

[For the DESERET NEWS.]  
**ARE WE OF ISRAEL?**

BY ELDER GEO. REYNOLDS.

"Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the world with fruit."—Isaiah.

CHAPTER I.

*Introductory—The promises of God to Abraham and his posterity—The seed of Joseph in America—The journey of the Ten Tribes northward—Ephraim mixed with all nations—The testimony of Pres. Brigham Young.*

The belief that the Latter-day Saints hold that the great majority of their number are of the house of Israel and heirs to the promises made to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, like many other portions of their faith, has received the ridicule of the shallow-minded and the contempt of the ungodly. However it is not our present intention to answer such, but to seek to adduce evidence, outside of the sure word of modern revelation, to prove that the Latter-day Saints have good reasons, drawn from history and analogy, for believing the words of their patriarchs who, in blessing them, pronounce them of the house of Abraham and of the promised seed of Jacob.

It is unnecessary to here quote all of the many gracious promises vouchsafed by the great father of us all to his friend Abraham and to that patriarch's immediate posterity, as they are cherished by the Saints as of more than earthly value, as pearls beyond all price, as sweet comforters in the day of trial and as strong towers of defence in the hour of temptation; yet it may not be out of place to refresh our minds by the recital of a few of the most prominent, that we may better comprehend the ideas and statements that follow after.

It is recorded (Genesis xvii, verses 4-7,) that the Lord covenanted with Abraham, saying:

"As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations; neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee; and I will make thee exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee."

Again (Genesis xxii-16-18) Jehovah declares:

"By myself, have I sworn, saith the Lord, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

To Isaac and to Jacob were these glorious promises confirmed if possible in yet stronger wording. Gen. xxvi, verses 4-10, xxviii, verse 14. To the latter it was said:

"And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad, to the west and to the east, and to the north and to the south. And in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

The blessing of Jacob upon his son Joseph is doubtless so familiar to the majority of our readers, that we shall simply quote the latter portion:

"The blessings of thy father have prevailed, above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills. They shall be upon the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brethren."

We will take but one step further in this direction. Jacob, in blessing the sons of Joseph, said (Gen. x, 8):

"Let my name be named on them, and the names of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

When Joseph reminded the aged patriarch that his right hand was placed on the head of the younger boy, he declared:

"I know it, my son, I know it. He (Manasseh) also shall become a people. And he also shall be great. But truly his younger brother shall be greater than he; and his seed

shall become a multitude of nations."

There are two points in these blessings that are very noteworthy. The first, that the seed of these patriarchs should become innumerable and grow to be a multitude of nations in the midst of the earth; the second, that in or through this seed all the nations and families of the earth should be blessed. With Abraham a covenant was made by the Most High, that he should become the father of many nations, and when we have laid aside the descendants of Ishmael—the Arabians and their fellows, who have grown into mighty multitudes, and not even counted the posterity of the sons of Keturah and of Abraham's other wives, yet in the one son Isaac the promise is renewed, his seed also is to multiply as "the stars of heaven." Once again we will divide the posterity and leave unnoticed the dukes of Edom and the other descendants of Isaac's favorite son. We will speak alone of Jacob; to him was repeated the divine promise:

"Thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth," and again "A nation and a company of nations shall be of thee." Here let us pause for a moment and ask, are they whom the world regard as the only representatives of Jacob, to-day—the dispersed of Judah—all that that holy man of old has to show as the fulfilment of so great a promise as the one last quoted. We think not, but believe that future search will vindicate prophecy and prove that the promises of the Eternal are not cut short in their complete fulfilment.

We are well aware, so great is the tendency of the races of the earth to mix and intermingle, that the Jews, as well as many Christians, point to their continued existence as a distinct people, as an unanswerable argument in favor of the divinity of their Scriptures, and the inspiration of their prophets. But their history, their exclusiveness, the dispersion, etc., do not fulfil a vast number of the prophecies uttered with regard to Israel. Yet when the history of all Israel is written, of Ephraim as well as of Judah, we are satisfied that no portion of God's holy word will be found to have returned to his mouth unfulfilled, and he will be as much glorified in the hiding up of the Ten Tribes and the mixing of Ephraim amongst the nations, as in the scattering of the sons and daughters of Judah.

Jacob had one son (and he not the ancestor of the Jews) to whom these blessings were not only renewed, but extended. To Joseph it is said that his blessings have prevailed above the blessings of his progenitors unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills, whilst of Joseph's younger son it was declared, "his seed shall be a multitude of nations." Thus we observe that with each succeeding heir to these choice blessings the promises seem to have grown larger, extended and spread out. To Abraham it was promised that he should be the father of many nations; to Ephraim, his grandson's grandson it was said of his seed, his seed alone, that it should become a multitude of nations. Where is that multitude of nations to-day? is a pertinent question, for God has promised it and they must exist.

The average student of history cannot answer this question. He knows nothing of the posterity of Ephraim, they are hidden from his sight. But the believer in the Book of Mormon will point to its record and declare that in the aborigines of North and South America, and of many of the Pacific Isles we find the seed of Joseph grown into a multitude of tribes, peoples and nations. We thankfully admit this truth, we cannot contradict it did we wish to do so. God has so revealed it and the external confirmatory evidences are growing stronger and more convincing every year. Yet another pertinent question here presents itself. We understand from the Book of Mormon the Lamanites to be of the house of Manasseh. If so his greatness does not fulfil the promises to Ephraim, who was to be greater than he. Surely the Lord, having so abundantly fulfilled his promise to the one brother, has not forgotten his covenant with his "first born." But shall we be deemed inconsistent if we say that we do not think that the whole of that multitude of nations is found in the descendants of Levi, of Mulok and their companions. Is it supposable that the Lord has confined

the fulfilment of the promises to Joseph whose blessings were to prevail above that of his progenitors to tribes who are to day, and, the majority of which have been for fifteen hundred years—or one quarter of this world's existence since mortals dwell hereon—amongst the wildest, the most degraded of mankind? If so the descendants of those to whom no promises were made have enjoyed the greater blessings. Greater blessings in numbers and in strength, in intelligence and wisdom, in the wealth and treasures of the earth and in the arts and adornments which applied knowledge produces. We contend that where Israel is not under the ban of God's displeasure through its sins and follies, it leads the world. Its sons are princes among men and the ministers of God's law to all people, indeed that in it, according to the oft repeated promise, all the families of the earth will be blessed. Here we may be interrupted by our reader (for it is Latter-day Saints we are addressing) with the question if we have forgotten the ten tribes hidden by Divine Providence in the far off frozen regions of the north, and envired by a belt of snow and ice so unpenetrable that no man in modern days has reached them. Now, we have not forgotten them, and through them, we believe, as through Levi and others, have the promises of God to Jacob and Joseph been partially fulfilled. But we ask further, is it altogether improbable that in that long journey of one and a half years, as Esdras states it, from Media, the land of their captivity, to the frozen north, some of backsliding Israel rebelled, turned aside from the main body, forgot their God, by and by mingled with the Gentiles and became the leaven to leaven with the promised seed all the nations of the earth? The account given in the Book of Mormon of a single family of this same house, its waywardness, its stiff-neckedness before God, its internal quarrels and family feuds are, we fear, an example on a small scale of what most probably happened in the vast bodies of Israelites who for so many months wended their tedious way northward. Laman and Lemuel had "no doubt" many counterparts in the journeying ten tribes. And who so likely to rebel as stubborn, impetuous, proud and warlike Ephraim. Rebellion and backsliding have been so characteristically the story of Ephraim's career that we can scarcely conceive that it could be otherwise and yet preserve the unities of that people's history. Can it be any wonder then that so much of the blood of Ephraim has been found hidden and unknown in the midst of the nations of northern Europe and other parts until the spirit of prophecy revealed its existence? But before proceeding further in our research, it may be well to insert the words of one having authority, to the effect that the Latter-day Saints are of Ephraim; to adduce ideas and reasons to substantiate this statement will be our pleasure as we proceed along.

President Young delivered a discourse in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, October 8th, 1855, from which the following are extracts:

"The set time has come for God to gather Israel, and for His work to commence upon the face of the whole earth, and the Elders who have arisen in this church and kingdom are actually of Israel. Take the Elders who are now in this house, and you can scarcely find one out of a hundred but what is of the house of Israel. It has been remarked that the Gentiles have been cut off, and I doubt whether another Gentile ever comes into this Church.

"Will we go to the Gentile nations to preach the gospel? Yes, and gather out the Israelites wherever they are mixed among the nations of the earth. What part or portion of them? The same part or portion that redeemed the house of Jacob and saved them from perishing with famine in Egypt."

"Ephraim has become mixed with all the nations of the earth, and it is Ephraim that is gathering together."

"It is Ephraim that I have been searching for all the days of my preaching, and that is the blood which ran in my veins when I embraced the gospel. If there are any of the other tribes of Israel mixed with the Gentiles we are also searching for them."

"It is the house of Israel we are after, and we care not whether they come from the east, the west,

the north or the south; from China, Russia, England, California, North or South America, or some other locality; and it is the very lad (Ephraim) upon whom Father Jacob laid his hands, that will save the house of Israel. The Book of Mormon came to Ephraim, for Joseph Smith was a pure Ephraimite, and the Book of Mormon was revealed to him, and while he lived he made it his business to search for those who believed the gospel."

You understand who we are; we are of the house of Israel, of the royal seed, of the royal blood." (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 2, pages 268-9.) To be continued.

**WEBER STAKE CONFERENCE.**

The Quarterly Conference of the Weber Stake of Zion was held in the Ogden Tabernacle, on Saturday and Sunday, July the 20th and 21st, 1878.

There were present on the stand: Of the Twelve Apostles, President John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Franklin D. Richards and Joseph F. Smith; the Presidency of the Stake D. H. Peery, L. J. Herrick C. F. Middleton, together with a number of leading Bishops and Elders.

After the opening exercises President D. H. Peery said he was sorry there were not more present, but realizing that now was an exceedingly busy time with the farmers; being in the midst of harvest, he could in part excuse them; still if we trusted more to the Lord and performed our duty when our religion called, we would reap greater blessings.

The following wards were reported in the morning session: 4th Ward, Ogden City, by Counselor E. Stratford; Second Ward by Bishop Robert McQuarrie; Third Ward by Bishop Winslow Farr; First Ward by Bishop F. A. Brown; Harrisville by Bishop P. G. Taylor; Slaterville by John A. Allred; Riverdale by Bishop Sanford Bingham; North Ogden by Bishop Amos Maycock; Plain City by Counselor John Spiers; West Weber by Bishop John I. Hart; Lynn by Bishop Daniel F. Thomas; Eden by Counselor Orson Eggleston; Huntsville by Bishop F. A. Hammond.

These reports were listened to with a great deal of interest. The reports concerning the great abundance of crops and the interest on the part of the Relief Societies in storing up wheat, and hence building granaries, were very gratifying. There also appeared to be an increased effort, on the part of the lesser priesthood, to magnify their holy calling. The Y. M. M. I. Associations were well attended, as were also the Y. L. M. I. Associations.

The Relief Societies received special commendation for their valuable assistance to the Bishops, in helping to take care of the poor and the afflicted. The meetings were usually well attended.

2 p. m.

After singing and prayer reports of the wards were continued, Uintah, by Bishop Ira N. Spaulding; Hooper, by Bishop Gilbert Belnap; Mound Fort, by Bishop David Moore.

Supt L. F. Monch stated that the attendance in the day school this summer had been better than in any previous year, and that many of the young men and ladies of the county were preparing themselves for teaching. In the Sabbath schools the efforts of the superintendent, Richard Ballantyne and his assistant, were principally directed toward securing attendance in the meeting as well as in the Sabbath school. The children were usually willing to go to school but the main difficulty seemed to be in securing teachers.

The clerk next read the statistical report of the Stake for the quarter ending July 20th, 1878. This showed an increase over the last quarterly conference report of 73 officers, 179 members, and 133 souls, thus showing that Weber Stake of Zion was considerably on the increase during the last three months.

Elder Wilford Woodruff addressed the Saints upon the importance of the work in which we are engaged and the necessity of union in all things, especially where the government of the people of God was at stake.

Elder Joseph F. Smith followed. He gave a brief account of the great faith and integrity of his mother, who, at his father's death, had to provide for two

families, how she paid strict tithing, attended to family prayer and every church duty, teaching the same to her children, and how she was thereby abundantly prospered. He then took up the subject of the elective franchise, and in a powerful discourse showed the right of men in the priesthood to hold office as well as laymen, if elected by the people, also the absolute necessity of union in our political affairs.

Sunday, 10 a.m.

After the opening exercises, Bishop Leonard W. Hardy addressed the meeting on the doctrine and practice of tithing and the blessings that flow therefrom.

Elder George Q. Cannon followed, with an intensely interesting discourse on our present position, politically and religiously, showing the corruptions of the world, the evils of office-seeking, and the right of the people under the constitution to choose their leading men, whether Apostles, Bishops, or other members of the priesthood to fill secular positions, and the right of those church authorities to fill such offices if elected, and they condescended to do so.

Elder Wilford Woodruff bore testimony to the truth of the remarks made, and to the fact that the whole earth would come under the rule of the kingdom of God.

2 p. m.

After singing and prayer Elder C. W. Penrose addressed the conference on the certainty of all persons reaping what they sowed, or receiving the results of their own acts, good or evil, all of which were recorded, and the effects of which were stamped upon their character, also upon sustaining the church policy in politics as well as all things else.

He then read the report of the Y. M. M. I. A. of Weber Stake and presented the General Authorities of the Church and of the Weber Stake, who were unanimously sustained.

Elder John Taylor followed in a powerful address, based on the Lord's prayer, particularly the words, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," and showed that it should be our highest aim to carry out the will of the Lord in all the affairs of life, and that the time would come when the kingdoms of this world would become the kingdom of God and His Christ, and he would rule over all the earth forever.

Elder F. D. Richards returned thanks to the brethren of the Twelve for their visit and instruction, and the singers under Professor J. Fowler for their music.

Conference adjourned for three months.

L. F. MONCH, Clerk.

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