

Joseph's Boy Continued 1.01

In the first *Joseph's Boys* we went over the “why” and “when” which included wickedness and slothfulness giving way to the need for a desolating sickness and the scourging which would wake up Joseph's boys from their slumber. We also discussed the failure of previous Saints to redeem and build New Jerusalem thus showing the why as well as the when for the redemption and building of New Jerusalem and at the end of the paper introducing the solution to the problem- Joseph's Boys. In this let's go over more of the “how” and “whom” of Joseph's Boys.

Isaiah 10/2 Nephi 20:24-27

24 Therefore, thus saith the Lord God of Hosts: O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian; he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt.

25 For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction.

26 And the Lord of Hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb; and as his rod was upon the sea so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt.

27 And it shall come to pass in that day that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.

There is a progression here from the redemption of Zion to the Anointing, starting with the “slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb”, next “as his rod was upon the sea so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt” and finally “the anointing.”

1. Redemption of Zion; compared to the slaughter of Midian
2. The gathering of people in and unto New Jerusalem; compared to Moses leading the children of Israel through the Red Sea
3. The Anointing; this is what opens the 7th seal, this is the crowning of Christ King of kings

So understanding this slaughter at the rock of Oreb should give us some good information on the redemption of Zion.

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Judges 6–9

Introduction

Israel enjoyed a period of relative peace for 40 years, but the younger generation that was born into this peace and prosperity trusted in their own strength and wisdom and did not rely on the Lord. Thus, the people eventually again did evil in the sight of the Lord. Because of the Israelites' disobedience, the Lord allowed them to be oppressed by the Midianites. Through an

angel the Lord called upon Gideon to deliver Israel. Gideon and his army of 300 men defeated a vast army of Midianites.

Many challenges we face can be difficult or impossible to overcome by ourselves. However, the Lord is ready to help and strengthen us *if we come to Him*. In the book of Judges, a man named Gideon helped Israel gain the Lord's help and overcome seemingly impossible adversity. As you study Gideon's life, look for principles that show you how to gain the Lord's help when you face your own challenges.

There are many points of reference here that people should be paying attention to already because of the obvious connections.

1. Israel enjoys a space of peace and prosperity
2. A generation is raised that no longer relies on the Lord (ie the tower) but on their own strength (ie. "I know how to better use the money than build the tower")
3. Thus enters a period of slothfulness and wickedness
4. The Lord scourges them, allows them to be oppressed by another group of people
5. "The remnant shall return, yea, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God" (Isaiah 10/2 Nephi 20:21) ie. The scourging humbled them and woke them up
6. The Lord sends an angel (ie. The servant) to gather the strength of His house
7. Redemption occurs with but a few

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(22-17) Judges 6:1–10. Why Was the Presence of the Midianites and the Amalekites such a Terrible Scourge to Israel?

"The Midianites and the Amalekites were the children of the desert who, through their roving habits which begot naturally a desire for plunder, led them into a systematic practice of robbing the Israelites. During the seasons of harvest they came from the deserts on the south and the east like great swarms of locusts and carried away the corn [grain] and the live-stock upon which the Israelites subsisted.

"For seven years Israel was thus impoverished, and adopted every means at their command to conceal their property and to hide themselves from the dangers of slaughter by the Midianites. In that period, through southern Palestine, they made caverns in the earth that may still be seen. In time, however, they came to feel so deeply their suffering and humiliation that they appealed to Jehovah, the God they had forsaken in their worship. He was their last refuge, their last means of escape from the awful bondage of those times." (Tanner, Old Testament Studies, 1:288–89.)

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Read Judges 6:1, looking for what the Israelites did that caused them to lose the Lord's blessings. Recall that in Judges 1–5 the "evil" the Israelites did was **worshipping the false gods** of the other inhabitants in the promised land. **Because of this, Israel lost the Lord's protection.**

Read [Judges 6:7–10](#), looking for how the Lord responded to the Israelites' cries.

One truth we can learn from this account is that **the Lord can answer our prayers through the words of the prophets.**

Judges 6:6-10

6 And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord.

7 And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord because of the Midianites,

8 That the Lord sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage;

9 And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land;

10 And I said unto you, I am the Lord your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.

Prophet(s) came among them telling them to look to the rock from whence they were hewn. In essence, telling them that if they had faith of the brother of Jared and were obedient none of these things would have happened to them. Thus also identifying the solution to the problem—repent, be obedient again, and have faith as the brother of Jared and rend their veils of unbelief.

Doctrine and Covenants 101:6-11

6 Behold, I say unto you, there were jarrings, and contentions, and envyings, and strifes, and lustful and covetous desires among them; therefore by these things they polluted their inheritances.

7 They were slow to hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God; therefore, the Lord their God is slow to hearken unto their prayers, to answer them in the day of their trouble.

8 In the day of their peace they esteemed lightly my counsel; but, in the day of their trouble, of necessity they feel after me.

9 Verily I say unto you, notwithstanding their sins, my bowels are filled with compassion towards them. I will not utterly cast them off; and in the day of wrath I will remember mercy.

10 I have sworn, and the decree hath gone forth by a former commandment which I have given unto you, that I would let fall the sword of mine indignation in behalf of my people; and even as I have said, it shall come to pass.

11 Mine indignation is soon to be poured out without measure upon all nations; and this will I do when the cup of their iniquity is full.

Mosiah 21:1-15

1 And it came to pass that Limhi and his people returned to the city of Nephi, and began to dwell in the land again in peace.

2 And it came to pass that after many days the Lamanites began again to be stirred up in anger against the Nephites, and they began to come into the borders of the land round about.

3 Now they durst not slay them, because of the oath which their king had made unto Limhi; but they would smite them on their cheeks, and exercise authority over them; and began to put heavy burdens upon their backs, and drive them as they would a dumb ass—

4 Yea, all this was done that the word of the Lord might be fulfilled.

5 And now the afflictions of the Nephites were great, and there was no way that they could deliver themselves out of their hands, for the Lamanites had surrounded them on every side.

6 And it came to pass that the people began to murmur with the king because of their afflictions; and they began to be desirous to go against them to battle. And they did afflict the king sorely with their complaints; therefore he granted unto them that they should do according to their desires.

7 And they gathered themselves together again, and put on their armor, and went forth against the Lamanites to drive them out of their land.

8 And it came to pass that the Lamanites did beat them, and drove them back, and slew many of them.

9 And now there was a great mourning and lamentation among the people of Limhi, the widow mourning for her husband, the son and the daughter mourning for their father, and the brothers for their brethren.

10 Now there were a great many widows in the land, and they did cry mightily from day to day, for a great fear of the Lamanites had come upon them.

11 And it came to pass that their continual cries did stir up the remainder of the people of Limhi to anger against the Lamanites; and they went again to battle, but they were driven back again, suffering much loss.

12 Yea, they went again even the third time, and suffered in the like manner; and those that were not slain returned again to the city of Nephi.

13 And they did humble themselves even to the dust, subjecting themselves to the yoke of bondage, submitting themselves to be smitten, and to be driven to and fro, and burdened, according to the desires of their enemies.

14 And they did humble themselves even in the depths of humility; and they did cry mightily to God; yea, even all the day long did they cry unto their God that he would deliver them out of their afflictions.

15 *And now the Lord was slow to hear their cry because of their iniquities*; nevertheless the Lord did hear their cries, and began to soften the hearts of the Lamanites that they began to ease their burdens; yet the Lord did not see fit to deliver them out of bondage.

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Judges 6:11–24

An angel of the Lord calls Gideon to deliver Israel

In Judges 6:11–13 we learn that in addition to sending a prophet to the children of Israel, the Lord also called a judge who was a “mighty man of valour” (Judges 6:12; *valor* means courage or bravery) as the military leader to deliver them from the Midianites. Read Judges 6:14–16, looking for how Gideon responded to his call to serve. You may want to mark his response in your scriptures.

In Judges 6:17–24 the Lord showed Gideon a sign to assure him that this call came from God. There is a difference between seeking a sign from God before we will believe and have faith and seeking a confirmation with a sincere heart, real intent, and faith (see Moroni 10:4). The motive for seeking a sign or confirmation from God is important (see D&C 63:7–9). “Some people claim that they would believe in God or His work if they were able to receive a sign. But faith does not come by signs. ... Signs are given to those who are faithful and obedient to strengthen them in their faith and to help them carry out the will of God” (Gospel Topics, “Signs”; [lds.org/topics](https://www.lds.org/topics)). Gideon righteously sought in faith for a sign, or confirmation.

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(22-18) Judges 6:11–24. Since the Lord Condemns Sign-Seeking, How Do We Explain Gideon’s Request?

“When Gideon asked for a ‘sign’ he seemed only to want a sign that the messenger was a bona fide emissary of the Lord (v. 17). On this point, note that messengers may sometimes be from the wrong source and discernment is important. (See, e.g., D&C 129; see another consideration of the problem in II Corinthians 11:13–15; I Corinthians 12:10; and I John 4:1–2.) (Signs may be given, based upon man’s faith and the will of God. D&C 63:10.)

“When Gideon made a meal of meat, cakes and broth, and the angel turned it into a miraculous burnt offering, this ‘sign’ quite overwhelmed Gideon. But the Lord kindly gave him comfort and peace, and Gideon gratefully named the monument he built there ‘Lord of Peace.’” (Rasmussen, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1:150.)

Discerning of spirits and messengers of God comes up again and again. If Joseph Smith is resurrected and he resurrects Brigham and Orson and Parley etc. and they come to your house how will you be able to discern? Gideon’s understanding that A) he wasn’t the prophet (remember we’ve already had the prophet identified) B) that the devil can appear as an angel of

light- he simply couldn't accept it at face value, he had to confirm that the messenger was of God. Like the manuals explain here there is a difference between being a sign seeker to believe vs. a sign seeker to confirm.

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Judges 6:25–40

In obedience to the Lord, Gideon removes false idols and prepares for battle

Read Judges 6:25–26, looking for what the Lord told Gideon to do before he delivered Israel from the Midianites. Look at footnote 25*b* to help you understand what the term *grove* meant.

Notice that the altar Gideon was commanded to destroy belonged to his father. Think about how difficult this command would have been if you had been in Gideon's position.

Why was it important to destroy the altar of the false god Baal before overcoming the physical oppression of the Midianites? What can we learn from the Lord's instructions to Gideon about our efforts to receive help and strength from the Lord?

From Judges 6:25–26 we can learn the following principle: **If we desire to have the Lord's help and strength, we must remove spiritually unclean and evil practices from our lives.**

As shown in Judges 6:27–40, Gideon did as he was commanded. The next day the men of the city wanted to kill Gideon because he destroyed their false idols. Gideon's father spoke in his defense, and the men of the city did not kill him. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he gathered an army of Israelites together. The Lord then showed Gideon another sign to assure him that the Lord had chosen him to deliver Israel.

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(22-19) Judges 6:25–7:1. How Did Gideon Receive the Name Jerubbaal and What Does It Mean?

Gideon's father, Joash, owned a grove and an altar dedicated to the false god Baal. Groves of trees played a prominent part in ancient heathen worship. Since it was thought wrong to shut up the gods with walls, groves of trees were often used as natural temples. Within the groves the immoral rites of the heathen religions were performed.

Gideon and ten other men followed the Lord's commandments to tear down the grove and the altar and in their place erect an altar to Jehovah. The men of the city cried for Gideon's death, but Joash defended his son's actions. Joash named Gideon Jerubbaal, "let Baal plead," meaning that if Baal was upset by Gideon's actions Baal could defend his own cause. The name Jerubbaal remained with Gideon on some occasions thereafter.

There's a lot of good information in here and things that have happened in the last two conference to confirm the time period that we are in.

1. The "fathers" became slothful and wicked with idolatry being the big issue
2. The Lord commands the young and middle-aged men to tear down these false statues of idolatry. This "debris" consisted of vegetation/trees, representing a "fertility goddess".
3. The young and middle-aged then built a proper altar unto Jehovah in its stead
4. As this is going on the older generation which loved their idolatry desire the death of these young and middle-aged men

So once again, there are a lot of things that have in the last two conferences to point us to know the time period we are in, but after reading this in this form I believe there is one quote that summarizes it sufficient. The Salt Lake City Temple recently had the vegetation and trees surrounding it torn out. As this was taking place an earthquake caused Moroni to drop the trumpet from his hand. President Nelson in the last conference reiterated this and then said this,

"As I have watched workers dig out old tree roots, plumbing, wiring, and a leaky fountain, I have thought about the need for each of us to remove, with the Savior's help, the old debris in our lives.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of repentance. Because of the Savior's Atonement, His gospel provides an invitation to keep changing, growing, and becoming more pure. It is a gospel of hope, of healing, and of progress. Thus, the gospel is a message of joy! Our spirits rejoice with every small step forward we take.

Part of the gathering of Israel, and a very important part, is the charge for us as a people to be worthy and willing to help prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Lord.

As we listen to the messages that have been carefully prepared by our leaders under the direction of the Holy Ghost, I invite you to pray to identify the debris you should remove from your life so you can become more worthy." (President Nelson, Welcome Message, April 2021)

Old Testament: Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual

When Gideon believed that the Lord had truly commanded him to deliver Israel, he went forward with faith.

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Judges 7

The Lord delivers the Midianites into the hands of the Israelites

Imagine that you, like Gideon, have been commanded to conquer and drive out the Midianites' army. Read Judges 7:12, looking for the size of the army. How many soldiers would you want to take with you into battle against such a vast army?

This is a much more inspired series of questions than one might initially realize. I have said it again and again and again, when people think of “the work of the Lord accelerating in the last days” they think of numbers, more numbers, and then they think of even more numbers (ie. Wide growth). When the Lord speaks of growth, when the Lord speaks of “precious fruit” and the accelerating of His work, He is not talking about growth outward, He is talking about depth of growth, depth of conversion, celestial people etc. Many are familiar with this quote from Elder Orson Pratt,

“We shall go back to Jackson County. Not that all this people will leave these mountains, or all be gathered together in a camp, but when we go back there will be a *very large* organization consisting of *thousands, and tens of thousands* and they will march forward...” (JD 15:364)

Let me, knowing the risk, seek to put forth the idea that even Elder Orson Pratt got too carried away with the numbers. That army might consist of 32,000 men but when it takes off to redeem Zion that number will be a lot smaller. Why?

Judges 7:1-2

1 Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

2 And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.

Old Testament: Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual

Why did the Lord want Gideon’s army of 32,000 men reduced to 300 to fight the Midianites? (See Judges 7:2. The Lord wanted the Israelites to trust him and recognize his power, not their power.) How does the Lord teach us to trust him and recognize his power today?

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Read Judges 7:1–2, looking for what the Lord said about the size of Gideon’s army. If you had been in Gideon’s position, what might you have thought when the Lord said you had too many soldiers in your army?

In verse 2, mark why the Lord wanted to reduce the size of Gideon’s army. (To *vaunt* means to boast or praise.) How does thinking too much about our own strength and efforts prevent us from recognizing that our blessings and strength come from the Lord?

Judges 7:3

3 Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.

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Read Judges 7:3, looking for what the Lord said Gideon needed to do to reduce the size of his army.

How many were in Gideon's army originally?

How many remained after Gideon told those who were afraid to leave?

Judges 7:4-8

4 And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will **try** them for thee...

The footnote for the word "try" says "or test", meaning the Lord is going to provide a test at this time. The footnote also takes you to:

D&C 98:9-16

9 Nevertheless, when the wicked rule the people mourn.

10 Wherefore, honest men and wise men should be sought for diligently, and good men and wise men ye should observe to uphold; otherwise whatsoever is less than these cometh of evil.
(Gideon)

11 And I give unto you a commandment, that ye shall forsake all evil and cleave unto all good, that ye shall live by every word which proceedeth forth out of the mouth of God. (Exact obedience)

12 For he will give unto the faithful line upon line, precept upon precept; and I will try you and prove you herewith.

13 And whoso layeth down his life in my cause, for my name's sake, shall find it again, even life eternal.

14 Therefore, be not afraid of your enemies, for I have decreed in my heart, saith the Lord, that I will prove you in all things, whether you will abide in my covenant, even unto death, that you may be found worthy. (Have no fear)

15 For if ye will not abide in my covenant ye are not worthy of me.

16 Therefore, renounce war and proclaim peace, and seek diligently to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children; (part of the test)

Judges 7:4-8 continued

...there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.

5 So he brought down the people unto the water: and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lapped of the water with his tongue, as a dog lapped, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

6 And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.

7 And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place.

8 So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men: and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley.

After the group was reduced to 300 the army went on to complete its task in a miraculous manner with the Lord making bare His arm. Skipping that for now, let us hone in on what is the most important thing for us right now to comprehend, and that would be understanding how these 300 were selected.

There are only two things provided to let us know how the Lord did select this group (and we learned in the first *Joseph Boy's* from Elder Heber C. Kimball that “those who have remained faithful will be selected” so this is the tie in to that point of reference). We also learn the same two things in D&C 98 that we read above. They are:

1. They had no fear (and remember the prepared are the only people who will not fear in that day, meaning this group is temporally prepared. The men whose families were not prepared temporally were those who feared and left)
2. Exact obedience.

D&C 101:67–75. Further Instructions Concerning Zion

The Lord spoke of two important items having to do with the establishment of Zion: the gathering of the Saints to places appointed, and the purchase of land in the region of Zion. The Lord cautioned in verses 68 and 72 that the work was not to proceed with haste. *Part of the difficulty experienced in the original attempt to establish Zion was caused by many Saints' coming to Zion ill-prepared. They apparently felt that the Lord would care for their needs rather than have them do it themselves. This idea was contrary to the Lord's counsel from the very beginning of Zion's founding*, for He said, “And let the work of the gathering be not in

haste, nor by flight” (D&C 58:56). He warned again: “And now, behold, this is the will of the Lord your God concerning his saints, that they should assemble themselves together unto the land of Zion, not in haste, lest there should be confusion, which bringeth pestilence” (D&C 63:24).

Enrichment B in the Appendix discusses Zion.

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Consider the following principle that we can learn from this account: **If we follow the Lord’s commands with exactness and always acknowledge our dependence on Him, then He will help us overcome our challenges.** Gideon’s small force succeeded because they were exactly obedient; every man did as he was instructed (see Judges 7:21).

So the two take aways are: A) they were prepared and thus they did not fear and B) they obeyed with exactness. I would then ask the question, are there any other stories or examples that we can point to that prove these principles? Yes, there are a multitude of examples, but let me hone in on just two such examples because I believe that they prove the point conclusively.

1. The Stripling Warriors: not much is known about these “young and middle-aged men” but we do know two very specific things about them that are quoted and taught often in the Church.

ONE:

Alma 56:45-48

45 And now I say unto you, my beloved brother Moroni, that never had I seen so *great courage*, nay, not amongst all the Nephites.

46 For as I had ever called them my sons (for they were all of them very young) even so they said unto me: Father, behold our God is with us, and he will not suffer that we should fall; then let us go forth; we would not slay our brethren if they would let us alone; therefore let us go, lest they should overpower the army of Antipus.

47 Now they never had fought, yet *they did not fear* death; and they did think more upon the liberty of their fathers than they did upon their lives; yea, they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them.

48 And they rehearsed unto me the words of their mothers, saying: We do not doubt our mothers knew it.

TWO:

Alma 57:19-22

19 But behold, my little band of two thousand and sixty fought most desperately; yea, they were firm before the Lamanites, and did administer death unto all those who opposed them.

20 And as the remainder of our army were about to give way before the Lamanites, behold, those two thousand and sixty were firm and undaunted.

21 ***Yea, and they did obey and observe to perform every word of command with exactness***; yea, and even according to their faith it was done unto them; and I did remember the words which they said unto me that their mothers had taught them.

22 And now behold, it was these my sons, and ***those men who had been selected*** to convey the prisoners, to whom we owe this great victory; for it was they who did beat the Lamanites; therefore they were driven back to the city of Manti.

Once again, the two things that identified this army were a lack of fear and exact obedience.

2. **The Fourth Watch:** To understand the fourth watch, to understand Jesus walking on water, to really understand it, you have to go back before they got in the boat. What happened directly before this event? The miraculous feeding of thousands with just a few loaves of bread and a few fish. Ie. The Lord took care of the people's temporal preparedness with a miracle as the crowd came completely unprepared. As soon as the miracle was performed Jesus perceived the hearts of the people that they were desirous to make Jesus king over them by force (think the Second Coming), but the reason why they wanted to make Him king was because they wanted Jesus to continue feeding them- they wanted the Lord to make all of their past poor decisions go away (eliminate their debt), they wanted the Lord to continue to provide for them. You could say that because these people were not prepared, they feared and forcing Jesus to be their king they thought that their problems or fears would be eliminated. The Lord then sends His disciples into a boat to cross the sea that evening and then departs into the mountain. Those that were fearful watched on as the Savior went into the mountain. It is unclear how long they sat there waiting for the Lord to come back down but we do know they eventually caught up with Jesus later and once again desired free bread. To which the Savior replied, "I am the bread of life" and these people left. So we have a separation here at the boat. Those that got in the boat were those who did not have fear while those that stayed on the shore took no thought of their temporal salvation and desired the Savior to make those problems go away ie. they were not prepared and thus were fearful. We then get into the second leg of the story which divides people once again. I went over this in my paper, *A test, a Test, a TEST!* and here is what I said:

Chapter Seventy-Two



Against the Wind, by Liz Lemon Swindle

Jesus sends his disciples across the sea to Gennesaret and the multitude away. Jesus goes into a mountain to pray and to watch the disciple cross the sea. Jesus walks on water during the fourth watch.

1 And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, to the land of Gennesaret, while he sent away the people.

2 But when Jesus therefore perceived that the people would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone to pray.

3 And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea,

4 And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.

5 And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew.

6 And the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

7 And Jesus alone on the land watched them toiling in rowing.

8 So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, and about the fourth watch of the night, Jesus cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.

9 But when they saw him drawing nigh unto the ship, walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out for fear:

10 For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.

11 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

12 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

13 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

14 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

15 Then they willingly received them into the ship: and immediately the wind ceased and the ship was at the land whither they went: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered.

16 For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.

17 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

Taken from Matthew 14:24-33, Mark 6:45-52, John 6:15-21

- 2. See also: John 18:36; Matt. 26:36; Luke 6:12; 9:28
- 10. See also: TG Cheerfulness
- 13. See also: TG Fearfulness
- 14. See also: Mark 4:40; 16:14; Luke 24:25; TG Doubt
- 16. See also: 1 Cor. 2:11; TG Hardheartedness

Let's do a macro timeline and try to understand what happened here while we do it.

1. The people wanted to make Jesus Christ king, and why? Because this group of people expect manna raining from heaven (once again, this seems to be a sign or indicator of a failed generation)
2. Jesus puts his disciples in a ship and tells them to sail across the sea (ie. their test)
3. Christ goes to a position where he can watch them discreetly or prudently as they test
4. The wind rose up contrary, meaning they were now rowing into the wind. They now have a choice to make, a point of variance if you will, in which they have to decide whether or not they will do exactly as the Lord commanded them and row to the other side that night OR if they will row to shore, start a fire, wait out the storm and proceed again in the morning. Most people would not have made it into the boat, most people would have been the group screaming for manna to come down from heaven that Jesus was fleeing from. The people in the boat are the elect, but how many of them would be exact in their obedience to such a seemingly temporal command. In this story the Savior simply told them to row across the water that night. As far as we know, He didn't explain why, He simply told them to do. Prophets for over 120 years have said to get a year supply of food and water and avoid debt like the plague, and they explained the specific whys, and yet when reading this story, members who don't have a year supply of food and water and are completely under in debt, don't realize that they never got in the boat in this story.

5. The test. The test is, they are now rowing into the wind, in a storm, in the middle of the night. Only those who have the spiritual conversion and faith will be able to pass through this period. They rowed for almost 4 miles in this condition and Jesus came down in the fourth watch (3am-6am) and they went into the boat in the evening, so depending on when they went into the boat they could have been rowing anywhere from 6-12 hours. That means they traveled around a mile in an hour or two. Most people can walk between 2-5 miles per hour. Meaning, they could have parked their boat and walked there faster. It was becoming against their better judgement to do exactly what the Lord wanted them to do.
6. During the fourth watch the Lord comes down, walks on the water, and “comes to save those who were faithful during the test.”
7. Peter, now most likely to the point of exhaustion from rowing and lack of sleep, actually walks on water to the Lord, but doesn’t make it all the way. Even a great man like Peter still had to reach for the hand of grace. This is not the point of the story that most members should be talking about. Most members aren’t even half of what Peter was. Reading the comments online about “manna raining down from heaven”, I am left to conclude that a lot of members wouldn’t even have made it into the boat.

END QUOTE from *A test, a Test, a TEST!*

So in conclusion, once again, the same two principles are identified, that of the prepared not fearing and exact obedience.

Going back to the story in Judges, once the group was selected and narrowed down using these two principles, Gideon and his men performed the miracle “in the middle watch.”

Old Testament Student Manual Genesis-2 Samuel

(22-21) Judges 7:19

Ancient Israel divided the twelve hours of the night into three watches. The middle watch would have been from 10:00 p.m. until 2:00 a.m. After the dispersion of Israel, the Jews continued the practice (see Exodus 14:24; 1 Samuel 11:11; Psalms 63:6; 90:4; 119:48; Lamentations 2:19). In New Testament times the Romans divided the night into four watches (see Matthew 24:43).

Tying us back to the fourth watch principle Gideon and his men performed this miracle sometime between the third and fourth watch.

One more story quickly that also teaches the selection principle of 1. The prepared not fearing and 2. Exact obedience, would be that of the story of Nephi and the sign of the birth of the Savior. The people threatened to kill the believers and many apostatized over fear. Nephi prayed and was told that the sign would be given that night (an exact point in time) and the people said that they would kill all of the believers at that point in time. Those that lacked faith to be exactly obedient and to have literal faith in the exactness of events that were to transpire were weeded out. Meaning, that it’s not only the exactness of our obedience that weeds people out but also the exactness of their faith in believing the words of God literally and plainly.

A couple things interesting to note before we go into what the redemption of Zion ie. What Joseph's Boys do, what that looks like, there are two interesting things to point out. One was that before the miracle of Gideon and his army took place there were men in Gideon's army that had dreams of the event.

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Judges 7:9–14 relates that Gideon went to where the Midianites' army was camped. While Gideon was near their camp, he overheard a man share a dream related to the destruction of the Midianites' army. This dream gave Gideon courage.

This is fascinating because there are many in this group who have had such dreams but related to the redemption of Zion.

The second thing is when the miracle was performed Gideon had his men shout,

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- Why do you think Gideon had his men shout, “**The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon**”? (See Judges 7:20. Gideon knew—and wanted his men to know—that the Lord was with them.)

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The phrase “the Lord set every man's sword against his fellow” (verse 22) means that the Midianites began to attack each other in the chaos created by Gideon's army.

Faith as the brother of Jared, faith in the sword of the Lord ie. Faith in the word of God, is what parts the veil of unbelief. At that day, at the redemption of Zion, faith as the brother of Jared is all that will be required, the Lord will fight His own battles.

Now that we understand the why or the need for Joseph's Boys, and now that we understand the when of when these events are/were to take place (we went over this in the first paper) and now that we understand the who, meaning who will be selected to do this, let us read some quotes from prophets and apostles describing the act of the redemption of Zion done by Joseph's Boys.

D&C 103:11–14. Will The Saints Actually Return to Build Zion in Jackson County?

Verses 11–14 state that the Lord intended to restore His people to their lands, and that they would “no more be thrown down” (D&C 103:13). It is also clear, however, that this restoration would not happen until after “much tribulation” (v. 12; see also D&C 58:2–4; Notes and Commentary on D&C58:2–4). The Lord warned the Saints in Doctrine and Covenants 103 that, even though He had promised they could return to the land of Zion, if they “pollute[d] their inheritances” through sin, they would lose the Lord's support and be “thrown down” (v. 14). Since this revelation was given, many leaders of the Church have discussed the future return to Jackson County, Missouri. Elder Orson F. Whitney said: “Will our mission end here [in Utah]? Is the State of Utah the proper monument of the ‘Mormon’ People? No.... The monument to

‘Mormonism’ will stand in Jackson County, [Missouri]. There the great City will be built: There Zion will arise and shine, ‘the joy of the whole Earth,’ and there the Lord will come to His temple in His own time, when His people shall have made the required preparation.” (In Smith and Sjodahl, Commentary, p. 147.) President Joseph Fielding Smith taught that “the center place where the City New Jerusalem is to be built, is in Jackson County, Missouri. It was never the intention to substitute Utah or any other place for Jackson County.” (Doctrines of Salvation,3:72.) President Brigham Young said: “Are we going back to Jackson County? Yes. When? As soon as the way opens up. Are we all going? O no! of course not. The country is not large enough to hold our present numbers.” (In Journal of Discourses,18:355.) He also said that “a portion of the Priesthood will go and redeem and build up the centre Stake of Zion” (in Journal of Discourses,11:16).For other scriptural statements concerning the redemption of Zion, see Doctrine and Covenants103:15–20; see also Doctrine and Covenants 100:13;101:17–18, 43–62; 105:1–6, 9–15; 136:18; 3 Nephi 20:22;21:22–25. Enrichment B in the Appendix discusses the concept of Zion as taught in the Doctrine and Covenants.

D&C 101:10–16. How Will the Lord Help His People?

The Lord has decreed that Israel will be gathered and the New Jerusalem built in preparation for His Second Coming (see Moses 7:60–62). The tribe of Ephraim has been given this responsibility, and none can stop them.

The Lord has promised the Latter-day Saints that He will help them in the work of preparation and will defend them against their enemies. Though they may experience great difficulty and distress, they must remember that He has all power and will deliver them. He will not allow His people to be overthrown. His counsel is “be still [calm, undisturbed] and know that I am God” (D&C 101:16). Nothing can frustrate His work or defeat His purposes (see 1 Nephi 22:15–17; 2 Nephi 30:10; D&C 35:14).

Nephi said, “For the time speedily cometh that the Lord God shall cause a great division among the people, and the wicked will he destroy; and he will spare his people, yea, even if it so be that he must destroy the wicked by fire. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins...For the time soon cometh that the fulness of the wrath of God shall be poured out upon all the children of men; for he will not suffer that the wicked shall destroy the righteous. Wherefore, he will preserve the righteous by his power, even if it so be that the fulness of his wrath must come, and the righteous be preserved, even unto the destruction of their enemies by fire. Wherefore, the righteous need not fear; for thus saith the prophet, they shall be saved, even if it so be as by fire. Behold, my brethren, I say unto you, that these things must shortly come; yea, even blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke must come; and it must needs be upon the face of this earth; and it cometh unto men according to the flesh if it so be that they will harden their hearts against the Holy One of Israel. For behold, the righteous shall not perish; for the time surely must come that all they who fight against Zion shall be cut off. And the Lord will surely prepare a way for his people, unto the fulfilling of the words of Moses, which he spake, saying: A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that all those who will not hear that prophet shall be cut off from among the people...And I would, my brethren, that ye should know that all the kindreds of the earth cannot be blessed unless he shall make bare

his arm in the eyes of the nations. Wherefore, the Lord God will proceed to make bare his arm in the eyes of all the nations, in bringing about his covenants and his gospel unto those who are of the house of Israel. Wherefore, he will bring them again out of captivity, and they shall be gathered together to the lands of their inheritance; and they shall be brought out of obscurity and out of darkness; and they shall know that the Lord is their Savior and their Redeemer, the Mighty One of Israel.” (2 Nephi 30:10-11, 1 Nephi 22:16-20, 10-12)

D&C 103:15–20. The Lord’s People Will Redeem Zion through His Power

Doctrine and Covenants 103:15–20 clearly teaches that Zion will not be redeemed by human strength alone. The Lord said that the redemption of modern Zion will resemble the deliverance of ancient Israel from Egypt (see vv. 18–20). The biblical account describes how the Lord attended Israel in a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. In 1873 Elder Orson Pratt taught that the return to Jackson County may be accompanied by similar manifestations: “I expect that when the Lord leads forth his people to build up the city of Zion, his presence will be visible. When we speak of the presence of the Lord we speak of an exhibition of power....“We shall go back to Jackson County. Not that all this people will leave these mountains, or all be gathered together in a camp, but when we go back there...they will march forward, the glory of God overshadowing their camp by day in the form of a cloud, and a pillar of flaming fire by night, the Lord’s voice being uttered forth before his army. Such a period will come in the history of this people.... And his people will go forth and build up Zion according to celestial law. “Will not this produce terror upon all the nations of the earth? Will not armies of this description, though they may not be as numerous as the armies of the world, cause a terror to fall upon the nations? The Lord says the banners of Zion shall be terrible. . . .When the Lord’s presence is there, when his voice is heard, and his angels go before the camp, it will be telegraphed to the uttermost parts of the earth and fear will seize upon all people, especially the wicked, and the knees of the ungodly will tremble in that day, and the high ones that are on high, and the great men of the earth.” (In *Journal of Discourses*,15:364.) This great army of the Lord will not be like the armies of the world. They will not take possession of the land of Zion by force but will go forth under the protection and guidance of the Almighty God to take possession of that which will be rightfully theirs by purchase. (See *Topical Guide*, “purchase,” 402; *Notes and Commentary on D&C 105:28–32*.) The Prophet Joseph Smith recorded that his scribe “saw, in a vision, the armies of heaven protecting the Saints in their return to Zion” (*History of the Church*,2:381).The Lord knows in advance what is in store for the Saints. President Brigham Young noted: “Before we were driven out of Missouri I had a vision, . . . and saw that the people would go to the east, to the north and to the west; but we should go back to Jackson County from the west. When this people return to the Centre Stake of Zion, they will go from the west.” Some members of the Church in early Utah were so anxious to return to Jackson County they were reluctant to make improvements to homes and lands they assumed they would abandon. President Young said: “Remarks have been made as to our staying here. I will tell you how long we shall stay here. If we live our religion, we shall stay here in these mountains forever and forever, worlds without end, and a portion of the Priesthood will go and redeem and build up the centre Stake of Zion.” (In *Journal of Discourses*,6:16–17.)

D&C 101:9–12. What Is Meant by the Phrase “Sword of Mine Indignation”

The sword, an instrument of war, connotes power and retribution. President Joseph Fielding Smith explained: “While there was punishment in the suffering the saints had to endure and that because they were slow to hear the Lord, nevertheless the actions of their enemies were not justifiable; and therefore the Lord promised that he would let fall the sword of his indignation in behalf of his people. [D&C 101:11–12.] The sword of indignation commenced to fall upon the enemies of the saints shortly after the saints were driven from Missouri, and from time to time it has fallen, both in this land and in foreign lands.” (Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:460.)

The phrase “without measure” (D&C 101:11) means that the Lord’s wrath will not be restrained but will come with great fury.

[remember what Gideon had his men shout]

D&C 101:18. What Does It Mean to Build Up the “Waste Places of Zion”?

Waste means “wild and uninhabited” (Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary, s.v. “waste”). Elder Orson Hyde taught: “The scripture says, that in the last days His people will go forth and build up the waste places of Zion. But they must first be made desolate, before they can be called ‘the waste places of Zion.’ Then the hands of the Saints will be required to build them up.” (In Journal of Discourses, 10:376.)

Elder Orson Pratt taught that the Saints would go back to Missouri and possess the properties they had once inhabited in the early days of the Church, after God’s judgments have made the cities desolate: “Now that order of things will continue and will spread forth from that nucleus in Jackson county and the western counties of Missouri and the eastern counties of Kansas, where this people will be located, and it will spread abroad for hundreds and hundreds of miles on the right hand and the left, east, west, north, and south from the great central city, and all the people will be required to execute the law in all their stewardships, and then there will be a oneness and union which will continue and it will spread wider and wider, and become greater and greater, until the desolate cities of the Gentiles will be inhabited by the Saints. Then will be fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, in which he says, ‘Thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited’ [Isaiah 54:3], for God will visit them in judgment, and there will be no owners left to occupy the country. Then the land will be filled up with Saints, those who will keep the celestial law; and they will receive their stewardships according to the appointment of heaven.” (Deseret Evening News, 2 Oct. 1875, p. 265.)

Elder Heber C Kimball said, “The western boundary of the State of Missouri will be swept so clean of its inhabitants that as President Young tells us, when you return to that place, there will not be left so much as a yellow dog to wag his tail.” (Heber C. Kimball, First Counselor in the First Presidency, May 1868, in Deseret News, 23 May 1931; see also Conference Report, Oct. 1930, p. 58-59)

Brigham Young said, “When our brethren in the Quorum of the 12 shall be called to the courts of Washington to give an account of the position of the Latter Day Saints...the world will be in commotion and the Lord will have something to work upon. It will be after this when our Savior

and others will make their appearance on the earth among the Latter Day Saints.” – Brigham Young (Recorded in a letter from Amanda H. Wilcox to Susie Young Gates, March, 11, 1904; Historical Dept. of the Church)

Additional References

[Jackson County and only Jackson County is the location for THE New Jerusalem]

D&C 101:17–20. “Zion Shall Not Be Moved”

Speaking of the expulsion from Jackson County, Elder James E. Talmage said: “The saints were not permitted to enter into immediate possession of the land, which was promised them as an everlasting inheritance. Even as years elapsed between the time of the Lord’s promise to Israel of old that Canaan should be their inheritance, and the time of their entering into possession thereof—years devoted to the people’s toilsome and sorrowful preparation for the fulfilment—so in these latter days the divine purpose is held in abeyance, while the people are being sanctified for the great gift and for the responsibilities associated with it. In the meantime the honest in heart are gathering to the valleys of the Rocky Mountains [and now to stakes all around the world]; and here, ... Temples have been erected, and all nations are flowing unto this region. *But Zion shall yet be established on the chosen site; she ‘shall not be moved out of her place,’ and the pure in heart shall return ‘with songs of everlasting joy, to build up the waste places of Zion.’*” (Articles of Faith, p. 353; see also Notes and Commentary on D&C 29:8.)

[Jackson County and only Jackson County is the location for THE New Jerusalem + Any generation from Joseph to today]

Doctrine and Covenants 101:17–21. Zion and her stakes will be established

Despite the Saints’ expulsion from Jackson County, Missouri, the Lord reaffirmed that “Zion shall not be moved out of her place, notwithstanding her children are scattered” (D&C 101:17). Although the stakes of Zion have spread over the face of the earth, “the center place,” Jackson County, continues to be designated by the Lord as the location for the city of New Jerusalem (see D&C 57:1–3; 101:17, 20–21).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “There is no occasion for uncertainty or anxiety about the building up of Zion—meaning the New Jerusalem—in the last days. The Lord once offered his people the chance to build that Zion from which the law shall go forth to all the world. They failed. Why? Because they were unprepared and unworthy, as is yet the case with those of us who now comprise the kingdom. When we as a people are prepared and worthy, the Lord will again command us and the work will go

forward—on schedule, before the Second Coming, and at the direction of the President of the Church. Until then, none of us need take any personal steps toward gathering to Missouri or preparing for a landed-inheritance there. Let us, rather, learn the great concepts involved and make ourselves worthy for any work the Lord may lay upon us in our day and time. Some things must yet precede the building up of Jackson County” (A New Witness for the Articles of Faith [1985], 586).

[Any generation from Joseph to today]

D&C 101:75. Zion Could Already Be Redeemed If the Saints Had Hearkened to the Lord’s Voice

In the revelation in section 101, given in December 1833, the Lord told His people that if those who called themselves Saints would only follow His counsels, they would have sufficient resources to redeem the land and to establish Zion, “no more to be thrown down” (D&C 101:75). In June 1834 the Lord indicated that Zion might already have been redeemed except for the transgressions of His people (see D&C 105:1–10). It is not the Lord who causes delays in bringing forth Zion. The rate at which His promises are fulfilled is determined by the willingness of His people to respond to His counsel.

[Original Zion’s Camp as a type]

Revelation to Zion’s Camp

“Section 105, Revelation to Zion’s Camp,” Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual (2002), 257–61

Historical Background

In October and November 1833, the Saints in Jackson County, Missouri, were driven from their homes by mobs. “A revelation was given to Joseph Smith December 16, 1833, giving the reason for the expulsion of the members of the Church from Jackson County (see D&C 101:1–9)” (Smith, Essentials in Church History, p. 142).

As part of that revelation the Saints were instructed, through a parable, to “gather together the strength of the Lord’s house, ‘My young men and they that are middle aged also among all my servants, who are the strength of mine house, save those only whom I have appointed to tarry,’ said the Lord, ‘and go straightway unto the land of my vineyard, and redeem my vineyard, for it is mine, I have bought it with money.’” (Smith, Essentials in Church History, p. 143.) The parable was explained to Joseph Smith in a revelation on 24 February 1834 (see D&C 103:21–34).

“Joseph Smith met with the High Council in Kirtland on February 24, 1834. The subject uppermost in the minds of everyone present was how could they relieve and rescue the Saints from the mobbers in Zion. At the meeting attended by about forty others, the group listened

attentively to Parley P. Pratt and Lyman Wight, newly arrived from Zion, pleading that the Saints there be succored.

“All were quiet when the Prophet arose and stated that in response to a revelation, he intended to go to Zion to assist in redeeming it. He asked for council sanction. There was unanimous assent. He called for volunteers. Forty hands were raised. ...

“The revelation to which the Prophet referred instructed him to do his best to recruit five hundred men. They were to be young and middle-aged. If, perchance because of poor response, he should have to accept less, he was not to start until he had a minimum of one hundred. Led by Joseph Smith and Parley P. Pratt, four pairs of elders were to seek volunteers to go to the redemption of Zion. Within two days Joseph and Parley were on their way east seeking volunteers and friends. For a month they labored diligently to obtain the required help. By that time there were 125 who had volunteered to go.” (Young, “Here Is Brigham ... ,” p. 89.)

When ready to start from Kirtland, the group consisted of about 150 men. This number increased to about 200 by the time the camp arrived in Missouri (see Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, 1:358).

Zion’s Camp arrived at Fishing River, Missouri, on 19 June 1834. Two days later, “on Saturday, the 21st of June, Colonel Sounce and two other leading men of Ray County visited Joseph, and begged to know his intentions, stating: ‘We see that there is an Almighty Power that protects this people.’ Colonel Sounce confessed that he had been leading a company of armed men to fall upon the Prophet, but had been driven back by the storm. The Prophet with all the mildness and dignity which ever sat so becomingly upon him, and which always impressed his hearers, answered that he had come to administer to the wants of his afflicted friends and did not wish to molest or injure anybody. He then made a full and fair statement of the difficulties as he understood them; and when he had closed the three ambassadors, melted into compassion, offered their hands and declared that they would use every endeavor to allay the excitement.” (Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith*, p. 180.)

“On the arrival of the camp in the vicinity of Jackson county, negotiations were opened with Governor Dunklin asking him to fulfill his promise to call out the militia in sufficient numbers to reinstate the exiled saints in their possessions. The governor admitted the justice of the demand, but expressed the fear that should he so proceed his action would excite civil war, and he dared not carry out what he admitted to be the plain duties of his office. He suggested that the delegation that waited upon him urge their brethren to sell their lands in Jackson county. This the saints could not do without repudiating the revelations that designated Jackson county as the land of their inheritance, the place for the gathering together of God’s people, and the location of the city of Zion; also it meant an abandonment of their right as citizens of the United States to settle wherever they thought proper to make their homes within the confines of the Union.

“With the governor unwilling to fulfill his engagements to the exiles by calling out the militia to reinstate them in their lands; with the inhabitants of western Missouri deeply prejudiced against them, and greatly excited by the arrival of Zion’s Camp; and the brethren of the camp, and the exiled brethren, painfully conscious that the saints in the eastern branches of the church had not

responded with either sufficient money or men for them to act independently of the governor, take possession of their lands, purchase other lands, and hold them despite the violence of mobs—the necessity of disbanding Zion’s camp, and awaiting some future opportunity for the redemption of Zion, was apparent to the minds of its leaders. Accordingly it was disbanded from its encampment on Rush Creek, in Clay county, on the 24th of June, and word to that effect was officially sent to some of the leading citizens of Clay county.” (Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church*, 1:359.)

Although the avowed purpose of the camp (to reinstate the Saints to their lands in Zion) was not realized, it was not an exercise in futility, but rather served as the forge in which the Lord tempered the steel of many of his early leaders, including the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Delbert L. Stapley said: “Zion’s Camp was disbanded on June 24, 1834. It had furnished the know-how and experience which made possible the subsequent exodus of more than 20,000 men, women, and children from Nauvoo to the Rocky Mountains, and prepared leaders for the great exodus. It also provided a proving ground—some 1,000 miles of it—for the future Church leaders. This is evidenced by the fact that when the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was ‘searched out’ by the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, [most of those] chosen had been members of Zion’s Camp. These men had demonstrated their willingness to sacrifice everything, even life itself, when commanded by the Lord. The First Quorum of the Seventy was likewise made up of the men who followed the Prophet to Missouri in Zion’s Camp.” (The Importance of Church History, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [Provo, 15 Apr. 1970], p. 3.)

D&C 103:21–28, 30–35. The Call of Zion’s Camp

The Lord issued a call to the young and middle-aged men of the Church to go to the land of Zion and “avenge me of mine enemies” (D&C 103:25). This passage sounds like a call to arms, for the Lord added, “Let no man be afraid to lay down his life for my sake” (v. 27). This expedition was later known as Zion’s Camp.

Several men were called to go on a journey to recruit men and obtain money for Zion’s Camp. They were commanded to try to enlist 500 men but to recruit no fewer than 100 men. Zion’s Camp was eventually made up of 207 men, 11 women, and 11 children.

President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote: “Parley P. Pratt and Lyman Wight, the messengers from the land of Zion, were commanded not to return until they had obtained companies to go up unto the land of their brethren. The companies were to be by tens, or by twenties, or by fifties, or by hundreds, until they had obtained the number of five hundred men. If they could not obtain five hundred, they were to seek diligently to get three hundred, and if they could not obtain three hundred, then they were to obtain one hundred. They were not, however, to go up to the land of Zion until they had obtained at least one hundred. The Prophet Joseph was to go up with them and preside in their midst, for, ‘all victory and glory is brought to pass unto you through your diligence, faithfulness and prayer of faith.’ Parley P. Pratt was to go with Joseph Smith the Prophet; Lyman Wight with Sidney Rigdon; Hyrum Smith with Frederick G. Williams; Orson Hyde with Orson Pratt, on this mission to raise funds and volunteers to undertake this journey to assist their exiled brethren in the land of Zion.” (Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:485.)

At first this situation might seem puzzling. First the Lord said that Zion must be redeemed by His power. Then He called on the Saints to use their own power, even to armed conflict and loss of life if necessary, to redeem Zion. This is characteristic of how God works with His children. Only His power is sufficient to save. And yet He withholds that power until we make the effort He requires.

[Being willing and able to live Celestial Law is a prerequisite + purge]

D&C 103:20. Zion Was Not to Be Redeemed in 1834

President Joseph Fielding Smith explained the implications of the phrase in time: “It appears from this declaration that the redemption of Zion was not to come immediately, but was to be postponed to some future day. *Moreover, that day would not come until the members of the Church were willing to keep their covenants and walk unitedly, for until the members of the Church learn to walk in full accord and in obedience with all of the commandments, this day cannot come. It may be necessary in order to bring this to pass for the Lord to use drastic measures and cleanse the Church from everything that offends. This he has promised to do when he is ready to redeem Zion.* (See Matt. 13:41.)” (Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:484.)

[Being willing and able to live Celestial Law is a prerequisite]

D&C 105:1–2. Why Was Zion’s Redemption Postponed?

President Lorenzo Snow taught that “the Saints in Jackson County and other localities, refused to comply with the order of consecration, consequently they were allowed to be driven from their inheritances; and should not return until they were better prepared to keep the law of God, by being more perfectly taught in reference to their duties, and learn through experience the necessity of obedience. And I think we are not justified in anticipating the privilege of returning to build up the center stake of Zion, until we shall have shown obedience to the law of consecration. One thing, however, is certain, we shall not be permitted to enter the land from whence we were expelled, till our hearts are prepared to honor this law, and we become sanctified through the practice of the truth.” (In Journal of Discourses, 16:276; see also Notes and Commentary on D&C 101:1–8; 96:1.)

[Being willing and able to live Celestial Law is a prerequisite]

D&C 105:4–5. Upon What Principles Is Zion to Be Built?

The Saints in Missouri were not successful in living a celestial law and so were not qualified to establish Zion. Failure to control their hearts cut them off from God’s full power and kept them

from prevailing over their enemies. This is the concept the Lord tried to teach them when He said, “This is Zion—THE PURE IN HEART” (D&C 97:21).

Only when our hearts are pure can we understand and live celestial law. Celestial law, according to Elder Bruce R. McConkie, “is the law of the gospel, the law of Christ, and it qualifies men for admission to the celestial kingdom because in and through it men are ‘sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost,’ thus becoming clean, pure, and spotless” (Mormon Doctrine, p. 117). Elder McConkie also said: “If a man obeys celestial law in this life, he obtains a celestial body and spirit” (p. 115). This enables the individual to live in unity with God and others.

Elder Joseph F. Smith explained: “Those who profess to be Latter-day Saints must become acquainted with the laws of the celestial kingdom, must abide by them, must comply with the requirements of heaven and hearken to the word of the Lord, in order that Zion may be built up acceptably, and that we may partake of the benefits and blessings of this labor. For it is a labor which devolves upon those who have been called out from the midst of the world in this dispensation. We have been called, and so far as we will be faithful we are chosen to do this work. But notwithstanding we have been called, if we do not prove faithful we will be rejected. I do not speak this in reference to the whole Church, but in reference to individual members of the Church.” (In Conference Report, Apr. 1880, p. 34; see also Smith, Church History and Modern Revelation, 2:3–4.)

[Untimely figs + solid points of reference]

D&C 105:9–12. How Long Will the Lord Wait to Redeem Zion?

The Lord works through His children and honors their agency, so their wickedness or righteousness can impede or accelerate His work. In section 105 the Lord spoke of the importance of preparation to the establishment of Zion:

He wanted His leaders to be prepared (see vv. 9–10).

He wanted the Saints to be taught more perfectly what He requires of them (see v. 10).

He wanted the Saints to gain experience (see v. 10). No one can know the things of God without doing them (see John 7:17).

He wanted the Saints to know their duty more perfectly (see D&C 105:10).

He wanted the Saints to be endowed with power from on high (see v. 11).

He wanted the Saints to be faithful, enduring in humility to the end (see v. 12).

President J. Reuben Clark Jr. taught that the principles of the welfare system “are not too far away” from the united order, and that the Saints need to add to them “brotherly love” and “provide the things which those who are in need, must have” (Church News, 8 Aug. 1951, p. 15).

[Untimely figs]

D&C 105:13. How Long Was the “Little Season” to Be before Zion Would Be Established?

Most people would probably not refer to a period of more than 170 years as a “little season” (D&C 105:13), but from the Lord’s perspective it is a short time. The Church has used the intervening years to prepare. President Spencer W. Kimball taught:

“Now, my brothers and sisters, it seems clear to me, indeed, this impression weighs upon me—that the Church is at a point in its growth and maturity when we are at last ready to move forward in a major way. Some decisions have been made and others pending, which will clear the way, organizationally. But the basic decisions needed for us to move forward, as a people, must be made by the individual members of the Church. The major strides which must be made by the Church will follow upon the major strides to be made by us as individuals.

“We have paused on some plateaus long enough. Let us resume our journey forward and upward. Let us quietly put an end to our reluctance to reach out to others—whether in our own families, wards, or neighborhoods. We have been diverted, at times, from fundamentals on which we must now focus in order to move forward as a person or as a people.

“Seemingly small efforts in the life of each member could do so much to move the Church forward as never before. ...

“Are we ready, brothers and sisters, to do these seemingly small things out of which great blessings will proceed? I think we are. I believe the Lord’s church is on the verge of an upsurge in spirituality. Our individual spiritual growth is the key to major numerical growth in the kingdom. The Church is ready to accomplish these things now which it could not have done just a few years ago. So also we are ready as members. If you will accept my counsel, you will come to feel that there is a readiness in our people which must be put to work.” (In Conference Report, Apr. 1979, p. 114; or Ensign, May 1979, p. 82.)

[Prepared need not fear]

The Order of the Church for the Benefit of the Poor

“Section 104, The Order of the Church for the Benefit of the Poor,” Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual (2002), 252–56

D&C 104:78, 83. “Pay All Your Debts. ... You Shall Be Delivered This Once Out of Your Bondage”

President N. Eldon Tanner said: “For most of us there are two kinds of financial debt—consumer debt and investment or business debt. Consumer debt refers to buying on credit those things we use or consume in daily living. Examples would include installment buying of clothes, appliances, furniture, etc. Consumer debt is secured by mortgaging our future earnings. This can be very dangerous. If we are laid off work, disabled, or encounter serious emergencies, we have

difficulties meeting our obligations. Installment buying is the most expensive way to purchase. To the cost of the goods we buy must be added heavy interest and handling charges.

“I realize that young families find it necessary at times to purchase on credit. But we caution you not to buy more than is truly necessary and to pay off your debts as quickly as possible. When money is tight, avoid the extra burden of additional interest charges.

“Investment debt should be fully secured so as not to encumber a family’s security. Don’t invest in speculative ventures. The spirit of speculation can become intoxicating. Many fortunes have been wiped out by the uncontrolled appetite to accumulate more and more. Let us learn from the sorrows of the past and avoid enslaving our time, energy, and general health to a gluttonous appetite to acquire increased material goods.

“President Kimball has given this thought-provoking counsel:

“The Lord has blessed us as a people with a prosperity unequaled in times past. The resources that have been placed in our power are good, and necessary to our work here on the earth. But I am afraid that many of us have been surfeited with flocks and herds and acres and barns and wealth and have begun to worship them as false gods, and they have power over us. Do we have more of these good things than our faith can stand? Many people spend most of their time working in the service of a self-image that includes sufficient money, stocks, bonds, investment portfolios, property, credit cards, furnishings, automobiles, and the like to guarantee carnal security throughout, it is hoped, a long and happy life. Forgotten is the fact that our assignment is to use these many resources in our families and quorums to build up the kingdom of God’ (Ensign, June 1976, p. 4).

“By way of testimony, may I add this to President Kimball’s statement. I know of no situation where happiness and peace of mind have increased with the amassing of property beyond the reasonable wants and needs of the family.” (In Conference Report, Oct. 1979, p. 120; or Ensign, Nov. 1979, pp. 81–82.)

Elder Franklin D. Richards taught:

“In getting out of debt and staying out of debt, there are certain basic principles that we, as individuals and families, can apply, such as:

- Live within your income.
- Prepare and use short- and long-term budgets.
- Regularly save a part of your income.
- Use your credit wisely, if it is necessary to use it at all. For example, a reasonable debt may be justified for the acquisition of a home or education.
- Preserve and utilize your assets through appropriate tax and estate planning.

“I know that by following these simple, basic principles it is possible to get out of debt and stay out of debt.

“What will this mean to us as individuals and families?

“President Heber J. Grant said, ‘If there is any one thing that will bring peace and contentment into the human heart, and into the family, it is to live within our means, and if there is any one thing that is grinding, and discouraging and disheartening it is to have debts and obligations that one cannot meet’ (Relief Society Magazine, May 1932, p. 302).” (In Conference Report, Apr. 1979, p. 56; or Ensign, May 1979, p. 39.)