

# Elder Christofferson / Oct 23

## Quote #1 (intro)

It has been prophesied since at least the days of Isaiah that in the latter days, the Lord's ancient covenant people, the house of Israel, should be "gathered in from their long dispersion, from the isles of the sea, and from the four parts of the earth" and restored to "the lands of their inheritance." President Russell M. Nelson has spoken often and powerfully about this gathering, calling it "the most important thing taking place on earth today."

What is the purpose of this gathering?

**Quick discussion questions:** What evidence do you see of this gathering today? Let's answer Elder Christofferson's question. What do you think the purpose of the gathering is? (Accept all reasonable answers - maybe write them on the board.)

## Quote #2 (protection)

By revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord identified one purpose as the protection of the covenant people. He said, "The gathering together upon the land of Zion, and upon her stakes, [will] be for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth." "Wrath" in this context may be understood as the natural consequences of widespread disobedience to the laws and commandments of God.

**Possible discussion questions:** Have you felt that loss of peace is happening yet? Why is it essential to be a covenant person during the upcoming days? The scriptures describe Zion as a defense and a refuge from the storm. What does

that mean to you? Why is it important to grow our spiritual habits like prayer, scriptures, and magnifying our callings? Who do we need to draw closer to in order to withstand the coming days? (accept all reasonable answers - Jesus Christ!)

### **Quote #3 (the way)**

There is another vital purpose in the gathering of Israel that has special meaning when we talk about sealing on earth and in heaven—that is the building and operation of temples. As the Prophet Joseph Smith explained: “What was the object of gathering the ... people of God in any age of the world? ... The main object was to build unto the Lord a house whereby He could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation; for there are certain ordinances and principles that, when they are taught and practiced, must be done in a place or house built for that purpose.”

**Possible discussion questions:** What do "the ordinances of His house" mean? (He is directly referring to the temple) How would you describe your temple experiences? Why do you attend? What is your favorite part about the temple and temple work? What advantage do the Lord's ordinances give us? How is the sealing power used in our temples, and why does it matter? How does temple work fit into the "way of salvation"?

### **Quote #4 (temple work)**

The highest and holiest manifestation of the sealing power is in the eternal union of a man and a woman in marriage and the linking of humankind through all their generations. Because the authority to officiate in these ordinances is so sacred, the President of the Church personally oversees its delegation to others. President Gordon B. Hinckley said on one occasion, “I have said many times that if nothing else came out of all of the sorrow and travail and pain of the restoration than the sealing power of the holy

priesthood to bind together families forever, it would have been worth all that it has cost.”

**Possible discussion questions:** Does anyone remember their sealing in the temple? What could you share with us about that day? Why do marriages sealed for all eternity matter to us? How important is it that we be sealed to our ancestors and form an eternal chain? How often do you like to return to the temple? Have you ever taken your own name to the temple? Why did you do it, and how did that feel?

## Quote #5 (many)

We can see why “marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children.” At the same time, we recognize that in the imperfect present, this is not the reality or even a realistic possibility for some. But we have hope in Christ. While we wait upon the Lord, President M. Russell Ballard reminds us that “scriptures and latter-day prophets confirm that everyone who is faithful in keeping gospel covenants will have the opportunity for exaltation.”

Some have experienced unhappy and unhealthy family circumstances and feel little desire for an eternal family association. Elder David A. Bednar made this observation: “To you who have experienced the heartache of a divorce in your family or felt the agony of violated trust, please remember [that God’s pattern for families] begins again with you! One link in the chain of your generations may have been broken, but the other righteous links and what remains of the chain are nonetheless eternally important. You can add strength to your chain and perhaps even help to restore the broken links. That work will be accomplished one by one.”

**Possible discussion questions:** What challenges do our marriage and family relationships face today? How does culture and society increase opposition to the happiness of marriages and families? Many people aren't able to marry for one reason or another - what would be your advice to those in that situation? Why is it so essential to have charity and patience in our relationships? How can the Savior help us have better relationships?