

The Ultimate Goal

The ultimate goal of professing Christians and Mormons is to return, after this life, to the presence of God and dwell with Him in the eternities within a glorious kingdom of everlasting righteousness and joy. On this there is no dispute. The questions arise in connection to how this is to be achieved on a personal, and also on a community level.

Mormons believe that for this to actually happen certain aspects of the original gospel of God and those instituted by Jesus Christ had to be restored to the earth, because they had been lost from the earthly population of mankind. The question then is; what was actually lost and in need of restoration? Some would say it was the pure precepts of the gospel itself. In fact, only certain critical parts went missing. The teachings of Christ and the holy prophets continued uninterrupted since the advent of the Lord's ministry on earth due in large part to the eventual availability of machine printed, canonized scripture. The most critical part in need of restoration was the authority to act in God's name with His approval and the support of the heavens. Stated in more familiar terms it was the reestablishment of the true priesthood and ordinances of God. Once regained, only then could the full work of the Lord progress in this temporal realm through greater understanding of His purposes for this creation. This understanding includes bringing forth ancient records of God's dealings with those of this and all other generations of man on this and other continents and their connection to the Lord's chosen people along with instructions for establishing and running the Lord's kingdom in this latter-day, mortal corner of His vineyard.

In the Book of Abraham we are told this of this creation's preexistence:

Abraham 3:

24 And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;

25 And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them...

From scripture and common teachings we are informed that a choice was given between two competing plans for the salvation of mankind to return and live eternally in the presence of God. Obviously, each spirit slated to come to this earth was required to choose which plan they would sustain and in which they would commit to participate. One can easily imagine that those who chose the Saviors plan insisted they would do all things the Lord their God would

command. Likewise, one can imagine that God lovingly said to them, “Very well, go prove yourself.”

What then is the purpose of this creation? Generally, it is to improve, educate, enlighten and elevate the souls of mankind and allow them to prove the measure of their capabilities. Specifically, it is to enlarge the borders of God’s kingdom in all of its manifestations for His glorification. Put plainly, it is to expand the borders of the spiritual and physical Zion, which is the righteous kingdom in which God’s presence dwells throughout the eternities. The fullness of the gospel restored to this mortal earth is actually to support the establishment of an earthly Zion upon the American continent as a refuge for His saints against the destruction and cleansing of the earth of those who choose wickedness over righteousness before the coming of Christ in power and glory to redeem Zion for it to become a part of the eternal kingdom of God.

D&C 6

6 Now, as you have asked, behold, I say unto you, keep my commandments, and seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion;

D&C 11

6 Now, as you have asked, behold, I say unto you, keep my commandments, and seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion.

D&C 12

6 Now, as you have asked, behold, I say unto you, keep my commandments, and seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion.

D&C 14

6 Seek to bring forth and establish my Zion. Keep my commandments in all things.

To this end we must pursue the Lord’s plan of both physical and spiritual salvation and sanctification; likewise the Lord must gather His saints into the garners so the dross of the field can be burned as the final act of the harvest. The steps for establishing Zion are well known. They are:

1. Belief and faith in Christ as our Savior and Redeemer.
2. Repentance of sins and transgressions.
3. Proper baptism by one holding true priesthood.

4. The imposition of hands by those possessing true authority, to confirm the physical act of immersive baptism and to facilitate the reception of the enduring Gift of the Holy Ghost.
5. To receive an endowment of certain keys and to covenant with God to become part of His chosen people.
6. To secure an inheritance in Zion.
7. To come together or gather in Zion.
8. To fulfill the Law of God and abide one's trial of faith.

We all live but a moment on this earth, so one must ask; what of these steps must I accomplish in mortality before I die, to gain my desired status and residence in the eternities?

The most immediate purpose now, in this dispensation of time is to pursue one's inclusion in the Lord's Zion on earth. Many Mormons in their personal progression have accomplished the first four or five steps in the process. The final three distinct steps exist to establish Zion as required by the Lord for His saints' protection and their sanctification. The first of these final steps is to secure an inheritance in Zion. This will be the primary focus of this presentation. To this end, certain definitions are necessary for a clear, contextually correct, understanding of what is to follow and for use in the study of other ancillary scriptural references. Some serve only as definitions while others can be used as enlightening substitutions. All scripture and teachings must be understood by its purpose and context. The remaining two steps beyond the securing of an inheritance fall beyond the scope of this offering and come only after the first of these final three steps is accomplished, namely; the acquisition of an inheritance property.

THE LORD'S CHURCH – In the Book of Mormon we find the Lord's view of this subject.

1 Nephi 14

10 And he said unto me: Behold there are save two churches only; the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil; wherefore, whoso belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations; and she is the whore of all the earth.

CHURCH – The best rendering is "Community."

PROVE – The most complete and accurate meaning is to "demonstrate through action."

MOUNTAIN – Unless specifically referring to a physical mound, the best understanding is a "Stronghold," or a seat of government or of power.

ETERNAL LIFE – Permanent residence in the Celestial Kingdom.

ETERNAL LIVES – Permanent residence in the top degree of the Celestial Kingdom.

ETERNAL INCREASE – Ongoing addition of glory and progeny for those in the top degree of the Celestial Kingdom.

KING – When not referring to the Lord, it can refer to a mortal king, but in vision it usually refers to a kingdom, nation, or era of earthly time.

ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION – The persecution or destruction of that or those, which are righteous.

DESOLATION OF ABOMINATION – The destruction of the wicked.

LOT – Besides the nephew of Abraham, it can mean a parcel of ground, or a method of selection as in “drawing lots,” or the majority of something up to its entirety, or one’s status as in one’s lot in life, or an assignment, allotment or appointment. Each interpretation depends on the context in which it is used.

WEDDING FEAST – Concerning the references herein; it is the fullness of the Lord’s gospel in Zion, to be realized at the second advent of Christ.

BRIDEGROOM – As used in connection with the “Wedding Feast” in Zion, it is Christ.

ZION – The community of God and Christ as it exists in three realms, namely; the celestial, spiritual kingdom throughout the eternities wherein resides the Church of the Firstborn, or the terrestrial realm of those who have been temporarily translated, and the earthly refuge or sanctuary for those living the temporal fullness of Celestial Law to overcome their trial of faith.

With an idea of what is the Lord’s Zion, the question remains about where Zion is to be found. In all aspects, Zion is a physical place, whether it is in the spiritual realm, an intermediate realm or an earthly one or in one’s heart, it must exist somewhere. The Lord has already made clear where it is in this age and on this continent.

Section 57

Date: July 20, 1831

Place: Zion, Jackson County, Missouri

To: Elders of the Church

D&C 57

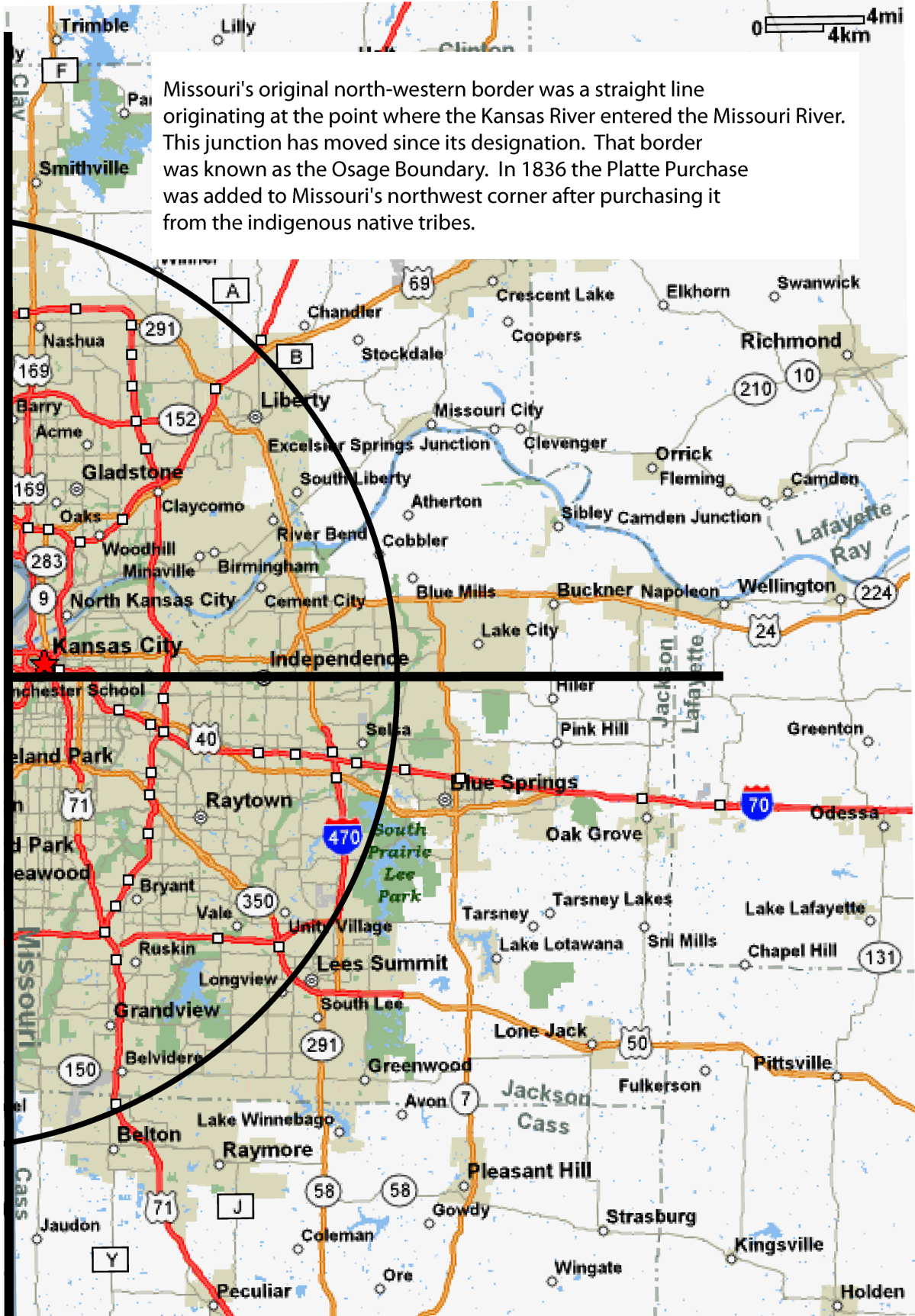
1 Hearken, O ye elders of my church, saith the Lord your God, who have assembled yourselves together, according to my commandments, in this land, which is the land of Missouri, which is the land which I have appointed and consecrated for the gathering of the saints.

2 Wherefore, this is the land of promise, and the place for the city of Zion.

3 And thus saith the Lord your God, if you will receive wisdom here is wisdom. Behold, the place, which is now called Independence, is the center place; and a spot for the temple is lying westward, upon a lot, which is not far from the courthouse.

4 Wherefore, it is wisdom that the land should be purchased by the saints, and also every tract lying westward, even unto the line running directly between Jew and Gentile;

5 And also every tract bordering by the prairies, inasmuch as my disciples are enabled to buy lands. Behold, this is wisdom, that they may obtain it for an everlasting inheritance.



Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Six 1843-44 p.362

President Joseph Smith said: -- It is as impossible for me to continue the subject of yesterday as to raise the dead. My lungs are worn out. There is a time to all things, and I must wait. I will give it up, and leave the time to those who can make you hear, and I will continue the subject of my discourse some other time. I want to make a proclamation to the Elders. I wanted you to stay, in order that I might make this proclamation. You know very well that the Lord has led this Church by revelation. I have another revelation in relation to economy in the Church -- a great, grand, and glorious revelation. I shall not be able to dwell as largely upon it now as at some other time; but I will give you the first principles. You know there has been great discussion in relation to Zion--where it is, and where the gathering of the dispensation is, and which I am now going to tell you. The prophets have spoken and written upon it; but I will make a proclamation that will cover a broader ground. The whole of America is Zion itself from north to south, and is described by the Prophets, who declare that it is the Zion where the mountain of the Lord should be, and that it should be in the center of the land. When Elders shall take up and examine the old prophecies in the Bible, they will see it.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Two 1834-37 p.79

I received, by a heavenly vision, a commandment in June following, to take my journey to the western boundaries of the State of Missouri, and there designate the very spot, which was to be the central place for the commencement of the gathering together of those who embrace the fullness of the everlasting Gospel. Accordingly I undertook the journey, with certain ones of my brethren, and after a long and tedious journey, suffering many privations and hardships, arrived in Jackson County, Missouri, and after viewing the country, seeking diligently at the hand of God, He manifested Himself unto us, and designated, to me and others, the very spot upon which he designed to commence the work of the gathering, and the upbuilding of an "holy city," which should be called Zion -- Zion, because it is a place of righteousness, and all who build thereon are to worship the true and living God, and all believe in one doctrine, even the doctrine of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall bring again Zion" (Isaiah 52:8).

There are several key points in these references worthy of amplification. The one of greatest importance is that God personally appointed and consecrated the "land of Missouri" as the place for the city of Zion and ultimately for the gathering of those who would prove to be called His saints. Before the State of Missouri had settled all its boundaries, the Territory of Missouri

was much larger, spanning from the Canadian border to the Gulf States. He goes further to specify the center of the future Zion in the existing city of Independence. The Lord states that the land should be acquired lying between Jew and Gentile; the “Jew” meaning the remnant of the house of Jacob already in the land and the white, European Gentiles.

Joseph Smith’s statement that the whole of America is Zion is ultimately correct, but the “mountain of the Lord,” meaning the stronghold, His temple residence, the seat of government and power is to be in the center of the land. It is made clear that this is where the establishment of Zion is to commence and that Zion is to be a holy city. It is the only contemporary city defined as Holy because no other city is on record as appointed and consecrated by God Himself. The word “holy” is only applicable to God alone and no one else. The Savior went so far as to include the word “good.”

Matthew 19

16 ¶ And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? [there is] none good but one, [that is], God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

Understanding what Zion is functionally, and where it is physically located may be very interesting as a subject of study, but what would make it a critical concern to modern Mormons and all those who would be saints? The answer quite simply is that without an established and functioning earthly Zion we, and our progeny not only fail to survive the coming calamities, but we will not be counted among the Lord’s chosen people in the eternities.

Zion on earth must exist as required by God or there is no survival or salvation for our offspring and us. This creation is already successful, Christ fulfilled His earthly mission and conquered both physical and spiritual death, and as it stands, the Lord and God will eventually redeem this creation. The only thing left for our generation and those that follow us, is to try to be included in God’s salvation and the sanctification of this creation’s inhabitants who have already qualified.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Two 1834-37 p.71

Take away the Book of Mormon and the revelations, and where is our religion? We have none; for without Zion, and a place of deliverance, we must fall; because the time is near when the sun will be darkened, and the moon turn to blood, and the stars fall from the heaven, and the earth reel to and fro. Then, if this is the case, and if we are not sanctified and gathered to the places God has appointed, with all our former professions and our great love for the Bible, we must fall; we cannot stand; we cannot be saved; for 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. – DHC 2:52.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Five 1842-43 p.254

In regard to the building up of Zion, it has to be done by the counsel of Jehovah, by the revelations of heaven; and we should feel to say, "If the Lord go not with us, carry us not up hence." We would say to the Saints that come here, we have laid the foundation for the gathering of God's people to this place, and they expect that when the Saints do come, they will be under the counsel that God has appointed.

The Twelve are set apart to counsel the Saints pertaining to this matter; and we expect that those who come here will send before them their wise men according to revelation; or if not practicable, be subject to the counsel that God has given, or they cannot receive an inheritance among the Saints, or be considered as God's people, and they will be dealt with as transgressors of the laws of God. We are trying here to gird up our loins, and purge from our midst the workers of iniquity; and we hope that when our brethren arrive from abroad, they will assist us to roll forth this good work, and to accomplish this great design that "Zion may be built up in righteousness; and all nations flock to her standard;" that as God's people, under His direction, and obedient to His law, we may grow up in righteousness and truth; that when His purposes shall be accomplished, we may receive an inheritance among those that are sanctified. (July 15, 1842.) DHC 5:61-66.

It is evident from the foregoing reference that a generalized call to gather the bulk of the Lord's people to the land designated for the establishment of Zion is the responsibility of the twelve central apostles and must certainly include the first presidency and must also be based on a

specific revelation from the Lord. Also, that Joseph realized his work was preparatory and the early saints laid only the foundation for events to transpire in the future. He goes on to say however, that if such a public call to gather is not practicable, which it is not at this time due to the lack of the required revelation, the responsibility to prepare ahead of time for such a gathering rests with true believers individually. Under the current circumstances, the Lord's saints are ultimately subject to the commandments the Lord has already given, or they cannot claim an inheritance in Zion, now or in the eternal future. Furthermore, those who ignore this most important aspect of the gospel will not be part of God's people and will be considered as transgressors of the laws of God. At this point, since there is no general call to gather, one may simply buy a property and hold it in reserve while waiting for further instructions and the public call to gather.

So, what can one do presently to meet the Lord's requirements and how important is it to do so? The only step to be accomplished, before the call to gather the masses, is to acquire and keep an inheritance in the land of Zion for oneself and one's future family members. Although, if a saint wishes to move there before the call to the masses, so much the better for them. Alternatively, one can purchase and hold an inheritance property without moving one's residence until the time is right.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section One 1830-34 p.36

Behold, He will not fail you! He will come with ten thousand of His Saints, and all His adversaries shall be destroyed with the breath of His lips! All those who keep their inheritances, notwithstanding they should be beaten and driven, shall be likened unto the wise virgins who took oil in their lamps. But all those who are unbelieving and fearful, will be likened unto the foolish virgins, who took no oil in their lamps: and when they shall return and say unto the Saints, Give us of your lands -- behold, there will be no room found for them. As respects giving deeds, I would advise you to give deeds as far as the brethren have legal and just claims for them, and then let every man answer to God for the disposal of them.

D&C 101

68 Nevertheless, as I have said unto you in a former commandment, let not your gathering be in haste, nor by flight; but let all things be prepared before you.

69 And in order that all things be prepared before you, observe the commandment which I have given concerning these things--

70 Which saith, or teacheth, to purchase all the lands with money, which can be purchased for money, in the region round about the land which I have appointed to be the land of Zion, for the beginning of the gathering of my saints;

71 All the land which can be purchased in Jackson county, and the counties round about, and leave the residue in mine hand.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Two 1834-37 p.101

But to illustrate more clearly this gathering: We have another parable -- "Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure hid in a field, the which, when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof, goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field!"

The Saints work after this pattern. See the Church of the Latter-day Saints, selling all that they have, and gathering themselves together unto a place that they may purchase for an inheritance, that they may be together and bear each other's afflictions in the day of calamity.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Two 1834-37 p.101

"Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." The Saints again work after this example. See men traveling to find places for Zion and her stakes or remnants, who, when they find the place for Zion, or the pearl of great price, straightway sell that they have, and buy it.

D&C 63

25 Behold, the land of Zion--I, the Lord, hold it in mine own hands;

26 Nevertheless, I, the Lord, render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's.

27 Wherefore, I the Lord will that you should purchase the lands, that you may have advantage of the world, that you may have claim on the world, that they may not be stirred up unto anger.

28 For Satan putteth it into their hearts to anger against you, and to the shedding of blood.

29 Wherefore, the land of Zion shall not be obtained but by purchase or by blood, otherwise there is none inheritance for you.

30 And if by purchase, behold you are blessed;

31 And if by blood, as you are forbidden to shed blood, lo, your enemies are upon you, and ye shall be scourged from city to city, and from synagogue to synagogue, and but few shall stand to receive an inheritance.

It is common knowledge that originally an early saint had to be specifically called to go to the Missouri community established to set up the beginnings of Zion and all others were prohibited. Some may still be under the misconception that this moratorium is still in effect. This is not so.

D&C 64

21 I will not that my servant Frederick G. Williams should sell his farm, for I, the Lord, will to retain a strong hold in the land of Kirtland, for the space of five years, in the which I will not overthrow the wicked, that thereby I may save some.

22 And after that day, I, the Lord, will not hold any guilty that shall go with an open heart up to the land of Zion; for I, the Lord, require the hearts of the children of men.

This revelation was given September 11, 1831. Therefore, since September 11, 1836 any sincere seeker with an open heart wishing to be considered a saint could not only prepare for the coming devastation by buying an inheritance in Zion, one could move to Zion if desired without fear of transgressing the Lord's will. This remains in effect to this day.

A similar misconception, believed by many is commonly known as the "Yellow Dog" teaching.

J. Golden Kimball, Conference Report, October 1930, p.59

"The western boundaries of the State of Missouri will be swept so clean of its inhabitants that as President Young tells us, 'when we return to that place there will not be as much as a yellow dog to wag his tail.'

Without debating the veracity of this statement, two things are clear. First, there is no documented disclosure of this declaration in any official statement made by Brigham Young and second, this has never been an official doctrine of the church or any prophet. It exists only as a whispered rumor among the fearful. The cleansing of the land of its inhabitants will clearly occur during the destruction of the wicked and will affect the whole of the continent, if not the world. Therefore, waiting elsewhere for the land of Missouri to be swept clean outside the protective confines of Zion undoubtedly is much too late to avoid one's destruction.

These realities are important at this time for the same reason it was conceived of before, namely, that Zion is to be a sanctuary from the impending bloodshed on this continent. Joseph foresaw our first civil war and warned of its then imminent dangers.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section One 1830-34 p.17

And now I am prepared to say by the authority of Jesus Christ, that not many years shall pass away before the United States shall present such a scene of bloodshed as has not a parallel in the history of our nation; pestilence, hail, famine, and earthquake will sweep the wicked of this generation from off the face of the land, to open and prepare the way for the return of the lost tribes of Israel from the north country. The people of the Lord, those who have complied with the requirements of the new covenant, have already commenced gathering together to Zion, which is in the state of Missouri; therefore I declare unto you the warning which the Lord has commanded me to declare unto this generation, remembering that the eyes of my Maker are upon me, and that to Him I am accountable for every word I say, wishing nothing worse to my fellowmen than their eternal salvation; therefore, "Fear God, and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come." Repent ye, repent ye, and embrace the everlasting covenant, and flee to Zion, before the overflowing scourge overtake you, for there are those now living upon the earth whose eyes shall not be closed in death until they see all these things, which I have spoken, fulfilled. Remember these things; call upon the Lord while He is near, and seek Him while He may be found, is the exhortation of your unworthy servant.

(Signed) JOSEPH SMITH, JUN. -- DHC 1:312-316.

Roughly thirty years after this declaration of Joseph the American Civil War commenced. Joseph was speaking of futurity but this is not limited to just the nineteenth century. True prophecies must ultimately come to pass, but many times they are done piecemeal or are fulfilled more than once. Other scripture and teachings refer to our modern day as well.

D&C 45

63 Ye hear of wars in foreign lands; but, behold, I say unto you, they are nigh, even at your doors, and not many years hence ye shall hear of wars in your own lands.

64 Wherefore I, the Lord, have said, gather ye out from the eastern lands, assemble ye yourselves together ye elders of my church; go ye forth into the western countries, call upon the inhabitants to repent, and inasmuch as they do repent, build up churches unto me.

65 And with one heart and with one mind, gather up your riches that ye may purchase an inheritance which shall hereafter be appointed unto you.

66 And it shall be called the New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints of the Most High God;

67 And the glory of the Lord shall be there, and the terror of the Lord also shall be there, insomuch that the wicked will not come unto it, and it shall be called Zion.

68 And it shall come to pass among the wicked, that every man that will not take his sword against his neighbor must needs flee unto Zion for safety.

69 And there shall be gathered unto it out of every nation under heaven; and it shall be the only people that shall not be at war one with another.

70 And it shall be said among the wicked: Let us not go up to battle against Zion, for the inhabitants of Zion are terrible; wherefore we cannot stand.

71 And it shall come to pass that the righteous shall be gathered out from among all nations, and shall come to Zion, singing with songs of everlasting joy.

The first part of this quotation could pertain to our first civil war but on careful examination it becomes clear that it also refers to things that are yet in our future. Most obvious is that the city of Zion does not presently exist where the glory of the Lord resides. The wicked are yet to be fearful of attacking Zion. And lastly, it must exist as an actual city before those who will not be party to the shedding of blood can flee to it and it will be the only city not overcome by any war. The most troubling thing suggested resides in the statement that those who must flee to the protection of Zion are those who will not fight their “neighbor.” This is likely not a foreign enemy invading our land; they are our next-door neighbors. Indicated in these words is a yet future localized war as alluded to in the following statements.

The Book of Mormon is a record of the forefathers of our western tribes of Indians; having been found through the ministration of an holy angel, and translated into our own language by the gift and power of God, after having been hid up in the earth for the last fourteen hundred years, containing the word of God which was delivered unto them. By it we learn that our western tribes of Indians are descendants from that Joseph who was sold into Egypt, and that the land of America is a promised land unto them, and unto it all the tribes of Israel will come, with as many of the Gentiles as shall comply with the requisitions of the new covenant. But the tribe of Judah will return to old Jerusalem. The city of Zion spoken of by David, in the one hundred and second Psalm, will be built upon the land of America, "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." (Isaiah 35:10); and then they will be delivered from the overflowing scourge that shall pass through the land. But Judah shall obtain deliverance at Jerusalem. See Joel 2:32; Isaiah 26:20 and 21; Jeremiah 31:12; Psalms 1:5; Ezekiel 34:11, 12 and 13. These are testimonies that the Good Shepherd will put forth His own sheep, and lead them out from all nations where they have been scattered in a cloudy and dark day, to Zion, and to Jerusalem; besides many more testimonies which might be brought.

The latter half of this teaching speaks of the ransomed of the Lord being delivered from an "overflowing scourge" that will pass through this land and that Judah, or the Jews, will have deliverance at Jerusalem, meaning the ancient Jerusalem. Bear in mind that when Joseph spoke these words the Jews had already been scattered out of Jerusalem for about seventeen hundred years and Jerusalem was then, still under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. The reality of non-Israelite rule of Jerusalem would continue for another one hundred years until the Jews would again gather to Jerusalem and take control of its government in the mid nineteen forties. The final gatherings for deliverance are yet to happen. Whether one anticipates an occupation of a foreign invading force or civil upheaval, the requirement for a city of refuge to protect the Lord's people remains the same.

As things stand at present for those who would be saints, the most immediate priority is a personal plan for self-preservation and protection for those of their ongoing families. They must have a place in Zion on which to be delivered. Once Zion exists there will be found there residents, and as also indicated, refugees of the destruction swirling about this land. As already determined, only saints holding deeds will be actual residents with a legitimate right to occupy that land and all refugees will be under their protection, but will not possess or enjoy the power

to participate in governing Zion's affairs. The long-range priority of those who would be saints is to secure for themselves an inheritance in both the earthly and the heavenly Zion to exist beyond this mortal sphere for themselves and their progeny in the Celestial Kingdom.

The common mantra of Mormons for many years has been; "Families Are Forever." Properly stated, it should be rendered "Families Can Be Forever If All Requirements Are Met."

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Six 1843-44 p.300

Except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity, while in this probation, by the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood, they will cease to increase when they die; that is, they will not have any children after the resurrection. But those who are married by the power and authority of the priesthood in this life, and continue without committing the sin against the Holy Ghost, will continue to increase and have children in the celestial glory. The unpardonable sin is to shed innocent blood, or be accessory thereto. All other sins will be visited with judgment in the flesh, and the spirit being delivered to the buffetings of Satan until the day of the Lord Jesus.

Since the unpardonable sin, which puts one beyond the Atonement of Christ, is the shedding of innocent blood or being accessory thereto, and since during armed conflict one cannot actually tell whose blood the Lord might consider as "innocent," participation in warfare is out of the question.

D&C 131

1 In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees;

2 And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage];

3 And if he does not, he cannot obtain it.

4 He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Six 1843-44 p.331

The question is frequently asked, "Can we not be saved without going through with all those ordinances? I would answer, No, not the fullness of salvation. Jesus said, There are many mansions in my Father's house, and I will go and prepare a place for you. House here named should have been translated kingdom; and any person who is exalted to the highest mansion has to abide a celestial law, and the whole law too.

To have eternal progeny one must gain entry into the highest level of the celestial kingdom and a requirement for that station is entering into the everlasting covenant of marriage, but that is neither the only requirement nor the highest or most important. There are those who believe celestial marriage means only plural marriage, but most disagree with that notion. Regardless of that difference of opinion one must live the complete or fullness of celestial law, within the confines or restrictions of this earthly existence, to qualify for inclusion in that level of glory. Without compliance to that "whole law" all must fall short without the possibility of eternal increase to be single agents forever in the service of God.

A practical consideration in regard to buying an inheritance in Zion relates to wondering if one can only occupy the specific parcel purchased in mortality throughout the eternities since this earth, when celestialized, will be the abode of the Lord and his saints. The final disposition of these inheritances can be inferred from the following.

D&C 85

6 Yea, thus saith the still small voice, which whispereth through and pierceth all things, and often times it maketh my bones to quake while it maketh manifest, saying:

7 And it shall come to pass that I, the Lord God, will send one mighty and strong, holding the scepter of power in his hand, clothed with light for a covering, whose mouth shall utter words, eternal words; while his bowels shall be a fountain of truth, to set in order the house of God, and to arrange by lot the inheritances of the saints whose names are found, and the names of their fathers, and of their children, enrolled in the book of the law of God;

8 While that man, who was called of God and appointed, that putteth forth his hand to steady the ark of God, shall fall by the shaft of death, like as a tree that is smitten by the vivid shaft of lightning.

9 And all they who are not found written in the book of remembrance shall find none inheritance in that day, but they shall be cut asunder, and their portion shall be appointed them among unbelievers, where are wailing and gnashing of teeth.

10 These things I say not of myself; therefore, as the Lord speaketh, he will also fulfil.

11 And they who are of the High Priesthood, whose names are not found written in the book of the law, or that are found to have apostatized, or to have been cut off from the church, as well as the lesser priesthood, or the members, in that day shall not find an inheritance among the saints of the Most High;

12 Therefore, it shall be done unto them as unto the children of the priest, as will be found recorded in the second chapter and sixty-first and second verses of Ezra.

It is stated that the inheritances of the saints whose names are found in the “Book Of The Law Of God” will be arranged by lot. It’s unclear what exactly the word “lot” means in this context, but the most likely is either according to their standing in regard to the Law, or it is by assignment based on other criteria to satisfy the Lord’s will.

Scripture states that inheritances may be appointed. The circumstance for the stated appointment is to be the result of the appointee having contributed to a fund, along with others, to buy properties through agents and then the properties are to be distributed to the investors through an authority figure or through some prearranged procedure. Any such recipient of access to an inheritance property must personally receive an unencumbered warranty deed for the property to qualify for inclusion in Zion. Likewise, any property purchased individually must be owned free and clear to qualify. There is no such thing as having claim on an inheritance property in Zion, which is legally owned or encumbered by others.

Furthermore, a legitimate, qualifying inheritance property cannot be just given to someone who has taken no thought or made any personal sacrifice to purchase such, unless they are a legitimate heir of the giver for it to be a legal and recognized inheritance. Also, a qualifying inheritance property cannot be stolen because it has been abandoned due to the legal owners

having fled or died, leaving it vacant. Any inheritance property in Zion that is not a family purchase must be disposed of only by the One Mighty and Strong, spoken of in the scripture, according to the Lord's determination at that time.

It is also disclosed that even those who may have purchased inheritances, who do not continue faithful to the end or those who fail to comply with all the requirements of the Law, will lose their claim on such inheritances, allowing those properties to be reassigned, combined, or subdivided as the Lord sees fit. It should also be understood that ownership of an inheritance could be passed on to one's offspring. And if they don't dispose of the whole of it, but honor and keep it, they may also eventually, and rightfully gather to Zion for safety.

So, where might we all be in the unfolding scenario of these last days? We are given parables, which generally through metaphor or simile map out what will happen to enlighten those who seek some clarity. Of particular interest is the parable of the Bridegroom's Wedding Feast.

JST Matthew 22

1 AND Jesus answered the people again, and spake unto them in parables, and said,

2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, who made a marriage for his son.

3 And when the marriage was ready, he sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding; and they would not come.

4 Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them that are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my oxen, and my fatlings have been killed, and my dinner is ready, and all things are prepared; therefore come unto the marriage.

5 But they made light of the servants, and went their ways; one to his farm, another to his merchandise;

6 And the remnant took his servants, and entreated [them] spitefully, and slew [them].

7 But when the king heard that his servants were dead, he was wroth; and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

8 Then said he to his servants, The wedding is ready; but they who were bidden were not worthy.

9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

10 So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

11 But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man who had not a wedding garment.

12 And he said unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

13 Then said the king unto his servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take and cast him away into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

14 For many are called, but few chosen; wherefore all do not have on the wedding garment.

Here is a key. If the inhabitants of the city into which God originally sent his servants with invitations to His Son's eventual marriage is the world, and the invitation to the wedding feast, which occurs at the second coming of the Lord, is the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, then the last of the aforementioned slain servants would be Joseph Jr. and Hyrum Smith. It therefore follows that the next action to be taken is the destruction of the wicked city, which lies before us now.

Joseph Smith Matthew 1

4 And Jesus left them, and went upon the Mount of Olives. And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying: Tell us when shall these things be which thou hast said concerning the destruction of the temple, and the Jews; and what is the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world, or the destruction of the wicked, which is the end of the world?

5 And Jesus answered, and said unto them: Take heed that no man deceive you;

6 For many shall come in my name, saying--I am Christ--and shall deceive many;

7 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you, and ye shall be hated of all nations, for my name's sake;

8 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another;

9 And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many;

10 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold;

11 But he that remaineth steadfast and is not overcome, the same shall be saved.

12 When you, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, then you shall stand in the holy place; whoso readeth let him understand.

One's Holy Place on this continent can only be one's plot in Zion and nowhere else.

JST Luke 12

38 Let your loins be girded about and have your lights burning;

39 That ye yourselves may be like unto men who wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

40 Verily I say unto you, Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching; for he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

41 For, behold, he cometh in the first watch of the night, and he shall also come in the second watch, and again he shall come in the third watch.

42 And verily I say unto you, He hath already come, as it is written of him; and again when he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, blessed are those servants when he cometh, that he shall find so doing;

43 For the Lord of those servants shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

44 And now, verily I say these things unto you, that ye may know this, that the coming of the Lord is as a thief in the night.

45 And it is like unto a man who is a householder, who, if he watcheth not his goods, the thief cometh in an hour of which he is not aware, and taketh his goods, and divideth them among his fellows.

46 And they said among themselves, If the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through and the loss of his goods.

47 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, be ye therefore ready also; for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

48 Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or unto all?

49 And the Lord said, I speak unto those whom the Lord shall make rulers over his household, to give his children their portion of meat in due season.

50 And they said, Who then is that faithful and wise servant?

51 And the Lord said unto them, It is that servant who watcheth, to impart his portion of meat in due season.

52 Blessed be that servant whom his Lord shall find, when he cometh, so doing.

54 But the evil servant is he who is not found watching. And if that servant is not found watching, he will say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and the maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken.

55 The Lord of that servant will come in a day he looketh not for, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him down, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

56 And that servant who knew his Lord's will, and prepared not for his Lord's coming, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

57 But he that knew not his Lord's will, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom the Lord has committed much, of him will men ask the more.

58 For they are not well pleased with the Lord's doings; therefore I am come to send fire on the earth; and what is it to you, if I will that it be already kindled?

59 But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!

63 And he said also unto the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, ye say straightway, There cometh a shower; and so it is.

64 And when the south wind blows, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass.

65 O hypocrites! Ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?

D&C 88

77 And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom.

78 Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand;

79 Of things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms—

80 That ye may be prepared in all things when I shall send you again to magnify the calling whereunto I have called you, and the mission with which I have commissioned you.

81 Behold, I sent you out to testify and warn the people, and it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor.

82 Therefore, they are left without excuse, and their sins are upon their own heads.

83 He that seeketh me early shall find me, and shall not be forsaken.

84 Therefore, tarry ye, and labor diligently, that you may be perfected in your ministry to go forth among the Gentiles for the last time, as many as the mouth of the Lord shall name, to bind up the law and seal up the testimony, and to prepare the saints for the hour of judgment which is to come;

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