

BY THE RIVERS OF BABYLON

Rodney Turner

(BYU Professor of Religion from 1956-1988)

This should be a fitting anticlimax to Brother Nibley's talk, or it may be the decrescendo before Brother Andrus's crescendo. At any rate, I feel a profound responsibility whenever speaking to the Latter-day Saints, so that I rely on your spirit and the Spirit of the Lord.

How awesome would it be (and/or humbling) to speak between Nibley and Andrus?! Andrus and Nibley had very different ideas on the economy of Zion, but both were clearly united in a correct understanding of the "city of Zion", and isn't that just the thing we are missing? The great "unifier" in the gospel? We talk an awful lot, and I'm sure it will come up again in conference, about how the Gospel of Jesus Christ, how The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the great unifier... But how is it thus? "Oh, because we believe in Christ!" Really...? Looking at the "Christian world" you see a sea of unity don't you? All the "Christian" united because of their belief in Christ? Nah... Not even close... There is so much more than simply a "belief in Christ" that is required to unite God's people... How can we preach the church being the "great unifier" while butchering the 10th article of faith...? Answer: we can't...

A Lost Zion

You will recall that the Lord promised Abraham a land of promise and that initially that land was Canaan. When Israel was raised up-Jacob being the Father of Israel--the twelve tribes were given that land of promise with understanding that they would retain it if they honored their fathers and mothers, which I take to mean the teachings and counsels of their forebears, the principles for which they stood. In time the ten tribes were taken captive into Assyria and were lost, and they are lost to this day. We expect them to return momentarily, however, in a very magnificent style.

I remember, now a long time ago, putting out a video/paper in which I asked "where are all the Brother Hyrum Andrus' of today? Where are the Elder Bruce R. McConkie of today? Where are all the Saints that still hold these beliefs literally and plainly...? I could add this individual, Brother Turner, apparently to that same list... Where did they all go? And why did we as Saints decide to replace such faith filled preachers of the word for priestcraft? This individual in the first paragraph states matter-of-factly a few things that today are spoken nowhere... What it means to honor our fathers and mothers- to retain the teachings and counsels of our forebears and the principles for which they stood. This absolutely flies in the face of the modern progressive religious scholarly teachings... The ten tribes are lost TO THIS DAY... Wha?! Who teaches this anymore with such "matter-of-fact" faith?! Does this make this Brother Turner also an arrogant abrasive man simply because he states the doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints literally, plainly, and matter-of-factly? Most likely in today's "Tik Tok Mormon" culture... And finally, "we expect the ten tribes to return in a *very magnificent style*... Amen and amen! One paragraph and yet already such a massive division between those of faith vs those without...

In the sixth century B.C. the Jewish kingdom, the southern kingdom of Judah was taken captive into Babylon. At the time of their captivity Jerusalem was decimated and the horrors which took place in that city few people comprehend. But the Babylonians slaughtered many thousands of Jews, a slaughter perhaps

equaled only by the Romans in 70 A.D. And so the Jews went into what is known as the "Babylonian captivity" for some seventy years. Thus, all twelve tribes were driven out of their land of promise because they had not honored their fathers and mothers and had lost their commitment to Jehovah. In time, the opportunity to return to the land of Zion was afforded them by the Persians.

An anonymous author, in a poignant psalm, a psalm of desire wrote the following:

*By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.
We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.
How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?
If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.
If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy. (Psalms 137)*

A poignant lament for a lost Zion. I feel that we, as modern Israel dwelling by the waters of our modern Babylon, ought to have within our souls that kind of desire, that kind of longing. Brigham Young said that Zion should be the one central concern of our lives and that until we have been able to establish Zion we should never be satisfied with life on this planet.

We should, but we don't... And what's worse is that we now have members actively teaching against that lost city... "Oh it is here!" or "oh it is there!" or "oh, it is everywhere!"... We should we weeping beside the rivers of Babylon, our hearts should be broken, we should weep night and day over the fact that we rationed away the great unifier, the tower, the New Jerusalem, because "our money might better be spent" on our other, newer, "chief joys"... How much have we fallen from just the time this talk was given around 50 years ago... We are living the Parable of the Nobleman and His Olive Trees and are watching its fulfillment before our very eyes...

Desire For Zion

Now desire is the mother of faith-as Alma teaches us. And we might add, the grandmother of hope. Everything begins with desire. The things that matter, the things of value, are those things that we can acquire only through desire. And if Zion is as desirable as the prophets have indicated, then it is obvious that there has to be a desire on our part for Zion.

Can I have no desire for Zion and yet obtain the blessing of it?

Great need produces great prayer. Think back and you will recall those moments in your life when you so desperately needed the Lord's support, the Lord's guidance and his answer to prayer were those moments when you wrestled with God. And those moments when the need was not paramount were the moments when your prayers sometimes tended to be trivial. When we hunger and thirst after righteousness, we are promised the outpourings of the Holy Spirit. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for they shall be filled." Well, hungering and thirsting are painful. When you are hungry you are uncomfortable, and when you are thirsty you are uncomfortable; and so there has to come a sense of disquiet, of discomfort, in our life if we're going to achieve that Zion of which the prophets have spoken.

The need, for example, to overthrow Satan will prompt the Saints to pray day and night for the Lord to come. Well, we're not praying day and night now for the Lord to come. As a matter of fact there are some Latter-day Saints who, like St. Augustine, want him to come-but not yet. They've got plans of their own, and his coming would seriously interfere with them. President Joseph Fielding Smith speaking here at BYU in 1967 said, "This is the time of the harvest. This is the time spoken of which is called the end of the world, and I am glad of it. I want to see the world come to an end." How many of us want to bring on the consummation of those prophecies? There are some who don't and some who do; but as far as having a conscious yearning to bring this world to an end, to topple the towers of Satan.... I suspect that there are many Saints who have not arrived at that state.

Disobedience necessitates suffering; humble ourselves vs being compelled... If we are slow to hear the voice of the Lord in the days of our plenty, the Lord will be slow to hear our prayers in the days of our troubles...

Need For Vision

What is it that gives you desire? What is it that makes you want to do a thing? I think the answer is vision. And we gain that vision according to Joseph Smith, by "human testimony and human testimony alone"- so the root of desire is who we surround ourselves with and the collective vision. "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18) So we must have a vision both of that to which we aspire to and of things as they are. We must know where we are and know where we can be before we can have that magnificent obsession, before the reality which lies before us will take on the dimensions to which it is entitled. This is precisely why having a correct understanding of The Macro Last-day Timeline is crucial... This is [also] precisely the problem we have in choosing between Zion and Babylon. How *real* is the celestial kingdom to us? How *real* is God to us? How *real* are these things we talk about almost interminably? Words, words, words, but where is the *reality* behind them? Where is the *literal*? How deep does the *literal* go into our minds and hearts? Those who have come to the realities of the Gospel have come to desire them; while those for whom the gospel is still just words have not done so. In My Fair Lady when the boy starts singing of his love for Eliza, she stops him and says, "I don't want just words; show me you love me. Don't keep telling me; show me." I think that's how God is. He wants to see action and not just a lot of words telling him how much we love him. After all, he knows how much we really love him, and he knows when we're exaggerating about how much we love him. But some Latter-day Saints have lacked the vision of Zion, or the vision of the kingdom of God. It doesn't matter what terms we use. We're talking about the new world—not the world of Huxley, but the world of Jesus Christ, the kingdom of God come to fulfillment.

There are what we might call "utilitarian Mormons." Utilitarian Mormons" are those who view the Church and its programs as simply an instrument for the gratification of their own narrow interests. This has only gotten worse today, with "Tik Tok Mormons" who view the Church and its programs as simply an instrument for the gratification of their own narrow interests and want that gratification immediately, and when they don't get that gratification immediately they feel to lift up their voices and curse God and die as though their voices were the only voices in

the world of any value... They are aggressive consumers that can turn hostile on the drop of a dime but yet build nothing for [t]hey have not expanded their vision beyond themselves. Notice, for example, how often in testimony meeting we limit our witness to what God has done for me, my wife, my son, the job I got, the healing that took place, and so forth; how very seldom we mention the grand scheme of God. **Honesty and looking beyond ourselves, stuck on rung one so that we never get to the “grand scheme of God”...**

In our prayers, how often do we really pray about the coming of Jesus Christ, the establishment of Zion, the returning of Israel and its sanctification? **I know that my family and this “Zion or Bust!” group does this very thing, night and day...** When I start praying about what I want and what I feel and what I'm concerned about, the heavens are brass, and it's obvious that the Lord has gone fishing or is out to lunch or somewhere other than with me; but when I change the subject, and I pray about the things that are of interest to him, guess what happens. The Spirit comes flowing down because I'm talking about something close to the heart of God and not just close to the heart of Rodney Turner.

God wants to be thought of, talked about, He's a jealous God. He would like us to direct our attention to him sometimes. So we don't want to be utilitarian Mormons; **we don't want to be Tik Tok Mormons;** we don't want to be among those who thank God for a prophet as long as he doesn't interfere with their business or tell them how to dress, how to cut their hair, or what to do in this situation or that; **we don't want to have lines in the sand that we won't cross despite the urgings of our prophet.**

We want to be among those who thank God for a prophet who prophesies **and who gives us counsel and urgings etc.** I don't know what good it does to have a prophet who doesn't prophesy. Who wants a cook who doesn't cook? You'll starve to death. Obviously we want a prophet who prophesies. And we have a prophet who prophesies. But then some of us don't want him to prophesy that way. We'd rather he prophesied about somebody else and leave us alone. That's no way to establish Zion. **I hope and pray that the honest in heart in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will realize who is and who isn't intent on truly establishing Zion- by their fruits ye shall know them. It has been a lonely road for most of us, fighting against the combined filthy rivers of spiritualization and rationalization of both the prophesies of the last-days and the urgings from the mouthpiece of the Lord. Period.**

Disunity

Those Jews in Babylon were not united. Not all said, "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down." Most of them loved Babylon; they enjoyed it. They were making a lot of money there for one thing. Life was good. It was a pleasant country, far superior to Palestine. Why go back to Zion when I can live in some better place? Who wants Zion when the world is delightful as it is? So we must realize that the longing for Zion, the desire to see the fulfillment of the great prayer of Joseph Smith (because it was the burden of his life) for the establishment of Zion is not universal in the Church anymore than the longing was universal among the Jews.

In fact there often seems to be an inverse correlation between how much money some have and how interested they are in Zion. The more money they have, the less anxious they are to see the Lord come and take it away from them. It is the poor who are praying for the coming of the

Lord. It was the same among the ancient Jews it was the poor among them that went back and built the second temple. The wealthy stayed behind in Babylon and wrote the Talmud! Well, we also have our Babylonian Mormons today.

The Lord said “Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” (John 20:29) and Alma taught “that because ye were compelled to be humble ye were blessed, do ye not suppose that they are *more blessed who truly humble themselves because of the word?* Yea, he that truly humbleth himself, and repenteth of his sins, and endureth to the end, the same shall be blessed—*yea, much more blessed than they who are compelled to be humble because of their exceeding poverty.*” (Alma 32: 14-15)

Elder L Tom Perry (*The Power of Deliverance*, April 2012)

“What was the difference between the people of Alma and the people of King Limhi? Obviously, there were several differences: the people of Alma were peaceful and more righteous; they had already been baptized and entered into a covenant with the Lord; they humbled themselves before the Lord even *before their tribulations started*. All these differences made it appropriate and fair that the Lord would deliver them quickly in a miraculous way from the hand which kept them in bondage. These scriptures teach us of the Lord’s power of deliverance.”

Pioneer Expectations

There are some who think the whole idea of returning to Jackson County is ludicrous. That was part of our innocence, of our childhood as a Church. We dreamed the dreams of youth, but now we’ve come to maturity. In reality, though, it’s because we have middle-age spread and because we’ve acquired some of this world’s goods that it’s ridiculous to talk about going back. For one thing, how are we going to get rid of Kansas City—which is sitting practically on top of the Garden of Eden? It would be quite impossible to do that. But the Lord has a way of clearing territory when he makes up his mind to do so and I think we can look forward to some action in Kansas City now that Harry Truman has left.

Certainly when the pioneer Saints came to the West they fully expected to go back. They didn’t expect to stay out here in this country, which many described in terms that I won’t repeat tonight. But one innocent story is that when Harriet Young arrived in the valley, she said she’d walked over a thousand miles to get here and she’d walk another thousand to get out of the place. In 1864, W.W. Phelps, who was then in his sixties said, “I hope to enjoy the next half of my life, or the most of it, on the land of Zion according to revelation.” Those pioneer saints really thought they were going back to establish the New Jerusalem. There were a number of statements by various brethren to that effect. It was thought that things would move much more rapidly than they have. We’ve missed this time factor all along the line... So here we are not in Zion, but in Babylon—with our color televisions and our pizza pies and, presumably, our harps hanging upon the willows.

Defining Zion

What is Zion? It is many things. Very briefly, we can define it as a city, as a land, as a world, or indeed, as the sum of all celestial kingdoms. Or we can define it as the perfection of the government of God or as the pure in heart, meaning those who have an eye single to the glory of God. And what is the glory of God if it isn't the salvation of his children? Is our eye single to the cause of salvation to his children? Is our eye single to the cause of salvation? If it is not, we are double minded. Such are not "Zion." Thus, we can define Zion physically and spiritually. But, we can also define it in terms of a symbol of divine hope and expectation. Thus, the Lord calls us Zion But we are not Zion *in fact*; we are only Zion *in expectation*. It's much the same as when he addressed Satan as Lucifer—the "light bearer." Because the Lord wanted this son to amount to something, he gave him a very good name—Lucifer. But the bearer of light didn't live up to his name; instead, he became the prince of darkness.

You will recall that Helaman named his sons Nephi and Lehi. But do you remember why? It was because Helaman hoped that they would live up to those noble names. And of course, they did. So too, God has given us the honorable title Zion, not because we have achieved Zion, but because it lies *within our capacity to do so, and because we will achieve it as a people*. We have the more sure word in this respect.

Joseph Smith taught "could we all come together with one heart and one mind in perfect faith the veil might as well be rent *today as next week, or any other time*, and if we will but cleanse ourselves and covenant before God, to serve Him, it is our privilege to have an assurance that God will protect us at all times." (FWR, pp. 13–14. Oct. 25, 1831) Brigham Young further clarified that "we have got to continue to labor, fight, toil, counsel, exercise faith, ask God over and over, and have been praying to the Lord for thirty odd years for that which we might have received and accomplished *in one year*. (vol. 11, pp. 291-305) So it is something we have not achieved, but that we can achieve, and is it something we could achieve in very little time if we but qualified.

Thus, we want to set up Zion. But what Zion? Let's just talk about the literal city, the New Jerusalem to be established in Jackson County Missouri, in the town of Independence. Why there? The Prophet tells us Jackson County is the setting of the Garden of Eden. That's where it all began. That's where God walked and talked with his first children on this earth. That's where God will walk and talk with you when you enter Zion. That's what it's all about. We must return to that holy center, the Garden of Eden, the beginning of all beginnings. This is why Zion *can't be moved out of its place; it must be built there. There's only one place on this earth where we can establish the New Jerusalem. And that's the place. The Lord tells us in no uncertain terms in Section 101 of the Doctrine and Covenants that it will be built there. The Lord is never frustrated in these matters.*

Isolation

How will Zion come about? May I suggest that it will not come by the evolution of our present political, social, and economic order. It's not going to evolve out of the world situation as we know it, this is a Telestial world. We are dealing with Telestial governments and Telestial

nations, and nowhere in any of the prophecies either in the standard works or by our modern prophets have I ever read that the Zion of the New Jerusalem would come out of the present government of the United States.

On the contrary, I don't know of a single instance in history where God has been able to sanctify a people who dwelt in Babylon. In other words, to sanctify a people he must isolate that people. He did that with the city of Enoch; it was not a part of Chicago. Later he flooded the world. He was not able to set up Zion among the Nephites and Lamanites until he had removed those who were not worthy. The more wicked part of the people, as you recall, were destroyed in those great cataclysms at the time of the Savior's death and crucifixion. Then, with the remnant, he was able to set up a Zion, a millennial state, for something over a hundred and sixty years. And so it has been that when the Lord has produced a Zion he has isolated his people.

Orson Pratt was thinking along these lines in the 1870's, when, feeling perhaps somewhat pessimistic about the Latter-day Saints (he felt they were becoming very worldly, very materialistic, very class conscious), he said:

I do not know but that it would be an utter impossibility to commence and carry out some principles pertaining to Zion right in the midst of this people. They have strayed so far that to get a people who would conform to heavenly laws it may be needful to lead some from the midst of this people and commence a new somewhere in the regions round about in these mountain. (A remnant of the remnant in other words)

I do not know how long it will be before this people are brought to the trying point to see who is and who is not from the Lord; but I would advise the Latter-day Saints to prepare for this, for it may come sooner than some of you expect. If the Lord should undertake to bring about an order of things different from that which now exists, and establish it, not exactly in the midst of this people, but in some place where they can commence anew, I hope the people will begin to pray to the Lord, reckon up with themselves and examine their own hearts, and see whether they are willing and prepared, if called upon, to place all that they have, or as much as they are required in that order of things, and carry it out. (JC 15:361)

We certainly wouldn't say that this is a doctrine, that this will happen; but the question is, how can you sanctify a people today? We live in a world, that invades your home through television through the media **and social media, through the internet**; a world so defiled, so corrupt, that it is almost impossible to maintain the Spirit of God and a pure undivided mind. We're constantly being bombarded by negative stimuli of one kind or another, **by the world itself and by Tik Tok Mormons in our midst**. How can we maintain the Spirit of God? It's like a woman washing her sheets white and clean and hanging them out only to have a dust storm soil them again. That's about the way it is with us—our efforts to become a pure people are met with relentless opposition. **As Zion or Bust! grows we see a few bad apples enter seeking to divide and conquer for power and gain and then the low hanging fruit unable to deal with the pressure, retreat back to their own corners of Babylon.**

The Church now has programs dealing with problems never contemplated before. We have not been able as a people to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil. As individuals, yes,

because Zion is the pure in heart. And there are many who have virtually attained the spirit of Zion. But as a people we have not yet done so and it is doubtful that we will until the Lord isolates us in some way. If we won't leave Babylon, perhaps the Lord will take Babylon from us.

And what does that sound like to us? Brothers and sisters what does that sound like? We are in Babylon, drunk Ephraimites, and the Lord sends a "desolating sickness" to snap Ephraim out of its slumber and what does the desolating sickness do? It *isolates us*... period...

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard; and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." (3 Nephi 24)

This is a group of Saints that *just at that moment in time* began to meet together and talk often one to the other- this is a group of Saints that have isolated themselves. The Lord did not do this isolation by bringing a group of Saints to a specific location on the globe, isolating them from the world, no, the Lord did this through the internet... The Lord brought and is bringing His "Zion minded" people together via the internet and is "isolating them" as He prepares them for what comes next...

"Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." (3 Nephi 24)

Elder Heber C. Kimball

[For] the time is coming when we will be mixed up in these now peaceful valleys to that extent that it will be difficult to tell the face of a Saint from the face of an enemy to the people of God. Then, brethren, look out for the great sieve, for there will be a great sifting time, and many will fall; for I say unto you there is a test, a Test, a TEST coming, and who will be able to stand? This church has before it many close places through which it must pass before the work of God is crowned with victory. To meet the difficulties that are coming it will be necessary for you to have knowledge of the truth of this work for yourselves. The difficulties will be of such character that the man or woman who does not possess this personal knowledge or witness will fall. If you have not got the testimony, live right and call upon the Lord and cease not 'till you obtain it. If you do not, you will not stand... Then the Prophet Joseph and others will make their appearance and those who have remained faithful will be selected to return to Jackson County, Missouri and take part in the building of that beautiful city, the New Jerusalem."

(May 1868, in *Deseret News*, 23 May 1931; see also *Conference Report*, Oct. 1930, p. 58-59; Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1945, p. 446, Smith, Robert W. and Elisabeth A., *Scriptural and Secular Prophecies Pertaining to The Last Days*, Ninth Edition, Pyramid Press, SLC, UT, 1947, pp. 134-138; *Deseret News*, May 23, 1931; W. Cleon Skousen, *Prophecy and Modern Times*, pp. 31-33, *An Army of Elders*, May 1868, Heber C. Kimball Reported by his son J. Golden Kimball, CR October 1930, p. 58. See also *Prophetic Sayings of Heber C. Kimball to Sister Amanda H. Wilcox*)

Joseph Fielding Smith (Doctrines of Salvation)

SAINTS TO BUILD TEMPLE IN JACKSON COUNTY.

The Latter-day Saints are building temples and believe that the time will come when they will be called on to build the great temple which shall grace the New Jerusalem, or City of Zion, the capital city of God on this continent.⁴⁷

The Lord will not call upon those who are cut off from his people to accomplish his holy work. The temple will not be built by those who say that Joseph Smith was a fallen prophet and who have failed to accept the fulness of the word of the Lord as it came through him.

No people will be commanded and directed by revelation from the Lord to build his temple, when they know nothing of temple building and the ordinances performed in temples. The Latter-day Saints may be assured that when the time comes for the building of the house of the Lord, he will call upon his people who have remained true and have been faithful in the purposes of the Lord in bringing to pass the salvation of the living and of the dead.”

Brigham Young said, *“This people can only gain strength upon the principle of fleeing to a country where the wicked will not live, and where they can gain strength enough to walk by themselves, and to go where they please. This is one of the truths of heaven.”* (JD 3:210)

Heber C. Kimball likened the Church to clay. He pointed out that every time the clay is just about ready to be molded, some more is added to the batch. Every year thousands of new converts must be absorbed. However, we today are witnessing a group of truly noble spirits coming into the Church. I can compliment my own son sitting here. I don’t think there is a boy walking this earth who is finer, a boy who is cleaner in mind, more committed to God. I’ve never in my life had to tell him to go to church. He represents thousands of young men and women coming along today. I don’t want you to think that I’m pessimistic. I’m not.

But we have the yoke of the Gentiles on us so powerfully that we can hardly breathe. Look at my tie; a kind of symbol of the yoke of the Gentiles. When Moroni appeared in the Prophet’s bedroom, did he have a necktie on? He did not. He didn’t have any yoke of the Gentiles on him! But modern Israel is not yet fully free of bondage.

In Section 113 of the Doctrine and Covenants we read: What are we to understand by Zion loosing herself from the bands of her neck; (Isaiah 52:2) We are to understand that the scattered remnants are exhorted to return to the Lord from whence they have fallen; which if they do, the promise of the Lord is that he will speak to them, or give them revelation. (Isaiah 52:6-8) The bands of her neck are the curses of God upon her, or the remnants of Israel in their scattered condition among the Gentiles. (D&C 113:9-10)

World Coming to End

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “God will gather out his Saints from the Gentiles, and then comes desolation and destruction, and none can escape except the pure in heart who are gathered.” (TPJS, p. 71) The nations of this earth are doomed. America is doomed. **As the Lord’s prophets and apostles warned us in 1995, “further, we warn that the disintegration of the family *will bring* upon individuals, communities, and nations *the calamities* foretold by ancient and modern prophets.” (Family Proclamation)** This nation is living out its last days. It is under the indictment of the Book of Mormon. If we do not serve the God of this land, who is Jesus Christ, we’re going to meet the fate of the Jaredites and the Nephites. Nor is

American serving the God of the land—although hypocritically we may be pretending to do so. We put “In God We Trust” on our coins and then permit abortion and the murder of innocence via permissive laws pertaining to our moral and social standards. In the 1880’s John Taylor called us a nation of murders because of abortion, which at that time was **illegal abortion**. Today it’s **legal**. How many millions of abortions are committed by the so-called God-fearing citizens of this country and other countries today? How then can the Lord spare this world? In Section 87 of the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord declared” a full end to all nations” (vs.6)

President John Taylor saw the awesome desolations that would take place in America and the world in the last days. There were few men left, and city after city was destroyed; the country was virtually desolate-no trains running, no transportation, no food available. (I hope you have your supply because the way things are going you’re going to need it-if only because of prices.) He saw all of this in vision and was told that this terrible desolation was taking place, not only in America, but throughout the entire world. He said, “I cannot paint in words the horrors that encompass me about, it was beyond description or thought for me to conceive.” He then was given to understand that there were **few left alive on the earth**. We do not have to worry about overpopulation, brothers and sisters; we’d better worry about depopulation. The lord intends to depopulate, not overpopulate. Those who are trying to depopulate the earth will be among those depopulated. After having seen the destruction in America, he writes:

Immediately after, I seemed to be standing on the left bank of the Missouri River, opposite the city of Independence-but I saw no city. I saw the whole states of Illinois and Missouri and part of Iowa, a complete wilderness of desert with no living human being there.

I then saw a short distance from the river, twelve men draped in the robes of the Temple, standing in a square, or nearly so. I understood it represented the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem. And they with uplifted hands were consecrating the ground and laying the cornerstone of the Temple. (Notice that apparently the cornerstone for the temple in Zion will not be laid until this country has come under the judgments of God.)

And while they were thus employed, I saw myriads of angels hovering over them and around them. And I heard the angels singing the most heavenly music. The words were: “Now is established the kingdom of God and His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever, and the Kingdom shall never be thrown down, for the Saints have overcome!”

Only out of the judgments of the last days will Zion come into being; arising like the phoenix out of the ruins of a decadent social and political order. So the Saints will return and build up the waste places of Zion. (D&C 101:18) There they will stand in holy places while awaiting the coming of Christ and this new world order. What are the holy places? The Doctrine and Covenants tells us that the holy places are Zion and her stakes, the other cities of Zion the Saints **will build**. D&C 101:21-23) We have holy places today to the extent that we are making ourselves and our present stakes holy. These are holy places, and the Saints can stand with security in these holy places as they await the Lord’s coming.

Mount Zion

When does Zion become Mount Zion? It becomes Mount Zion when Christ comes and receives that city. It is the presence of God that changes Zion to Mount Zion. God is a Mountain Man. He dwells in the tops of the mountains. And only mountain men and mountain women will come to know him face to face. We don't meet God face to face down in the valleys of sin. It was in the mountain tops that Enoch and Moses and the Brother of Jared and all the rest met the Lord face to face. And it is in Mount Zion that we, hopefully-and indeed assuredly—behold the very face of Jesus Christ! But, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in this holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart.” (Psalms 24)

Our goal is to know God personally, not to have to look at someone else and ask, “Have you seen the Lord? Has President Lee seen the Lord? Did President McKay see the Lord?” This is not the point. The point is have *you* come to know your Lord personally, face to face-not through books, not through the testimony of someone else, but through your own knowledge? When the Savior comes, no man will say, “Know the Lord,” for “All shall know (him), who remain, even from the least unto the greatest, and shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord” (D&C 84:89)

The Zion of Enoch, that translated (now resurrected) people, will also return to earth when the Lord returns. Their Zion will be drawn to the Zion of Joseph, the Zion of the Latter-day Saints. The two will become one. But they cannot come yet; we're not worthy of their company; we're not prepared to associate with the righteous, the holy ones of that translated city-not yet. So we must become a pure people (D&C 100:16) so that we can associate with them.

Speaking of the return of that city and of the reunion of the great Zions, the Lord said,

And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men; and righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare, an Holy City, that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem.

*And the Lord said unto Enoch: **Then** shalt thou and all thy city meet them there, and we will receive them into our bosom, and they shall see us; and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks, and we will kiss each other;*

And there shall be mine abode, and it shall be Zion, which shall come forth out of all the creations which I have made; and for the space of a thousand years the earth shall rest. (Moses 7:62-62)

Meaning the Saints have to first become, then redeem, then build- the city of Enoch is not the New Jerusalem that will just plop out of the sky, we first must build the New Jerusalem and then Enoch's city begins its return back to Earth.

That's what we want isn't it?-not simply to read about the Lord. What if you spent your life reading of romances, but never had one? Is that how you want to spend your life-having other

people tell you about their great loves, their happy marriages, their families, and you only a reader of romances? You want a romance of your own, don't you? You want to know what love is for yourself. You want to experience these things. It's not enough to just read about them. Frustrated, lonely people read love stories while other people are experiencing them. Well, we want a romance with God, a romance with Christ. We want that direct and real and literal relationship with him. That's what we want, and that's what we're going to have if we desire it enough. **And those that desire it enough will continue to be led to others who also desire it enough, as the Lord continues to isolate and prepare them for what is to come shortly.**

We will have it as a people; but the question is, "Will we as individuals be part of the realization of the relationship?" The gospel, brothers and sisters, is not just words, it's not lectures, it's not programs; ultimately, the gospel is power and pure passion. It's emotion, it's feeling. Notice that the Lord didn't say, "We'll come down and we'll shake hands with them and they'll shake hands with us and we'll discuss the MIA program for the year." That isn't what he said. He said, "We will fall upon their necks and they shall fall upon our necks and we will kiss each other." The Lord wants us to know the reality, the direct emotion of associating with righteousness-not simply living on a level of words and more words and never coming to the eternal reality. **We must not simply want the city, we must love the people that will be in that city, and we cannot do that without first becoming like those people who will be in that city. Two people walking in two different directions will not both end up in that same city. Period.**

Magnify the Gift

We all see through a glass darkly in this life; therefore, I would recommend that you seek the mind of the Lord in order to gain vision. It is said that what the eye does not see, the heart does not yearn for. If so, then what your spiritual eyes do not see, your heart will not yearn for. If you do not see Zion in vision, you won't yearn for it; and if you don't yearn for it, you won't pay the price necessary to achieve it. So pray for the desire that will subordinate your will to the will of the Lord that will put you in a position to receive his guidance and counsel **and the Lord will lead you to those he is isolating and preparing and they collectively will increase your desire further- collectively you shall keep up your spiritual momentum.**

Magnify the gift of the Holy Ghost that you have received. Magnify it!

Joseph Fielding Smith (Doctrines of Salvation, p.43) taught "We have the right to the guidance of the Holy Ghost, but we cannot have that guidance, if we wilfully refuse to consider the revelations that have been *given* to help us to understand and to guide us in the light and truth of the everlasting gospel. We cannot hope to have that guidance when we refuse to consider these great revelations which mean so much to us both temporally and spiritually. Now if we find ourselves in this condition of unbelief or unwillingness to seek for the light and the knowledge which the Lord has placed within our reach, then we are liable or in danger of being deceived by evil spirits, the doctrines of devils, and the teachings of men. And when these false influences are presented before us, we will not have the distinguishing understanding by which we can segregate them and know that they are not of the Lord. And so we may become prey unto the ungodly, to the vicious, to the cunning, to the craftiness of men."

Brothers and Sisters, if we all have the mind of the Lord, then we will see eye to eye on the issues of the day and won't have these contentious "letters to the editor" or vicious attacks on one another that we witness from time to time. It's the want of the Spirit, it's the want of *intelligence*, that created the diversities, the divisions among us. They are not necessary. And, as we know, the Lord says that disputations have no place among his people. Well then, we've got to gain more of the Spirit, *that intelligence, which will create that unity of mind and give a greater desire to see the kingdom come.* Let that be the bright hope of your life, a real living hope.

Unity, Not Compromise

I firmly believe that you are going to live to see the establishment of Zion. You'll either be a part of it, or you'll be a spectator; but I believe it's going to take place in your day. Back in President Young's time they had a little saying, "Brigham rules, the kingdom grows, the stone is rolling, mind your toes." The stone is rolling and if you don't want to lose some toes, you'd better roll with it.

The more we're committed, the less we'll compromise with this world. Compromise is a disease. A certain amount of it may be acceptable, but beyond that point it becomes an evil. Don't compromise when you don't have to compromise. There's too much compromising in the Church. There are some who are not very committed. The Lord puts in his long-distance call to them and tries to draw them home, but then the devil puts in his call-a local call by the way-and what do they do? They put the Lord on the "hold" button and carry on a long and animated conversation with the devil for the rest of their lives. There are too many people who have God on the "hold" button while talking their heads off to the devil. *There are too many people who view their conversations with the devil as "their real world"...* Such must hang up on Satan and get back to the Lord *while the Lord can still be found- make the Lord and the Lord's people your "real world".*

Don't wait for *others*. That can be a fatal mistake. If you wait for everyone, you may never make it to Zion. This is not a lockstep Church. You can go up the mountain of the Lord just as fast as *you're able*. You're a free agent. You can get revelation and guidance for *your own* spiritual growth and development. *We're free to climb at our own pace, but only those that keep the righteous pace will receive the righteous reward.*

Hugh Nibley warned of the consequences of not being able to keep that righteous pace, as well as the signs and symptoms of it (Approaching Zion Chapter 11): "...the Nephites had to work all the time to preserve the order -- eating, fasting, praying, and doing all the other things. *They couldn't tolerate the righteous pace*, so they were lifted up in pride, such things as wearing costly apparel and seeking the fine things of the world. "And from that time forth they did have their goods and their substance no more common among them. And they began to be divided into classes" (4 Nephi 1:25-26). They did not dwindle in unbelief but willfully rebelled against the gospel of Christ. They didn't just subside imperceptibly into a more relaxed way of life. Not at all. They didn't dwindle. "They did wilfully rebel against the gospel of Christ" (4 Nephi 1:38). Even as it was in the beginning, they went back to their old vices: "As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly" (Proverbs 26:11). They actually taught their children to hate the children of God, even as the Lamanites were taught to hate the children of

Nephi from the beginning."

So don't waste your time praying for world peace. There isn't going to be any world peace, those unable to keep the righteous pace are teaching their children to hate the children of God. Pray for the Prince of Peace. Christ will bring us peace; Christ will save us. Live for that prayer, and don't worry about trying to produce what cannot be, peace without righteousness, Zion without a united Zion people, etc. For that, we've been told, is an impossibility.

Now Brothers and Sisters, may our motto as Latter-day Saints be-paraphrasing a well known song- "Let there be Zion on Earth and Let It Begin with Me." In conclusion, may I read the beautiful Psalm of Zion from the 84th section of the Doctrine and Covenants.

The Lord hath brought again Zion; The Lord hath redeemed his people, Israel, According to the election of grace, Which was brought to pass by the faith And covenant of their fathers.

The Lord hath redeemed his people; And Satan is bound and time is no longer. The Lord hath gathered all things in one. The Lord hath brought down Zion from above. The Lord hath brought up Zion from beneath.

The earth hath travailed and brought forth her strength; And truth is established in her bowels; And the heavens have smiled upon her; And she is clothed with the glory of her God; For he stands in the midst of his people.

Glory, and honor, and power, and might, Be ascribed to our God; for he is full of mercy, Justice, grace and truth, and peace, Forever and ever, Amen. (D&C 84:99-102)

God bless you and keep you sweet and clean. There is nothing so sad as the lost innocence of youth. Keep clean; love one another; sustain one another; help one another in the weaknesses to which we're all susceptible. Bear one another's burdens. One has one burden; another, another. **Let's truly be concerned about one another.** Where you are strong, administer to the weak; and where you're weak, seek the strong. Don't drag anyone down; don't weaken the faith of anyone; don't rob anyone of peace of mind and the Spirit of the Lord. **But work together, desiring Zion, having that vision. God will be with us; we will be sustained, and every righteous desire of our hearts will be gratified beyond our fondest expectations. And please, do it now, time is running out...** To that end I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen