

Portrait of
**a ZION
PERSON**

LARRY BARKDULL

Series Titles

Introduction: *Portrait of a Zion Person*

Book 1: *Zion—Our Origin and Our Destiny*

Book 2: *The First Pillar of Zion—The New and Everlasting Covenant*

Book 3: *The Second Pillar of Zion—The Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood*

Book 4: *The Third Pillar of Zion—The Law of Consecration*

Book 5: *The Pure in Heart*

Book 6: *No Poor among Them*

Book 7: *In One Year—The 3 Nephi Model for Becoming a Zion Person*

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Dedication

To Elizabeth Barkdull
Ron and Bonnie McMillan
David and Lorelea Anderson
Paul and Sharon Meyers

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Note about The Three Pillars of Zion

The full Zion series contains eight books. The original series, *The Three Pillars of Zion*, contains five of those books. Because the subjects build one principle upon another, the full table of contents, bibliography, and index are included in each of these five books for ease of navigation. The introduction to the series, *Portrait of a Zion Person*, and the final two volumes in the series, *No Poor among Them* and *In One Year—The 3 Nephi Model for Becoming a Zion Person*, are stand-alone books containing their respective front and concluding matter.

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Portrait of a Zion Person

This book is a concise introduction to the expansive series entitled *The Three Pillars of Zion*. Within its pages, we will identify and provide a brief overview of several (not all) characteristics that might portray a Zion person. In the seven subsequent books, we will discuss these characteristics, along with others, as we explore in depth the unique covenants, attributes, powers, and privileges of a Zion person.

We speak of Zion, sing of Zion and long for Zion, but what do we know of it? That we must have wanted to live in the days of Zion and become Zion people is evidenced by our being born in the latter days and enjoying the blessings of Zion. We likely prepared for Zion in the premortal life, and perhaps we asked and were assigned to come at this time to help and establish Zion. With little doubt, Zion was and is our desire.

We live at a time when the three covenants or “pillars” of Zion—The new and everlasting covenant, the oath and covenant of the priesthood, and the law of consecration—have been restored to the earth.¹ Thus, we have immediate access to the blessings of Zion. What remains is our understanding these covenants and our abiding faithfully in them. That is, we must lift our sights, believe, and implement *all* the terms of the covenants in our lives. Only then can we achieve the ideal of the characteristics that describe Zion people.

When a person seeks to faithfully live *all* the terms of the three pillars of Zion, he qualifies for an unequalled harvest of blessings. If we were to attempt to describe a Zion person who abides in these covenants, we would discover that his set of characteristics would be light-years removed from the description of a person of Babylon. Among his characteristics might be the following:

- Living in the highest priesthood society
- Gathering around Zion principles for an exalted purpose
- Embracing beauty
- Becoming unified—“one heart and one mind”
- Striving for equality—“no poor among them”
- Becoming selfless and giving Christian service

1 D&C 42:67.

Exhibiting the pure love of Christ
Experiencing true happiness, joy, and fullness of life
Becoming holy
Achieving the state of *blessedness* by
 Sustaining leaders
 Believing Christ by receiving baptism and the Holy Ghost
 Bearing testimony
 Becoming poor in spirit
 Mourning righteously
 Becoming meek
 Hungering and thirsting for righteousness
 Becoming merciful
 Becoming pure in heart
 Becoming a maker of peace
 Being willing to suffer persecution for the cause of Christ

Experiencing true safety and security
Obtaining an abundance in all things
Embracing the law of consecration with its four foundational principles:
 Agency
 Stewardship
 Accountability
 Labor

Enjoying God's presence

While these qualities, characteristics, and attributes are not inclusive, they do provide a basis by which we might paint the portrait of a Zion person.

Living in the Highest Priesthood Society

Earthly societies exist in varying levels, from telestial to celestial. President Kimball called Zion, “the highest order of priesthood society.”² When ancient Zion people entered into the new and everlasting covenant, they, as individuals and as priesthood societies, flourished beyond imagination. The best known of these priesthood societies were the cities of Enoch, Salem, and the Nephites in their golden era.³ The Melchizedek Priesthood, with its ordination and ordinances, has the power to prepare people for the Lord to establish Zion in individual lives, marriages, families, and in a priesthood society.⁴ The fundamental priesthood society, of course, is the family; hence, the continuing admonition of the prophets is to create Zion in our homes. For example, Elder Matthew Cowley said, “In your homes where the priesthood of God exists, there is Zion.”⁵ Hence, Zion is family centered, just as it is in heaven.

Pure-hearted people who embrace the new and everlasting covenant (the Covenant⁶) seek to first embrace Zion principles in their individual lives; then they seek for the establishment of Zion in their marriages, families and, of course, in the Church. They become ambassadors of Zion, and they dedicate their lives to drawing people out of Babylon and into Zion. They “arise and shine forth, that [their] light may be a standard for the nations.”⁷ By means of the power of the priesthood and the Zion principles of righteousness, they are eventually brought back into the presence of God and obtain heaven, the celestial environment and ideal of Zion.⁸

2 Kimball, “And the Lord Called His People Zion,” *Ensign*, August 1984, 2.

3 Moses 6:67; JST, Genesis 14:27, 32–34; 4 Nephi 1:1–18.

4 D&C 113:8; 84:19–22.

5 Cowley, *Matthew Cowley Speaks*, 30.

6 In this book, when the word *Covenant* is capitalized, it is referring to the new and everlasting covenant.

7 D&C 115:5.

8 See JST, Genesis 14:26–32.

Gathering Around Zion Principles for an Exalted Purpose

Jeremiah spoke of the Lord's intention to gather us to and make us individually Zion: "I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion."⁹ Zion, as a priesthood society, can be subdivided into stakes¹⁰ and wards, and further subdivided into families.¹¹ The purpose of gathering to Zion, or gathering around Zion principles, is always the same: "to raise up a committed society of 'pure people' who will 'serve God in righteousness' (D&C 100:13, 16)."¹² To that end, Moses restored the keys of gathering to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Kirtland Temple, a significant principle of priesthood power that parents might ponder with regard to their family.¹³

A reason that Zion individuals gather to Zion and around Zion principles in their marriages, families, wards, and stakes is to become *one*, or unified. Jesus taught that there is inherent power in unity: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, as I said unto my disciples, where two or three are gathered together in my name, as touching one thing, behold, there will I be in the midst of them—even so am I in the midst of you."¹⁴ Besides marriages, families, wards and stakes, Zion people gather in presidencies, home teaching, visiting teaching, in missionary companionships, or wherever two or more are gathered in the Lord's name. When we gather together "as touching one thing,"¹⁵ we invite the Lord to join with and help us. The principle of gathering summons extraordinary power when exercised in righteousness.

9 Jeremiah 3:4.

10 D&C 101:21–22.

11 Cowley, *Matthew Cowley Speaks*, 30.

12 *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, s.v. "Zion," 1624; see also D&C 43:8–11; Ephesians 4:11–13.

13 D&C 110:11.

14 D&C 6:32; see also Matthew 18:20.

15 D&C 6:32.

Embracing Beauty

Zion is the perfection of beauty.¹⁶ This could be said of a Zion person. Besides meaning outward loveliness, the word *beauty* suggests harmony, excellence, truthfulness, originality. Beauty draws attention to something or someone's most effective features. Moreover, beauty is gratifying and defined as an outstanding or conspicuous example.¹⁷ No wonder, then, that the Lord commands that "Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness... Zion must arise and put on her beautiful garments."¹⁸ Hugh Nibley wrote:

The two words most commonly used to describe Zion are beauty and joy, and the same two words most often relate to heaven and paradise. Beauty comes first, for beauty is whatever gives joy. Now we approach the question of what Zion looks like: "The city of our God... Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion...Walk about Zion and go round about her" (Psalm 48:1–2, 11–12). "An eminently delightful place..." These are more than figures of speech. As President Joseph F. Smith put it, "Things upon the earth, so far as they have not been perverted by wickedness, are typical of things in heaven. Heaven was the prototype of this beautiful creation when it came from the hand of the Creator, and was pronounced "good."... The order of Zion is such as will leave the earth as near its primordial, paradisiacal condition as possible. The paradise of Eden is called in the scriptures "the garden of the Lord" (Genesis 13:10), and we are told that God and his holy angels delighted to come to it and commune with Adam in its delightful surroundings."¹⁹

Zion people seek for beauty: "If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things."²⁰ A Zion person is refined, modest, virtuous and beautiful beyond the charms of Babylon. A Zion person approaches and eventually exceeds the beauties of Eden. Such a person is described as blessed and beautiful: "And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day... and whoso shall publish peace... how beautiful upon the mountains shall they be."²¹

16 Psalms 50:2.

17 American Heritage Dictionary, s.v. "Beauty."

18 D&C 82:14.

19 Nibley, *Approaching Zion*, 7.

20 Thirteenth Article of Faith.

21 1 Nephi 13:37.

Becoming Unified—“Of One Heart and One Mind”

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught that cooperation exemplifies and empowers people who are striving to become Zionlike: “When you are united, your power is limitless. You can accomplish anything you wish to accomplish.”²² This phenomenon is called “synergy.” That is, when two or more agents act together, they create an effect greater than the sum of the individual agents. For example, if one thread can hold five pounds, two threads woven together might actually hold twenty or more pounds!

Oneness is the divinely mandated goal for all covenant relationships: “I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine.”²³ Jesus exemplifies oneness by being “no respecter of persons”²⁴; that is, he has equal regard for everyone, and likewise, he expects Zion people to be “even as I am.”²⁵ The Godhead sets the example of unity: “The Father, and I, and the Holy Ghost are one.”²⁶ Jesus commands Zion people to likewise become one with each other and one with the Father and with him: “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us . . . that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.”²⁷

Jesus wrought the infinite Atonement so that we might become one with the Father and with him. “The literal meaning of the word ‘Atonement’ is self-evident: at-one-ment, the act of unifying or bringing together what has been separated and estranged.”²⁸ We cannot fully accept the Atonement without becoming one with each other and with the Father and the Son. The Savior taught the Nephites that Zion people become one by ending contention and disputations,²⁹ to deal justly with each other,³⁰ and by ending economic and social distinctions.³¹ Zion-like oneness is manifested in the covenant marriage.³² That is, God provided us the sealing power³³ to make us one—to “turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.”³⁴

The preeminent quality of oneness has always described Zion people: “And the Lord called his people ZION, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them.”³⁵ Divisiveness of any kind or in any degree is an invention of the devil³⁶ and thus characteristic of Babylon.

22 Hinckley, “Your Greatest Challenge, Mother,” *Ensign*, November 2000, 97.

23 D&C 38:27.

24 D&C 38:16.

25 3 Nephi 27:27; D&C 38:27.

26 3 Nephi 11:36.

27 John 17:21–23.

28 *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, s.v. “Atonement,” 83.

29 3 Nephi 11:22–28.

30 4 Nephi 1:2–3.

31 3 Nephi 6:10–16; 4 Nephi 1:2–3, 24–35.

32 D&C 38:26–27.

33 D&C 132:19.

34 Malachi 4:6.

35 Moses 7:18.

36 3 Nephi 11:29.

Striving for Equality—“No Poor Among Them”

The *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* explains, “Since love comprehends all righteousness (Matt. 22:36–40), the people of Zion live together in love as equals.”³⁷ From the beginning of this dispensation, the Lord emphatically insisted that we strive to become equal: “But it is not given that one man should possess that which is above another, wherefore the world lieth in sin.”³⁸ A tragedy of inequality is that “the abundance of the manifestations of the Spirit [are] withheld.”³⁹

The Lord’s solution for all forms of inequality is Zion. Equality does not infringe on our ability to remain individual; neither does it suggest communal living or joint ownership of property. Rather, equality provides that each of us enjoys equal access to the resources consecrated to the Lord and his Church. That is, Zion people have “all things common among them.”⁴⁰ The Lord explained the eternal order of common access: “And you are to be equal, or in other words, *you are to have equal claims on the properties*, for the benefit of managing the concerns of your stewardships, every man according to his wants and his needs, inasmuch as his wants are just—And all this for the benefit of the church of the living God, that every man may improve upon his talent, that every man may gain other talents, yea, even an hundred fold, to be cast into the Lord’s storehouse, to become the common property of the whole church—Every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God. This order I have appointed to be an everlasting order unto you.”⁴¹ This is the celestial order of Zion, which allows us to “enjoy in this world the type of equality that defines relations between persons in the celestial world (D&C 78:4–8; 105:4–5).”⁴²

Zion *levels up* its people. The poor are exalted by means of the consecrated offerings of the rich, meaning those who have more time, talents, and means than they need: “And it is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine. But it must needs be done in mine own way; and behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low.”⁴³ Consequently, a true Zion person allows no poor—no monetarily, emotionally, physically or spiritually poor—to experience want within his circle of influence.⁴⁴

By truly loving “thy neighbor as thyself,”⁴⁵ a Zion person esteems his brother as himself. Repeating the principle twice for emphasis, the Lord states: “And let every man esteem his brother as himself, and practise virtue and holiness before me. *And again* I say unto you, let every man esteem his brother as himself.”⁴⁶ There can be no mistaking the meaning of this commandment. By obeying it, a Zion person lends his support to the cause of Zion, a central goal of which is that the covenant people of God enjoy “all things in common.”⁴⁷

37 *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, s.v. “Zion,” 1625.

38 D&C 49:20.

39 D&C 70:14.

40 3 Ne 26:19; 4 Nephi 1:3.

41 D&C 82:17–20, emphasis added.

42 *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, s.v. “Equality,” 463.

43 D&C 104:15–16.

44 Moses 7:18.

45 Matthew 22:39.

46 D&C 38:24–25; emphasis added.

47 Acts 2:44.

Becoming Selfless and Giving Christian Service

President Spencer W. Kimball had much to say about Zion: “Zion is ‘every man seeing the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God.’”⁴⁸ And at another time, “Are we interested in what we can get or are we interested in what we can give? The Savior's life was one of unselfish service. The Savior's doctrine and gospel is one of selflessness.”⁴⁹

Continuing, President Kimball also stated, “selflessness brings Zion.”⁵⁰ Selflessness is the hallmark of heaven and thus of Zion: “Heaven is a place, but also a condition . . . *It is selflessness.*”⁵¹ The Zion attribute of selflessness engenders a celestial level of happiness: “Selflessness is a key to happiness and effectiveness; it is precious and must be preserved as a virtue that guarantees so many other virtues.”⁵² Explaining this, President Kimball said, “One of the differences between true joy and mere pleasure is that certain pleasures are realized only at the cost of someone else's pain. Joy, on the other hand, springs out of selflessness and service, and it benefits rather than hurts others.”⁵³ President James E. Faust added, “Our search for happiness largely depends on the degree of righteousness we attain, *the degree of selflessness we acquire*, the amount and quality of service we render, and the inner peace that we enjoy.”⁵⁴

The Savior's parable of the good Samaritan exemplifies the selflessness of a Zion person. Here was a Zion individual, who, without prejudice, showed compassion on a stranger, stopped to minister to the injured man, “set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.” Then the Samaritan paid for the man's ongoing treatment.⁵⁵ That attitude of generosity and selfless service shown to someone in need is quintessentially Zion. Whenever we serve “one of the least” of God's children, the Lord counts our service as if we had done that service unto him.⁵⁶ And because God can be in debt to no one, he rewards our service with an incredible return—“an hundredfold.”⁵⁷ Truly, he is the most generous paymaster. Upon this principle of giving and receiving “with increase,”⁵⁸ Zion people prosper. President Marion G. Romney said, “You cannot give yourself poor in this work; you can only give yourself rich.”⁵⁹

48 Kimball, “Becoming the Pure in Heart,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 79; D&C 82:19.

49 Kimball, Conference Report, October 1951, 87.

50 Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 363.

51 Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle*, 264; emphasis added

52 Kimball, “My Beloved Sisters,” *Ensign*, Nov 1978, 17–19.

53 Kimball, “President Kimball Speaks Out,” *New Era*, March 1981, 40.

54 Faust, *Ensign*, Oct. 2000, 2; emphasis added.

55 Luke 10:33–37.

56 Matthew 25:40.

57 Matthew 19:29.

58 Packer, “The Candle of the Lord,” *Ensign*, January 1983, 51.

59 Romney, “Welfare Services: The Savior's Program,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 92.

Exhibiting the Pure Love of Christ

President Joseph F. Smith said, “Charity, or love, is the greatest principle in existence.”⁶⁰ On the principle of love—love of God and love of neighbor—“hang all the law and the prophets.”⁶¹ Like other principles, love ranges in quality from telestial to celestial, which type of love is called charity, “the pure love of Christ.” This is the quality of love found in a Zion person. Because charity is perfect, celestial love, it “never faileth.”⁶²

Charity describes God: “God is love.”⁶³ Because we are commanded to be perfect like him,⁶⁴ we must learn to love as he loves. The more we develop and exhibit charity, the more God-like and Zion-like we become. The Apostle John taught that the person who loves best knows God best: “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.”⁶⁵

What sets celestial love apart from terrestrial and telestial forms of love is its motivation: Charity is more concerned with what it *does* than what it *feels*. Therefore, the opposite of love is not hate but apathy.⁶⁶ Perhaps the best description of charity is found in 1 Corinthians 13:1–13 and Moroni 7:44–48. Here is a list of attributes as seen through the lens of a Zion person:

- A Zion person suffers long (endures a hardship or endures with someone during his or her hardship).
- A Zion person is kind.
- A Zion person does not envy.
- A Zion person is not vaunted up (does not boast).
- A Zion person is not puffed up (is not proud).
- A Zion person does not behave unseemly (act rudely).
- A Zion person seeks not his or her own (is not selfish).
- A Zion person is not easily provoked (keeps temper under control).
- A Zion person thinks no evil (focuses on the good).
- A Zion person does not rejoice in iniquity but rejoices in the truth (is not inclined toward evil, but embraces anything virtuous, lovely, of good report, or praiseworthy⁶⁷).
- A Zion person bears all things (bears up under the weight of problems).
- A Zion person believes all things (recognizes and follows truth).
- A Zion person hopes all things (knows ultimately that God is in charge).
- A Zion person endures all things (is willing to pay the price because he knows the wait will be worth it).

60 Smith, Conference Report, April 1917, 4.

61 Matthew 22:40.

62 Moroni 7:46–47.

63 1 John 4:7–8.

64 Matthew 5:48.

65 1 John 4:7.

66 Ashton, “Be a Quality Person,” *Ensign*, February 1993, 93.

67 Articles of Faith 13.

Charity (celestial, Zion-like love) differs from telestial and terrestrial manifestations of love by the fact that it is *saving* love. Charity lifts another person; charity has the capacity to forgive and rescue from enormous distances. As we give and receive this celestial love, we discover that those within our gravitational pull cannot escape our loving embrace.

Charity, the love of Zion, is built on the foundation of

1. total loyalty
2. total sacrifice
3. total trust

Moreover, charity has three manifestations:

1. love from Christ
2. love for Christ
3. love like Christ

Expounding, H. Wallace Goddard referenced Elder Max Caldwell, observing, “Charity is first and foremost the redemptive love that Jesus offers all of us. It is the love from Christ. He is the model of charity—which never faileth.”⁶⁸

When we receive love *from* Christ, we develop love *for* Christ. We might ask ourselves, “How does celestial love germinate?” And the answer would be: By Jesus’ showing his love for us first. Both Heavenly Father and Jesus set the example: “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us . . . We love him, because he first loved us.”⁶⁹ Likewise, when we take the initiative and show love to someone first, that love is returned with an increase. It is an oft-repeated scriptural formula that has many applications. For example, “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.”⁷⁰ Elder Boyd K. Packer said it this way: “As you give what you have, there is a replacement, with increase!”⁷¹ John Greenleaf Whittier wrote, “I’ll lift you, and you lift me, and we’ll both ascend together.” This is the love of Zion.

Whereas Babylon elevates only *me*, Zion elevates others *through me*. Zion-like love is not only an expansive principle, it is one that draws God near to us and becomes perfect when we accept it and do not turn away from it.⁷² The Apostle John said, “If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.”⁷³ Moreover, by showing love through selfless service, we receive an added measure of the Holy Ghost: “Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.”⁷⁴ As we abide in this cycle of loving and receiving love, our ability to love eventually becomes perfect: “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect.”⁷⁵

68 Goddard, *Drawing Heaven into Your Marriage*, 111 .

69 1 John 4:10, 19.

70 Matthew 5:7.

71 Packer, “The Candle of the Lord,” *Ensign*, January 1983, 51.

72 1 Nephi 8:28.

73 1 John 4:12.

74 1 John 4:13.

75 1 John 4:16–17.

One of the greatest benefits of love is ceasing to be afraid: “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear.”⁷⁶

Moreover, Zion-like love is patient, which means:

1. “I will wait *with* you.”
2. “I will wait *for* you.”
3. “I will wait *upon* you,” meaning “I will serve you.”

In one way or another, Zion-like love means *I will wait*.

Love—celestial Zion love—is the greatest power in the universe. It is the “Royal Law,”⁷⁷ which James quoted the Savior as defining: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”⁷⁸

Love motivates God to do all that he does.⁷⁹ The greatest expression of his love is to give and redeem life. He invites all of his children to experience this quality of love and his quality of life, for therein is his “joy made full.”⁸⁰ By following his example—giving life and redeeming life—is our joy also made full.⁸¹ And the words *full* and *fullness* always describe Zion.

76 1 John 4:18.

77 James 2:8.

78 Matthew 22:36–40.

79 Moses 1:39.

80 3 Nephi 17:20.

81 Alma 26:11, 16; 3 Nephi 27:31; 28:10.

Experiencing True Happiness, Joy, and the Fullness of Life

The scriptures associate happiness and joy with the fullness of life.⁸² The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God.”⁸³

Happiness, like other gospel principles, exists in varying degrees “ranging from ‘celestial’ to ‘testial,’ depending on the level of ‘law’ [individuals] ‘abide’ (D&C 88:22–35; 76).”⁸⁴ People of Zion enjoy happiness on a level that approaches celestial. Having embraced the Covenant after the coming of Christ, the Nephites enjoyed happiness equal to that of Enoch’s people. Elder Marion G. Romney described this group of Nephites as “a society in which, ‘there was no contention . . . because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people’; a society in which, ‘there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness;’ a society in which every member had conquered the lusts of the flesh. ‘. . . and surely,’ concludes the record, ‘*there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God.*’ (4 Nephi 15–16).”⁸⁵ Certainly, the absence of evil promotes joy, but only “virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God,”⁸⁶ which includes selfless service, facilitates true joy.⁸⁷ If the purpose of man’s creation is that he might have joy,⁸⁸ then that man must develop these attributes in his character.

We experience joy, in part, by awareness and appreciation for “the gifts of life, the earth, and personal agency (e.g., taste, smell, beauty, music)”; by “using these gifts to create opportunities or to develop relationships (e.g., marriage, parenting, charity); by “coming to understand how mortality fits into the divine purpose or plan of Heavenly Father” (using this understanding “as a framework for comprehending and assimilating life’s experiences”); and by “accepting Christ as Savior and feeling his acceptance and approval of one’s efforts.”⁸⁹

Elder McConkie explained that only entering into the joy of the Lord⁹⁰ can result in a fullness of joy, which is the ultimate condition of Zion people. True happiness, or *joy*, he said, “is a gift of the Spirit. It comes from the Holy Ghost,”⁹¹ suggesting that Satan cannot duplicate the feeling of joy. “In this connection, the Book of Mormon describes a scene wherein ‘the spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy, having received a remission of their sins, and having peace of conscience’ (Mosiah 4:3; cf.

82 4 Nephi 1:3, 16; Mosiah 16:11.

83 Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 255–56.

84 *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, s.v. “Zion,” 1625.

85 Marion G. Romney, Conference Report, April 1958, 126; emphasis added.

86 Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 255–56.

87 Matthew 16:25; Mosiah 4:3, 20.

88 2 Nephi 2:25.

89 *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, s.v. “Joy,” 771.

90 D&C 51:19.

91 McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, “Joy,” 397.

John 15:10–12).⁹² Therefore, the more faith-filled, repentant, humble, and Zion-like we become, the more joy we experience. Moreover, our seeking the establishment of Zion in our lives will serve to dispel sadness and result in the highest degree of joy: “For the Lord shall comfort Zion, he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody.”⁹³

92 *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, s.v. “Joy,” 771.

93 2 Nephi 8:3.

Becoming Holy

Zion is a holy place—“the City of Holiness”⁹⁴—whose individual citizens are holy: “he that is left in Zion . . . shall be called holy.”⁹⁵ We cannot make ourselves holy; only God can do that.⁹⁶ Our responsibility is to strive for holiness by living the new and everlasting covenant, which has the power to bring us to perfection, and thus holiness. Because Zion “cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom,”⁹⁷ a state of holiness is not possible unless we embrace this celestial Covenant and become like celestial people. Brigham Young explained the goal of holiness that is pursued by Zion people: “We are trying to be the image of those who live in heaven; we are trying to pattern after them, to look like them, to walk and talk like them, to deal like them, and build up the kingdom of heaven as they have done.”⁹⁸

Becoming holy is a journey: “The process of becoming holy is based on three doctrines: *justification*, which satisfies the demands of justice for the sins of the individual through the Atonement of Jesus Christ; *purification*, made possible by that same Atonement and symbolized in the sacrament of the bread and water, requiring the constant cleansing of oneself from earthly stains and imperfections; and *sanctification*, the process of being made holy. Having purified oneself of imperfections to the greatest degree possible, one is invested, over a lifetime, with holiness from God.”⁹⁹

The concept of perfection, the ultimate expression of holiness, can seem overwhelming to struggling mortals. This commandment is stated in the Sermon on the Mount. Using the Father as an example, Jesus told his disciples in Jerusalem: “Ye are therefore commanded to be perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”¹⁰⁰ Later, to the Nephites, he gave substantially the same commandment, but this time he added himself as an example: “Therefore I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect.”¹⁰¹

We see in these verses a subtle indication that total perfection is acquired by going from one *perfection* to another. While Jesus was in the flesh, although he was a perfect man, he was nevertheless not yet as perfect as his Father, who was now a resurrected, glorified man. But after Jesus’ Resurrection, as indicated in his rewording the commandment to the Nephites, Jesus could claim the Father’s quality of perfection. Clearly, this exalted level of perfection can only be attained *after* the Resurrection.

Interestingly, some gospel writers have suggested that the Savior’s commandment to become perfect points to the diligence we give to abiding in the new and everlasting covenant. Hence, the verse might read, “Ye are therefore commanded to be perfect in living the Covenant even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect in living the

94 Moses 7:19.

95 Isaiah 4:3.

96 *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, s.v. “Holiness,” 648.

97 D&C 105:5.

98 *Journal of Discourses*, 9:170.

99 *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, s.v. “Holiness,” 648.

100 JST, Matthew 5:50.

101 3 Nephi 12:48.

Covenant.” That is, with the same degree of diligence that the Father gives to perfectly abiding in the Covenant, we must strive to abide in the Covenant—“even unto death, that [we] may be found worthy.”¹⁰²

We do not arrive at this or any level of perfection automatically. Nevertheless, we understand that just men, who are not yet ultimately perfect, are nevertheless *made* perfect through the grace of Jesus Christ.¹⁰³ That is, abiding in the Covenant assures us the enabling power of the Atonement to make us *as if* we were perfect until the time that we are wholly perfect, meaning “finished, complete, fully developed.”¹⁰⁴ Perhaps being made perfect by the grace of Jesus Christ is what is meant when we read of just men like Noah, who is described as perfect in his generation.¹⁰⁵ Likewise, we are *made* perfect in the Covenant, which is designed to move us forward to ultimate perfection and holiness, if we will abide in it as does our Father, whose name is Man of Holiness.¹⁰⁶

Therefore, we have no reason to lose hope. The prophets have taught us repeatedly that it is our direction, not our arriving, that makes all the difference. The perfection of Enoch’s Zion, we are told, happened in the “process of time.”¹⁰⁷

102 D&C 98:14.

103 Moroni 10:32–33; D&C 76:69; 129:3; Hebrews 12:23.

104 Matthew 5:48 footnote *b*.

105 Moses 8:27.

106 Moses 6:57; 7:35.

107 Moses 7:21.

Achieving the State of Blessedness

When Jesus appeared to the Nephites, he taught them the principles of *blessedness*, otherwise known as *Beatitudes*, which means “to be blessed” or “to be happy.” Jesus had taught these same principles to his Judean disciples at the Sermon on the Mount¹⁰⁸ and later at Christ’s sermon on the plain.¹⁰⁹ To the Nephites he added several additional principles of blessedness. Collectively, the body of principles contained in these two sermons could aptly be described as the law of the gospel.

President Harold B. Lee called this sermon “the constitution for a perfect life.”¹¹⁰ He wrote, “In order to gain entrance into the kingdom of Heaven, we must not only be good but we are required to do good and be good for something.”¹¹¹ That is, we must strive to achieve the celestial state of blessedness that characterizes a Zion person. President Lee suggested that these principles of blessedness “represent a recipe for righteousness with incremental steps.”¹¹²

The Beatitudes follow an intriguing sequence that leads from one state of blessedness to the next. In fact, they mark our spiritual journey from its inception to its perfect conclusion. Consider, for example, the soul who is poor in spirit. That he lacks pride is one interpretation, but another suggests that he is spiritually impoverished, lacking that which is essential to make the journey to the promised land. His spiritual lack draws him to the only Source; thus Jesus commends those who are poor in spirit “who come unto me,” promising and prophesying that “theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”¹¹³ That is, the kingdom of heaven on earth—the Church of Jesus Christ, which is the custodian of saving covenants and ordinances—is the inheritance of those who humble themselves and make their way to Christ seeking to satisfy their spiritual lack. Then having received of the Spirit, the once-impoverished are strengthened to journey onward until they arrive in the celestial kingdom of heaven.

Recognition of spiritual lack also causes sons and daughters of God to mourn or mourn *righteously*—mourning that leads to spiritual growth. For whatever reason, sin, or weakness, they mourn for their fallen condition and plead for relief. The Lord responds to such mourning with comfort,¹¹⁴ a soothing voice and soft touch, and the promise of eventual reward.

Spiritual lack and righteous mourning summon meekness, that Godlike quality of humility. The meek yearn to ascend from their spiritual poverty and reduced circumstances and yearn to be reunited and reconciled with God and enjoy spiritual abundance. Their longings are heard by the Lord through prayers, and those prayers are answered again with the promise of inheritance: this time inheritance of the earth,¹¹⁵ which shall become a celestial kingdom.¹¹⁶

108 Matthew 5–7.

109 Luke 6:20–49.

110 Lee, *Decisions for Successful Living*, 56–57.

111 Lee, *Decisions for Successful Living*, 59–60.

112 Condie, “Agency: The Gift of Choices,” *Ensign*, September 1995, 16.

113 3 Nephi 12:3.

114 3 Nephi 12:4.

115 D&C 45:58.

116 D&C 88:18–26.

Spiritual lack, righteous mourning, meekness—what do they lead to? “Hungering and thirsting after righteousness.”¹¹⁷ Who is the Righteous? Jesus Christ.¹¹⁸ What are His names? The Bread of Life;¹¹⁹ the Living Water.¹²⁰ What is the promise given to those who hunger and thirst for the Bread of Life, the Living Water, the Righteous? “They shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.”¹²¹ “And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”¹²²

When a person receives the miracles of the Lord—being relieved of spiritual poverty, experiencing divine comfort, being spiritually fed—he realizes that he has been blessed by love alone, not for any deserving action. The miracle is a pure manifestation of mercy. Then another miracle occurs when the recipient discovers that mercy is both an expansive and a reciprocal principle: mercy grows and returns by giving mercy. Thus the Lord promises that those who give away the mercy they received from the Lord will yet see that mercy, compounded, return again to them. “And blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”¹²³

The acts of mercy-giving and mercy-receiving tend to purify the soul. Eventually, they who are sufficiently purified—“the pure in heart”—shall, with an immutable promise, “see God.”¹²⁴ This is the end of the journey for those who have struggled to overcome their spiritual impoverishment, mourned for their fallen condition, humbled themselves before the Lord, hungered and thirsted to find Him and know all about Him, lived as He lives: extending mercy as they receive mercy, and submitting to the purifying process of the Holy Ghost—“*all the pure in heart . . . shall see God.*”

What do the pure in heart become? *Peacemakers*—makers of peace in similitude of the Prince of Peace. They abhor contentions and disputations; they do the peaceable works of Christ. Their promise is glorious: “They shall be called the children of God;”¹²⁵ that is, they become the sons and daughters not only by descendency but by spiritual birth and inheritance: heirs of salvation.¹²⁶

The state of the pure in heart and peacemakers places them at odds with Babylon. Suddenly, the sons and daughters of God find themselves at war with a system that will no longer support them. This intense hatred summons persecution in a multitude of ways. Lehi and Nephi listed a few: mockery, scorn, anti-Christ philosophies, direct or overt conditions that tend to “yoke, torture, slay, and bind.” Who are the persecutors? The idolaters, the materialistic, and the spiritually perverse, to name a few.¹²⁷ The Lord reserves great promises for those who endure the world’s persecution: “For ye shall have great joy and be exceedingly glad, for great shall be your reward in heaven.”¹²⁸

117 3 Nephi 12:6.

118 Moses 7:47.

119 John 6:48.

120 John 4:11.

121 3 Nephi 12:6.

122 John 6:35.

123 3 Nephi 12:7.

124 3 Nephi 12:8.

125 3 Nephi 12:9.

126 Mosiah 27:25; D&C 25:1.

127 1 Nephi 8:26–28; 13:7–9.

128 3 Nephi 12:10–12.

Clearly, the Beatitudes mark the spiritual journey that begins with the first motions of conversion and ends with unequalled celestial reward. They describe what we become by following this journey.

Let us take a further view involving other or more in-depth interpretations of the Beatitudes through the lens of becoming a Zion person.

Sustaining Leaders

*“Blessed are ye if ye shall give heed unto the words of these twelve whom I have chosen from among you to minister unto you.”*¹²⁹ A Zion person sustains his rank and file leaders and covenants to live by their counsel. A Zion person recognizes the Lord’s voice in the voice of his servants: “Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.”¹³⁰

Interestingly, when we sustain our leaders, we do so with the right hand, which is the sign of covenant-making. Our keeping this sustaining covenant promotes the oneness demanded by Zion, and it allows the Spirit to flow through our leaders to us—an avenue of revelation that is vital to our spiritual survival and progression. Clearly, through the servants of God, Zion people are blessed.

Believing Christ by Receiving Baptism and the Holy Ghost

*“Blessed are ye if ye shall believe in me and be baptized . . . behold, I will baptize you with fire and with the Holy Ghost.”*¹³¹ This principle of blessedness hearkens to the first principles and ordinances of the gospel: faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, and receiving the Holy Ghost.¹³² Only faith in Jesus Christ—believing who he is and what he has done—can motivate a person to seek a change of heart,¹³³ symbolized and formalized by baptism, the “covenant of salvation.”¹³⁴ Baptism is the gate that one passes through to leave and be saved from Babylon (a type of hell) and to enter the path leading to Zion (a type of the celestial kingdom).

Baptism by water and baptism by the Spirit are equally essential. Joseph Smith said, “Baptism by water is but half a baptism, and is good for nothing without the other half—that is, the baptism of the Holy Ghost.”¹³⁵ Elder McConkie listed the four purposes for baptism. These purposes are: 1) baptism is for the remission of sins; 2) baptism gives the repentant person membership in the Church and admits him into the kingdom of God on earth; 3) baptism is the gate to the celestial kingdom of heaven; that is, it starts a person out on the straight and narrow path which leads to eternal life; and 4) baptism is the means whereby the door to personal sanctification is opened.¹³⁶

129 3 Nephi 12:1; emphasis added.

130 D&C 1:38.

131 3 Nephi 12:1; emphasis added.

132 Articles of Faith 4.

133 Alma 5:7, 13–15.

134 McConkie, “Baptism,” *Mormon Doctrine*, 69–72.

135 Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 314.

136 McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, “Baptism,” 69–72.

Jesus commanded, “Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day.”¹³⁷ One of the criteria of the baptismal covenant especially points us to Zion: “to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light.”¹³⁸

Bearing Testimony

“Blessed are they who shall believe in your words.”¹³⁹ Someone hearing the testimony of a Zion person is blessed because he has heard and believed the word of God on faith alone.¹⁴⁰ Likewise, the Zion person who has borne testimony is blessed by having his testimony recorded in heaven and by receiving anew a remission of sins: “Nevertheless, ye are blessed, for the testimony which ye have borne is recorded in heaven for the angels to look upon; and they rejoice over you, and your sins are forgiven you.”¹⁴¹

The blessedness that is inherent in a Zion person draws others to him by means of his spoken or unspoken testimony. Bearing testimony makes a Zion person the “salt of the earth,” and salt, of course, is a “healing, flavoring, and preserving agent.”¹⁴² By means of his testimony and service, a Zion person “succors the weak, lifts up the hands which hang down, and strengthens the feeble knees.”¹⁴³ Additionally, bearing testimony characterizes Zion’s blessedness by making a Zion person a light to the world: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto you to be the light of this people. . . . Therefore let your light so shine before this people, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”¹⁴⁴

Becoming Poor in Spirit

“Yea, blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”¹⁴⁵ A common interpretation of this phrase is “blessed are the poor in pride, or the poor of this world.” That is, a person who is poor in spirit lacks pride. Perhaps he is devoid of pride because he has not enjoyed the things of this world; or maybe he lacks pride because he has disciplined himself to not set his heart on the things of this world; then again, he might lack pride because he is in need of additional spiritual insight or strength. In any case, when such people recognize their need or weakness and come to Christ, the Lord will “make weak things become strong unto them.”¹⁴⁶ This enabling principle is called *grace*,¹⁴⁷ and it demonstrates the strength of *oneness* we gain when we partner with the Lord in the Covenant. In that partnership, the weak (poor

137 3 Nephi 27:20.

138 Mosiah 18:8.

139 3 Nephi 12:2; emphasis added.

140 John 20:29.

141 D&C 62:3.

142 Largey, ed., *The Book of Mormon Reference Companion*, s.v. “Salt,” 695.

143 D&C 81:5.

144 3 Nephi 12:14, 16.

145 3 Nephi 12:3, emphasis added.

146 Ether 12:27.

147 Bible Dictionary, s.v. “Grace” 697.

in spirit) person yokes himself to Christ¹⁴⁸ and thereby becomes as strong as his Companion. Therefore, it is with great eagerness that a Zion person is willing to declare his nothingness and vulnerability, and seek the Lord with full dependency,¹⁴⁹ rather than relying on the arm of flesh, or his own genius and strength.¹⁵⁰

The associated blessings are remarkable: “And behold, I say unto you that if ye do this ye shall always rejoice, and be filled with the love of God, and always retain a remission of your sins; and ye shall grow in the knowledge of the glory of him that created you, or in the knowledge of that which is just and true.”¹⁵¹ In this sense, being poor in spirit is a redeeming quality.

Considered in another light, our being poor in spirit can suggest a deficit of character that needs correcting. Therefore, the poor in spirit who admit their sins, “viewing themselves in their own carnal state, even less than the dust of the earth,” and repent, crying, “O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified; for we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God”;¹⁵² those who yearn for forgiveness, strip themselves of pride, and come to the Lord in humility seeking the return of the Spirit, will be filled with the Holy Ghost. They will be “filled with joy, having received a remission of their sins, and having peace of conscience, because of the exceeding faith which they had in Jesus Christ.”¹⁵³

Mourning Righteously

“*Blessed are all they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.*”¹⁵⁴ Notice the word *all*. When a person who is poor in spirit (pride) comes to the Lord, and when the Lord shows the person his weakness, that person *mourns*, which, interestingly, can be an act of worship.¹⁵⁵ The characteristic of one who mourns is having a broken heart and a contrite spirit.¹⁵⁶ He recognizes his nothingness and carnal nature and longs for support and deliverance.

When the people of King Benjamin made this discovery, they immediately shed themselves of pride, came to Christ, and mourned, desiring desperately to be delivered from Babylon and brought into Zion: “And they had viewed themselves in their own carnal state, even less than the dust of the earth. And they all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified; for we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, and all things; who shall come down among the children of men.”¹⁵⁷

148 Matthew 11:29.

149 Mosiah 4:11.

150 Alma 30:17.

151 Mosiah 4:12.

152 Mosiah 4:2.

153 Mosiah 4:3.

154 3 Nephi 12:3.

155 Alma 30:2; Helaman 9:10; D&C 95:7.

156 3 Nephi 9:20; 12:19.

157 Mosiah 4:2.

Righteous mourning is characteristic of a Zion person, whose compassion demands that he “mourns with those who mourn.”¹⁵⁸ Such empathetic mourning stems from and leads to feelings of compassion, kindness, and mercy. A Zion person feels genuine sorrow for those who suffer, and he is moved to exhibit tenderness and loving assistance toward them; he strives “to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light . . . and comfort those that stand in need of comfort.”¹⁵⁹ Jesus set the example: “And he said unto them: Behold, my bowels are filled with compassion towards you. Have ye any that are sick among you? Bring them hither. Have ye any that are lame, or blind, or halt, or maimed, or leprous, or that are withered, or that are deaf, or that are afflicted in any manner? Bring them hither and I will heal them, for I have compassion upon you; my bowels are filled with mercy.”¹⁶⁰

A person who mourns for his own sins, the death of a loved one, or whose mourning moves him to compassion¹⁶¹ so that he is willing to “bear with or suffer with”¹⁶² someone in need, is promised consolation from the Comforter. Eventually, his sorrow shall be turned into joy.¹⁶³ This is the condition of Zion.

Becoming Meek

“*And blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*”¹⁶⁴ To be meek is to be gentle, humble, patient, and submissive.¹⁶⁵ But meekness is not weakness; nevertheless Babylon perceives meekness as such and often persecutes it.¹⁶⁶ President Lee said, “A meek man . . . is not easily provoked or irritated and forbearing under injury or annoyance.”¹⁶⁷ President Hinckley said, “The meek and the humble are those who are teachable. They are willing to learn. They are willing to listen to the whisperings of the still, small voice for guidance in their lives. They place the wisdom of the Lord above their own wisdom.”¹⁶⁸

Meekness is a childlike quality¹⁶⁹ that the Savior attributed to himself.¹⁷⁰ A person who is meek is often described as being lowly in heart; that is, by his true penitence, he is ready “to hear the word of the Lord.”¹⁷¹ Thus, a person who exercises faith in Christ, humbles himself, repents, and accepts baptism, receives a remission of his sins, which “bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love.”¹⁷²

158 Mosiah 18:9.

159 Mosiah 18:8–9.

160 3 Nephi 17:6–7.

161 Matthew 9:36.

162 Ogden and Skinner, *Verse by Verse: The Four Gospels*, 177.

163 John 16:20.

164 3 Nephi 12:6.

165 *American Heritage Dictionary*, s.v. “Meek.”

166 2 Nephi 9:30; 28:13; Helaman 6:39.

167 Lee, *Decisions for Successful Living*, 60.

168 Hinckley, *Stand a Little Taller*, 18.

169 Mosiah 3:19.

170 Matthew 11:29.

171 Largey, ed. *Book of Mormon Reference Companion*, “Lowliness of Heart,” 524.

172 Moroni 8:26.

Those who are meek and lowly of heart “find rest to their souls,”¹⁷³ which rest is the glory of the Lord.¹⁷⁴ They receive the knowledge and the love of God and know that they are right before him.¹⁷⁵ One must become meek and lowly of heart before he can obtain the spiritual gifts of faith, hope and charity; to live otherwise is in vain, “for none is acceptable before God, save the meek and lowly in heart.”¹⁷⁶

It is the attribute of meekness that gives us access to the Lord’s grace,¹⁷⁷ that help or strength that is beyond our ability, which is proffered to us through the love and mercy of Jesus Christ.¹⁷⁸ A Zion person strives to become meek and lowly of heart, “humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.”¹⁷⁹ The Lord’s promise to such a person is that he will gain an eternal inheritance on the earth,¹⁸⁰ which will become Zion and a celestial kingdom to those who live on it.¹⁸¹

Hungering and Thirsting after [for] Righteousness

*“And blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.”*¹⁸² Again, notice the word *all*.

The Lord taught us that everything has spiritual underpinnings,¹⁸³ therefore all hunger, including physical hunger, can be traced to a corresponding spiritual need. Therefore, we might venture that to be physically or spiritually hungry and thirsty is designed to lead us to Christ, the Bread of Life and the Living Water.¹⁸⁴ Whereas physical hunger motivates the need for food, spiritual hunger motivates the need for redemption. If we will allow physical hungers their purpose, they will usher us to Christ.

Only Jesus can provide spiritual nourishment for a starved, parched spirit. His solution is an infusion of the Spirit: “Blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.”¹⁸⁵ When we consume the food and drink the Holy Ghost gives, our appetite increases and we long for more. Then, as we continue to hunger and thirst for righteousness, we receive the eventual promise: *fulfillment*; that is, we are filled. “The Greek word [*filled*] . . . originally meant to feed and fatten an animal. It carried the notion of eating till one was completely and totally satisfied. Such is the Lord’s promise to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. He will feed us more than we can possibly imagine.”¹⁸⁶

173 Alma 37:33–34.

174 D&C 84:24.

175 Smith, ed., *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed., 58, 125–126.

176 Moroni 7:43–44.

177 Ether 12:26–27.

178 Bible Dictionary, s.v. “Grace,” 697.

179 Mosiah 3:19.

180 3 Nephi 12:5.

181 D&C 88:17–26; 130:9.

182 3 Nephi 12:7.

183 D&C 29:34.

184 John 6:35; John 4:10.

185 3 Nephi 12:6.

186 Ogden and Skinner, *Verse by Verse: The Four Gospels*, 178–79.

This promise hearkens to the quality of abundance found in Zion—no lack of any good thing. Jesus demonstrated the spiritual principle of completely satisfying hunger and thirst when he fed the Israelites with manna for forty years,¹⁸⁷ when he fed Elijah by means of ravens,¹⁸⁸ when he fed the five thousand and later the four thousand,¹⁸⁹ and when he fed the Nephites at his appearance.¹⁹⁰

A manifestation of hungering, thirsting and being filled is the law of the fast. This law offers us specific blessings: “to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke.”¹⁹¹ A true fast includes Zion-like selfless service: “to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house . . . when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him.”¹⁹² And it includes improving or reestablishing family relationships: “and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh.”¹⁹³

The blessings of the fast are amazing and singular—light, health, righteousness, protection, revelation: “Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward [guardian]. Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am.”¹⁹⁴

A true fast includes extending mercy (“tak[ing] away the yoke”), repenting, and giving selfless service: “draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul.” Incredible blessings follow a true fast. The Lord will multiply your light, dispel the darkness that holds you captive, guide you continually, fill you spiritually and physically, bless your family forever with the gospel and priesthood, and bless you to become a savior and peacemaker to your family and to others. You become a “repairer of the breach.”¹⁹⁵

Likewise, we experience spiritual fulfillment when we go to the house of worship hungering and thirsting for righteousness and partake of the sacrament.¹⁹⁶ The sacrament is key to always being filled with the Spirit. Whereas we are given the gift of the Holy Ghost at our confirmation, we are guaranteed the Holy Ghost’s ongoing companionship by means of the sacramental covenant. Having the Spirit perpetually with us points us toward eternal life.¹⁹⁷ If the Spirit is with us, we are deemed free from sin,¹⁹⁸ because the Spirit cannot dwell in an unclean tabernacle.¹⁹⁹ Therefore,

187 Exodus 16:32.

188 1 Kings 17:4.

189 Mark 6:35–44 and Mark 8:1–9.

190 3 Nephi 20:6–9.

191 Isaiah 58:6.

192 Isaiah 58:7.

193 Isaiah 58:7.

194 Isaiah 58:8–9.

195 Isaiah 58:9–12 “Then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.”

196 Mosiah 18:7–10.

197 D&C 20:75–79; Moroni 4, 5.

198 Alma 34:36.

199 Alma 7:21; 1 Corinthians 3:16–17.

by the continual presence of the Holy Ghost, we are “made perfect,”²⁰⁰ through the Atonement and merits of Jesus Christ.²⁰¹ That is the condition of Zion people.

Becoming merciful

“*And blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.*”²⁰² The law of the harvest states, “Whatsoever ye sow, that shall ye also reap.”²⁰³ Applied to mercy, the law of the harvest reads, “Those who sow righteousness reap mercy.”²⁰⁴ That is, when a Zion person strives to live faithfully in the Covenant, he qualifies for the Lord’s mercy.

Mercy is another of the gospel’s reciprocal principles; once mercy is given it returns “with increase.”²⁰⁵ Mercy, like love, multiplies when it is “given first.”²⁰⁶ Elder Henry D. Moyle said, “There is an eternal truth, the verity of which I am certain, that love begets love, and as we love one another, our ability to love increases.”²⁰⁷ The same could be said of mercy. Pres Hinckley said, “How godlike a quality is mercy. It cannot be legislated. It must come from the heart. It must be stirred up from within. It is part of the endowment each of us receives as a son or daughter of God and partaker of a divine birthright. . . . I am convinced that there comes a time, possibly many times, within our lives when we might cry out for mercy on the part of others. How can we expect it unless we have been merciful ourselves? . . . One cannot be merciful to others without receiving a harvest of mercy in return.”²⁰⁸

Mercy is defined as compassionate treatment, especially of those for whom we have a responsibility; it is showing clemency or leniency toward an offender; it is a disposition to be kind and forgiving, and it is exemplified by a willingness to alleviate distress and give relief.²⁰⁹ Heavenly Father sets the standard of mercy: “Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father is also merciful.”²¹⁰

The Father’s plan of mercy called for an infinite Atonement to “satisfy the demands of justice,” and to encircle us “in arms of safety.”²¹¹ The Savior’s mission was to enact the Father’s plan of mercy, which “overpowereth justice, and bringeth about means unto men that they might have faith unto repentance.”²¹² Because of the Lord’s Atonement, the meek have claim upon mercy: “I, the Lord, show mercy unto all the meek.”²¹³ A Zion person is merciful even as the Lord is merciful.²¹⁴

200 D&C 76:69.

201 Moroni 6:4.

202 3 Nephi 12:7.

203 D&C 6:33.

204 Hosea 10:12.

205 Packer, “The Candle of the Lord,” *Ensign*, January 1983, 51.

206 1 John 4:19.

207 Moyle, Conference Report, April 1951, 125–126.

208 Hinckley, “Blessed are the Merciful,” *Ensign*, May 1990, 68.

209 *American Heritage Dictionary*, s.v. “Mercy.”

210 Luke 6:36.

211 Alma 34:15–16.

212 Alma 34:15–16.

213 D&C 97:2.

214 3 Nephi 27:27.

Becoming Pure in Heart

“And blessed are all the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”²¹⁵ Once again we note the inclusive word *all*. Perhaps this beatitude best describes a Zion person, for truly, “Zion is the pure in heart.”²¹⁶

President Kimball taught, “Zion can be built up only among those who are the pure in heart, not a people torn by covetousness or greed, but a pure and selfless people. Not a people who are pure in appearance, rather a people who are pure in heart. Zion is to be in the world and not of the world, not dulled by a sense of carnal security, nor paralyzed by materialism. No, Zion is not things of the lower, but of the higher order, things that exalt the mind and sanctify the heart.”²¹⁷ President Kimball suggested three fundamental qualifications to become pure in heart and thus “bring again Zion.”²¹⁸ These qualifications are: 1) eliminate selfishness, 2) cooperate completely and work in harmony one with one another, and 3) lay on the altar whatever is required by the Lord.²¹⁹

To be pure in heart suggests a change of heart, or a rebirth, which begins with baptism and leads to eternal life: “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”²²⁰ Explaining the process of rebirth, or changing one’s heart, the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* states, “Scripture describes the rebirth to which Jesus refers as a ‘mighty change in your hearts’ or being ‘born of God’ (Alma 5:13, 14). It means that the person puts off the ‘natural man’ [terrestrial man] and puts on a new [Zion] nature that has ‘no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually’ (Mosiah 5:2; 3:19). A person who is pure of heart is one who has died to evil and awakened to good. Thus ‘pure people,’ being alive to good, dwell together in righteousness and are called Zion (Moses 7:18). Zion, then, is the way of life of a pure-hearted people who abide in the Covenant and live the gospel of Jesus Christ.”²²¹

Beyond this description, the pure in heart are those who forsake their sins, come unto Christ, call on his name, obey his voice, and keep his commandments.²²² On August 2, 1833, the Lord gave an expanded revelation on the principle of being pure in heart: “And inasmuch as my people build a house unto me in the name of the Lord, and do not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, that it be not defiled, my glory shall rest upon it; Yea, and my presence shall be there, for I will come into it, and all the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see God.”²²³ This revelation places the temple at the center of importance concerning a pure-hearted person’s qualifying to see God. “To see God, according to Elder Royden G. Derrick, [is more than visual sight; it] means to come to know God, discover him, and understand

215 3 Nephi 12:8.

216 D&C 97:21.

217 Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 363.

218 Isaiah 52:8; Mosiah 12:22; 15:29; 3 Nephi 16:18; D&C 113:8.

219 Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 363.

220 John 3:5.

221 *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, s.v. “Zion,” 1625.

222 D&C 93:1.

223 D&C 97:15–16.

him (*Temples in the Last Days*, 80).²²⁴ A Zion person is privileged to come to know God, discover him, understand him, and to literally see him, for Zion is God's "abode forever."²²⁵

The temple ordinances help to purify one's heart and point that person toward this supernal experience: "And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God. Therefore, in the ordinances thereof [the ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood], the power of godliness is manifest. And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; *For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live.* Now this Moses plainly taught to the children of Israel in the wilderness, and sought diligently to sanctify his people *that they might behold the face of God.*"²²⁶

And the temple is the likely place where that will happen.

Hugh Nibley said, "The temple is the earthly type of Zion."²²⁷ Quite literally, the temple is heaven on earth. Because heaven is where God lives, the pure in heart—all the pure in heart²²⁸— may enter the temple, God's house and partake of its ordinances and commune with and someday see God.

Becoming A Maker of Peace

*"And blessed are all the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."*²²⁹

Again, notice the word *all* in this beatitude. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you."²³⁰ Clearly, peace ranges in levels, as do other gospel principles, from telestial, which is almost non-existent²³¹ and usually means absence of war, to celestial, which "passeth all understanding."²³²

According to Elder McConkie, the Lord's peace is a gift of the Spirit,²³³ and Satan cannot duplicate it.²³⁴ Mortal fear flees in the face of the Lord's peace: "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."²³⁵ When the Lord established Zion among the Nephites, they experienced unequalled peace. The following description is remarkable:

- No contentions
- No disputations

224 Ogden and Skinner, *Verse by Verse: The Four Gospels*, 180.

225 Moses 7:21.

226 D&C 84:19–23, insertion and emphasis added.

227 Nibley, *Approaching Zion*, 27.

228 3 Nephi 12:8.

229 3 Nephi 12:9.

230 John 14:27.

231 D&C 1:35.

232 Philippians 4:7.

233 McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, "Peace," 561–63. He lists the following scriptures: Psalms 37:37; 119:165; Isaiah 26:3; 48:18, 22; 57:21; Romans 8:6; 10:15; 14:17–19; 1 Corinthians 14:33; Ephesians 6:15.

234 George D. Watt, ed., *Journal of Discourses* 15:379; Sheri L. Dew, "Living on the Lord's Side of the Line," Brigham Young University devotional, March 21, 2000.

235 John 14:27.

- Every man dealing justly one with another
- All things in common
- No rich, poor, bond, or free
- Peace and prosperity in the land
- A love of God in the hearts of the people
- No envyings, strifes, tumults, whoredoms, lyings, murders, or lasciviousness
- No robbers, murderers, or any “-ites.”²³⁶

Every person—*each and every peacemaker*²³⁷—who strives to make celestial peace follows the example of the Prince of Peace, and that person’s reward is glorious: “He who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come.”²³⁸ Melchizedek, who established Zion among his people, became a peacemaker and followed the example of the Savior in becoming a prince of peace: “Melchizedek did establish peace in the land in his days; therefore he was called the prince of peace.”²³⁹ Likewise, Abraham desired to establish Zion and become a prince of peace.²⁴⁰

The peace of Zion a peacemaker establishes blesses his family: “And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.”²⁴¹ For making such an effort, the Lord promises that peacemakers will become sons and daughters of God, meaning that such people will become “joint heirs with Christ, inheriting with him the fullness of the Father. (D&C 93:17-23) . . . [and become] gods in eternity. (D&C 76:58).”²⁴²

Being Willing to Suffer Persecution for the Cause of Christ

*“And blessed are all they who are persecuted for my name's sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake; For ye shall have great joy and be exceedingly glad, for great shall be your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets who were before you.”*²⁴³ Persecution comes in a variety of ways, but it appears to be the common lot of every Saint who espouses the principles of Zion. Paul said, “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”²⁴⁴

One form of persecution is mockery and scorn, as exhibited by the people in Lehi’s great and spacious building: “Their manner of dress was exceedingly fine; and they were in the attitude of mocking and pointing their fingers towards those who had come and were partaking of the fruit.”²⁴⁵ That persecution grew out of

236 4 Nephi 1:15–17.

237 3 Nephi 12:10

238 D&C 59:23.

239 Alma 13:18.

240 Abraham 1:2.

241 Isaiah 59:23.

242 McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, “Son of God,” 745.

243 3 Nephi 12:10–12.

244 2 Timothy 3:12.

245 1 Nephi 8:26.

the mockers' pride and vain imaginations, meaning their useless pursuits.²⁴⁶ Those people were clearly vicious in their motive to dissuade the people of God.

Nephi described the philosophies of the persecutors as having the capacity to torture, slay, bind down, yoke, and bring into captivity the Saints of God.²⁴⁷ We understand the meaning to include temporal and spiritual abuse and confinement. Such persecutors were idolaters, those who were materialistic, and the sexually perverse: "And I also saw gold, and silver, and silks, and scarlets, and fine-twined linen, and all manner of precious clothing; and I saw many harlots."²⁴⁸

The proud of Babylon, or the world, have always persecuted Zion's people, who are defined as the poor, i.e., poor in pride, poor in spirit, poor as to things of this world: "The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor."²⁴⁹ Moreover, they who are rich often judge the poor harshly and withhold their assistance, which is a form of persecution.²⁵⁰ Additionally, they see themselves as part of an elevated class and consider themselves better than others.²⁵¹ Or they persecute, mock, and ignore the poor in favor of increasing their holdings, which they idolize as if they were sanctuaries: "Because of pride they are puffed up. They rob the poor because of their fine sanctuaries; they rob the poor because of their fine clothing; and they persecute the meek and the poor in heart, because in their pride they are puffed up."²⁵² This sin, according to Jacob, is "abominable unto God."²⁵³

Zion people are never accepted by Babylon, and they never will be. Babylon has been and ever will be the enemy and persecutor of Zion: "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."²⁵⁴ For enduring the persecutions of Babylon, the humble followers of Christ will earn the greatest reward that God has to offer. Because they have believed in him and tried at all costs through their works and examples to build up his kingdom on the earth for the establishment of his Zion, they will inherit nothing less than the celestial kingdom of heaven, the eternal Zion of God.

These qualities are the conditions and characteristics of blessedness embraced and enjoyed by a Zion person. Some of these things speak eloquently to the first commandment to love God, while other qualities are encompassed in the second commandment to love our neighbor. These qualities are "Jesus' character in words,"²⁵⁵ which President Harold B. Lee called the "constitution for a perfect life."²⁵⁶ In every way, the Beatitudes describe Zion people.

246 1 Nephi 11:36.

247 1 Nephi 13:5.

248 1 Nephi 13:7.

249 Psalms 10:2.

250 Mosiah 4:17.

251 Jacob 2:13, 20.

252 2 Nephi 28:13.

253 Jacob 2:5.

254 James 4:4.

255 Ogden and Skinner, *Verse by Verse: The Four Gospels*, 173.

256 Lee, *Decisions for Successful Living*, 56–57.

Experiencing True Safety and Security

From the moment we declare our allegiance to Zion, Babylon will cry, “Treason!”²⁵⁷ Then Babylon will withdraw her support from us and declare that we are enemies. At these times of trial, the Lord’s promises of protection for Zion-like people are comforting. The following scriptures can be personalized.

“[Zion is] a city of refuge, a place of safety for the saints of the Most High God; And the glory of the Lord shall be there, and the terror of the Lord also shall be there, inso-much that the wicked will not come unto it, and it shall be called Zion . . . 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.”²⁵⁸ On a more personal and local note, Zion is a home, a place of refuge.

God protects Zion people from the perils of the world: “And all that fight against Zion [you and your family] shall be destroyed.”²⁵⁹ And on another occasion: “Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you—there is no weapon that is formed against you shall prosper; And if any man lift his voice against you he shall be confounded in mine own due time.”²⁶⁰

The Lord has promised that the homes of latter-day Zion people will receive the same protection he extended to the ancient Israelites: “And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory of Zion shall be a defence.”²⁶¹

No danger is greater than the power of God: “Therefore, let your hearts be comforted concerning Zion [you and your family]; for all flesh is in mine hands; be still and know that I am God.”²⁶² The bounds of Zion’s enemies “are set, they cannot pass . . . therefore, fear not what man can do, for God shall be with you forever and ever.”²⁶³

257 Nibley, *Approaching Zion*, 32–33.

258 D&C 45:66–67, 70.

259 1 Nephi 22:14; see also 2 Nephi 27:3; Moses 7:20.

260 D&C 71:9–11.

261 2 Nephi 14:5.

262 D&C 101:16.

263 D&C 122:9.

Obtaining an Abundance in All Things

Zion exists “that every man may improve upon his talent, that every man may gain other talents, yea, even an hundred fold.”²⁶⁴ Abundance, not poverty, describes Zion. But, as with other principles, abundance and prosperity can be obtained in telestial, terrestrial, and celestial ways and amounts. Motivation for obtaining abundance lies at the heart of the issue. Whereas a telestial wealth is often obtained through hoarding, personal genius, and self-serving efforts, celestial wealth is obtained by obedience to God’s commandments, building up his kingdom, and improving the condition of his children.

The telestial and celestial motivations and methods for obtaining and managing abundance are set forth in the scriptures.²⁶⁵ Nephi stated the frightening situation of telestially gotten wealth: “But wo unto the rich, who are rich as to the things of the world. For because they are rich they despise the poor, and they persecute the meek, and their hearts are upon their treasures; wherefore, their treasure is their God. And behold, their treasure shall perish with them also.”²⁶⁶

Often, if a man is to become rich, he decides, early in his career, to suppress the urge to take care of his neighbor. He might soothe his conscience by dealing out comfortable portions so that he can look himself in the mirror and declare that he has fulfilled his duty to God and his neighbors. Nevertheless, in the daily management of his affairs, he is ever vigilant to take care to not overstep the bounds of proper business practice. In the eyes of God, however, at the moment that the rich man sets his heart on building his treasure, that man begins to despise the poor and persecute the meek.

On the other hand, Jacob reminded his people of the celestial law of wealth and its motivation: “Think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you. But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God. And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them for the intent to do good—to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted.”²⁶⁷ Clearly, celestially-gotten wealth follows those who “seek . . . first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; *and all these things shall be added unto you.*”²⁶⁸

There is an important distinction here between the methods of Babylon and Zion for obtaining wealth. As we are told by substantially every prophet in the Book of Mormon, celestial wealth follows obedience to the commandments of God.²⁶⁹ Few other commandments are repeated as often as to not seek for riches but rather for the kingdom of God. Some people rationalize their seeking first for riches with the eventual intent of blessing the kingdom of God. But their motive is transparent, and they cannot point to an instance in which God has authorized the sequence.

264 D&C 82:19.

265 Alma 30:12–18.

266 2 Nephi 9:30.

267 Jacob 2:17–19.

268 Matthew 6:33.

269 1 Nephi 4:14.

The kingdom must be our first, entire, and eternal focus. We are under covenant now, not later, to use all our time, talents, and means to do God's work, which is to elevate his children.²⁷⁰ By doing so, God—not Babylon—will subsequently prosper us so that our capacity to bless others will increase and thereby we will be able to give more. In other words, Zion people become a conduit through which God funnels blessings to his children. This is an essential lesson Zion people must incorporate in their lives: We were sent to earth to learn to become like God, who is the most generous *Giver*.

Developing the attitude of selfless giving is a major step we take to remove ourselves from Babylon. We must take this step in order to become Zionlike, for it is impossible to simultaneously serve God and mammon.²⁷¹ One master or the other will eventually claim our loyalty. President Stephen L Richards said, "The accumulation and utilization of wealth confront the human family with some of its major challenges in determining the righteousness of goals and the correctness of behavior." Then, quoting Franklin D. Richards, he added, "'In many respects the real test of a man is his attitude toward his earthly possessions' (F. Richards, p. 46). The prosperity that results from honest and intelligent work is not necessarily repugnant to the spiritual quality of life, but the Church consistently warns of the risks of selfishness and personal aggrandizement that lurk in accumulating wealth (S. Richards, CR [Apr. 1928, 31])."²⁷² President Richards went on to say that Zion people believe that "everything rightly belongs to God (Mosiah 2:21–25) and comes to man 'in the form of trust property' to be used for God's purposes (S. Richards, CR [Apr. 1923, 151])."²⁷³

Zion-like abundance and prosperity pivot on the principle of personal righteousness: "Inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land."²⁷⁴ In addition, President N. Eldon Tanner outlined five principles for personal economic affairs: "pay an honest tithing, live on less than you earn, distinguish between needs and wants, develop and live within a budget, and be honest in all financial affairs (*Ensign* . . . [Nov. 1979, 81–82])."²⁷⁵ Consider the payment of tithes and offerings. Has anyone ever been impoverished by paying them? It would be impossible. The true Paymaster invites us to prove, or test, him on this matter, and he will not fail us; he is a God of truth who cannot lie. Millions of tithe payers can attest that the windows of heaven most certainly will burst and pour out blessings that will challenge our ability to receive. Interestingly, it is upon the principle of tithing that we initiate our retreat from Babylon and our return to Zion: "Wherein shall we return? . . . In tithes and offerings." Is it not interesting that tithing saves us from the devourer, ensures that the conditions of a telestial world will not destroy us, and makes of us a blessed and delightful people?²⁷⁶ Zion indeed!

270 Moses 1:39.

271 Matthew 5:20; 6:24.

272 *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, s.v. "Wealth, Attitude toward," 1552.

273 *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, s.v. "Wealth, Attitude toward," 1552.

274 Alma 36:30.

275 *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, s.v. "Wealth, Attitude toward," 1552.

276 Malachi 3:7–12.

Zion is described as being exceedingly prosperous,²⁷⁷ which leads us to believe that celestial prosperity, as much as we are awed by it, does not compare to the prosperity enjoyed by Zion people. Of course, the greatest wealth is not to be measured in terms of money: “Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God.”²⁷⁸ The Lord added, “And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come.”²⁷⁹ The Lord also counseled, “Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.”²⁸⁰ And in our day, “Seek not for riches but for wisdom, and behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich. Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich.”²⁸¹ Friends, family, wisdom, other celestial characteristics, and eternal life are true wealth.

277 4 Nephi 1:7.

278 D&C 18:10.

279 D&C 130:19.

280 Matthew 6:20.

281 D&C 6:7.

Embracing the Law of Consecration

To consecrate something is to sanctify, purify, and set it apart for a sacred use, to make it holy, to dedicate it solemnly to a special service, or to give it religious sanction as with an oath or a vow.²⁸² When we make the covenant of consecration, we agree to consecrate our lives, including everything that we have, will have, are, or will be. That is, we consecrate “our time, talents and means to care for those in need—whether spiritually or temporally—and in building the Lord’s kingdom.”²⁸³ Hugh Nibley asked, “And how much is one able to give? Exactly as much as the Lord has given him—all that which the Lord has blessed you, or with which he will bless you.”²⁸⁴ Lived properly, the covenant of consecration paves the way and lays the foundation for the establishment for Zion in a righteous person’s life.

One of the first recorded revelations concerning consecration was received on April 7, 1829, when the Lord instructed Joseph Smith to “seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion.”²⁸⁵ This was no small task. Zion is the celestial order of things, for both individuals and societies.²⁸⁶ Some descriptions of consecrated Zion people include:

- Their belief that all things belong to God and that they are stewards²⁸⁷
- Their willingness to be unified by esteeming others as themselves²⁸⁸
- Their retaining and exercising their free agency²⁸⁹
- Their willingness to set aside selfishness and become equal with all the Saints of God, according to their wants, needs, and family situations²⁹⁰ by consecrating their “time, talents, strength, properties, and monies”²⁹¹
- Their being accountable to the Lord for the discharge of their covenants and stewardships²⁹²

Anciently, Enoch managed to establish the ideal of Zion among his people, who later joined to create Zion, the city. These people exercised faith in Jesus Christ, repented of their sins, embraced the fullness of the new and everlasting covenant, and thereby became “of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them.”²⁹³ The vehicle that made this condition possible and that will make it possible in the latter-days, was the law of consecration.

At the beginning of 1831, “the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith in Fayette, New York, that anciently he had taken the Zion of Enoch to himself and then

282 *American Heritage Dictionary*, s.v. “Consecrate” and “Sanctify”

283 Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 366.

284 Nibley, *Approaching Zion*, 427.

285 D&C 6:6.

286 D&C 105:5.

287 D&C 38:17; 104:11–14.

288 D&C 38:24–27; 51:3, 9; 70:14; 78:6; 82:17.

289 D&C 104:17.

290 D&C 51:3.

291 McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, “Consecration,” 157.

292 D&C 72:3; 104:13–18.

293 Moses 7:18.

commanded him to go to Ohio to receive the law [the law of Zion].”²⁹⁴ A month later, on February 9, 1831, the Lord revealed to the Prophet “the law,” or the law of Zion, that which the Prophet specified as “embracing the law of the Church.”²⁹⁵ This law became known as section 42 of the Doctrine and Covenants, and in it the Lord revealed the cornerstones of the law of consecration²⁹⁶:

- First, mutual assistance—the Lord expects his disciples to sustain and help one another.
- Second, proper use of priesthood—the priesthood is to be used to benefit those who are physically and spiritually ill or in need.
- Third, the need for faith—according to God’s will, a person can be healed [physically, emotionally, and spiritually] by the power of the priesthood if that individual has faith in Jesus Christ and if he is “not appointed unto death,” information that gives confidence to the person as he realizes that the Lord has given him time to work out his exaltation.
- Fourth, reciprocal love—the Lord expects his disciples to love one another and to become one.

President Ezra Taft Benson said, “The law of consecration is a law for an inheritance in the celestial kingdom. God, the Eternal Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and all holy beings abide by this law. It is an eternal law.”²⁹⁷ People whose lives are consecrated to the Lord “set their hearts on righteousness and having actually put first in their lives the things of God’s kingdom.”²⁹⁸

The Church welfare plan describes a consecrated person as one who does not seek for worldly riches; who esteems his brother as himself; who, through tithes and offerings, helps to build up the kingdom of God by caring for the temporal needs of those General Authorities whom God has called into full-time service; who makes his worldly goods available, over and above his family’s necessities, for the Lord’s work; and who, with his time, talents, and means, takes care of the temporally and spiritually poor.²⁹⁹

Quoting the Church welfare plan, Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote, “The practice of the law of consecration is inextricably intertwined with the development of the attributes of godliness in this life and the attainment of eternal life in the world to come. ‘The law pertaining to material aid is so formulated that the carrying of it out necessitates practices calculated to root out human traits not in harmony with requirements for living in the celestial kingdom and replacing those inharmonious traits with the virtues and character essential to life in that abode.’ (Bowen, *The Church Welfare Plan*, p. 13).”³⁰⁰ Then, quoting a supporting scripture, Elder McConkie added, “For if you will that I give you a

294 *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, s.v. “Consecration,” 312.

295 D&C 42, Introduction.

296 List adapted from Clark V. Johnson, Sperry Symposium 1989, “The Law of consecration: The Covenant That Requires All and Gives Everything.”

297 Benson, *The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, 121.

298 McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, “Consecration,” 157.

299 Bowen, *The Church Welfare Plan*, 6.

300 McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, “Consecration,” 157.

place in the celestial world, you must prepare yourselves by doing the things which I have commanded you and required of you.”³⁰¹

Elsewhere in the scriptures, we learn that the law of consecration is built on the foundational principles of agency, stewardship, accountability, and labor.

Agency

An agent is someone who has the power and authority to act.³⁰² Therefore, agents have agency, which is the ability to “act for themselves,”³⁰³ or the ability to act for themselves with respect to a given responsibility or obligation.³⁰⁴ Agents have the capacity to be accountable for their actions. Whereas *freedom* is the power and privilege to exercise our will and act upon it, *agency* is the power, independence of mind, and individual will to choose in the first place.

Elder McConkie wrote: “Four great principles must be in force if there is to be agency: 1. Laws must exist, laws ordained by an Omnipotent power, laws which can be obeyed or disobeyed; 2. Opposites must exist—good and evil, virtue and vice, right and wrong—that is, there must be an opposition, one force pulling one way and another pulling the other; 3. A knowledge of good and evil must be had by those who are to enjoy the agency, that is, they must know the difference between the opposites; and 4. An unfettered power of choice must prevail.”³⁰⁵

Moral agency describes our ability to act upon and be accountable for spiritual matters.³⁰⁶ Zion people exercise their God-given agency to choose to make and keep covenants and to reject the enticements of Babylon. And choose we must. Posing the choice between Zion and Babylon, Elijah asked, “How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal [Babylon], then follow him.”³⁰⁷ Being lukewarm on the issue is not acceptable: “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”³⁰⁸

That opposites exist makes agency possible: “And it must needs be that the devil should tempt the children of men, or they could not be agents unto themselves; for if they never should have bitter they could not know the sweet.”³⁰⁹ Therefore, we are free to choose our destiny: Zion, to our salvation, or Babylon, to our condemnation. “Behold, here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man; because that which was from the beginning is plainly manifest unto them, and they receive not the light.”³¹⁰ Having chosen Zion and thus having overcome Babylon, Zion people enjoy the highest degree of moral agency and its resulting freedom.

301 D&C 78:7.

302 See *American Heritage Dictionary*, s.v. “Agent”

303 2 Nephi 2:26.

304 D&C 29:35.

305 McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, “Agency,” 26.

306 D&C 29:35.

307 1 Kings 18:21, insertion added.

308 Revelation 3:15–16.

309 D&C 29:39.

310 D&C 93:31.

Agency and freedom flourish in Zion: “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”³¹¹ “And because that they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon.”³¹²

Agency and freedom decrease in Babylon: “And the whole world [Babylon] lieth in sin, and groaneth under darkness and under the bondage of sin.”³¹³ Choosing Babylon results in fewer choices and less freedom to exercise agency, while choosing Zion results in limitless choices and unequalled freedom to exercise agency.

Stewardship

When a person exercises his agency to abide in the Covenant, he makes a conscious choice to become a steward of the Lord’s property. His approach to ownership is “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof.”³¹⁴ Elder Bruce R. McConkie said, “Underlying this principle of stewardship is the eternal gospel truth that all things belong to the Lord. ‘I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine. . . . Behold, all these properties are mine. . . . And if the properties are mine, then ye are stewards; otherwise ye are no stewards.’ (D&C 104:14, 55–56).”³¹⁵

We are expressly forbidden to hoard property or claim it as our own: “I command thee that thou shalt not covet thine own property.”³¹⁶ Therefore, a Zion person’s claim to his property is subordinate to the Lord’s claim. As Martin Harris learned, property must be consecrated for the building up of the kingdom of God and the establishment of Zion, which provides that no poor should exist among us. Ultimately we will be held accountable for the discharge of our stewardship.³¹⁷

A Zion person’s stewardship is sometimes referred to as “portion,”³¹⁸ or “inheritance.”³¹⁹ It is to be used to support his own family, and then “conveying back to the Lord’s storehouse any surplus which accrued [for the poor]. (D&C 42:33–34, 55; 70:7–10).” Elder McConkie added, “It is by the wise use of one’s stewardship that eternal life is won.”³²⁰

Zion people do not take their covenant of stewardship lightly; they know that everything depends on their faithfulness in this responsibility: “And whoso is found a faithful, a just, and a wise steward shall enter into the joy of his Lord, and shall inherit eternal life.”³²¹

311 John 8:36.

312 2 Nephi 2:26.

313 D&C 84:49–50.

314 Psalms 24:1.

315 McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, “Stewardships,” 767.

316 D&C 19:26.

317 D&C 72:3–4; 51:19; Matthew 25:14–30; Luke 16:2; 19:17; D&C 82:3, 11; 78:22.

318 D&C 51:4.

319 D&C 51:4; 57:15.

320 McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, “Stewardships,” 767.

321 D&C 51:19.

Accountability

The Lord said, “Every man shall be made accountable unto me, a steward over his own property.”³²² Upon the principle of moral agency, stewards are free to manage their stewardships, but they are not free from being accountable to the Lord: “It is required of the Lord, at the hand of every steward, to render an account of his stewardship, both in time and in eternity. For he who is faithful and wise in time is accounted worthy to inherit the mansions prepared for him of my Father.”³²³ Clearly, we will one day stand before God to give an accounting of our deeds, which will include the management of our stewardships. Our performance will determine the trusts and stewardships given to us in eternity.

Zion people are under covenant to account for their earthly stewardships to the Lord’s servant, the bishop: “Verily I say unto you, the elders of the church in this part of my vineyard shall render an account of their stewardship unto the bishop, who shall be appointed of me in this part of my vineyard. These things shall be had on record, to be handed over unto the bishop in Zion.”³²⁴ For this reason, we report to the bishop each year regarding our tithes and offerings.

Labor

Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote, “Work is the great basic principle which makes all things possible both in time and in eternity. Men, spirits, angels, and Gods use their physical and mental powers in work.”³²⁵

Work, like other gospel principles, exists in degrees ranging from telestial to celestial. Adam was commanded to work in this telestial world to support his family.³²⁶ Because of his approach to work, his was a celestial endeavor. We note with interest that he was not commanded to set his sights on empire building, plundering, extorting, leveraging, competing, augmenting his balance sheet, or amassing personal wealth on the backs of the poor, all of which are telestial.

Adam worked to create the first Zion upon the earth: Adam-ondi-Ahman. There he labored to sustain his immediate family and to bless the lives of others. Likewise, Enoch worked to establish Zion, as did Melchizedek and Nephi: “And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did cause my people to be industrious, and to labor with their hands.”³²⁷ Nephi’s Zion-like people worked together for the benefit of all. They labored to establish righteousness. They worked in unity to raise crops, smelt ore to create weapons for defense, and fashion objects of beauty. They built buildings and a temple. Because of their celestial level of labor they were blessed with prosperity and familial strength: “And it came to pass that we began to prosper exceedingly, and to multiply in the land.”³²⁸

322 D&C 42:32.

323 D&C 72:3–4.

324 D&C 72:5–6.

325 McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, “Work,” 847.

326 Genesis 3:19.

327 2 Nephi 5:17.

328 2 Ne 5:10–16.

Things began to fall apart when the Nephites became selfish and began to work on a telestial level. Jacob chastised his people for searching “for gold, and for silver, and for all manner of precious ores.” They were doing these things for the purpose of obtaining riches “more abundantly than that of [their] brethren,” causing the errant ones to be “lifted up in the pride of [their] hearts,” and supposing that they were better than others.³²⁹ This kind of labor is not justified in Zion; it is condemned. President Kimball said, “As I understand these matters, Zion can be established only by those who are pure in heart, and who labor for Zion, for the ‘laborer in Zion shall labor for Zion; for if they labor for money [riches] they shall perish.’”³³⁰

Jacob taught his people the celestial law of labor and its underlying motivation: “Think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you. But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God. And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them for the intent to do good—to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted.”³³¹

Clearly, we must work, but what we work for determines if the work is telestial or celestial. Conversely, “idleness has no place [in Zion],” said President Benson, “and greed, selfishness, and covetousness are condemned. [Zion] may therefore operate only with a righteous people.”³³²

These four principles—agency, stewardship, accountability, and labor—form the foundation of the law of consecration, which is the law a person must keep if he hopes to become pure in heart in this life and qualify for eternal life in the world to come. Only upon the principle of consecration is the kingdom of God built up and Zion established as an individual, family, ward, stake, or Church.

329 Jacob 2:12–14.

330 Kimball, “Becoming the Pure in Heart,” *Ensign*, March 1985.

331 Jacob 2:17–19.

332 Benson, “A Vision and a Hope for the Youth of Zion,” *Devotional Speeches of the Year*, 74.

Enjoying God's Presence

Zion is the habitation of the Lord.³³³ A Zion person harbors the hope that one day the Father and the Son will make their abode with him. This is one of the primary reasons—to enjoy God's presence—a person enters into the new and everlasting covenant. To enjoy God's presence is the promised result and the supernal blessing for abiding in the Covenant. Joseph Smith said,

“If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and *we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*” Now what is this other Comforter? It is no more nor less than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; and this is the sum and substance of the whole matter; that when any man obtains this last Comforter, he will have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend him, or appear unto him from time to time, and even He will manifest the Father unto him, *and they will take up their abode with him,* and the visions of the heavens will be opened unto him, and the Lord will teach him face to face, and he may have a perfect knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God; and this is the state and place the ancient Saints arrived at when they had such glorious visions—Isaiah, Ezekiel, John upon the Isle of Patmos, St. Paul in the three heavens, and all the Saints who held communion with the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn.³³⁴

The scriptures state, “They who dwell in [God’s] presence are the church of the Firstborn.”³³⁵ Interestingly, the Church of the Firstborn is also synonymous with the Church of Enoch,³³⁶ or the “Order of Enoch,”³³⁷ which is synonymous with Zion. The Book of Mormon refers to the Church of the Firstborn as the “rest of the Lord,” meaning the “fulness of his glory.”³³⁸ Speaking of this heavenly church, Elder McConkie wrote, “This is the Church which exists among exalted beings in the celestial realm. But it has its beginning here on earth. Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who so devote themselves to righteousness that they receive the higher ordinances of exaltation become members of the Church of the Firstborn. Baptism is the gate to the Church itself, but celestial marriage is the gate to membership in the Church of the First-

333 Psalms 132:13; Moses 7:21; see also Psalms 9:11; 76:2; Isaiah 24:23; 59:20; 60:14; Jeremiah 8:19; Joel 3:16; Micah 4:7; D&C 97:19; 105:32.

334 Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 150; emphasis added.

335 D&C 76:94.

336 D&C 76:67.

337 Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, 179.

338 D&C 84:17–24; see Alma 13:11–12.

born, the inner circle of faithful saints who are heirs of exaltation and the fulness of the Father's kingdom. (D&C 76:54, 67, 71, 94, 102; 77:11; 78:21; 88:1–5; Heb. 12:23).³³⁹

Continuing, he said, “Those who attain this state of cleanliness and perfection are able, as occasion may require, to see God and view the things of his kingdom. (D&C 84:23; 88:68; Ether 4:7).³⁴⁰ Indeed, the ultimate privileges of God's holy authority are spoken of as follows: ‘The power and authority of the higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood, is to hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church—to have the privilege of receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, to have the heavens opened unto them, to commune with the general assembly and church of the Firstborn, and to enjoy the communion and presence of God the Father, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant’ (D&C 107:18–19).³⁴¹

“While in the flesh,” Zion people can qualify for the “privilege of seeing and knowing for themselves.”³⁴² The Father and the Son will come and make their abode with them, as the Prophet Joseph Smith said, and because they have made their hearts pure by abiding the Covenant, “they shall see God.”³⁴³

339 McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:231.

340 McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed., “Sanctification,” 675.

341 McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:231.

342 D&C 76:117.

343 JST, Matthew 5:10; 3 Nephi 12:8.

Conclusion

This, then, is a portrait of a Zion person, the ideal to which we all should aspire. We may not achieve the ultimate expression of perfection of Zion in this life, but we must “relentlessly chase perfection,” as Vince Lombardi is quoted as saying, “knowing full well we will not catch it, but . . . in the process we will catch excellence.”³⁴⁴ This portrait of a Zion person contains no new revelation. Joseph Smith, whose mission it was to restore the fullness of the gospel, received every revelation, covenant, and power regarding the establishment of Zion. Therefore, we have everything we need to become individually pure in heart and Zion-like. The law of Zion is not in our future; we have the law, and we are expected to live it *now*. We have made the Covenant; we simply need to embrace it. Everything of eternal consequence hinges on our obedience and diligence living this law.

Prefacing the eternal law of marriage, which is the crowning order of the new and everlasting covenant and the gate to Zion,³⁴⁵ the Lord revealed the following essential information regarding the Covenant:

Prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; *for all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same.* For behold, I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant; *and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory.* For all who will have a blessing at my hands shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing, and the conditions thereof, as were instituted from before the foundation of the world. And as pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant, *it was instituted for the fulness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fulness thereof must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned, saith the Lord God.*³⁴⁶

In vision, Nephi saw the latter-day members of the Church who had made the Covenant. To his dismay, he saw widespread apathy; we had neglected the Covenant in favor of carnal security. We had been lulled away from the Covenant by Satan, and we were ignorantly under the impression that “All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well.”³⁴⁷

While it is true that all is well with the Church, it is not necessarily “well” with many of its members. Nephi saw that our carnal appetites had allowed the devil to “cheat our souls” with the purpose of “leading us away carefully down to hell.”³⁴⁸ According to Brigham Young, carnal security, materialism, and wealth seeking are the devil’s clever “decoys” that

³⁴⁴ Jeremy Schaap, *Parade Magazine*, “We Will Catch Excellence,” February 3, 2008.

³⁴⁵ McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:231.

³⁴⁶ D&C 132:3–6, emphasis added.

³⁴⁷ 2 Nephi 28:21.

³⁴⁸ 2 Nephi 28:21.

drive a wedge between Zion and us. The metaphor is chilling. A decoy is something that looks like the real thing but is meant to trap its victim. A decoy is cleverly disguised, but it is deadly if you get too close to it. President Young said, “It is a fearful deception which all the world labors under, *and many of this people too, who profess to be not of the world*, that gold is wealth.”³⁴⁹ The only solution is the one Nephi offered when confronted by the people in the great and spacious building: “We heeded them not.”³⁵⁰ That is, “we did not allow ourselves to become distracted. We were determined to abide in the Covenant regardless of what Babylon said or offered us.” Only abiding in the Covenant provides real security.

Of course, this is a tall order. You might ask, “What will become of me if I attempt to step away from Babylon and fully embrace the principles of Zion?” The answer is always the same: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”³⁵¹ The solution is imbedded in the Covenant; it is God’s promise. He will support us, sustain us, stand beside us, and keep us safe: “Surely Zion shall dwell in safety forever.”³⁵² Safe in the Covenant, we no longer have to worry like we did in Babylon: “Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.”³⁵³ This takes faith, lots of faith. Consequently, no one can come to Zion alone. Only the Atonement of Jesus Christ can make the journey possible. The Atonement has the power to purify our hearts, make of us celestial people, secure for us a celestial resurrection, make us heirs of God’s kingdom, and bind to us our spouse and family forever.

The subject of Zion permeates prophetic teaching: “The prophets always labor to prepare people to become a people of Zion. Sometimes people embrace Zion; most often they do not.”³⁵⁴ Why would we choose to reject the principles of Zion? Perhaps because of fear. We might say to ourselves, “Zion and consecration are well and good, but I don’t want to be the first to live them. Therefore, I will wait for the president of the Church to reveal a program.” This is a dangerous attitude fraught with folly. As we have previously asked: “Which of our covenants, having been made, is waiting for a program from Church headquarters? Baptism? Sabbath-day observance? Temple worship? Eternal marriage? Why, then, do we consider parts of the new and everlasting covenant, especially consecration, to be futuristic? We know the principles of Zion, so what stops us from living them? Clearly, Babylon has a hold on us that we fear to break. But if we would consider the payment of tithes and offerings as an indication of Zion’s safety and prosperity, then we might, with confidence, press through our fear and embrace Zion in its entirety, as we have covenanted to do. Perhaps to that end the Lord encourages us to consider the lilies of the field.³⁵⁵ Most certainly, he will take care of his covenant people. The Book of Mormon is a textbook on the subject.”

During the ministry of Christ, a fierce storm arose, threatening to capsize the Apostles’ boat. Panicked, they awakened the Savior and cried, “Master, carest thou not that we perish?”

349 Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 10:271, emphasis added.

350 1 Nephi 8:33.

351 Matthew 6:33; 3 Nephi 13:33.

352 Moses 7:20.

353 3 Nephi 13:31–32.

354 *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, s.v. “Zion,” 1625.

355 Matthew 6:28–29; 3 Nephi 13:28–29.

And he arose, rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?"³⁵⁶ In other words, "Why were you afraid knowing that I was with you? Where is your faith?" As we have learned, wherever Zion is, there is the Lord. If he is with us, and we know that he commanded us to live the new and everlasting covenant, to strive to build up the kingdom of God, to seek the establishment of Zion, and to believe that he will stand beside us, what have we to fear? We will not be disappointed. We, like the Nephites, will experience for ourselves the safety, abundance, and joy of Zion, for "surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God."³⁵⁷

Finally, if we intend to become Zion people, we must change the paradigm of our belief. In too many instances, we do not believe what our faith tells us. Often, we believe in a convenient gospel with the expectation that God, if he wants to, will move us along and eventually reward us with extraordinary blessings in the end. But Zion cannot be established either in an individual's life, a marriage, a family, or in a priesthood society on such a philosophy. Zion has always been established by people believing *all* that their faith teaches them.

If we truly want to become Zion people, we must believe what our faith tells us about Zion. Zion is the pure in heart, those who ultimately qualify to see God. Will that happen without invoking the law of seeking Zion and asking the Lord to make of us that kind of person? Of course not. No blessings arrive unbidden. We must work for them. "Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am."³⁵⁸

This, then, is a portrait of a Zion person. By becoming such a person, we hope to achieve that which the Third Nephi saints achieved.

And it came to pass that there was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people.

And there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness; and surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God.

There were no robbers, nor murderers, neither were there Lamanites, nor any manner of -ites; but they were in one, the children of Christ, and heirs to the kingdom of God.

And how blessed were they! For the Lord did bless them in all their doings.³⁵⁹

356 Mark 4:38–40.

357 4 Nephi 1:16.

358 D&C 93:1.

359 4 Nephi 1:15–18.

About the Author

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