

Bible Prophecies about the Book of Mormon

The restoration of the house of Israel to its former relationship and favor with the Almighty as prophesied in the Bible is connected with the promise of a divinely appointed book. David's thankful praise and prediction that God would bring back "the captivity of Jacob" is attended with this prophecy: "Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven" (Ps 85:11). Since the Bible reveals that the return of Israel from its captivity occurs in the last days (Jer 30:24), the promised ascent of truth from the earth attended with the descent of righteousness from heaven must also occur in the last days.

God sent the Hebrew nation into captivity because their sins eventually polluted the Promised Land into which He had led them. The northern kingdom, called Israel, Ephraim and Samaria by Biblical writers, fell to the Assyrians during a series of invasions that extended from 744 BC, when the land given by Moses to Manasseh and Gad fell, to 719, when the Assyrians conquered the rest of the ten tribes, exiling them near the Caspian Sea. The southern kingdom, called Judah, fell to the Babylonians in 588 BC when Nebucadnezzar captured Jerusalem, razed the Temple, and executed King Zedekiah's sons before leading the dethroned monarch, whom he had made blind, to captivity in Babylon. After Zedekiah, no descendant of David has yet to rule over the tribe of Judah. Isaiah prophesied these events when he said, "Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices. Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel. And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee. And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust" (Is 29:1-4). The city in which David dwelt and which housed the Temple in which the Spirit of God had burned was destroyed by Nebucadnezzar after the Babylonian siege. Nevertheless, God promised that it would speak out of the dust. Latter Day Saints believe that the cited speech contains the truth promised by David to spring from the earth.

The Book of Mormon teaches that a male child of Zedekiah's, named Mulek, escaped from Jerusalem and eventually joined the Jewish immigrants in America. Mulek in Hebrew means *belonging to the king*. Mulek was not considered a son at the time of the Babylonian conquest because he was not weaned. The Bible states that an unweaned male infant was not considered a son (Num 31:17; Deut 20:13-14). Mulek's descendants and followers, although the most numerous among the Jewish peoples that the Book of Mormon says also migrated from Jerusalem, never ruled the people in Central America, fulfilling the Biblical prophecies. The nation that these Jewish people formed eventually perished, but its sacred record containing God's dealings with them, did not. It lie buried in the dusty earth to spring forth in these last days and speak truth to latter-day Israel just as if its writers had appeared from the dead. Mormon, who compiled the book, closes his record with a direct appeal to those who will be given his words, saying, "Behold, I speak unto you as though I spake from the dead; for I know that ye shall have my words" (Mor 4:96). His words help fulfill Isaiah's promise that a voice speaking from the dust will be "as one having a familiar spirit, out of the ground."

God revealed through Habakkuk that a vision recorded on tablets would wait until the last days to be revealed. It would not be a lie, but reveal God's truth. The prophecy says, "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Hab 2:2-3). The Bible reveals that the words of the tablet will be given to both an educated man and an unlearned one. Isaiah prophesied, "And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned" (Is 29:11-12). Martin Harris, one scribe for Joseph Smith during the translation of the Book of Mormon, took a copy of some characters on the plates to Professor Anton of New York. He opposed the translation because of its miraculous disclosure. On the other hand, Joseph, who was uneducated, completed it. This event fulfilled another part of Isaiah's prophesy.

God promised that the restoration of the house of Israel would begin with the tribe of Ephraim. Through Jeremiah, God revealed, "I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock" (Jer 31:9-10). A reasonable conclusion is that descendants of Ephraim will be the ones to whom the book is revealed. Ezekiel confirms that conclusion. He prophesied that Israel, although apparently only dried bones, would rise and live (Ez 37:1-14). The means of their restoration entailed writings placed on two sticks. The prophecy says, "Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and for all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these? Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land" (Ez 37:16-21).

Ezekiel prophesied that two sticks will be joined in the hand of Ephraim, the first tribe in the latter-day gathering of Israel. One stick has writings for Judah and the other has writings for Joseph. What are those two sticks?

During the time of the prophets, books were not bound in volumes as done today, but rolled around sticks to form scrolls. One interpretation is that Ezekiel's sticks refer to two books, one of Judah and one of Joseph. The Bible is a record of the Jews and is "of Judah." The most prominent is the King James Version, authorized by James I of England, who believed that his coronation united the house of Jacob.¹ The King James Bible was the primary, if not the only, version of the Bible used in nineteenth century America. On the other hand, the Book of Mormon claims to be written by

descendants of Manasseh, the oldest son of Joseph and is “of Joseph.” The publication of the Book of Mormon brought the Bible and the Book of Mormon, or the stick of Judah and the stick of Joseph, together. Since most of the early members of the restored church, especially its leaders such as Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdrey, were descendants of the Angles who participated with the Saxons in the invasion of the British Isles and were descendants of Ephraimⁱ, the union of the Bible and the Book of Mormon in their hands fulfill Ezekiel’s prophecy. Both the record of the Jews and the record of Joseph were joined in the hand of Ephraim.

Others claim that the two sticks refer to standards or nations around which people rally. During the days of Moses the Hebrews marched through the wilderness in an ordered procession of tribes. When they rested, they gathered by tribes underneath their tribal standard (Num 2:2-25). The standard for Judah contained a lion. John revealed that the Lion of Judah is the Lamb of God. His vision states, “The Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain” (Rev 5:5-6). The Bible records the efforts Jesus, the Lamb of God, made among the tribe of Judah to bring about the redemption of all mankind by his passion on the cross. Jesus is the standard to which all are called to gather. The standard of Judah refers to the Savior’s message of salvation, especially as recorded in the Bible.

Jesus’ announcement of his gospel is written on another standard. His ministry included the declaration of the Father’s name. In his prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus concluded with these words: “Righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them” (Jn 17:25-26). The early Christians taught that the Father’s name was Jesus Christ.ⁱⁱⁱ Jesus told the woman at the well that he was Jesus, the Christ (Jn 4:26). He told the same thing to the Jews (Jn 8:24, 28). His question to Peter revealed his Messiahship to his disciples (Matt 16:15-16), which he confirmed in their presence shortly before his arrest, trial, and crucifixion (Jn 14:10-11). The Bible clearly shows that Jesus’s statement to his Father about previously declaring his name was true. The question remains, when did Jesus make the same declaration after his arrest? After all, Jesus promised the Father, “And will declare it” (Jn 17:26). The Bible records no such event. Even when his accusers asked Jesus if he was the Christ, the Savior only answered, “Thou hast said” (Matt 26:64).

David revealed that the Savior would declare his name through the standard of Joseph. In his prophecy concerning the Savior’s passion, he expressed our Lord’s plea: “Save me from the lion’s mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns. I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee” (Ps 21-22). The symbol of a lion is the standard for Judah. The Father saved the Son from his Jewish tormenters by hearing his declaration through the horns of unicorns. The unicorn, the King James rendering of the Hebrew word for *wild bull*, is the symbol for the house of Joseph. In his blessing on the tribes of Israel, Moses said of the tribe of Joseph, “His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of

Manasseh" (Deut 33:17). The tribe of Joseph was divided into two tribes according to the two sons of Joseph. Ephraim and Manasseh were numbered as tribes in Israel. They are the two horns that gather latter-day Israel to their land of inheritance. By combining Moses' blessings with David's prophecy, the Bible shows that Jesus would declare his name through the standard of Joseph at the time that God gathers latter-day Israel.

The Book of Mormon states that shortly after his resurrection Jesus descended to the Jewish nation that had migrated to Central America. According to the account, his first words to those people were, "Behold I am Jesus Christ" (3 N 5:11). When Jesus identified himself as the Christ to America's ancient inhabitants, he fulfilled the promise he made to the Father to declare his name sometime after his prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. His declaration that is recorded by descendants of Manasseh and which sprang out of the earth in the last days as God began gathering Israel also fulfills the prophecy that the Savior would declare his name through the standard of Joseph.

The King James Bible, or record of Judah, was produced by England. The Book of Mormon, or record of Joseph, was printed in America. England and America are two different nations, each with two specific sacred records. Those who maintain that the two sticks must refer to nations or standards around which people may rally find fulfillment in America and England, publishers of the Bible and Book of Mormon. Either interpretation of Ezekiel points the believer to the Bible and Book of Mormon as instruments that when joined together in the hand of Ephraim help gather latter-day Israel.

The Savior's visit to Jews settled in Central America fulfills another promise that Jesus made. John records him as saying, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (Jn 10:16). Book of Mormon critics maintain that the "other sheep" mentioned by Jesus refers to the Gentiles who eventually heard and obeyed the gospel when the apostles preached it throughout the Old World. While the Gentile nations heard the apostles' voice, they did not hear the Savior's. Jesus said that the other sheep to which he referred "shall hear my voice." Jesus never visited or spoke to a Gentile nation. He even refused to visit one that invited him. King Abgar, Toparch of Edessa, heard about Jesus and the mistreatment he suffered under the hands of the Jews and invited him to come to his kingdom where the Savior could receive the respect and recognition that he deserved. Jesus refused. In his reply he stated, "As to your request that I should come to you, I must complete all that I was sent to do here, and on completing it must at once be taken up to the One who sent me. When I have been taken up I will send you one of my disciples to cure your disorder and bring life to you and those with you."^{iv} Jesus never visited a Gentile nation or personally spoke to its citizens. The Savior even refused to receive a Gentile in need of his ministry. He explained by saying, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 15:24). The only nations to which Jesus came were Hebrew nations and the only peoples who personally heard his voice preach the gospel were Israelites. Jesus confined his personal ministry to them. This means that the "other sheep" who Jesus promised would hear his voice must be Israelites. His appearance among Jews settled in ancient America fulfills the Savior's promise in a more literal sense than the

interpretation by Book of Mormon critics does and retains better harmony with Biblical passages.

Isaiah explained that the book he prophesied to come forth will appear before Lebanon returns to its ancient fertility. He said, "Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest? And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness" (Is 29:17-18). For centuries Lebanon, the country whose fertility provided abundant materials for Solomon's Temple, lay desolate. It regained its fruitfulness in the mid-nineteenth century, just before Jews began returning to their land of inheritance. Lebanon's restored fertility that happened over a century ago indicates that the sealed book must have been revealed about the same time. The Book of Mormon is the only book that can possibly fulfill Isaiah's prophecy. Its appearance marked, among other things, the restoration of spiritual gifts as enjoyed by ancient Christians under the ministry of the apostles. Devout men and women experienced visions, prophecies, healings, tongues, and interpretation of tongues that bolstered their faith and enlightened their minds. David predicted these spiritual manifestations when he prophesied that righteousness would come down from heaven at the same time that truth sprang from the earth. The divine light attending the Book of Mormon fulfills Isaiah's prophecy that people deaf and blind to spiritual matters would "see out of obscurity, and out of darkness."

The Bible predicts the appearance of a book that springs from the earth. It is written on tablets by people from Jerusalem who, at times, speak directly to modern readers. The book is a record of Joseph and is delivered to both an educated man and an unlearned one. It is revealed before Lebanon returns to its ancient fertility and is attended with divine manifestations. The only candidate fulfilling all these predictions is the Book of Mormon.

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ⁱⁱYair Davidi; *The Tribes*; Russell-Davis Publishers; Hebron, Israel; P 74-75

ⁱⁱⁱJustin Martyr; *Dialogue with Trypho*; Ch 75

^{iv}Eusebius; *The History of the Church*; Bk 1, 13.10; Penguin Books; NY; 1989; P 32.