

## **Jeremiah 29-31**

### **Jeremiah 29:1 the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem... to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away**

"In Jeremiah 29 we find a letter in which Jeremiah delivered the word of the Lord to those already in exile in Babylon. To the exiles the Lord said, 'Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them' (Jer. 29:5), all language reminiscent of Jeremiah's call 'to build, and to plant' (Jer. 1:10). The point is that the Exile would be long, and therefore the people should live their lives, taking husbands and wives and begetting sons and daughters, with an understanding that Babylon would be home for them. In part this letter was a response to those false prophets in Babylon who apparently were raising the hopes of the people for a quick return (Jer. 27:7-9). The Lord even noted that two of those false prophets of the Exile would be turned over to Nebuchadnezzar and killed (Jer. 29:21). In a real sense, the scattering of Israel that had begun on a large scale with the deportation of the Northern Kingdom in the eighth century was being continued. Jeremiah's letter served to remind exiled Judah that though they should not become part of the world, they should learn to live in the world." (Kent P. Jackson, ed., *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 4: 1 Kings to Malachi* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1993], 205 - 206)

### **Jeremiah 29:10 after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you... in causing you to return to this place**

#### **George Albert Smith**

When Cyrus was about fifty years of age, after subduing many peoples and small nations, he appeared with his army before Babylon, the then greatest of all cities, with its impregnable walls, three hundred feet high, and its mighty gates of iron and brass. Instead of attacking the walls, he diverted the Euphrates River that flowed through the city and used the channel under the walls by which to enter Babylon. He captured the city without difficulty, while Belshazzar, the king, with his courtiers were drinking themselves drunk and desecrating the sacred vessels of the house of the Lord which his father, Nebuchadnezzar, had brought from Jerusalem.

Within the city, Cyrus found the Hebrew prophet, Daniel, who had already interpreted the handwriting on the wall, having informed Belshazzar that he had been "weighed in the balance and found wanting" (Dan. 5:27). Having access to the Jewish records, Cyrus learned that the God of Israel had

decreed that he was to rebuild Jerusalem. He promptly issued a proclamation to the Jews to return to Jerusalem and for the nations to assist them in rebuilding the city and the temple. This was accomplished exactly seventy years after Jerusalem was destroyed, thus fulfilling Jeremiah's prophecy uttered more than one hundred years before. (*Conference Report*, April 1945, pp. 135-139)

**Jeremiah 29:13 ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart**

**James E. Faust**

Jeremiah counsels us to pray with all our heart and soul. Enos recounted how his soul had hungered and that he had prayed all the day long. (Enos 1:4) Prayers vary in their intensity. Even the Savior "prayed more earnestly" in His hour of agony. Some are simple expressions of appreciation and requests for a continuation of blessings on our loved ones and us. However, in times of great personal hurt or need, more may be required than mere asking. The Lord said, "You have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me." (D&C 9:7) Blessings sought through prayer sometimes require work, effort, and diligence on our part. (*Ensign*, May 2002, 59)

**Thomas S. Monson**

The formula for finding Jesus has always been and ever will be the same—the earnest and sincere prayer of a humble and pure heart. The prophet Jeremiah counseled, "Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." (Jer. 29:13.)

Before we can successfully undertake a personal search for Jesus, we must first prepare time for him in our lives and room for him in our hearts. In these busy days there are many who have time for golf, time for shopping, time for work, time for play—but no time for Christ.

Lovely homes dot the land and provide rooms for eating, rooms for sleeping, playrooms, sewing rooms, television rooms, but no room for Christ.

Do we get a pang of conscience as we recall his own words: "The foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." (Matt. 8:20.) Or do we flush with embarrassment when we remember, "And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for

them in the inn." (Luke 2:7.) No room. No room. No room. Ever has it been. ("The Search for Jesus," *Ensign*, Dec. 1990, 4-5)

### **Dieter F. Uchtdorf**

Since "God is love," the closer we approach Him, the more profoundly we experience love. But because a veil separates this mortality from our heavenly home, we must seek in the Spirit that which is imperceptible to mortal eyes.

Heaven may seem distant at times, but the scriptures offer hope: "Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

However, seeking God with all our hearts implies much more than simply offering a prayer or pronouncing a few words inviting God into our lives. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." (1 John 5:3; 2 John 1:6) We can make a great production of saying that we know God. We can proclaim publicly that we love Him. Nevertheless, if we don't obey Him, all is in vain, for "he that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1 John 2:4)

We increase our love for our Heavenly Father and demonstrate that love by aligning our thoughts and actions with God's word. His pure love directs and encourages us to become more pure and holy. It inspires us to walk in righteousness-not out of fear or obligation but out of an earnest desire to become even more like Him because we love Him. By doing so, we can become "born again ... [and] cleansed by blood, even the blood of [the] Only Begotten; that [we] might be sanctified from all sin, and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory." (Moses 6:59)

My dear brothers and sisters, don't get discouraged if you stumble at times. Don't feel downcast or despair if you don't feel worthy to be a disciple of Christ at all times. The first step to walking in righteousness is simply to try. We must *try* to believe. Try to learn of God: read the scriptures; study the words of His latter-day prophets; choose to listen to the Father, and do the things He asks of us. Try and keep on trying until that which seems difficult becomes possible-and that which seems only possible becomes habit and a real part of you. ("The Love of God," *Ensign*, Nov 2009, 21-24)

**Jeremiah 29:17 I will send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence**

## **Ezra Taft Benson**

Now the prophecies are very clear with reference to the dispersion and scattering of Israel and Judah. Moses, Ezekiel, Amos, Jeremiah, and others made clear predictions that Judah would be scattered. The Master referred to it when asked by his disciples for a sign as to the end of the world. The Lord said,

And they [referring to the Jews] shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled (Luke 21:24).

Jeremiah made it clear that they, the Jews, would be persecuted with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence and that the Lord would

. . . deliver them to be removed to all kingdoms of the earth to be a curse, and an astonishment, and a hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them:

Because they have not hearkened to my word, saith the Lord (Jer. 29:18-19).

Is it possible that the times of the Gentiles are nearing their fulfillment, that the time is approaching when the gospel will be carried to the descendants of Judah? I think one of the saddest chapters in history is the account of the dispersion and suffering of Judah.

I have before me a quotation of Will Durant in his book, *The Story of Civilization*, in which he states that "no people in history fought so tenaciously for liberty as the Jews, nor any other people against such odds." He says further, "No other people has ever known so long an exile, or so hard a fate."

Then referring to the siege of Jerusalem under Titus, lasting for 134 days, during which 1,110,000 Jews perished and 97,000 were taken captive: he states that the Romans destroyed 987 towns in Palestine and slew 580,000 men, and a still larger number, we are told, perished through starvation, disease, and fire.

Nearly all Judea was laid waste. So many Jews were sold as slaves that their price fell to that of a horse. Thousands hid in underground channels rather than be captured. Surrounded by Romans they died one by one of hunger while the living ate the bodies of the dead.

Scarcely eight thousand Jews were left in all of Palestine. And even their banishment and scattering didn't end their persecution. Efforts were made to drive them from various countries. Some nations made an effort to banish them completely. They were accused of causing the "Black Death" that spread through Europe in 1348, and many Jews were crucified therefore.

I have said nothing regarding the Crusades and the dastardly deeds perpetrated in the name of Christianity upon the remaining Jews in Palestine. Yes, the prophecies regarding the dispersion and the suffering of Judah have been fulfilled. But the gathering and reestablishment of the Jews is also clearly predicted. (*Conference Report*, April 1950, pp. 71-79)

**Jeremiah 31:6 the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God**

The apostles and prophets of the Restoration-the apostles and prophets since the Restoration-are "the watchmen upon mount Ephraim." Called primarily through the lineage of Ephraim, the latter-day leaders of the kingdom have been inviting Israel to come home since 1830. The gathering has commenced; it has accelerated; it will hasten in its time (D&C 88:73). "The watchmen upon the mount Ephraim" are the latter-day version of those who publish peace:

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that published peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!  
Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion. (Isa. 52:7-8)

**LeGrand Richards**

It would appear that Jeremiah wrote a portion of the history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints approximately 2500 years before it occurred.

This was a cry from "the watchmen upon mount Ephraim. . . . Arise ye and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God."... This was to be a gathering of the descendants of Joseph and Ephraim, "to Zion unto the Lord our God."

"Sing with gladness for Jacob." Why? Because the day of his redemption was nigh.

"Shout among the chief of the nations." (v. 7) The Elders of this Church had been sent to Great Britain (1846), the Scandinavian countries, Germany, etc., the chief nations, and had gathered in many converts to Nauvoo, Illinois.

"I will bring them . . . a great company shall return thither." (v. 8) This was something the Lord was going to do. Note that Jeremiah does not say that they will return hither, or to the place where this prediction was made, but thither, or to a distant place. He understood that Joseph was to be given a new land in the "utmost bound of the everlasting hills." (See Genesis 49:22-26; Deuteronomy 33:13-17.) (*Israel! Do You Know?* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954], 177-178)

### **Jeremiah 31:8-9 a great company shall return thither**

#### **LeGrand Richards**

A "great company" was to "return thither," and with them "the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together," and "they shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them." About twenty thousand Latter-day Saints were driven out of Nauvoo, and with them "the blind and the lame, the woman with child." They did not leave their beautiful homes because they wanted to, hence they came "weeping" and with "supplications" unto the Lord, and He led them as He had promised.

"I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble." In their trek from Nauvoo, Illinois, across the great American desert to the Salt Lake Valley, the saints traveled about six hundred miles along the North Platte River, as Jeremiah had seen.

"Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion." (v. 12) At this writing (1954) the Tabernacle Choir, at Salt Lake City, Utah, consisting of approximately 375 unpaid voices broadcasts weekly "from the crossroads of the west." They are in their twenty-sixth year of weekly nation-wide broadcasts. This represents but a small part of the singing that is done "in the height of Zion." (*Israel! Do You Know?* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954], 177-178)

### **Jeremiah 31:9 I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble**

#### **LeGrand Richards**

The thirty-first chapter of Jeremiah is but "Mormon" history written three thousand years ago when the Lord said through Jeremiah:

For there shall be a day, that the watchman upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God. (Jeremiah 31:6.)

Then he indicates that the Lord would gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child, a great company should return thither. They should come with weeping and supplications, and he promised that he would cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they should not stumble. And when the pioneers came to these valleys of the mountains, they traveled some six hundred miles along the Platte and North Platte rivers, fulfilling literally the words of Jeremiah in the gathering of the people to Ephraim's mountains, and they did come as a great multitude and with them their sick and their lame and the blind and the woman with child, and they came sorrowing because they were driven from their homes. And how did Jeremiah know all this three thousand years ago if... there is no way men can know things before they actually transpire? (*Conference Report*, April 1947, Afternoon Meeting 44 - 45)

### **Jeremiah 31:9 Ephraim is my firstborn**

Ephraim was not the firstborn. He was the second son of the eleventh son. Manasseh was Joseph's first son not Ephraim (Gen 41:51-52). So what does Jeremiah mean, "Ephraim is my firstborn"? As with Esau and Jacob wherein the birthright went to the younger brother, so Joseph made sure that Ephraim received the birthright under the hand of his father Jacob (Gen. 48:13-14).

In the last days, Ephraim is the Lord's firstborn. He is the instrument of the Restoration. He is the first to build up Zion. He is the first to receive the blessings of the Priesthood. He is the first to return to the House of the Lord. He is the first to cry, "Come unto Zion, for the Lord thy God reigneth." As firstborn, Ephraim will rule into the Millennium, when his privilege will be to administer the saving ordinances of the temple to his gathered brethren from "the north country" and "the coasts of the earth." (v. 8)

### **Joseph Fielding Smith**

We learn, then, that when these glorious times shall come the children of Ephraim shall be "servants" of the Lord. Ephraim shall stand in the full glory of his birthright at the head, to minister to his fellow tribesmen. What a glory is

his! What honor bestowed upon him now when he is no longer rebellious! And the Lord adds:

Behold, this is the blessing of the everlasting God upon the tribes of Israel, and the richer blessings upon the head of Ephraim and his fellows. (D&C 133:34)

It is Ephraim, today, who holds the Priesthood. It is with Ephraim that the Lord has made covenant and has revealed the fulness of the everlasting Gospel. It is Ephraim who is building temples and performing the ordinances in them for both the living and the dead. When the "lost tribes" come-and it will be a most wonderful sight and a marvelous thing when they do come to Zion-in fulfillment of the promises made through Isaiah and Jeremiah, they will have to receive the crowning blessings from their brother Ephraim, the "first-born" in Israel. (*The Way to Perfection* [Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1949], 125)

**Jeremiah 31:10 declare it in the isles... he that scattered Israel will gather him**

### **Bruce R. McConkie**

Hear it again, O ye scattered ones, and let it be written in every heart. Ephraim shall bring salvation to you in the last days. Ephraim shall hear the word from the Lord and proclaim it to you. In his hands shall be the Stick of Joseph, which is the Stick of Ephraim, which is the Book of Mormon which contains the fulness of the everlasting gospel, which is the standard around which all men must either rally or be damned. The call shall come unto you from the mountains of Ephraim. Be wise and give heed.

"For thus saith the Lord; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel." Salvation now goes forth to the scattered remnants in all the nations of their habitation. Publish the word; praise the Lord. Cry Salvation, and Glory, and Honor. The promised day of restoration is here. (*The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982], 194)

### **Bruce R. McConkie**

Our divine commission to bring Israel to Zion is recorded in our revelations. But it can also be read in the inspired decisions of the living oracles who send forth the elders of Israel, duly and properly instructed, to tell the people in all



nations where and under what circumstances they shall gather in their day and situation. One of the greatest of the written calls came in a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith on November 3, 1831, a mere nineteen months after the Church and kingdom of God had been set up again on earth in this final gospel dispensation. It is to this wondrous document of superlative worth, and one filled with dynamic expression, that we shall first give our attention. Then we shall note some other revealed statements and weave them all into the inspired procedures ordained by those who hold the keys of gathering and who are thereby empowered to specify the place and direct the manner in which each soul in scattered Israel shall gather.

Speaking to his newly established church, to the little flock gathered into his latter-day sheepfold, to those who already believed his word and sought to learn and do his will, the Lord said: "Prepare ye, prepare ye, O my people; sanctify yourselves; gather ye together, O ye people of my church, upon the land of Zion, all you that have not been commanded to tarry." The Lord always gathers his people. In this wicked world they must come together to strengthen each other in the holy faith. They must assemble in congregations to teach one another the doctrines of the kingdom. They must use their united strength to bear the burdens of each other, to mourn with those who mourn, and to comfort those who go stand in need of comfort. They must come where the temples of God stand so as to be endowed with power from on high. (*The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982], 290)

### **Jeremiah 31:12 they shall come and sing in the height of Zion**

#### **Orson Pratt**

Jeremiah says in his thirty-first chapter-"Behold I will bring them from the north, the blind and the lame with them, and the woman with child; they shall come, a great company out of the north countries." Where will they go to? Will they go immediately to Palestine, where they formerly had their inheritance? No. Jeremiah tells us where they will go; he tells us there is to be a place called Zion before these tribes come out of the north countries, and when they come with a great company, the blind and the lame with them, and the Lord God leads them with supplication and with tears and with prayers, bringing them forth from those dreary, desolate, cold arctic regions: when that day shall come there shall be a Zion prepared to receive these ten tribes, before they finally go back to Palestine. Is there anything in the Scriptures about this? Yes. In the same chapter of Jeremiah we read that "they shall come and sing in the height of Zion." Zion, then, will have to be built up before they come;

Zion will have to be reared somewhere and prepared to receive them; and it will be a holy place, and it will be a holy people who will build up Zion, so much so that the Lord will bring these ten tribes in to the height of Zion, into the midst of it.

What will then take place? They shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for the wheat, the wine, the oil, or the young of the flock; their souls shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not sorrow any more at all. Why? Because they have got among a good people, where there is no need to sorrow; they have come up into a land that is choice above all other lands, a land that brings forth wheat, and grapes for the producing of wine, where flocks, herds, &c., are multiplied, and their souls will be like a watered garden, and all the sorrows they have experienced for twenty-five hundred years, in the cold regions of the north, will be done away; and they will not sorrow any more at all. (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 18: 23)

### **Jeremiah 31:14 I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness**

#### **LeGrand Richards**

I do not believe you could go anywhere in the world and find men engaged in the ministry, I care not how great their salaries are, who would testify that the Lord has satiated their souls with fatness and they are satisfied with the Lord's goodness to them, as are you brethren who bear the Priesthood of God and are privileged to feed the flock under His divine leadership and inspiration. (*Conference Report*, April 1943, Second Day-Morning Meeting 47)

### **Jeremiah 31:15 A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation... Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted**

Herod the Great should be known as Herod the Terrible. His paranoia and wickedness seem unsurpassed in the annals of despotism. Of his sons, Herod was perpetually suspicious. Concerned that one of his sons was guilty of sedition, he had his son's friends tortured in order to extract information from them. This torture resulted not in confession but in the death of many of the young men. (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XVI, 8:4). Josephus writes, "he was...overrun with suspicion and hatred against all about him...in order to his preservation, he continued to suspect those that were guiltless: nor did he set any bounds to himself; but supposing that those who stayed with him had the most power to hurt him, they were to him very frightful." This mentality lead to mental illness with paranoid delusions, "because he could

trust nobody, he was sorely punished by the expectation of further misery; for he often fancied in his imagination, that his son had fallen upon him, or stood by him with a sword in his hand; and thus was his mind night and day intent upon this thing, and revolved it over and over...And this was the sad condition Herod was now in." (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XVI, 8:5)  
Predictably, Herod had three of his own sons killed: Alexander, Aristobulus, and Antipater.

"The cup of Herod's misdeeds, but also of his misery, was full. During the whole latter part of his life, the dread of a rival to the throne had haunted him, and he had sacrificed thousands, among them those nearest and dearest to him, to lay that ghost. And still the tyrant was not at rest. A more terrible scene is not presented in history than that of the closing days of Herod. Tormented by nameless fears; ever and again a prey to vain remorse, when he would frantically call for his passionately-loved, murdered wife Mariamme, and her sons; even making attempts on his own life; the *delirium* of tyranny, the passion for blood, drove him to the verge of madness. The most loathsome disease, such as can scarcely be described, had fastened on his body, and his sufferings were at times agonizing." (Edersheim, Alfred, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, p. 151)

The news of a new king, heralded by prophecy, accompanied by foreign dignitaries, and pronounced by a new star in the heavens must have struck a familiar, paranoid chord in Herod. While a rational person would have seen no threat in the birth of the infant, Herod was near the end of his reign, in failing health, and well beyond reason. Still, he managed some shrewdness in his devious plan to destroy the potential rival, obtaining the two pieces of information he most needed: the location and timing of Jesus' birth.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,  
Saying, Where is the child that is born, the Messiah of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and have come to worship him.

When Herod the king had heard of the child, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

And when he had gathered all the chief priests, and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them, saying, Where is the place that is written of by the prophets, in which Christ should be born? For he greatly feared, yet he believed not the prophets.

And they said unto him, It is written by the prophets, that he should be born in Bethlehem of Judea, for thus have they said,

The word of the Lord came unto us, saying, And thou Bethlehem, which lieth in the land of Judea, in thee shall be born a prince, which art not the least among the princes of Judea; for out of thee shall come the Messiah, who shall save my people Israel.

Then Herod, when he had called the wise men privily, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found the child, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. (Matt. 2:1-8)

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth; and sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, In Ramah there was a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning; Rachael weeping for the loss of her children, and would not be comforted because they were not. (Matt. 2:16-18)

### **Jeremiah 31:29-30 The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge**

One of the greatest curses is when the children suffer because of the sins of their fathers. When one generation's apostasy is passed on, the effects can be devastating for generations. When just one man is sexually abusive to his children, it sets in motion a potential cascade of abuse for his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. When an alcoholic's dysfunction affects his home and children, the family suffers for generations.

The Lord warned Israel from the first, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." While the Lord seems to take ownership of the iniquity that is passed upon the children, the blame resides with the first disobedient generation. The consequences for the next generation follow in natural succession. **Spencer W. Kimball** noted:

"It is amazing how many divorces come to the children when the mother and the father are divorced. It is amazing how easy it is for the children to fail the family prayers when the parents fail in their family prayers. It is not surprising when children will not go to church or their meetings when the father and the mother do not go. Do you see the sour grapes? They go right on down

through the generation." (*BYU Studies*, vol. 25 (1985), Number 4 - Fall 1985 151)

The more heinous sins, in particular, affect multiple generations. This is why Laman and Lemuel were held responsible for the apostasy of the Lamanites (2 Ne. 4:6). This is why breaking the covenant Moses made for Israel brought dangerous consequences for the children:

Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day long...  
Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity...  
And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee. (Deut. 28:32, 41, 53)

The history of Israel had unfortunately seen the fulfillment of the curses brought upon the children. Jeremiah's rejoicing is in the day that the children will no longer suffer because of the parents. When Israel is finally righteous again, when the covenant is no longer broken, when the sins of the fathers are no longer passed on to the next generation, all Israel will have reason to rejoice. No more will the children have a bad taste in their mouth because the father's choice to eat sour grapes.

### **Joseph Fielding Smith**

The Lord never punishes a child for its parents' transgressions. He is just and merciful. The real meaning of this visiting of the iniquity is that when a man transgresses he teaches his children to transgress, and they follow his teachings. It is natural for children to follow in the practices of their fathers and by doing so suffer for the parents' iniquity which they have voluntarily brought upon themselves. (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 5 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1957-1966], 1: 81)

### **Jeremiah 31:31 I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel**

The apostle Paul had the difficult task of explaining to the Jewish Christians that the Law of Moses was fulfilled. He had to explain there was a new and higher law, a new and higher covenant, and a new and higher priesthood. Paul's brilliant explanation occupies most of Hebrews 7-10. Therein he quotes Jeremiah 31:31-32 (see Hebrews 8:8-11). However, the Jewish converts to Christianity never reached the point of righteousness that Jeremiah spoke of.

The prophecy was not fulfilled in Paul's day; the meridian saints didn't get even close to the description that all should know the Lord "from the least to the greatest" (Heb. 8:11).

The new and everlasting covenant that Paul was trying to teach the saints was lost for a dispensation. It therefore had to be revealed again, "Behold, I say unto you that all old covenants have I caused to be done away in this thing; and this is the new and everlasting covenant, even that which was from the beginning." (D&C 22:1) The *covenant* is from everlasting; it is *new* only to the generation in which it is restored. To the Jews of Paul's day, the idea of a covenant relationship with Christ was new. To the house of Israel in the latter-days, the idea of a covenant relationship with the Lord through the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is new.

### **Dallin H. Oaks**

The New Testament teaches that Christ was "the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Heb. 8:6). The Prophet Joseph Smith declared that this covenant was not put in force at the time of Christ's mortal ministry because Israel rejected him (see *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 14-15). In a revelation given the same month the restored Church was organized, the Lord declared, "I say unto you that all old covenants have I caused to be done away in this thing; and this is a new and an everlasting covenant, even that which was from the beginning" (D&C 22:1).

The covenant described in these scriptures, made new by its renewal and confirmation in these latter days, refers to our covenant relationship with Jesus Christ. It incorporates the fulness of the gospel (see D&C 66:2; D&C 132:6), which **President Joseph Fielding Smith** described as "the sum total of all gospel covenants and obligations" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:156). ("Another Testament of Jesus Christ," *Ensign*, Mar. 1994, 63-64)

### **Bruce R. McConkie**

Hear it and mark it well: it will be a new covenant, a new and an everlasting covenant; it will be the fulness of the everlasting gospel, not in name only, but in fact and in deed, in active operation in the lives of men. It will be "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord." When the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt he offered them the fulness of the gospel. Moses held the Melchizedek Priesthood, and his people could have lived the

higher gospel law had they chosen to do so. But they broke not only the gospel covenant but also the Mosaic or lesser covenant, at least in large measure.

"But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." There will be a day when latter-day Israel will serve the Lord with all their hearts and make themselves worthy of the fulness of his glory. (*The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982], 681)

### **Jeremiah 31:33 I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts**

Have you ever been frustrated with the repetitive nature of the temple endowment? Have you ever felt to doze off during a session? Have you wondered why the same information is repeated over and over again? What is the Lord trying to do? Is he trying to torture us? Doesn't he know how much we like variety? Why must we hear the same thing over and over again?

Jeremiah has the answer. The Lord controls the content of our temple teaching because he has a special goal for us, to place the law in our inward parts and to write the principles in our hearts. The repetition allows us to internalize key principles; key principles allow us to stay true to our covenants. Latter-day saints who rarely pick up the scriptures are often very familiar with temple doctrines. They may know little about Paul's ministry, but they know what the Lord expects of them. They may know nothing of the covenant Moses made on Sinai, but they know what covenants the Lord expects them to keep.

"Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ... written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart" (2 Cor. 3:3) The temple is where the Lord writes his law upon the fleshy tables of our hearts, because this is where the Lord can teach us how to walk in his statutes and keep his ordinances that we will be worthy to be called his people.

### **Jeremiah 31:34 they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest**

In the Millennium, "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa 11:9).

### **Erastus Snow**

[In] the millennium... universal peace will be established upon the earth, and the Kingdom of our God [will] prevail in all lands-a day when the servants of God may bear the glad tidings to all people, nations, kindreds and tongues upon all the face of the earth, and there shall be none to molest them, or make them afraid. The truth will abound and light and understanding come to the people. It will be a day of great light in every corner of the land-the day spoken of by the Prophet Isaiah, wherein he says the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea-the day when they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord; for they shall all know Him from the least of them to the greatest of them-a day when "every man shall see eye to eye." Prophets and Saints have looked for such a period, have longed for it, have prayed for it, have sung about it, have prophesied of it, and they have spoken of the work that should bring it about. Are all these prophecies fallacious? Are all these hopes vain? Will all these expectations come to naught? Or are they to be fulfilled? With the Latter-day Saints there is but one answer to this question. The Lord has opened their understanding, has touched their eyes, has pricked them in the ear, has comforted them, and has given to them the Holy Ghost. (*Journal of Discourses*, 25:69)