

Fulfillment of Prophecy Through The Covenants

Jon Tandy

The Book of Mormon was written to the house of Israel, “to shew unto the remnant of the house of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord” (title page of the Book of Mormon). This statement places the Book of Mormon squarely in both the past and the future – looking backward to the covenants which the Lord made with the house of Israel, and forward to the fulfillment of those covenants. This prophetic focus, rooted in historic covenants, is a fundamental part of the message of the book and of the latter-day church. This article highlights an interesting feature of this prophetic message, which is repeated many times over in key passages of the Book of Mormon text.

The other main Book of Mormon purpose is also stated on the title page: “to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations.” It is suggested in this article that the statement “manifesting himself unto all nations” is not only a general characteristic of God, but also refers to the historic manifestations of God and Christ to mankind as represented in the Book of Mormon and biblical narratives. It is also a subtle hint which points toward the prophetic message of the book, concerning that day when Christ will be visibly manifested in power to the nations.

There are many passages in the Book of Mormon that speak of God making good on his promises and fulfilling the covenants to Israel. In 3 Nephi, Jesus Christ spoke to the Nephites in prophecy, telling many things that would happen in the future, including His promise that the covenants will be fulfilled. (3 Nephi 7:28-45; 3 Nephi 9:46-10:8 RLDS) [3 Nephi 16:4-20; 3 Nephi 20:10-21:29 LDS] Some years ago, I read this and other similar passages and noticed that, at several points, the Lord said, “at that day” shall the covenants be fulfilled;” and “and at that day shall the work of the Father commence....”

My thought was, if Jesus was laying out a historical sequence of events for the last days, at which of these points are the covenants actually to be fulfilled, or at which point is the work of the Father supposed to “commence?” Why are there so many verses pointing to a particular “time” when these things are to occur? What is the actual sequence of events being described, and is there more than one event that constitutes the Lord commencing his work and fulfilling the covenants?

In the process of further study, I discovered the answer, which turned out to be an interesting feature of the Book of Mormon text. In the above-mentioned passages in 3 Nephi, there is a historical sequence of events that is repeated four times in a row. On the first day of Jesus’ visit to the Nephites, he gave a prophecy of last days’ events. (3 Nephi 7:28-45 RLDS) [3 Nephi 16:4-20 LDS] But then, he abruptly broke off with the statement, “I perceive that ye are weak, that ye can not understand all my words which I am commanded of the Father to speak unto you at this time...” (3 Nephi 8:2 RLDS) [3 Nephi 17:2 LDS]

On the following day, Jesus resumed his discussion of the covenants and future prophecy with this introduction, “...Behold, now I finish the commandment which the Father hath commanded me concerning this people who are a remnant of the house of Israel. Ye remember that I spake unto you, and said that when the words of Isaiah should be fulfilled...” (3 Nephi 9:46-47 RLDS) [3 Nephi 20:10-11 LDS] In the verses that follow, he then repeated the same prophecy of last

days' events, not once, but three times in succession. (3 Nephi 9:46-10:8 RLDS) [3 Nephi 20:10-21:29 LDS]

Repetition is used in Hebrew scripture to indicate importance and to give emphasis to the subject being mentioned. Thus, a four-part repetition of these prophecies highlights their significance in the text, indicating to us that it's very important to understand. Besides this passage from Jesus' personal ministry to the Nephites, there are at least three other lengthy passages in the Book of Mormon dealing with the same prophetic message of last days' events. (1 Nephi 3:173-237; 1 Nephi 7:6-64; 2 Nephi 11:80-12:100 RLDS) [1 Nephi 13:29-14:17; 1 Nephi 22:3-28; 2 Nephi 26:14-30:18 LDS]

In each of these seven passages, the exact series of events is not an identical listing of each point in a neat, exact sequential pattern. Particularly in 2 Nephi 11:80-12:100 [2 Nephi 26:14-30:18 LDS], the description of prophetic events is scattered across two chapters of Nephi's sermon, interspersed with many diversions and admonitions of Nephi to his brethren. It is clear that each of these passages stands on its own and isn't a direct copy of any of the others. None of them includes every point of the prophecy, and they are given in different order and sometimes with a subtly different context. When all of these passages are considered together, it is clear that they represent a complex theological and prophetic insight.

Below is a table showing the seven passages considered in this study. Following the table, each heading in the table is summarized along with selected quotations, and further comments are given on several items of particular interest.

Seven-Fold Book of Mormon Prophecy

	3Ne 7:28-45 [3Ne 16:4-20]	3Ne 9:46-63 [3Ne 20:10-25]	3Ne 9:64-85 [3Ne 20:26-46]	3Ne 9:86 - 10:8 [3Ne 21:1-29]	1Ne 3:173-237 [1Ne 13:29-14:17]	1Ne 7:6-64 [1Ne 22:3-28]	2Ne 11:80-12:100 [2Ne 26:14-30:18]
Israelites scattered	7:28, 32-33 [16:4, 8-9]	9:49 [20:13]	9:65 [20:27]	9:88 (21:2)	3:150,176-178 [13:14, 30-31]	7:6-12, 16 [22:3-5, 7]	11:81-83 [26:15]
Gentiles receive blessings	7:30 [16:6]	9:51 [20:15]	9:65 [20:27]	9:89-90 [21:3-4]	3:179-182 [13:32-34]	7:13-15 [22:6-7]	
Book of Mormon comes forth (fullness of the gospel)	7:28, 31 [16:4, 7]		9:66 [20:28]	9:91-92 [21:5-6]	3:183-197 [13:34-41]		11:83-86,126-131 [26:15-17; 27:7-11]
Gentiles reject the gospel, fullness of the gospel taken from them	7:34-35 [16:10]	9:51 [20:15-16]	9:66 [20:28]		3:213 [14:6]		11:116; 12:38-40 [27:1, 30-32]
Work of Father commences, covenant with Israel remembered, gospel preached	7:28-29, 36-37 [16:4-5, 11-12]	9:48-49, 58 [20:12-13, 22]	9:65-69, 85 [20:27-30, 46]	9:93; 10:4-7 [21:7, 26-28]	3:185-186,211,237 [13:36; 14:5, 17]	7:20-25 [22:9-12]	12:42-43, 80-87 [29:1-2; 30:3-8]
Gathering of Israel	7:29 [16:5]	9:49, 54 [20:13, 18]	9:79-80 [20:41-42]	10:5-8 [21:26-29]	3:18 [10:14]	7:23, 56-59 [22:12, 25]	12:85 [30:7]
If Gentiles repent, numbered with Israel	7:38 [16:13]			10:1 [21:22]	3:198-203,210 [13:42-14:2, 5]	7:19 [22:9]	12:77-78 [30:2]
Kings shut their mouths, assist in restoring Israel			9:83 [20:45]	9:94-95; 10:1-3 [21:8-9, 22-24]		7:13-18 [22:6-8]	
Prophet will lead Israel		9:60-61 [20:23]	9:81-83 [20:43-45]	9:96-97 [21:10]		7:43-46 [22:20-21]	
Great and marvelous latter day work				9:95 [21:9]	3:214-216 [14:7]	7:17 [22:8]	11:29,146; 12:42 [25:17; 27:26;29:1]
God's judgment on the Gentiles	7:39-41 [16:14-15]	9:51-56 [20:16-20]		9:98-106 [21:11-21]	3:232-236 [14:15-17]	7:26-35 [22:13-16]	11:117; 12:88-90 [27:2; 30:9-10]
Watchmen lift up voice	7:43 [16:18]		9:70, 78-79 [20:32, 40-41]				
Land given for inheritance	7:42 [16:16]	9:50, 57-58 [20:14, 21-22]	9:68, 71-72 [20:29, 33-34]	10:1 [21:22]	3:203 [14:2]	7:23 [22:12]	12:73 [29:14]
Lord makes bare His arm	7:45 [16:20]		9:73 [20:35]			7:21-22 [22:10-11]	12:42 [29:1]
Zion,New Jerusalem	7:43-44 [16:18-19]	9:58 [20:22]	9:85 [20:46]	10:2-3 [21:23-24]		7:30 [22:14]	12:92-95 [30:12-15]
Power of heaven (endowment)		9:59 [20:22]		10:4 [21:25]	3:187,230-231 [13:37; 14:14]	7:36 [22:17]	11:131 [27:11]

Israelites scattered

It was prophesied by Jesus and other Book of Mormon prophets that in future days, the house of Israel, including the remnant of the Nephites and Lamanites, would be scattered by the Gentiles. This has certainly happened to the Nephite/Lamanite remnant on the American continent, through the Gentile discovery of the American continents and the westward expansion of the United States, as well as a general persecution of the Jewish people around the world through the centuries.

“And I beheld the wrath of God that it was upon the seed of my brethren; and they were scattered before the Gentiles, and were smitten” (1 Nephi 3:150 RLDS) [1 Nephi 13:14 LDS].

“For it appears that the house of Israel, sooner or later, will be scattered upon all the face of the earth, and also among all nations...wherefore, they shall be scattered among all nations, and shall be hated of all men” (1 Nephi 7:6,12 RLDS) [1Nephi 22:3,5 LDS].

Gentiles receive blessings

Through the Gentiles’ belief in Jesus Christ and the unbelief of the house of Israel, the Gentiles would become a mighty nation and be blessed through the Holy Ghost.

“Wherefore, saith the Lamb of God, I will be merciful unto the Gentiles, unto the visiting of the remnant of the house of Israel in great judgment” (1 Nephi 3:180 RLDS) [1 Nephi 13:33 LDS].

“And blessed are the Gentiles, because of their belief in me, in and of the Holy Ghost, which witness unto them of me and of the Father” (3 Nephi 7:30 RLDS) [3 Nephi 16:6 LDS].

“then fulfilleth the Father the covenant...unto the pouring out of the Holy Ghost through me upon the Gentiles, which blessing upon the Gentiles, shall make them mighty above all, unto the scattering of my people, O house of Israel: and they shall be a scourge unto the people of this land” (3 Nephi 9:65 RLDS) [3 Nephi 20:27 LDS].

Book of Mormon comes forth

The Gentiles would be the instruments in the hands of God by bringing about a blessing to the house of Israel, primarily through the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon would bear testimony of Jesus Christ to the house of Israel and bring them, including the Nephite/Lamanite remnant, to a knowledge of the faith of their ancestors and the Lord’s covenants.

“And after the Gentiles do stumble exceedingly because of the most plain and precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb which has been kept back, by that abominable church, which is the mother of harlots, saith the Lamb, I will be merciful unto the Gentiles in that day, insomuch that I will bring forth unto them in mine own power, much of my gospel, which shall be plain and precious, saith the Lamb” (1 Nephi 3:183 RLDS) [1 Nephi 13:34 RLDS].

“Behold, because of their belief in me, saith the Father, and because of the unbelief of you, O house of Israel, in the latter day shall the truth come unto the Gentiles, that the fullness of these things shall be made known unto them” (3 Nephi 7:31 RLDS) [3Ne 16:7 LDS].

Gentiles reject the gospel, fullness of the gospel taken from them

However, after the blessing of the Lord to the Gentiles, they will reject the fullness of the gospel and be lifted up in pride and wickedness.

“Nevertheless, when they shall have received the fullness of my gospel, then if they shall harden their hearts against me, I will return their iniquities upon their own heads, saith the Father. 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” (3 Nephi 9:66-67 RLDS) [3 Nephi 20:28-29 LDS].

“Therefore, wo, be unto the Gentiles, if it so be that they harden their hearts against the Lamb of God” (1 Nephi 3:213 RLDS) [1 Nephi 14:6 LDS].

Several of the above-referenced verses say the gospel will be given back to the Israelites “if” the Gentiles reject the gospel (3 Nephi 9:66-67; 1 Nephi 3:213 RLDS) [3 Nephi 20:28-29; 1 Nephi 14:6 LDS] as if there is a possibility that it might not happen in this way. Yet, we know the Lord is faithful to his word, and he has certainly promised to fulfill his covenants with the house of Israel. Because the rejection of the gospel by the Gentiles is prophetically given as a precondition to Israel being restored, it is a near certainty that the Gentiles will fulfill this prophecy of rejecting.

Further, several of the verses confirm this supposition as a certainty. “At that day when the Gentiles shall sin against ... and shall reject the fullness of my gospel...” (3 Nephi 7:34 RLDS) [3 Nephi 16:10 LDS]; and “they will be drunken with iniquity” (2 Nephi 11:116 RLDS) [2 Nephi 27:1 LDS]; and “they will deny me”. (2 Nephi 12:40 RLDS) [2 Nephi 27:32 LDS] Thus, it is virtually certain from the prophecy that the Gentiles will sin against the gospel and reject the fullness, and thus deny the Lord who was merciful in bringing it unto them.

“And thus commandeth the Father that I should say unto you, At that day when the Gentiles shall sin against my gospel, and shall reject the fullness of my gospel, and shall be lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations, and above all the people of the whole earth, and shall be filled with all manner of lyings, and of deceits, and of mischiefs, and all manner of hypocrisy, and murders, and priestcrafts, and whoredoms, and of secret abominations; and if they shall do all these things, and shall reject the fullness of my gospel, behold, saith the Father, I will bring the fullness of my gospel from among them; and then will I remember my covenant which I have made unto my people, O house of Israel, and I will bring my gospel unto them” (3 Nephi 7:34-36 RLDS) [3 Nephi 16:10-11 LDS].

“But behold, in the last days, or in the days of the Gentiles; yea, behold all the nations of the Gentiles, and also the Jews, both those who shall come upon this land, and those who

shall be upon other lands; yea, even upon all the lands of the earth; behold, they will be drunken with iniquity, and all manner of abominations” (2 Nephi 11:116 RLDS) [2 Nephi 27:1 LDS].

“Wo be unto the Gentiles, saith the Lord God of hosts; for notwithstanding I shall lengthen out mine arm unto them from day to day, they will deny me” (2 Nephi 12:40 RLDS) [2 Nephi 27:32 LDS].

Although the latter-day revelations beyond the Book of Mormon are not the focus of this article, yet this same truth is confirmed in several sections of the Doctrine and Covenants.

“nevertheless, if they pollute their inheritances, they shall be thrown down; for I will not spare them if they pollute their inheritances” (D&C 100:3c RLDS) [D&C 103:14 LDS]).

“the rebellious shall be cut off out of the land of Zion, and shall be sent away, and shall not inherit the land; ... for it shall come to pass, that the inhabitants of Zion shall judge all things pertaining to Zion; and liars, and hypocrites shall be proved by them, and they who are not apostles and prophets shall be known” (D&C 64:7b-d RLDS) [D&C 64:35-39 LDS].

“And upon my house shall [the judgment] begin, and from my house shall it go forth, saith the Lord. First among those among you, saith the Lord, who have professed to know my name and have not known me, and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house, saith the Lord” (D&C 105:10 RLDS) [D&C 112:25-26 LDS]).

“ And this I have told you concerning Jerusalem; and when that day shall come, shall a remnant be scattered among all nations, but they shall be gathered again; but they shall remain until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled...a light shall break forth among them that sit in darkness, and it shall be the fullness of my gospel; but they receive it not, for they perceive not the light, and they turn their hearts from me because of the precepts of men; and in that generation shall the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled; and there shall be men standing in that generation that shall not pass, until they shall see an overflowing scourge, for a desolating sickness shall come over the land” (D&C 45:3f-4d RLDS) [D&C 45:24-31 LDS].

When the Gentiles reject the fullness of the gospel, it is time that the “fullness of the times of the Gentiles” will be fulfilled. More will be said about this below.

Work of Father commences, God remembers covenant, gospel preached to Israel

After the Gentiles have rejected the fullness of the gospel, it will be taken from them. It is at this point that the text says God will remember and fulfill His covenant with Israel. The fulfilling of the covenants consists in bringing about the regathering of Israel and bringing them to a knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In three of these prophetic sequences, the statement is made, “at that day the work of the Father shall commence.” Book of Mormon believers may be tempted to think that the work “commenced” in the 1820s and 1830s with the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and

Restoration movement. However, in this context, the “work of the Father” seems to be specifically referring to the complete work of fulfilling the covenants, in the gathering of Israel and the establishment of Zion and Jerusalem. This theme of the “commencement of the work of the Father” appears in other scriptures (2 Nephi 2:24; Mormon 1:82; Ether 1:114 RLDS) [2 Nephi 3:13; Mormon 3:17; Ether 4:17 LDS], where it is also associated with the work of a latter-day prophet, and the gathering and actual restoration of the house of Israel to their lands – just the same as in the prophetic verses we are considering in this article.

“And when these things come to pass, that thy seed shall begin to know these things, it shall be a sign unto them, that they may know that the work of the Father hath already commenced unto the fulfilling of the covenant which he hath made unto the people who are of the house of Israel” (3 Nephi 9:93 RLDS) [3 Nephi 21:7 LDS].

“And then shall the power of heaven come down among them; and I also will be in the midst, and then shall the work of the Father commence, at that day even when this gospel shall be preached among the remnant of this people.

Verily, I say unto you, At that day shall the work of the Father commence among all the dispersed of my people; yea, even the tribes which have been lost, which the Father hath led away out of Jerusalem.

Yea, the work shall commence among all the dispersed of my people, with the Father, to prepare the way whereby they may come unto me, that they may call on the Father in my name;

Yea, and then shall the work commence, with the Father, among all nations, in preparing the way whereby his people may be gathered home to the land of their inheritance” (3 Nephi 10:4-7 RLDS) [3 Nephi 21:26-28 LDS].

“Then at that day, the work of the Father shall commence, in preparing the way for the fulfilling of his covenants which he hath made to his people, who are of the house of Israel” (1 Nephi 3:237 RLDS) [1 Nephi 14:17 LDS].

“And it shall come to pass that the Lord God shall commence his work, among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, to bring about the restoration of his people upon the earth” (2 Nephi 12:87 RLDS) [2 Nephi 30:8 LDS].

Gathering of Israel

Though the house of Israel were scattered, they will be gathered again in fulfillment of the covenants made by God to Abraham, as they are brought to a knowledge of redemption through Jesus Christ. (3 Nephi 7:29, 9:49 & 54, 9:79-80, 10:5-8, 1 Nephi 3:18, 1 Nephi 7:23, 56-59, 2 Nephi 12:85 RLDS) [3 Nephi 16:5, 20:13 & 18, 20:41-42, 21:26-29, 1 Nephi 10:14, 1 Nephi 22:12 & 25, 2 Nephi 30:7 LDS]

And then will I gather them in from the four quarters of the earth; and then will I fulfill the covenant which the Father hath made unto all the people of the house of Israel (3 Nephi 7:29 RLDS) [3 Nephi 16:5 LDS]

And they shall go out from all nations... (3 Nephi 10:8 RLDS) [3 Nephi 21:29 LDS]

Wherefore, he will bring them again out of captivity, and they shall be gathered together to the lands of their inheritance (1 Nephi 7:23 RLDS) [1 Nephi 22:12 LDS].

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 (2 Nephi 12:85 RLDS) [2 Nephi 30:7 LDS]

Along with the general promise of a gathering, the Lord specifically foretold that the Jews would come into possession of Jerusalem—for the first time since Jerusalem was conquered by the Romans in 70 A.D.

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 for ever, saith the Father (3 Nephi 9:68 RLDS) [3 Nephi 20:29 LDS].

Then shall this covenant which the Father hath covenanted with his people, be fulfilled; and then shall Jerusalem be inhabited again with my people, and it shall be the land of their inheritance (3 Nephi 9:85 RLDS) [3 Nephi 20:46 LDS].

And [the Jews] 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 21:23 IV) [Luke 21:24 KJV].

And this I have told you concerning Jerusalem; and when that day shall come, shall a remnant be scattered among all nations, but they shall be gathered again; but they shall remain until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled (D&C 45:3f RLDS) [D&C 45:24-25 LDS].

The beginning of the restoration of the house of Israel has been occurring for many decades. In 1830, the French Parliament granted the Jews certain civic rights, the first such act by any modern nation. By 1887, all nations except Russia and Romania had granted civil rights to the Jews (Roy E. Weldon, *Book of Mormon Deeps*, 2:301). In 1841, Apostle Orson Hyde went to the Holy Land at the direction of the prophet Joseph Smith and prayed on the Mount of Olives for a restoration of the land of Israel and for the return of the Jews. The following year, the rains returned to Palestine, in fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah 29 that “Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field.” (Henry Schaefer, *I Will Be With You Always*, p. 53)

In 1917, the British “Balfour Declaration” promised that Israel would be given to the Jews for “establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.” The nation of Israel declared its independence on May 15, 1948. During the 1948 War of Independence, though vastly outnumbered at first, Israel miraculously defended itself against the invasion of combined armies from Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Trans-Jordan. But, during this time, the Israeli armies were not able to capture Jerusalem. The time for the fulfillment of the above prophecies was not yet to be.

In June of 1967, eight Arab nations amassed their armies in the Middle East in an attempt to exterminate the small nation of Israel, whose population numbered under three million. During the Six-Day War, the Israelis succeeded miraculously in capturing the city of Jerusalem,

destroying the Egyptian air defenses, and defeating an army several times larger than itself. Jerusalem was now in their possession after almost 1900 years of captivity and dispersal. It seems clear that this pivotal event must be the fulfillment of the prophecies that Jerusalem would be returned to the Jews, which also coincides with the fulfillment of the “times of the Gentiles.”

Gentiles numbered with Israel

God will bring about judgment on the Gentiles because of their pride and wickedness. However, if the Gentiles repent, they will be numbered with the house of Israel, which is a blessing to them.

“But if the Gentiles will repent, and return unto me, saith the Father, behold, they shall be numbered among my people, O house of Israel” (3 Nephi 7:38 RLDS) [3 Nephi 16:13 LDS].

“But if they will repent, and hearken unto my words, and harden not their hearts, I will establish my church among them, and they shall come in unto the covenant, and be numbered among this the remnant of Jacob, unto whom I have given this land for their inheritance, and they shall assist my people, the remnant of Jacob” (3 Nephi 10:1 RLDS) [3 Nephi 21:22 LDS].

“And it shall come to pass, that if the Gentiles shall hearken unto the Lamb of God in that day that he shall manifest himself unto them in word, and also in power, in very deed, unto the taking away of their stumbling-blocks, and harden not their hearts against the Lamb of God, they shall be numbered among the seed of thy father; yea, they shall be numbered among the house of Israel; and they shall be a blessed people upon the promised land for ever” (1 Nephi 3:201-203 RLDS) [1 Nephi 14:1-2 LDS].

“For behold, I say unto you, That as many of the Gentiles as will repent, are the covenant people of the Lord; and as many of the Jews as will not repent, shall be cast off; for the Lord covenanteth with none, save it be with them that repent and believe in his Son, who is the Holy One of Israel” (2 Nephi 12:77-78 RLDS) [2 Nephi 30:2 LDS].

Kings shut their mouths, assist in restoring Israel

The work of restoring the house of Israel will be such a dramatic and public occurrence that even kings (in our day, presumably referring to world leaders in general) will “shut their mouths” in amazement at what the Lord does for Israel. This must necessarily involve a public demonstration of the Lord’s power in order to bring this about.

“So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him [the prophet]: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider” (3 Nephi 9:83 RLDS) [3 Nephi 20:45 LDS].

“And when that day shall come, it shall come to pass that kings shall shut their mouths; for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider. For in that day, for my sake shall the Father work a work, which shall be a great and a marvelous work among them; and there shall be among them who

will not believe it, although a man shall declare it unto them” (3 Nephi 9:94-95 RLDS) [3 Nephi 21:8-9 LDS].

These Gentile kings will marvel at the developments the Lord does among the house of Israel. However, there is also an indication that they may provide substantial aid in physically facilitating the restoration of the Israelites back to the lands of their inheritance.

“But if they [the Gentiles] will repent ... then shall they assist my people that they may be gathered in, who are scattered upon all the face of the land, in unto the New Jerusalem” (3 Nephi 10:1-3 RLDS) [3 Nephi 21:22-24 LDS].

Nephi uses a prophecy of Isaiah to elaborate this point. The Gentiles will carry the house of Israel “upon their shoulders”. (1 Nephi 7:13-18 RLDS) [1 Nephi 22:6-8 LDS] One could imagine that believing Gentiles might be involved not only in spreading the gospel throughout the world and the remnants of Israel, but perhaps there will be world leaders who actually assist in providing transportation and safe passage so that the gathering can come about.

“Nevertheless, after they have been nursed by the Gentiles, and the Lord has lifted up his hand upon the Gentiles and set them up for a standard, and their children have been carried in their arms and their daughters have been carried upon their shoulders, behold, these things of which are spoken, are temporal: for thus are the covenants of the Lord with our fathers;

And it meaneth us in the days to come, and also all our brethren who are of the house of Israel.

And it meaneth that the time cometh that after all the house of Israel have been scattered and confounded, that the Lord God will raise up a mighty nation among the Gentiles, yea, even upon the face of this land;

And by them shall our seed be scattered.

And after our seed is scattered, the Lord God will proceed to do a marvelous work among the Gentiles, which shall be of great worth unto our seed;

Wherefore, it is likened unto their being nourished by the Gentiles, and being carried in their arms, and upon their shoulders” (1 Nephi 7:13-18 RLDS) [1 Nephi 22:6-8 LDS].

Latter-day prophet will lead Israel

In the midst of these prophecies of the latter day restoration of the house of Israel, there is a promise that a latter-day prophet will lead Israel out of bondage. There is disagreement among Restoration believers whether these verses refer to a future human prophet who will come in great power to lead the people, or whether it refers to Jesus Christ himself, or it possibly referred to the work performed through Joseph Smith Jr. in his earthly ministry.

I believe it must be understood as a future human prophet, because in 3 Nephi 9:96-97 [3 Nephi 21:10 LDS], Jesus declares to the Nephites, “But behold, the life of my servant shall be in my hand; therefore they shall not hurt him, although he shall be marred because of them. Yet I will heal him, for I will shew unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil.” This clearly seems to be referring to a human prophet who is acting as Jesus’ servant.

Also in Jesus' quotation of Isaiah (3 Nephi 9:81-83 RLDS) [3 Nephi 20:43-45 LDS] (Isaiah 52:13-15), the prophet is referred to as "my servant" who shall have his "visage ... marred more than any man." The Doctrine and Covenants also indicates the same thing regarding a "man," a prophet who will "lead them like as Moses led the children of Israel...out of bondage." (D&C 100:3d-e RLDS) [D&C 103:15-18 LDS]

"Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; (his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men,) so shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider" (3 Nephi 9:81-83 RLDS) [3 Nephi 20:43-45 LDS].

It appears that this prophet will be wounded through opposition of the enemies of God, but he will be healed. Could this be similar to Revelation 11, where two prophetic witnesses are killed by the beast, but are resurrected after three days?

However, parallel passages (3 Nephi 9:60-61; 1 Nephi 7:43-46 RLDS) [3 Nephi 20:23; 1 Nephi 22:20-21 LDS] don't mention a latter-day prophet, but instead refer to Moses' prophecy about a prophet who would come and associates him with Jesus Christ. For those who believe the latter-day "Moses-like" prophet who will lead the people is none other than Jesus Christ himself, the parallel nature of these prophecies might be worthy of consideration in this context.

"Behold, I am he of whom Moses spake, saying, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me, him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that every soul who will not hear that prophet, shall be cut off from among the people" (3 Nephi 9:60-61 RLDS) [3 Nephi 20:23 LDS].

"And the Lord will surely prepare a way for his people, unto the fulfilling of the words of Moses, which he spake, saying: A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that all those who will not hear that prophet, shall be cut off from among the people. And now I, Nephi, declare unto you, that this prophet of whom Moses spake, was the Holy One of Israel" (1 Nephi 7:43-46 RLDS) [1 Nephi 22:20-21 LDS].

Great and marvelous work

In the context of this latter-day restoration of the house of Israel, the Lord will proceed to do a "great and marvelous work." While believers in the Restoration Movement have always considered the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the latter-day church to be part of this great and marvelous work, these scriptures specifically refer to that "great and marvelous work" to be the actual restoration of the house of Israel to their inheritances, which will be so dramatic and unexpected that "kings will shut their mouths," as referred to above. The latter-day restoration of the gospel laid the foundation for this work and predicted its fulfillment, but the real "great and marvelous work" is a future event yet to be fulfilled.

“For in that day, for my sake shall the Father work a work, which shall be a great and a marvelous work among them; and there shall be among them who will not believe it, although a man shall declare it unto them” (3 Nephi 9:95 RLDS) [3 Nephi 21:9 LDS].

“... I shall proceed to do a marvelous work among them, that I may remember my covenants which I have made unto the children of men, that I may set my hand again the second time to recover my people, which are the house of Israel” (2 Nephi 12:42 RLDS) [2 Nephi 29:1 LDS].

God’s judgment on the Gentiles

If the Gentiles do not repent of their wickedness, they are under the judgment of God and will be cut off. The prophecies state that the house of Israel will be at least part of God’s instrument in bringing about this judgment. (3 Nephi 7:39-41, 9:51-56, 9:98-106, 1 Nephi 3:232-236, 1 Nephi 7:26-35, 2 Nephi 11:117; 12:88-90 RLDS) [3 Nephi 16:14-15, 20:16-20, 21:11-21, 1 Nephi 14:15-17, 1 Nephi 22:13-16, 2 Nephi 27:2; 30:9-10 LDS].

And I say unto you, that if the Gentiles do not repent, after the blessing which they shall receive, after they have scattered my people, then shall ye who are a remnant of the house of Jacob, go forth among them; And ye shall be in the midst of them, who shall be many; and ye shall be among them, as a lion among the beasts of the forests, and as a young lion among the flocks of sheep, who, if he goeth through, both treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. Thy hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off. And I will gather my people together, as a man gathereth his sheaves into the floor, for I will make my people with whom the Father hath covenanted, yea, I will make thy horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass. And thou shalt beat in pieces many people; and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth. And behold, I am he who doeth it. And it shall come to pass, saith the Father, that the sword of my justice shall hang over them at that day; and except they repent, it shall fall upon them, saith the Father, yea, even upon all the nations of the Gentiles” (3 Nephi 9:51-56 RLDS) [3 Nephi 20:16-20 LDS]

In the above scripture, there is an interesting use of imagery which was pointed out to me years ago by brother Neil Simmons. There are three images the Lord uses to depict the judgment being brought about upon the Gentiles. The first depicts the house of Jacob like a lion, which tears in pieces. And the second is a bull, with horns and hoofs, which will tread down and beat in pieces. The question was then asked, “which of the tribes of Israel are represented by a lion and a bull?” The answer comes from the Lord’s blessings to the tribes of Israel given in the Old Testament.

Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up; he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion, who shall rouse him up? (Genesis 49:9 IV/KJV)

let the blessing come upon the head 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 (Deuteronomy 33:16-17 IV/KJV).

Judah and Joseph are represented among the tribes of Israel as a lion and a bullock. This seems to resonate with other scriptures, which place the tribes of Judah and Joseph (particularly the tribe of Ephraim) as being the two prominent tribes of leadership among the house of Israel in the last days. Judah was the line through which the kings of Israel were to come (Genesis 49:10 IV/KJV), but to Joseph was given the birthright (1 Chronicles 5:1-2 IV/KJV)

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. (Ezekiel 37:19 IV/KJV)

Let them, therefore, who are among the Gentiles, flee unto Zion. And let them who be of Judah, flee unto Jerusalem, unto the mountains of the Lord's house... and he shall utter his voice out of Zion, and he shall speak from Jerusalem... (D&C 108:4,5e RLDS) [D&C 133:12-13, 21 LDS]

And then shall they fall down and be crowned with glory, even in Zion, by the hands of the servants of the Lord, even the children of Ephraim; and they shall be filled with songs of everlasting joy. Behold, this is the blessing of the everlasting God upon the tribes of Israel, and the richer blessing upon the head of Ephraim and his fellows. And they also of the tribe of Judah, after their pain, shall be sanctified in holiness before the Lord to dwell in his presence day and night for ever and ever (D&C 108:6d-f RLDS) [D&C 133:32-35 LDS]

Yet, there is a third image that the Lord uses to describe the judgment – a sword. The Lord will perform his own judgment upon the Gentile nations, as well as upon all those who refuse to believe and repent of their iniquities. The image of the Lord's judgment as a sword is used later in 3 Nephi, when the Lord says he will “cut off” all those things of wickedness and the wicked themselves, “whosoever will not repent and come unto my beloved Son.” (3 Nephi 9:101-106 RLDS) [3 Nephi 21:14-21 LDS]; see also (Micah 5:8-15 IV/KJV)

Watchmen lift up their voice

In 3 Nephi 7:43 [3 Nephi 16:18 LDS] and again in 3 Nephi 9:70, 78-79 [3 Nephi 20:32, 40-41 LDS], Jesus quotes from the prophecy in Isaiah 52:7-11, which says in part, “Thy watchmen shall lift up their voice; with the voice together shall they sing...” This is an indication that there will be a dramatic and open proclamation of the gospel in the last days, in which the works and the gospel of the Lord will be made known openly among all nations.

“Then shall their watchmen lift up their voices; and with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye.

Then will the Father gather them together again, and give unto them Jerusalem for the land of their inheritance.

Then shall they break forth into joy--sing together ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Father hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

The Father hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of the Father; and the Father and I are one” (3 Nephi 9:70-73 RLDS) [3 Nephi 20:32-35 LDS]; (Isaiah 52:9-10 IV/KJV).

“And then shall be brought to pass that which is written, Awake, awake again, and put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city, for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, sit down, O Jerusalem; loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. For thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for naught; and ye shall be redeemed without money” (3 Nephi 9:74-76 RLDS) [3 Nephi 20:36-38 LDS]; (Isaiah 52:1-3 IV/KJV).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, that my people shall know my name; yea, in that day they shall know that I am he that doth speak. And then shall they say, How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings unto them, that publisheth peace: that bringeth good tidings unto them of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” (3 Nephi 9:77-78 RLDS) [3 Nephi 20:39-40 LDS]; (Isaiah 52:6-7 IV/KJV).

“And then shall a cry go forth, Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch not that which is unclean; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord. For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel shall be your rearward” (3 Nephi 9:79-80 RLDS) [3 Nephi 20:41-42 LDS]; (Isaiah 52:11-12 IV/KJV).

Lord makes bare his arm

Included in this prophecy from Isaiah is the statement that the Lord will “make bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations.” (Isa. 52:10) This will be a visible manifestation of the power of God. God is “taking off the gloves” and “rolling up his sleeves,” to use a few modern expressions. He is going to come out of hiding and show himself in a marvelous way, so that all will witness his faithfulness to his covenants.

“The Father hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of the Father; and the Father and I are one” (3 Nephi 9:73 RLDS) [3 Nephi 20:35 LDS].

“And I would, my brethren, that ye should know that all the kindreds of the earth can not be blessed unless he shall make bare his arm in the eyes of the nations. Wherefore, the Lord God will proceed to make bare his arm in the eyes of all the nations, in bringing about his covenants and his gospel, unto those who are of the house of Israel” (1 Nephi 7:21-22 RLDS) [1 Nephi 22:10-11 LDS].

It may be particularly enlightening to consider the phrase from the title page of the Book of Mormon, “manifesting himself unto all nations,” in view of this last-days prophecy described in this section: “the Lord shall make bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations.” This will be a public and visible manifestation of the work of God. “I will shew unto the children of men, that I am able to do mine own work.” (2 Nephi 11:143 RLDS) [2 Nephi 27:21 LDS]

Land given for inheritance

The promise of the Lord to the house of Israel is that they would receive a promised land for their inheritance. This is a fulfillment of the covenants made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that their descendants would be given land for an inheritance.

“And it shall come to pass that I will establish my people, O house of Israel. And behold, this people will I establish in this land, unto the fulfilling of the covenant which I made with your father Jacob; and it shall be a new Jerusalem” (3 Nephi 9:57-58 RLDS) [3 Nephi 20:21-22 LDS].

Zion, New Jerusalem

The land of promise will actually be “lands” of promise, as Jerusalem in Israel will be redeemed, but also Zion (New Jerusalem) will be established on the American continent. The covenant people will receive their inheritance according to the promise, and the Lord will set up Zion in the latter days as a place of refuge. This promise of both an old Jerusalem and a new Jerusalem being established is mentioned in many scriptures, but is perhaps best summarized in Ether:

“Behold, Ether saw the days of Christ, and he spake concerning a New Jerusalem upon this land; and he spake also concerning the house of Israel, and the Jerusalem from whence Lehi should come; after it should be destroyed, it should be built up again a holy city unto the Lord;

Wherefore it could not be a New Jerusalem, for it had been in a time of old, but it should be built up again, and become a holy city of the Lord: and it should be built up unto the house of Israel;

And that a New Jerusalem should be built up upon this land, unto the remnant of the seed of Joseph, for which things there has been a type...” (Ether 6:4-6 RLDS) [Ether 13:4-7 LDS]

Power of heaven (endowment)

In order to accomplish this great work of gathering and the restoration of Israel, the power of heaven must be employed. Jesus promised that he would personally be in the midst of the remnant of Israel, to arm the covenant people with an endowment of power and glory of God in order to accomplish the work.

“And the powers of heaven shall be in the midst of this people; yea, even I will be in the midst of you” (3 Nephi 9:59 RLDS) [3 Nephi 20:22 LDS].

“And then shall the power of heaven come down among them; and I also will be in the midst, and then shall the work of the Father commence, at that day even when this gospel shall be preached among the remnant of this people” (3 Nephi 10:4 RLDS) [3 Nephi 21:25 LDS].

“And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost” (1 Nephi 3:187 RLDS) [1 Nephi 13:37 LDS].

Conclusion

Throughout the Book of Mormon, there are many references to the latter day work of the Restoration of the gospel, of God's covenants to the house of Israel, and prophecies of the last days. In particular, at least seven passages provide an extended sequence of prophetic events centering on these themes. Four of these passages appear back-to-back within Jesus' message to the Nephites during His two days of ministry, as recorded in 3 Nephi.

This prophecy foretold that the Gentiles would be blessed with the fullness of the gospel, but that they would reject the gospel, and thus have the fullness taken away from them. When that happens, the work of the Father is said to commence among the covenant people of the house of Israel, as the Lord remembers His covenants to them and gathers them in. Kings of the earth will be amazed as the Lord makes bare His arm in power, and a prophet will lead the Lord's people through the accomplishment of this work, even in the face of strong persecution. In the midst of these blessings to the covenant people, judgment is predicted on the nations of the Gentiles who will not repent and come unto Christ. The Lord's watchmen will lift up their unified voices, and the Lord will bring His people to Zion and the New Jerusalem.

This prophecy is at the heart of the angel message brought forth by the prophet Joseph Smith. Our Heavenly Father works through covenants, and He will show Himself faithful to the promises He has made, in bringing about the fulfillment of these prophecies. Let us renew our diligence and faithfulness, so that we may be able to assist in the Lord's work in these latter days.

“Behold, I speak unto you, and also to all those who have desires to bring forth and establish this work; and no one can assist in this work, except he shall be humble and full of love, having faith, hope, and charity, being temperate in all things whatsoever shall be intrusted to his care.” (D&C 11:4a&b RLDS) [D&C 12:7-8 LDS]