

THE COURSE OF



ZION'S REDEMPTION

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Zion

The central goal of the restored church was and remains the building up of the kingdom of God on earth. It is part of the promise God made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and which He renewed with ancient Israel. He even called them out of their Egyptian captivity to mold them into a holy nation. Through Moses, He promised, "*If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation*" (Ex 19:5-6).

Unfortunately, people are sinners—even chosen people. A holy kingdom can only be inhabited by a holy people. People must be freed from their sins if they are to be holy. The Mosaic Law contained no power to make the Hebrews holy. In fact, no set of rules or regulations does. Without the means to make the Hebrews holy, their entrance into the Promised Land was destined to meet set backs, even failure, in their effort to build up the kingdom of God on earth.

The promise of a future holy kingdom included a means to cleanse its inhabitants from sin. Jesus achieved what no law could. He redeemed His people from their sins. God's justice demands that a penalty be fixed for our transgressions. Jesus mediated a solution that appeased those demands, at least for those who accept His offer. He agreed to bear the consequence of our sins, that is death, and our Heavenly Father agreed to accept His sacrifice on behalf of all those who choose to repent of their sins and submit to Jesus. The Book of Mormon states, "*Therefore God himself atoneth for the sins of the world, to bring about the plan of mercy, to appease the demands of justice, that God might be a perfect, just God, and a merciful God also*" (Alma 19:97).

The new covenant, for which the restored Church of Jesus Christ is destined to fulfill, is founded on a new testament, which Jesus perfected when He willingly offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins. He, who created and sustains His creation, also bequeathed a portion of His glory to all the repentant when He died on Calvary's cruel cross. Through the preaching of the Savior's gospel and the implementation of His ordinances, people are made holy. They are divinely empowered to inhabit the holy nation, as long as they keep themselves unspotted from the world. That is why the Restoration combined the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ with the invitation to build up the kingdom of God on earth. The former had power to make people holy and the latter gathered them into one place. Once people are cleansed from sin through faith in Christ's redemption, repentance from dead works and baptism of both water and Spirit, they are prepared for residency in Zion.

Shortly after the organization of the church, God commanded His people to begin building up the holy city. That task remains incomplete 182 years later. Does the failure to build up Zion mean that the hope is false? Was it an outgrowth of the optimism resident among Christians inhabiting the American frontier? Or, has the saints' repeated failure to live in peace and harmony merely delayed its eventual establishment? Some see the scriptures that Joseph Smith presented as failed prophecy, perhaps literally false, but allegorically insightful. This presentation's thesis is that the latter-day scriptures are literally true and that they accurately predict the events that have surrounded the course of Zion's redemption from its commencement, through its exile and return and finally to its inevitable establishment.

A Place Appointed

God promised to gather Israel in the last days. Isaiah prophesied, *“It shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people. . . 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”* (Is 11:11-12).

The gathering of latter-day Israel is promised to be more miraculous than the Exodus. Jeremiah foretold, *“The days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land”* (Jer 23:7).

The place of Israel’s gathering is Zion. Isaiah foretold, *“The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away”* (Is 35:10). Jeremiah prophesied, *“Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion”* (Jer 31:12).

The location of latter-day Zion is not in the land of Jerusalem. Jeremiah, who prophesied in that city, indicated Israel would gather to a different place: *“Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together; a great company shall return thither”* (Jer 31:8). Thither is an archaic word for there, indicating that the gathering would be to a different place than Judea.

Isaiah revealed that God erected the ensign to *“assemble the outcasts of Israel”* (Is 11:12). He also disclosed that it would be on the other side of the earth from where he prophesied: *“He will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth; and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly”* (Is 5:26). The prophet revealed that God intended to gather latter-day Israel to the end of the world. There, at that far place, He promised to lift up the attracting ensign. Elsewhere, he disclosed that the ensign would be raised in *“the land shadowing with wings”* (Is 18:1-3).

The constellation Aquila represents an eagle with outstretched wings. It is part of Capricorn and appears just north of the Equator of the Heavens, with its southern wing tip touching the equator. This means that the Aquila appears in the western to northwestern night sky when viewed from the northern hemisphere. The land to the west and northwest of Jerusalem in Isaiah’s time and shadowed by the eagle’s outstretched wings is America. Perhaps more significantly, the emblem of the USA is an eagle with outstretched wings. American rests under the eagle’s outstretched wings. It is on the other side of the earth from Jerusalem and appears to be the divinely appointed place for Zion.

Nathan, the prophet during King David’s reign, revealed that God would appoint another land in which to plant Israel. He said, *“Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them anymore, as before time”* (2 Sam 7:10). Perhaps understanding something about the divine destiny surrounding the first Puritan voyage to America, John Cotton, who gave the farewell sermon, quoted Nathan’s prophecy

on April 7, 1630, the day before the Arabella set sail for Massachusetts,¹. The Arabella was the first armada's flagship of the Great Migration that sowed Puritan Christians in New England. They reinforced and eventually absorbed the Pilgrims who had come a decade earlier. The fact that these Christians viewed the land to which they sought refuge as a divinely appointed country where the Lord's people could securely live without oppression is significant. History records no other band of believers invoking Nathan's promise on their destination, or considering their haven the place God prophetically appointed millennia before.

The Pilgrims and Puritans who first settled New England seriously devoted their efforts to building up the kingdom of God. In *A Model of Christian Charity*, John Winthrop explained the opportunity that their colony enjoyed: to show the world and all following "*plantations*" an example of a righteous society. He counseled that this goal could only be achieved if each person agreed "*to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with our God. . . We must delight in each other, make one another's condition our own, rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our Commission and Community.*" He concluded that if the colony followed righteousness, "*We shall find that the God of Israel is among us. . . For we must consider that we shall be as a City upon a Hill.*"²

Two centuries after the Arabella sailed, Joseph Smith published the Book of Mormon and, by direct divine commandment, restored the Church of Jesus Christ. The next year, the Lord revealed to some elders who came with Joseph to Independence, Missouri that they had assembled on "*the land which I have appointed and consecrated for the gathering of the Saints: wherefore this is the land of promise, and the place for the city of Zion*" (D&C 57:1a-b). The appointed place in which God intends to plant latter-day Israel—the land the Lord specified to King David through Nathan as a land of refuge 3000 years before—is centered in Jackson County, Missouri. It is the land that, when viewed from Judea, appears to be under the outstretched wings of the eagle. It is in a nation whose emblem is an eagle with opened wings. It is the place to which God will gather a remnant of Israel in the last times; and with them will come the poor, the lame, the halt and the blind of the earth.

The same prophecy that described an appointed land also promised a divinely built house. David wanted to build a house for God. He mourned, "*See, now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains*" (2 Sam 7:2). Nathan told the king that he was not allowed to build a house of the Lord, but prophesied, "*The Lord telleth thee that he will make thee a house*" (2 Sam 7:11). The Book of Chronicles renders the words of the promise, "*Furthermore I tell thee, that the Lord will build thee a house*" (1 Chr 17:10). David's son, Solomon, built a house for the Lord. Nehemiah and Ezra rebuilt it after Nebuchadnezzar razed it. Herod enlarged it, but Titus destroyed it. The Lord has yet to build His house. The fact that God's promise to build His house is part of the promise to appoint a land of refuge for Israel strongly suggests that the two promises are connected. The Lord intends to build His house on the appointed land—in America.

Any building must have a foundation. The city on a hill that John Winthrop envisioned must have a foundation, especially if it is "*to be the light of the world*" (Mat 5:16) as Jesus described it. The Savior established the foundation for the Lord's house during His first advent. Paul wrote, "*Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus*

¹ Peter Marshall and David Manuel, *The Light and Glory*, Old Tappan, NJ: Power Books, 1977, p. 157.

² *Ibid.*, p. 162.

Christ" (1 Cor 3:11). The house that God intends to erect will be founded on Jesus Christ. He is its foundation, but the edifice above it is made with living stones. Peter noted, "*Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house*" (1 Pet 2:5). Each member is a part of the Lord's glorious temple. The Bible explains, "*Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost*" (1 Cor 6:19). How do faithful church members become living stones in the house of God?

When Peter testified on Pentecost that Jesus, although crucified, rose from the dead, ascended to the Father and reigns on His throne, the people who were convicted by his sermon asked what they should do. The apostle answered, "*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*" (Acts 2:38). Those who receive the gift of the Holy Ghost have God living in them. They become a house for God's Spirit—a temple of God. Paul emphasized, "*Ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you*" (1 Cor 3:16). Those anointed with the Holy Ghost become living stones—stones alive with God—that the Lord can fit together into the house He wants. People without a common ancestry, with different languages, from diverse nations and of various races can be molded by the Lord and "*builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit*" (Eph 2:22). When they are baptized and receive the Holy Ghost, they "*are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord*" (Eph 2:19-21). This is the house that God intends to build in America—a house of people made holy by the Holy Spirit's abiding presence in each one, permeating all they do and all they say—a house organized and masterfully fitted together. The architect of God's house is Jesus Christ. The Bible calls Jesus "*an high priest over the house of God*" (Heb 10:21).

The apostles give the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. Philip baptized several at Samaria, but they had not yet received the Holy Ghost. When the apostles heard, they sent Peter and John to bestow that divine confirmation. The Bible records, "*Then laid they their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost*" (Acts 8:17). By the time of the Pilgrims and Puritans that power did no longer existed. Roger Williams, a Puritan himself, noted, "*There is no regularly constituted church on earth, nor any person authorized to administer any church ordinance; nor can there be until new apostles are sent by the Great Head of the Church.*"¹ If God was to produce the living stones that He needed to build His house, He had to restore the apostolic power that gives the Holy Ghost. He gave that power to Joseph Smith (D&C 24:2c) and through him told others: "*On as many as ye shall baptize with water, ye shall lay your hands, and they shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*" (D&C 39:6). Those who receive the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the elders' hands join the Church of Jesus Christ, the same church that the apostles built up. They become church members, part of the family of God. They also become the house of God. Paul wrote "*The house of God, which is the church of the living God*" (1 Tim 3:15).

When the Lord commanded the saints to gather to the appointed place, He began assembling living stones on the appointed place and fitting them into the house that He promised for King David. He called His house Zion—a holy city set on the highest mountain. It is destined to be the light of the world, a city that cannot be hid. The ancient

¹ *Picturesque America, or the Land We Live In*, ed. William Cullen Bryant, New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1872, vol. 1, p. 502.

prophets foretold its glory and praised the peaceful teachings it brought: *“In the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it”* (Mic 4:1-2).

The city on a hill has inspired the hopes of countless Americans since John Winthrop penned the phrase. Its full expression can never occur without a righteous population. A righteous city must be founded on Jesus Christ. He is its foundation and chief cornerstone. Jesus came in the meridian of time to break down the partition separating people from God and create the way by which people can be made holy. In these last days, that same Jesus called on Joseph Smith to restore His church and dedicate the land appointed as the site for the house of God—a house that He calls Zion. Having exercised great patience, endured long suffering, and guided the growth and destiny of nations, will He fail to accomplish what he promised? Isaiah asked, *“Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth?”* (Is 66:9). Surely, God is not impotent, but will finish the task He began when He gathered Pilgrims and Puritans to America’s shores and when He led Joseph Smith and the first elders to Independence *“that you might be honored of laying the foundation, and of bearing record of the land upon which the Zion of God shall stand”* (D&C 58:3c). The promise of God is sure: *“Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man-child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children”* (Is 66:7-8).

The First Labors

The first attempt to build Zion began immediately after the consecration of the spot for the Temple. The Lord had previously told the saints, *“With one heart and with one mind, gather up your riches that ye may purchase an inheritance which shall hereafter be appointed unto you, and it shall be called the New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints of the most high God”* (D&C 45:12c). He reaffirmed his commandment shortly after the consecration: *“Wherefore, I, the Lord, willeth, that you should purchase the lands, that you may have advantage of the world, that you may have claim on the world, that they may not be stirred up unto anger”* (D&C 63:8c). The Lord told the saints to purchase the land of Zion because He foreknew the opposition that Independence’s earlier settlers would harbor.

The amount of land that the Lord told the saints to buy extended from the Courthouse in Independence to the Western boundary of the United States, which today is marked by Missouri’s border with Kansas. After revealing the spot for the Temple, God explicitly commanded: *“The land should be purchased by the Saints; and also every tract lying westward, even unto the line running directly between Jew and Gentile”* (D&C 57:1e). That distance is about 13 miles. An area of 15 miles square is 144,000 acres. The Federal government owned almost all that land at the time the revelation was given.

The appointed land contains the spot for the Temple. On Aug 1, 1831 Joseph Smith revealed, *“I have sent you that you might be obedient, and that your hearts might be prepared to bear testimony of the things which are to come; and also that you might be honored of laying the foundation, and of bearing record of the land upon which the Zion of God shall stand”* (D&C 58:3b-c). Joseph and seven others, including Edward Partridge, dedicated the

spot on August 3, 1831.¹ John Whitmer's history records, "*Sidney Rigdon dedicated the ground where the city is to stand: Joseph Smith, Jr. laid a stone at the northeast corner of the contemplated temple in the name of the Lord Jesus of Nazareth.*"² John Taylor, who visited Independence in April 1833 wrote, "*Edward Partridge took me to the corner stone, or the stone, that marked the Temple, he and Mr. Morley together, and said that was the place where the Temple was to be built. The corner stone was up above ground.*"³

The task of purchasing the land in Zion was a corporate activity, not an individual one. Gathering members were commanded to consecrate all their assets to the cause of Zion. The revelation as it was first printed specified, "*Thou shalt consecrate all thy properties, that which thou hast unto me.*"⁴ Those who laid their possessions before the bishop were to receive an inheritance—sufficient assets to provide for his family. Each managed his allotment as a steward. The revelation specified, "*He [the bishop] shall appoint every man a steward over his own property, or that which he has received, inasmuch as is sufficient for himself and family.*"⁵ Shortly after the consecration, the Lord reminded the saints: "*This is a law unto every man that cometh unto this land, to receive an inheritance, and he shall do with his moneys according as the law directs*" (D&C 58:7c).

The law of consecration, which the Lord expected all gathering saints to obey, was not His only requirement. He expected them to "*remember in all things, the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted*" (D&C 42:9c). He also commanded, "*Be one; and if ye are not one, ye are not mine*" (D&C 38:6a). He explained, "*In your temporal things you shall be equal, and this not grudgingly*" (D&C 70:3d). Jesus said that His people are to live "*by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*" (Matt 4:4). Since it is not possible to make a list of everything that God wants His people to do, He described the attitude he expected His saints to exhibit: "*Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind; and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days*" (D&C 64:7a). All things were to be done in wisdom and coordination, not with recklessness or disorder. He specified, "*This is the will of the Lord your God concerning his Saints, that they should assemble themselves together unto the land of Zion, not in haste, lest there should be confusion, which bringeth pestilence*" (D&C 63:8a).

Unfortunately, the membership failed to comply with God's specifications. Some refused to give their riches. They neither sold their lands nor consecrated their assets to the Bishop. God singled out one prominent member by asking him to set an example: "*It is wisdom in me that my servant Martin Harris should be an example unto the church, in laying his moneys before the bishop of the church*" (D&C 58:7b). Others sold their lands and journeyed to the land of Zion without consecrating their monies. According to Orson Pratt, Joseph Smith wrote a letter to one of the brethren in Zion warning those who refused to consecrate, but were buying their properties directly from the government. He reported, "*The letter was written to one of the brethren in Zion in relation to the consecrations of the properties of the people. The Lord said in that revelation that the principle which He had*

¹ *Times and Seasons*, vol. 5, no. 5 (March 1, 1844): 450.

² *An Outline History of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot)*, Independence, MO: Board of Publication, 1979, p. 45.

³ <http://www.jwha.info/jct17.htm>.

⁴ *Book of Commandments*, Ch 44:26, Independence, MO: Herald House, Reprint, 1972, p. 92.

⁵ *Ibid.*

*revealed in relation to the properties of his church must be carried out to the very letter upon the land of Zion; and those individuals who would not give heed to it, but sought to obtain their inheritance in an individual way by purchasing it themselves from the government should have their names blotted out from the book of the names of the righteous.”*¹ Some gathered with little assets to consecrate and expected to receive their full inheritance.

The saints’ failure to build up of Zion through the law of consecration limited Bishop Partridge’s ability to purchase the specified lands. They bought only about 2,000 acres, a little more than 1% of the estimated amount designated. Those lands were scattered. The Independence Branch owned lands just west of the Temple Lot. The Blue River Branch settled on plots along the Blue River. The Cincinnati Branch had not yet developed their inheritance south of the Blue River Branch. The Coleville Branch occupied plots on Brush Creek west of the Blue River. The Whitmer Branch settled the largest tract a little to the north of the Colesville Branch. The Prairie Branch occupied several tracts next to the state line on Brush Creek, where the Kansas City Plaza is today.² Because church members did not live particularly close to each other, their settlements were more exposed to enemies and less defensible.

Perhaps the most obvious waywardness was the saints’ willful violation of Christian conduct. God complained, *“There were jarrings, and contentions, and envyings, and strifes, and lustful and covetous desires among them; therefore by these things they polluted their inheritances”* (D&C 98:3a). Their disobedient and ungodly behavior caused the Lord to place the entire church under condemnation until they repented *“and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written”* (D&C 83:8b).

The migration of Latter Day Saints to Jackson County caused friction with local residents. Four significant problems stand out. 1) Gathering members came from Northern states—free states. Missouri was a slave state. The local residents feared that a large influx of Northern Mormons would change the political landscape and, worse yet, perhaps create a refuge for escaped slaves. 2) In addition, the church’s first mission to the Indians had excited controversy with the clergy. Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer, Parley P. Pratt, Ziba Peterson and F. G Williams had arrived in Independence on January 13, 1831. Cowdery, Pratt and Williams immediately crossed into Indian Territory and visited two tribes: first the Shawnee and then the Delaware. While among the Delaware Tribe, Richard Cummins, Indian Agent, ordered the three to leave.³ The Intercourse Act of 1802 required all Americans to receive a special permit to enter Indian Territory,⁴ which the missionaries never obtained. Although Oliver Cowdery subsequently wrote General Clark, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs at St Louis, and requested a permit, neither permit nor response was ever received.⁵ Parley Pratt believed that jealous sectarian missionaries

¹ *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 15, London: Albert Carrington, 1873, p. 358.

² Larry C. Porter and Ronald E. Romig, *The Prairie Branch, Jackson County, Missouri: Emergence, Flourishing, and Demise, 1831-1834*, Mormon Historical Studies, Vol. 8, Nos 1 & 2, Spring/ Fall 2007, p. 6 at http://www.mormonhistoricsitesfoundation.org/publications/studies_2007/2007.htm.

³ Leland H. Gentry, *Light on the “Mission to the Lamanites”*, *BYU Studies* 36, no. 2 (1996-97), p. 228.

⁴ Seventh Congress, Sess. I, Ch 13, p 141 at <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=002/llsl002.db&recNum=178>.

⁵ Leland H. Gentry, p. 229.

caused their expulsion from Indian Territory. He reported “They commenced a mission in the Indian Territory; but were compelled by the United States agents, influenced, no doubt, by missionaries, to depart from Indian country, although well received by the Indians themselves.”¹ 3) Friction was also caused by the presence of spiritual gifts among the saints. The saints in Zion had prophesied, but only began speaking in tongues during June 1833.² Such unusual events concerned both the local clergy and residences. 4) The saints also taught that Jackson County would eventually become the holy city. Local residents interpreted that tenet to mean all in the county must either convert or leave. Despite these acute differences, God promised to soften the hearts of these opponents if the saints would live repentantly. He said, “*If your brethren desire to escape their enemies let them repent of all their sins, and become truly humble before me and contrite*” (D&C 54:1b).

The saints did not repent. In consequence, the Lord did not soften the hearts of their enemies. An article in the July 1833 issue of the *Evening and Morning Star*, the Church’s publication in Independence, angered local residents. Although it was intended to relax tensions by pointing out that the State Constitution prohibited anyone from attracting free blacks to Missouri, local citizens considered the article differently. A mob gathered and listed their grievances against the saints. They stated that the article was “*inviting free Negroes and mulattoes from other states to become ‘Mormons,’ and remove and settle among us. . . It would require none of the supernatural gifts that they pretend to, to see that the introduction of such a caste amongst us would corrupt our blacks, and instigate them to bloodshed.*”³ They also complained, “*They openly blaspheme the Most High God, and cast contempt on His holy religion, by pretending to receive revelations direct from heaven, by pretending to speak unknown tongues, by direct inspiration, and by diverse pretenses derogatory to God and religion.*”⁴ They added, “*They declare openly that their God hath given them this county of land, and that sooner or later they must and will have possession of our lands for an inheritance.*”⁵ On July 20, 1833, the mob attacked the printing house, destroyed the press and threw out most the store’s contents into the streets, where they burned what they could. Three days later, on July 23, 1833, church leaders signed an agreement under duress. It promised that all members would leave the county.

Ten days later, on Aug 2, 1833, long before news of the difficulties in Independence reached Ohio, the Lord spoke through Joseph at Kirtland, commanding the saints in Independence to build the Temple on the designated spot: “*Verily I say unto you, that it is my will that an house should be built unto me in the land of Zion, like unto the pattern which I have given you; yea, let it be built speedily by the tithing of my people: behold, this is the tithing and the sacrifice which I, the Lord, require at their hands, that there may be an house built unto me for the salvation of Zion*” (D&C 94:3a). In the same revelation God promised that if the saints would diligently obey His commands, He would protect them: “*If Zion do*

¹ Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1968, p. 60.

² Larry C. Porter and Ronald E. Romig, p. 21.

³ History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, (hereinafter denoted LDS Church History), vol. 1, Salt Lake City: The Deseret Book Company, 1961, p. 375.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 376.

⁵ *Ibid.*

these things, she shall prosper and spread herself and become very glorious, very great, and very terrible” (D&C 94:5a).

Church members in the land of Zion failed to make any attempt to build the Temple. Parley P. Pratt admitted, *“This revelation was not complied with by the leaders and Church in Missouri, as a whole; notwithstanding many were humble and faithful. Therefore, the threatened judgment was poured out to the uttermost.”*¹ Without any divine protection, mobs of local residents forcibly expelled the saints from Jackson County. On the night of October 31, 1833, between 40 and 50 men, some armed, attacked a branch of saints east of Independence, un-roofing and partly demolishing ten homes, and driving away their families. Several men were whipped and beaten.² During the next few days, other homes of saints were pillaged or vandalized. Then, on November 5 and 6 the remaining homes and branches were invaded by merciless mobs. Aged men and old women received no compassion and were evicted with the rest. Women and children fled, often barefoot and ill clad, across the frozen farm fields. On November 7, many members gathered on the southern banks of the Missouri River, waiting to cross into Clay County. Husbands searched for their missing wives and children, while women and children looked for their lost husbands and fathers. The gathering grew and took on the appearance *“of a village of wigwams.”* On the night of November 8, about 2:00 in the morning, the saints were greeted with a heavenly display of falling stars, in which *“all heaven seemed enwrapped in a splendid fireworks,”* like *“fiery trains”* of thousands of meteors.³

A few church members thought that they could remain after the rest of the saints were driven away. Not so: they were forced from Jackson County when a mob ordered them to leave on November 23, 1833.⁴ A different group of between 80 and 90 saints had fled to extreme Southern Jackson County, now Cass County, where they stayed until February 1834.⁵ In total, *“no less than two hundred and three houses [were] burned”* and an uncalculated amount of household goods and sacks of wheat destroyed.⁶

Zion’s Camp

When the Lord told the saints to purchase the land of Zion, He revealed that their other option was to take it by force: *“Satan putteth it into their hearts to anger against you, and to the shedding of blood; wherefore the land of Zion shall not be obtained but by purchase, or by blood, otherwise there is none inheritance for you” (D&C 63:8d).* After members were forcibly driven from their lands, it appeared that their only option to build Zion was to retake it by force.

The Lord presented an alternative. He informed the church the following February, 1834 that if its members would obey His commands, they would succeed: *“Behold, they shall, for I have decreed it, begin to prevail against mine enemies from this very hour, and by*

¹ Pratt, p 96.

² The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (hereinafter denoted RLDS Church History), vol. 1, Independence, MO: Herald House, 1967, p. 324.

³ Ibid., p. 333.

⁴ Ibid., p. 348.

⁵ Larry C. Porter and Ronald E. Romig, p. 24-26.

⁶ RLDS Church History, vol. 1, p. 334.

hearkening to observe all the words which I, the Lord their God, shall speak unto them, they shall never cease to prevail until the kingdoms of the world are subdued under my feet; and the earth is given unto the saints, to possess it for ever and ever. But inasmuch as they keep not my commandments, and hearken not to observe all my words, the kingdoms of the world shall prevail against them” (D&C 100:2b-c). This promise contained a warning. If they refused to obey God, they would fail. A disobedient people cannot establish a holy city nor abide in it. God promised to preserve an obedient people, but he will not bless a defiant one.

The Lord told the church to gather sufficient men to retake the land: *“It is my will that my servant Parley P. Pratt, and my servant Lyman Wight should not return to the land of their brethren, until they have obtained companies to go up unto the land of Zion, by tens, or by twenties, or by fifties, or by an hundred, until they have obtained to the number of five hundred of the strength of my house”* (D&C 100:6c). A company of 500 men was an impressive size on the American frontier. When the Lord required such a notable size, He recognized that people do not always obey Him. He allowed the church to gather just 300: *“Men do not always do my will; therefore, if you cannot obtain five hundred, seek diligently that peradventure you may obtain three hundred”* (D&C 100:6d). However, the Lord forbid any to return to Zion until a minimum of 100 men had volunteered.

The revelation appointed Joseph Smith, and Parley P. Pratt, Sidney Rigdon and Lyman Wright, Hyrum Smith and Fredrick G. Williams, and Orson Hyde and Orson Pratt to travel in pairs throughout the east to raise men and contributions for the expedition (D&C 100:7). The response was small and disappointed Joseph. In April, he wrote, *“If this Church, which is essaying to be the Church of Christ will not help us, when they can do it without sacrifice . . . God shall take away their talent, and give it to those who have no talent, and shall prevent them from ever obtaining a place of refuge, or an inheritance upon the land of Zion.”*¹

On May 1, 1834, only 20 men were ready to go. By May 4 another 80 were ready, making 100. This minimal amount allowed the company to depart. Joseph led the 80 men out of Kirtland. On the second day they caught up to the 20 who had left 3 days earlier. Joseph organized the camp by dividing it into companies of tens and fifties.

Leaders hope to gain at least 200 more volunteers during the march.. The army collected additional volunteers, arms, supplies and money from members as it traveled through Southern Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. By the time it reached the Mississippi River one month later, it included 185 men. Hyrum Smith and Lyman Wight had left Kirtland on April 21 to travel through northern Ohio, Michigan and Illinois, where they hoped to raise more men and supplies. They joined the regiment on June 8, bringing 18 more men. Zion’s Camp was now at its largest size: 205 men², 10 women³, 11 children and 25 baggage wagons⁴—well below the 300, the smaller divinely acceptable number.

The anti-Mormons in Jackson County learned of the approaching army in June 1834. The postmaster at Chagrin, Ohio had written its Independence counterpart: *“The Mormons*

¹ LDS Church History, vol. 2, p. 48.

² RLDS Church History, vol. 1, p. 462-464.

³ Ibid., p. 462.

⁴ Church History Inst., p 143.

*in this region are organizing an army to restore Zion, and it is to take it by force of arms.”*¹
The Missourians organized a militia, conducted drills and posted sentries.

Meanwhile, the saints in Clay County petitioned Missouri Governor Daniel Dunkin to help them regain their lands. While the governor sympathized with the saints, he understood that he might need to call out the state militia to meet their request. When Joseph sent Orson Hyde and Parley P. Pratt ahead to ask the governor to assist their army with state arms, he refused, pointing out that to do so would probably precipitate an open war. Instead, Governor Dunkin advised the church to choose a different part of the state in which to settle.

As Zion’s Camp advanced, Judge John Ryland arranged a meeting for June 16 between a committee of citizens from Jackson County and Church representatives in Clay County. The committee offered two proposals. One was for the Jackson Countians to buy all the saints’ lands at a fair price. The other was for the Church buy all the Jackson Countians’ lands at a fair price within 30 days. The saints could accept neither. The former was a violation of God’s commands, which was to purchase the lands of Zion. The second was far beyond their financial means. The meeting deteriorated as threats to drive the Mormons from Clay County arose.

A few days later, Church leaders returned with a counter offer: the church would buy the property of all those presently in Jackson County who were unwilling to peacefully live with the saints. Instead of completing the sale within 30 days, as the initial proposal mandated, this one promised to close the sale within one year. It also guaranteed that no church member would move back to Jackson County until all monies were paid. The Jackson Countians rejected their offer and negotiations broke off.

On June 19, Zion’s Camp rose early and, without either morning prayers or breakfast, marched through Richmond, Missouri in hopes of reaching Liberty by nightfall. Slowed by broken wagon wheels, they only made 15 miles, they were forced to camp “*on an elevated piece of ground between two branches of Fishing River,*”² on land owned by John Cooper, a church member.³

Zion’s Camp heard about a possible ambush along the road while marching through Richmond. Once camped, Joseph prayed for the Lord’s protection. Their fears were confirmed when five armed Missourians rode into camp. They vulgarly swore that a contingent of 60 men from Ray County, 70 from Clay and 200 from Jackson County, who were crossing the Missouri River, would shortly attack the Mormon Army.⁴ An unconfirmed number from Lafayette County were also believed to be advancing. Sounds of distant gunfire were heard. Some in Zion’s camp urged Joseph to attack, but, instead, he declared, “*Stand and See the Salvation of God.*”⁵

A small black cloud appeared on the western horizon minutes after the Missourians galloped out of camp. As it moved eastward, darkness unfolded across the sky. A sudden

¹ Letter from JU. M. Henderson to Independence postmaster as quoted in Pearl Wilcox, *The Latter Day Saints on the Missouri Frontier*, Self Published, Independence, MO, 1972, p 121.

² RLDS Church History, vol. 1, p. 464.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 475.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 465.

⁵ Joseph Holbrook, *History of Joseph Holbrook, 1806-1885*, LDS Historical Department, Salt Lake City, UT, p 17.

storm descended. It was filled with flooding rain, hail the size of turkey eggs, vivid lightening and ferocious winds. It struck just as the second scow transporting the Jackson County militia across the Missouri River at Williams Ferry approached shore. The squall made it impossible for the ferry to return for another boatload. The violent storm tore branches from trees and destroyed crops. It raised the level of Fishing River nearly 40 feet, soaked the mob's ammunition, frightened away their horses, broke some rifle stocks and prevented the Missourians from attacking Zion's camp. Camp members had to find shelter in an old Baptist church, where they spent the time singing hymns. One member recorded, "*The whole canopy of the wide horizon was in one complete blaze with terrifying claps of thunder.*"¹ Joseph Smith later recalled, "*It seemed as if the mandate of vengeance had gone forth from the God of battles, to protect His servants from the destruction of their enemies; for the hail fell on them and not us, and we suffered no harm except the blowing down of our tents.*"² One church member, Brother Hancock, died during the storm, but apparently not from the storm itself.³

Fishing River rose so high after the storm that it could not be crossed. On June 21, two days later, Colonel John Scone and two other members of the Ray County Militia rode into Zion's Camp inquiring about its intentions. The Colonel admitted, "*I see that there is an Almighty power that protects this people.*"⁴ Joseph explained that the reason they came was to help reinstate their expelled members on their lands in Jackson County. They possessed no desire to injure anyone. Joseph's account of the saints' unjust ordeals and heartbreaking sufferings so moved the envoy that they promised to "*use their influence to allay the excitement that everywhere prevailed against*"⁵ the church and its members.

The next day, Cornelius Gallium, Clay County's sheriff, entered camp bearing both news about the Missourians' attitudes and suggestions about how to win their favor. Joseph and other church leaders wrote a notice explaining the peaceful purpose of their expedition, concluding, "*We do not wish to settle down in a body except where we can purchase the lands with money, for the shedding of blood is entirely foreign to our feelings.*"⁶

These pledges did not adequately dispel the animosity that many Missourians held against church members. Had Zion's Camp contained the required 500 men, its size alone may have persuaded the Jackson Countians to reach a peaceful agreement. Since the Jackson County defenders, along with supporters in Ray, Clay and Lafayette Counties totaled over 300 men, perhaps reaching 400, they contained almost twice the numbers in the church's regiment. That size differential allowed them to comfortably remain intransigent, notwithstanding the sheltering shield with which Almighty God had blessed His army. Other than protection, the Lord would not help Zion's Camp further, for the saints had not obeyed His words. He had said, "*But inasmuch as they keep not my commandments, and hearken not to observe all my words, the kingdoms of the world shall prevail against them*" (D&C100:2c). The refusal of the Missourians to allow the saints to

¹ *Journal of Moses Martin*, LDS Historical Department, Salt Lake City, UT.

² RLDS Church History, vol. 1, p. 466.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 476.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 467.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 475.

return to their lands in Jackson County resoundingly affirms that disobedience prohibited the church from redeeming Zion in that generation.

The Lord underscored that condemnation when He spoke through Joseph Smith on the same day Camp leaders promised peace: *“Therefore, in consequence of the transgression of my people, it is expedient in me that mine elders should wait for a little season for the redemption of Zion, that they themselves may be prepared, and that my people may be taught more perfectly, and have experience, and know more perfectly, concerning their duty, and the things which I require at their hands”* (D&C 102:3c).

Two men contracted cholera shortly before Joseph received the revelation. With the river remained too high to cross on June 23rd, Zion’s camp marched north around the heads of the river, taking its sick with them. General Atchison met it six miles from Liberty and advised its members not to enter the town. The general reported that animosity remained dangerously high. The Camp stopped, following their leaders’ promise of peace, and pitched tents at Brother Burket’s farm.

Some members grew disappointed and angry at the refusal to fight, complaining and, in some cases, apostatizing. Cholera broke out during the night of June 24 and lasted four days. Sixty-eight members were stricken, including Joseph. In all 13 died.¹ The camp was dismissed and those who were able settled in Clay County as the revelation given a few days earlier decreed. It said, *“As many as have come up hither, that can stay in the region round about, let them stay”* (D&C 102:6a). The redemption of Zion had to wait for another time.

Many may misunderstand the purpose of Zion’s Camp. They, like the Missourians or some in Zion’s Camp, may consider it an armed expedition to take back by force the property that the church owned in Jackson County. Joseph Smith does not appear to have held that goal. The letter stating the purpose of Zion’s Camp, signed by Joseph and five others, explained, *“We have brought our arms with us for the purpose of self-defense,”* adding *“We want to live in peace with all men.”*² It also stated, *“We do not wish to settle down in a body, except where we can purchase the lands with money; for to take possession by conquest or the shedding of blood, is entirely foreign to our feelings.”*³

Joseph’s peaceful, even harmless intentions are illustrated by two events along the way. During Zion’s Camp’s march through Illinois, Joseph and other men discovered three rattlesnakes while they were preparing one evening to pitch their tents. Joseph advised the men not to kill the snakes. He told them, *“Let them alone – don’t hurt them! How will the serpent ever lose his venom, while the servants of God possess the same disposition, and continue to make war upon it? Men must become harmless before the brute creation.”*⁴

The other happened when Zion’s Camp tarried one mile west of Louisiana, Missouri. Levi Hancock recorded, *“As soon as we came in sight of camp a dog came, he began to bark and ran to Sylvester [Smith] and tried to bite him. It made me mad and he said he would kill that dog. Joseph said he should not, and he would whip any man who would do it. If Sylvester had a good spirit he could get along without being bit. It was by a man’s being overcome with*

¹ RLDS Church History, vol. 1, p. 480.

² Ibid., p. 474-475.

³ Ibid., p. 475.

⁴ LDS Church History, vol. 2, p. 71-72.

such a spirit that caused him to always try to take vengeance and seek an opportunity to do it and take life. Such spirit kept men in misery.”¹

Joseph expressed those peaceful intentions when he gave answer to Sheriff Cornelius Gillium’s inquiry as quoted before. The statement was signed by five others and offered to purchase the property of all Jackson Countians who did not want to live with the saints in peace.² Had Zion’s Camp contained 500 members, instead of the 204, its offer may have found favor. If the saints had been sufficiently obedient, the Lord could have blessed them in ways that He cannot bless a disobedient people. In commanding the organization of Zion’s Camp, He had said, *“The redemption of Zion must needs come by power; therefore I will raise up unto my people a man, who shall lead them like as Moses led the children of Israel”* (D&C 100:3d). Just as Moses led the ancient Israelites across the Red Sea on dry ground, or Joshua led the Hebrews into Canaan by stopping the flow of the Jordan River, Joseph, if directed and empowered by the same God, could have led Zion’s Camp across the Missouri River on dry ground. The Lord had already promised, *“If Zion do these things, she shall prosper and spread herself and become very glorious, very great, and very terrible; and the nations of the earth shall honor her, and shall say, Surely Zion is the city of our God”* (D&C 94:5a). Would not the reaction of the Jackson Countians at such a marvelous display of divine power have been the same as the citizens of Jericho? But Zion did not obey. Neither did Zion’s Camp. They murmured at their difficulties and trusted in their own arms. Some apostatized. The saints were left to their own strength. The divine confirmation *“that the kingdoms of this world may be constrained to acknowledge that the kingdom of Zion is in very deed the kingdom of our God and his Christ”* (D&C 102:9b) had to wait until a later day.

Expulsion

When the Jackson Countians drove out the saints, only Clay County’ residents welcomed them. Parley P. Pratt reported, *“The saints who fled took refuge in the neighboring counties—mostly in Clay County, which received them with some degree of kindness. Those who fled to the county of Van Buren were again driven, and compelled to flee; and those who fled to Lafayette County were soon expelled, or the most part of them, and had to move wherever they could find protection.”³* Joseph Smith wrote, *“The main body of the church is now in Clay County, where the people are as kind and accommodating as could be reasonably expected.”⁴*

The presence of so many Latter Day Saints just across the river made many Jackson County residents uneasy. Church leaders petitioned the state to help them recover their lands. Governor Dunklin seemed to favor using the state militia. The Jackson Countians bought a cannon and enlisted volunteers from surrounding counties south of the river in case the Governor issued such an order. Some even tried to force the saints from Clay

¹ Clara E. H. Lloyd, *Levi Hancock 1803-1882*, p. 25 as published in www.ourlittlecircle.com/journals/lhancock.pdf

² RLDS Church History, vol. 1, p. 474-475.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 334.

⁴ *Times and Seasons*, vol. 6, no. 11 (June 15, 1845): 930.

County, calling a meeting “and stirred up all the feelings there that they possibly could against the saints.”¹

According to Edward Stevenson, Joseph Smith taught that members should continue gathering to Missouri, “and situate themselves to be in readiness to move into Jackson in two years from 11 Sep next [1834] which is the appointed time for the redemption of Zion.”² Church members, following the advice of some friendly Missouri nonmembers, also invited distant saints to immigrate to Clay County. More church members might discourage mob attacks and increase the probability of state help if they did. “Accordingly word was sent forth to the churches to that effect, and in the summer of 1834 a large company emigrated from the eastern churches to Clay County for that purpose.”³

The saints originally intended to only temporarily stay in Clay County, while they negotiated their return to Jackson County, but their continuing presence and the arrival of new immigrants began to wear on some Clay County residents. Mobs formed during the summer 1836. A few saints were caught and whipped. One mob numbering over sixty people turned back a few wagons of gathering members. Concerned citizens feared a bloody war. They quickly called a meeting for June 29, 1836 at the Liberty Courthouse. Their petition pointed out that the saints “came to our county thus friendless and penniless, seeking (as they said) but a temporary asylum from the storms of persecution by which they were then buffeted.”⁴ They concluded, “We urge on the Mormons to use every means to put an immediate stop to the emigration of their people to this county. We earnestly urge them to seek some other abiding place.”⁵

The northern part of Ray County, immediately east of Clay County, contained few residents. It seemed an ideal place for church members to settle. A few saints who had been evicted from Jackson County had already settled there. “In 1833, three Lyons brothers, who were Mormon exiles from Jackson County, settled at Log Creek, two miles southeast of Kingston. They built a horse mill (the first mill in the county), a blacksmith shop and three cabins for their families.”⁶ Bishop Partridge and W. W. Phelps scouted the area during the Spring of 1836. On May 3, 1836 they began buying land around Shoal Creek in Northern Ray County.⁷

On July 1, church leaders responded to the concerned citizens’ request: “We comply with the requisitions of their resolutions in leaving the county of Clay, as explained by the preamble accompanying the same; and that we will use our exertions to have the church do the same; and that we will also exert ourselves to stop the tide of emigration of our people to this county.”⁸ They also asked assistance in finding a suitable place: “We accept of the friendly offer verbally tendered to us, by the committee yesterday, to assist us in selecting a

¹ *Times and Seasons*, vol. 1, no. 4 (February 1840): 50.

² Dr Milton Backman, *Writings of Early Latter-day Saints and their Contemporaries* as quoted at <http://www.farwesthistory.com/morrisp.asp>

³ *Times and Seasons*, vol. 1, no. 4 (February 1840): 50.

⁴ RLDS Church History, vol. 2, p. 57.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁶ <http://files.usgwarchives.net/mo/caldwell/misc/booth3.txt>.

⁷ <http://seminary.lds.org/manuals/church-history-institute-student-manual/chft-11-15-15.asp>.

⁸ RLDS Church History, vol. 2, p. 63-64.

location and removing to it.”¹ The Branch by Fishing River chose Morris Phelps and others to explore northern Ray County for suitable land. They left near the end of July and bought out the only Missourians on Long Creek, three in number.²

Meanwhile negotiations with Ray County, its residents, and the state legislature, with assistance from Alexander Doniphan, Liberty attorney and state representative, helped find a haven for church members. The original idea was to create a new county from the northern half of Ray County and designate it as a refuge for Mormons. Citizen complaints reduced the proposed area in half. On December 26, 1836, the Missouri legislature approved the formation of Caldwell County and Davies County, appointing Far West as Caldwell County’s County Seat. Davies County was formed from the area omitted as a refuge for the saints. *“Most of the non-Mormon settlers in Caldwell, about twenty in number, sold their farms and moved out.”*³

Church members began pouring into Caldwell County. The first came from Clay County and the temporary camps of immigrants who had been halted on their trip to Clay County. Refugees from Kirtland came in 1837. Joseph moved to Far West in 1838. *“The Mormon population in Missouri eventually reached 10,000 and Caldwell County became the largest county in Western Missouri. By the fall of 1838, Far West was the hub of community activity extending throughout Caldwell, encompassing nearly 2,000 farms over approximately 250,000 acres purchased from the Federal Government.”*⁴ In 1838 Far West reported a population of 4,000.⁵

The founding of Caldwell County coincided with the decline of Kirtland as a Mormon settlement. In November 1836, church leaders petitioned Ohio for a banking charter, but, according to Joseph Smith, what was so freely granted to others was declined on *“some frivolous excuse.”*⁶ Angered, they formed an anti-bank on January 2, 1837. Laws then allowed firms to issue notes and function as a quasi-bank, a practice encouraged by the Whig party.⁷ One hundred and eighty-seven people, one of them being Joseph Smith,⁸ signed the agreements that formed the Kirtland Safety Society. Joseph served as cashier.

The Kirtland Safety Society issued notes in excess of its liquid capital. The *“paper money”* fueled a spirit of speculation among some church members at a time when speculation was rising across the nation. The society continued to print notes into June 1837. Joseph transferred his holdings to Oliver Granger and J. Carter that same June and resigned his position in the society before July 7. By July, some local banks began refusing Kirtland Society’s notes. Joseph Smith warned the public about speculators who were buying the notes at a discount and *“duping the unwary and unsuspecting, by palming upon them those bills, which are of no worth here.”*⁹ The anti-bank failed in November 1837.

¹ RLDS Church History, vol. 2, p. 64.

² Morris Phelps, MSd 271, LDS Family and Church Historical Department, Archives as quoted in <http://www.farwesthistory.com/morrisp.asp>.

³ <http://www.caldwellcountymissouri.com/history.htm>.

⁴ <http://www.caldwellcountymissouri.com/history.htm>.

⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caldwell_County,_Missouri.

⁶ RLDS Church History, vol. 2, p. 83.

⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kirtland_Safety_Society.

⁸ *Messenger and Advocate*, no. 6 (Mar. 1837): 475–477.

⁹ RLDS Church History, Vol. 2, p. 94.

The failure of the Kirtland Safety Society spurred 13 lawsuits seeking \$30,206.44 in damages.¹ The first was filed in June 1837. Joseph was arrested “*seven times in four months.*”² Some church members, including members of the Twelve, accused Joseph of mismanagement and using the Society to enrich himself. When Joseph went on a short mission to Canada from June 13 to June 22, 1837, a young girl claimed to receive revelations about the future through a black seer stone. “*David Whitmer, Martin Harris, and Oliver Cowdery, whose faith in seer stones had not diminished when Joseph stopped using them, pledged her their loyalty, and F.G. Williams, Joseph's First Counselor, became her scribe.*”³ Shortly thereafter, Warren Parrish, cashier at the time and secretary at the meeting that formed the Kirtland Safety Society, claimed that Smith had prophesied that the firm would “*grow and flourish and spread from the rivers to the ends of the earth, and survive when all others should be laid in ruins.*”⁴ Wilford Woodruff recorded only that Joseph prophesied, “*If we would give heed to the commandments the Lord had given this morning all would be well.*”⁵ Parrish subsequently led an opposition, called the Church of Christ. Three apostles, Luke Johnson, John Boynton and Lyman Johnson, as well as other church leaders participated in this opposition. George A. Smith reported, “*One of the Presidency, several of the Twelve, the witnesses of the Book of Mormon, presidents of Far West, and a number of others standing high in the church were all carried away in this apostacy [sic].*”⁶ Joseph’s popularity among the saints waned so much that Heber Kimball wrote at the time, “*There were not twenty persons on earth that would declare that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God.*”⁷

More prominent and affluent church members began leaving Kirtland for Far West during the latter half of 1837. In January 1838 an armed group carrying a warrant for Joseph’s arrest on a charge of illegal banking prepared to capture and hold him for trial. Joseph learned its intentions on the same day that he received two revelations concerning matters at Far West, one regarding the removal of the stake presidency⁸ and the other how to organize a stake.⁹ Joseph and Sidney immediately left Kirtland, but Joseph only reported the vigilantes as the reason for their hurried departure: “*On the evening of the 12th of January, about ten o’clock, we left Kirtland, on horseback, to escape mob violence, which was about to burst upon us under the color of legal process to cover their hellish designs and save themselves from the just judgment of the law.*”¹⁰ Joseph and Sidney were among the last of church leaders to flee Kirtland for Missouri. They reached Far West on March 14, 1838.¹¹

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kirtland_Safety_Society.

² Faun Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, NY: Vintage Books, 1995, p. 201.

³ Brodie, p. 205.

⁴ *Painesville Republican*, February 22, 1838 as quoted at http://www.mormoncurtain.com/topic_kirtlandbank.html.

⁵ *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, January 6, 1837 as quoted at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kirtland_Safety_Society.

⁶ Steven Shields, *Divergent Paths of the Restoration*, 4th edition, Los Angeles: Restoration Research, 1990, p. 23.

⁷ Brodie, p. 203.

⁸ <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/revelation-12-january-1838%E2%80%933a>.

⁹ <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/revelation-12-january-1838%E2%80%933b>.

¹⁰ RLDS Church History, vol. 2, p. 136.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

The Mormon refuge in Caldwell county was brief. Church members, weary of continuing persecution, were becoming sensitive and defensive. Non-members, aware of increasing friction, were growing more critical and antagonistic. A number of events heightened tensions. At Far West on November 7, 1837, "*Frederick G. Williams was rejected as second counselor in the First Presidency and Hyrum Smith was sustained in his place.*"¹ Williams was re-baptized on August 5, 1838.² All three members of the Far West Presidency and Book of Mormon witnesses, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer and John Whitmer were removed on February 5, 1838.³ Oliver returned to the church in 1848, but neither of the Whitmers did. They, along with Lyman Johnson, who had also been expelled, remained at Far West. Dissident, expelled members had not remained among the saints before. Their presence only increased friction.

On Sunday, June 17, 1838 Sidney Rigdon preached his Salt Sermon. Using the text in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, Rigdon "*called the dissenters the salt that had lost its savor, hence, said he, 'they are good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot.' The dissenters made capital of his sermon, using it to prejudice the people in the adjoining counties against the Saints.*"⁴ The fiery Rigdon followed with a declaration of independence given on Independence Day, July 4, 1838. He said, "*We take God and all the holy angels to witness this day, that we warn all men in the name of Jesus Christ, to come on us no more forever. For from this hour, we will bear it no more, our rights shall no more be trampled on with impunity. The man or the set of men, who attempts it, does it at the expense of their lives. And that mob that comes on us to disturb us; it shall be between us and them a war of extermination; for we will follow them till the last drop of their blood is spilled, or else they will have to exterminate us: for we will carry the seat of war to their own houses, and their own families, and one party or the other shall be utterly destroyed.*"⁵

With Caldwell County well inhabited by Spring 1838, saints had began settling in Davies, Clinton and Carroll Counties.⁶ The saints' aggressive attitude and militant rhetoric made a tinderbox that only needed a spark to set conflict ablaze. That spark was struck August 6, 1838 at Gallatin. "*An attempt was made to prevent the 'Mormons' from voting; which resulted in a conflict, and was the beginning of the hostilities which finally resulted in so much suffering and the expulsion of the saints from the State.*"⁷ As hostilities grew and aggressive rhetoric grew on both sides, Thomas B Marsh and Orson Hyde left the church on October 19, 1838. They signed an affidavit at Richmond, Missouri on October 24, 1838 that only fanned the flames. The affidavit included testimony about a secret group, called Danites, "*who have taken an oath to support the heads of the Church in all things that they*

¹ <http://www.lds.org/manual/church-history-in-the-fulness-of-times-student-manual/chapter-fifteen-the-church-in-northern-missouri-1836-38?lang=eng>.

² RLDS Church History, vol. 2, p. 167.

³ Ibid., p. 142.

⁴ Jedediah Morgan Grant, *A Collection of Facts Relative to the Course Taken by Elder Sidney Rigdon in the States of Ohio, Missouri, Illinois and Pennsylvania* (Bountiful, Utah: Restoration Research, 1984 - reprint of 1844 Philadelphia, Pa. edition), p. 3 as quoted at <http://user.xmission.com/~research/central/resth12.htm>.

⁵ <http://www.mrm.org/topics/documents-speeches/sidney-rigdons-4th-july-oration>.

⁶ RLDS Church History, vol. 2, p. 112.

⁷ Ibid., p. 167.

say or do, whether right or wrong” and another company who were ready, if necessary, “to burn Liberty and Richmond.”¹ The affidavit also stated that the saints expected Joseph Smith to control Missouri and eventually the United States: “*The plan of said Smith, the prophet, is to take the State, and he professes to his people to intend taking the United States, and ultimately the whole world.*”² Three days later, October 27, 1838, Governor Boggs issued the infamous Missouri Executive Order 44, or Exterminating Order. It decreed, “*The Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the State.*”³

The saints migrated from Missouri to Illinois where they were graciously received. Joseph Smith and other church leaders, who were taken captive at Far West and jailed, were released or allowed to escape. Joseph and his fellow prisoners arrived in Quincy, Illinois on April 22, 1839. Two days later, a council resolved, “*That the advice of the conference to the brethren in general is, that as many of them as are able, move north to Commerce, as soon as they possibly can.*” The saints purchased and drained the overpriced swampland, a tribute to their ingenuity and hard work, building the town of Nauvoo. By 1843, Nauvoo reached a population of 12,000.⁴ It became one of the largest cities in Illinois then, but peace and prosperity were brief.

On April 18, 1844 Robert D. Foster, Wilson Law, William Law, and Jane Law were expelled from the church.⁵ William Law claimed that Hyrum Smith showed him a revelation on polygamy that the Laws considered an abomination. Along with his brother Wilson, William purchased a press, which arrived in Nauvoo on May 7, 1844. On June 7, 1844 they published the first and only issue of the Nauvoo Expositor. Its purpose was to expose the corruption that they believed ran rampant in Nauvoo: “*We are earnestly seeking to explode the vicious principles of Joseph Smith, and those who practice the same abominations and whoredoms.*”⁶ He described a revelation on polygamy—“*I hereby certify that Hyrum Smith did, (in his office) read to me a certain written document, which he said was a revelation from God, he said that he was with Joseph when it was received.*”⁷ William Law also criticized Joseph Smith’s involvement in politics. Joseph was a candidate for the US presidency at the time: “*We disapprove and discountenance every attempt to unite church and state; and that we further believe the effort now being made by Joseph Smith for political power and influence, is not commendable in the sight of God.*”⁸

The Nauvoo City Council met the next night. According to the report published in the *Nauvoo Neighbor*, Joseph denied all charges that were personally made against him. Hyrum Smith “*referred to the revelation read to the High Council of the Church, which has caused so much talk about a multiplicity of wives; that said revelation was in answer to a question concerning things which transpired in former days, and had no reference to the*

¹ <http://www.olivercowdery.com/smithhome/1840s/1841Misr.htm>.

² Ibid.

³ RLDS Church History, vol. 2, p. 217.

⁴ Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, vol. 5, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973, p. 232.

⁵ RLDS Church History, vol. 2, p. 736.

⁶ *Nauvoo Expositor* (June 7, 1844): col. 6, p. 1 at (<http://www.solomonspalding.com/docs/exposit1.htm>)

⁷ Ibid., col. 4, p. 2.

⁸ *Nauvoo Expositor*, col. 4, p. 2.

present time."¹ Hyrum also testified to William Law's immorality. The following Monday, the City Council declared the paper a nuisance and ordered its destruction. Joseph Smith, Nauvoo's mayor, immediately ordered the city marshal, John P. Greene, to destroy the press, apparatus and handbills. Mr. Greene reported the job complete by 8:00 PM that night.

The destruction of the Expositor's press infuriated non-Mormons. F. M. Higbee, who had been expelled from the church on May 18, 1844, "*went before Thomas Morrison, a justice of the peace, at Carthage, Illinois, and obtained a writ for the arrest of Joseph Smith*"² and others. That warrant was discharged by the Nauvoo Court, but another was obtained by different plaintiffs. The second warrant was also discharged. By then, the agitated non-Mormon public demanded a more impartial hearing. Joseph had notified Governor Ford that he and "*all who were implicated would go before any legal tribunal at the State capital and submit to an investigation,*"³ but the Governor only agreed to offer Joseph and his comrades the protection of the State Militia if they went to Carthage to answer the charge of riot before the judge who issued the warrant. Joseph fearfully agreed. On June 25, 1844, he went to Carthage and posted a bond of \$500, a promise to appear at the next Circuit Court. Joseph and Hyrum were immediately arrested on a charge of "*treason against the State of Illinois*"⁴ and remanded to jail without a hearing.

Governor Ford met with the prisoners on June 26. "*On the morning of the 27th he disbanded the McDonough troops and sent them home, took Captain Dunn's company of cavalry and proceeded to Nauvoo, leaving these two men and three or four friends to be guarded by eight men at the jail.*"⁵ William Daniels reported that the Carthage Greys had proposed to the Warsaw Militia "*to come to Carthage on the following day, and assist them in murdering Joseph and Hyrum Smith,*"⁶ but the company was met in route with dispatches from the Governor disbanding the militia. Eighty-four of them, determined to carry out their plans, continued their mission. Others followed as spectators. One member of the Greys met the band about four miles from town and delivered the following note; "*Now is a delightful time to murder the Smiths. The Governor has gone to Nauvoo with all the troops. The Carthage Greys are left to guard the prisoners. Five of our men will be stationed at the jail; the rest will be upon the public square. To keep up appearances, you will attack the men at the jail—a sham scuffle will ensue—their guns will be loaded with blank cartridges—they will fire in the air.*"⁷ The Warsaw mob attacked the jail in late afternoon, June 27, 1844, killing both Joseph and Hyrum Smith.

Mormonism did not dissipate at Joseph Smith's death. The Mormons did not retaliate, nor was Nauvoo attacked. A tenuous peace ensued, while the opposition turned political. On January 29, 1845 the Illinois legislature repealed Nauvoo's charter—a move that, among other things, stripped the city of its legion. The next day, Eliza Snow

¹ *Nauvoo Neighbor* (June 19, 1844): 238.

² RLDS Church History, vol. 2, p. 737-738.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 738.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 741.

⁵ *Times & Seasons*, vol. 5, no. 12 (July 1, 1844): 560.

⁶ William M. Daniels, *Murder of Generals Joseph and Hyrum Smith at Carthage*, Nauvoo, IL: John Taylor Publisher, 1845, reprinted by Daniel Macgregor, p. 8.

⁷ Daniels, p. 11.

complained that the charter's revocation left the saints "*naked, exposed to the chilling blast of mobocratic fury which [had] already begin to blow.*"¹ Governor Ford wrote Brigham Young on April 8, 1845 with advice on how Nauvoo might provide civil government without a charter. He also urged the church to vacate the state: "*If you can get off by yourself you may enjoy peace; but surrounded with such neighbors I confess that I do not foresee the time when you will be permitted to enjoy quiet.*"² The Governor also advised the saints to leave by February 1, 1846.³ On September 10, 1845, "*'anti-Mormons,' who had sworn to expel the 'Mormons' from the State, because of alleged outrages, began burning houses in the vicinity of Green Plains, Hancock County. It is reported that as many as one hundred or one hundred and twenty-five houses were burned within a short time.*"⁴ With tensions growing, "*They urged the necessity, (to stop the effusion of blood,) to expel the church, or as they call them, the Mormons, from the United States, 'peacefully if they could, forcibly if they must,' unless they would transport themselves by next spring.*"⁵

Looking back after 30 years Orson Pratt reported the terms of a treaty, perhaps this one. He remembered it in these words: "*You must leave all the States of the Union, you must not stop this side the Rocky Mountains, you must go beyond the Rocky Mountains; if you will do this you may depart in peace, but we will take your houses and lands and occupy them without remuneration, we will not pay you for them; but if you can get away without selling your property and you will agree to go beyond the Rocky Mountains you may have the privilege of going, otherwise we will kill you.*"⁶

The High Council agreed on January 20, 1846, to send a party of "young, hardy men" and some families West. Their job was "*to put in a spring crop, to build houses, and to prepare for the reception of families who will start as grass shall be sufficiently grown to sustain teams and stock.*"⁷ The first group of about 2000⁸ saints, which included the nine remaining in the Quorum of Twelve,⁹ left Nauvoo during February 1846¹⁰ in the church's move toward the Rocky Mountains. The main body of the saints followed. The last group, under the threat of an armed mob, left Nauvoo on September 17, 1846.¹¹

The ten years from the disbandment of Zion's Camp to the exodus from Nauvoo witnessed the removal of the saints from four places of refuge: Clay County, Missouri; Kirtland, Ohio; Caldwell, County, Missouri; and Nauvoo, Illinois. Before they were driven from their first gathering place in Jackson County, Missouri the Lord explained the consequences of their faithlessness: "*Lo, your enemies are upon you, and ye shall be scourged from city to city, and from synagogue to synagogue, and but few shall stand to receive an inheritance*" (D&C 63:8f). Like the ancient Israelites, latter-day Israel's faith had proved

¹ *Times & Seasons*, vol. 6, no. 4 (March 1, 1845): 823.

² Reva Scott, *Samuel Brannan and the Golden Fleece: A Biography*, NY:Stratford Press, 1944, p. 79.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ RLDS Church History, vol. 3, p. 147.

⁵ *Times & Seasons*, vol. 6, no. 16 (Nov 1, 1845): 1017.

⁶ *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 17, p. 294.

⁷ *Times & Seasons*, vol. 6, no. 21 (Jan 15, 1846): 1096.

⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 22 (Feb 1, 1846): 1114.

⁹ RLDS Church History, vol. 3, p. 164.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

insufficient. Their generation was prohibited from finding rest in the Promised Land. The saints were driven from “city to city” as the revelation predicted and few of them were left to return to the land of Zion.

In 1875, Orson Pratt reflected on these events: *“Have we had much tribulation? Yes. Look at the many times we have been driven since that revelation was given. We were driven out of Clay County, then out of Kirtland, in Geauga County, now called Lake County, Ohio; and after that we were driven from Caldwell County, from Davies' County, Ray County, and several other surrounding counties in the State of Missouri, and finally expelled from the State, leaving a great many thousand acres of land for which we hold the deeds to the present day. After that we settled in the State of Illinois, in Nauvoo. We were there but a few years when the Prophet, his brother and several others were killed, and again we were driven.”*¹

The Return

Soon after the saints were forcibly driven from Jackson County in November 1833, the Lord promised, *“Zion shall not be moved out of her place, notwithstanding her children are scattered, they that remain and are pure in heart shall return and come to their inheritances; they and their children, with songs of everlasting joy; to build up the waste places of Zion”* (D&C 98:4g).

The hope of returning to Zion burned in the hearts of many saints after Joseph’s and Hyrum’s deaths. Some Utah pioneers initially refused to improve their homesteads, believing that they would soon march back to Jackson County. Orson Pratt reported the attitude of many: *“In their family prayers they have heard their fathers pray to the Most High to remember Zion and to redeem Zion, and to restore his people to the lands of their inheritances.”*² He expected a large company, some from his generation, to March from the mountains in their return: *“We shall go back to Jackson County. Not all this people will leave the mountains, or all be gathered together in a camp, but when we go back there will be a large organization consisting of thousands, and tens of thousands, and they will march forward, the glory of God overshadowing their camp by day in the form of a cloud, and a pillar of flaming fire by night, the Lord’s voice being uttered forth before his army.”*³

The first Latter Day Saints to return to Jackson County came from Illinois under Granville Hedrick’s leadership. Five branches of the original church united in the Crow Creek Branch. Granville Hedrick was ordained its prophet in 1862. On April 24, 1864, he said that an angel visited him, instructing those under his leadership to *“gather together upon the consecrated land which I have appointed and dedicated by My servant Joseph Smith . . . in Jackson County, state of Missouri.”*⁴ They were to return in 1867. John Hedrick, Granville’s brother was the first, buying a 245 acre farm near Independence on October 11,

¹ *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 17, p. 293.

² *Ibid.*, p. 291.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. 15, p. 364

⁴ R. Jean Addams, *The Church of Christ (Temple Lot) and Their Quest to Build a Temple in Zion*, A paper presented at The 2009 CESNUR Conference, Salt Lake City, Utah, June 11-13, 2009, p. 11 at http://www.cesnur.org/2009/slc_addams1.htm.

1865.¹ The main body arrived on February 27, 1867.² Granville Hedrick arrived on June 1, 1869.³

The original 63.2 acre plot purchased by Edward Partridge in December 1831 that contained the spot dedicated for the Temple had been subdivided by 1867. The spot dedicated by Joseph Smith was part of the Woodson and Maxwell Addition to the City of Independence, lots numbered 15 through 22.⁴ The Church of Christ (Temple Lot) began purchasing the city block believed to include the spot for the Temple. It bought three lots in 1867, four in 1873 and one in 1874. A triangular piece at the corner of River and Lexington was purchased in 1906, completing the current Temple Lot.⁵ Among those members of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) returning to Independence were William McLellin, and David Judy.⁶ McLellin served in the church High Council at Clay County and later as an apostle before being expelled in 1838. He was only briefly associated with the Church of Christ (Temple Lot). Judy was an elder in the original organization and also “*was among the saints who was driven out of Missouri in the early day.*”⁷

Members of the Reorganized Church were the second group to return to Independence. Some members began returning to Independence in the late 1860s. In 1869, a committee “*appointed to select lands and locate a colony*” to which church members could gather visited Independence, as well as Topeka and Atchison, Kansas; Nebraska City, Nebraska; and Council Bluffs, Iowa. “*They had made no selection.*”⁸ The Reorganization was larger and some of its members painfully remembered their expulsion from Missouri. They were much more hesitant to return en masse. The first branch of the RLDS Church in Independence was organized on May 25, 1873, with Henry Etzenhouser as its pastor.⁹ Etzenhouser had returned in 1870.

In April 1873, Joseph Smith III presented a revelation that advised, “*Let my commandments to gather into the regions round about, and the counsel of the elders of my church guide in this matter until it shall be otherwise given of me*” (D&C 117:11b). Instead of a large migration possibly exciting old hostile feelings, the Lord advised RLDS members to slowly gather in areas around the land of Zion. In 1909, a revelation received through Joseph Smith III explained, “*The necessity of the great majority of the church in gathering together can only be provided for by settling carefully together as many in one region as may be practicable and profitable and in accordance with the feelings of the people under the laws existing in the places where such settlements are to be made*” (D&C 128:5). This tactic allowed RLDS members not only to concentrate in Jackson County, but also gather into several surrounding counties.

¹ R. Jean Addams, *The Church of Christ (Temple Lot) and Their Quest to Build a Temple in Zion*, p 11.

² B.C. Flint, *An Outline History of the Church of Jesus (Temple Lot)*, Independence, MO, 2005, p. 108-109.

³ Addams, p. 12.

⁴ H. Michael Marquardt, *The Independence Temple of Zion*, 1997 at <http://user.xmission.com/~research/family/temple.htm>.

⁵ R. Jean Addams, *Reclaiming the Temple Lot in the Center Place of Zion*, p. 14.

⁶ Flint, p. 108.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁸ RLDS Church History, vol. 3, p. 546.

⁹ <http://www.stone-church.org/history.html>.

Joseph Smith III visited Independence in July 1877. He reported, “*At Independence we found a few Saints in charge of Bro. George Pilgrim, the husband of a niece of Elder John E. Page, one of the early apostles of the latter-day work. We found a welcome at the house of Brn. J. W. Brackenbury and ___ Beagle, Saints lately from Kansas.*”¹ Joseph also noted, “*We found Brn. Parker and Clow, with their families from Canada, at Independence; together with some of the Hedrickite, Brighamite, Whitmerite, Framptonite, Morrisite, and Strangite brethren, all with the Josephites indulging a hope that the full time for favoring Zion, the land of Zion, had fully come.*”² The Independence District of the RLDS Church was organized in 1878.³ Joseph III returned to Independence in 1884 to dedicate the first RLDS church at the corner of Lexington and Pearl,⁴ but the Independence Branch was already outgrowing its building. In 1887 the branch began a new church, now called the Stone Church, which sets directly north of the Temple Lot.⁵ The cornerstone was laid April 6, 1888.⁶ By 1897, its membership stood at 875. The Independence Stake was organized on April 24, 1901.⁷

Some members of the Reorganized church who return to Independence had been expelled from Jackson County and Missouri during the 1830s. Elizabeth Brackenbury, the wife of Joseph B. Brackenbury, the first Latter Day Saint elder to die in the mission field,⁸ was one of them: “*Because of the dedication of Independence by the founder, the members returned in great numbers in the [eighteen] sixties and in the following three decades, the returning members including children and grandchildren of those who had left the city of Zion years before. The late Arthur J. Brackenbury of Independence recalled that his grandmother, Elizabeth Brackenbury, lived there at the time of the expulsion.*”⁹ Other returning members were Alexander Smith and Joseph Smith III. Joseph III moved to Independence on August 8, 1906.¹⁰

A third group who gathered was members of the Church of Jesus Christ, but it did not gather to Jackson County, Missouri. William Bickerton collected the remnants of Sidney Rigdon’s faction of the original organization. William was converted and ordained an elder in 1845 by Sidney after Rigdon led his followers from Nauvoo to Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. The church disintegrated after Sidney tried to establish a Zionite community at Greencastle, Pennsylvania and move church headquarters there. At the organizational meeting of the Church of Jesus Christ in July 1862, William Bickerton was chosen president. In July 1872, he proclaimed that its members must soon gather near Indian Territory and establish a Stake of Zion in the West. William believed his church should build a Zionite community

¹ RLDS Church History, vol. 4, p. 187.

² Ibid., p. 190.

³ Ibid., p. 218.

⁴ <http://www.stone-church.org/history.html>.

⁵ RLDS Church History, vol. 4, p. 554.

⁶ Ibid., p. 602.

⁷ RLDS Church History, vol. 5, p. 545.

⁸ Personal testimony of Bill Sheldon a great-great-great grandson of Joseph Brackenbury. Family tradition maintains that Joseph was poisoned by a man who wanted to see if a man who claimed to be God’s servant was immune to poison.

⁹ The Kansas City Sunday Star, November 20, 1938, col. 1, p. 10 A as quoted at <http://www.jwha.info/mmff/mlet0897.htm>

¹⁰ RLDS Church History, vol. 6, p. 168.

from which missionaries could convert the Indians. He believed that their conversion was a preparatory step in Zion's establishment.

The next year John Stevenson traveled to southeastern Kansas to preach to the Indians. Instead, he converted several families in Kansas when two children were miraculously healed of injuries. Brother Stevenson reported the news to his members in Pennsylvania when he returned in 1874.¹ The church immediately appointed a committee to facilitate a gathering of the church near the Native Americans.² While contemplating where to establish a stake in the West, William Bickerton testified that he "*felt by the power of God when I touched the map that Stafford county was the place the Lord wanted me.*"³ In the Fall 1874, William Bickerton and John Stevenson left for Parsons, Kansas to meet the new members converted the year before. William told those western saints about his intentions to build a stake in Stafford County. They agreed to the enterprise and chose two of their members to go with the Pennsylvanians. On a Sunday in late 1874, William Bickerton directed his small party to a place two miles south of Rattlesnake Creek, which he marked by driving a stake in the ground. He named the place Zion Valley. William testified, "*We stood up four of us, after we drove the stake, and asked the blessing of God upon the land, and prayed that the time would soon come that we should go to the Lamanites. This was the Sabbath morning about sunrise.*"⁴

In February 1875, members of the Church of Jesus Christ organized the Zion Colonization Society and collectively pledged \$20,000 for an incorporation fund to finance the communal society. Forty families, including William Bickerton, left for Kansas. The first Saints arrived at Zion Valley in five wagons on April 3, 1875, and Bickerton recalled it "*was very rough weather and snowing. Many of the Brethren came from the East, and we lived in tent houses.*"⁵ By May 17 the rest of the members and the oxen needed for farming had arrived. In June, the eastern churches severed their support for Zion Valley on false reports that described Kansas as too desolate for farming. Dissension and intrigue in the East left the Zion Valley without money and means to continue, forcing the community to privatize. While the hope of a Western Zion died, the colony of church members began to flourish.

Once the internal conflicts dissipated, more eastern saints migrated to Zion Valley, but the majority stayed in the East. By 1877, Zion Valley numbered about 200 people, mostly members of the Church of Jesus Christ. In early August 1878, the saints built and dedicated a new church building that could seat 500 people.⁶ The settlements' prosperity began attracting nonmembers and a railroad. By 1879, it had grown into a small town, and the residents renamed it St. John, after then governor John P. St. John⁷ a move that successfully won the town's hope of being named Stafford County's county seat. The influx of nonmembers reduced the saints to a political minority. Shortly thereafter the saints sold

¹ Gary R. Entz, *Zion Valley, The Mormon Origins of St. John, Kansas*, Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains, vol. 24, no. 2, Summer 2001, p. 103.

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._John,_Kansas.

³ Entz, p. 104.

⁴ *County Capital*, October 17, 1889; Bickerton, "Testimony, June 1903," 11 as quoted by Entz, p. 104.

⁵ Entz, p. 107.

⁶ Entz, p. 114.

⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._John,_Kansas.

their church, which the locals called the Mormon Temple, “to Swartz Bros. who converted it into a hardware and drug store.”¹

The railroad brought LDS missionaries through St. John on their missions. Elders from the LDS Northern States Missions “were quite surprised to find a large group of people who held the Book of Mormon to be sacred and who called themselves saints living on the western plains of Kansas.”² While the work converted some non-Restoration members, it also attracted a number of William Bickerton’s followers. LDS missionaries were able to convince some Church of Jesus Christ members that such unique doctrines as baptism for the dead had merit. When they did, the members were suspended,³ an action that helped win members for the LDS Church. LDS leaders changed supervision of the St. John missionary enterprise to the Southern States Mission in 1887, where it could receive better support. In 1895, the LDS Church built and dedicated a meetinghouse at St. John on the site where the original church of the Church of Jesus Christ was built in 1878. It also established the Southern States Mission headquarters there. On March 29, 1898, other states were added to the mission and it was renamed the Southwestern States Mission. Its missionaries established a mission at Jay, Kansas, organizing a branch there in 1901. That branch closed in 1914 when the LDS Church at Leavenworth opened⁴ and its members began worshipping there.

LDS missionaries from the mission centered at St. John also baptized converts in the Kansas City area. “In 1895 Elder Brigham F. Duffin brought Richard Preator back into the Church in Independence, Missouri. Preator became the first member of the return of the Church to Jackson County.”⁵ Richard had been converted in England in 1843⁶ and immigrated to Utah, pushing a handcart across the plains in 1856.⁷ He joined the Reorganized Church on April 7, 1880, being baptized by Joseph Luff in Salt Lake City,⁸ and moved to Independence with his family in 1883. After he rejoined the LDS Church in 1895, he became “the first Branch President of the new Independence Branch in 1897.”⁹ The branch first met in the Preator home on S. LeRoy Street in Independence¹⁰ and was composed of three families, the Preator, Hutchinson and Wilhelm families.¹¹ Ira J. Hutchinson was born October 5, 1846 in Hickman Co., Tennessee and moved with his wife

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_%28Bickertonite%29.

² <http://bycommonconsent.com/2011/08/01/cemetourism-zion-valley-kansas/>.

³ Testimony of Alex Robinson, current pastor at the independent church at St John, Kansas.

⁴ <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/58702/United-States-information-Kansas.html>.

⁵ Dr. Douglas C. LeMon and Robert and Hazel Blodgett, *The Return to Zion, The Missouri Independence Mission*, Independence, MO, 2005, p. -4.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p 215.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

⁸ *Early Members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, Vol. 4, Compiled by Susan Easton Black, Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1993, p. 880.

⁹ LeMon and Blodgett, p. 4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

to Independence about 1883.¹ No information is available about the church membership or conversion to the LDS Church of either the Hutchinson or Wilhelm families.

In 1898, Elder Duffin used the Kingston RLDS Church building to preach the first sermon for the LDS Church in Caldwell County.² In December 1900, he moved the mission headquarters from St. John, Kansas to Kansas City, Missouri. A Church Dedication Program announced, *“The church officially returned to Jackson County on Dec. 26, 1900 when the office of the Central States Mission under the administration of Pres. Brigham F. Duffin was moved from St. John, Kansas to Kansas City, Missouri.”*³ *“The members of the Church were found to be in a condition of dis-union, with much ill-feeling among them.”* On February 2, 1901, *they met with the presidency of the mission at the Mission office. Prayer was held, the songs of Zion were sung, and the principle of forgiveness explained. The Spirit of the Lord rested upon those present and mutual acknowledgments were made and forgiveness asked, and the members left the meeting with a much better feeling.”*⁴ On March 17, 1904, mission President James Duffin purchased 26 acres on behalf of the LDS Church.⁵ It included a portion of the original 65-acre tract that Edward Partridge bought for the Temple. In 1907, the mission headquarters was moved from Kansas City to Independence. The first LDS church in Independence was built at 302 S. Pleasant and dedicated on November 22, 1914.⁶ In 1917 the LDS Church built a mission home for the mission president.⁷ *“The first Missouri stake was organized in Kansas City in 1956. . . The Independence Stake was split from the Kansas City stake in 1971”*⁸

The Reorganized Church was the first returning group to begin rebuilding *“the waste places of Zion”* (D&C 98:4g) as promised in the Covenants. This not only included erecting places of worship but meeting other community needs. In 1906, the RLDS Church received the following instruction: *“It is the will of the Lord that a sanitarium, a place of refuge and help for the sick and afflicted, be established by the church, at Independence, Missouri”* (D&C 127:1a). The same revelation called for a *“home for children”* (D&C 127:4a). Construction on the Independence Sanitarium began in 1907. It was completed in 1909.⁹ The school of Nursing was organized on February 5, 1910.¹⁰ By 1909, *“the church maintained two homes in Independence for the care of the aged and infirmed.”*¹¹ The children’s home was opened on August 15, 1911, with accommodations for 35 children,¹² but it was located in Lamoni, Iowa.

When Fredrick M. Smith succeeded his father, Joseph III, as president of the RLDS Church in 1914, he was poised to begin Zion communities. He had already obtained his

¹ LeMon and Blodgett, p. 208.

² Ibid., p. 2.

³ Ibid., p. 212.

⁴ Ibid., p. 159.

⁵ Ibid., p. 161.

⁶ Ibid., p. 163.

⁷ RLDS Church History, vol. 6 p. 257.

⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints_in_Missouri.

⁹ RLDS Church History, vol. 6, p. 213-214.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 222.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 341.

¹² Ibid., p. 406.

M.A. in Sociology. Two years later he received his Ph.D. in psychology.¹ Not only did RLDS members consider him divinely appointed to build up the holy city, but he was academically trained for the task. In 1926, Fred announced the “*organization of trusts and trust associations of the business men of the church to manage many of the properties of the church.*”² The next month, Bishop Koehler explained the goal of “*group stewardship enterprises.*”³ Participants were sought and land purchased. The most noteworthy of several attempts was a stewardship community at Atherton, Missouri, an area northeast of Independence on the Missouri River bottoms. In 1926, the church added about 1,100 acres to its existing holdings,⁴ making a total of 2,500 acres there.⁵ Atherton was platted and up to 19 families began improvements. “*They built a church, farmed, and began a poultry hatchery which, for a time, brought in a profit for the community that was equally divided among all stewards.*”⁶ The depression thwarted all stewardship enterprises. Expansion and construction projects had burdened the RLDS Church with an enormous debt of \$1,876,000.⁷ The Atherton lands were mortgaged and its stewardship association disbanded in 1931.⁸ Construction projects stopped. Staff and missionaries were laid off. The RLDS Church did not become debt free until the beginning of 1943.⁹

The Church of Christ (Temple Lot) erected a tent on the Temple Lot for preaching meetings during the summer of 1917. Priesthood from both the Church of Christ and the Reorganized Church preached. The event increased fellowship and harmony between the two groups. It also “*gave rise to a quickening of interest in the building of the Temple at Independence.*”¹⁰ By April 1918 the two churches had both adopted the Agreements of Working Harmony.¹¹ Among other things, the agreement allowed members to transfer to one church from the other without rebaptism.

By 1925, membership in the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) had dropped to less than 300.¹² After the controversy over Supreme Directional Control at the 1925 RLDS General Conference, about 2,700 RLDS members left and joined the Church of Christ.¹³ The 900% gain in membership helped the Church of Christ retain and manage the Temple Lot. On February 4, 1927, Apostle Otto Fetting received a revelation implying that the Church of Christ should build the Temple: “*The temple will be built, if not by the people in charge, the*

¹ Paul M. Edwards, *The Chief: An Administrative Biography of Fred M. Smith* (Independence, MO: Herald Publishing House, 1988): 93, 114.

² RLDS Church History, vol. 8, p. 156.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁴ RLDS Church History, vol. 8, p. 158.

⁵ David Howlett, *The Death and Resurrection of the RLDS Zion: A Case in “Failed Prophecy,” 1930-70*, p. 117 at http://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V40N03_122.pdf

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁷ RLDS Church History, vol. 8 p. 414.

⁸ Howlett, p118.

⁹ RLDS Church History, vol. 8, p. 415.

¹⁰ RLDS Church History, vol. 7, p. 204.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 279-283.

¹² Personal testimony Joseph F. Smith.

¹³ *Ibid.*

*Lord will raise up a people that will build it.*¹ A revelation dated March 23, 1929, the tenth received, said that the survey markers were “set ten feet too far to the east and if you will move the stakes then it shall stand upon the place that has been pointed out by the finger of God.”² The groundbreaking ceremony took place on April 6, 1929. The Church of Christ Temple Fund totaled \$889.00 at the time.³ On May 18, excavators “found one stone on the north line of the Temple foundation.”⁴ The Kansas City Star reported, “They have uncovered a stone, a battered, earthworn stone with faint ciphering on it, which the seers of the church today pronounced as the original cornerstone laid by Joseph Smith on the temple lot in 1831, and which they regarded as confirmation as divine and infallible the revelation made by an angel to Otto Fetting.”⁵ The stone had “the inscription upon the lower side which reads 40 w 1831, and by a steel tape measuring 40 feet west of the spot to which the stake was removed at the counsel of the messenger.”⁶ Today, Church of Christ maintains, “This stone was found 40 feet west of the northeast corner of the present foundation site.”⁷

A second stone was found on June 26, 1929. The Independence Examiner reported, “On one side of it easily could be read the numerals, 1831.”⁸ The Church of Christ believes it is the stone that Joseph Smith laid in 1831: “At the dedication of the Temple Lot, a stone was laid to mark the northeast corner of the ‘spot’ to be occupied by the temple building and this stone was found in 1929 when excavation was started.”⁹ The second stone was not found at the northeast corner, but “on the south side of the excavation . . . about 18 inches in the soil, face down.”¹⁰ Today, the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) says that it marked the southeast corner. Apparently, saints returned to the Temple Lot under cover of night shortly after their expulsion in 1834 and moved the cornerstone from the northeast corner. They buried another stone on the north line, which they marked to tell how far it was from the actual corner. This is the stone that was found in May 1929. They also buried the real cornerstone on the southeast, hoping to hide it from their enemies and preserving it for future generations. This is the stone found in June 1929.

With funds limited, the Church of Christ unsuccessfully solicited aid from the RLDS and LDS Churches. Internal conflict further hindered the project. On July 18, 1929, Apostle Otto Fetting received a message that required rebaptism. A special conference in October removed Otto Fleming and Walter Gates from the Quorum of Twelve. They were disfellowshipped at the April 1930 general conference. Approximately one-third of its members left with them.¹¹ That same conference sent apostle Samuel Wood to England to ordain E. J. Trapp as an apostle. While there, he became “imbued with the ‘One Person

¹ *The Word of the Lord*, Church of Christ, Independence, MO, 1933, p. 3.

² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

³ R. Jean Addams. *The Church of Christ (Temple Lot) and Their Quest to Build a Temple in Zion*, p. 7.

⁴ *Zion's Advocate*, vol. 89, no. 5 (September/October 2012): 87.

⁵ R. Jean Addams. *The Church of Christ (Temple Lot) and Their Quest to Build a Temple in Zion*, p. 8.

⁶ Clarence Wheaton, *A Brief History of the Church of Christ*, 1929, p. 19.

⁷ *An Outline History of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot)*, p. 47.

⁸ R. Jean Addams. *The Church of Christ (Temple Lot) and Their Quest to Build a Temple in Zion*, p. 8.

⁹ *An Outline History of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot)*, p. 46.

¹⁰ Clarence Wheaton, p. 19.

¹¹ *An Outline History of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot)*, p. 142.

Godhead' heresy and made that a part of his teaching."¹ The Quorum of Twelve met in a special council from September 15-19, 1933 to consider matter.² Meanwhile, excavation for the foundation continued. By the September 1933 special council, timbers had been cut and placed to shore the earthen excavated walls. During one council meeting, Apostle Wood became especially animated and started shouting. He was verbally constrained by Clarence Wheaton.³ Winfield Gould, who was picking up the tools to leave the excavation site during this confrontation, looked toward the noisy meeting and saw the devil dancing on the excavation's north bank.⁴ By the next morning, the north bank had collapsed. Arthur Smith resigned as head of the building committee and moved to Ava, Missouri.⁵ The Bemidji contingent, who had brought a saw mill to cut the shoring timbers and regularly worked at the site, returned to Minnesota, to "*raise up a people worthy of building the Temple.*"⁶ The excavation remained open, with scanty work periodically done. Some construction materials were placed on the lot, but they were eventually sold before deterioration made them worthless. In 1938, the Church of Christ decided to fill the excavation, a daunting task and beyond its resources. The excavation was 90 feet wide, 180 feet long and 12 feet deep.⁷ In 1946, the city of Independence offered to backfill the excavation at city expense. The Church of Christ Conference accepted the city's offer. The lot was leveled and seeded by that May.⁸

With the RLDS Church's debt nearing retirement, it began placing new missionaries in the field as early as 1942.⁹ Ten years later, President Israel A. Smith addressed the Reorganization's centennial conference with confidence and optimism: "*This is an important year in the life of church because of what we have attained: the largest membership since the days of Nauvoo, the greatest material prosperity of our members, a greatly enhanced financial position as an organization, increased respect among the people of the world, and what is far more important, great unity and spiritual power.*"¹⁰ RLDS membership totaled 147,355¹¹ and its net worth stood at \$12,876,886.40.¹² It was the largest organization of Restoration saints in Jackson County and the surrounding areas. Israel Smith considered the church he led as the faithful saints to whom the promise of returning to the land of Zion had been given over a century before. He said, "*The time came when the Saints who remained and were pure in their allegiance to God and to the doctrine of*

¹ An Outline History of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot), p. 142.

² *Zion's Advocate*, vol. 10, no. 9 (September, 1933): 127.

³ Testimony of both Joseph F. Smith, whose father, Arthur Smith, an apostle, was in the meeting and Sam Gould, whose father, Winfield Gould witnessed the event.

⁴ Personal testimony of Sam Gould, son of Winfield Gould.

⁵ Personal testimony of Joseph F. Smith. The April 1934 General Conference minutes show that Arthur Smith was absent.

⁶ Personal testimony of Sam Gould, grandson of Leon Gould who made the statement.

⁷ Addams. *The Church of Christ (Temple Lot) and Their Quest to Build a Temple in Zion*, p. 15.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁹ My father, Philip Moore, was among the first new appointees. His appointment was approved at the April General Conference 1942. He entered the mission field about 2 months later after graduating from college at the age of 20.

¹⁰ RLDS Conference Minutes, 1952, p. 35.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 23.

the church nucleated under the leadership of the son of the Prophet . . . many of them actually having been driven out, began to return—they and their children, ‘with songs of everlasting joy.’ And these Saints were members of the Reorganized Church or Reorganization. Others never returned; neither did their children. Who fulfilled prophecy? The answer is, and always will in truth be, the members of the Reorganization.”¹

Pollution

Although saints returned to Jackson County as promised and began to “*build up the waste places of Zion,*” their efforts were scattered and inconsistent. The RLDS Church established stewardship enterprises, but only two in Jackson County. After their failure in the 1930s, that church never instituted Zionistic ventures again. It organized a Social Service Center to which members could contribute goods for use by others in need, but that service no longer exists. In addition, some members formed communal type groups for various enterprises, but none received an endorsement by the RLDS Church. Its corporate goal to build up Zion in Jackson County gradually changed. In 1987, the Committee on Basic Beliefs explained, “*Members of the church are called to develop signal communities where they can live the word of God prophetically. Each congregation should be such a signal community,*”² adding, “*Such communities must never be limited to any one area of geography or even to any one nation.*”³ Today, its mission is to “*promote communities of joy, hope, love and peace.*”⁴

The LDS Church established the Independence Stake in 1971. While it continues to maintain social programs, it has not yet undertaken any effort to build up Zion or to establish Zionistic communities in Jackson County. While it affirms the church’s original goal of establishing a holy city during Joseph Smith’s lifetime, it maintains that it now has a broader objective. In 1977, Apostle Bruce McConkie explained, “*We were directed in the day of Joseph Smith to do one thing with reference to the gathering of Israel and the building up of Zion. Today we are counseled to turn away from the past and do something entirely different,*” adding, “*We are now engaged in gathering Israel within the various nations of the earth and in establishing stakes of Zion at the ends of the earth.*”⁵ The church has no public plans to complete Joseph Smith’s goal of building up the holy city in Jackson County.

The Church of Christ returned to Jackson County with a very specific purpose: to buy the land dedicated by Joseph Smith in 1831 for the Independence Temple. It was not until unrest in the Reorganized Church boosted its membership that the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) tried to build the temple. Differences divided its members shortly after it started the excavation. The depression left it without the financial ability to proceed. Although Church of Christ agents solicited financial aid from other Restoration churches, none contributed. LDS President Anthony W. Ivins announced at the October 1929 General Conference, “*They have come to our office, soliciting aid. They would like us to assist them in*

¹ RLDS Conference Minutes, 1952, p. 35.

² *Exploring the Faith*, Independence, MO: Herald House, 1987, p. 202.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

⁴ <http://www.cofchrist.org/ourfaith/mission.asp>.

⁵ Bruce R. McConkie, *Come: Let Israel Build Zion*, Ensign, May 1977 at <http://www.lds.org/ensign/1977/05/come-let-israel-build-zion>.

building a temple."¹ In Spring 1936, the Temple Lot Church's Presiding Elder Clarence Wheaton wrote both the RLDS and LDS churches hoping that "*a friendship and fellowship may be established between us all, which can transcend all of our differences.*"² S. A. Burgess, RLDS historian, acknowledged in 1936, "*They are making [an] approach to all of the other factions, including the Utah faction and ours, for a group effort cooperative, to build this temple that they plan.*"³ In 1936, LDS Church President David O. McKay noted that there had been "*a committee of the Church of Christ, Independence, Missouri, inviting our church to join in building a temple in Jackson County. We courteously refused.*"⁴ Without contributions from other Restoration churches, the Church of Christ was forced to abandon the venture. As it did, the hope of building the temple on the designated spot began to fade.

Among the revelations Joseph Smith brought is this warning, received in February 1834: "*Behold, this is the blessing which I have promised after your tribulations, and the tribulations of your brethren; your redemption, and the redemption of your brethren; even their restoration to the land of Zion, to be established, no more to be thrown down; nevertheless, if they pollute their inheritances, they shall be thrown down; for I will not spare them if they pollute their inheritances*" (D&C 100:3b-c). As prophesied, faithful saints returned, but they proved lackadaisical in their efforts to build up Zion.

The Church of Christ (Temple Lot) divided in October 1929. On July 18, 1929, Apostle Otto Fetting received his twelfth message. It stated, "*The Lord has rejected all creeds and factions of men, who have gone away from the word of the Lord and have become an abomination in his sight, therefore, let those that come to the Church of Christ be baptized.*"⁵ Some interpreted the message as requiring members of all the Restoration's factions, including the RLDS Church, to be re-baptized when joining the Church of Christ (Temple Lot). "*Many members of the Church were rebaptized.*"⁶ A special conference was called in October to consider the matter. That conference overwhelmingly rejected the doctrine. Otto Fleming and Walter Gates were removed from the Quorum of Twelve. Both were disfellowshipped.⁷ They led over one-third of that church's approximately 4000 members⁸ and formed a separate church, also called the Church of Christ. It formally organized on April 6, 1930. In April 1836, the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) formally rejected all Fetting's revelations,⁹ although today it requires rebaptism of any coming from other Restoration churches.

The Church of Christ (Fettingite) further divided. Otto Fetting died January 30, 1933.¹⁰ William Draves, a Fettingite elder, claimed that on October 4, 1937 John the Baptist, the same messenger that gave Otto Fetting his 30 messages, visited him. That

¹ Addams, *The Church of Christ (Temple Lot) and Their Quest to Build a Temple in Zion*, p. 8.

² Letter to the First Presidency and Quorum of Twelve of both churches from Clarence Wheaton dated April 9, 1936, Relations Committee, Minutes, Church of Christ (Temple Lot) archives.

³ Addams, *The Church of Christ (Temple Lot) and Their Quest to Build a Temple in Zion*, p. 13.

⁴ Addams, *The Church of Christ (Temple Lot) and Their Quest to Build a Temple in Zion*, p. 13.

⁵ *The Word of the Lord*, p. 27.

⁶ An Outline History of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot), p. 142.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Christ_%28Fettingite%29.

¹⁰ Ibid.

message and following ones caused division. The Louisiana and Mississippi portions of the Fettingite church reacted immediately. They formed a separate church called The Church of Christ (Restored). The Independence portion was slower to respond, but it also rejected Draves' messages. Those believing the new messages formed The Church of Christ "With the Elijah Message" in 1943.¹ After the Independence portion of the Church of Christ (Fettingite) denounced Draves' messages, the Church of Christ (Restored) refused to reconcile with them.² In the 1950s, The Church of Christ (Fettingite) adopted Sabbath worship,³ making any reconciliation between the two groups unlikely.

Like the Church of Christ (Temple Lot), the Reorganized Church fragmented. Its division developed more slowly. The 1925 debate over church government did more than drive over 2,500 members to the Church of Christ (Temple Lot). It created the Protest Movement. For two years members of both churches protested what its participants considered was Fred Smith's usurpation of power. Members of the RLDS Quorum of Twelve and Presiding Bishopric participated. Apostle Paul Hansen noted other RLDS leaders who were disaffected like himself: "*Heman C. Smith, Peter Anderson, F. M. Sheehy, Joseph Luff, Benj. R. McGuire, J. W. Rushton, I. A. Smith, J. F. Keir, F. G. Pitt, Daniel MacGregor, T. W. Williams, E. E. Long, James E. Yates, F. F. Wipper, Frank Almond, Harry Passman, Elmer C. Ohlert, and scores of others.*"⁴ About that time, Apostle John Garver disorganized the DeKalb, Illinois Branch for participating in the Protest Movement and, when it continued to meet in its local church building, the RLDS Church sued for possession.⁵ Worse yet, members exercised gifts of the Spirit that sometimes criticized church leaders. For 20 years the RLDS Church suffered the debilitating effects of controversy. When Israel A. Smith succeeded Fred Smith as RLDS president, Patriarch Roy Hopkins interpreted a gift of tongues given at the General Conference Prayer Service on April 6, 1946 preceding the formal acceptance of Israel Smith as president. It promised a time of harmony: "*Now I have called upon my servant Israel whom I have prepared for the particular time in which my church needs his ministry, and verily say unto you it shall be in the future, at times, as if his father Joseph [III] were walking among the people. I have put in him the spirit of his father.*"⁶ Despite the calming and unifying effect that Israel brought to the Reorganized Church, the suspicions that sprouted in the 1920s never went away.

In the 1950s, at the very time that the RLDS Church seemed to be emerging as the prophesied organization that returned the saints to Jackson County, Missouri, tension between two differing camps began to build. One took a more allegorical view of scripture and tended to rely on educational insight for understanding. It more readily attracted educated and progressive members. The second camp took a more literal view of scripture and tended to rely on divine enlightenment. The latter attracted members sympathetic to the Protest Movement and apprehensive about academia's influence on church leadership. Both Fred M. Smith and Floyd McDowell, a member of the First Presidency, held doctorate degrees and were the objects of the protest. In 1938, Floyd McDowell became Director of

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Christ_with_the_Elijah_Message.

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Christ_%28Restored%29.

³ Ibid.

⁴ *The Messenger*, vol. 2, no. 1 (October 1, 1926): 1.

⁵ E. E. Long, *The DeKalb Agreement*, Self Published, p 3.

⁶ Private copy.

Priesthood Education. His encouragement for a better educated ministry helped widen the gap. Each side failed to understand that both views had value.¹ Instead of working through differences, positions hardened and discord expanded until it affected most members. By 1980, the allegorical camp included most, if not all, of the RLDS leadership. The literal camp felt abandoned, especially after the RLDS First Presidency threatened to silence any priesthood who participated in the independently sponsored Restoration Festival of September 1980.² When the RLDS World Conference approved the ordination of woman to priesthood offices in 1984 the tentative unity broke and that church fragmented.

The Church of Christ, Restored was the first organization of disgruntled RLDS members after the breach. It incorporated during March 1984 in Michigan and held its first conference that May, restructuring the leading church quorums. Its high priests were ordained by elders, something that most disgruntled RLDS members believed was unlawful. Lee Abramson, an RLDS seventy, formed the Church of the Lamb of God, which incorporated in November 1984 at Beals, Maine.³ In 1986 an International Conference of Elders convened in Independence, Missouri. It chose John Cato for its prophet. Many participants immediately severed any further association. The remaining participants organized the Church of Jesus Christ Zion's Branch. Norman Page brought a revelation to a group of seventy authorizing them to reorder the church based on the responsibility given to the Quorum of Seventy to set a disordered church back in order (D&C 122:10a). The majority of those seventy rejected the revelation, but five met again and approved it. Under their direction the Restoration Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints officially organized on April 6, 1991.⁴ The Church of the Lamb of God and the Restoration Church later merged. David Bowerman organized the Conference of Restoration Elders. It convened its first conference in April 1992. A group of High Priests participating in the Conference of Restoration Elders, one of whom was David Bowerman, published a Proclamation and Invitation to the Faithful on May 18, 1999. That Council of High Priests claimed the right to set the church in order (D&C 122:10a). Their August 9, 1999 letter invited all elders "*who support, in principle the 'Proclamation' and its seven points*" to help plan an organizational conference.⁵ That organizational conference convened on April 8, 2000 and formed the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Anticipating its organization, Richard Price listed 10 separate churches that were created from the RLDS Church's fragmentation.⁶ Of those 10 churches, five remain in 2012. Despite these

¹ Relying on Greek texts, Origen explained, "By Solomon in the Proverbs [Pro 22:21] we find some such rule as this enjoined respecting the divine doctrines of Scripture: 'And do thou portray them in a threefold manner, in counsel and knowledge, to answer words of truth to them who propose them to thee.' The individual ought, then, to portray the ideas of holy Scripture in a threefold manner" (De Principiis, Bk 4, Ch 1.11 Greek Text). Literal and allegorical are but two of these three cords.

² As pastor of the Wellsville, KS Mission I received a letter during August 1980 that the RLDS First Presidency sent to all pastors. It forbade any RLDS priesthood from participating in the upcoming Restoration Festival. I talked by phone with Grant McMurray, then Church Secretary, who explained that priesthood could attend, but those participating as priesthood were subject to silence.

³ Richard Price, *The Abramson-Page Movement*, Independence, MO: Price Publishing, 1991, p. 65.

⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Restoration_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter_Day_Saints.

⁵ Council of High Priests letter, personal library.

⁶ *Vision*, no. 32 (August 1999) Independence, MO: Price Publishing Co, p. 10.

organizational efforts, a majority of disgruntled RLDS members worshiped separately in Restoration Branches, the congregational unit of the RLDS Church. They believed that only a General Conference could authorize ordinations to the leading church councils and quorums. Some maintain that only the First Presidency can convene a General Conference. In 2005, 37 US branches met in a joint conference to facilitate world evangelism and provide a membership entity for international branches. A larger group of about 150 US Restoration Branches and study groups¹ remain independent.

While the Church of Jesus Christ did not gather to Jackson County, it did gather to Zion Valley in central Kansas. By 1900, that group functioned as a branch of the Church of Jesus Christ. In 2008, its pastor and leading priesthood were excommunicated for administrative reasons. The saints still meeting in St. John function as an independent fellowship.

All three churches whose members returned to the land of Zion or its proximity during the lifetime of saints from the original organization suffered debilitating divisions. Despite their schisms, the doctrinal differences between all of them are hard to see, except for those steeped in the in-fighting. Their contentions and divisions undermined whatever potential they originally had. New generations needed to find alternative and attainable goals. The result is that all three churches abandoned their original purpose for their gathering. The Church of Christ (Temple Lot) has no plans to build the Temple. The Reorganized Church has no plans for building up Zion's waste places. The saints in Zion Valley abandoned their communal enterprise over a century ago. The Church of Jesus Christ has no presence in either Independence or Zion Valley today. No division of either the Temple Lot or the Reorganized Churches has any active Zionite project, with the noted exception of the Remnant Church. It announced Bountiful in April 2011, a "*Zionite endeavor [that] can burn brightly as the ensign of Kingdom living.*"² Bountiful is a community of 17 lots in Lafayette County, Missouri, where church members can purchase and build a home, but it is not a communal endeavor or a self-sustaining enterprise.

The likelihood of any group of latter-day saints building up the land of Zion under present circumstances is most improbable. The Covenants defined the original area for Zion: "*Behold, the place which is now called Independence, is the Center Place, and the spot for the temple is lying westward upon a lot which is not far from the courthouse; wherefore it is wisdom that the land should be purchased by the Saints; and also every tract lying westward, even unto the line running directly between Jew and Gentile*" (D&C 57:1d-e). The estimated amount of land west of the Independence Courthouse to the state line is estimated at 15 miles square, or 144,000 acres. This area includes much of metropolitan Kansas City. While the land could have been bought for about \$144,000 in 1831, a conservative estimate today is over \$50 billion.

The task to build up Zion is daunting at anytime. While finances and administration are important, the necessary ingredient is the ability of members to live together in love and peace. The early revelations point out that necessity: "*Faith, hope, charity, and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualifies him for the work. Remember, faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, diligence.*" (D&C 4:1e-2a). The early saints produced different qualities: "*jarrings, and contentions, and*

¹ <http://www.centerplace.org/Branches/>.

² *The Hastening Times*, vol. 12, no. 2 (April 2011) p. 4.

envyings, and strifes, and lustful and covetous desires among them; therefore by these things they polluted their inheritances" (D&C 98:3a). These are the same qualities that separated members of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot), Reorganized Church and Church of Jesus Christ into various fractions of the Restoration work. If these qualities in the first saints caused them to pollute their inheritances, then those same qualities in the returning saints also caused them to pollute their inheritances. The revelation stated, "*If they pollute their inheritances, they shall be thrown down; for I will not spare them if they pollute their inheritances*" (D&C 100:3c). The divisions among the returning saints and their offspring and the differences that keep the resulting fractions of the returning churches apart stand as a testimony to the truthfulness and accuracy of the latter-day revelation.

For Zion to be redeemed, its residents must be transformed. That is the purpose of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the evidence of the Holy Spirit. They must learn to live in love and peace. Until that happens, God does not have a people for whom he can redeem Zion. People must be made holy if the city that they inhabit is to be holy. The power to make people holy resides in the gospel of Jesus Christ as restored through Joseph Smith. Its priesthood have authority to give the Holy Ghost—the sanctifying power that can make an entire citizenry holy. Ezekiel foretold the time when the Holy Spirit will purify the Lord's people: "*I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you*" (Ezek 36:24-26).

Judgment

The Bible contains God's promise to King David that He would appoint a land of refuge for latter-day Israel. The Restoration fulfilled that promise 3000 years later when Joseph Smith revealed that Missouri contained the appointed spot, "*the place for the city of Zion*" (D&C 57:1a-b). When Joseph and his accompanying elders designated the place for the Temple, the Lord revealed that they were "*honored of laying the foundation, and of bearing record of the land upon which the Zion of God shall stand*" (D&C 58:3c). No promise was made that they would build it up, only that in time it would prosper: "*Zion shall flourish, and the glory of the Lord shall be upon her, and she shall be an ensign unto the people, and there shall come unto her out of every nation under heaven*" (D&C 64:8a).

When the Lord first set His hand to gather latter-day Israel to the appointed place, He restored His church and commissioned servants. He assigned them two tasks: to preach His gospel and to invite believers to gather to Zion: "*This church have I established and called forth out of the wilderness; and even so will I gather mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, even as many as will believe in me, and hearken unto my voice*" (D&C 32:2a-b). All the events surrounding the restoration of the church—the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, the appearance of angels to restore the priesthood, the preaching of all the elders, and the confirming manifestations of spiritual gifts—encompass the promised ensign by which the Lord pledged to gather His people. It fulfilled Isaiah's 2500-year-old prophecy: "*He will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth; and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly*" (Is 5:26). The Lord raised His ensign in America to gather His people and make them holy.

Unfortunately, the restored church did not build up Zion at the appointed spot. The unsettled land of that day is now occupied and improved. The task to redeem it at this time appears improbable, if not impossible. Is the failure of the restored church to redeem Zion 178 years ago sufficient evidence abandoning the establishment of Zion in Jackson County. Is the hope of a holy city only a 19th century ideal—an ideal that is neither attainable nor relevant? Latter-day revelation implies otherwise. A comparison between the prophecies and the subsequent history shows that each of the following happened as predicted.

1) The Lord told the saints to consecrate their properties to the Bishop (D&C 42:8-10). Their diligent consecration would have allowed the Bishop to purchase much of the designated lands directly from the federal government. Too many people refused to consecrate their properties and some bought land directly from the government. Because they would *“not impart of their substance, as becometh Saints, to the poor and afflicted among them, and are not united according to the union required by the law of the celestial kingdom”* (D&C 102:2b), God could not receive their offering nor honor their effort on the designated land. He explained, *“Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom, otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself”* (D&C 102:2c). Their disobedience brought the Lord’s chastisement: *“My people must needs be chastened until they learn obedience”* (D&C 102:2d).

2) The Lord told the saints to buy the land of Zion (D&C 63:8c), an area of approximately 144,000 acres. The church bought only 2000 acres, less than two percent. For failing to purchase the lands of Zion, the Lord decreed, *“your enemies are upon you, and ye shall be scourged from city to city, and from synagogue to synagogue”* (D&C 63:8e). After the saints were expelled from Independence, they were scourged from Clay County, Kirtland, Caldwell County, the entire state of Missouri and, finally Nauvoo.

3) A revelation commanded the saints in Zion to build the Independence Temple (D&C 94:3a). It was one last opportunity for them to prove their devotion and obedience. They never started the project. For refusing to even begin the Independence Temple, God visited *“her according to all her works, with sore affliction, with pestilence, with plague, with sword, with vengeance, with devouring fire”* (D&C 94:5f). The saints were forced from their homes at the beginning of winter, without provisions or even life’s necessities, and driven from the county.

4) God commanded the church to raise a troop of 500 men, who were to march to Independence and redeem Zion (D&C 100:6c), this time establishing it *“upon the laws and commandments which have been, and which shall be given, unto you”* (D&C 100:6g). They only assembled 204 people. Worse yet, too many trusted their own arms instead of the arm of the Lord. When they failed to gather the required number of men to redeem the land of Zion, God delayed its redemption: *“In consequence of the transgression of my people, it is expedient in me that mine elders should wait for a little season for the redemption of Zion”* (D&C 102:3c). Their hope of building up the holy city on the appointed place did not happen, but was postponed to another time and another generation.

5) Seven years after Zion’s Camp dissolved and three years after Missouri’s extermination order, the Lord told the saints at Nauvoo to build another Temple. He warned them that if they continued to ignore His commandments, He would bring a vexing judgment. As early as 1831, God admonished, *“I the Lord have looked upon you, and have seen abominations in the church that professes my name. . . Woe unto them that are deceivers, and hypocrites, for thus saith the Lord, I will bring them to judgment”* (D&C 50:2a-

b). Three months later, He added, *“There were among you adulterers and adulteresses; some of whom have turned away from you, and others remain with you, that hereafter shall be revealed. Let such beware and repent speedily, lest judgment shall come upon them as a snare, and their folly shall be made manifest, and their works shall follow them in the eyes of the people”* (D&C 63:4b-c). The disasters that befell the saints in their flight from Independence, Clay County, Kirtland, and Far West did not sufficiently purify them. In 1841, the Lord upbraided them again. The completion of the Nauvoo Temple was not all He wanted. He required an obedient people—the holy people needed for a holy habitation: *“If you build a house unto my name, and do not the things that I say, I will not perform the oath which I make unto you, neither fulfill the promises which ye expect at my hands, saith the Lord; for instead of blessings, ye, by your own works, bring cursings, wrath, indignation, and judgments, upon your own heads, by your follies, and by all your abominations, which you practice before me, saith the Lord”* (D&C 107:14a-b). Three years after this warning, a mob from Warsaw murdered Joseph and Hyrum Smith at Carthage. The church divided into over 20 fragments. A church that numbered at least 150,000 members¹ was fragmented and scattered in a struggle over church leadership and disputes about right doctrine. Instead of growing into a pinnacle of righteousness where *“the nations of the earth shall honor her”* (D&C 94:5b), Mormonism in all its parts became associated with immorality, heresy and the occult. That legacy still follows the latter-day work. As prophesied, the follies of its members were made manifest in the eyes of the world.

6) With the church fragmented, its members scattered throughout the United States, and a significant portion residing outside its borders, only a handful of the saints that were removed from Missouri returned to the land of Zion. The Covenants foretold that outcome: *“Few shall stand to receive an inheritance”* (D&C 63:8e).

7) Latter-day revelation promised that a faithful few or their children would return to Jackson County (D&C 98:4g, 100:3b). Latter Day Saints began returning in 1867 and by 1900 a number of both saints who had lived in Missouri in the 1830s or their children had moved back. Some of them wrote beloved hymns, *“songs of everlasting joy”* (D&C 98:4g), as the prophecy predicted. Among those hymn writers were the children and grandchildren of Joseph, the Seer.

8) Those who returned came to build up the waste places of Zion. The Holy Spirit attended their efforts and they made a good start, but their successors could not carry through. The same difficulties that beset the first saints—*“jarrings, and contentions, and envyings, and strifes, and lustful and covetous desires”* (D&C 98:3a)—also plagued the returned saints. They, like the first church members, *“polluted their inheritances”* (D&C 98:3a). The Covenants warned those who returned: *“If they pollute their inheritances, they shall be thrown down”* (D&C 100:3c). Even that prediction happened. Those groups that returned to build up Zion have further divided into almost a dozen fractions. Some have revised what Zion means, thereby removing any need for them to facilitate the redemption of the appointed land. Others claim to hold the sole right to redeem Zion, but none have the resources to do it.

9) In 1841, God accepted the offering that faithful saints made in Jackson County, as meager as it was. He also promised to punish those who hindered His work. Some of those were church members. Prophecy said that church members were the first to receive God’s

¹ Joseph Smith III, *Rejection of the Church*, p. 3.

wrath: *“First among those among you, saith the Lord, who have professed to know my name and have not known me”* (D&C 105:10b). During the following 168 years, the surviving fragmented organizations have repeatedly asserted that each was the legitimate successor. They became separate denominations during a partisan time in a sectarian culture. The Lord warned, *“For the time speedily shall come, that all churches which are built up to get gain, and all those who are built up to get power over the flesh, and those who are built up to become popular in the eyes of the world, and those who seek the lusts of the flesh and the things of the world, and to do all manner of iniquity”* (1 Ne 7:50), adding, *“They are those who must be brought low in the dust; they are those who must be consumed as stubble”* (1 Ne 7:52). When the fragments of the restored church began building up their denominations instead of building up Zion, they grew more like Protestant denominations, placing themselves in positions to experience the divine retribution pronounced on churches that are built up for gain. From 1860 to 1990, the Restoration’s surviving factions suffered at least 135 further divisions.¹ Recently, US participation among active members of many factions declined as well. For instance, RLDS Church membership stood at 207,178 in 1972² with 39.2% contributing³—a total of 81,421 contributors, but by 2009, the number of contributors had dropped to approximately 17,800,⁴ a 78% loss. The Church of Christ (Temple Lot) currently estimates its US members at 1,400,⁵ a loss of 65% since 1930. Mainstream Protestant churches experienced similar, but less dramatic statistics. Between 2001 and 2008, mainstream Protestant churches lost 17.92% of their membership, or 6,413,000 members. Meanwhile, non-traditional Christian fellowships gained, 20,609,000 members, becoming 4.9 times larger than their sectarian counterparts. Mainstream Protestant denominations presently represent only 16.9% of affiliated Protestants.⁶ The Book of Mormon’s prophecy predicting that churches built for gain or popularity will be brought low is being fulfilled today.

The break-up of American denominations allows believers to seek the best place to bolster their faith and develop their relationship with Jesus. Denominational lines are now blurred. Some Protestant ministers quote the Book of Mormon and teach Restoration tenets, while contemporary Christian music is molding the hopes and devotion of Restoration and Christian peoples alike. Meanwhile, non-believers can readily leave organized religion. This growing polarization allows the wicked to comfortably say, *“Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die: and it shall be well with us”* (2 Ne 12:9), or *“Nevertheless, fear God, he will justify in committing a little sin”* (2 Ne 12:10). On the other hand, believers can still seek Jesus, even while being buffeted by unbelief, whether from secular or denominational sources. The Lord explains, *“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent”* (Rev 3:19). The divine judgments that fell upon the church beginning in 1844 and went to the world in 1860 came to correct misbehavior in believers across all denominational boundaries. Corrected behavior brings divine approval. The Bible teaches, *“Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son*

¹ Shields, p. 4-9.

² World Conference Bulletin 1974, p. 77.

³, Ibid., p. 94.

⁴ World Conference Bulletin 2010, p. E-5.

⁵ Testimony of Joseph F. Smith.

⁶ Carl V. Rabstojek, churchMembership.pdf at www.hound.info, p. 2.

whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons" (Heb 12:6-7). The Lord continued to bless His saints in every portion of the church, as well as believers outside the Restoration, inviting them to repent and raising up children to Him in each generation. He also sent servants to preach the gospel of repentance, inviting new generations to obey it and escape His culminating wrath. The Lord's patience and long suffering accomplishes two things: it increases the number of people that will come into His kingdom and it purifies His church. The Bible teaches "*that he [Jesus] might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish*" (Eph 5:27). This is the precious fruit produced during the time of judgment. The Lord is preparing a people to assist in Zion's redemption and help extend the second invitation.

10) The Lord explained that His judgment would last "*unto the third and fourth generation, so long as they repent not, and hate me, saith the Lord God*" (D&C 107:15b). Did the Lord mean to start counting with the generation in which the revelation came? Is Joseph Smith the Seer the first generation or is the first generation the generation of his children? The former indicates that Joseph Smith's great-grandchildren are members of the fourth generation. The latter designates them as the third. Either way, we are at the end of the third and fourth generation. Few of Joseph Smith's great grandchildren still live. The fact that divine retribution has not fully ended all nations until the end of the third and fourth generation was accurately predicted in latter-day revelation.

The history of the Restoration's failure to either build up Zion or redeem it is not an example of false or failed prophecy. Granted, it is a failure, but a failure of obedience. Over and over again the saints disobeyed. The fruit of their disobedience was divine judgment, not just the punishment that cognitive dissidence rationalizes, but the condemnation specifically foretold in divine revelation. The ten listed examples give overwhelming evidence that latter-day prophecy is true; but the prophetic evidences do not end here.

The Lord prophesied that the judgment, which befell the church at Joseph's and Hyrum's deaths, would afterwards engulf non-members who hindered the work: "*Behold, vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth—a day of wrath, a day of burning, a day of desolation, of weeping, of mourning, and of lamentation—and as a whirlwind it shall come upon all the face of the earth, saith the Lord. And upon my house shall it begin, and from my house shall it go forth, saith the Lord.*" (D&C 105:9b-10a). Peter revealed the same sequence: "*For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*" (1 Pet 4:17).

Latter-day revelation explains how the divine judgment fits into God's work. When Joseph Smith dedicated the spot for the Independence Temple, the Lord said that they were also preparing "*a supper of the house of the Lord, well prepared, unto which all nations shall be invited*" (D&C 58:3d). The revelation described two separate invitations to be extended to nations. Those two invitations furnish the supper with guests. He said, "*Firstly, the rich and the learned, the wise and the noble; and after that cometh the day of my power; then shall the poor, the lame, and the blind, and the deaf, come in unto the marriage of the Lamb, and partake of the supper of the Lord, prepared for the great day to come*" (D&C 58:3e-f). In the 1830s, the rich, learned, wise and noble nations were the Gentile nations. The church under Joseph's direction took the gospel to those nations, as commanded: "*unto the Gentiles first*" (D&C 87:3c); and "*first unto the Gentiles, and then unto the Jews*" (D&C 104:13b). The

Lord called the restored church's leaders and missionaries the "*first laborers in this last kingdom*" (D&C 85:19). They traversed the Gentile nations—the United States, Canada and Europe—inviting people to not only believe and obey the gospel, but to gather to Zion. Parley Pratt presented the Restoration message to Queen Victoria. He wrote, "*I must close this letter by forewarning the Sovereign and people of England, in the most affectionate manner, to repent and turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart.*"¹ He added, "*Now, if the rulers, clergy, and people of England hearken to this message they shall have part in this glorious kingdom so clearly set forth in this letter, but if they will not hearken to the words of the prophets and apostles, they will be overthrown with the wicked, and perish from the earth.*"² Joseph Smith personally implored President Van Buren to redress Zion's wrongs. The president replied, "*Gentlemen, your cause is just, but I can do nothing for you.*"³ He also told Joseph, "*If I take up for you I shall lose the vote of Missouri.*"⁴ Joseph also met with congressmen, who merely suggested the well-worn response to take the matter to the Missouri Courts. Illinois Senator Richard Young offered to present their case to the Senate.⁵ His petition was referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee, which ruled that redress could only be legally obtained in Missouri's courts. The Senate accepted the committee's report on March 23, 1840⁶ and the appeal to America's leaders died. Joseph Smith prophesied that if the federal government "*would not heed him [Joseph], He [God] would vex the nation.*"⁷

Joseph Smith prophesied that judgment would begin on the world when South Carolina rebelled: "*Verily thus saith the Lord, concerning the wars that will shortly come to pass, beginning at the rebellion of South Carolina, which will eventually terminate in the death and misery of many souls. The days will come that war will be poured out upon all nations, beginning at that place.*"⁸ South Carolina seceded from the Union on December 20, 1860. According to the prophecy, their secession started a vexation on the Gentiles that would last "*until the consumption decreed, hath made a full end of all nations.*"⁹ South Carolina's secession was the initial vexation that came to the nation that most hindered Zion. It started as prophesied, 16 years after judgment befell the church, and remains America's most deadly war to date.¹⁰

Jesus also foretold two invitations before the marriage supper: "*When the marriage was ready, he sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding; and they would not come*" (Matt 22:3). In Luke's account, "*they all, with one consent, began to make excuse*" (Lu 14:18). Matthew states, "*They made light of the servants, and went their ways; one to his farm, another to his merchandise; and the remnant took his servants, and entreated*

¹ *Times and Seasons*, vol. 3, no. 2 (Nov 15, 1841): 596.

² *Ibid.*

³ Lucy Mack Smith, *Joseph Smith and his Progenitors*, Independence, MO: Herald House, 1969, p. 334.

⁴ *LDS History of the Church*, vol. 4, p. 80.

⁵ Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005, p. 394.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 397.

⁷ *Lucy's Book*, ed. Levina Fielding Anderson, Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001, p. 708.

⁸ *RLDS Church History*, vol. 1, p 262.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

¹⁰ About 625,000 troops died, just under half of the troops killed in all US wars. See http://www.militaryfactory.com/american_war_deaths.asp.

them spitefully, and slew them" (Mat 22:5-6). Every Gentile nation ignored the invitation to build up Zion, although many humble people believed. Some attacked the saints, stealing their property, plundering their possessions, and scourging them from city to city. A mob murdered Joseph and Hyrum Smith. These events accurately fulfilled the Savior's prophecy. Jesus also foretold the reaction, "*When the king heard that his servants were dead, he was wroth; and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then said he to his servants, The wedding is ready; but they who were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage*" (Matt 22:8-9). History clearly shows that Jesus' prophecy about the Gentile nations ignoring the first invitation and killing the first servants was accurately fulfilled.

Both Jesus' parable and latter-day revelation describe two separate invitations, with a day of judgment in between them. Jesus revealed that the Gentile cities will be burned. Latter-day revelation describes it as a "*day of power.*" A divine judgment after the first laborers invited the Gentiles is foretold elsewhere in latter-day revelation: "*Tarry ye, and labor diligently, that you may be perfected in your ministry, to go forth among the Gentiles for the last time, as many as the mouth of the Lord shall name, to bind up the law, and seal up the testimony, and to prepare the Saints for the hour of judgment, which is to come*" (D&C 85:23a). Elsewhere, it commanded, "*Go ye forth as your circumstances shall permit, in your several callings, unto the great and notable cities and villages, reprovng the world in righteousness, of all their unrighteous and ungodly deeds, setting forth clearly and understandingly the desolation of abomination in the last days.*" (D&C 83:24a). Daniel predicted a desolating abomination. That ancient prophet predicted the desolation of abomination that the first elders were to announce to the world: "*From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days*" (Dan 12:11). The traditional Restoration interpretation is that Daniel's "little horn" took away the daily sacrifice in 570 AD, sending the church into the wilderness for 1260 prophetic days. Adding 30 prophetic days to 1260 yields 1290 prophetic days, the time for the desolation of abomination. Adding 1290 days to 570 AD gives 1860, the year of South Carolina's secession and the beginning of God's judgment on the world.

The judgment that began on the world in 1860 did not make "*a full end of all nations*" then. Neither were all the Gentile cities burned. The nations lacked the weapons to render such havoc in those days. That is no longer true. Today, at the end of the fourth generation from the judgment that overtook the church, a number of countries possess the power to destroy all nations on earth.

The Bible describes a group of countries north of Israel who are confederate with "*Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya*" (Ezek 38:1-6). Today Russia and its allies include many Arab states. The prophecy foretells their evil thought, "*I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land*" (Ezek 38:11-12). While the Arab states oppose the nation of Israel, the description of the land that they are destined to invade is not in the Middle East. All those nations have barriers and gates. That is not the case in America. It has no bars or gates. In addition, like the prophecy

depicts, America once was a wilderness, but now it is populated with people from many nations. America is the envied nation that Ezekiel's confederacy wants to spoil.

The prophets describe the desolation that this "*northern army*" (Joel 2:20) brings. The invading army is "*a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be anymore after it, even to the years of many generations*" (Joel 2:2). It is an understatement to say that modern weaponry is unlike anything in past battles as far back as history records. The result of this predicted war, Armageddon as the Apocalypse names it (Rev 16:16), will be vast devastation: "*A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth*" (Joel 2:3). Rockets will be part of their arsenal: "*Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble*" (Joel 2:5). The description of the fallout sounds like nuclear radiation, "*I, the Lord God, will send forth flies upon the face of the earth, which shall take hold of the inhabitants thereof, and shall eat their flesh, and shall cause maggots to come in upon them, and their tongues shall be stayed that they shall not utter against me, and their flesh shall fall from off their bones, and their eyes from their sockets*" (D&C 28:5a-b). All these horrible afflictions attend the great day when the Lord comes out of his hiding place to afflict the wicked: "*For his camp is very great, for he is strong that executeth his word; for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?*" (Joel 2:11).

The judgments that devastate the world and burn the Gentile cities prepare a time for a second invitation to gather for the Lord's great supper. That marriage feast will be held in Zion. The Book of Mormon prophesies several events that prepare America for this supper of the Lord. Like the other cited prophecies, all of them have developed since the book's publication. Some are fulfilled and others are in completion.

1) The Book of Mormon foretold that America would become the greatest nation: "*The Lord God will raise up a mighty nation among the Gentiles, yea, even upon the face of this land*" (1 N 7:15). Jesus added the promise, "*which blessing upon the Gentiles, shall make them mighty above all*" (3 N 9:65).

2) It revealed that the Gentiles would reject the latter-day gospel: "*The Gentiles shall sin against my gospel, and shall reject the fullness of my gospel*" (3 N 7:34).

3) The Book of Mormon reveals that the Gentiles would lose the gospel that they received from the Pilgrims and Puritans. Jesus said, "*And if they shall do all these things, and shall reject the fullness of my gospel, behold, saith the Father, I will bring the fullness of my gospel from among them*" (3 N 7:35). America is gradually scrubbing its culture of its foundational Christian traditions and morals.

4) It predicts that descendants of Book of Mormon peoples will overrun America: "*I will suffer my people, O house of Israel, that they shall go through among them, and shall tread them down*" (3 N 7:40). Assuming that the people to whom Jesus spoke those words lived in Meso-America, Jesus' prediction is being accurately fulfilled as Hispanics immigrate to the US, gradually become the largest percentage of the population and taking over many blue-collar jobs.

5) The Book of Mormon prophesies that America will be devastated and its cities burned: "*Wo be unto the Gentiles, except they repent, for it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Father, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots, and I will cut off the cities of thy land and throw down all thy strongholds . . . thou shalt no more worship the works of thy hands; and I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee; so will I destroy thy cities*" (3 Ne 9:101-104). Americans have already lost their

horses for transportation. When their oil supply ends, their chariots will be useless. Even today, terrorism threatens to destroy America's great cities. Jesus explained, "*The sword of my justice shall hang over them at that day; and except they repent, it shall fall upon them, saith the Father, yea, even upon all the nations of the Gentiles*" (3 Ne 9:56).

Many prophecies in latter-day scripture have accurately foretold events that are now recorded in our history. Some describe proceedings that are unfolding, partly complete, but not entirely. Their abundance is sufficient to trust the few yet to come: the culminating war and Zion's redemption.

The Redemption

Jesus has two advents. The Jews failed to distinguish between them and dismissed the Savior because their expectations were not entirely met during his first appearance. Similarly, the summons to Zion has two invitations. Those unable to differentiate between the two are likely to be confused. Some may even reject the hope because Zion was not redeemed during the first invitation. Zion's redemption is a future event and, as the prophecies show, awaits the second invitation.

Both latter-day revelation and the Gospels specify that the first invitation to prepare for Jesus' return and its accompanying wedding feast is followed by a time of judgment. One reason is because the call to build up Zion attracts both good and bad. Jesus taught, "*The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind*" (Mat 13:48). Before Zion is redeemed the good and the bad must be separated. Jesus' parable adds, "*They drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels; but cast the bad away*" (Matt 13:48).

While devout Christians, Pilgrims and Puritans, first colonized America, speculators and immigrants looking for better opportunities also settled the New World. Not all of them were interested in purifying the church of Jesus Christ or conforming to the model of Christian charity. Likewise, not everyone responding to the latter-day gospel was willing to crucify the natural man and live according to the celestial law. That is why the restored church contained "*deceivers, and hypocrites*" (D&C 50:2b). The kingdom of God will contain both good and bad until Jesus completes His work. Latter-day revelation states, "*There will be foolish virgins among the wise, and at that hour cometh an entire separation of the righteous and the wicked*" (D&C 63:13g). The Lord calls the separation of the good and bad His strange act: "*I may proceed to bring to pass my act, my strange act, and perform my work, my strange work. That men may discern between the righteous and the wicked*" (D&C 98:12e). Isaiah confirms that God's strange act is associated with divine judgment: "*The Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act*" (Is 28:21).

The culminating judgment that begins the second invitation started when South Carolina seceded. The Civil War that followed was the beginning of a series of wars that will eventually end all nations. Latter-day revelation prophesies, "*I have sworn in my wrath and decreed wars upon the face of the earth, and the wicked shall slay the wicked, and fear shall come upon every man, and the Saints also shall hardly escape*" (D&C 63:9b). Although believers will find difficulty maintaining their faith and devotion, God promised to preserve

His people (D&C 36:12e). He will rescue them by covering them with righteousness. The Bible advises, *"It is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you"* (Hos 10:12). God also promised to bring truth out of the ground. Latter-day revelation assures, *"Righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of my Only Begotten"* (D&C 36:12e).

Truth from the earth refers to the Book of Mormon. After announcing the strange act that God promises to perform in rescuing His work, Isaiah describes Ariel, *"the city where David dwelt"* (Is 29:1). The prophet predicts, *"She shall be brought down, and shall speak out of the ground."* Those words that she spoke appear as a book that is sealed: *"The vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed"* (Is 29:11 KJ). Joseph's translation states, *"The Lord God shall bring forth unto you the words of a book; and they shall be the words of them which have slumbered. And behold, the book shall be sealed"* (Is 29:11-12). The sealed book is not read when the Book of Mormon plates are translated. The Lord instructed, *"Touch not the things which are sealed, for I will bring them forth in mine own due time"* (2 Ne 11:143). In the Lord's due time, when He performs His strange act, *"the words of the book which were sealed, shall be read upon the housetops; and they shall be read by the power of Christ"* (2 Ne 11:131). This remarkable event will *"bear testimony of my Only Begotten"* (D&C 36:12e). At no other time in the history of Christendom have so many professors of religion doubted Jesus' historicity and divinity. Their doubts burden the humble followers of Christ, but that burden will be removed when the sealed book appears, attracting all people who confess Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Before the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon springs from the earth, the revelation states that righteousness will descend from heaven. That poetic phrase refers to the appearance of angels. For instance, the Book of Mormon reveals, *"He hath sent his angels to declare the tidings of the conditions of repentance, which bringeth unto the power of the Redeemer, unto the salvation of their souls"* (Hel 2:73). When the cause of Zion is almost overcome by her enemies, God promises to rescue His people by sending divine power: *"The great mother of abominations did gather together in multitudes upon the face of all the earth, among all the nations of the Gentiles, to fight against the Lamb of God. And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb, and upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory"* (1 N 3:229-231). George Washington's vision helps show that the righteousness, the divine power, that God sends down are His angels. He saw an angel *"descended from heaven, attended by legions of bright spirits. These immediately joined the inhabitants of America"* to repulse the invading armies.¹ The Covenants teach that angels will also sever the good from the bad: *"I send mine angels, to pluck out the wicked, and cast them into unquenchable fire"* (D&C 63:13h). Jesus said, *"For in that day, before the Son of Man shall come, he shall send forth his angels and messengers of heaven. And they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them out among the wicked"* (Mat 13:42-43). Angels also gather His people: *"He shall send his angels before him with the great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together the remainder of his elect from the four winds; from one end of heaven to the other"* (Matt 24:40).

¹ Alvin, Knisley, *Infallible Proofs*, Independence, MO: Herald House, 1930, p. 56.

Angelic intervention not only preserves the righteous and brings the good into it, but it removes the bad from the kingdom of God.

The Book of Mormon ties the preservation of the righteous to the second lifting of the ensign: *"They that fight against Zion and the covenant people of the Lord, shall lick up the dust of their feet; and the people of the Lord shall not be ashamed. . . The Messiah will set himself again the second time, to recover them"* (2 Ne 5:33-36). God will save His people from destruction in remarkable ways for two reasons: *"that I may remember my covenants which I have made unto the children of men, that I may set my hand again the second time to recover my people, which are the house of Israel"* (2 N 12:42). The Lord promised the faithful in past generations, such as to Abraham and Sarah, that He will preserve their descendants, whether literal or adopted, and lift up the attracting ensign a second time. Isaiah, specifically ties the second attempt to recover the Lord's covenant people to the raising of the ensign: *"It shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations"* (Is 11:11-12). The Lord raised the first ensign when He revealed the Book of Mormon and sent angels, who restored the priesthood and instructed the first elders. The raising of the ensign for a second time seems destined to do the same, but, perhaps, in a more dramatic fashion. When explaining the *"root of David"* in the cited verse from Isaiah, Elias Higbee asked the meaning of the phrase, *"Put on thy strength, O Zion"* (Is 52:5). Joseph Smith presented the Lord's explanation: *"He had reference to those whom God should call in the last days, who should hold the power of priesthood to bring again Zion, and the redemption of Israel; and to put on her strength is to put on the authority of the priesthood, which she (Zion) has a right to by lineage; also to return to that power which she had lost."*¹

The judgment that began on the church before it went to the world has divided the saints and fragmented their spiritual power. They are too weak to redeem Zion or to exercise the power of priesthood. In fact, many saints are in bondage to the world, fettered by debt and without an inheritance. The explanation that the Spirit gave through Joseph reveals that Zion will again put on its strength, presumably when the ensign is raised for a second time. Under that power the saints will *"bring again Zion"* and *"return the power which she had lost."* Joseph Smith explained how angels participate in the return of the lost power, the redemption of Zion and the descent of righteousness: *"Paul spoke of the dispensation of the fullness of times, when God would gather together all things in one, etc.; and those men to whom these keys have been given will have to be there; and they without us cannot be made perfect. These men are in heaven, but their children are on earth. . . The Son of Man shall send forth his angels. All these authoritative characters will come down and join hand in hand in bringing about this work. . . Thus angels come down, combine together to gather their children. We cannot be made perfect without them, nor they without us."*² Latter-day revelation contains the same promise: *"Ye must needs be led out of bondage by power, and with a stretched out arm; and as your fathers were led at the first, even so shall the redemption of Zion be. Therefore, let not your hearts faint, for I say not unto you as I said unto your fathers, Mine angel shall go up before you, but not my presence; but I say unto you,*

¹ RLDS Church History, vol. 2, p. 138-139.

² *Millennial Star*, vol. 17, no. 20 (May 19, 1855): 311.

Mine angels shall go before you, and also my presence, and in time ye shall possess the goodly land” (100:3e-f).

Although angels will help redeem Zion, the same prophecy reveals that Jesus will also personally participate. He said, *“Mine angels shall go before you, and also my presence” (100:3f).* The Book of Mormon confirms the Savior’s personal involvement. Zenos’ parable describes the gathering of the natural branches that were previously scattered. The branches represent remnants of Israel (Jac 3:31). The servant pleads with the Lord of the vineyard to spare His corrupt vineyard. They agree to gather the branches and graft them back into their mother tree: *“Wherefore let us take of the branches of these which I have planted in the nethermost parts of my vineyard, and let us graft them into the tree from whence they came” (Jac 3:112).* Servants are called to *“prepare the way” (Jac 3:125)* for the natural fruit. As they do, those servants are also told to trim only the most corrupt branches *“that the root and the top may be equal in strength, until the good shall overcome the bad” (Jac 3:132).* Their success allows Jesus to *“bring them together again, that they shall bring forth the natural fruit; and they shall be one. And the bad shall be cast away; yea, even out of all the land of my vineyard; for behold, only this once will I prune my vineyard” (Jac 3:133-135).* Their work proves successful because Jesus works with them: *“The Lord of the vineyard labored also with them; and they did obey the commandments of the Lord of the vineyard, in all things” (Jac 3:140).* Jacob explains that this success is during the second invitation: *“In the day that he shall set his hand again the second time to recover his people, is the day, yea, even the last time, that the servants of the Lord shall go forth in his power, to nourish and prune his vineyard; and after that, the end soon cometh” (Jac 4:3).* The second attempt to gather His people—the second time the Lord lifts the ensign—succeeds because Jesus works with His servants: *“the Messiah will set himself again the second time, to recover them” (2 N 5:36).*

When the Lord sets his hand a second time, he empowers two sets of people. The Book of Mormon explains that righteousness descends on two groups: *“I, Nephi, beheld the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb, and upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth” (1 N 3:130).* One group on which Jesus’ power descends is church members—*“saints of the Lamb of God.”* One might conclude that the judgments and separation that befell church members since the deaths of the martyrs were designed to limit the bad inherent in each portion. Zenos’ parable explains that as the grafted natural branches *“begin to grow, ye shall clear away the branches which bring forth bitter fruit, according to the strength of the good and the size thereof; and ye shall not clear away the bad thereof, all at once, lest the roots thereof should be too strong for the graft, and the graft thereof shall perish” (Jac 3:130-131).* One benefit from the saints’ separation since 1844 is the limitation of the bad and the refining of a people to ransom Zion. When angels descend and the faithful are armed with spiritual power, they will combine their efforts to redeem Zion.

In addition to the descent of angels and spiritual power to faithful saints, a specific servant plays a key role. His job is to gather a remnant of members scattered among the various portions of the church. The Covenants contains the parable of Zion’s redemption. According to it, *“The lord of the vineyard said unto one of his servants, Go, and gather together the residue of my servants; and take all the strength of mine house, which are my warriors, my young men, and they that are of middle age also, among all my servants, who are the strength of mine house, save those only whom I have appointed to tarry; and go ye*

straightway unto the land of my vineyard, and redeem my vineyard, for it is mine, I have bought it with money" (98:7d-e). While the appointed servant could have been Joseph Smith, who gathered Zion's Camp, and could have been Joseph Smith III, who returned a number of saints to the land of Zion to purchase more of it, Zion was not redeemed at either time. It is just as probable that the parable predicts a future time in which an appointed person gathers the residue of faithful saints scattered among the various Restoration groups. This gathered remnant redeems Zion. The Revelations promise: "*The redemption of Zion must needs come by power; therefore I will raise up unto my people a man, who shall lead them like as Moses led the children of Israel, for ye are the children of Israel, and of the seed of Abraham*" (D&C 100:3d).

Isaiah also revealed that an individual plays an important role in the second invitation: "*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 it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people*" (Is 11:10-11). While the cited verse does not state that "*the root of Jesse*" is a person, Joseph Smith did so under the impulse of the Holy Spirit. In answer to the question, "*What is the root of Jesse spoken of in the tenth verse of the eleventh chapter?*" Joseph said, "*Behold, thus saith the Lord, It is a descendant of Jesse, as well as of Joseph, unto whom rightly belong the priesthood, and the keys of the kingdom, for an ensign, and for the gathering of my people in the last days.*"¹ A person who is a descendant of both Jesse, King David's father, and Joseph, Jacob's son, will participate in lifting the attracting ensign that begins the second invitation. That person may also be the same person who unites the faithful already a part of the Restoration. Their identity is a matter of speculation.

The faithful of the Restoration must unite. Zion cannot be redeemed while the saints are separated. Even united they will need divine intervention—the same intervention that brought ancient Israel into Canaan. God will not intercede for a divided people. The Covenants explain, "*Be one; and if ye are not one, ye are not mine*" (D&C 38:6a). On several occasions, leaders in different Restoration portions brought revelations that invited saints to work together. Joseph Smith III presented a revelation in 1894 that admonished "*Let nothing separate you from each other and the work whereunto you have been called; and I will be with you by my Spirit and presence of power unto the end*" (D&C 122:17b). Clarence L. Wheaton, Presiding Elder of the Church of Christ, received a revelation on March 11, 1919² that said, "*This is your work; to gather together in one all those of my sheep who are scattered upon the face of the earth. Ye shall lay aside all contention with your brethren of the different branches of my church, for in the day that I shall come to my temple I will perfect them in theory and in doctrine, and in all things pertaining to my church. Ye shall continue to strive for a unity of my children.*"³ Later, Apostle James E. Yates of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) wrote in the September 25, 1933 issue of *The Torch of Truth*, "*When this Temple so long dreamed of is built at the sacred place, it will be when all divisions of the Church of the Restoration develope [sic] enough of real Christianity . . . to join hands in the building of this Temple.*"⁴

¹ RLDS Church History, vol. 2, p. 138.

² Outline History of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot), p. 135.

³ *Zion's Advocate* 2, no. 8 (September 15, 1925): 12.

⁴ Addams. *The Church of Christ (Temple Lot) and Their Quest to Build a Temple in Zion*, p. 11.

For four generations, latter-day saints have debated which faction was the true successor to the original church. They have reaped division. If believers are to unite, they must behave differently. In July 1843, Joseph Smith, Jr. explained the proper approach: *“If I esteem mankind to be in error, shall I bear down on them? No. I will lift them up, and in their own way too, if I cannot persuade them my way is better. I will not seek to compel any man to believe as I do, only by force or reasoning, for truth will cut its own way. Do you believe Jesus Christ and the gospel of salvation, which he revealed? So do I. Christians should cease wrangling and contending with each other, and cultivate the principles of union and friendship in their midst; and they will do it before the millennium can be ushered in and Christ takes possession of His kingdom.”*¹

Nephi’s vision reveals that Jesus’ power also descends on another set of people, *“the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth”* (1 N 3:130). These are the rest of scattered Israel. They include those tribes exiled to the north countries: *“They who are in the north countries shall come in remembrance before the Lord, and their prophets shall hear his voice, and shall no longer stay themselves, and they shall smite the rocks, and the ice shall flow down at their presence”* (D&C 108:6a). As they gather, they will bring with them *“the poor, the lame, and the blind, and the deaf”* (D&C 50:3f) who are to also partake of the Lord’s supper. Jeremiah prophesied, *“Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together; a great company shall return thither”* (Jer 31:8). Descendants of ancient Americans who received Jesus shortly after His resurrection will also gather to Zion, for they are part of scattered Israel. Jesus told them, *“Then will I remember my covenant which I have made unto my people, O house of Israel, and I will bring my gospel unto them; and I will shew unto thee, O house of Israel, that the Gentiles shall not have power over you, but I will remember my covenant unto you, O house of Israel, and ye shall come unto the knowledge of the fullness of my gospel”* (3 Ne 7:36-37). The Covenants explain, *“Before the great day of the Lord shall come, Jacob shall flourish in the wilderness; and the Lamanites shall blossom as the rose”* (D&C 49:5a).

Zion must be redeemed before scattered Israel can gather to it. Latter-day revelation promises, *“Zion shall flourish upon the hills, and rejoice upon the mountains, and shall be assembled together unto the place which I have appointed”* (D&C 49:5b). Lost Israel cannot gather to it nor bring their contributions until Zion is redeemed: *“They shall bring forth their rich treasures unto the children of Ephraim my servants. And the boundaries of the everlasting hills shall tremble at their presence. And then shall they fall down and be crowned with glory, even in Zion, by the hands of the servants of the Lord, even the children of Ephraim; and they shall be filled with songs of everlasting joy”* (D&Cc108:6c-d). Ephraim represents those gathered into the Restoration during the first invitation. The revelation foretelling the *“man like Moses”* tells church members, *“Ye are the children of Israel, and of the seed of Abraham”* (D&C 100:3d). Elsewhere, the Covenants prophesy that those left in the land of Zion after the judgment are descendants of Ephraim (D&C 64:7b). Once God unites the faithful of the Restoration and redeems Zion, the remnants of Israel scattered in the north countries, in Meso-America, on the isles of sea and throughout the rest of the world will have a place to gather and a people to receive their treasures. The poor, the halt,

¹ LDS Church History, vol. 5, p. 499.

and the blind nations will come with them. This is the fruit of the second invitation—the invitation that will be extended after the prophesied judgment culminates the Gentile nations.

The 1830 saints may have considered Zion a frontier town or perhaps a community of 20,000 on the banks of a river, like Nauvoo. God was not interested in only blessing such a small portion of His creation. The Lord's great and marvelous work, which has postponed the redemption of Zion, is destined to bless all people who do not fight against Zion. The Book of Mormon promises, "*Blessed are the Gentiles, they of whom the prophet has written: for behold, if it so be that they shall repent and fight not against Zion, and do not unite themselves to that great and abominable church, they shall be saved*" (2 Ne 5:30-31). Had the Lord redeemed Zion and destroyed the wicked in 1834, most Gentiles would not have been saved. They were actively fighting against Zion. Just as God is carefully causing the good in each portion of His church to overcome the bad, He has gradually increasing good among the Gentiles. Our merciful Father patiently toils within His creation, employing innumerable tools, to enlarge the good fruit and save as much of it as possible.

The Lord's goal in His culminating work is to cover all those who remain with His Spirit. Latter-day revelation explains, "*I design to prepare mine apostles to prune my vineyard for the last time, that I may bring to pass my strange act, that I may pour out my Spirit upon all flesh*" (D&C 92:1c). The Lord promised that after the tribulation of Zion's redemption, "*It shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh*" (Joel 2:28). He also said, "*The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea*" (Hab 2:14). This spiritual outpouring fulfills Biblical prophecy: "*I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God*" (Ezek 36:27-28).

While Zion may begin with the redemption of a relatively small area, it will expand. The Book of Mormon announces, "*Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited*" (3 Ne 10:10-11). After Zion's redemption, its inhabitants will be joined by scattered Israel. Migrations from the north countries and from the isles—concourses of Lamanites and believing Gentiles will quickly expand Zion's borders. Orson Pratt taught: "*Now that order of things will continue and will spread forth from that nucleus in Jackson county and the western counties of Missouri and the eastern counties of Kansas, where this people will be located, and it will spread abroad for hundreds and hundreds of miles on the right hand and the left, east, west, north, and south from the great central city, and all the people will be required to execute the law in all their stewardships, and then there will be a oneness and union which will continue and it will spread wider and wider, and become greater and greater, until the desolate cities of the Gentiles will be inhabited by the Saints.*"¹ As the gospel of the Kingdom continues to be preached, scores of believing Gentiles as well as all the hosts of Israel will gather, enlarging Zion's borders until the land is filled. Joseph Smith maintained that eventually Zion will include all of America: "*You know there has been great discussion in relation to Zion—where*

¹ *Deseret Evening News*, 2 Oct. 1875, p. 265. As quoted at <http://institute.lds.org/manuals/doctrine-and-covenants-institute-student-manual/dc-in-101-101.asp>.

it is, and where the gathering of the dispensation is, and which I am now going to tell you. The Prophets have spoken and written upon it; but I will make a proclamation that will cover a broader ground. The whole of America is Zion itself from north to south, and is described by the Prophets, who declare that it is the Zion where the mountain of the Lord should be, and that it should be in the center of the land.”¹

The gathering of both the saints and the elect to the appointed spot where they are bathed in the Holy Spirit completes Nathan’s prophetic promise to King David: “*The Lord will build thee a house*” (1 Chr 17:10). God will establish His house in the appointed place. Latter-day revelation specifies, “*By and by I may come with the residue of mine house and possess the land*” (D&C 98:7g). Although the days preceding Zion’s redemption reek with doubt and apprehension, the Lord, who reigns in the midst of eternity, will rise up to vindicate His word as spoken through prophets of His choosing. He will remove those who fight against His work. The Bible promises, “*Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the heat with the shadow of a cloud; the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low. And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined*” (Is 25:5-6). This is the blessed state of the Lord’s people who eat His supper in His house: “*That the earth may know that the mouths of the prophets shall not fail; yea, a supper of the house of the Lord, well prepared, unto which all nations shall be invited*” (D&C 58:3d).

Conclusion

Latter-day revelation accurately predicts the Restoration’s history. It also describes the saints’ current condition. The world’s eroding economic, military and political situations portend a coming judgment with the potential to change the present paradigm. These provide ample evidence for those who choose to believe. The believers’ hope does not lie in any analysis of historical events that is wittingly tied to specific prophecies, but in the fulfillment of the promise—in the establishment of the kingdom of God at the appointed place where the Lord will build His house. Confirmation that latter-day prophecies have been accurately fulfilled during Zion’s sojourn strengthens the promise of Zion’s ultimate redemption—the unity of the saints, the gathering of Israel and the redemption of the holy city. Yet, the most valuable evidence of Zion’s future redemption is the testimony of the Holy Spirit that burns in the bosom of all who yearn to see the kingdom of God fully built on earth. The Book of Mormon promises, “*Blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost*” (1 Ne 3:187).

Any thesis, especially about a hope, will attract both believers and non-believers. Showing that some of Joseph Smith’s prophecies have come true does not guarantee that those about the future will. The discussion about whether they will, or even if they are divine, misses the point. The ultimate question is whether God will complete His promises as recorded in scripture. Perhaps that is exactly why the Lord has continued to work with people who do not fully do His will. Their failure eventually brings a time when God must do what they would not. The Book of Mormon states, “*I will shew unto the children of men,*

¹ Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976, p. 362.

that I am able to do mine own work" (2 Ne 11:143). If a group of people were able to bring about Zion, they might receive the glory due God. Their success might win unanimous admiration, but it would not generate unified devotion to either the Father or the Son. On the other hand, if "*the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people*" (Is 11:11)—if "*the Messiah will set himself again the second time, to recover them*" (2 N 5:36)—everyone will realize that God is and that He does what He says. Jesus told His disciples, "*I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe*" (John 14:29).

Irrefutable divine intervention to complete the work—the Lord's protection of the righteous and the establishment of His kingdom on earth—will show everyone that God exists. Latter-day revelation discloses, "*Let the unbelieving hold their lips, for the day of wrath shall come upon them as a whirlwind, and all flesh shall know that I am God*" (D&C 63:2b). The Book of Mormon reveals, "*I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children. And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh: they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Savior and thy Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob*" (1 N 6:55-56). Isaiah prophesied, "*The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God*" (Is 52:10). The redemption of Zion not only fulfills the Puritan hope and completes the latter-day glory as vouchsafed in the Restoration, but it so overwhelming confirms the presence and unequalled power of the Father and the Son that every person must confess that God is and that His Christ, their Savior, is worthy. Unto them and them alone all blessing, honor and glory belong.