



AN Ensign FOR THE Nations

A signal banner teaches us about how the Lord will gather Israel.

ENSIGN

"In the scriptures, a flag or standard around which people gather in a unity of purpose or identity. In ancient times an ensign served as a rallying point for soldiers in battle" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Ensign," scriptures.lds.org).

BIBLE FACTS



When Moses raised the brazen serpent on a pole (see Numbers 21:8), the word translated as "pole" is the same Hebrew word that is translated as "ensign" elsewhere. Because those who looked on the serpent were healed, it represents Jesus Christ, the Master Healer (see John 3:14–15; Alma 33:19–22).



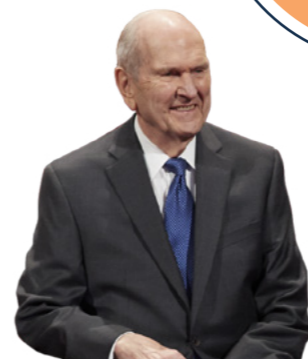
In the last days, the "root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people" (Isaiah 11:10) for the gathering of Israel, is Jesus Christ.



An ensign was usually raised on a hill or mountain (see Isaiah 18:3). In former times, mountains often represented or served as temples (see Isaiah 2:2).

What We Can Learn

An ensign:



Gathers.

In the last days, the Lord will gather scattered Israel. He has begun this work by restoring His authority and His Church (see Doctrine and Covenants 110:11–12), as well as by sending His servants to preach the gospel. They invite people to "gather" by accepting Jesus Christ, obeying Him, making covenants, and assembling in stakes of Zion in their own lands. "The Book of Mormon and the Church of Jesus Christ are symbolic ensigns to all nations of the earth" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Ensign," scriptures.lds.org). Also included in the work of gathering are ordinances performed for deceased ancestors.



Focuses on a rallying point.

The center of our faith, devotion, and service is Jesus Christ. He said, "My Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father" (3 Nephi 27:14).

Rallies an army.

We rally to the Lord's cause by making and keeping covenants, preaching God's word, keeping His commandments, and serving in His Church. As we minister to one another and stand up for the cause of truth and righteousness, we join the ranks of the Lord's army.

DETAIL FROM HE LIVES, BY SIMON DENVEY; PHOTOGRAPH OF OAKLAND CALIFORNIA TEMPLE



Is raised up.

The Lord urges us to look upward, to raise our sights and serve a higher cause—His cause.



HOW TO BE AN ENSIGN

"If we are to hold up this Church as an ensign to the nations and a light to the world, we must take on more of the luster of the life of Christ individually and in our own personal circumstances."

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), "An Ensign to the Nations, a Light to the World," Oct. 2003 general conference.



"And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. . . ."

"And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."

Isaiah 11:10, 12.