of the “congregations” of God (Alma 33:9). Some of his enemies became reconciled to him through the power of God, but others were visited “with speedy destruction” (Alma 33:4, 10). Finally, he was slain because of his bold testimony of the coming of the “Son of God” (Hel. 8:13–19).

A major theme in the teachings of Zenos was the destiny of the house of Israel. His allegory or parable comparing the house of Israel to a tame olive tree and the Gentiles to a wild olive tree constitutes the longest single chapter in the Book of Mormon, Jacob chapter 5 (see BOOK OF MORMON: BOOK OF JACOB). The allegory refers to major events in the scattering and gathering of the house of Israel (see ALLEGORY OF ZENOS; ISRAEL: GATHERING OF ISRAEL; ISRAEL: SCATTERING OF ISRAEL).

The second-longest quotation from Zenos in the Book of Mormon is his hymn of thanksgiving and praise recorded in Alma 33:3–11, which emphasizes prayer, worship, and the mercies of God. A careful comparison of the style and contents of this hymn with Hymn H (or 8) and Hymn J (or 10) of the Thanksgiving Hymns of the DEAD SEA SCROLLS, noting certain striking similarities, suggests that the three may have been written by the same person. Further, the life situations of the author (or authors) are very similar (CWHN 7:276–83). Some LDS scholars anticipate that other evidences of Zenos’ writings may appear as additional ancient manuscripts come to light.

Book of Mormon prophets frequently quoted Zenos because of his plain and powerful testimony of the future life, mission, atonement, death, and resurrection of the Son of God. Alma recorded part of Zenos’ prayer to God, recounting that “it is because of thy Son that thou hast been thus merciful unto me, therefore I will cry unto thee in all mine afflictions, for in thee is my joy; for thou hast turned thy judgments away from me, because of thy Son” (Alma 33:11). Nephi recalled Zenos’ knowledge that after the Son of God was crucified, he would “be buried in a sepulchre” for three days, and a sign of darkness should be “given of his death unto those who should inhabit the isles of the sea, more especially given unto those who are of the house of Israel” (1 Ne. 19:10). Amulek quoted Zenos’ words to show “that redemption cometh through the Son of God” (Alma 34:7). Mormon included Zenos as one of the prophets who spoke of events associated with “the coming of Christ” (3 Ne. 10:15), as did Nephi, who stated, “Yea, behold, the prophet Zenos did testify boldly; for the which he was slain” (Hel. 8:19).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES summarized some of the teachings of Zenos and evaluated his contributions as follows:

It was Zenos who wrote of the visit of the Lord God to Israel after his resurrection; of the joy and salvation that would come to the righteous among them; of the desolations and destructions that awaited the wicked among them; of the fires, and tempests, and earthquakes that would occur in the Americas; of the scourging and crucifying of the God of Israel by those in Jerusalem; of the scattering of the Jews among all nations; and of their gathering again in the last days “from the four quarters of the earth.” (1 Ne. 19:11–17). I do not think I overstate the matter when I say that next to Isaiah himself—who is the prototype, pattern, and model for all the prophets—there was not a greater prophet in all Israel than Zenos [p. 17].

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ZION

Latter-day Saints use the name Zion to signify a group of God’s followers or a place where such a group lives. Latter-day scriptures define Zion as the “pure in heart” (D&C 97:21). Other uses of the name in scripture reflect this one. For example, Zion refers to the place or land appointed by the Lord for the gathering of those who accept his gospel (D&C 101:16–22; 3 Ne. 20–22). The purpose of this gathering is to raise up a committed society of “pure people” who will “serve [God] in righteousness” (D&C 100:13, 16). Hence, the lands of Zion are places where the pure in heart live together in righteousness. Geographical Church units are called “stake[s] of Zion” (D&C 101:21–22). The Church and its stakes are called Zion because they are for gathering and purifying a people of God (D&C 43:8–11; Eph. 4:11–13). Scripture also refers to Zion as a “City of Holiness” (Moses 7:19), because the “sanctified” or “pure”
live there (Moro. 10:31–33; Alma 13:11–12), and a “city of refuge” where the Lord protects them from the peril of the world (D&C 45:66–67).

“Pure in heart” may be explained in terms of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus said that to be saved a person must believe in him, repent of sins, and be born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5, 16; 3 Ne. 27:20). Scripture describes the rebirth to which Jesus refers as a “mighty change in your hearts” or being “born of God” (Alma 5:13, 14). It means that the person puts off the “natural man” and puts on a new nature that has “no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually” (Mosiah 5:2; 3:19). A person pure of heart is one who has died to evil and awakened to good. Thus “pure people,” being alive to good, dwell together in righteousness and are called Zion (Moses 7:18). Zion, then, is the way of life of a people who live the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Since love comprehends all righteousness (Matt. 22:36–40), the people of Zion live together in love as equals (see EQUALITY; D&C 38:24–27). They have “all things common” (4 Ne. 1:3). They labor together as equals, each contributing to the good of all and to the work of salvation according to their individual talents (D&C 82:3; Alma 1:26). As equals, all receive the things that are necessary for survival and well-being, according to their circumstances, wants, and needs (D&C 51:3, 9). Consequently, among a people of Zion there are no rich or poor (4 Ne. 1:3). It is written of the ancient people of Enoch that “the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them” (Moses 7:18).

People of Zion enjoy fulness of life, or happiness, in the highest degree possible in this world and, if they remain faithful, in the world to come (4 Ne. 1:3, 16; Mosiah 16:11). According to LDS belief, persons may attain different degrees of “fulness” of life, ranging from “celestial” to “telestial,” depending on the level of “law” they “abide” (D&C 88:22–35, 76). By living the principles of Zion, the people live together according to the celestial law that governs the highest order of heaven and partake of the life it promises (D&C 105:4–5). Fulsness of life in the celestial degree consists in being filled with God’s love, or being alive to all that is good—a state of happiness that reaches full fruition only in eternity (Eph. 3:17–19; Moro. 7:16–25, 44–48). The capacity of people to live celestial law and enjoy life in its fulness results from the purifying rebirth already mentioned.

The prophets always labor to prepare people to become a people of Zion. Sometimes people embrace Zion; most often they do not. For example, the followers of Enoch (the son of Jared and father of Methuselah; Gen. 5:18–24; Luke 3:37) built Zion, and because of their righteousness, “God received [them] up into his own bosom” (Moses 7:69; Heb. 11:5). Later, Noah declared the word of life unto “the children of men, even as it was given unto Enoch” (Moses 8:19). Still later, Moses “sought diligently” that his people might be purified and enter the rest of God, as did Enoch’s people (D&C 84:23–45). But the people of Noah and, to a lesser degree, the people of Moses “hardened their hearts” (D&C 84:24) and refused to accept the ways of Zion. On the other hand, “the people in the days of Melchizedek” were “made pure and entered into the rest of the Lord their God” (Alma 13:10–14). Before 125 B.C. in ancient America, king Benjamin’s people, and the Nephites who followed the prophet Alma underwent that mighty change of heart that makes a people pure (Mosiah 2–5; Alma 5:3–14). When Jesus Christ visited his “other sheep” in ancient America after his crucifixion (John 10:16; 3 Ne. 15:21), he established Zion among them. It is said of them that “there was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people . . . . Surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God” (4 Ne. 1:3, 15–16). The Bible also describes early Christians who experienced purification and lived the order of Zion (Acts 2:44; 4:32; 15:9).

Hand of God, by Maynard Dixon (1940, oil on masonite). God’s guiding and protecting hand, depicted in a cloud formation, rests over a group of pioneers laboring to establish a home in the wilderness. Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Brigham Young University.
In the restoration, Joseph Smith taught his people that they can, and must, become people of Zion. That vision inspires the labors and programs of the Church to this day. In establishing Zion, Latter-day Saints believe they may be a light to humankind (D&C 115:4–6) and usher in the millennial reign of Christ (Moses 7:60–65; D&C 43:29–30). During the millennium, Zion will have two great centers—Jerusalem of old and a new Jerusalem in America—from which “the law” and the “word of the Lord” will go forth to the world (Isa. 2:3; Ether 13:2–11).

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Zion as explained here is much more detailed than, but bears certain social similarities to, the idea of Zion found in the work of Martin Buber in On Zion: The History of an Idea (New York, 1973). An LDS work that applies the idea of Zion to contemporary life is Hugh W. Nibley’s Approaching Zion (CWHN 9).

A. D. SORENSEN

ZIONISM
Zion (Hebrew, early the Jerusalem mountain on which the City of David was built) is employed in LDS scripture both geographically and spiritually: the land of Zion and “the pure in heart” (D&C 84:99; 97:21; 100:16; cf. Moses 7:18–21). The declaration that “we believe in the literal gathering of Israel and the restoration of the ten tribes” refers to a new Zion in America as well as a renewed Jerusalem in the Old World. Latter-day scripture declares that Jerusalem will become the spiritual-temporal capital of the whole Eastern Hemisphere, “One Great Centre, and one mighty Sovereign” (MFP 1:259), while Zion will be the place of refuge and divine direction in the Western Hemisphere.

In 1831, less than two years after the organization of the Church, Joseph Smith received a revelation that included the imperative “Let them who be of Judah flee unto Jerusalem, unto the mountains of the Lord’s house” (D&C 133:13). In 1833 he wrote that the tribe of Judah would return and obtain deliverance at Jerusalem, citing Joel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Psalms, and Ezekiel (cf. TPJS, p. 17).

In March 1836, the dedicatory prayer given by Joseph Smith at the Kirtland Temple—since canonized and used as a pattern in later LDS temple dedications—pleaded that “Jerusalem, from this hour, may begin to be redeemed; and the yoke of bondage may begin to be broken off from the house of David” (D&C 109:62–63). In 1840–1841, Orson Hyde, an apostle, was commissioned by the Prophet to go to Jerusalem and dedicate the land. His prayer petitioned for the gathering home of the exiles, the fruitfulness of the earth, the establishing of an independent government, the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and “rearing a Temple in honor of thy name” (Heschel, p. 18). Two years later, Joseph Smith prophesied that the gathering and rebuilding would occur “before the Son of Man will make his appearance” (TPJS, p. 286). These prayers and prophecies have been frequently reiterated by other apostolic authorities, both on the Mount of Olives and on Mount Carmel in the Holy Land and in official convocations of the Saints throughout the world.

Jewish tradition warns that commitment to “sacred soil” without faith in the living God is a form of idolatry. Early in the twentieth century the Zionist movement advocated a compromise between secular Zionists, who envisioned a state without traditional Judaism, and religious Zionists, who argued that the state must be grounded in traditional Judaism. History in the modern political state of Israel has thus far implemented that compromise.

Spiritual Zionism among Latter-day Saints is advocated in the setting of concern for all of the children of God. It does not pronounce on specific geopolitical struggles or endorse speculations on the exact “when” and “how” of the fulfillment of ancient and modern prophecy. Many LDS leaders see events of the past 160 years as a preface. They continue to plead for peace and for coexistence with all the peoples who lay claim to old Jerusalem and the Holy Land: Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and others.

The term Zion, pertaining to a spiritually significant New Jerusalem in America, is one of the central themes of the Doctrine and Covenants (see NEW JERUSALEM).

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