

## LESSON 12

### “The Gathering Of My People”

D&C 29:1-8; 33:3-7; 37; 38:24-41; 52:2-5, 42-43; 57:1-3; 110:11; Articles of Faith 1:10; Our Heritage, pages 16-23, 37-39

#### OVERVIEW:

The Lord is gathering His people. The Saints gathered in Ohio. The Saints gathered in Missouri. The Saints now gather to the stakes of Zion in their own lands.

(The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “All that the prophets...have written, from the days of righteous Abel, down to the last man that has left any testimony on record for our consideration, in speaking of the salvation of Israel in the last days, goes directly to show that it consists in the work of the gathering.” TPJS, p. 83)

(Boyd K. Packer: In an area conference held in Mexico City in 1972, Bruce R. McConkie said: “[The] revealed words speak of ... there being congregations of ... covenant people of the Lord in every nation, speaking every tongue, and among every people when the Lord comes again. ... “The place of gathering for the Mexican Saints is in Mexico; the place of gathering for the Guatemalan Saints is in Guatemala; the place of gathering for the Brazilian Saints is in Brazil; and so it goes throughout the length and breadth of the whole earth. ... Every nation is the gathering place for its own people.” (Mexico and Central America Area Conference, 26 Aug. 1972, p. 45.) The following April, President Harold B. Lee quoted those words in general conference, and, in effect, announced that the pioneering phase of gathering was now over. The gathering is now to be out of the world into the Church in every nation. (See Conference Report, Apr. 1973, p. 7.) CR, Oct 1992, p. 99)

(Ezra Taft Benson: From the revelations, we can see that a stake has at least four purposes: 1. Each stake, presided over by three high priests and supported by twelve men known as a high council, becomes a miniature Church to the Saints in a specific geographic area. The purpose is to unify and perfect the members who live in those boundaries by extending to them the Church programs, the ordinances, and gospel instruction. 2. Members of stakes are to be models, or standards, of righteousness. 3. Stakes are to be a defense. They do this as stake members unify under their local priesthood officers and consecrate themselves to do their duty and keep their covenants. Those covenants, if kept, become a protection from error, evil, or calamity. We only build temples in stakes. The blessings and ordinances of the temple prepare one for exaltation. Of course, it is not possible for every stake to have a temple, but we are presently witnessing some remarkable—yes, miraculous—developments in the building of temples in different parts of the world. Such a program permits members of the Church to receive the full blessings of the Lord. 4. Stakes are a refuge from the storm to be poured out over the earth. Ensign, Jan 1991, p. 4-5.)

(Why gather? Joseph Smith taught that there is only one purpose for a gathering—to build temples. “It is for the same purpose that God gathers together His people in the last days,” he said, “to build unto the Lord a house to prepare them for the ordinances and endowments, washings and anointings, etc. . . . What was the object of gathering the Jews or the people of God in any age of the world? . . . The main object was to build unto the Lord a house whereby He could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation.” (History of the Church 5:423-24.) In the early days of the Church, all were encouraged to gather to a central spot, for there were few members and fewer temples. Now we have many members and many stakes. The nature of the gathering has not changed. We still gather around temples, or we gather so that more temples may

be built. One day we hope to have many more temples in many more states and countries. House of Glory: Finding Personal Meaning in the Temple, S. Michael Wilcox.)

## SCRIPTURES:

### THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS SECTION 29

*Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, in the presence of six elders, at Fayette, New York, September 1830. HC 1: 111—115. This revelation was given some days prior to the conference beginning September 26, 1830.*

*1—8, Christ gathers his elect; 9—11, His coming ushers in the Millennium; 12—13, The Twelve shall judge all Israel; 14—21, Signs, plagues, and desolations will precede the Second Coming; 22—28, The last resurrection and final judgment follow the Millennium; 29—35, All things are spiritual unto the Lord; 36—39, The devil and his hosts were cast out of heaven to tempt man; 40—45, Fall and atonement bring salvation; 46—50, Little children are redeemed through the atonement.*

1 LISTEN to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Redeemer, the Great <sup>a</sup>I AM, (Here Jesus Christ declares himself to be both our Redeemer and the same God who appeared to Moses on Sinai. The title "I AM" is derived from the third person singular form of the Hebrew verb "to be" and is transliterated by four letters YHWH. When directly translated, YHWH means "he is" or "he exists." Therefore, the very use of the title "I AM" affirms faith in the existence of God. The tetragrammaton YHWH was probably pronounced Yahweh. Later renditions of the name of God included attempts to pronounce the name of God from these letters. King James translators used the anglicized name Jehovah, but most often preferred to use the title LORD (with capital letters) to indicate where the biblical text contained YHWH, the name of Deity. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 233) whose arm of <sup>b</sup>mercy hath <sup>c</sup>atoned for your sins;

2 Who will <sup>a</sup>gather his people even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, even as many as will hearken to my voice and <sup>b</sup>humble themselves before me, and call upon me in mighty prayer.

3 Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, that at this time your <sup>a</sup>sins are <sup>b</sup>forgiven you, therefore ye receive these things; but remember to sin no more, lest perils shall come upon you.

4 Verily, I say unto you that ye are chosen out of the world to declare my gospel with the sound of rejoicing, as with the <sup>a</sup>voice of a trump. (The promise to the tribe of Ephraim was that they would the ones in the last days to bring the gospel to all people.)

5 Lift up your hearts and be <sup>a</sup>glad, for I am in your <sup>b</sup>midst, and am your <sup>c</sup>advocate with the Father; and it is his good will to give you the <sup>d</sup>kingdom.

6 And, as it is written—Whatsoever ye shall <sup>a</sup>ask in <sup>b</sup>faith, being <sup>c</sup>united in prayer according to my command, ye shall receive.

7 And ye are called to bring to pass the <sup>a</sup>gathering of mine <sup>b</sup>elect; (Who are the elect? Bruce R. McConkie: The elect of God comprise a very select group, an inner circle of faithful members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They are the portion of church members who are striving with all their hearts to keep the fulness of the gospel law in this life so that they can become inheritors of the fulness of gospel rewards in the life to come. As far as the male sex is concerned, they are the ones, the Lord says, who have the Melchizedek Priesthood conferred upon them and who thereafter magnify their callings and are sanctified by the Spirit. In this way, "They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God." They keep "the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood," and are rewarded with the fulness of the Father's kingdom. (D. & C. 84:33-41.) To gain this elect status they must be endowed in the temple of the Lord (D. & C. 95:8), enter into that "order of the priesthood" named "the new and everlasting covenant of marriage"

(D. & C. 131:1-4), and overcome by faith until, as the sons of God, they merit membership in the Church of the Firstborn. (D. & C. 76:50-70, 94-96.) The elect of God are the chosen of God; and he has said: "There are many who have been ordained among you, whom I have called but few of them are chosen." (D. & C. 95:5; 121:34-40.) This is the day in which the Lord is gathering his elect, those who hear his voice and harden not their hearts (D. & C. 29:7), from the four quarters of the earth (D. & C. 33:6), so that if they continue to abide in his word, they shall have an eventual salvation in his presence. This is the day of which the Lord spoke: "I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there." (Isa. 65:9.) The coming millennial day is one in which the "elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands" (Isa. 65:22), for the earth and the fulness thereof shall then be theirs. Mormon Doctrine, p. 217. Many noble and great spirits were in mortality as the Restoration unfolded (Abraham 3:22-23; D&C 138:53-55). They were elected, or, in other words, foreordained by God, to be born in the lineage of Abraham. Bible and Book of Mormon prophets both spoke of the great and marvelous work that would take place in the last days that would result in the gathering of the elect in fulfillment of the covenants that God had made with their ancient fathers. Having proven themselves valiant in the cause of the Lord in premortality, they brought to earth the characteristics that distinguished them as faithful in that sphere. They are among those whom the Savior identified as his sheep who, he said, would know his voice (John 10:27). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 234) for mine elect <sup>c</sup>hear my voice and <sup>d</sup>harden not their <sup>e</sup>hearts; (George Q. Cannon: Where people are pure and chaste in their thoughts and actions, the Spirit of God has such power with them that they readily perceive and comprehend the truth. It is by this means that the best among the children of God are being gathered out from the nations. Truth cleaves to truth, light to light and purity to purity. [Sec. 88:40.] The Gospel gathers within its influence those who love its principles; and if any should be gathered in who cannot abide its requirements, they pass off and mingle with the elements that are congenial to the spirit they possess. (MS, 1863, 25:169.))

8 Wherefore the decree hath gone forth from the Father that they shall be <sup>a</sup>gathered in unto one place upon the face of this land, (Harold B. Lee: The spirit of gathering has been with the Church from the days of that restoration. Those who are of the blood of Israel have a righteous desire, after they are baptized, to gather together with the body of the Saints at the designated place. The Lord has clearly placed the responsibility for directing the work of gathering in the hands of the leaders of the Church, to whom He will reveal His will where and when such gatherings would take place in the future. It would be well, before the frightening events concerning the fulfillment of all God's promises and predictions are upon us, that the Saints in every land prepare themselves and look forward to the instruction that shall come to them from the First Presidency of this church as to where they shall be gathered. They should not be disturbed in their feelings until such instruction is given to them as it is revealed by the Lord to the proper authority. CR, Apr 1948, p. 55) to <sup>b</sup>prepare their hearts and be prepared in all things against the day when <sup>c</sup>tribulation and desolation are sent forth upon the wicked.

### SECTION 33

*Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to Ezra Thayre and Northrop Sweet, at Fayette, New York, October 1830. HC 1: 126—127. In recording this revelation the Prophet affirmed that "the Lord is ever ready to instruct such as diligently seek in faith."*

*1—4, Laborers are called to declare the gospel in the eleventh hour; 5—6, The Church is established and the elect are to be gathered; 7—10, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand; 11—15, The Church is built upon the gospel rock; 16—18, Prepare for the coming of the Bridegroom.*

3 For behold, the <sup>a</sup>field is <sup>b</sup>white already to harvest; and it is the <sup>c</sup>eleventh hour, (In the era of the Bible, division of time designated that the first hour of a day began at sunrise, or approximately 6:00 A.M. The

eleventh hour came at about 5:00 P.M., or towards the end of the workday. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder," the Savior taught, "which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard" (Matthew 20:1). In the parable of the laborers we learn that at "about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard" (Matthew 20:6-7). In symbolic fashion, the restoration of the gospel came in the eleventh hour. The laborers of all dispensations have served as coworkers in the vineyard of the Lord, some receiving their commission to work in the early hours that followed the Creation and others to work in these the last days. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 256. Joseph Fielding Smith: This is "the eleventh hour." The time in which we live is compared to the eleventh hour, and so it is in the Lord's reckoning, for we are in the closing scenes of the present world. Elder Orson F. Whitney referred to our dispensation as the "Saturday night" of time. And according to the parable of the men employed in the vineyard, we who labor in this hour will be rewarded if we are faithful with equal compensation with those who labored in the previous hours, or dispensations, in the history of mankind. Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:153) and the last time that I shall call <sup>d</sup>laborers into my vineyard. (Jacob 5 gives a detailed account of the allegory of the olive trees which speaks about the last time the laborers would be called to labor in the vineyard.)

4 And my <sup>a</sup>vineyard has become <sup>b</sup>corrupted every whit; and there is none which doeth <sup>c</sup>good save it be a few; and they <sup>d</sup>err in many instances because of <sup>e</sup>priestcrafts, all having corrupt minds. (Hyrum M. Smith: Let me explain, when I use the term "corrupt" with reference to these ministers of the gospel, that I use it in the same sense that I believe the Lord used it when he made that declaration to Joseph Smith, the prophet, in answer to the prophet's prayer. He did not mean, nor do I mean, that the ministers of religion are personally unvirtuous or impure. I believe as a class they, perhaps, in personal purity, stand a little above the average order of men. When I use the term "corrupt" I mean, as I believe the Lord meant, that they have turned away from the truth, the purity of the truth, the beauty of the truth, and have turned to that which is false. A false doctrine is a corrupt doctrine; a false religion is a corrupt religion; a false teacher is a corrupt teacher. Any man who teaches a false doctrine, who believes in and practices and teaches a false religion is a corrupt professor, because he teaches that which is impure and not true. CR Oct 1916, p. 43)

5 And verily, verily, I say unto you, that this <sup>a</sup>church have I <sup>b</sup>established and called forth out of the <sup>c</sup>wilderness.

6 And even so will I <sup>a</sup>gather mine elect from the <sup>b</sup>four quarters of the earth, even as many as will believe in me, and hearken unto my voice.

7 Yea, verily, verily, I say unto you, that the field is <sup>a</sup>white already to harvest; wherefore, thrust in your sickles, and reap with all your might, mind, and strength.

## SECTION 37

Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon, near Fayette, New York, December 1830. HC 1: 139. Herein is given the first commandment concerning a gathering in this dispensation. (Joseph Smith: It may be well to observe here, that the Lord greatly encouraged and strengthened the faith of his little flock, which had embraced the fulness of the everlasting Gospel, as revealed to them in the Book of Mormon, by giving some more extended information upon the Scriptures, a translation of which had already commenced. Much conjecture and conversation frequently occurred among the Saints, concerning the books mentioned, and referred to, in various places in the Old and New Testaments, which were now nowhere to be found. [Jude 3, 14, 15; Colossians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 5:9.] The common remark was, "They are lost books!" but it seems the Apostolic Church had some of these writings, as Jude mentions or quotes the Prophecy of Enoch, the seventh from Adam. To the joy of the little flock, which in all, from Colesville to Canandaigua, New York, numbered about seventy members,



did the Lord reveal the following doings of olden times, from the prophecy of Enoch: [Moses, ch. 7, quoted.] Soon after the words of Enoch were given, the Lord gave the following commandment: [Section 37, follows.] (HC 1:131-39, December 1830; Fayette, New York.)

*1—4, The saints are called to gather at the Ohio.*

1 BEHOLD, I say unto you that it is not expedient in me that ye should <sup>a</sup>translate (Joseph was in the process of translating the Bible at this time. John A. Widtsoe: The use of the Bible by L.D.S. missionaries led, however, to one of the most notable labors of Joseph Smith. The teachings of the Book of Mormon, and the revelations he had received, convinced Joseph that in the Bible were many errors, such as unauthorized additions, incomplete statements, and faulty translations. This seemed to him, a lover and expounder of truth, out of keeping with the sacred nature of the volume. D&C 37 1Therefore, after placing the matter before the Lord he began the so-called "inspired translation" of the Bible. In June, 1830, less than three months after the Church was organized, there was revealed to him the "Visions of Moses," which gave a more complete account of the events mentioned in the book of Genesis, and set forth many lost doctrines; for example, the meaning of the fall of Adam and Eve, long misunderstood because of the imperfections of existing translations of the Bible, was cleared, and shown to be a necessary act in the development of the Lord's plan of salvation. [Moses, chapters 2-8.] D&C 37 1Towards the end of the year 1830, with Sidney Rigdon as assistant, he began a somewhat full "explanation and review" of the Old and New Testaments. The work then done is a convincing evidence of Joseph's inspiration. D&C 37 1Thousands of the changes were made, all conforming to common sense, and many in full harmony with later modern scholarship. Disputed meanings were made clear, and new doctrines expounded.) any more until ye shall go to the Ohio, and this because of the enemy and for your sakes. (Why move to Ohio? For their own safety and to build a temple. The call to the Ohio was for two reasons. The opposition to the Church in and around Fayette had become bitter. There had been many converts made among the followers of Sidney Rigdon in Kirtland, and the spirit there was friendly. The trend of the Church was ever westward; as persecution arose, and it became necessary to seek protection the Church moved farther and farther west. The Lord had a design in this. The place of the City Zion was west and it was necessary that eventually the Church be located there. Although it would not be a permanent residence, until Zion is redeemed. Not only was Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon commanded to go to Ohio, but this came as a command to the entire Church. Joseph Fielding Smith, Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:163.)

2 And again, I say unto you that ye shall not go until ye have preached my gospel in those parts, and have <sup>a</sup>strengthened up the church whithersoever it is found, and more especially in <sup>b</sup>Colesville; for, behold, they pray unto me in much faith.

3 And again, a commandment I give unto the church, that it is expedient in me that they should assemble together at <sup>a</sup>the Ohio, (Though unknown to the Saints at this time, it would be in Kirtland, Ohio, that some of the most important events of this dispensation would take place. Their gathering there was necessary for the construction of a temple and the subsequent appearance of Christ—to accept that edifice as his house—and then the appearance of Moses, Elias, and Elijah to restore the keys, powers, and majesties they held when on earth. It would be here that the Saints would be "endowed with power from on high" (D&C 38:32). Almost half of the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants were given in Ohio. It was here that the school of the prophets was formed, the Lectures on Faith given, most of the work on the Joseph Smith Translation completed, and the Abraham papyrus purchased. It was also here that the law of consecration was revealed and revelations relative the establishment of Zion received. No period in the history of the Church equals the Ohio era for the outpouring of divine knowledge. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 271-72) against the time that my servant Oliver Cowdery shall return unto them. (Oliver was still the second elder of the Church, and therefore, was very important to the Church.)

4 Behold, here is wisdom, and let every man <sup>a</sup>choose for himself until I come. Even so. Amen.

## SECTION 38

*Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Fayette, New York, January 2, 1831. HC 1: 140—143. The occasion was a conference of the Church.*

*1—6, Christ created all things; 7—8, He is in the midst of his saints, who shall soon see him; 9—12, All flesh is corrupted before him; 13—22, He has reserved a land of promise for his saints in time and in eternity; 23—27, The saints are commanded to be one and esteem each other as brethren; 28—29, Wars are predicted; 30—33, The saints are to be given power from on high and go forth among all nations; 34—42, The Church is commanded to care for the poor and needy, and to seek the riches of eternity.*

24 And let every man <sup>a</sup>esteem his brother as himself, and practise <sup>b</sup>virtue and holiness before me.

25 And again I say unto you, let every man esteem his <sup>a</sup>brother as himself.

26 For what man among you having twelve sons, and is no respecter of them, and they serve him obediently, and he saith unto the one: Be thou clothed in robes and sit thou here; and to the other: Be thou clothed in rags and sit thou there—and looketh upon his sons and saith I am <sup>a</sup>just?

27 Behold, this I have given unto you as a parable, and it is even as I am. I say unto you, be <sup>a</sup>one; (Salvation comes in our obtaining the mind of Christ and thus being one with him (1 Corinthians 2:16). We are saved to the extent that we have learned to believe as he believes, feel as he feels, and act as he acts. This is the sense in which the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are spoken of as being one God. The intent of scripture is not to suggest three manifestations of the same God, but rather three persons who are one in thought and deed. To the extent that we do not believe, feel, or act as Christ would, we are not one with him, and thus the Lord would say of us, "Ye are not mine." Revelations of the Restoration, p. 286) and if ye are not one ye are not mine. (There is great power in unity. Harold B. Lee said: If we are not united, we are not his. Here unity is the test of divine ownership as thus expressed. If we would be united in love and fellowship and harmony, this Church would convert the world, who would see in us the shining example of these qualities which evidence that divine ownership. Likewise, if in that Latter-day Saint home the husband and wife are in disharmony, bickering, and divorce is threatened, there is an evidence that one or both are not keeping the commandments of God. If we, in our wards and our branches, are divided, and there are factions not in harmony, it is but an evidence that there is something wrong. If two persons are at variance, arguing on different points of doctrine, no reasonable, thinking persons would say that both were speaking their different opinions by the Spirit of the Lord. . . . If it is so important, then, that this people be a united people, we might well expect that upon this principle the powers of Satan would descend for their greatest attack. We might well expect, also, that if there be those of apostate mind among us, they would be inclined to ridicule and to scorn this principle of oneness and unity as being narrow-minded or as being unprogressive. We would likewise expect that those who are enemies would also seek to fight against that principle. . . . CR, Apr 1950, p. 97-98)

28 And again, I say unto you that the enemy in the secret chambers seeketh your <sup>a</sup>lives. (Elder Joseph F. Smith: The hatred of the wicked always has and always will follow the Priesthood and the Saints. The devil will not lose sight of the power of God vested in man—the Holy Priesthood. He fears it, he hates it, and will never cease to stir up the hearts of the debased and corrupt in anger and malice towards those who hold this power, and to persecute the Saints, until he is bound. (At St. George, Utah, April 2, 1877, JD19:24) )

29 Ye hear of <sup>a</sup>wars in far countries, and you say that there will soon be great wars in far countries, but ye know not the hearts of men in your own land. (This is the earliest allusion to the Civil War. Bruce R. McConkie: Nor are the days of our greatest sorrows and our deepest sufferings all behind us. They too

lie ahead. We shall yet face greater perils, we shall yet be tested with more severe trials, and we shall yet weep more tears of sorrow than we have ever known before. The way ahead is dark and dreary and dreadful. There will yet be martyrs; the doors in Carthage shall again enclose the innocent. We have not been promised that the trials and evils of the world will entirely pass us by. If we, as a people, keep the commandments of God; if we take the side of the Church on all issues, both religious and political; if we take the Holy Spirit for our guide; if we give heed to the words of the apostles and prophets who minister among us—then, from an eternal standpoint, all things will work together for our good. Our view of the future shall be undimmed, and, whether in life or in death, we shall see our blessed Lord return to reign on earth. We shall see the New Jerusalem coming down from God in heaven to join with the Holy City we have built. We shall mingle with those of Enoch's city while together we worship and serve the Lord forever. CR, Apr 1980, p. 98-100. **See below for the entire talk by Elder McConkie.)**

30 I tell you these things because of your prayers; wherefore, <sup>a</sup>treasure up <sup>b</sup>wisdom in your bosoms, lest the wickedness of men reveal these things unto you by their wickedness, in a manner which shall speak in your ears with a voice louder than that which shall shake the earth; but if ye are prepared ye shall not fear. (President Ezra Taft Benson: What are some of the calamities for which we are to prepare? In section 29 the Lord warns us of “a great hailstorm sent forth to destroy the crops of the earth.” (D&C 29:16.) In section 45 we read of “an overflowing scourge; for a desolating sickness shall cover the land.” (D&C 45:31.) In section 63 the Lord declares he has “decreed wars upon the face of the earth. ...” (D&C 63:33.) In Matthew, chapter 24, we learn of “famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes. ...” (Matt. 24:7.) The Lord declared that these and other calamities shall occur. These particular prophecies seem not to be conditional. The Lord, with his foreknowledge, knows that they will happen. Some will come about through man's manipulations; others through the forces of nature and nature's God, but that they will come seems certain. Prophecy is but history in reverse—a divine disclosure of future events. Yet, through all of this, the Lord Jesus Christ has said: “... if ye are prepared ye shall not fear.” (D&C 38:30.) What, then, is the Lord's way to help us prepare for these calamities? The answer is also found in section 1 of the Doctrine and Covenants, wherein he says: “Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments; “And also gave commandments to others. ...” (D&C 1:17–18.) He has also said: “Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises which are in them shall all be fulfilled.” (D&C 1:37.) Here then is the key—look to the prophets for the words of God, that will show us how to prepare for the calamities which are to come. For the Lord, in that same section, states: “What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.” (D&C 1:38.) CR, Oct 1973, p. 89)

31 And that ye might escape the power of the <sup>a</sup>enemy, and be gathered unto me a righteous people, without <sup>b</sup>spot and blameless—

32 Wherefore, for this cause I gave unto you the <sup>a</sup>commandment that ye should go to the <sup>b</sup>Ohio; and there I will give unto you my <sup>c</sup>law; and there you shall be <sup>d</sup>endowed with power from on high; (The endowment is an ordinance of protection and blessing normally given in a temple. A partial endowment was given in the Kirtland Temple, but the full endowment was not revealed until the Saints were in Nauvoo. The elders of Israel—like their ancient counterparts—were not to go to the nations of the earth until they had received this heavenly endowment (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 8; D&C 95:8-9). See commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 39:15, “And from thence men shall go forth into all nations.” Revelations of the Restoration, 287-88. **Even today, missionaries do not go out until they are endowed.)**

33 And from thence, whosoever I will shall go forth among <sup>a</sup>all nations, and it shall be told them what they shall do; for I have a great work laid up in store, for Israel shall be <sup>b</sup>saved, and I will <sup>c</sup>lead them whithersoever I will, and no power shall <sup>d</sup>stay my hand.

34 And now, I give unto the church in these parts a commandment, that certain men among them shall

be appointed, and they shall be <sup>a</sup>appointed by the <sup>b</sup>voice of the church; (Common consent. Those who serve in positions of authority over others in the Church do so only with the consent of those over whom they preside (D&C 26:2; 28:12). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 288)

35 And they shall look to the poor and the needy, and administer to their <sup>a</sup>relief that they shall not suffer; and send them forth to the place which I have commanded them;

36 And this shall be their work, to govern the affairs of the property of this <sup>a</sup>church.

37 And they that have farms that cannot be sold, let them be left or rented as seemeth them good.

38 See that all things are preserved; and when men are <sup>a</sup>endowed with power from on high and sent forth, all these things shall be gathered unto the bosom of the church.

39 And if ye seek the <sup>a</sup>riches which it is the will of the Father to give unto you, ye shall be the richest of all people, for ye shall have the riches of eternity; and it must needs be that the <sup>b</sup>riches of the earth are mine to give; but beware of <sup>c</sup>pride, lest ye become as the <sup>d</sup>Nephites of old. (George Q. Cannon: There is something in the human heart of that character that when human beings are prospering they are apt to be lifted up in pride and to forget the cause or the source of their prosperity; they are apt to forget God, who is the fountain of all their blessings, and to give glory to themselves. It requires a constant preaching of the word of God, a constant pleading with the people, a constant outpouring of the Spirit of God upon the people to bring them to a true sense of their real condition. With all the experience the Latter-day Saints have had, who is there among us that cannot perceive this tendency? Why, it is constantly bringing itself into notice. It becomes in some instances quite offensive, because those who are humble feel the effects of it. Those who are poor, needy and destitute, not gifted with ability to accumulate the things of this world, feel it, and very frequently their hearts are grieved because of it. There is this tendency we have to contend with as a people and as individuals, and it is something we should constantly bear in mind, that God has sent us here and given unto us a mission on the earth, not to accumulate riches, not to become worldly-minded, not to pile up the things of this world which are perishable, to the injury of ourselves or to our detriment in our progress in the things of the kingdom of God. Is it right that we should take care of ourselves as a people and as individuals? Certainly. Is it right that we should be prudent, that we should take care of those gifts and blessings which God has given unto us, that we should husband our resources, that we should be economical, and not extravagant? Certainly; this is right, this is proper, we should be culpable if we were not so. But with this there is also something else required, and that is, to keep constantly in view that the management and care of these things is not the object that God had in sending us here, that is not the object of our probation. God has shown unto this people repeatedly—and there is scarcely an individual member of the Church who has not had experience in it—that he can give and he can take away. I have in my mind now many instances where men of wealth—comparatively wealthy at least—have joined this Church, and it seemed as though there was a succession of events after they joined the Church, to deprive them of all they had, to test their faith apparently, but to show them that God did not give men means for the purpose of placing their affections upon them, and then, after they were stripped, he has, in many instances, begun to bless them again, and allowed them to have means in greater abundance than ever they had before. He has done so with this people. We have been stripped of our property, reduced to the last extremity for food and for other necessary comforts, and yet God has multiplied upon us these blessings when he has sent us food, and we have had abundance. But the happiness of a people does not consist in the abundance of worldly things, that is, the abundance of food or of raiment, or of houses, carriages, horses, and costly apparel. It is true that if we are relieved from the pressure of want, if we have the wherewith to supply our necessities, we feel better, we feel a relief that we do not feel when ground down by poverty. But happiness is not entirely dependent upon these circumstances, as doubtless many of my brethren and sisters have proved. I have proved it myself to my entire satisfaction. I have been in reduced circumstances; been on missions when I did not know where to get a mouthful to eat; turned away by the people who dare not entertain me because of the anger that was kindled against us. I could stand by and weep, being a boy and away from all my friends. But I, nevertheless, was happy. I never enjoyed



myself in my life as I did then. I know that happiness does not consist in the possession of worldly things. Still it is a great relief when people can have the means necessary for the support of themselves and families. If they possess these things and the Spirit of God with them, they are blessed. JD, 22:100-101)

40 And again, I say unto you, I give unto you a commandment, that every man, both elder, priest, teacher, and also member, go to with his might, with the <sup>a</sup>labor of his <sup>b</sup>hands, to prepare and accomplish the things which I have commanded.

41 And let your <sup>a</sup>preaching be the <sup>b</sup>warning voice, every man to his neighbor, in mildness and in <sup>c</sup>meekness. (The voice of warning will always be the voice of the true messenger of the Lord. The Lord does not send out his servants to assure the world that the course they are following is acceptable to him. Their purpose is to declare repentance, the need for baptism both for the remission of sins and for entrance into the Church and kingdom of God. Those who reject this message forfeit all the knowledge and blessings that would come to those who have received an inheritance in Zion. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 289. Joseph F. Smith: The one thing now that I desire to impress upon the minds of my brethren of the Holy Priesthood is that we should live so near to the Lord, be so humble in our spirits, so tractable and pliable, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, that we will be able to know the mind and will of the Father concerning us as individuals and as officers in the Church of Christ under all circumstances. And when we live so that we can hear and understand the whisperings of the still small voice of the Spirit of God, let us do whatsoever that Spirit directs, without fear of the consequences. It does not make any difference whether it meet the minds of carpers or critics, or of the enemies of the kingdom of God, or not. Is it agreeable to the will of the Lord? Is it compatible with the spirit of the great latter-day work in which we are engaged? Is the end aimed at likely to advance the Church and to strengthen it in the earth? If its trend is in that direction, let us do it, no matter what men say or think. (CR, October 1903, p. 86.))

## SECTION 52

*Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, to the elders of the Church, at Kirtland, Ohio, June 7, 1831. HC 1: 175—179. A conference had been held at Kirtland, beginning on the 3rd, and closing on the 6th of June. At this conference the first distinctive ordinations to the office of high priest were made, and certain manifestations of false and deceiving spirits were discerned and rebuked.*

*1—2, The next conference is designated to be held in Missouri; 3—8, Appointments of certain elders to travel together are made; 9—11, The elders are to teach what the apostles and prophets have written; 12—21, Those enlightened by the Spirit bring forth fruits of praise and wisdom; 22—44, Various elders are appointed to go forth preaching the gospel, while traveling to Missouri for the conference.*

1 BEHOLD, thus saith the Lord unto the elders whom he hath called and chosen in these last days, by the <sup>a</sup>voice of his Spirit—

2 Saying: I, the Lord, will make known unto you what I will that ye shall do from this time until the next conference, which shall be held in Missouri, (This is the first reference to the state of Missouri in the revelations of the Restoration. In September 1830 the Lord had stated that no man knew the place where the city of Zion would be built but that it would be located on the "borders by the Lamanites" (D&C 28:9). This revelation tells us it would be in Missouri. Independence, Missouri, was identified as the center place of the city of Zion in a revelation received six weeks later on 20 July 1831 (D&C 57:1-3). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 395) upon the <sup>a</sup>land which I will <sup>b</sup>consecrate unto my people, which are a <sup>c</sup>remnant of Jacob, (As used in scripture, the remnant of Jacob generally refers to the twelve tribes collectively. A remnant of Jacob could be any of the various scattered parts of Jacob's family. In this instance the reference is to the descendants of Lehi, who was a rightful heir of all the promises made by

God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (D&C 19:27). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 395) and those who are heirs according to the <sup>d</sup>covenant. (All of Abraham's seed are heirs according to the covenant. They have a right to all the promises made to their ancient father on condition of righteousness. "I give unto thee a promise," the Lord told Abraham, "that this right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal" (Abraham 2:11). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 395. The Lord had commanded that conferences of the Church be held every three months or as often as the Saints assembled in conference decided (D&C 20:61). Usually the leaders of the Church decided in one conference the date and place of the next. The Lord in this revelation designated Missouri as the location of the next conference. Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual, p. 112.)

3 Wherefore, verily I say unto you, let my servants Joseph Smith, Jun., and Sidney Rigdon take their journey as soon as preparations can be made to leave their homes, and journey to the land of <sup>a</sup>Missouri.  
4 And inasmuch as they are faithful unto me, it shall be made known unto them what they shall do; (The revelation necessary for us to accomplish what we have been commanded to do will in most instances come as we proceed, not before. Echoing the same principle, Nephi said, "I was led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which I should do" (1 Nephi 4:6). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 396)  
5 And it shall also, inasmuch as they are faithful, be made <sup>a</sup>known unto them the <sup>b</sup>land of your inheritance.

42 And thus, even as I have said, if ye are faithful ye shall assemble yourselves together to rejoice upon the land of <sup>a</sup>Missouri, which is the land of your <sup>b</sup>inheritance, which is now the land of your enemies.  
43 But, behold, I, the Lord, will hasten the city (of New Jerusalem) in its time, and will crown the faithful with <sup>a</sup>joy and with rejoicing.

## SECTION 57

*Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, in Zion, Jackson County, Missouri, July 20, 1831. HC 1: 189—190. In compliance with the Lord's command (Section 52), the elders had journeyed from Kirtland to Missouri with many varied experiences and some opposition. In contemplating the state of the Lamanites and the lack of civilization, refinement, and religion among the people generally, the Prophet exclaimed in yearning prayer: "When will the wilderness blossom as the rose? When will Zion be built up in her glory, and where will thy Temple stand, unto which all nations shall come in the last days?" Subsequently he received this revelation.*

*1—3, Independence, Missouri, is the place for the City of Zion and the temple; 4—7, The saints are to purchase lands and receive inheritances in that area; 8—16, Sidney Gilbert is to establish a store, W. W. Phelps is to be a printer, and Oliver Cowdery is to edit material for publication.*

1 HEARKEN, O ye elders of my church, saith the Lord your God, who have assembled yourselves together, according to my commandments, in this land, which is the land of <sup>a</sup>Missouri, which is the <sup>b</sup>land which I have appointed and <sup>c</sup>consecrated for the <sup>d</sup>gathering of the saints. (The land for the city of Zion, or the New Jerusalem, was set apart from the time of the creation of the earth. The land near Independence, Missouri, encompasses the area of the garden planted eastward in Eden, in which Adam and Eve were placed. We learn from Brigham Young that "our God will finish his work where he commenced it, where the centre [place] of Zion is, and where the garden of Eden was" (Journal of Discourses, 8:72). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 411)  
2 Wherefore, this is the <sup>a</sup>land of promise, and the <sup>b</sup>place for the city of <sup>c</sup>Zion. (The city of Zion—the New Jerusalem to be built in Independence, Missouri— and the Jerusalem of old will be the capitals of

the millennial kingdom of Christ. The latter-day city of Zion shall be blessed with the presence of Enoch and his people, who were taken to heaven without tasting death (Moses 7:62-64). It shall expand its borders to include all of North and South America, until eventually the entire globe shall be called Zion. The Prophet Joseph Smith stated: "You know there has been great discussion in relation to Zion—where 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. When Elders shall take up and examine the old prophecies in the Bible, they will see it" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 362). Further, "when Joseph first revealed the land where the Saints should gather," Brigham Young explained, "a woman in Canada asked if we thought that Jackson County would be large enough to gather all the people that would want to go to Zion. I will answer the question really as it is. Zion will extend, eventually, all over this earth. There will be no nook or corner upon the earth but what will be in Zion. It will all be Zion" (Journal of Discourses, 9:138). The building up of Zion began like a seed planted in parched soil. The Prophet expressed dismay at the lack of civilization and "leanness of intellect" of the inhabitants of the surrounding regions. As the kingdom of God on earth is like the stone cut out of the mountain without hands (Daniel 2:44-45), which rolled forth until it filled the earth, so is the beginning of the establishment of Zion the commencement of a new covenant community that will likewise fill the earth, in which the citizens are the pure in heart. A great change was and is required for the environs of Independence, Missouri, to become worthy of the divinely appointed appellation—Zion. In time, under the direction of his prophets, the city of Zion will be built upon the foundations laid at the dawn of this dispensation. It will be "Zion, because it is a place of righteousness," declared the Prophet Joseph Smith, "and all who build thereon, are to worship the true and living God—and all believe in one doctrine, even the doctrine of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 80). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 411-12)

3 And thus saith the Lord your God, if you will receive wisdom here is wisdom. Behold, the place which is now called Independence is the <sup>a</sup>center place; and a spot for the <sup>b</sup>temple is lying westward, upon a lot which is not far from the courthouse. (There are many stakes in Zion in which the Saints will gather. However, the Lord singled out Independence, Missouri, as the center place of the millennial kingdom. Bruce R. McConkie taught: "Let Israel gather to the stakes of Zion in all nations. Let every land be a Zion to those appointed to dwell there. Let the fulness of the gospel be for all the saints in all nations. Let no blessing be denied them. Let temples arise wherein the fulness of the ordinances of the Lord's house may be administered. But still there is a center place, a place where the chief temple shall stand, a place to which the Lord shall come, a place whence the law shall go forth to govern all the earth in that day when the Second David reigns personally upon the earth. And that center place is what men now call Independence in Jackson County, Missouri, but which in a day to come will be the Zion of our God and the City of Holiness of his people. The site is selected; the place is known; the decree has gone forth; and the promised destiny is assured" (New Witness, 595). See commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 42:9. The temple. Among all houses of the Lord, the temple to be built at the center place of Zion will stand supreme. It is destined to consist of a complex of twenty- four buildings, all dedicated as houses of the Lord. The Lord revealed that the gathering to and building of the city of the New Jerusalem will have its beginning at the place of the temple (D&C 84:4). Along with the companion temple to be built in the Jerusalem of old, this is the temple in which Isaiah's words will find fulfillment: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:2-3). Further, it is at the temple in the New Jerusalem that "the Lamb shall stand upon Mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four

thousand, having his Father's name written on their foreheads" (D&C 133:18). See commentary on Doctrine and Covenants 133:7-16, 18. The twenty-four buildings aforementioned were located on a plot map of the future city of Zion. Joseph Smith wrote: "The names of the temples to be built on the painted squares as represented on the plot of the city of Zion, which is now about to be forwarded thither:— numbers 10, 11, and 12, are to be called, House of the Lord, for the Presidency of the High and most Holy Priesthood, after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order of the Son of God, upon Mount Zion, City of the New Jerusalem. Numbers 7, 8, and 9, the Sacred Apostolic Repository, for the use of the Bishop. Numbers 4, 5, and 6, the Holy Evangelical House, for the High Priesthood of the Holy Order of God. Numbers 1, 2, and 3, the House of the Lord, for the Elders of Zion, an Ensign to the Nations. Numbers 22, 23, and 24, House of the Lord for the Presidency of the High Priesthood, after the Order of Aaron, a Standard for the People. Numbers 19, 20, and 21, House of the Lord, the Law of the Kingdom of Heaven, and Messenger to the People; for the Highest Priesthood after the Order of Aaron. Numbers 16, 17, and 18, House of the Lord for the Teachers in Zion, Messenger to the Church. Numbers 13, 14, and 15, House of the Lord for the Deacons in Zion, Helps in Government. Underneath must be written on each house—Holiness To The Lord" (History of the Church, 1:359). The Prophet Joseph Smith further instructed the Saints to commence by building temple number five as the beginning of the city of Zion, which temple was very similar to that built in Kirtland, Ohio (History of the Church, 1:359-62). Whether the other buildings will be built before or after the Savior returns remains to be revealed. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 412-414)

## SECTION 110

11 After this <sup>a</sup>vision closed, the heavens were again <sup>b</sup>opened unto us; and <sup>c</sup>Moses appeared before us, and committed unto us the <sup>d</sup>keys\* (Keys are the "right of presidency" (D&C 107:8), meaning the right to preside. When Moses gave the keys of the gathering of Israel to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, it meant that they alone held the presidency over this event. Thus everything that happens relative to the gathering of Israel that constitutes the fulfillment of prophecy must take place under their direction, or under that of their legal and lawful successors as possessors of those keys, or that presidency. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 889) of the <sup>e</sup>gathering (To be gathered is to be baptized for the remission of sins.) of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the <sup>f</sup>north. (Bruce R. McConkie: Israel's great lawgiver, the prophet whose life was in similitude of the Messiah himself, the one who delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage and led them to their land of promise, came to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on 3 April 1836, in the Kirtland Temple. He gave them: (1) "the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth," and (2) the keys of "the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north" (D&C 110:11). Since then, with increasing power and in great glory, we have gathered, from their Egyptian bondage as it were, the dispersed of Ephraim and a few others, initially to the mountains of America, but now into the stakes of Zion in the various nations of the earth. The gathering of Israel is a reality. When the ten tribes return they will come at the direction of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for he now holds and will then hold the keys of presidency and direction for this mighty work. Ensign, Apr. 1980, p. 22. Joseph Fielding Smith: Whether these tribes are in the north or not, I am not prepared to say. As I said before, they are "lost" and until the Lord wishes it, they will not be found. All that I know about it is what the Lord has revealed, and He declares that they will come from the North. He has also made it very clear and definite that these lost people are separate and apart from the scattered Israelites now being gathered out. Signs of the Times, p. 186. Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained: "'We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes' (A of F 10). This inspired language leaves the clear impression that the gathering of Israel is one thing and the restoration of the Ten Tribes is another. Why this distinction? Are not the Ten Tribes a part of Israel? And if Israel is to be gathered, surely in the very nature of things this would include the gathering of the major portion of that ancient



and favored people. An immortal Moses, appearing in resurrected glory on the 3rd day of April, 183[6], in the Kirtland Temple, committed unto his mortal fellowservants, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, 'the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north' (D&C 110:11). Again there is a distinction between Israel as a whole and the Ten Tribes who are the dominant portion of Jacob's seed. All scripture comes by the power of the Holy Ghost and is verily true. When special and unusual language is used, there is a reason. Holy writ is not idle chatter; it is the mind and will of the Lord; it says what he wants said. And so it now behooves us to learn why it is one thing to gather Israel from the four parts of the earth and yet another to lead the Ten Tribes from the land of the north. We have already seen that all Israel, including specifically and pointedly the Ten Tribes, is scattered in all the nations of the earth, upon all the islands of the sea, and among every people who dwell on this planet. . . . We are also aware that the Ten Tribes were first taken as a body into Assyria; that they went out from Assyria, northward, in a body, under prophetic guidance; and that they were then splintered and driven and scattered into all places and among all peoples. These Ten Tribes, no matter where they are located, are in nations and places known in the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah and the ancient prophets as the north countries. Hence, their return to Palestine at least will be from the land of the north. The tribe of Ephraim is one of the Ten Tribes; and her people became wanderers in the nations, where they now reside and where they are now being found and gathered, one of a city and two of a family, into the stakes of Zion in those nations. This gathering of Israel is not to an American Zion; it is not to Palestine and the ancient holy land; it is not to any central place or location. Rather, it is to the holy places of safety that are now being set up in all nations as rapidly as our strength and means permit. As we have seen, this gathering of Ephraim falls in the category of the gathering of Israel and not of the leading of the Ten Tribes from the land of the north. This gathering of Ephraim is into the stakes of Zion in all the nations of the earth. There are, of course, isolated and unusual instances of people from the other lost tribes gathering with Ephraim, but these are few and far between. The gathering of these other tribes is not yet, but by and by. . . . But with the Ten Tribes, in part at least, it will be another thing. They are destined to return (at least in large and representative numbers) to the same soil where the feet of their forebears walked during the days of their mortal pilgrimage. They are to return to Palestine. At least a constituent assembly will congregate there in the very land given of God to Abraham their father. Others will, of course, be in America and in all lands, but the formal return, the return from the north countries, will be to the land of their ancient inheritance" (Millennial Messiah, 319-21).)

Articles of Faith 10 - We believe in the literal <sup>a</sup>gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the <sup>b</sup>Ten Tribes; that <sup>c</sup>Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent; that Christ will <sup>d</sup>reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be <sup>e</sup>renewed and receive its <sup>f</sup>paradisiacal <sup>g</sup>glory. D&C 45:71: And it shall come to pass that the righteous shall be gathered out from among all nations, and shall come to Zion, singing with <sup>a</sup>songs of everlasting <sup>b</sup>joy.

## OUR HERITAGE:

### **“Go to the Ohio”: The Gathering of Latter-day Israel**

#### *Persecution in Colesville*

During the very month when the Church was organized, the Prophet Joseph Smith went on a mission to teach his friends, the Joseph Knight Sr. family, who resided in Colesville, New York. On 28 June, many Knight family members and friends were prepared to make the baptismal covenant.

There was strong opposition to the preaching of the gospel in Colesville, and a mob tried to stop the baptisms by breaking down the dam the brethren had built for the purpose of holding water. This was soon repaired, however. Joseph Knight Jr. described the measures that were resorted to by enemies of the faith: “When we were going from the [baptisms], we were met by many of our neighbors, pointing at us and asking if we had been washing sheep. ... That night our wagons were turned over and wood piled on them, and some sunk in the water, rails were piled against our doors, and chains sunk in the stream and a great deal of mischief done.” 18

At this same time, those in opposition attempted to distract the Prophet by having him arrested and tried for disturbing the peace. However, Joseph Knight Sr. hired lawyers, who soon cleared him of all charges.

Whenever important advances are being made by the Church, it seems that the adversary of all righteousness mounts a concerted effort to stop the growth of the kingdom of God. But dedicated Saints of God overcome the problems and grow stronger, as did the Colesville Saints, who welded themselves into a strong and united branch.

### *Missionaries to the Indians*

In September and October 1830, four young men were called by revelation to take the gospel and the Book of Mormon message to the Indians of the Americas, who were descendants of the Book of Mormon people. These missionaries were Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer Jr., Parley P. Pratt, and Ziba Peterson (see **D&C 28:8**; **D&C 30:5–6**; **D&C 32**). They traveled hundreds of miles under very trying conditions and were able to preach to the Catteraugus Indians near Buffalo, New York, the Wyandots of Ohio, and lastly the Delaware who lived west of the state of Missouri. But they had their greatest success with the settlers in Kirtland, Ohio, and vicinity, where they converted 127 people. After the missionaries left, the number of Saints in Ohio soon reached several hundred through the proselyting of those members left behind.

### *The Call to Gather to Ohio*

Sidney Rigdon, a former minister and newly converted member from the Kirtland area, and a nonmember friend named Edward Partridge were anxious to meet the Prophet and learn more of the teachings of the Church. In December 1830 they traveled more than 250 miles to Fayette, New York, to visit Joseph Smith. They asked him to seek the will of the Lord in relation to themselves and the Kirtland Saints. In response, the Lord revealed that the New York Saints should “assemble together at the Ohio” (**D&C 37:3**). At the third and last conference of the Church in New York, held at the Whitmer farm on 2 January 1831, the Lord repeated his directive to the members:

“And that ye might escape the power of the enemy, and be gathered unto me a righteous people, without spot and blameless—Wherefore, for this cause I gave unto you the commandment that ye should go to the Ohio; and there I will give unto you my law; and there you shall be endowed with power from on high” (**D&C 38:31–32**). This was the first call in this dispensation for the Saints to gather together.

While a few members chose not to dispose of their properties and make the long journey from New York to Ohio, the majority of the Saints heard the voice of the Shepherd to gather Israel. Newel Knight is representative of the disciples who followed priesthood leadership and answered the call:

“Having returned home from conference, in obedience to the commandment which had been given, I, together with the Colesville Branch, began to make preparations to go to Ohio. ... As might be expected, we were obliged to make great sacrifices of our property. The most of my time was occupied in visiting the brethren, and helping to arrange their affairs, so that we might travel together in one company.” 19

Joseph Knight Sr. is also an example of those who willingly made sacrifices in the sale of their properties in order to join the Prophet in Ohio. His simple notice in the *Broome Republican* says much about his commitment to the gospel: “The farm lately occupied by Joseph Knight, situate in the town of Colesville, near the Colesville Bridge—bounded on one side by the Susquehanna River, and containing about one hundred and forty two acres. On said Farm are two Dwelling Houses, a good Barn, and a fine Orchard. *The terms of sale will be liberal.*” 20 Some 68 members from Colesville were on their way to Ohio by mid-April 1831.

Equally obedient to the Lord’s command were 80 Saints from the Fayette Branch and 50 from the Manchester Branch, who left their homes in early May 1831. Lucy Mack Smith, mother of the Prophet, was asked to take charge of the exodus of the members from Fayette. When they arrived at Buffalo, New York, they found that the harbor on Lake Erie was clogged with an ice field, and the steamboat carrying the Fayette Saints was unable to leave port. In this difficult situation, she called upon the members to exercise their faith: “Now, brethren and sisters, if you will all of you raise your desires to heaven, that the ice may be broken up, and we be set at liberty, as sure as the Lord lives, it will be done.” At that very moment a noise was heard “like bursting thunder.” The ice parted and a narrow passage formed through which the boat was able to move. They had barely passed through when the avenue again closed, but they were in open water and could continue their journey. Following this miraculous escape, the company was called together in a prayer meeting to offer up their thanks to God for his mercy on their behalf. 21

By mid-May all the branches of the Church from New York had been able to travel by ship across Lake Erie to Fairport Harbor, Ohio, where they were met by fellow Saints and taken to destinations in Kirtland and Thompson townships. The great gathering of latter-day Israel had begun. The Saints were now in a position to be taught as a body by the Lord’s chosen servants, to be instructed in his laws, and to build holy temples.

18. Joseph Knight Autobiographical Sketch, 1862; in LDS Church Archives.

19. Newel Knight, quoted in Larry Porter, “A Study of the Origins of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania, 1816–1831” (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1971), 296.

20. *Broome Republican*, 5 May 1831; quoted in Larry Porter, “A Study of the Origins of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” 298–99; emphasis added.

21. Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith*, 204.

### **The Prophet's Arrival in Ohio**

On a cold day in February 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith and his wife, Emma, then six months pregnant with twins, completed the 250-mile journey from New York to Kirtland, Ohio. They arrived in a sleigh at the Gilbert and Whitney store. The following excerpt records the meeting of Newel K. Whitney with the Prophet:

“One of the men [on the sleigh], a young and stalwart personage, alighted, and springing up the steps, walked into the store and to where the junior partner was standing.

“ ‘Newel K. Whitney! Thou art the man!’ he exclaimed, extending his hand cordially, as if to an old and familiar acquaintance.

“ ‘You have the advantage of me,’ replied the one addressed, as he mechanically took the proffered hand ... —‘I could not call you by name, as you have me.’

“ ‘I am Joseph, the Prophet,’ said the stranger, smiling, ‘You’ve prayed me here; now what do you want of me?’ ” 1

Some time before, Newel and his wife, Elizabeth, had uttered a fervent prayer for guidance. In answer, the Holy Spirit descended upon them and a cloud overshadowed their house. From out of the cloud a voice proclaimed, “Prepare to receive the word of the Lord, for it is coming!” 2 Shortly thereafter, the missionaries who were called to teach the Indians came to Kirtland, and now the Prophet had arrived.

Orson F. Whitney, a grandson of Newel, later related his feelings about this event: “By what power did this remarkable man, Joseph Smith, recognize one whom he had never before seen in the flesh? Why did not Newel K. Whitney recognize him? It was because Joseph Smith was a seer, a choice seer; he had actually seen Newel K. Whitney upon his knees, hundreds of miles away, praying for his coming to Kirtland. Marvelous—but true!” 3

The Prophet's coming brought the word of the Lord to Kirtland, where many essential elements of the Church were set in place. The basic organization of Church government was revealed, missionaries were sent abroad, the first temple was built, and many important revelations were received. The Saints were severely persecuted and tested to see whether they would demonstrate faith, courage, and willingness to follow the Lord's anointed prophet.

### **Two Centers of Church Activity**

At the same time the Saints were being called to gather to Ohio, they began to look forward to the time when they could establish Zion. In June of 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation directing him, Sidney Rigdon, and 28 other elders to go on a proselyting mission to Missouri and there hold the next conference of the Church (see **D&C 52**). Missouri was on the western frontier of what was then the United States of America, over 1,000 miles west of Kirtland. The Lord revealed to Joseph that in Jackson County, Missouri, the Saints would receive their inheritance and establish Zion.



Joseph, the other missionaries, and shortly afterward the entire group of Saints from Colesville, New York, traveled to Jackson County during the summer of 1831 and began to establish a settlement. While the Prophet and other leaders returned to Kirtland, many members of the Church settled in Missouri.

Between 1831 and 1838, the Church had two centers of population. Joseph Smith, members of the Council of the Twelve, and a large number of Saints lived in the Kirtland, Ohio, area, while many other Church members lived in Missouri, presided over by their appointed priesthood leaders. Important events were happening in both places at the same time, and officers of the Church traveled from one location to the other as necessary. The events in Kirtland during this seven-year period will be discussed first, and then the events in Missouri during the same period will be discussed.

### **Sacrifices of Saints in Gathering to Ohio**

Many of the Saints who came to Ohio made great sacrifices. Some were disowned by their families; others lost the companionship of former friends. Brigham Young described how he sacrificed to respond to the Prophet's call to gather:

“When we arrived in Kirtland [in September 1833], if any man that ever did gather with the Saints was any poorer than I was—it was because he had nothing. ... I had two children to take care of—that was all. I was a widower. ‘Brother Brigham, had you any shoes?’ No; not a shoe to my foot, except a pair of borrowed boots. I had no winter clothing, except a homemade coat that I had had three or four years. ‘Any pantaloons?’ No. ‘What did you do? Did you go without?’ No; I borrowed a pair to wear till I could get another pair. I had travelled and preached and given away every dollar of my property. I was worth a little property when I started to preach. ... I had traveled and preached until I had nothing left to gather with; but Joseph said: ‘come up;’ and I went up the best I could.” 4

Many other faithful Saints came to Kirtland, where the members already there welcomed them and willingly shared their meager substance. Such stalwart people formed the foundation for the Church's amazing growth and progress.

## **Chapter Four** **Establishing Zion in Missouri**

### **The Early Years in Missouri**

At the same time the Saints were striving to build the kingdom of God in Kirtland, Ohio, many members of the Church were undergoing great struggles in Jackson County, Missouri.

When called upon to do so, the Saints living in Colesville, New York, had willingly left their homes to gather to Kirtland (see page 18). When they arrived in Ohio in mid-May 1831, they found that the land set aside for them was not available. The Prophet Joseph Smith took the plight of these Saints to the Lord in prayer. He had just received the revelation directing himself, Sidney Rigdon, and 28 other elders to go on a proselyting mission to Missouri, and the Lord instructed that the Colesville Saints also journey “unto the land of Missouri” (**D&C 54:8**). They were the first group of Saints to settle in the land that was to become known as Zion.

Newel Knight, president of the Colesville Branch, immediately gathered his people. Emily Coburn related, “We most truly were a band of pilgrims, started out to seek a better country.” 1 At Wellsville, Ohio, they boarded a steamboat and, using the Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri Rivers, traveled to Jackson County, Missouri. The captain of the steamboat said that they “were the most peaceable and quiet emigrants they had ever carried west; ‘no profanity, no bad language, no gambling and no drinking.’ ” 2

Using an overland route, the Prophet and other Church leaders hurried ahead of the Colesville Saints to make advance arrangements for locating them in Jackson County. The Prophet’s party reached Independence, Missouri, on 14 July 1831. After viewing the country and prayerfully seeking divine guidance, the Prophet said, “[The Lord] manifested himself unto me, and designated to me and others, the very spot upon which he designed to commence the work of the gathering, and the upbuilding of an holy city, which should be called Zion.” 3

This revelation specified that Missouri was the place intended by the Lord for the gathering of the Saints, and that “the place which is now called Independence is the center place; and a spot for the temple is lying westward, upon a lot which is not far from the courthouse” (**D&C 57:3**). The Saints were to buy every tract of land lying west of that city to the line separating the state of Missouri and Indian territory (see **D&C 57:1–5**).

Joseph Smith and Bishop Partridge acquired land for the Colesville Branch in Kaw Township, some 12 miles west of Independence. On 2 August 1831, after the arrival of the branch members, a ceremony was conducted that was filled with symbolism. Twelve men, representing the 12 tribes of Israel, carried a freshly cut oak log and placed it across a stone that had been set by Oliver Cowdery, thus laying the symbolic foundation for the establishment of Zion. From that humble beginning the Saints constructed a building that was used as both a church and a schoolhouse. 4

On the following day, a number of the brethren gathered at an elevated point one-half mile west of the Independence courthouse. The Prophet Joseph Smith set in place the cornerstone for the contemplated temple and dedicated it in the name of the Lord. The central feature of the land of Zion was to be the house of the Lord. 5

The Prophet returned to Kirtland, and the Saints in Jackson County began to receive parcels of land from Bishop Edward Partridge. They were very poor and did not even have tents to protect them from the elements while building cabins. They were also almost entirely without farm implements until teams were sent more than 200 miles east to St. Louis to obtain them. Once the Saints were outfitted, they began to break up the ground for planting. Greatly impressed by what she witnessed, Emily Coburn related: “It was a strange sight indeed, to see four or five yoke of oxen turning up the rich soil. Fencing and other improvements went on in rapid succession. Cabins were built and prepared for families as fast as time, money and labor could accomplish the work.” 6

Despite the inconveniences of the frontier, the Colesville Saints remained cheerful and happy. Parley P. Pratt, who settled with them, said: “We enjoyed many happy seasons in our prayer and other meetings, and the Spirit of the Lord was poured out upon us, and even on the little children, insomuch that many of eight, ten or twelve years of age spake, and prayed, and prophesied in our meetings and in our family worship. There was a spirit of peace and union, and love and good will manifested in this little Church in the wilderness, the memory of which will be ever dear to my heart.” 7

The Saints were blessed by a second visit from the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon in April of 1832. These leaders had just come from a very painful experience at the John Johnson farm in Hiram, Ohio, where they had been working on the translation of the Bible. A mob of enemies of the Church had dragged Joseph Smith from his home during the night. They had choked him, stripped him, and covered his body with tar and feathers. Sidney Rigdon had been dragged by his heels along frozen, rough ground, causing severe lacerations to his head.

Now, in contrast to that physical beating, they were safe with friends. Joseph affirmed that he “received a welcome only known by brethren and sisters united as one in the same faith, and by the same baptism, and supported by the same Lord. The Colesville branch, in particular, rejoiced as the ancient Saints did with Paul. It is good to rejoice with the people of God.” 8

### **Persecution in Jackson County**

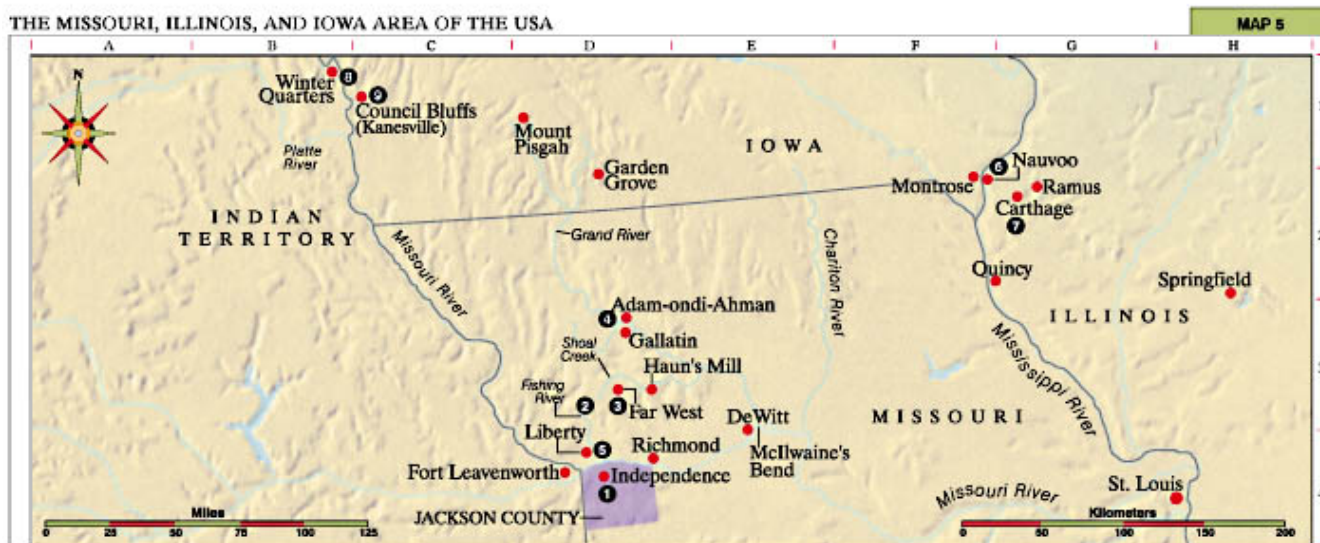
Following the commandment of the Lord, Bishop Partridge purchased hundreds of acres of land in Jackson County for the many Saints who were emigrating from Ohio and elsewhere. The leaders initially set up the Independence, Colesville, Whitmer, Big Blue, and Prairie Branches for these members. A total of ten branches were established by the latter part of 1833. 9 There were probably more than 1,000 Saints present when the combined branches met at the Big Blue River in April 1833 to celebrate the third anniversary of the founding of the Church. Newel Knight said that this gathering was the first commemoration of its kind in Zion and the Saints had a spirit of general rejoicing. However, Newel also observed, “When the Saints rejoice, the devil is mad, and his children and servants partake of his spirit.” 10

Before April had ended, the spirit of persecution manifested itself. At an early stage, local citizens warned Church members that they were displeased with the arrival of so many Latter-day Saints, who, they feared, would soon overwhelm them at the voting polls. The Saints were primarily from the northern states and generally were against black slavery, which was then legal in the state of Missouri. The Saints’ belief in the Book of Mormon as scripture, their claim that Jackson County was ultimately to be their Zion, and their assertion that they were led by a prophet were very unsettling. Too, the charge that they had contact with the Indians aroused the suspicions of the local citizens.

A circular, sometimes referred to as the secret constitution, was passed around by the opposition to obtain the signatures of those willing to eliminate the “Mormon scourge.” These feelings of animosity culminated on 20 July 1833 when a mob, numbering some 400 men, met at the courthouse in Independence to coordinate their efforts. Written demands were placed before the leaders of the Church calling upon the Saints to leave Jackson County; to cease printing their newspaper, *The Evening and the Morning Star*; and to not allow any additional Church members to come into Jackson County. When the mob found that the Church’s leaders would not agree to these illegal requirements, they attacked the newspaper office, which was also the home of the editor, William W. Phelps. The attackers stole the printing press and demolished the building.

## CHURCH HISTORY MAPS

### THE MISSOURI, ILLINOIS, AND IOWA AREA OF THE USA



**1. Independence** Identified as the center place of Zion (see D&C 57:3). A temple site was dedicated on 3 August 1831. The Saints were driven from here in 1833.

**2. Fishing River** Joseph Smith and Zion's Camp traveled from Kirtland, Ohio, to Missouri in 1834 to restore the Jackson County Saints to their land. D&C 105 was revealed on the banks of this river.

**3. Far West** This was the largest Mormon settlement in Missouri. A site for a temple was dedicated at this location (see D&C 115). On 8 July 1838, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles received a call from the Lord to serve missions in the British Isles (see D&C 118).

**4. Adam-ondi-Ahman** The Lord identified this place in upper Missouri as the site where a future great gathering will take place when Jesus Christ comes to meet with Adam and his righteous posterity and receive keys (see D&C 78:15; 107:53-57; 116).

**5. Liberty Jail** Joseph Smith and others were falsely imprisoned here from December 1838 to April 1839. In the midst of troubled times for the Church, Joseph called on the Lord for direction and received D&C 121-23.

**6. Nauvoo** Located on the Mississippi River, this area was the gathering place for the Saints from 1839 through 1846. Here a temple was built, and ordinances such as baptism for the dead, the endowment, and the sealing of families began. Here the Relief Society was organized in 1842. Revelations received include D&C 124-29.

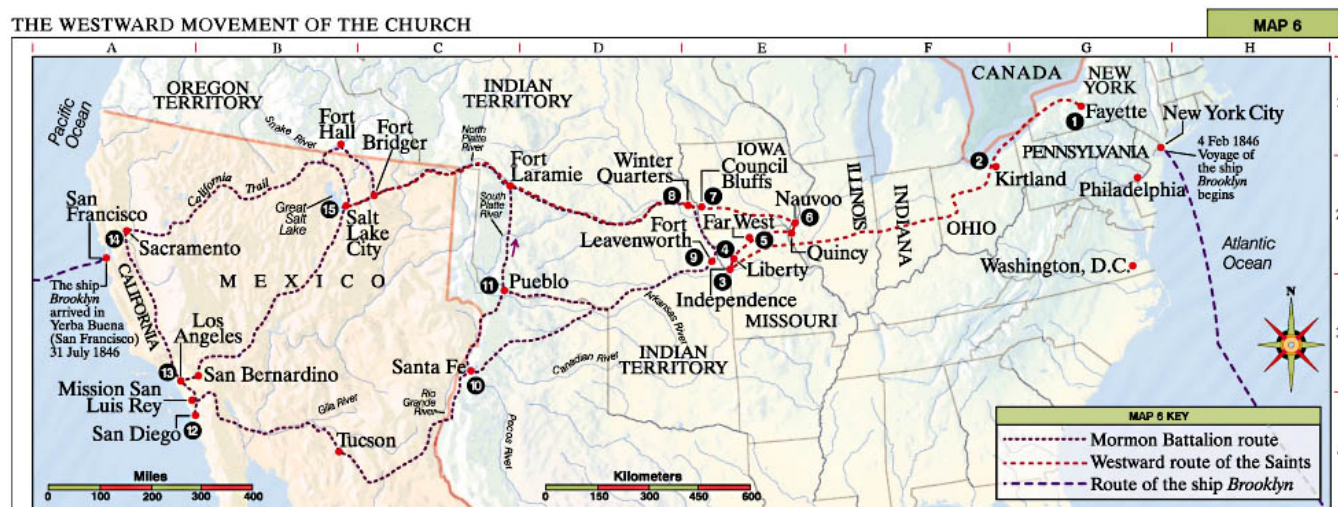
**7. Carthage** Here the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were martyred on 27 June 1844 (see D&C 135).

**8. Winter Quarters** The headquarters settlement for the Saints (1846-48) en route to the Salt Lake Valley. The Camp of Israel was organized for the westward journey (see D&C 136).



**9. Council Bluffs (Kanesville)** The First Presidency was sustained here on 27 December 1847, with Brigham Young as President.

## CHURCH HISTORY MAPS THE WESTWARD MOVEMENT OF THE CHURCH



**1. Fayette** The Prophet Joseph Smith left Fayette for Kirtland, Ohio, in January 1831. The three New York branches followed in April and May 1831 under the Lord's command to gather (see D&C 37, 38).

**2. Kirtland** The headquarters of the Church from 1 February 1831 to 12 January 1838, when the Prophet moved to Far West, Missouri.

**3. Independence** The Lord identified Independence as the center place of Zion in July 1831 (see D&C 57:3). Mobs forced the Saints out of Jackson County in November 1833.

**4. Liberty** The Saints from Jackson County gathered in Clay County from 1833 to 1836, when they were again required to leave. The Prophet Joseph Smith and others were imprisoned here.

**5. Far West** A refuge was established here for the Saints 1836-38. It was the headquarters of the Church in 1838. In 1838-39 the Saints were forced to flee to Illinois.

**6. Nauvoo** The headquarters of the Church 1839-46. After the martyrdom of the Prophet and his brother Hyrum, the Saints moved west.

**7. Council Bluffs** The pioneers arrived here June 1846. Members of the Mormon Battalion departed on 21 July 1846 under Lt. Col. James Allen.

**8. Winter Quarters** Headquarters of the Church 1846-48. The vanguard company under the direction of President Brigham Young departed for the West April 1847.

**9. Fort Leavenworth** The Mormon Battalion was outfitted here before starting the march west in August 1846.

**10. Santa Fe** Lt. Col. Philip Cooke commanded the Mormon Battalion as it marched from here 19 October 1846.

**11. Pueblo** Three sick detachments were ordered to Pueblo to recuperate, where they spent the winter of 1846-47 with Saints from Mississippi. These parties entered the Salt Lake Valley in July 1847.

**12. San Diego** The Mormon Battalion completed its 2,000-mile march here on 29 January 1847.

**13. Los Angeles** The Mormon Battalion was discharged here 16 July 1847.

**14. Sacramento** Some discharged battalion members worked here and at Sutter's Mill farther east on the American River, where they helped discover gold.

**15. Salt Lake City** Brigham Young arrived in the Salt Lake Valley on 24 July 1847.

### **ADDITIONAL READING:**

The following excerpt is taken from the book entitled *Behold, I Come Quickly: The Last Days and Beyond*, by Hoyt W. Brewster:

#### **Return to Jackson County**

There has been some speculation that civil disobedience or disasters may precede the future building of the City of Zion, or the New Jerusalem. Most, if not all, of this is based on two sources: first, a reported prophecy of Joseph Smith to General Alexander Doniphan, his friend and attorney in Missouri; and second, an alleged prophecy by President Heber C. Kimball, counselor in the First Presidency to Brigham Young.

The Joseph Smith prophecy was recorded by General Doniphan's brother-in-law some seventy years after it was reportedly spoken. According to the account, the Prophet warned Doniphan that "God's wrath hangs over Jackson County . . . and *you will live to see the day* when it will be visited by fire and sword. . . . The fields and farms and houses will be destroyed, and only the chimneys will be left to mark the desolation." (L. M. Lawson, as quoted in Junius F. Wells, "A Prophecy and Its Fulfillment," *Improvement Era*, November 1902, p. 9; italics added.)

General Doniphan is reported to have said that "the devastation of Jackson County [during the Civil War] forcibly reminded him of this remarkable prediction." (Ibid.) Elder B. H. Roberts used this account as well as vivid descriptions of the destruction in Jackson County during this terrible war to show the fulfillment of Joseph Smith's prophecy regarding this land of Zion. (See *Comprehensive History of the Church*, 1:537-59.)

The alleged prophecy of President Heber C. Kimball is often referred to as the "yellow dog" prophecy. This declaration focuses on some future destruction in Jackson County. Elder Graham W. Doxey, of the Seventy, has written the following regarding its origin:

It seems to have originated in a conversation between Heber C. Kimball and Amanda H. Wilcox in Salt Lake City in May 1868. She reports him as saying, "The western boundaries of the State of Missouri will be swept so clean of its inhabitants that, as President Young tells us, when we return to that place, 'There will not be left so much as a yellow dog to wag his tail.'" (*Prophetic Sayings of Heber C. Kimball to Sister Amanda H. Wilcox*, p. 6.)

There seem to be a number of questions about the authenticity of this account since Heber C. Kimball was apparently in Provo, not Salt Lake, during the month of May. Also, no other record exists of Brigham Young making a similar statement. However, it is sufficiently similar to Joseph Smith's statements, except for the "yellow dog," that someone may have remembered the original substance but in the retelling allowed embellishment to creep in. ("Missouri Myths," *Ensign*, April 1979, p. 65.)

One other statement should be considered regarding the return to Jackson County to build the City of Zion. As a counselor in the First Presidency, President Joseph F. Smith stated the following:

When God leads the people back to Jackson County, how will he do it? Let me picture to you how *some* of us *may* be gathered and led to Jackson County. I think I see two or three hundred thousand people wending their way across the great plain enduring the nameless hardships of the journey, herding and guarding their cattle by day and by night, and defending themselves and little ones from foes on the right hand and on the left, as when they came here. They will find the journey back to Jackson County will be as real as when they came out here. Now, mark it. And though you may be led by the power of God "with a stretched out arm," it will not be more manifest than the leading the people out here to those that participate in it. They will think there are a great many hardships to endure in this manifestation of the power of God, and it will be left, perhaps to their children to see the glory of their deliverance, just as it is left for us to see the glory of our former deliverance from the hands of those that sought to destroy us. *This is one way to look at it.* It is certainly a practical view. Some might ask, what will become of the railroads? I fear that the sifting process would be insufficient were we to travel by railroads. We are apt to overlook the manifestations of the power of God to us because we are participators in them, and regard them as commonplace events. But when it is written in history—as it will be written—it will be shown forth to future generations as one of the most marvelous, unexampled and unprecedented accomplishments that has ever been known to history." (*JD*, 24:156-57; italics added.)

Elder Graham W. Doxey provided the following commentary on President Smith's statement: "This is a vivid mental picture, but people frequently remember the picture and forget he said '*some* of us' and '*may* be gathered.' We should also keep in mind that he said this is 'one way to look at it,' remembering also the perspective of 1882. From our perspective [today], it seems even less likely that we would sell our automobiles and herd cattle along our freeway systems. But we simply have no scriptural information about who—if any general Church members—will be called to go back and the means that they might use. The prophets of our day have not found it timely or necessary to speak on the matter." ("Missouri Myths," pp. 64-65.) Behold, I Come Quickly: The Last Days and Beyond, Hoyt W. Brewster.)

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### The Coming Tests and Trials and Glory

*Elder Bruce R. McConkie Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles*

Bruce R. McConkie, "The Coming Tests and Trials and Glory," *Ensign*, May 1980, 71

We stand today on a mountain peak, on a majestic, glorious peak in the midst of the mountains of Israel. To gain this height, we have climbed over peaks of peace and trudged through the valleys of despair.

Below us lie the deserts of sin and the forests of evil; below us stretch the swamps of carnality and the plains of passion; below us rage the roaring rivers of war and hate and crime, through all of which we have struggled to reach this summit.

Above us, stretching crest on crest, are yet greater and grander peaks. Each one is rimmed with rivers and forests and cliffs and crags. There are deep canyons and steep precipices.

Along the way we shall yet climb, hidden in the underbrush, is the lair of the lion and the hole of the asp. Venomous serpents are coiled on ledges beside the path and jackals lurk in dark caves by the wayside.

Our onward course will not be easy. The way ahead will be blocked by a landslide of lasciviousness; an avalanche of evil will bury the trail.

As we trudge forward, sharp rocks will cut our feet; rivers of lava will melt the soles of our sandals; and we shall be hungry and thirsty and faint. The way ahead will be hard and the path rugged.

But far in the distance—its heights hidden in the clouds, the divine Shechinah resting upon its summit—far in the distance stands Mount Zion, the grandest peak of all.

**Through the morning mists we see Mount Zion, whereon is built “the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,” where there is assembled “an innumerable company of angels,” on whose height is congregated “the general assembly and church of the firstborn” (Heb. 12:22–23).**

From where we stand, on the peak of 150 years of progress, the view is glorious indeed.

Looking back with pride, we see the spring of 1820 when the Gods of heaven, the supreme rulers of the universe, rent the heavens, appeared to Joseph Smith, and ushered in the dispensation of the fulness of times (see **D&C 112:30**).

We see Moroni flying through the midst of heaven, sounding the trump of God, and revealing the book which whispers from the dust with a familiar spirit (see **Rev. 14:6**).

We see other angelic ministrants come, bringing keys and powers and authorities until all of the keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth.

We see the little stone cut from the mountain without hands beginning to roll forth toward that coming day when it shall smite the Babylonian image, break in pieces the kingdoms of men, and fill the whole earth (see **Dan. 2:34–35**).

**We see the elders of the kingdom going forth to many nations, crying repentance, gathering Israel, and assembling the faithful in the tops of the mountains where stands the house of the Lord (see 2 Ne. 12:2).**

We see converts and stakes and temples. Gifts and signs and miracles abound. The sick are healed and the dead are raised by the power of God, and the work of the Lord goes forward.

But amid it all there is sorrow and toil and testing. The Saints are tried to the full to see if they will abide in the Lord’s covenant even unto death (see **D&C 98:14**).

Our gaze falls upon Carthage, where murderous devils in human guise shed the best blood of the nineteenth century.

We see Nauvoo in flames and the holy temple of God desecrated by depraved and cursing fiends.

We see snow and cold and death and graves, as a weary people follow a new leader to their promised land.

We see a people cursed and smitten and driven as they lay their all on the altar, and we hear them sing with their might, “All is well, all is well” (*Hymns*, no. 13).

We see prophet follow prophet as the faithful seek to prepare a people for the Second Coming of him whose witnesses they are.

But our joy and rejoicing is not in what lies below, not in our past—great and glorious as that is—but in our present and in our future.

Nor are the days of our greatest sorrows and our deepest sufferings all behind us. They too lie ahead. We shall yet face greater perils, we shall yet be tested with more severe trials, and we shall yet weep more tears of sorrow than we have ever known before.

We honor our forebears and reverence our prophets. We rejoice in the goodness of God to them and thank him and them for the heritage that is ours.

As we ponder these things and count our blessings, we seem to hear a voice acclaim, “Put off thy shoes from off thy feet for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” (**Ex. 3:5**).

But we know that our work is in the living present and our glorious destiny lies ahead.

From the top of the peak where the soles of our feet now tread, we can look forward, crest upon crest, to the Zion of God which one day will be ours if we walk in the course charted by those who have gone before. We cannot see the whole course; many things are hidden from our view. Mountain trails wind through valleys and over crests, around ledges, and through forests. We do not know the length of the journey nor the perils that await us.

But what we can see causes us to rejoice and to tremble. We tremble because of the sorrows and wars and plagues that shall cover the earth. We weep for those in the true Church who are weak and wayward and worldly and who fall by the wayside as the caravan of the kingdom rolls forward.

We rejoice because of the glory and honor that awaits those who come forth out of all this tribulation with clean hands and pure hearts (see **Ps. 24:4**).

**Looking ahead, we see the gospel preached in all nations and to every people with success attending.**

**We see the Lord break down the barriers so that the world of Islam and the world of Communism can hear the message of the restoration; and we glory in the fact that Ishmael—as well as Isaac—and Esau—as well as Jacob—shall have an inheritance in the eternal kingdom.**

**We see congregations of the covenant people worshipping the Lord in Moscow and Peking and Saigon. We see Saints of the Most High raising their voices in Egypt and India and Africa.**

**We see stakes of Zion in all parts of the earth; and Israel, the chosen people, gathering into these cities of holiness, as it were, to await the coming of their King.**

**We see temples in great numbers dotting the earth, so that those of every nation and kindred and tongue and people can receive the fulness of the ordinances of the house of the Lord and can qualify to live and reign as kings and priests on earth a thousand years.**

**We see the seed of Cain—long denied that priestly power which makes men rulers over many kingdoms—rise up and bless Abraham as their father.**

**We see the Saints of God, who are scattered upon all the face of the earth, rise in power and glory and stand as lights and guides to the people of their own nations.**

**We see our children and our children's children stand firm in defense of truth and virtue, crowned with the power of God, carrying off the kingdom triumphantly.**

**We see the faithful Saints perfecting their lives and preparing for the coming of him whose children they are, preparing for the glorious mansion he has promised them in the kingdom of his Father.**

But the vision of the future is not all sweetness and light and peace. All that is yet to be shall go forward in the midst of greater evils and perils and desolations than have been known on earth at any time.

As the Saints prepare to meet their God, so those who are carnal and sensual and devilish prepare to face their doom.

As the meek among men make their calling and election sure, so those who worship the God of this world sink ever lower and lower into the depths of depravity and despair.

Amid tears of sorrow—our hearts heavy with forebodings—we see evil and crime and carnality covering the earth. Liars and thieves and adulterers and homosexuals and murderers scarcely seek to hide their abominations from our view. Iniquity abounds. There is no peace on earth.

We see evil forces everywhere uniting to destroy the family, to ridicule morality and decency, to glorify all that is lewd and base. We see wars and plagues and pestilence. Nations rise and fall. Blood and carnage and death are everywhere. Gadanton robbers fill the judgment seats in many nations. An evil power seeks to overthrow the freedom of all nations and countries. Satan reigns in the hearts of men; it is the great day of his power.

But amid it all, the work of the Lord rolls on. The gospel is preached and the witness is born. The elect of God forsake the traditions of their fathers and the ways of the world. The kingdom grows and prospers, for the Lord is with his people.

Amid it all, there are revelations and visions and prophecies. There are gifts and signs and miracles. There is a rich outpouring of the Holy Spirit of God.

Amid it all believing souls are born again, their souls are sanctified by the power of the Spirit, and they prepare themselves to dwell with God and Christ and holy beings in the eternal kingdom.

Is it any wonder that we both rejoice and tremble at what lies ahead?



Truly the world is and will be in commotion, but the Zion of God will be unmoved. The wicked and ungodly shall be swept from the Church, and the little stone will continue to grow until it fills the whole earth.

The way ahead is dark and dreary and dreadful. There will yet be martyrs; the doors in Carthage shall again enclose the innocent. We have not been promised that the trials and evils of the world will entirely pass us by.

If we, as a people, keep the commandments of God; if we take the side of the Church on all issues, both religious and political; if we take the Holy Spirit for our guide; if we give heed to the words of the apostles and prophets who minister among us—then, from an eternal standpoint, all things will work together for our good.

Our view of the future shall be undimmed, and, whether in life or in death, we shall see our blessed Lord return to reign on earth. We shall see the New Jerusalem coming down from God in heaven to join with the Holy City we have built. We shall mingle with those of Enoch's city while together we worship and serve the Lord forever.

And so, as we view the endless course ahead, the glory and wonder on each succeeding peak seems to swallow up the shadows and sorrows in the valleys below.

With our souls attuned to the infinite, we seem to hear a heavenly choir whose celestial strains resound through the mountains of Israel. The music purifies our souls and the words become a psalm of worship—the Psalm of the Restoration. From peak to peak the echoing strains acclaim:

*Glory and honor unto the Lord our God. Let heaven and earth acclaim his name, for he hath wrought wondrous works in all the earth.*

Sing unto him, for he sendeth his holy angel and restoreth his pure word. He calleth truth from the earth and raineth righteousness from heaven.

Blessed be his great and holy name. He restoreth the kingdom to Israel; he gathereth his elect out of all nations; he inviteth the Gentiles to join with his people.

All glory to the Lord our King, for he cometh to reign gloriously among his Saints. He cometh with fire, and the wicked are as stubble. He cometh with loving kindness, and his redeemed inherit the earth.

Glory and honor unto the Lord our God.

Sing unto him for his wondrous works.

Blessed be his great and holy name.

All glory to the Lord our King.

And as these psalmic words echo and reecho in our hearts, we hear other things that it is not lawful for us to utter; and there comes into our hearts that sure witness that he who called his ancient covenant people, he who guides and preserves us at this hour, even he will be with us and ours everlastingly.

Our souls are at rest.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

# *Prophetic References to the Signs of the Last Days*

## **The Great Temple of the New Jerusalem**

*Richard O. Cowan*

Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint History: Missouri, 1994 p. 138-152

The book of Ezekiel ends with the prophet's description of the latter-day inheritances of the twelve tribes in the Holy Land. He indicates that there would be a holy city, 4,500 cubits (approximately one and one third miles) square in which the Lord would be present (Ezek. 48:30-35). In the Apocalypse, John similarly spoke of latter-day events, including the final judgment and millennium. He declared that he had seen a new heaven and a new earth and "the holy city," the dwelling place of God known as the "New Jerusalem," descending down from heaven to the earth (Rev. 21:1-4).

Since the early days of the Restoration, Latter-day Saints have been fired with the vision of this holy city, or Zion, on earth. The Book of Mormon, published in March 1830, declared that the New Jerusalem would be built upon "this land" (Ether 13:2-3), meaning the American continent. In December of that same year, when the writings of Enoch were made known, Latter-day Saints were not only thrilled with descriptions of the power and glory of the ancient city of Zion, but also learned that in a future era of righteousness the elect would be gathered into a similar "Holy City" to be known as Zion or the New Jerusalem (Moses 7:13-19, Moses 7:62). Two months later, the Lord specifically mentioned that there would be a temple in the New Jerusalem. As he revealed the law of consecration, he indicated that, among other things, the consecrated funds would be used for the "building up of the New Jerusalem" to which the Lord's people would gather at the time he would come to his temple (D&C 42:35-36; cf. 36:8 and 133:1-2). Another revelation given the following month further intensified the Saints' anticipation of establishing this Latter-day Zion: "And it shall be...a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints of the Most High God; And the glory of the Lord shall be there" (D&C 45:66-67).

### **Location of the "Center Place"**

Information concerning the location of the latter-day Zion and the specific nature and design of the great temple to be built there was not given all at once, but was received piecemeal. The Lord has revealed these matters "precept upon precept [and] line upon line" (Isa. 28:10), typically in connection with specific direction or counsel to the Saints at a given time. Similarly, Church leaders have focused on different aspects of building the future temple; their particular areas of emphasis can often be related to the circumstances of the Saints to whom they were speaking.

In September 1830, Hiram Page announced revelations through a "certain stone" in his possession concerning "the upbuilding of Zion" and other subjects.[fn1]

A revelation through the Prophet to Oliver Cowdery at this time declared that "no man knoweth where the city of Zion shall be built." Nevertheless, Oliver was called to "go unto the Lamanites" (D&C 28:8) and was told that Zion would be "on the borders by the Lamanites" (v 9).

When the Saints began to gather to Ohio, some supposed that Kirtland might be the "place of the New Jerusalem spoken of in the Book of Mormon."<sup>[fn2]</sup> A few months later, the elders in Ohio were told to convene their next conference in Missouri, upon the land God would consecrate to his people (D&C 52:2). In July 1831, they arrived there with heightened feelings of anticipation. Newel Knight wrote:

Our feelings can be better imagined than described when we found ourselves upon the Western frontiers. The country itself presented a pleasant aspect with its rich forests bordering its beautiful streams, and its deep rolling prairies spreading far and wide, inviting the hand of industry to establish for itself homes upon its broad bosom. And this was the place where the Lord had promised to reveal unto us where...the New Jerusalem [or] Zion should be and our hearts went forth unto the Lord desiring the fulfillment, that we might know where to bestow our labors profitably.<sup>[fn3]</sup>

The Prophet Joseph Smith was likewise moved to exclaim, "When will Zion be built up in her glory, and where will Thy temple stand, unto which all nations shall come in the last days?"<sup>[fn4]</sup> The new arrivals did not have to wait long for the answer. A revelation dated 20 July specified that Independence was to be the "center place" and that the temple should be built not far west of the courthouse (D&C 57:3).

On Wednesday, 3 August 1831, Joseph Smith and a small group of elders went to a knoll about a half-mile west of the Independence courthouse, turned south from the old road (now Lexington Avenue), and made their way about 200 feet through the thick forest. The Prophet then indicated the specific spot where the temple was to stand, and placed a stone to mark the northeast corner of the future structure. Relevant scriptures were read, and a dedicatory prayer was offered, in accordance with previously revealed instructions (D&C 58:57). "The scene was solemn and impressive."<sup>[fn5]</sup> In December of that same year, Bishop Edward Partridge purchased in behalf of the Church some 63.27 acres, which included the spot dedicated for the temple (Figure 1).

For the next two years, Independence, Jackson County, was a focal point of the Saints' activity. Interest grew when, in June of 1833, Joseph Smith released his plan for the city of Zion (Figure 2). At the center of the mile-square city, he envisioned two large blocks containing 24 sacred "temples." These were to be assigned to the various priesthood quorums and were to serve a variety of functions. The Prophet anticipated that the city would have a population of from 15,000 to 20,000 so that these 24 buildings would be needed as "houses of worship, schools, etc."<sup>[fn6]</sup> Because all inhabitants of the city should be living on a celestial level (D&C 105:5) all these structures could properly be regarded as "temples"-places of communication between heaven and earth-even though their functions were not restricted to ordinance work.

The Prophet's plat for the city of Zion was prepared when he was also in the midst of planning Kirtland and its temple. A revelation given 6 May 1833 (D&C 94:1) called for three sacred structures at the center of Kirtland. Another revelation given 1 June (D&C 95:1) gave more details concerning the design and functions of the temple itself. The plat for Zion (drawn up the same month as this latter revelation) therefore represented an expansion in the number of sacred buildings from three to 24.

The Prophet specified that "none of these temples are to be smaller than the one of which we send you a draft.... The house of the Lord for the Presidency, is eighty-seven feet long and sixty-one feet wide, and ten feet taken off the east end for the stairway, leaves the inner court, seventy-eight feet by sixty-one."<sup>[fn7]</sup> At least three sets of plans for this temple are extant. The first two sets, sketched freehand, follow the dimensions specified by the Prophet, so were undoubtedly linked with his June 1833 plat for the city of Zion. The third set, drafted more precisely, extended the length of the building by ten feet. Only fragments of the first set have survived. (The second and third sketches are shown in Figure 3,

being compared with the Kirtland Temple.) All three sketches described a building having many of the features which would characterize the slightly smaller Kirtland Temple-the unique system of veils, box pews with reversible seating, and a series of pulpits at each end of the main halls.[fn8] These buildings described by Joseph Smith were suited to the needs of the Saints in the 1830s and to construction methods common at the time. That these descriptions and plans were not the last word concerning the appearance of the ultimate New Jerusalem Temple became evident in later years.

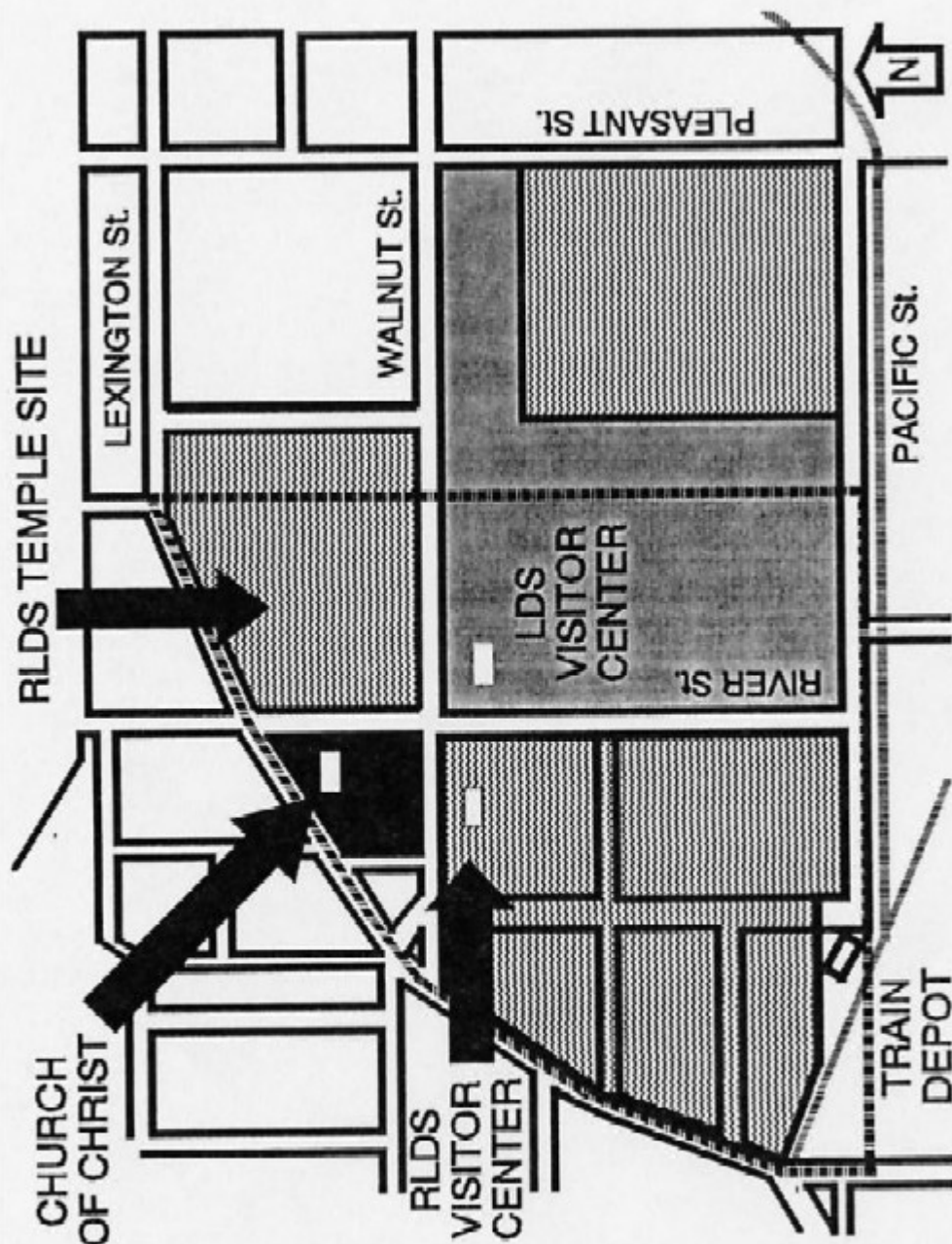


Fig. 1. Broken black line shows the perimeter of the property purchased by Edward Partridge in December 1831. Arrows and titles indicate the disposition of Partridge's purchases today.



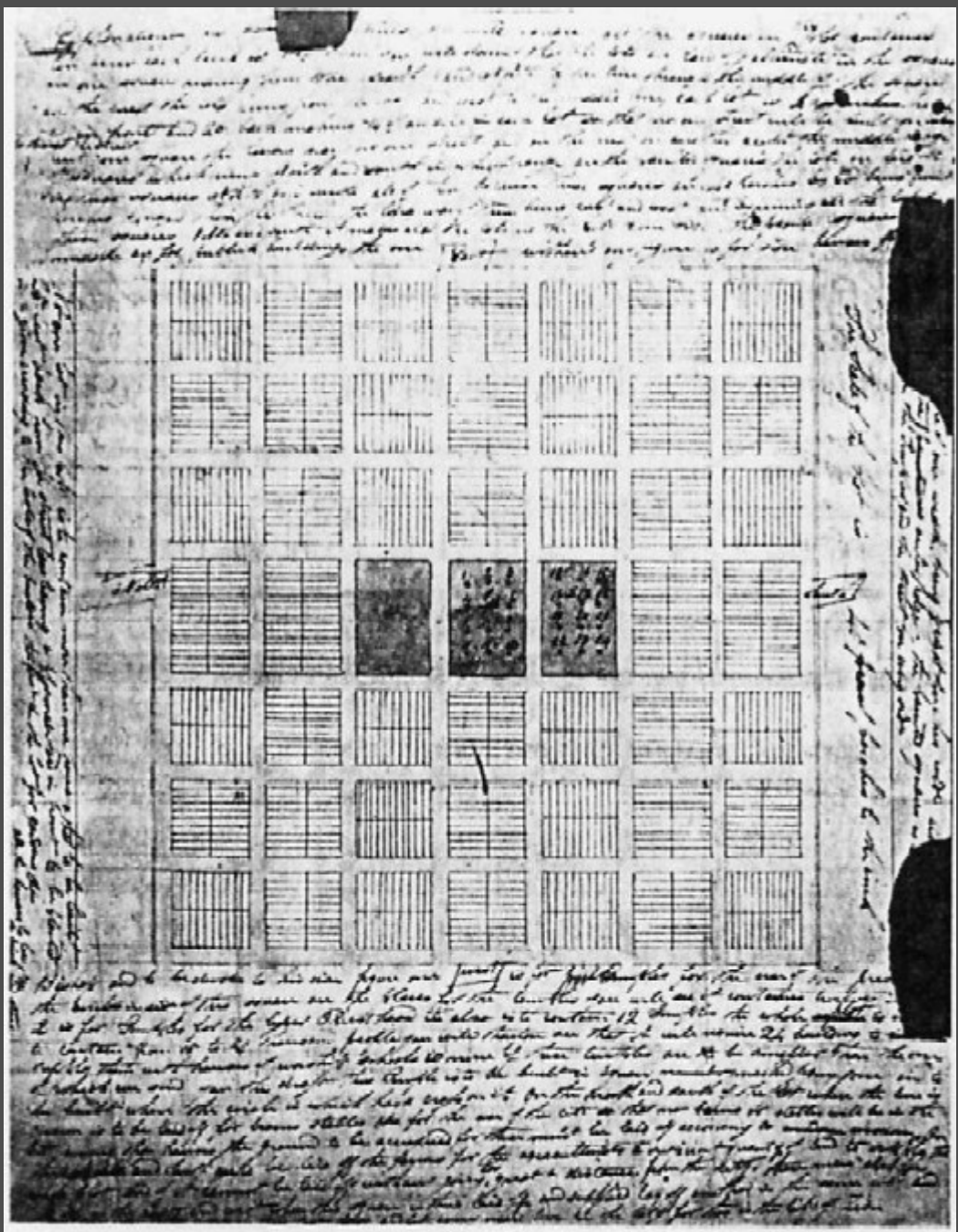


Fig. 2. 1833 Plat of City of Zion. Courtesy of LDS Church Archives.

Fig. 3. "Developing the Temple Design" shows plans for the temple in Zion and compares this structure to the Kirtland temple.

FIGURE 4: TEMPLES IN ZION	
TEMPLE NUMBERS AND NAMES	PULPITS



10-12 House of the Lord, for the Presidency of the High and most Holy Priesthood, after the order of Melchizedek.	West: Melchizedek Presidency
7-9 Sacred Apostolic Repository, for the use of the Bishop.	Bishopric
4-6 Holy Evangelical House, for the High Priesthood of the High Priests Holy Order of God.	High Priests
1-3 House of the Lord, for the Elders of Zion, and Ensign Elders of the Nations.	Elders East: Aaronic
22-24 House of the Lord for the Presidency of the High Presidency Priesthood, after the Order of Aaron.	Presidency
19-21 House of the Lord, Law of the Kingdom of Heaven, Messenger to the People; for the Highest Priesthood after the Order of Aaron.	Priests
16-18 House of the Lord for the Teachers in Zion, Messenger to the Church.	Teachers
13-15 House of the Lord for the Deacons in Zion, Helps in Government.	Deacons

Furthermore, this plan for the city of Zion came at a time when the organization of priesthood quorums was still being unfolded. Significantly, the names to be given to the 24 temples emphasize the roles of various priesthood officers in these sacred structures. These officers corresponded precisely to those who were to occupy the tiered pulpits at the two ends of the temple's main rooms (Figure 4).

But the temple in Zion was not to be built at that time. Anti-Mormon violence flared in Jackson County, and the Saints' press at Independence was destroyed on 20 July, less than one month after the Prophet had drawn up his plat for the City of Zion. By late fall, the Saints had to flee their homes in the chosen land. During the years following their expulsion they empathized with the ancient Israelites who sat down by the rivers of Babylon and "wept when [they] remembered Zion" (Ps. 137:1). In 1838, Joseph Holbrook, a Latter-day Saint then living in northern Missouri, returned to Jackson County on business: "At Independence I saw the temple lot that had been dedicated and consecrated to the Lord of hosts by the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr. as the capital of Zion in the last days and now the Saints are driven from Jackson County and their inheritance laid waste and no Mormon is safe in this county, if known.... When shall we build the [temple[?]]" Holbrook mused. "The Lord must truly work a work upon this land before this can be fulfilled so Lord, let it be." [fn9]

## Interest Continues Following the Exodus

Even after Brigham Young led the Mormon pioneers to Utah in 1847, their hope to build this center place and its future glorious temple remained bright. "When Zion is established in her beauty and honor and glory," declared John Taylor in 1858, "the kings and princes of the earth will come, in order that they may get information and teach the same to their people." [fn10]

The following year, Elder Charles W. Penrose explained that at the Second Coming, the Savior will first appear at the New Jerusalem. "He will come to the temple prepared for him, and his faithful people will behold his face, hear his voice, and gaze upon his glory. From his own lips, they will receive further instructions for the development and beautifying of Zion." [fn11]

Once, while Brigham Young was walking through the Temple Block in Salt Lake City, his thoughts turned to Jackson County. He described what he thought the great temple might look like: Each building would have its own tower, and in the center of the "temple complex" there would be a "high tower" and a square beautified by "hanging gardens" where the people could meet. [fn12]

The importance of the Saints' preparation was emphasized early. "When will Zion be redeemed?" asked Brigham Young in 1861; only "as soon as the Latter-day Saints are ready and prepared," he insisted. [fn13] His stressing the need for hard work reflected the immediate demands on the pioneers: "Where is the man that knows how to lay the first rock for the wall that is to surround the New Jerusalem?" God will not do the work for us which we should do for ourselves, President Young emphasized, unless we "let him work by, through, and with us, ... we shall fall short and shall never have the honor of building up Zion on the earth." [fn14]

The Saints in Utah were naturally interested in the prospects of returning to Jackson County, many assuming that the time of the return was not distant. In 1862, Brigham Young declared that he wanted to push construction of the Salt Lake Temple as far as possible before returning to Jackson County. "The way things are going," he believed, "the way will soon be clear." In fact, President Young hoped that it would be his privilege to see the temple in Jackson County finished before any other temple. [fn15] Other events, however, would alter the Saints' timetable.

During the Civil War, the Mormons felt secure in the relative isolation of their Rocky Mountain stronghold. They viewed the destruction which the North and South were heaping on one another as just recompense for the nation's earlier mistreatment of the Latter-day Saints and supposed that this desolation would open the way for their return to Jackson County. When this failed to materialize, the Saints looked to a more distant return.

Orson Pratt, for example, exhibited this shift in feeling. In 1872, he quoted Joseph Smith's 1832 revelation that the "temple shall be reared in this generation" (D&C 84:4). Noting that most who were living when that revelation was given had passed away, Elder Pratt concluded that "the time must be pretty near when we shall begin that work." [fn16] Just three years later he referred to the same prophecy, but this time emphasized that he believed that God was not "limited to any definite period." [fn17]

During the 1870s a number of Latter-day Saints in Utah engaged in a variety of cooperative ventures known as "united orders." They recalled the 1834 revelation given at Fishing River, Missouri, which specified that the people must be united and impart to the poor according to a celestial law before Zion could be established (D&C 105:3-5). In this setting, Church leaders emphasized the need to live this

higher law before the New Jerusalem and its temple could be built. "We are not yet prepared to go and establish the Center Stake of Zion," President Young emphasized. The Lord gathered the Saints to the place where the New Jerusalem would be built and gave them laws concerning the establishment of Zion, "but the people could not abide them, and the Church was scattered." [fn18]

Speaking in 1874, Orson Pratt recalled the Fishing River revelation given 40 years before and declared that if the Saints in their prevailing way of life were to attempt to build the temple on the consecrated spot, "we should be cast out again," because "the Lord would not acknowledge us as his people." Elder Pratt continued: "If we would go back then, we must comply with the celestial law, the law of consecration, the law of oneness." [fn19] "When we go back to Jackson County, we are to go back with power," he declared on another occasion. "Do you suppose that God will reveal his power among an unsanctified people who have no regard nor respect for his laws?" [fn20]

Brigham Young likewise cautioned, "If we are not very careful, the earth will be cleansed from wickedness before we are prepared to take possession of it. We must be pure to be prepared to build up Zion." [fn21] George Q. Cannon insisted that before Jesus will come to his latter-day temple, "the organization of society that exists in the heavens must exist on the earth; the same condition of society, so far as it is applicable to mortal beings, must exist here." [fn22]

Likewise, Wilford Woodruff reminded the people of Enoch's example and stressed that the New Jerusalem will have to be built "by the United Order of Zion and according to the celestial law." [fn23] A portion of the property consecrated to the Lord's storehouse, explained Elder Orson Pratt, "will be used for the building of temples." [fn24]

The opening of the St. George Temple in 1877 sparked a revival of interest in temples and temple ordinances. This, in turn, heightened interest in the future temple of the New Jerusalem. During the next two or three years, Elder Orson Pratt spoke repeatedly on the function and design of this magnificent structure. Citing the 1833 revelation directing that no unclean thing should be allowed to enter and defile the temple (D&C 97:15-17), he emphasized that "there are certain places appointed, and certain provisions to be complied with" in order for the fullness of priesthood ordinances to be made known by which fathers and children as well as the living and the dead are united. "This is the object of Temples," he declared. [fn25]

Elder Pratt then reviewed how the pattern of temple design had unfolded: there had been no provisions for sacred ordinances at Kirtland, but a font was added at Nauvoo. Likewise, the New Jerusalem temple will not be built "according to the pattern of our present Temples." But "there will be, according to the progress of this people, and the knowledge they receive," many features not found in present temples. [fn26] Speaking in the recently dedicated Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Orson Pratt shared his idea of what the temple would look like. It would be "much larger, very much larger" than any existing Latter-day Saint building. It would not consist of one large hall as in the Tabernacle, but there would be 24 separate "compartments." "When we build these 24 rooms in a circular form and arched over the center [like the building in which Elder Pratt was speaking], we shall give the names to all these different compartments just as the Lord specified through Joseph Smith." [fn27] "The Lord our God will command his servants to build that Temple in the most perfect order," Elder Pratt testified. "When we build a Temple that is never to be destroyed, it will be constructed after the most perfect order of the celestial worlds." For this purpose, he concluded, we must have prophets in our midst who can receive "the whole pattern thereof given by revelation." [fn28]

Elder Wilford Woodruff learned by means of a dream that the glorious latter-day temple would be built with the help of heavenly beings:

I saw a short distance from the Missouri River, where I stood, twelve[men...[whose] hands were uplifted while they were consecrating the ground; and later they laid the corner-stones of the house of God. I saw myriads of angels hovering over them, and above their heads there was a pillar-like cloud. I heard the most beautiful singing in the words: "Now is established the Kingdom of our God and His Christ, and He shall reign forever and forever, and the Kingdom shall never be thrown down, for the Saints have overcome." I saw people coming from the river and from distant places to help build the Temple. It seemed as though there were hosts of angels helping to bring material for the construction of that building.[fn29]

Elder Orson Pratt was also very much interested in the visible manifestation of God's glory at the future temple: "A cloud of glory [will] rest upon that temple by day, the same as the cloud rested upon the tabernacle of Moses.... Not only that, but a flaming fire will rest upon the temple by night." He continued: "You will have no need of any artificial light, for the Lord God will be the light thereof, and his glory will be there, and you will see it and you will hear his voice." [fn30] This conspicuous display of God's glory will have "quite a tendency to strike terror to all the nations of the earth." Elder Pratt expected that its fame would become known worldwide and that people would travel from around the earth to see it.[fn31]

### **Developments at the "Center Place"**

During the later nineteenth century, even though the Saints in Utah gave up the idea of an immediate return to Missouri and anticipated a more distant fulfillment of prophecies concerning the New Jerusalem and its temple, activities in the appointed "center place" did not cease. In 1867, a small group of former Mormons who were now followers of Granville Hedrick, returned to Independence and began the process of quietly purchasing two and one-half acres including the spot where Joseph Smith had placed the temple cornerstone over three decades earlier. This group would form the "Church of Christ, (Temple Lot)." During the 1870s and 1880s, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, followers of Joseph Smith III, also began to return and eventually established their headquarters at Independence.

During these years, the Utah Saints lived in relative isolation, but this situation changed with the 1890 Manifesto announcing the end of plural marriages. During the decade of goodwill that followed, mission fields, including Missouri, that had lain dormant for several decades, now began to revive. This led the Saints once again to become more aware of contemporary developments affecting the temple site. In the early 1890s, for example, Utah newspapers covered the major features of the "Temple Lot Case" between the Church of Christ (or Hedrickites) and the Reorganized Church. Interest was particularly high during March 1892, when attorneys from both sides came to Salt Lake City to interview witnesses during a series of formal hearings.[fn32]

Utah interest in Missouri was further enhanced in 1904 when The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints began to purchase 20 of the 63 acres originally acquired by Bishop Edward Partridge for the temple and other uses in Independence. In 1907 the Church located headquarters of the Central States mission here, and also established a press, Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., from which millions of missionary tracts, as well as copies of the Book of Mormon and the Liahona magazine were issued.

Latter-day Saints noted the activities of other groups interested in building a temple at the divinely appointed site. As early as 1914, Utah papers reported that the Church of Christ (not to be confused with the larger denomination having the same name) was actively considering temple construction. James A. Hedrick, a descendant of that church's founder, believed that Joseph Smith's declaration that the temple would be built "in this generation" (D&C 84:4) meant the work would need to be completed within 100 years of 1832.[fn33] As the deadline drew closer, a Hedrickite apostle, Otto Fetting, announced a series of revelations commanding that the work proceed, and on 6 April 1929, the Church of Christ "broke the sod" for the temple. An excavation was made for the 90 by 180-foot structure.

Speaking at the October 1929 General Conference in Salt Lake City, Anthony W. Ivins of the First Presidency referred to appeals for funds and to invitations from the Church of Christ for the Utah Church to join them in building the temple. "With all good feelings toward these people," he observed, "you will readily understand the impossibility of such a coalition." [fn34] Referring to these developments, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith affirmed that God had not released the Saints from their responsibility to establish Zion and to build the temple on the designated spot. He insisted that the temple would have to be built by those possessing proper priesthood authority and a knowledge of the purposes of temples and temple ordinances.[fn35] An editorial in the *Liahona* declared that "all premature, unauthorized movements" to build the temple must inevitably "come to naught." [fn36]

When Fetting's apostasy in 1930 drew away about one-third of the Church of Christ's 4,000 members, progress on the temple project halted. In 1946, the Hedrickites had the excavation filled in, the ground leveled, and the lot seeded in grass. They now view themselves as guardians of this sacred property awaiting the time when all of the followers of Joseph Smith who are "pure in heart" will unite to build the temple.

### **A More Cautious Interest**

Even though the General Authorities spoke of the New Jerusalem temple publicly less often during the twentieth century than previously, their occasional statements did reflect a continuing interest. For example, speaking at the dedication of the beautiful Alberta Temple in 1923, Elder Rudger Clawson anticipated that "the time will come when we shall have much finer temples. That which is to be built in the Center Stake of Zion, in Jackson County, will be far more magnificent than any yet erected." [fn37]

During the 1960s, Elder Alvin R. Dyer, who earlier had been a mission president at Independence, was assigned to take a special interest in the sacred lands of Missouri. Speaking to students at Brigham Young University, he said he envisioned "a temple complex such as has never been known." At its center will be the great temple of the New Jerusalem in which the Lord will make his appearance, and from which he will govern all the earth.[fn38]

Writing about prophesied events, Elder Bruce R. McConkie also emphasized the importance of the temple. He insisted that the New Jerusalem could not be "built up" as "a holy city, a city of Zion," until a temple is erected there. "The Lord will not reign in or send forth his law from a city in which he has no house of his own." Nevertheless, Elder McConkie did not believe that this temple needed to be built immediately: "Because the Saints were `hindered by the hands of their enemies, and by oppression,' the Lord withdrew the time limitation (D&C 124:49-54), and the command now in force is: `Zion shall be redeemed in mine own due time' (D&C 136:18)." [fn39]

During the 1970s, the Saints' attention again turned to Missouri. In 1971, the Church dedicated its visitors center designed to highlight the significance of Independence, both in the past and in the future.

However, the Saints' interest in prophesied events has sometimes led them to attach undue significance to present-day developments in Missouri. In 1978, for example, when The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints purchased over 4,000 acres of land across the river in Clay County, many Mormons concluded that this was somehow a sign of the temple's immediate construction. Church leaders stressed that the purchase was for investment purposes only.[fn40]

Rather than focusing on actually moving to Missouri, the General Authorities have continued to urge the Saints to develop the qualities that must characterize those who build Zion. Elder Harold B. Lee cautioned: "The Lord has placed the responsibility for directing the work of gathering in the hands of the leaders of the Church." He emphasized that the Saints would do well, therefore, to look to the First Presidency for instructions as to when and where they should gather.[fn41]

Consistent with this more cautious emphasis, developments in Missouri received relatively little public attention during the later twentieth century. Even though Utah newspapers covered the sensational story of the arson-caused fire which destroyed the Hedrickites headquarters building on New Year's Day, 1990, they gave little or no attention to a more significant story-the Reorganized Church's beginning construction of their temple across the street during that same year. The new structure featured a 300-foot spiral tower, regarded as a "divinely inspired plan that would speak in a universal language to all persons throughout the world." [fn42]

### **The "Center Place" as Viewed by a Worldwide Church**

The Latter-day Saints' feelings about the land of Missouri have necessarily been affected by the growing emphasis on the Church's broader worldwide mission. Throughout the twentieth century, LDS leaders have urged the Saints to remain in their own lands, strengthen the Church there, and establish stakes of Zion. For example, at the 1972 Mexico City area conference, Elder Bruce R. McConkie again stressed the need to build up the Church in many lands: "The place of gathering for the Mexican Saints is in Mexico; the place of gathering for the Guatemalan Saints is in Guatemala; the place of gathering for the Brazilian Saints is in Brazil; and so it goes throughout the length and breadth of the whole earth. Japan is for the Japanese; Korea is for the Koreans; Australia is for the Australians; every nation is the gathering place for its own people." [fn43]

As part of its broadened focus, the Church has increasingly erected temples in many lands. Latter-day Saints believed these developments began to fulfill prophecies that temple work would accelerate even faster during the millennium. "When the Savior comes," foresaw Elder Wilford Woodruff, "a thousand years will be devoted to this work of redemption; and Temples will appear all over this land of Joseph-North and South America-and also in Europe and elsewhere." [fn44] "To accomplish this work," President Brigham Young explained as early as 1856, "there will have to be not only one temple but thousands of them, and thousands and tens of thousands of men and women will go into those temples and officiate for people who have lived as far back as the Lord shall reveal." [fn45] Likewise, President Spencer W. Kimball looked forward to the time "when the temples will be used around the clock and throughout the year." [fn46]

In an era of international growth and temple building worldwide, what were the Saints to think about Missouri? "Let Israel gather to the stakes of Zion in all nations," exclaimed Elder McConkie. "Let temples arise wherein the fullness of the ordinances of the Lord's house may be administered. But still there is a center place, a place where the chief temple shall stand, a place to which the Lord shall come,...and that center place is what men now call Independence in Jackson County, Missouri." [fn47] Hence, despite the Church's broader view of the gathering and of temple building, the Saints have



continued to show a keen interest in the land of Missouri, the center place, and the future temple to be built there. Paraphrasing the ninth article of faith, the Saints are grateful for all that God has revealed concerning Zion, they are excited about what he is now revealing about temples and temple service worldwide, but they are eagerly anticipating what he will yet reveal concerning the great temple of the New Jerusalem.

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