
Framing the Restoration and Gathering

ORSON HYDE AND EARLY MORMON
UNDERSTANDINGS OF ISRAEL, JEWS,
AND THE SECOND COMING

Andrew C. Reed

Andrew C. Reed is an assistant professor of
Church history and doctrine at Brigham Young University.

One of the main themes of the Book of Mormon is the role that Jews have historically played in God's work and the central place they will assume in the latter days. Within the opening chapters of the Book of Mormon, Nephi makes clear the need for his family to understand and acknowledge God's interaction with their ancestors through the "record of the Jews and also a genealogy of [their] forefathers" (1 Nephi 3:3). The stated purpose for Nephi and his brothers' return to Jerusalem was to procure the record so that they might "preserve unto [their] children the language of [their] fathers" as well as the "words which have been spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets" (1 Nephi 3:19–20). From the beginning of Nephi's narrative, it is clear that he and his family need to understand and also identify with biblical Israel. Despite the theological import of these statements, this scriptural narrative does not fully account for early Mormon interest in contemporary Jews and Judaism.¹ There was a far more immediate concern in early Mormonism regarding Jews than simply the idea that the Book of Mormon was an ancient Jewish record.²

There are many possible origins for Mormon interest in Judaism. The most familiar source for members of the Church is the Book of Mormon. The authors of the Book of Mormon were remarkably aware of their own internal purposes and the larger divine narrative of the text they produced. Nephi, one of the first prophetic figures encountered in the book, argued, “I, Nephi, received a commandment that the ministry and the prophecies, the more plain and precious parts of them, should be written upon these plates, and that the things, which were written should be kept for the instruction of my people, who should possess the land, and also for other wise purposes, which purposes are known unto the Lord” (1 Nephi 19:3). Nephi drew this larger narrative of “wise purposes” into a lengthy discussion of covenants made between God and the biblical fathers (see 1 Nephi 17:26; 22:7–10) and an eventual moment when the covenant people (Israel) will be gathered along with “every nation, kindred, tongue and people (see 1 Nephi 19: 15–17). The Book of Mormon framed the long narrative of God acting in the world and infused early Mormonism with a sense of responsibility and longing for the Millennium when God would commence a full gathering of Israel (see 2 Nephi 30:1–9).

The title page of the Book of Mormon notes that it was “written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to the Jew and Gentile” and is “to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel the great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever.”³ Thus, not only did Lehi and his family need the brass plates for their immediate spiritual welfare, they were also forever tied to the community that created the record for them (see D&C 3:16).⁴ Early members of the Church firmly held the belief that Jews would eventually regather to Palestine. As premillennialists, they also viewed the process as one where they would work alongside God to accomplish this essential step in ushering in the Second Coming.

In order to better understand why Mormons were so preoccupied with the history and beliefs of Jews and Judaism, we need to know the religious climate surrounding that interest. Using the historian’s lens allows us to locate possible extant sources available to Joseph Smith and the early Saints to explain in real terms the gathering process spoken of in the Book of Mormon. Further, by examining the life of Orson Hyde and his interest in Judaism as a living religion in his own day, Hyde’s trip to Palestine in

1841 becomes part of the process of revelation—questions or ideas being raised and then instruction divinely received. Seeing Hyde’s trip at the intersection of personal interest, prophetic revelation, and growing social concern clarifies the LDS doctrine of gathering for the modern reader. Hyde was in Britain between 1837 and 1838 and joined his fellow missionaries in London, Liverpool, Preston, and other major cities. It was also in these cities where Britain’s Jews were present in the largest numbers.⁵ It was this experience that likely sparked an interest among these early missionaries for Jews and Judaism as living communities and made the idea of “gathering” more tangible to them.

After Joseph Smith’s translation of the Book of Mormon and the subsequent establishment of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (March–April 1830), the most significant moment of development and implementation of this gathering was Orson Hyde’s journey from the United States through Europe and Palestine. Hyde was an early Mormon Apostle who expressed strong interest in all things Judaic. Further, the subject of Judaism and Jews collectively was one that occupied the attention of many of the early Apostles, particularly as they undertook missionary efforts in the British Isles.⁶

With the charge to begin thinking about a millennial reign of Christ, early Mormon Apostles followed the prophetic call to undertake evangelizing missions to Great Britain in 1838. On 8 July 1838, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation in which God called members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to depart the following spring “to go over the great waters, and there promulgate [his] gospel” (see D&C 118:4–5).⁷ This prophetic call of the Twelve would eventually open up “an effectual door” (D&C 112:19) for the expansion of missionary efforts that brought about a strong cohort of future Church leaders and provided essential converts en masse. An added benefit of this journey to Great Britain was that it placed Mormon Apostles in a hotbed of Jewish discussions about gathering to Palestine and creating a space where Jews could live peaceably among themselves without abandoning their religious identity through conversion or assimilation.⁸ To wit, in January 1839, the social reformer Anthony Ashley-Cooper, known as Lord Ashley (1801–55), published a tract in the *Quarterly Review* in London that encouraged a social perspective married with evangelical impetus bent on regathering Jews to their biblical homeland. In addition to comments about

the nature of the political strife in Egypt in the mid-nineteenth century, he argued for a greater sense of Christian appreciation for Jews as “the remnant of a people which produced poets like Isaiah and Joel; kings like David and Josiah; and ministers like Joseph, Daniel, and Nehemiah; but above all, as that chosen race of men, of whom, the Saviour of the world came according to the flesh.”⁹ This type of rhetoric was common in Britain, and the early missionaries and Apostles likely encountered many of these ideas as they mingled in British society.

As Latter-day Saints gradually pieced together an identity based in an adoptive relationship to ancient Israel, they necessarily drew parallels to God’s covenanted relationship to Jews. Latter-day Saints understood their role in similar fashion for the modern, American context. Mormon theology maintains that the spiritual blessings made to Abraham and his posterity continue even up to this day and will be essential to an eventual gathering of God’s children (D&C 27:10). In its theology—if not fully within its practice and rhetoric—early Mormonism rejected traditional Christian supersessionism (the notion that the gospel of Christ completely outmoded and supplanted the Old Testament, the law of Moses, and the religion of the Israelites), opting instead for a view that emphasized the centrality of covenant and universality of its application.¹⁰ In so doing, they joined a powerful wave of American Christian thought that emphasized the continued covenant with Israel, mediated through a profound sense of American exceptionalism.¹¹ Added to this was the premillennialist notion that if Christ is to reign upon the earth (Articles of Faith 1:10) then there must be a necessary gathering of Israel before the Second Coming.¹² Joseph Smith obtained much of his theological understanding through Protestant theologians and drew upon themes and ideas common to his era.¹³ The Book of Mormon’s stated mission is “to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God.”¹⁴ For Joseph Smith, as well as many of the earliest Saints, the belief that their message contained in sacred scripture needed to reach all people led to strong rhetoric that reeked of philosemitic overtones.¹⁵ For early Latter-day Saints, it made perfect sense that Jews were God’s chosen people and that they were, by God’s continued grace, still integrally connected and relevant to the story of gathering. They, like many European Christians, esteemed Jews as necessary partners. However, they

also exhibited at times sentiments that were overtly negative toward Jews, drawn from their reading and interpretation of scripture.

From its beginnings in the first half of the nineteenth century, Mormonism drew heavily upon biblical motifs to help solidify the community of believers as an American Israel. One who looks at the history of the emergence of Mormonism out of American revivalism need not look too far before noticing terms such as “Israel,” “Zion,” or “Jerusalem” applied systematically to the community. In fact, Brigham Young (1801–77), the second President of the Church, was often referred to as an “American Moses.”¹⁶ Early comparisons of Brigham Young to Moses and the Mormon trek west as an Exodus experience further infused biblical motifs into Mormon self-perceptions. In the formative years of Mormonism in America, its first President, Joseph Smith Jr. (1805–44), learned Hebrew along with other leading men in the Church. In his role as a modern-day prophet, Smith claimed authority to receive revelation for members of the Church as well as the world and the ability to translate ancient records; the most notable translation was the Book of Mormon. In connection with his desire to study the Bible and eventually to retranslate it, Smith decided upon the necessity of knowing Hebrew for his work. To fulfill this desire, Smith hired Joshua Seixas, a prominent Jewish scholar from New York to instruct Church leaders in Hebrew during a seven-week course that cost 320 dollars.¹⁷ Their willingness to pay such fees suggests that their interest was sincere and that at least some of them felt an immediacy in their efforts to better understand the Bible. Further, when these early Mormons read the biblical text, they read it in such a way as to link ancient Israel to a new Israel through a process of spiritual adoption.¹⁸ Even within Mormonism’s own narrative of ancient peoples, the connections with ancient Israel are central to their understanding of where their records originated and how they became heirs to the blessings promised to Abraham in the book of Genesis.

Orson Hyde’s journey to Europe and Jerusalem is the subject of numerous accounts of early Mormon missionary efforts and travels abroad.¹⁹ For Hyde and John E. Page (his appointed companion for his mission to Palestine), there can be little doubt that the impetus for any enthusiasm must have largely rested with Hyde.²⁰ Before embarking toward England in 1840, Hyde wrote to Joseph Smith and suggested that the work of the missionaries

ought to be “spread . . . among all people, Languages and tongues so far as possible; and gather up all jewels among the Jews besides.”²¹ In a letter dated 14 May 1840, Joseph Smith responded to Hyde and Page:

If there is anything calculated to interest the mind of the saints, to awaken in them the finest sensibilities, . . . surely it is the great and precious promises, made by our heavenly father to the children of Abraham . . . Bretheren [*sic*] you are in the path way to Eternal Fame! and immortal Glory; and inasmuch as you feel interested for the covenant people of the Lord, the God of their Father shall bless you. Do not be discouraged on account of the greatness of the work . . . He who scattered Israel has promised to gather them; therefore, inasmuch as you are to be instrumental in this great work, he will endow you with power, wisdom, might, and intelligence, and every qualification necessary.²²

The echoing of Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants claims about the children of Abraham, combined with the prophetic call to gather scattered Israel, made Orson Hyde long to see the cities he once saw in vision and fulfill his mission to the people God had long prepared.

The idea that Christianity functioned allegorically to fulfill all Old Testament prophecies about Israel was firmly fixed in nineteenth-century Christian parlance.²³ This rhetoric, coupled with the Book of Mormon text, led Hyde and other early Mormons to consider the possibility that there might be a literal gathering of Israel (or Jews) back to Palestine in preparation for the Second Coming. Wilford Woodruff, one of the Twelve Apostles in Britain, wrote in his journal: “I addressed in the fore part of the day. Had the Chills & fever in the Afternoon but met with the saints in the evening & broke bread unto them. My mind is much interested these days in the gathering of the Jews for they are now fast fulfilling the scriptures by returning to Jerrusalem.”²⁴ Further, Woodruff noted on 2 November 1840 that there were efforts by Moses Montefiore, a brother-in-law to the Rothchild patriarch and highly influential Jewish communal leader in London, to establish banks as a precursor to a Jewish return to their Palestinian homeland.²⁵ Thus, as will be shown later with Hyde, early Mormon interests in Judaism depended upon a steep learning curve for many of the Apostles during their 1840 mission in Britain. While there, they learned through newspapers and

meetings with local Jewish leaders about the plight of Europe’s Jews in the 1840s which gave context to and formed the Mormon response that ultimately pushed Hyde toward Palestine. Therefore, Hyde’s writings from his Palestinian mission reflect a concerted effort to see Jews as a historical nation with contemporary relevance.

Mormons were certainly not the only American religious groups to foster such an interest. We might look no further than Alexander Campbell’s *Christian System* to get a sense of the growing interest in Jews and Judaism among nineteenth-century ministers. In his lengthy sermon detailing the “Jewish Institution”—that is, the law of Moses and the process of transition from Jewish communal life focused on patriarchal family to nation—Campbell argued for typological understanding of pre-Rabbinic Judaism. He suggested that “the Jewish institution is not to be regarded only in its political, moral, and religious aspects, but especially in its figurative and prospective character. God so wisely and benevolently contrived it from its origin to its close, that its whole history . . . should exactly and impressively shadow forth the new institution with the fates and fortunes of the subjects of this new and more glorious order of things.”²⁶

From this perspective, Judaism and its historical antecedents ought to be seen as part of God’s grand plan and as one step along the way for God’s justice and eventual mercy to work their way through the human family. Such a view, indeed a supersessionist one at heart, should not surprise us given the millenarian view of many nineteenth-century Christian movements. Reverend Charles Buck’s 1821 *Theological Dictionary* argued that Judaism is “but a temporary dispensation, and was to give way, at least the ceremonial part of it, at the coming of the Messiah.”²⁷ Campbell suggested, however, that it was imperative for the nineteenth-century Christian who sought divine knowledge about God to know something of “Adam, Abel, Noah, Melchizedek, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samson, David, Jonah, . . . and of *ordinances*, the passover, the scape-goat, the red heifer, the year of jubilee, the law of the leper, the kinsman redeemer, the cities of refuge; together with all the sacrifices, washings, anointings, and consecrations of the *holy* nation.”²⁸ Further, the Christian mind ought to know of “the furnishing of a new alphabet and language, (the elements of heavenly science,) without which it would appear to have been almost, if not altogether, impossible to learn the spiritual things or to make any proficiency in

the knowledge of those relations which Christianity unfolds. The language of the new institution is therefore explained by that of the old. No one can understand the dialect of the kingdom of heaven who has not studied the dialect of the antecedent administrations of heaven over the patriarchs and Jews.²⁹ The world that Joseph Smith, Orson Hyde, and others operated within was well accustomed to discussions about the theological import of Jews within Christian worldviews. Because of the pervasiveness of the Jews' figurative position within the Christian mind, the end result was often a general negation of living, contemporary Jews. That is to say, among nineteenth-century Christians the image of biblical Israel was somehow disconnected from Jews that they met on the street. They often invoked the claim that modern Jews continued to survive if only to serve as a valuable reminder that this "fallen race," as Hyde once called them, was to endure godly punishment for their rejection of Jesus.³⁰

While Mormonism had all the requisite theological dictates to find historical Judaism as an attractive object of study and inquiry, Orson Hyde's writings reflect a different concern with Judaism than the strictly theological arguments of Campbell and others. Hyde reflected a growing awareness of the immediate plight of Jews in Europe, Russia, and Palestine during the nineteenth century. As it turns out, this was also a characteristic of Woodruff's tone and content. Woodruff noted that after Hyde made his way to Manchester to meet with other members of the Twelve in April 1841, he "appealed powerfully to the meeting & covenanted with the saints present in a bond of mutual prayer. During his mission to Jerrusalem and the east which was sustained on the part of the hearers with a harty Amen."³¹ The following day, Woodruff continued:

Before we left the Twelve lade hands upon the head of Elder {Kimball} Orson Hyde & Blessed him in the name of the Lord, as he had ben set apart by the first Presidency to take a mission to the Holy land, the City of Jerrusalem whare Jesus Dwelt, for the purpose of laying the foundation of a great work in that land. This is the first mission that any man has taken to the land of Asia belonging to the church of Christ of Latter Day Saints. Much of the Spirit of God rested upon us when we blessed him, Elder Kimball was mouth & Elder Taylor scribe.³²

As was his habit of doing, Hyde sought introduction while in London through a network of contacts with "some of the principal Jews in the place."³³ One of these Jews was the aged chief rabbi of England (referred to in Hyde's letters as "the President Rabbi of the Hebrews in England"), Solomon Hirschell (1762–1842).³⁴ Hirschell was born in London but trained according to Polish (most likely Lithuanian) Jewish tradition, following in the footsteps of the Gaon of Vilna (Elijah ben Schlomo Zalman), and was a lifelong enemy of the growing reform movement in the nineteenth century. As the chief rabbi, his responsibility was to the British Empire and it was through him that all queries regarding Jewish life and practice in Britain were adjudicated.³⁵ As evidenced in his later writing to Joseph and others, Hyde's efforts to meet with Hirschell proved to be profoundly influential to his view of Judaism in the nineteenth-century European context. In his 1842 letter to Parley P. Pratt in Liverpool, Hyde argued:

There is an increasing anxiety in Europe for the restoration of that people; and this anxiety is not confined to the pale of any religious community, but it has found its way to the courts of kings. Special ambassadors have been sent, and consuls and consular-agents have been appointed. The rigorous policy which has hitherto characterised the course of other nations towards them, now begins to be softened by the oil of friendship, and modified by the balm of humanity.³⁶

In order to see the context behind this letter, we ought to be aware of Hirschell's own interests in the final year of the aged rabbi's life. Perhaps the most crucial and contentious year in the first half of the nineteenth century for European and Middle Eastern Jews was 1840. This year and the years immediately following were long foretold by Jews as the advent of the messianic age. Moses Hess (1812–75),³⁷ the German-Jewish writer, acknowledged the year 5600 as the messianic year. Hess went so far as to include as a sign that this was under way during the events in Damascus in 1840. Jacob Katz argued that "in all the lands of eastern Europe, the opinion was widespread that the approaching year 5600 was the year of the redemption."³⁸ This belief seems to have originated with Talmudic and Zohar passages that made reference to the messianic age. Given the traditionally accepted

six-thousand-year life span of the world, Talmudic tractate Sanhedrin (99a) contains the following statement:

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, behold your king comes to you; he is just and has salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass and upon a colt the foal of an ass” (Zech. 9:9). . . . R. Eliezer says, “The days of the Messiah will be forty years. . . . R. Dosa says “Four hundred years. Here it is written, ‘And they shall serve them and they shall afflict them four hundred years.’ (Gen. 15:13) and elsewhere Make us glad according to the days wherein you have afflicted us” (Ps. 90:15).³⁹

Arie Morgenstern uses this passage as a way of showing the Talmudic foundations of the dating to then draw the argument toward an examination of just how pervasive this sense of messianic hope was throughout the whole of nineteenth-century Europe and the Mediterranean world.⁴⁰ Many Jews held that if Rabbi Dosa’s prediction proved accurate, the messianic year ought to occur in or near 1840 (5600) to allow time for the four hundred year period of cleansing and torment to occur before the 6000th year.⁴¹ The *Zohar*, a thirteenth-century mystical text likely composed by Moses de Leon of Guadalajara (d. 1305), also makes reference to the flood in the time of Noah and then predicts that a “flood” of knowledge and wisdom would come forth, based on the same dating schema, around the year 1840.⁴² This line of thinking fit well into the Christian understanding that the events leading Jews and Christians to think about a future home for Jews in Palestine was connected to the divine narrative that both groups saw unfolding, albeit with noticeable differences.

When Hyde arrived in London for the first time, and particularly on his Palestine trip, he surely encountered “principal Jews” who helped him see their social and messianic worldview and their hope for a brighter future for Jews both in Europe and in their traditional homeland. Later nineteenth-century Jewish expectations of a return to Jerusalem accelerated *aliyot* (singular *aliyah*), or mass waves of migration toward Jerusalem, to begin the long process of resettling *Eretz Yisrael*. It was against great struggle that even earlier Jewish settlers attempted to establish an Ashkenazic Jewish presence in Palestine with very little natural or economic resources.⁴³ By the time

Hyde encountered Jerusalem, he was seeing a world enmeshed in dramatic chaos and transition with a very uncertain future.⁴⁴

Just before his arrival in Jerusalem, Hyde ported in Beirut, a central destination of European Jewish migration in the 1830s. Hyde commented on the Christian clergy that he encountered in the various cities that echoed his own desire to see *Eretz Yisrael* flourish once again. However, he was quite cynical of their approach. He noted:

The course which the popular clergy pursue at this time in relation to the Divine economy, looks to me as though they would say; “O Lord! We will worship thee with all our hearts, serve thee with all our souls and be very pious and holy. We will even gather Israel, convert the heathen, and bring in the millennium, if you will only let us alone that we may do it in our own way, and according to our own will. But if you speak from heaven to interfere with our plans, or cause any to see visions or dream dreams or prophecy whereby we are disturbed or interrupted in our worship, we will exert all our strength and skill to deny what you say, and charge it home upon the devil or some wild fantastic spirit, as being its author.”⁴⁵

Hyde ventured then to show how the gathering of Israel might be better facilitated by Christians, and Mormons in particular. In his letter to the Twelve, dated 1 January 1842, Hyde argued, “It was by political power and influence that the Jewish nation was broken down, and her subjects dispersed abroad; and I will here hazard the opinion, that by political power and influence, they will be gathered and built up; and further, that England is destined, in the wisdom and economy of heaven, to stretch forth the arm of political power, and advance in the front ranks of this glorious enterprise. . . . This opinion I submit, however, to your superior wisdom to correct, if you shall find it wrong.”⁴⁶

There were good reasons for Hyde to think that England would be the country to lead this effort to redeem Israel in 1841 and 1842—reasons that were entirely political and related to the philanthropic endeavors of wealthy British Jews in Britain. One example who was well known to Rabbi Hirschell was Moses Montefiore, one of Britain’s wealthiest and most internationally

recognized philanthropists and a Jewish advocate, who approached the Viceroy of Egypt, Mehemet Ali (1769–1849) with a proposal for Jewish recolonization in the region.⁴⁷

Jews across the globe focused on Beirut's neighboring city of Damascus in 1840 for political reasons. In February of that year, an Italian monk named Father Thomas, along with his servant, disappeared in Damascus. The charge of ritual murder was levied against the city's Jewish population and they were convicted. Ritual murder consists of a charge against Jews that historically drew upon "secrets" found in the Talmud and other texts that supposedly prescribed the use of Christian blood for ritual purposes, most often the mixing of blood with flour for the Matza dough. This case grew into a *cause célèbre* that drew the attention and consternation of European Jews broadly. Presiding Jews from Britain and France came to the aid of Damascus Jews. The likes of Moses Montefiore and Adolf Cremieux made numerous trips to the region seeking to learn more of the case and force the hand of local officials to release the Jews, overturn the conviction, and assert control over the region again. The whole of European Jewish attention was focused on the region to which Hyde would travel because of the Damascus affair. Those leading Jews with whom he met in 1840 and 1841 in Germany and England were among those community leaders who were petitioning Damascus officials, the Catholic Church, Ottoman officials, and world leaders to put a stop to the accusations.

Further, the Damascus affair also contributed to the first publications in 1841 of the *Jewish Chronicle* that served for the rest of the nineteenth century as the journal of world Jewry.⁴⁸ In nearly every edition, one can find news from around the world concerning Jewish developments, inter-faith strife, celebrations, and other notable occurrences. Funded by wealthy Jews in Britain, the *Jewish Chronicle* served in the 1840s as the clarion call for assistance and support of impoverished Jewish communities of the *ali-yot*, Russia, and the United States. Hyde's claims that the way to further the gathering of Jews to Palestine was through humanitarian efforts echoes similar claims from Hirschell, Montefiore, Cremieux, and other Jews who worked tirelessly on behalf of worldwide Jewry.⁴⁹ One of the major news stories that developed on the pages of the *Jewish Chronicle* was the changing tide of Russian treatment of Jews and Count Pavel Kiselev's efforts to incorporate Jewish schools and institutions within the vast Russian Empire.

For Hyde, the events in Russia and England suggested that the moment was indeed upon them; regardless of whether 1840 was truly a messianic year, it was a critical moment in the unfolding of God's work in the world. He tied together at least two of the sources for his optimism when he wrote: "But on the land of Joseph, far in the west, where the spread eagle of America floats in the breeze and shadows the land . . . shall Zion rear her stately temples and stretch forth the curtains of her habitation. The record of Mormon chimes in so beautifully with the scriptures to establish this position, that an honest and faithful examination of the subject is all that is required to expel every doubt from the heart."⁵⁰ It was clear even in 1840, as Woodruff noted in his journal, that Mormon Apostles found themselves fully engaged in this work of finding avenues for facilitating a modern, yet no less prophetic, gathering of Israel. Woodruff argued:

But in the midst of this mighty struggle, there is a small portion of the Community among the Nations of the Earth, who are looking upon other signs of this present generation as indicating a day big with events, even the restoration of primitive Christianity, the proclamation of the fulness of the Everlasting gospel among all nations both Gentile & Jew, the restoration of the Jews to their own land, the rebuilding of Jerrusalem, great changes, Judgments, wars, & revolutions of the gentile nations, the Second Advent of the Mesiah in the Clouds of heaven, & the great Millennium or rest of the Saints of one thousand years all of which events have been predicted by the Holy Prophets who have Spoken since the world began.⁵¹

Thus, the magnitude of the prophetic call of the Twelve to gather in Britain in 1840 weighed heavily upon those who took the charge and viewed, as part of their mission, the responsibility to begin a period of concerted effort to figure out how Israel might be gathered again.

At the conclusion of his mission, when the Twelve were again gathered on the American side of the Atlantic, Woodruff reported that "Elder Orson Hyde delivered an interesting discourse at President Joseph Smiths giving an account of his travels at Jerrusalem & home again which was interesting. He saw the medeteranean [*sic*] & dead sea at the same time from mount Olivet. Saw smoke or fog continually arising from the dead sea. Spoke of

the sepulcher & many things that put him in mind of the days of Christ. He published our principles in the German language & circulated them among the various nations.”⁵² Without seeing the prophetic nature of the mission of the Twelve to Britain and the necessity of their being in Britain in 1840 and 1841 when the world was focused upon the “Jewish Question” in Europe, Hyde’s journey to Palestine appears void of any real significance for the broader Church. Seeing 1840 Britain as necessary for the fulfillment of the revelation in Doctrine and Covenants 118 helps to situate the work for the eventual gathering of Jews to Palestine as part of the early Latter-day Saint work of preparing the world for the anticipated millennial reign of the Savior, Jesus Christ.

Notes

1. This interest was evidently not limited to a scriptural fascination as seen in the account in Joseph Smith’s journal of the visit of Robert Matthews (who claimed the title “Prophet Matthias”). Joseph Smith indicated that “Curiosity to see a man that was reputed to be a jew [*sic*] caused many to call during the day and more particularly at evening suspicions were entertained that said Joshua was the noted Mathias of New York, spoken so much of in the public prints on account of the trials he underwent in that place before a court of justice, for murder manslaughter contempt of court whipping his Daughter &c for the two last crimes he was imprisoned, and came out about 4, months since, after some, equivocating he confessed that he was really Mathias.” Joseph Smith, Journal, 1835–1836, in Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839*, vol. 1 of the Journals series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2008), 93–95. Based on this account it is difficult to say what caused more people to show up at Joseph Smith’s home when word got out, but at least a few were seemingly interested in the claim of Matthias as a Jewish prophet rather than his notoriety as criminal.

2. A short survey of relevant titles on the subject of early Mormon understandings of Israel, Jews, and Judaism include the following: Shalom Goldman, *God’s Sacred Tongue: Hebrew & the American Imagination* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 176–98; Victor L. Ludlow, “Jews,” in *Book of Mormon Reference Companion*, ed. Dennis L. Largey (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 463–64; Robert L. Millet, “Gathering of Israel,” in Robert L. Millet and others, *LDS Beliefs: A Doctrinal Reference* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 247–49.

3. Title page, the Book of Mormon.

4. A careful reading of the Doctrine and Covenants and the Book of Mormon reveals a constant interplay between biblical motif, modern parallels, and a grand narrative of events that will occur as the events of the Second Coming unfold. The

Latter-day Saint understanding of this process builds this relationship between the Book of Mormon families and the biblical peoples by locating common stories and parallels. Alma 46:23–24 builds upon the narrative of Joseph in Egypt and the Lord’s preservation of peoples for divine purposes. Similarly, Nephi attempted to instruct his brothers by showing them the remarkable parallel of their own story with that of Moses and the Israelites, as well as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (1 Nephi 17:26–40).

5. David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841–1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 5. Cesarani argues that there were 30,000 to 40,000 Jews in England in the 1840s.

6. Examples of this include the following: Scott G. Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal, 1833–1898* Typescript (Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1983), 2:364; and Hyde, *A Voice from Jerusalem: A Sketch of the Travels and Ministry of Elder Orson Hyde*, (Liverpool: P. P. Pratt, 1842), iii.

7. Richard L. Evans, *A Century of “Mormonism” in Great Britain: A Brief Summary of the Activities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the United Kingdom, with Emphasis on its Introduction One Hundred Years Ago* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1937), 85–94.

8. Abigail Green, “The British Empire and the Jews: An Imperialism of Human Rights?” *Past & Present*, no. 199 (May 2008), 175–205. The prevalence of this idea in the United States was richly documented in the journal of the Society for the Meliorating of the Condition of the Jews, *Israel’s Advocate* (1823–27). The serial essay, “The Restoration of the Jews Contemplated and Urged,” *Israel’s Advocate* 1, no. 1 (January 1823) detailed how American Christians and government officials might aid in the relief of European Jews. Abigail Green, *Moses Montefiore: Jewish Liberator, Imperial Hero* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 127. Green argues that most British Evangelicals “regarded this development [diplomatic discussions about a Jewish presence in the Middle East] as a world-historical event that would pave the way for the coming of the messiah.”

9. Anthony Ashley-Cooper (Lord Ashley, Earl of Shaftesbury), review of “Letters on Egypt, Edom, and the Holy Land,” *Quarterly Review* 63 (January and March 1839): 192. The *Quarterly Review*, founded in 1809, was intended as a Tory highbrow journal that would record “the advance of knowledge in every field of human enterprise.” See Joanne Shattock, *Politics and Reviewers: The Edinburgh and the Quarterly* (London: Leicester University Press, 1989), 3–4. According to one historian, *Quarterly Review* sold 8,500 copies in 1841 and was read by many of Britain’s elites. See Richard D. Altick, *Punch: The Lively Youth of a British Institution 1841–1851* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1997), 35.

10. Supersessionism describes the Christian belief that Jews, as a result of their “blindness” and rejection of Jesus Christ have been temporarily displaced as the covenanted people and have ceded that position to Christians. Christian supersessionism does not necessarily demand that Jews will never hold a position within the kingdom of God, but it certainly delays or places restrictions upon it. Supersessionism depends upon a typological reading of scriptural passages that allows for Christians to identify moments where Israel lost its favored position. For example, some have read Matthew

21:28–41 as an indication that God has revoked his covenant with Israel because they killed Jesus Christ, whom they took for the heir. See Christopher M. Leighton, “Christian Theology After the Shoah,” in *Christianity in Jewish Terms*, ed. Tikva Frymer-Kensky and others (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2000), 36–48.

11. Doctrine and Covenants 10:49–50 connects the Book of Mormon translation process in 1828–29 to the coming forth of the gospel message and the preparation of “this land” and the blessing pronounced upon it by those who compiled it for that express purpose. Robert K. Whalen, “‘Christians Love the Jews!’ The Development of American Philo-Semitism, 1790–1860,” *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 6, no. 2 (Summer 1996), 225–59.

12. Shalom Goldman, *Zeal for Zion: Christians, Jews, and the Idea of the Promised Land* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 2009), 12–13.

13. J. Spencer Fluhman, *“A Peculiar People”: Anti-Mormonism and the Making of Religion in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 28, 83–84; Goldman, *God’s Sacred Tongue*, 190; Kent P. Jackson, “Joseph Smith’s Biblical Antiquity,” in *Approaching Antiquity: Joseph Smith and the Ancient World*, ed. Lincoln H. Blumell, Matthew J. Grey, and Andrew H. Hedges (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2015), 166.

14. Title Page, the Book of Mormon. Emphasis in original. For more on the significance and interpretation of this in Latter-day Saint teaching and doctrine today, see the following two essays: Shon D. Hopkin, “To the Convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus Is the Christ,” in *The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon: A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, 44th Annual Brigham Young University Sidney B. Sperry Symposium, ed. Dennis L. Largey and others (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2015), 281–99; and Jared W. Ludlow, “‘They Are Not Cast Off Forever’: Fulfillment of the Covenant Purposes,” in *The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon*, 266–79.

15. Jonathan Karp and Adam Sutcliffe, “A Brief History of Philosemitism,” in *Philosemitism in History*, ed. Jonathan Karp and Adam Sutcliffe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 6. Philo-Semitism is “the idealization of Jews and Judaism by non-Jews.” There is no single definition that the majority of scholars who study relations between Jews and Christians readily agree upon. This disagreement is the result of various strands of Philo-Semitism that combine adoration and criticism in their discussions that might appear, at least on the surface to be very pro-Jewish in tone. However, within many of these critiques, there is the underlying belief among Christians that all Jews will eventually need to adopt Christianity and accept Jesus Christ as Savior.

16. Brigham Young was referred to as “the Moses of the Latter days” by Edward W. Tullidge in 1876. He wrote in his biography of the prophet, “Here we have him at once in the character of the modern Moses. It is no fanciful conceit of the author to thus style him to-day, after he and his people have built up a State fabric, with three hundred cities and settlements, networked with railroads and the electric telegraph; for at that very period his name rang throughout America, and reverberated in Europe, as the Moses of the ‘latter days,’ and the Mormons were likened to the children of Israel in the wilderness.” Tullidge, *Life of Brigham Young; or Utah and Her Founders*

(New York: n.p., 1876), 6. Others commented further on the character of Young as Moses including John T. Caine, a territorial delegate in Washington. When asked by Frank G. Carpenter of the *New York World* to comment on Young, Caine replied: “He was a great man. . . . The work of Moses leading the children of Israel through the wilderness was nothing to his taking that band of Mormons over the untrodden wilderness of the great American desert and of settling them in the heart of it. Moses only traveled a few hundred miles. Brigham’s band traversed thousands. It took Brigham Young less than a year to find his land of Canaan, while Moses wandered around for fully forty.” See Frank G. Carpenter, “Talk with the Utah Delegate,” *Deseret Weekly News*, 25 October 1890, 584. In 1854, the Scottish writer and social commentator, Thomas Carlyle suggested in a brief essay on Mormons that “No Czar of Russia is so absolute as Joseph Smith’s successor.” See Clyde de L. Ryals, “Thomas Carlyle on the Mormons: An Unpublished Essay” *Carlyle Studies Annual* 15 (1995), 51. Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986). Arrington adopted this appellation as a fitting title for his landmark biography on Brigham Young.

17. Joseph Smith, History, 6 January 1836, in Karen Lynn Davidson, et al., eds., *Histories, Volume 1: 1832–1844*, vol. 1 of the Histories series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2012), 168. For more on Seixas and his connection to Joseph Smith, see Goldman, *God’s Sacred Tongue* 176–98. One of the most successful students in Seixas’s lectures was Orson Hyde, who wrote a personal letter to his teacher on 31 March 1836. Hyde wrote: “The time has arrived when your valuable course of Heb. Instruction with us has come to a close; and I am unwilling for you to leave without expressing on my parts the deep sense I have of your indefatigable labours, and the intense interests you have manifested by employing all, and the most efficient means in your power to advance us in the knowledge of the Heb. Scriptures. It is but justice to say that our expectations under your very valuable course of instruction, have been more than realized. The extra privileges which I have enjoyed with you in consequences of local circumstances, call for my grateful acknowledgement and inspire my head to call upon Heaven for blessings to rest upon you, and upon your beloved family. Should any institution, class, or people wish to acquire a knowledge of the Hebrew Language (did they know your superior qualifications,) I am confident they would not ask, What are the terms of tuition? But can we obtain him?” Hyde Family Papers, University of Utah J. Willard Marriott Special Collections, MS 193, box 1, folder 1.

18. See the concise article on the subject of Mormonism and its use of ancient Israel in W. D. Davies, “Israel, the Mormons and the Land” in *Reflections on Mormonism: Judaeo-Christian Parallels*, ed. Truman G. Madsen (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 1978), 79–96.

19. Among the many secondary sources that relay Orson Hyde’s story, see for example, “Orson Hyde’s Trip to the Holy Land 1841 A.D.,” extracts from the writings of Marvin S. Hill and Joseph S. Hyde, compiled by Glenn E. Nielson, February 1963, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Provo, UT; Myrtle Hyde, *Orson Hyde: The Olive Branch of Israel* (Salt Lake City: Agreka, 2000), 111–30; Grant Underwood, *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism* (Urbana: University of

Illinois, 1999), 63–6; Howard H. Barron, *Orson Hyde: Missionary, Apostle, Colonizer* (Bountiful, UT: Horizon, 1978), 113–41; Marvin S. Hill, “An Historical Study of the Life of Orson Hyde, Early Mormon Missionary and Apostle from 1805–1852” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1955), 43–65, 110–18.

20. Myrtle Stevens Hyde, *Orson Hyde: The Olive Branch of Israel* (Salt Lake City: Agreka, 2000), 112–14. In early March 1840, Hyde saw in vision the cities he was to visit including Constantinople, Amsterdam, and Jerusalem. According to Myrtle Hyde, the vision lasted six hours. Hyde indicated that it lasted “for a number of hours.” On 4 March 1840, Hyde related the events to Joseph Smith who reacted with equal enthusiasm. See Hyde, *A Voice from Jerusalem*, iii.

21. Orson Hyde and John E. Page, Letter, 1 May 1840, Columbus, OH, to Joseph Smith, Nauvoo, IL; in Joseph Smith, Letterbook 2, 144–45, handwriting of Howard Coray, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/letter-from-orson-hyde-and-john-e-page-1-may-1840?p=1&highlight=orson%20hyde#!/paperSummaryletter-from-orson-hyde-and-john-e-page-1-may-1840>.

22. Joseph Smith, Letter, 14 May 1840, Nauvoo, IL, to Orson Hyde and John E. Page, Cincinnati, OH, in Joseph Smith, Letterbook 2, 146–47, handwriting of Howard Coray, Church History Library, <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/letter-to-orson-hyde-and-john-e-page-14-may-1840>.

23. From among many possible early nineteenth-century American sources, one might look at William Cogswell, *The Harbinger of the Millennium* (Boston: Pierce and Parker, 1833); John Jacob Bergmann, “The Restoration of the Jews Contemplated and Urged,” *Israel’s Advocate* 1, no. 1–7 (January 1823–July 1823); or for Britain, see for example, Ashley-Cooper, review of “Letters on Egypt, Edom, and the Holy Land,” 166–92.

24. *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 1:364.

25. *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 1:367.

26. Alexander Campbell, *The Christian System, in Reference of Primitive Christianity as Plead in the Current Reformation*, 4th ed. (Cincinnati: H. S. Bosworth, 1866), 140.

27. Rev. Charles Buck, *A Theological Dictionary* (Philadelphia: W. W. Woodward, 1821), 278.

28. Campbell, *Christian System*, 141; emphasis in original.

29. Campbell, *Christian System*, 141.

30. Orson Hyde, *A Voice from Jerusalem*, 9. Hyde, in giving a description of his mission, wrote: “But against this heavenly message, streaming from the bosom of the compassionate God, with the purest love and good-will to a fallen race, and beaming in the face of men with a celestial radiance, is arranged the cold-hearted prejudices of an unbelieving world. Well did the Savior ask this question,—‘When the son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?’”

31. *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 2:85.

32. *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 2:86.

33. Orson Hyde, *A Voice from Jerusalem*, 10.

34. Hirschell was the Chief Rabbi from 1802 to 1842. Orson Hyde’s letter to Hirschell was published in *Times and Seasons*, 1 Oct. 1841, 2:551–55. In the article, Hyde mentioned that Hirschell broke his femur, an injury that had him laid up for some time, and later, in 1842, he fell again and broke his collar bone, after which he died. Orson Hyde, Letter, Ratisbon, Bavaria, to Joseph Smith, Nauvoo, IL, 17 July 1841, in *Times and Seasons*, 15 October 1841, 2:570–73.

35. Hirschell was often referred to in the press as “the high priest” of British Jewry. Hillary L. Rubinstein, “Hirschell (Hirschel, Herschell), Solomon (1762–1842),” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 27: 311–312.

36. Hyde, *A Voice from Jerusalem*, 14–15.

37. Hess, a *maskil*, or “enlightened scholar,” found a new sense of Jewish identity through a growing Jewish nationalism that helped him navigate the difficult issue of whether Jews might ever find a home in Europe or whether they need look elsewhere. *The Revival of Israel: Rome and Jerusalem*, trans. Meyer Waxman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 43. See also Michael Brenner, *Zionism: A Brief History* (Princeton: Markus Weiner, 2003), 11–13; Howard M. Sachar, *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time*, 3rd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), 11–12; Robert M. Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought: The Jewish Experience in History* (Upper Saddle, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1980), 686–89. For more on Moses Hess, see Ken Koltun-Fromm, *Moses Hess and Modern Jewish Identity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

38. Jacob Katz, “On the Year 5600 as a Messianic Year and its Influence on the Efforts of *Perushim* to Hasten the Redemption” (Hebrew), *Cathedra* 24 (1982), 73, quoted in Arie Morgenstern, *Hastening Redemption: Messianism and the Resettlement of the Land of Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 23–49. For more on the *Perushim* movement, see Green, *Moses Montefiore*, 116–17. See also Israel Bartal, “Messianism and Nationalism: Liberal Optimism vs. Orthodox Anxiety,” *Jewish History* 20, no. 1 (2006), 5–17; and Chaim I. Waxman, “Messianism, Zionism, and the State of Israel,” *Modern Judaism* 7, no. 2 (May 1987), 175–92.

39. Jacob Neusner, *Talmud, Sanhedrin* 99a, vol. 16 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011), 529.

40. Morgenstern, *Hastening Redemption*, 23–24.

41. The work of Arie Morgenstern has shown the broad acceptance of the 1840 date as the dawn of the messianic age as critical for the work of the Jews in the world. See Morgenstern, *Hastening Redemption*, 23–49.

42. *Zohar* 1.117a, Pritzker Edition, trans. Daniel C. Matt (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), II: 180. The passage 1:117a reads: “Every sixty years of that sixth millennium, *he* is invigorated, scaling its rungs. In the six hundredth year of the sixth, springs of wisdom will open above, springs of wisdom below, and the world will prepare to enter the seventh, just like a person preparing on the sixth day, as the sun is about to set, to enter Sabbath. Your mnemonic: *In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life . . . all the springs of the great abyss burst and the sluices of heaven were opened* (Genesis 7:11).” The sixth millennium is traditionally symbolized by the Hebrew letter ם (vav),

hence the “mystery of the 7” is the beginning line of *Zohar* 1.117a. The symbolic numerical representation of 7 is six, hence the beginning of the sixth millennium was 1240/41 C.E., making 1840 (six hundred years later) the designated year for this flood of wisdom. The messianic millennium, according to Jewish tradition, will commence 2240/41 C.E.

43. Green, *Moses Montefiore*, 112–19; Morgenstern, *Hastening Redemption*, 72–73.

44. Hyde, *A Voice from Jerusalem*, 34–35. Hyde’s sense of urgency and potential for danger seems to have been a statement about both the general state of affairs, but also out of fear for his own life. At the conclusion of his last letter, dated 20 October 1841, Hyde noted, “I have many particulars that I would like to write, but time will not allow at this time. You will hear from me again by the first opportunity, if the Arabs don’t kill me.”

45. Hyde, *Voice from Jerusalem*, 12–13.

46. Hyde, *Voice from Jerusalem*, 14.

47. Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Jerusalem: The Biography* (New York: Vintage, 2011), 343–46.

48. Cesarani, *Jewish Chronicle*, 9.

49. Hyde, *A Voice from Jerusalem*, 14–15. Hyde is careful here to make the connection between a softened political and social outlook that benefits Jews and their imminent return to the scriptural basis mentioned above that ties Jews and Mormons to the “god of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

50. Hyde, *A Voice from Jerusalem*, 18.

51. *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 2:1 (1 January 1841).

52. *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 2:194 (11 December 1842).