

## Podcast 123: Numbered Among

**In this episode, Denver discusses what it means to be "numbered among the House of Israel," how the Covenant plays a role in changing people from being Gentiles into being numbered among the House of Israel and the literal seed of Jacob (and vice versa), and how this influences the message and meaning of prophecy.**

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DENVER: When the sample Scriptures came in, I made a note in the front of three of the volumes (that I've since held onto) that I received them on June 25th of 2020. I started reading them the next day. And between June 25th and August 31st, I read all three volumes of the new Scriptures (in one read-through from front to back). In the Book of Mormon, I noticed something that I made note of that I hadn't particularly noticed before, and then I followed this theme from the beginning of the Book of Mormon to the end of the Book of Mormon and marked the references as I went through.

This is in the second book of Nephi. He is quoting a revelation that came to him from God. And so, this is God speaking.

*Wherefore, the gentiles shall be blessed and numbered among the house of Israel. Wherefore, I will consecrate this land unto thy seed, and they who shall **be numbered** among thy seed, for ever, for the land of their inheritance; for it is a choice land, saith God unto me, above all other lands. Wherefore, I will have all men that dwell thereon that they shall worship me, saith God. (2 Nephi 7:4 RE, emphasis added)*

That struck me when I read it—because it's extending the covenant-status from the descendants of Nephi to the Gentiles (those that are blessed that will be numbered among the house of Israel), which struck me as I read it.

Later, Nephi is explaining the major themes of his ministry in writing on the plates and summarizing why he had quoted from the text of Isaiah. (This becomes important again later, but it's important here also.) In Nephi's explanation of what he was doing in his sermon/in his message on the plates that he'd created and carved on, he says, *I say unto you, 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 12:11 RE, emphasis added).*

So, what Nephi is summarizing from the Isaiah materials (and the others that he has explained in his two volumes of First and Second Nephi) is that covenant-status and becoming the people of the Lord will include Gentiles (on the assumption that the Gentiles accept the Book of Mormon and repent in order to become numbered among the people). But **if** even the people that are referred to as “my ancient covenant people, the Jews” will

not repent, then they're cast off. And so, they cease to be numbered among the covenant people of the Lord.

Later on, in the book of Alma, there were a group of Lamanite people who had repented, had been converted by Ammon, who had buried their swords, who had determined never to take up the violence of warfare ever again or shed another person's blood. They were willing to die rather than to be taking the life of someone else, even in defense of themselves. So, they were brought by Ammon over to the land of Jershon, and there they dwelt among the Nephites. And in the course of explaining this transition, it says they were distinguished by that name ever after (that is, the people of Ammon) and also numbered among the people. *They were distinguished by that name ever after. And they were numbered among the people of Nephi, and also numbered among the people who were of the church of God* (Alma 15:9 RE). So, these people who were clearly—as a matter of blood descent—Lamanites were numbered among the people of Nephi and numbered among the people who were of the church of God. So, their status as a matter of genealogy ceased to matter because of their covenant-status. They changed from being Lamanites to being *numbered among the people of Nephi* (ibid).

Then in Alma, there's a prophecy that Alma gives explaining what he knows is going to happen to the Nephites and his descendants. He says,

*Then shall they see wars and pestilences, yea, famine and bloodshed, even until the people of Nephi shall become extinct. Yea, and this because they shall dwindle in unbelief and fall into the works of darkness, and lasciviousness, and all manner of iniquities. Yea, I say unto you that because they shall sin against so great light and knowledge, ...I say unto you that from that day, even into the fourth generation shall not all pass away before this great iniquity shall come. ...when that great day cometh, behold, the time very soon cometh that those who are now, or the seed of those who are now numbered among the people of Nephi, shall no more be numbered among the people of Nephi. But whosoever remaineth and is not destroyed in that great and dreadful day shall be numbered among the Lamanites, and shall become like unto them.* (Alma 21:2 RE)

So, the prophecy that Alma gives says that whatever remnant there may have been of Nephi that will exist after the great apostasy following four generations after Christ's visit among the Nephites, whoever's left is no longer a Nephite, but they are numbered among the Lamanites, even if they are descendants of Nephi.

So, we get to Helaman, and in Helaman, the theme picks up again. He's describing where things are going to be headed, and as he says,

*...from one generation to another by the Nephites, even until they have fallen into transgression and have been murdered, plundered, and hunted, and driven forth, and slain, and scattered upon the face of the earth, and mixed with the Lamanites **until***

***they are no more called the Nephites, becoming wicked, and wild, and ferocious, yea, even becoming Lamanites.*** (Helaman 2:4 RE, emphasis added)

So, you can change your identity. You can change your identity from being a Nephite into becoming a Lamanite. You can change your identity from being a Lamanite to being a Nephite. But more importantly, you can change your identity from being a Gentile into being of the house of Israel.

Then we get to Christ and the events that occur at His visit with the Nephites, immediately preceding that. In the 30th year that they're reckoning time from in Third Nephi, *It came to pass that those Lamanites who had [been] united with the Nephites were numbered among the Nephites, and their curse was taken from them* (3 Nephi 1:11 RE). They were numbered among the Nephites and were called Nephites.

So, by the time you get to Christ's visit, you have people who were descendants of Laman, and they were numbered with the Nephites and included within the group of Nephites who were spared and Nephites who Christ came to visit at the House of the Lord in Bountiful. Christ then visits this very same subject when He appears to the Nephites in Third Nephi, but **He** clarifies some things that are even more remarkable than all of this. This is Christ speaking during His visit, *O house of Israel, and ye shall come unto the knowledge of the fullness of my gospel. 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 7:5 RE).

So, Christ speaking to the Nephites, quoting His Father, says that it is the Father's determination that the Gentiles who repent and return unto Christ are gonna be numbered among the people of the house of Israel.

Then Christ, still talking to the Nephites in Third Nephi says, *...that the gentiles, if they will not harden their hearts, that they may repent, and come unto me, and be baptized in my name, and know of the true points of my doctrine, that they may be numbered among my people, O house of Israel* (3 Nephi 9:11 RE).

Then in Third Nephi, Christ goes on to say,

*But if they [meaning the Gentiles] 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, and also...many of the house of Israel as [will] come, that they may build a city which shall be called the New Jerusalem. And...they [shall] assist my people, that they may be gathered in, who are scattered upon all the face of the land, in unto the New Jerusalem. And then shall the Powers of Heaven come down among them, and I also will be in their midst.* (3 Nephi 10:1 RE)

So, this building of the new Jerusalem by the Gentiles is actually going to be done by the remnant of Jacob, which includes the Gentiles who come unto Him and repent and are numbered among the house of Jacob.

Then Christ quotes Isaiah, as Nephi had done earlier. It's at this point that the loop closes, and it becomes clear that—first Christ quotes Isaiah, then He interprets Isaiah—that one of the primary messages of the Book of Mormon is the restoration of the covenant-status and the reclaiming into the house of Israel of those who are called Gentiles—in a lost and forsaken condition—who know nothing concerning a covenant with God reclaiming them, converting them, and after they repent, turning them into the house of Israel. Christ quoting Isaiah says, *And then shall that which is written come to pass: Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child; for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife* (3 Nephi 10:2 RE).

So, Isaiah is analogizing what will happen at the very end to a barren woman who has never given birth and saying that woman—who is desolate, without children—is going to have more children than the married woman who conceives and bears her own children.

He goes on to elaborate (this is Christ interpreting Isaiah), *Thy seed shall inherit the gentiles and make the desolate cities to be inhabited* (ibid). “Thy seed shall inherit the gentiles,” meaning that the line that had ended because of apostasy that did not preserve itself following four generations—that line of people who became desolate and barren, they—that line is going to inherit as their posterity (to be numbered as thy children) the Gentiles so that the covenant people that are to inherit the land are the repentant Gentiles who were accepted and adopted into the house of Israel in the last days.

Then in the Book of Ether, Moroni also picks up the theme.

*And they shall be like unto the old, save the old have passed away and all things have become new. And then cometh the New Jerusalem; and blessed are they who dwell therein, for it is they whose garments are white through the blood of the Lamb; and they are they who are **numbered among** the remnant of the seed of Joseph, who were of the house of Israel.* (Ether 6:3 RE, emphasis added)

So, Moroni adds his own testimony at the end.

This theme of converting Gentiles, through their repentance, from their status as “Gentiles” into a new status of being part of the “house of Israel” is one of the major themes of the Book of Mormon—because the Book of Mormon was intended to come forth in the last days as a text to cry repentance out of the dust, and those who respond change from being “Gentile” into being “numbered among the house of Israel” and to be “numbered among the people of Jacob.” The distinction between Israel and Jacob is the difference between Jacob, the birth name of the man who, through covenant-status, altered from the old name of Jacob into the new name of Israel. The use of the name Jacob and the use of the name Israel

signifies not only that the Gentiles are gonna become covenant-status as Israel, but also reckoned as if they were directly from the blood of Jacob and (in that last quote) numbered among Joseph, the descendants of Joseph—so that in the last days when the Gentiles come aboard, they come aboard under the “house of Joseph” in order to bring the message of salvation to the rest of the house of Israel, **among whom they are numbered**. Though they may have come last in being numbered among Israel, in the last days they are turned into the first, and from their status as the first of the restored covenant of Israel people, they then are charged with taking the message to reclaim the **other** covenant people and bringing the message to them.

But if the Jews reject the message, or if the remnant of Nephi—the remnant on this land—reject the message, then they're cast off, meaning they lose their covenant status. And so, the obligation of those last days' Gentiles who repent and accept the covenant and come in unto the Lord is to (#1) recognize their status and to (#2) take the message out.

But all of this changes somewhat the way in which the prophecy should be read. Because the Gentiles who come aboard become numbered among Israel/become numbered among Jacob/become numbered among Joseph—all of whom are Father Jacob (renamed Israel) or his son Joseph. Those individuals are the ones that are prophesied to build the New Jerusalem. If Gentiles are gonna assist in that work, it will be Gentiles who are not yet numbered among the house of Israel. And if “my people Jacob” are to build the New Jerusalem, any Gentile who is numbered among the house of Jacob is going to be the people who build the New Jerusalem, and Gentiles will assist them.

It changes the interpretation as soon as a Gentile becomes numbered among the house of Israel/numbered among the people of Jacob. The prophecy about the people of Jacob and the descendants of Jacob building the New Jerusalem means that the interpretation—correctly—is that it's covenant Gentiles numbered among that house who will do so. And if Gentiles are going to assist them, then the Gentiles are those that have yet to enter into the covenant.

It changes the meaning of these verses—but it is a theme that appears early and often and one that the Lord Himself (when He visits with the Nephites) elaborates upon and (at the end) Moroni returns to. It's a major theme of the Book of Mormon, and it's one of those that ought not be missed.

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