

“Israel is an eternal people. Members of that chosen race first gained their inheritance with the faithful in the pre-mortal life. Israel was a distinct people in pre-existence. Many of the valiant and noble spirits in that first estate were chosen, elected, and foreordained to be born into the family of Jacob, so as to be natural heirs of all of the blessings of the gospel” (Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 2:284).

■ “Those born to the lineage of Jacob, who was later to be called Israel, and his posterity, who were known as the children of Israel, were born into the most illustrious lineage of any of those who came upon the earth as mortal beings. “All these rewards were seemingly promised, or foreordained, before the world was. Surely these matters must have been determined by the kind of lives we had lived in that premortal spirit world. Some may question these assumptions, but at the same time they will accept without any question the belief that each one of us will be judged when we leave this earth according to his or her deeds during our lives here in mortality. Isn’t it just as reasonable to believe that what we have received here in this earth [life] was given to each of us according to the merits of our conduct before we came here?” (Harold B. Lee, in Conference Report, Oct. 1973, 7–8; or *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, 5).

■ “Abraham’s mortal seed, because of long ages of preparation and devotion, while they yet dwelt as spirits in the presence of their Eternal Father earned the ‘right’ to the gospel and the priesthood and an eventual inheritance of eternal life. ([Abr. 2:10–12](#) .) That is, they were foreordained to be the children of the father of the faithful and to work the works of righteousness as did faithful Abraham. Though the gospel is for all men, in due course—‘For verily the voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape; and there is no eye that shall not see, neither ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated’ ([D&C 1:2](#))—yet some are entitled to receive it before it is presented to others. The Lord sends forth his word on a priority basis. It goes to all men eventually, but some are entitled to hear the voice before others” (Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*, 507).

■ “Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was. I suppose I was ordained to this very office in that Grand Council” (Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 365).

Mormon Doctrine

Believing Blood. This is a figurative expression commonly used to designate the aptitude and inclination of certain persons to accept and believe the principles of revealed religion. In general the Lord sends to earth in the lineage of Jacob those spirits who in pre-existence developed an especial talent for spirituality and for recognizing truth. Those born in this lineage, having the blood of Israel in their veins and finding it easy to accept the gospel, are said to have believing blood.

Since much of Israel has been scattered among the Gentile nations, it follows that millions of people have mixed blood,

blood that is part Israel and part Gentile. The more of the blood of Israel that an individual has, the easier it is for him to believe the message of salvation as taught by the authorized agents of the Lord. This principle is the one our Lord had in mind when he said to certain Jews: “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” (John 10:14, 26-27.)

Israel, *Mormon Doctrine*, Bruce R. McConkie

1. Jacob's name was changed to Israel, "for as a prince," the divine decree announced, "hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." (Gen. 32:24-30; 35:9-13; Hos. 12:1-5.) Literally, the name Israel means contender with God, the sense and meaning indicating one who has succeeded in his supplication before the Lord, who has enlisted as a soldier of God who has become a prince of God.
2. By divine command the name was applied to the 12 tribes collectively. (Gen. 49:28; Ex. 3:16.) Hundreds of millions of persons have thus been Israelites, heirs of the promises made to their fathers. This great host, called while on earth to be a peculiar people (Ex. 19:5-6; Deut. 14:2; 1 Pet. 2:9.), were also a separate and distinct group in pre-existence. (Deut. 32:7-9.) Those mortal Israelites who are faithful in all things, who obey the full law of the gospel, will continue on as members of the house of Israel in a future eternity, there ruling as kings and priests forever in the patriarchal chain.
3. Those who accept the gospel become of the house of Israel regardless of what their literal blood ancestry may have been. Because the blood of Israel has been scattered among the Gentile nations, nearly all who come into the Church are in greater or lesser degree of the house of Israel literally. But if someone whose blood was wholly of Gentile lineage were converted, he would be adopted into the lineage of Abraham and Jacob and become of the house of Israel. (Abra. 2:9-11.)

That this adoption involves a literal change in the convert's blood was plainly taught by the Prophet. The Holy Ghost, he said, "is more powerful in expanding the mind, enlightening the understanding, and storing the intellect with present knowledge, of a man who is of the literal seed of Abraham, than one that is a Gentile, though it may not have half as much visible effect upon the body; for as the Holy Ghost falls upon one of the literal seed of Abraham, it is calm and serene; and his whole soul and body are only exercised by the pure spirit of intelligence; while the effect of the Holy Ghost upon a Gentile, is to purge out the old blood, and make him actually of the seed of Abraham. That man that has none of the blood of Abraham (naturally) must have a new creation by the Holy Ghost." (Teachings, pp. 149-150.)

In the same way in which Gentiles by righteousness are adopted into the house of Israel -- so that the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob become their inheritance -- those who are literally of the house of Jacob may lose their blessings by unrighteousness. "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel," Paul said, for "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God." (Rom. 9:6-8.)