel among the nations of the world, though a punishment, would be the very means by which the Lord would fulfill part of the covenant God made with Abraham. Joseph Fielding Smith explained: “the Lord always turns punishments to the accomplishment of his purposes. The scattering of the Israelites among all nations was a punishment inflicted upon them, but a great blessing extended to the nations among whom they were scattered. . . the scattering of Israel, especially the descendants of the ten tribes who mingled with the Gentile nations, the blood of Abraham had been mixed with the blood of the Gentiles, and in this way the Gentiles have been brought into the seed of Abraham, and are therefore entitled to receive, on conditions of their repentance, all the blessings promised to the seed of Abraham. The children of Israel, even in their greatest number, never fulfilled the promise of the Lord concerning their magnitude when dwelling in the land of Palestine. The prediction was that their number should be as countless as the stars or the sand upon the seashore. In Palestine they never reached proportions too great to be numbered nor have they reached this number in their scattered condition although they had become absorbed into the body of the Gentile nations. Moreover, they, through this scattering, planted in the hearts of the Gentiles to some degree a desire to worship the God of Abraham and to accept of his teachings and the teachings of the prophets who came through his seed. Because the Jews rejected Jesus Christ they were scattered as the Savior predicted; but the Lord has kept them, for his own purpose, as a distinct people. They have not mixed to any great extent with the Gentiles by marriage, but have maintained their racial identity. And when Christ comes, he will appear to the gathered Jews as predicted by Zechariah” (The Restoration of All Things, p.129-137).

THE FOUNDATIONS OF NEW TESTAMENT JUDAISM

In 539 B.C., the Babylonians were conquered by the Persians. Cyrus, king of Persia, reversed the Babylonian practice of repression of nationalism by allowing those nations who had been deported by the Babylonians to return back to their homelands and to worship their own gods. Cyrus allowed returning captives to take with them the religious objects which the Babylonians claimed as booty. He also provided them some funds to help rebuild...
local religious shrines. He hoped that this generosity would create local governments who were loyal to him.

The Jews taken captive by Babylon benefitted from Cyrus’ policy and were allowed to return to Jerusalem. Cyrus edict allowing the Jews return is found in Ezra (1:2-4; 6:3-5). Over the next century and a half, numbers of Jews returned to rebuild Jerusalem and her temple. The books of Nehemiah and Ezra tell the story.

The return to the homeland was not forced. Those who wished to stay in Babylon could. These Jews were the children and grandchildren of the Jews who had been exiled by Babylon. They had acquired property and sunk roots in Babylon. As a consequence the majority of the Jews remained in Babylon where many had established a strong Jewish community. In fact, during the succeeding centuries numbers of Jews began to migrate to many areas of the Near East, Europe, and Africa so that by the time of Christ Jews were found in most parts of that ancient world (for a listing of countries see Acts 2:9-11). The areas where Jews were living outside of Jerusalem and Judea became known as the Diaspora.

**The Return of the Jews to Jerusalem**

Two important accomplishments were realized by the returning exiles. First the temple was rebuilt. Second, the law of Moses became the center of Jewish life. This happened in the following way. Shortly after Cyrus’ edict, a group of Jews led by Sheshbazaar, of the Davidic line, returned to Jerusalem. However, the situation in Jerusalem was difficult and the group failed to make much progress in securing Jerusalem and rebuilding the temple. In 520 B.C., a second group of exiles returned to Jerusalem led by two men named Zerubbabel, nephew to Sheshbazaar, and Joshua. Under their leadership, and through the inspiration of the prophet’s Zachariah and Haggai, the temple was rebuilt although its structure cannot be compared to the grandeur of Solomon’s temple. The building of the temple began what is known as the second temple period. As we shall see, it was this temple that Herod the Great greatly enlarged and remodeled.

Sometime after the temple was rebuilt (the date is very much disputed), a second group of exiles returned to Jerusalem led by Ezra. Ezra was “a ready [skilled] scribe in the law of Moses” (Ezra 7:6). Through the work of Ezra, idolatry was eradicated out of Jewish society. Further, the law of Moses became the preeminent law of the Jews, something that had rarely happened since Moses. Because of this, Ezra is sometimes referred to as the second Moses. Ezra also established a new class of religious leaders who were studied in the law. Prior to this time the religious leaders of the Jews were priests and prophets. But at this time, there were no prophets any more and the priests concerned themselves solely with temple rituals. These new religious leaders, called scribes, replaced the priests as those who interpreted the law of Moses and taught the law to the Jews. Through their help, many in the Jewish community became dedicated to the study of the law.

During the Persian Period (c. 515-332 B.C.), the Jewish community was localized in a twenty mile radius of Jerusalem. Essentially, Jerusalem was a small temple-state. Though the temple and priesthood was reestablished as it was in the days before the exile, the monarchy was not. The political and religious leader of the Jews was a high priest of Zadokite descent. (The Zadokites were descendents of Zadok, who was installed as the high priest by King David. From that time forth, all high priests were descendents from him.) They were subject to the Persian governor of the area but were not appointed by him.

**Malachi and the End of the Old Testament**

Either before or after Ezra came the ministry of the last prophet of the Old Testament, Malachi. He spoke out against the priesthood which had become lax and uncareful in their duties. Moreover, the same priesthood had “departed out of the way” and caused “many to stumble at the law” having “corrupted the covenant” (Mal. 2:8). He prophesied that “the sons of Levi” would be purified as gold and silver “that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness” (Mal. 3:3). He ended his prophecy, and thus the Old Testament, with a most significant prophecy: the Lord would send Elijah “before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord” to “turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers” (Mal. 4:5-6).

**The Inter-Testamental Period**

**The Greek Period**

In 334 B.C., the Greeks, led by Alexander the Great, conquered the Persian empire including Judaea, the name given to the province where Jerusalem was located. In 323 B.C., Alexander died and his empire, which extended from Greece to India, was divided among his four generals. Judaea came under the control of Ptolemy, who ruled Egypt and Palestine, while Syria and Babylon was ruled by Seleucus. However, in 198 B.C., Antiochus III, a Seleucid king, conquered Palestine, including Judaea. Judaea remained under Seleucian control until they attained independence as a result of the Maccabean revolt which began in 167 B.C. and continued for several years until the Greeks were finally driven out in 143 B.C.

**Hellenism**

Understanding the Greek, or Hellenistic, period is
important in the study of the New Testament. Though the Romans ruled the world of the New Testament, it was the Greek culture that predominated. Of this period, Frederick Murphy has written: “Alexander believed in the superiority of Greek culture, but was at the same time somewhat open to other cultures. . . Alexander wanted to put into practice the idea that all the world was a single city and all people inhabitants of that city. Alexander was pursuing a cosmopolitan ideal (from the Greek kosmos meaning ‘world’ and polis meaning ‘city’), but it was an ideal based on the conviction of the superiority of Greek views of the world and Greek institutions” (The Religious World of Jesus, p. 136). Under Alexander and his successors, Hellenism (the Greek way of life) was aggressively promoted.

As can be seen from Murphy’s comment, the main institution of Greek culture was the Greek city. These cities were ruled by the citizens (citizens were usually the land-owners). Common to all Greek cities was the agora, the marketplace. The agora was a large open square, often surrounded by porticoes (Greek: stoa), porches with open sides and a roof held up by rows of columns. The agora also served as a marketplace for ideas where philosophers could get a hearing. Religious missionaries could do likewise” (Murphy, The Religious World of Jesus, p. 137). You could also find theaters and gymnasia in a Greek city. “In the theater, plays immortalized Greek mythology and society was both praised and satirized. The gymnasium was much more than a place for sports, although sports were an important medium of social interaction and helped to substantiate the Greek idea of a sound mind in a strong body. Gymnasia also served varied social functions, from meeting places for political clubs, to a kind of high school for Greek boys. The high school taught the classics and trained the boys militarily. The gymnasium was a key vehicle for preserving, spreading, and transmitting Greek culture” (Murphy, The Religious World of Jesus, p. 137). Temples were also a major part of the Greek city. “Worship of the city’s deities was a civic duty. Since there was no division between civic and religious life, shrines were found in gymnasia, theaters, and elsewhere” (Murphy, The Religious World of Jesus, p. 137). The Greek city was the main instrument for the spread of Hellenism by Alexander and his successors. “They did so by building new cities, restructuring and chartering old cities of the Greek model, and organizing clusters of towns as a city” (Murphy, The Religious World of Jesus, p. 137).

The Religious World of Jesus

The Hellenization of Jerusalem

Jerusalem experienced some Hellenization after the Greek period began. However, when Jerusalem fell under the control of the Selucids during the reign of Antiochus III, the Hellenization of Jerusalem was greatly accelerated. During this time, the position of the high priest became appointed by the Selucid king. This began when Jason, of the Oniad family and a descendent of Zadok, took the office of the high priest from his brother, Onias III, by bribing Antiochus III. Jason changed Jerusalem from a temple-state to a Greek-city-state with a governing council (called the Sanhedrin). Further, a gymnasium was also established in Jerusalem. He also renamed the city to Antioch.

Jason lost his position to Menelaus who offered a higher bribe to Antiochus III. Menelaus was not a descendent of Zadok. The Jews who were steeped in the law of Moses found all of this unacceptable. There appeared at this time a clear division between the Jews. The rich aristocracy, of whom the high priests always belonged whether they were descended from Zadok or not, favored Hellenism while those who clung the law of Moses opposed it.

The Maccabean Revolt

In 175 B.C., Antiochus Epiphanes became king of the Seleucid kingdom. He made even greater efforts to Hellenize Jerusalem. However in 168-167 B.C., resistance to these measures came to a head when Antiochus Epiphanes forbade Jewish rituals in the temple in Jerusalem and had an altar to Zeus placed atop of the altar of sacrifice. The resistance came from the family of Hasmon and a group called the hasidim - a religious party within Judaism devoted wholly to the law of Moses. The revolution has become known as the Maccabean revolt, named for Judas Maccabaeus, the leader of the rebels.

Though the war went on for several years, by 165 B.C., Jerusalem had been freed of Selucid control and the temple was rededicated. Every year since then, Jews celebrate the rededication of the temple (known as the Feast of Dedication in the New Testament). This celebration is known as Hannukah.

The Hasmoanean Dynasty

In 128 B.C., the Jews finally won their independence and Judaea became an independent state. Judaea was ruled by the Hasmoanean family, the leader of which became the high priest. However, the various successors to the position of the high priest became more and more Hellenistic themselves. During the rule of John Hyrcanus (128-104 B.C.), the spiritual descendants of the Hasidim, known as the Pharisees, began to openly oppose the Hasmonean high priesthood. John Hyrcanus switched his loyalty to the aristocratic Zadokites who had become known as the Sadducees. The Sadducees, who were opposed to the Pharisees, were mainly the wealthy priests
and Jewish aristocracy. The Sadducees had control of the temple and from this time until the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D., the High Priest was a Sadducee.

John Hyrcanus’ son, Aristobulus I, (104-103 B.C.), became the high priest and took upon himself the title of king like other Hellenistic kings. During his days, he conquered “the Galilee of the Gentiles” and began to establish Jewish colonies in that region.

The Roman Rule

The Hasmonean rule continued until Judaea was conquered by the Romans in 63 B.C. The Romans, however, made Hyrcanus II, who had been King of Judaea, both the High Priest and the ethnarch, or “ruler of the people,” but withheld from him the title of king. Hyrcanus II was personally responsible to the Roman governor, to whom the Jews had to pay an annual tribute or tax. During the next several years, the Jews were unhappy about the government and especially Hyrcanus II as High Priest. Though there was much contention in Judaea from both in and outside sources, Hyrcanus retained his position. However, it was weakened when, in 48 B.C., Rome made Antipater, the governor of Idumaea, the procurator of Judaea.

Herod the Great

In 39 B.C., the Roman Senate approved Antipater’s

Apostasy, Restoration, and Gathering of Israel

What began in the Old Testament is not completed in the New Testament. These two together form the first half of the “scriptural movie.” The conclusion is not seen until the latter days and is shown forth in the Doctrine and Covenants and in church history. In this epilogue, a brief attempt will be made to show how the movie ends so that the reader might see the whole picture.

The Universal Apostasy

After the death of Christ around 33 A.D., the Apostles continued to spread the Kingdom of God on earth. The gospel soon spread throughout Asia Minor, into Greece and Italy, other parts of Europe, and northern Africa (especially in Egypt). After the death the Apostles, the Church entered into a state of apostasy (see D&C 86:3).

The Book of Mormon reveals that in an attempt to save apostate Israel, the Lord took select groups of Israel and placed them in various parts throughout the earth where they were privileged to retain the gospel. In an allegory found in Jacob 5, apostate Israel was symbolized as an olive tree producing bad fruit. In order to save the dying tree, Jacob 5:7-18 says the Lord took certain branches (groups of Israel) and placed them in various parts of the vineyard (world) while the rest of the bad branches were burned with fire. We are told that the Lord visited the various places where the select groups had been placed (Jacob 5:19-28). This is verified in 3 Nephi where Christ appeared to the Nephites/Lamanites and said he would visit the other scattered remnants of Israel (3 Nephi 16).

Eventually these remnants of Israel lost the gospel through apostasy. Just as the Book of Mormon records the apostasy of Lehi’s posterity, so the allegory in Jacob reveals that all the remnant who had retained the gospel also fell into apostasy (see Jacob 5:30-40). Thus, the whole world, scattered Israel included, were in a state of darkness for several hundred years. During this time, the remnants of Israel continued to scatter among the nations of the world intermixing their blood with the gentiles until the blood of Abraham was spread throughout the whole earth. Finally, after America had been colonized, and a country was founded that secured the right of religious freedom, the Lord saw fit that he would fulfill his covenant that he made...
The Restoration

In 1820, Joseph was visited in the Sacred Grove by God the father and his son, Jesus Christ. Joseph asked which church he should join. He was told that the truth was not on the earth. With the gospel no where to be found on the earth, a complete restoration of the gospel including the ordinances associated with the Abrahamic covenant (which are performed in the temple) had to be enacted. On September 22, 1823, Moroni appeared to Joseph Smith and began training him for his work, which work was similar to Abraham, Moses, and Elijah. That is, Joseph Smith was to restore the gospel with all the ordinances that scattered Israel’s heart may be turned back to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the covenant. Moroni told Joseph that Elijah would return and “reveal unto [him] the Priesthood” (or sealing powers) and that he would “plant in the hearts of the children [modern scattered Israel] the promises made to the fathers [the promises of the Abrahamic covenant]” (Joseph Smith History 1:38-39; D&C 2).

As part of the restoration, a land of promise was announced. On Jan. 2, 1831, the Lord stated to the church in language similar to the Old Testament: “I hold forth and deign to give unto you greater riches, even a land of promise, a land flowing with milk and honey, upon which there shall be no curse when the Lord cometh. And I will give it unto you for the land of your inheritance, if you seek it with all your hearts. And this shall be my covenant with you, ye shall have it for the land of your inheritance, and for the inheritance of your children forever, while the earth shall stand, and ye shall possess it again in eternity, no more to pass away” (D&C 38:18-20).

On July 20, 1831, the place of the new land of promise was revealed. The land of Missouri was to be the new land of promise and the place where Zion (the New Jerusalem) would be built (D&C 57:1-16). On Aug. 1, 1831, the church (modern Israel) was told that they would receive the land of promise only after many years and “much tribulation.” The church in the days of Joseph were only “laying the foundation” of Zion (D&C 58). Israel must first be gathered from the four quarters of the earth. This would be accomplished by the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh who would “push the people together from the ends of the earth” (D&C 58:45; cf with Deut. 33:17).

On Aug. 2, 1831, the History of the Church records a significant event. On that day, twelve men representing the twelve tribes of Israel placed a log for a foundation of a house near Independence, Missouri, symbolizing the laying of the foundation for Zion in the latter-days. Sidney Rigdon stood up and said to the men representing the twelve tribes: “Do you receive this land for the land of your inheritance with thankful hearts from the Lord?” They replied: “We do.” He then said, “Do you pledge yourselves to keep the law of God in this land which you never have kept in your own lands?” They replied, “We do.” This ritual is reminiscent of the covenant their forefathers made at Shechem between Mt. Gerizim and Ebal when they had first entered the land of promise.

In 1833, the saints in Jackson County were driven from their homes and lands. They lost the promised land. In D&C 103:11 the Lord stated the promised land would be redeemed. However, they were reminded of D&C 58:4 in which they were told that they would receive their land only “after much tribulation” (D&C 103:12). They were then told that a new Moses would be raised “who shall lead them like as Moses led the children of Israel.” Further, they were told, “For ye are the children of Israel, and of the seed of Abraham, and ye must needs be led out of bondage by power, and with a stretched-out arm. And as your fathers were led at the first, even so shall the redemption of Zion be” (103:16-18). Thus the first gathering of Israel from bondage is a type of the gathering of Israel in the last days. That is to say, before Israel can gather to their promised land, they must first gather to the “mountain of the Lord’s house,” or temple, wherein they can enter into the same covenant that Abraham made with God.

Keys for Israel’s Gathering Restored

Though Joseph Smith the Church was organized, Israel could not fulfill the law of the gathering without a temple wherein they could receive the ordinances of the higher gospel. In 1832, Joseph received a commandment to build a temple in Kirtland, Ohio (D&C 88:119). After the Kirtland temple was built and dedicated in March of 1836, an important event occurred. On April 3, Moses, Elias, and Elijah appeared to the prophet Joseph Smith and committed various keys necessary to the fulfill of the Abrahamic covenant (see D&C 110).

First, Moses committed “the keys for the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north” to Joseph Smith. Concerning this, Elder Bruce R. McConkie stated:

Two things are involved in this commission. First, Israel--all Israel, the Ten Tribes included--is to be gathered “from the four parts of the earth,” out of every nation and from among every people. They are to be gathered into the true church and fold of the God of Israel. This gathering is primarily spiritual, but it is also temporal in that the gathered sheep are assembled into the stakes of Zion where the living waters flow. But next, this commission directs the one who holds the
keys of the gathering, meaning the President of the Church, to lead the Ten Tribes from the land of the north to their destined Palestinian homeland. They will be led to their promised inheritances after they join the Church, after they return unto the Lord, after they believe in Christ and accept his gospel, after they receive, individually and collectively, the Abrahamic covenant again. This part of the gathering of Israel is Millennial, for that is the assigned period in which the Ten Tribes are to come forth; that is the day in which the kingdom will be restored to Israel in the political as well as the ecclesiastical sense. (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, pp. 528-530; see also “The Restoration of the Ten Tribes,” in *The Millennial Messiah*, pp. 319-329)

Following Moses, Elias restored the keys of the “dispensation of the gospel of Abraham” -- the Abrahamic covenant or the temple marriage covenant. Then Elijah restored the sealing powers to the prophet Joseph Smith so that the covenant made in marriage is bound on earth and in eternity.

Through the instrumentality of these keys given to the prophet, he could begin to turn scattered Israel’s heart back to the promises made to the fathers. The actual temple ordinances associated with the Abrahamic covenant were restored in Nauvoo in the 1840's.

**The Gathering of Ten Tribes and Judah**

Though the gathering of Israel is first, spiritual (to the Church and temple and stakes of Zion), and second, temporal (to the land that God promised Abraham), it is also apparent that there is a general gathering of the ten

We are currently living in Phase II. Phase I and II deal with Israel gathering first to the church through baptism and then to the temple. It is during Phase III that Israel gathers back to the land promised to Abraham.

**President Kimball on the Gathering**

Concerning the law of the gathering, President Spencer W. Kimball taught, “Now, the gathering of Israel consists of joining the true church and their coming to a 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.” (*Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p. 438-439).

Concerning Phase II of the gathering, President Kimball said, “The Saints are no longer to come to a single place. In 1955, Sister Kimball and I went to Europe. We spent six months touring all of the missions in Europe. The people were still laboring under the impression that they should come to America for the gathering process. The burden of our sermons to them was, ‘Stay where you are. You have received the gospel. The blessings will be brought to you. It will not be long until you have stakes, and the Brethren will come across the ocean to visit you. Eventually temples will come, and you will have all the blessings of Zion’ “ (*Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p. 438-439).

He also stated, “Early in the history of this world there was the great scattering of Israel, but today we have the gathering of Israel. In sixty-five countries we are now bringing the gospel by these fine young men who are among you. What are they doing? They are gathering Israel. Now, in the early days of the Church we used to preach for the people to come to Utah as the gathering process largely because that was the only place in the whole world where there was a temple. Now we have sixteen temples, and two more that have been approved, scattered throughout the world. So it is no longer necessary that we bring the people all to Salt Lake City” (*Proclaiming the Gospel*, p.99).

Finally, he said, “Many people have been holding their breath waiting to see the gathering of Israel. We are in Israel and are being gathered” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p. 439)

**The Gathering of Ten Tribes and Judah**

Though the gathering of Israel is first, spiritual (to the Church and temple and stakes of Zion), and second, temporal (to the land that God promised Abraham), it is also apparent that there is a general gathering of the ten
tribes and a general gathering of Judah and that these gatherings are generally separate from one another before the millennium. It is also evident that Israel’s gathering is spiritually to the church before the coming of Christ and then physically to their lands of inheritance after the coming of Christ. On the other hand Judah’s gathering seems to be temporal then spiritual. That is, Judah will first gather to the land of Palestine, the land promised to Abraham, then to the gospel after the coming of Christ. This is not to say that there will be no Jewish converts to the church before the second coming. But generally speaking, the Jews will not be converted until the coming of Christ. This is made clear in the Proclamation of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints published under the direction of President Brigham Young on April 6, 1845 (see Messages of the First Presidency 1:253-266). In that document the following was stated concerning the gathering of Israel: “And we further testify that the Lord has appointed a holy city and temple to be built on this continent for the endowment and ordinances pertaining to the priesthood; and for the Gentiles, and the remnant of Israel to resort unto, in order to worship the Lord; and to be taught in his ways and walk in his paths: in short, to finish their preparations for the coming of the Lord” (p. 254). Then concerning the Jews, the document states: “And we further testify, that the Jews among all nations are hereby commanded, in the name of the Messiah, to prepare, to return to Jerusalem in Palestine; and to rebuild that city and temple unto the Lord: And also to organize and establish their own political government, under their own rulers, judges, and governors in that country.” The document then states: “For be it known unto them that we now hold the keys of the priesthood and kingdom which is soon to be restored unto them” (p. 254)

The Return of the Ten Tribes
In Joseph Smith Matthew (in the Pearl of Great Price) we are informed that once the gospel has gone to all the world then the end of the world will come (vs. 31). The end of the world is directly preceded by the war that has become known as the battle of Armageddon (vs. 32). Zechariah prophesied that as part of this war Jerusalem would be besieged.

At a point in the war when the Jews have lost most of the “land” of Israel in battle and are about to be destroyed, the Lord will return to this remnant of the covenant people of Abraham to fulfill his covenant. When he comes, he will stand upon the Mt. of Olives. A great earthquake will split the Mt. of Olives in two, with half going towards the north (or left-hand) and the other towards the south (or right-hand) - a reminder of the covenants made with Abraham in Gen. 15 and at Shechem in Joshua 8! The Jews will escape their destruction by passing between the two halves of the Mt. of Olives - symbolizing that only by covenanting with the Lord can we be saved (again, note the similarity of this to the Israelites passing through the Red Sea thus being saved from destruction by the Egyptian army). Concerning these events, the Proclamation of the Twelve Apostles says, “In that day all who are in the siege, both against Judea and against Jerusalem, shall be cut in pieces; though all the people of the earth should be gathered together against it” (Messages of the First Presidency 1:258).

Doctrine and Covenants 45 continues the story. As the Jews pass “between the pieces” of the Mt. of Olives they will see their Messiah with wounds in his hands and his feet (a token of the blood of the covenant). They ask, “what are these wounds in thine hands and thy feet?” When they learn that this is the Savior, Jesus Christ, they are converted and the final fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant commences. The “earth shall be given unto them for an inheritance; and they shall multiply and wax strong and their children shall grow up without sin unto salvation” (vs. 58).

Doctrine and Covenants 133 finishes the story. After the Savior stands “upon the mount of Olivet . . . the land of Jerusalem and the land of Zion shall be turned back into their own place, and the earth shall be like as it was in the days before it was divided” (vs 20, 24). Then, “the Lord, even the Savior, shall stand in the midst of his people, and shall reign over all flesh” (vs. 25). At this point, “they who are in the north countries [scattered Israel gathered in stakes of Zion throughout the world] shall come in remembrance before the Lord; and their prophets shall hear his voice, and shall no longer stay themselves; and they shall smite the rocks, and the ice shall flow down at their presence.” Though the 10 tribes have gathered to stakes of Zion, they are still considered in the north countries (or under the curse) because they have not yet been restored back to the land from whence they were scattered - the land promised to Abraham!