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Questions and Answers - Gathering of the Jews

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ing many interesting incidents in the history of that old military station. Among other data is this, in regard to the travel over the trail of which Fort Laramie was the principal stopping point en route:

1841. J. R. Walker and fifteen men for Oregon. Later in the season, Bidwell and one hundred and twelve men for California.

1842. Elijah White's company of one hundred and twenty-one men and eighteen Conestoga wagons, for Oregon. The same season, Lieut. John C. Fremont and twenty-one United States soldiers, and Kit Carson for a guide, enroute to South Pass.

1847. Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball and one hundred and forty-three men and seventy-three wagons for Salt Lake.

1848. Brigham Young with one thousand two hundred men, women and children, and three hundred and ninety-seven wagons; Heber C. Kimball with six hundred and sixty-two people and two hundred and twenty-six wagons; W. Richards with five hundred and twenty-six persons and one hundred and sixty-nine wagons, all for Salt Lake.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Gathering of the Jews.

A reader of the ERA, writing from Leeds, Washington Co., Utah, asks the following question:

When the Jews gather to Palestine, will they be in a condition of belief or unbelief in Jesus Christ?

There are numerous passages in the Book of Mormon that are positive on the side of belief:

II. Nephi, 10:7. But behold, thus saith the Lord God: When the day cometh that they shall believe in me, that I am Christ, then have I covenanted with their fathers that they shall be restored in the flesh, upon the earth, unto the lands of their inheritance.

25:15. Wherefore, the Jews shall be scattered among all nations; yea, and also Babylon shall be destroyed; wherefore, the Jews shall be scattered by other nations;

16. And after they have been scattered, and the Lord God hath scourged them by other nations, for the space of many generations, yea, even down from generation to generation, until they shall be persuaded

to believe in Christ, the son of God, and the atonement, which is infinite for all mankind; and when that day shall come, that they shall believe in Christ, and worship the Father in His name, with pure hearts and clean hands, and look not forward any more for another Messiah, then, at that time, the day will come that it must needs be expedient that they should believe these things,

17. And the Lord will set his hand again the second time to restore his people from their lost and fallen state. Wherefore, he will proceed to do a marvelous work and a wonder among the children of men.

Following are the personal declarations of Jesus Christ:

III Nephi 20:29. And I will remember the covenant which I have made with my people, and I have covenanted with them, that I would gather them together in mine own due time; that I would give unto them again the land of their fathers, for their inheritance, which is the land of Jerusalem, which is the promised land unto them forever, saith the Father.

30. And it shall come to pass that the time cometh, when the fullness of my gospel shall be preached unto them,

31. And they shall believe in me, that I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and shall pray unto the Father in my name.

There are numerous other passages in the Book of Mormon, that simply refer to the future fact of the gathering of the Jews, without making any direct reference to their belief or unbelief in the Redeemer. Among them are the following: Page 99, chapter 20, vs. 20, 23; words of Isaiah; page 101, chapter 21, vs. 11, 12, also words of Isaiah.

There are other passages which indicate that there will be two classes of Jews who will gather to Palestine. The following is a sample:

II Nephi, 30:7. And it shall come to pass that the Jews which are scattered, also shall begin to believe in Christ; and they shall begin to gather in upon the face of the land; and as many as shall believe in Christ, shall also become a delightful people.

Some have taken the ground that the full unbelief situation is supported by the following from section 45, Doctrine and Covenants:

51. And then shall the Jews look upon me and say, What are these wounds in thine hands and in thy feet?

52. Then shall they know that I am the Lord; for I will say unto them, These wounds are the wounds with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. I am he who was lifted up. I am Jesus that was crucified. I am the Son of God.

Isolated from other inspired statements, this would seem to bear out the complete unbelief theory. Another passage in the same section, however, dispels it:

43. And the remnant shall be gathered unto this place,

44. And then they shall look for me, and, behold, I will come; and they shall see me in the clouds of heaven, clothed with power and great glory, with all the holy angels; and he that watches not for me shall be cut off.

Those who look for Christ close to the time of his coming must certainly be believers in him. Therefore, when he comes down to his people, the latter will be divided into two classes—believers and unbelievers in the Savior.

The 45th section is largely a reiteration of what Jesus told his ancient disciples regarding his second coming and events which were to precede it. Among these is the coming in of the times of the Gentiles—the restoration of the gospel to them. The times of the Gentiles are to be fulfilled within the same generation in which they are ushered in. Then will come the opportunity of the remnant of Jews, as the gospel will then go exclusively to them, and their gathering be accomplished. The gospel is “first to the Gentiles and then to the Jews.”

In the accomplishment of the purposes of God, the principle of preparation, or graduation, is always manifested. Many people in this dispensation have been prepared in advance for the declaration of the gospel in its fullness to them, and they have consequently accepted the glad tidings as soon as their ears were saluted by the divine message.

So it is in every special movement inaugurated by the Almighty among the hosts of men. The fulfillment of the wonderful promise of the God of Israel concerning the remnant of his ancient people in the last days must, being of far-reaching importance, be no exception to the rule. Hence the preparation of the Jewish mind for the acceptance of Christ and his gospel is now in its initial stage.

The attention of the Hebrew race must be directed toward the land of their fathers, as an initiatory preparation for their gathering. This is already in progress. It is a function of what is called the Zionist movement, inaugurated several years ago, by Dr. Herzl, and has had a steady and rapid growth. It is international, and has among its adherents and supporters the bulk of the leading and most influential and distinguished Jews of the world. This organization has a large and increasing fund to be used in carrying out the object of its existence—the colonizing of Palestine by the Jewish people and their re-establishment in a national capacity. The nature of this movement is such that it must attract the interest of all intelligent Hebrews, whose eyes are thus directed to the former home of their race.

The yearning toward the ancient home of the Jews must be associated by an appreciation of the character of Jesus Christ, that they may—when the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled and their own be ushered in—be prepared to receive the fullness of his gospel. This preparatory process is likewise in a condition of activity.

Not long since a large number of Jewish scholars and Rabbis responded to a request to answer the following question: "What is the Jewish thought today of Jesus of Nazareth?"

Dr. Isadore Singer, managing editor of the Jewish Encyclopedia:

"I regard Jesus of Nazareth as a Jew of Jews; one whom all Jews are learning to love. His teaching has been an immense service to all the world in bringing Israel's God to the knowledge of hundreds of millions of mankind.

"The great change in Jewish thought concerning Jesus of Nazareth, I can not better illustrate than by this fact: When I was a boy, had my father, who was a very pious man, heard the name of Jesus uttered from the pulpit of our synagogue, he and every other man would have left the building, and the Rabbi would have been dismissed at once. Now it is not strange in many synagogues to hear sermons preached eulogistic of this Jesus, and nobody thinks of protesting. In fact, we are all glad to claim Jesus as one of our people."

Dr. Emil G. Hirsch, of the Sinai congregation, and professor of Rabbinical literature in the University of Chicago:

"The gospel Jesus, the Jesus who teaches so superbly the principles

of Jewish ethics, is revered by all the expounders of Judaism. His words are studied; the New Testament forms a part of Jewish literature. Among the great preceptors that have worded the truths of which Judaism is the historical guardian, none, in our estimation, takes precedence of the Rabbi of Nazareth. To impute to us suspicious sentiments concerning him does us great injustice. We know him to be among our greatest and purest."

Dr. Max Nordau, critic and philosopher:

"Jesus is soul of our soul, and he is flesh of our flesh. Who then would think of excluding him from the people of Israel."

Dr. Kaufman, Rabbi of Temple Beth-ell, New York:

"As a veritable prophet, Jesus, in such striking manner, disclaimed allegiance and asked for no other authority but that of the living voice within, while passing judgment on the law, in order to raise life to a higher standard. * * * All this modern Judaism gladly acknowledges, reclaiming Jesus as one of its greatest sons."

If such expressions did not justly represent the modern Jewish thought, in relation to Jesus of Nazareth, surely there would have been a Jewish protest on the subject, yet apparently none has appeared. If they are accepted, tacitly or otherwise, what do such enunciations mean? Simply this: That a considerable body of that race have reached the brink of the acceptance of Jesus of Nazareth as the Redeemer of Israel. If he be "a Jew of Jews," whom "all Jews are learning to love;" if, "among the great preceptors none take precedence of the Rabbi of Nazareth;" if he be "among the greatest and purest," he was all he announced himself to be,—the Son of God, the Messiah. No being of that description could appear in the capacity of a pretender. The only ultimate logical position of those who take this view is their acceptance of him as the Messiah!

These statements are evidences that the Jews are "beginning to believe in Christ," and are therefore being prepared for complete conversion. The process by which this will be brought about has been clearly revealed.

In the Doctrine and Covenants there are numerous statements to the effect that the gospel is to be carried "first to the Gentiles, and secondly unto the Jews." In this connection, reference is now made to page 387, verses 33, 34, 35, Doctrine and Covenants in

which the express duties, in that regard, of the "traveling presiding High Council" of the Twelve, and of the Seventy, are declared.

When the servants of the Lord withdraw from the Gentiles and proclaim the fullness of the gospel to the Jews, it is unreasonable to presume that they will, as a body, reject the divine message. Such a position would bring upon them severe divine condemnation. Doubtless there will be a class of those who gather to Palestine who will be unbelievers, but it will probably be proportionately small.

A considerable number of the references in the foregoing are clear upon the point that, when the times of the Jews are ushered in, many of them will gather in upon the land of Palestine in a condition of belief in Jesus Christ. Other passages refer merely to the future fact of the gathering, while others indicate that they will consist of two classes—believers and unbelievers. It is safe to accept of both as correct, as they do not conflict.

Existing conditions foreshadow that the believers in Christ will preponderate also from the following indications:

1st. The turning of the desire and attention of the Jews toward the land of Palestine.

2nd. The wonderful change in the intelligent Hebrew mind in favor of an exalted estimate of Jesus of Nazareth, as a great teacher, a pure character, and an inspired prophet of God.

3rd. The prospective and positive duty, sure to be fulfilled—of the Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, when the set time is reached, to declare the fullness of the gospel to the Jews. Just as sure as this glorious duty shall be performed, so is it that the labors of the servants of the Most High shall not be fruitless. Present events are leading up to that final preparatory process for the gathering of the remnants of Judah, that when Christ shall appear he will find faith among his ancient people.

JOHN NICHOLSON.

BOOK MENTION.

The Andrew Jenson History Company has just issued volume one of the *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, a volume of 828 pages containing brief annals of over seven hundred leading and prominent men and