**DC 103                                                          Historical Background**

**B.H. Roberts**

At the time the prophecy of 1834 was uttered, a great part of the church was scattered along the Missouri bottoms, in Clay County, Missouri. The Saints had just been driven from their houses and lands in Jackson County, and were living in log huts and dug-outs, and subsisting, for the time being, upon the charity of the people of Clay County. The rest of the church was scattered in branches through several states of the American Union and Canada. They were without wealth, or influence; derided, scorned, distrusted, hated. Indeed, it is difficult to even imagine a situation more hopeless than that occupied by the church of Christ when this prophecy was uttered. (*New Witnesses for God*, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1909], 1: 295-296)

**Parley P. Pratt**

As the history of this horrible persecution of the Church was interwoven with my own… I must return [to my own personal narrative].

After making our escape into the county of Clay—being reduced to the lowest poverty—I made a living by day labor, jobbing, building, or wood cutting, till some time in the winter of 1834, when a general Conference was held at my house, in which it was decided that two of the Elders should be sent to Ohio, in order to counsel with President Smith and the Church at Kirtland, and take some measures for the relief or restoration of the people thus plundered and driven from their homes. The question was put to the Conference: "Who would volunteer to perform so great a journey?"

The poverty of all, and the inclement season of the year made all hesitate. At length Lyman Wight and myself offered our services, which were readily accepted. I was at this time entirely destitute of proper clothing for the journey; and I had neither horse, saddle, bridle, money nor provisions to take with me; or to leave with my wife, who lay sick and helpless most of the time.

Under these circumstances I knew not what to do. Nearly all had been robbed and plundered, and all were poor. As we had to start without delay, I almost trembled at the undertaking; it seemed to be all but an impossibility; but "to him that believeth all things are possible." I started out of my house to do something towards making preparation; I hardly knew which way to go, but I found myself in the house of brother John Lowry, and was intending to ask him for money; but as I entered his miserable cottage in the swamp, amid the low, timbered bottoms of the Missouri river, I found him sick in bed with a heavy fever, and two or three others of his family down with the same complaint, on different beds in the same room. He was vomiting severely, and was hardly sensible of my presence. I thought to myself, "well, this is a poor place to come for money, and yet I must have it; I know of no one else that has got it; what shall I do?" I sat a little while confounded and amazed. At length another Elder happened in; at that instant faith sprung up in my heart; the Spirit whispered to me, "is there anything too hard for the Lord?" I said to the Elder that came in: "Brother, I am glad you have come; these people must be healed, for I want some money of them, and must have it."

We laid hands on them and rebuked the disease; brother Lowry rose up well; I did my errand, and readily obtained all I asked. This provided in part for my family's sustenance while I should leave them. I went a little further into the woods of the Missouri bottoms, and came to a camp of some brethren, by the name of Higbee, who owned some horses; they saw me coming, and, moved by the Spirit, one of them said to the other, "there comes brother Parley; he's in want of a horse for his journey—I must let him have old Dick;" this being the name of the best horse he had. "Yes," said I, "brother, you have guessed right; but what will I do for a saddle?" "Well," says the other, "I believe I'll have to let you have mine." I blessed them and went on my way rejoicing.

I next called on Sidney A. Gilbert, a merchant, then sojourning in the village of Liberty—his store in Jackson County having been broken up, and his goods plundered and destroyed by the mob. "Well," says he, "brother Parley, you certainly look too shabby to start a journey; you must have a new suit; I have got some remnants left that will make you a coat," etc. A neighboring tailoress and two or three other sisters happened to be present on a visit, and hearing the conversation, exclaimed, "Yes, brother Gilbert, you find the stuff and we'll make it up for him." This arranged, I now lacked only a cloak; this was also furnished by brother Gilbert.

Brother Wight was also prospered in a similar manner in his preparations. Thus faith and the blessings of God had cleared up our way to accomplish what seemed impossible. We were soon ready, and on the first of February we mounted our horses, and started in good cheer to ride one thousand or fifteen hundred miles through a wilderness country. We had not one cent of money in our pockets on starting.

We travelled every day, whether through storm or sunshine, mud, rain or snow; except when our public duties called us to tarry. We arrived in Kirtland early in the spring, all safe and sound; we had lacked for nothing on the road, and now had plenty of funds in hand. President Joseph Smith and the Church in Kirtland received us with a hospitality and joy unknown except among the Saints; and much interest was felt there, as well as elsewhere, on the subject of our persecution.

The President inquired of the Lord concerning the matter, and a further mission was appointed us (section 103). (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, edited by his son, Parley P. Pratt [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985], 88-89)

**William W. Phelps**

*Letter of Wm. W. Phelps to the Brethren in Kirtland, Detailing the Farcical Effort of the Officers of Missouri to Enforce the Law.  Clay County, Missouri, Feb. 27, 1834.*

… The dreadful deeds now done in Jackson county, with impunity, must bring matters to a focus shortly. Within two or three weeks past some of the most savage acts ever witnessed have been committed by these bitter branches. Old Father Lindsey, whose locks have been whitened by the blasts of nearly seventy winters, had his house thrown down, after he was driven from it; his goods, corn, etc., piled together and fire put to it, but fortunately after the mob retired, his son extinguished it.

The mob has quit whipping and now beats with clubs. Lyman Leonard, one of the number that returned from Van Buren county had two chairs broken to splinters upon him, and was then dragged out of doors and beat with clubs till he was supposed to be dead, but he is yet alive. Josiah Sumner and Barnet Cole were severely beaten at the same time. The mob have commenced burning houses, stacks, etc.; and we shall not think it out of their power, by any means, to proceed to murder any of our people that shall try to live in that county, or perhaps, only go there.

Such scenes as are happening around us are calculated to arouse feelings and passions in all, and to strengthen the faith and fortify the hearts of the Saints for great things. Our Savior laid down His life for our sakes, and shall we, who profess to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God—shall we, the servants of the Lord of the vineyard, who are called and chosen to prune it for the last time—shall we, yea, verily we, who are enlightened by the wisdom of heaven—shall we fear to do at least this much for Jesus who has done so much for us? No; we will obey the voice of the Spirit that God may overcome the world.

I am a servant, etc.,

W. W. Phelps.

(*History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 vols., introduction and notes by B. H. Roberts [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1932-1951], 1: 481-483.)

**DC 103                                                          Introduction**

Since the summer of 1833, nothing but bad news was coming from Missouri.  The saints in Zion naturally looked to their brethren in Kirtland for help.  The responsibility of doing something was the Prophet’s and he knew it.  But what should he do?  Although he had been given great and glorious revelations, Zion’s immediate future was unclear.  Joseph lamented:

I cannot learn from any communication by the Spirit to me, that Zion has forfeited her claim to a celestial crown, notwithstanding the Lord has caused her to be thus afflicted, except it may be some individuals, who have walked in disobedience… I have always expected that Zion would suffer some affliction… but how many will be the days of her purification, tribulation, and affliction, the Lord has kept hid from my eyes; and when I inquire concerning this subject, the voice of the Lord is: Be still, and know that I am God!...

Now, there are two things of which I am ignorant; and the Lord will not show them unto me, perhaps for a wise purpose in Himself—I mean in some respects—and they are these: Why God has suffered so great a calamity to come upon Zion, and what the great moving cause of this great affliction is; and again, by what means He will return her back to her inheritance, with songs of everlasting joy upon her head. These two things, brethren, are in part kept back that they are not plainly shown unto me. (*History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 vols., introduction and notes by B. H. Roberts [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1932-1951], 1: 454.)

Prophetic access to the Lord did not mean that Joseph always knew what to do.  He struggled through mortality at times as blind to the immediate future as we are:

As the days passed, Joseph became more and more troubled.  On August 18, he wrote the most anguished letter of his life, all of it in his own hand, addressed to “Brother William, John, Edward, Isaac, John and Sidney”—the Missouri leaders.  He was driven nearly to “madness and desperation,” he said, not understanding why the grand plan for Zion, the heart of the whole restoration movement, had been set back… Joseph scarcely knew what to say or do. (Richard Lyman Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling,* [New York: Random House, 2005], 225)

By February 1834 when Lyman Wight and Parley Pratt arrive in Kirtland with more bad news, the persecutions had been going on for seven months.  Appeals to civil authorities had proved useless.  As a man of action by nature, Joseph wanted to do something.  Section 103 must have been a great relief to the Prophet.  It was a call to action!  The Lord was commanding the formation of a relief party eventually known as Zion’s Camp.  “Joseph declared that he was going to Zion to redeem the land and called for the council’s assent.  The members agreed unanimously, nominating Joseph as ‘Commander in Chief of the Armies of Israel.’” (*Rough Stone Rolling,* 235)  Organizing the men for this mission would take a few months, but the saints had a plan and a mission—to help their suffering brethren.

**DC 103:4 chastened… because they did not hearken altogether unto the precepts and commandments which I gave unto them**

**Orson Pratt**

We were inexperienced, and did not then understand the necessity of strictly obeying every word spoken by the mouth of God, and we had to suffer because of this… What have all these afflictions been for? To fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of the Prophets. Joseph Smith told us, or the Lord did through him, and it is printed here in this book, that when he first planted this people in Jackson County, in the State of Missouri, if we did not take such and such a course, our enemies would come upon us, our blood would be shed by them, and we should be scattered and driven from place to place, and this has been literally fulfilled upon our heads.(*Journal of Discourses*, 15:335, January 26, 1873)

**DC 103:6 they shall… begin to prevail against mine enemies from this very hour**

**Brigham Young**

We have been driven many times; but each time, if they who professed to be the servants of God had served Him with an undivided heart, they would have had the privilege of living in their houses, possessing their lands, attending to their meetings, and spreading abroad on the right and the left, lengthening the cords of Zion, and strengthening her stakes until the land had been dedicated to the Gospel of the Son of God. (*Journal of Discourses*, 13:1-2, April 7, 1869)

**George Q. Cannon**

Now, here is a promise that the Lord has given, He says, by a positive decree…  "They shall prevail"—that is if they keep His commandments and if they observe the counsel which He has given unto us… There has never been an hour since the Lord gave this work unto the Church—not one hour—that they have not prevailed over His enemies when they have hearkened unto His words and kept His commandments. . . . We know by experience that when the Latter-day Saints have been most faithful, have been most diligent, when they have been most zealous in preaching the Gospel, in building temples, in carrying out the word of our God as He has given it unto us, then the anger of our enemies has been most fierce against us. But notwithstanding the fierceness and the heat with which it has burned, it has been powerless against this people to injure us or to interfere in any manner with our growth and with the accomplishment of the purposes of God entrusted to us. (*Gospel Truth: Discourses and Writings of President George Q. Cannon*, selected, arranged, and edited by Jerreld L. Newquist [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1987], 125)

**Marion G. Romney**

That’s our great promise. We will never cease to prevail until the Lord establishes his Zion in this world. The true discipleship of the priesthood of God will determine how fast we move toward that great consummation as we, through living the gospel, fight the debauchery and the wickedness that’s going on in this world.  (“A Disciple of Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 39)

**Joseph Smith**

I now deliver it as a prophecy, if the inhabitants of this state (Illinois), with the people of the surrounding country, will turn unto the Lord with all their hearts, ten years will not roll around before the kings and queens of the earth will come unto Zion, and pay their respects to the leaders of this people; they shall come with their millions, and shall contribute of their abundance for the relief of the poor, and the building up and beautifying of Zion. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 227)

**DC 103:7 they shall never cease to prevail until the kingdoms of the world are subdued**

**Bruce R. McConkie**

The eventual triumph of the Lord's people is assured; there is to be a millennial day of glory and honor and peace; the fulness of the earth shall be theirs in that day, and all nations and kingdoms shall serve and obey them. But all the promised rewards need not be deferred until that day. Even now the saints can begin the process of inheriting the kingdom. They have power to begin to reap some of the millennial rewards. (*The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man*[Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982], 600)

**Joseph F. Smith**

Is there a person within the sound of my voice, or anywhere else upon the face of the wide earth, who can say that this promise has failed, that this prediction is not founded in truth, that so far it has not been fulfilled? I stand before this vast congregation, and am at the defiance of any human being to say that this was not pronounced by the spirit of truth, by the inspiration of the Almighty, for it has been fulfilled, and is being fulfilled, and that, too, in the face of opposition of the most deadly character; and what remains will be fulfilled literally and completely. And it is the fear in the heart of Satan that this will be the case that causes him to stir up his emissaries to oppose the kingdom of God and seek, if possible, to destroy this great and glorious work. For it is a living fact, a fact that fills the hearts of the righteous and God-fearing with unspeakable joy, and the hearts of the wicked and ungodly with consternation and jealous fear, that this work of God, this work of redemption and salvation in which we are engaged, is moving forward and is destined to continue in its onward march until the kingdoms of the world shall be subdued and brought under the law of Almighty God. And that this will come to pass, I can assure you, the enemy of all righteousness comprehends as well as we do. Yes, he knows that this will eventually be the case, better than many who profess to have received the Holy Spirit in their hearts; and, therefore, he is diligently seeking to stir up the hearts of the wicked to fight against the Saints of God, until they are discomfited, and Zion is free.

These predictions concerning the triumph of the cause of God over the wicked who contend against them, were uttered by Joseph Smith in his youth, in the early rise of the Church when, to all human appearance, their fulfillment was absolutely impossible. At that time there were but few who could believe, that dared to believe the truth of these predictions. The few, comparatively, that did believe when they heard, were those whose minds had been enlightened by the Holy Spirit of Promise and who, therefore, were prepared to receive them. As these predictions have been fulfilled, so those not yet fulfilled will come to pass in the due time of the Lord; and as this latter-day work has so far grown and assumed force and power in the earth, so it will continue to do, and there is no power beneath the celestial kingdom that can prevent its growth, or the consummation of all that has been predicted concerning it (*Gospel Doctrine: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Joseph F. Smith*, compiled by John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], 487.)

**DC 103:8  inasmuch as they keep not my commandments… the kingdoms of the world shall prevail against them**

**George Q. Cannon**

There cannot be a doubt in any faithful man's mind concerning the truth of this promise—the promise of victory and deliverance on the one hand, the promise of punishment, disaster and trouble on the other. The Latter-day Saints have in their experience proved fully the truth of these words. They have seen them fulfilled to the very letter. When they have been faithful in keeping the commandments of God they have prospered and they have had deliverance. When they have been unfaithful they met with trouble and serious difficulty. (Conference Report, October 1899, Afternoon Session)

**DC 103:9 they were set to be a light unto the world**

**Ezra Taft Benson**

It is easy to despair when we see about us the moorings of society slipping. We must remember, however, that the Lord sent His Saints into the world “to be a light unto the world, and to be the saviors of men.” (D&C 103:9.) This is a time when “Zion must arise and put on her beautiful garments.” (D&C 82:14.) The contrast between the Church and the world will be increasingly marked in the future, which contrast, we hope, will cause the Church to be more attractive to those in the world who desire to live according to God’s plan for us, His children. (“May the Kingdom of God Go Forth,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 33)

**Bernard P. Brockbank**

The Lord has spoken! Every Latter-day Saint is to be a light unto the world and is to be savior of men; and if they fail in this sacred, soul-saving assignment, they will be trodden under the foot of men. (“The Leaves Are Commencing to Show on the Fig Tree,” *Ensign*, May 1976, 75)

**DC 103:10 they are as salt that has lost its flavor**

“Covenant Saints are the salt of the earth. They should be a symbol of Christlike living by setting an example and keeping the Lord’s commandments. A righteous personal example can have a positive impact on others’ receptivity. Negative examples can keep people from receiving the gospel message, as Alma reminded his son Corianton: ‘For when they saw your conduct they would not believe in my words’ (Alma 39:11).

“The Savior asks, ‘If the salt shall lose its savor, wherewith shall the earth be salted?’ (Inspired Version, Matt. 5:15; compare KJV, Matt. 5:13). Salt can lose its savor only through mixture and contamination. Light can be diminished only when it is doused or filtered.” (W. Jeffrey Marsh, “Prophetic Enlightenment on the Sermon on the Mount,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1999, 17)

**Ezra Taft Benson**

We are grateful that members of the Church for the most part are striving to live the gospel and dealing justly with our fellowman. But are we not all saddened and disappointed when Church members are found guilty of taking advantage of others through business transactions or are judged guilty of breaking the laws of God and man? As Church members, blessed with the truths of the gospel, the Lord expects us to be honest, morally clean, chaste, free from profanity and vulgarity, trustworthy, and exemplary in all our conduct.

The Lord said to Church members of this dispensation:

   But inasmuch as they keep not my commandments, and hearken not to observe all my words, the kingdoms of the world shall prevail against them.

   For they were set to be a light unto the world, and to be the saviors of men;

   And inasmuch as they are not the saviors of men, they are as salt that has lost its savor, and is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men.  (D&C 103:8–10.) (“Our Responsibility to Share the Gospel,” *Ensign*, May 1985, 6-7)

**DC 103:12 after much tribulation cometh the blessing**

**Joseph Smith**

Inasmuch as God hath said that He would have a tried people, that He would purge them as gold, now we think that this time He has chosen His own crucible, wherein we have been tried; and we think if we get through with any degree of safety, and shall have kept the faith, that it will be a sign to this generation, altogether sufficient to leave them without excuse; and we think also, it will be a trial of our faith equal to that of Abraham, and that the ancients will not have whereof to boast over us in the day of judgment, as being called to pass through heavier afflictions; that we may hold an even weight in the balance with them; but now, after having suffered so great sacrifice and having passed through so great a season of sorrow, we trust that a ram may be caught in the thicket speedily, to relieve the sons and daughters of Abraham from their great anxiety, and to light up the lamp of salvation upon their countenances, that they may hold on now, after having gone so far unto everlasting life. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, selected and arranged by Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976], 135)

**DC 103:13 this is the blessing which I have promised after your tribulations… your redemption and the redemption of your brethren**

**Joseph F. Smith**

It is somewhere written as the word of God, that the enemies of the people of God can do nothing against but for Zion… In all these vicissitudes and during all the persecutions of fourteen years (1830-1844) which were as ceaseless against the Prophet Joseph as the forces of nature are endless, did they diminish the numbers of Saints? Did they break the Saints to pieces? Did they destroy them? No; you know they did not, and it seems that our enemies themselves are fully aware of this fact. But when they thought they had torn up "Mormonism" by the roots and cast it out to dry up and wither under the parching, blighting influence of hostile public sentiment, behold, they had only transplanted the tree into new and better watered soil. Instead of destroying our confidence in the promises of God to us, it had the tendency to strengthen our faith, to increase our knowledge and experience, thus fitting and preparing us for the future that lay before us. (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 23: 72-73)

**DC 103:15 the redemption of Zion must needs come by power**

**Joseph Fielding Smith**

It appears from this declaration that the redemption of Zion was not to come immediately, but was to be postponed to some future day. Moreover, that day would not come until the members of the Church were willing to keep their covenants and walk unitedly for until the members of the Church learn to walk in full accord and in obedience with all of the commandments, this day cannot come. It may be necessary in order to bring this to pass for the Lord to use drastic measures and cleanse the Church from everything that offends. This he has promised to do when he is ready to redeem Zion. (See Matt. 13:41.) **Orson Pratt** discoursing on the redemption of Zion said:

"When we go back to Jackson County, we are to go back with power. Do you suppose that God will reveal his power among an unsanctified people, who have no regard nor respect for his laws and institutions but who are filled with covetousness? No. When God shows forth his power among the Latter-day Saints, it will be because there is a union of feeling in regard to doctrine, and in regard to everything that God has placed in their hands; and not only a union, but a sanctification on their part, that there shall not be a spot or wrinkle as it were, but everything shall be as fair as the sun that shines in the heavens." (J. of D. XV:361.)  (*Church History and Modern Revelation*, 4 vols. [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1946-1949], 3: 20)

**Orson Pratt**

We are here in these mountain valleys. It is a goodly land which the Lord has pointed out for us. We are making preparation for our great redemption to go back to the promised land, the same as the Israelites are to gather back to their promised land. And a further promise is made unto us, in this connection, that when the time shall come, the Lord will raise up a man like unto Moses who shall deliver this people out of bondage, the same as the children of Israel, their fathers, were delivered. And he tells us that he will do this with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. And he also says, that his angels shall go before us, and also his presence. Here then is a promise made to the Latter-day Saints, that the presence of the Lord, as well as his angels, should go before their camp. (*Journal of Discourses*, 19:18)

**DC 103:16 I will raise up unto my people a man, who shall lead them like as Moses**

As Zion has not yet been redeemed, this prophecy has not yet been fulfilled.  A future prophet, like unto Moses, will perform this great deliverance, when the saints return as a group from their current headquarters to establish Zion in Jackson County.  Elder Orson Pratt wondered if the saints might be in some real bondage requiring such a deliverance.  At any rate, the identity of this *man* is unknown.

**Orson Pratt**

Zion must be led forth out of bondage, as Israel was at the first. In order to do this God has prophesied that he will raise up a man like unto Moses, who shall lead his people therefrom.

Whether that man is now in existence, or whether it is someone yet to be born; or whether it is our present leader (Brigham Young) who has led us forth into these valleys of the mountains, whether God will grant unto us the great blessing to have his life spared to lead forth his people like a Moses, we perhaps may not all know…

God will surely fulfill this promise. This was given before our Prophet Joseph Smith was taken out of our midst. Many of us no doubt thought when that revelation was given that Joseph would be the man. I was in hopes it would be Joseph, for I had no idea that he was going to be slain. (*Journal of Discourses*, 17:362-363)

**Orson F. Whitney**

I am aware there are divers interpretations put upon the words which I have read to you (D&C 103:16-18). But God has spoken them; you may interpret them as you please. One thing I know, the redemption of Zion is an event yet to be. It will come by power; the power of God operating upon and through His Priesthood and His faithful people; a people who will put their trust in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and not in the men, nor the methods of this world. (Brian H. Stuy, ed *Collected Discourses*, 5 vols. [Burbank, Calif., and Woodland Hills, Ut.: B.H.S. Publishing, 1987-1992], vol. 1, September 22, 1889)

**John A. Widstoe**

"I will raise up unto my people a man, who shall lead them like as Moses led the children of Israel." (D. & C. 103:16) There have been many conjectures concerning this statement. There have even been misguided men who have declared themselves to be this man "like as Moses."

Yet, the meaning as set forth in the scriptures, is very simple. In modern revelation the President of the Church is frequently compared to Moses… The man like unto Moses in the Church is the President of the Church. (*Evidences and Reconciliations* [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era], 248.)

**DC 103:20 Mine angels shall go up before you, and also my presence**

**Orson Pratt**

It was, in ancient days, a great calamity to Israel, when the Lord swore in his wrath that he would not go up in their midst, but that he would send an angel before them. Why did the Lord do this? Because of the wickedness and stiffneckedness of that people…

In these last days, in redeeming his people from bondage he has told us in plain words, that his angel should go before us *and also his presence*; and as, in the deliverance of Israel in ancient times the waters were divided and plagues sent forth upon the Egyptian nation, it would not surprise me at all if there should be similar power manifested in the redemption of Zion. There may be a few individuals go to prepare the way, to purchase a little more land and get things in orders; but when that is accomplished, this people as a body will return to that land, the Lord going with them.

In ancient times, so long as the Lord did continue with Israel, he manifested his glory over their camp by a cloud by day; and whenever the cloud arose they followed it, and wherever it rested, there they pitched their tents and remained until the cloud moved again, when they again journeyed on. Now, if Zion is to be redeemed after the same manner, you need not be surprised if the Lord God should let his glory, in the form of a cloud by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night, be over all the camp of Zion. This is what I look for; perhaps I am a little enthusiastic, but it is really what I look for and expect; and when the Lord says that his presence shall go with us, I expect he will be in the midst of this people as he was in the midst of ancient Israel until they rejected him from their midst. (*Journal of Discourses*, 17:304, italics added)

**DC 103:20 in time ye shall possess the goodly land**

**Brigham Young**

When will Zion be redeemed? When will the Savior make his appearance in the midst of his people? When will the veil be taken away, that we may behold the glory of God? Can any of you answer these questions? Yes, readily, when I tell you. The redemption of Zion is the first step preparatory to the two last-named events. Just as soon as the Latter-day Saints are ready and prepared to return to Independence, Jackson County, in the State of Missouri, North America, just so soon will the voice of the Lord be heard, “Arise now, Israel, and make your way to the Center Stake of Zion.” Do you think there is any danger of our being ready before the Lord prepares the other end of the route? Do you believe that we, as Latter-day Saints, are preparing our own hearts, our own lives, to return to take possession of the Center Stake of Zion, as fast as the Lord is preparing to cleanse the land from those ungodly persons who dwell there? You can read, reflect, and make your own calculations. If we are not very careful, the earth will be cleansed from wickedness before we are prepared to take possession of it. We must be pure to be prepared to build up Zion. (*Journal of Discourses*, 9: 137)

**DC 103:21 Joseph Smith, Jun., is the man to whom I likened the servant… in the parable**

D&C 101:44-62 describes a parable concerning the redemption of Zion.  The imagery is similar to the Olive Tree Allegory—the saints are depicted as workers in the Lord’s vineyard.  In verse 55, there is a reference to the Prophet Joseph Smith, “the lord of the vineyard said unto one of his servants (i.e. Joseph Smith):  Go and gather together the residue of my servants, and take all the strength of mine house… and redeem my vineyard (i.e. Zion).” (D&C 101:55-56)  The Prophet must have understood the interpretation of the parable, especially that he was the servant mentioned.  But at the time that revelation was given, he did not know when such a group should be organized, “And the servant said unto his Lord:  when shall these things be?  And he said unto his servant: When I will” (D&C 101:59-60).  Section 103, in contrast to the previous revelation, answered the question regarding timing. Joseph was to go ahead. It was time to redeem Zion.

**DC 103:23, 29  let all the churches send up wise men with their moneys**

Verses 37-40 detail the companionships the Lord set forth for a short mission.  The goal of the mission was to procure men and money for Zion’s Camp.  These missionaries filled a mission for most of the month of March 1834.

**Joseph Smith**

Sunday (Mar) 16.—Elder Rigdon preached to a large congregation in Geneseo, Elder Pratt preached in the afternoon of Monday, the 17th.

There was also the same day, March 17, a conference of Elders at Avon, Livingston county, New York, at the house of Alvah Beaman, which I attended. There were present also Sidney Rigdon, Parley P. Pratt, Lyman Wight, John Murdock, Orson Pratt and Orson Hyde, High Priests; and six Elders. I stated that the object of the Conference was to obtain young and middle-aged men to go and assist in the redemption of Zion, according to the commandment; and for the Church to gather up their riches, and send them to purchase lands according to the commandment of the Lord; also to devise means, or obtain money for the relief of the brethren in Kirtland, say two thousand dollars, which sum would deliver the Church in Kirtland from debt; and also determine the course which the several companies shall pursue, or the manner they shall journey when they shall leave this place. (*History of the Church*, 2:44)

**DC 103:24 inasmuch as mine enemies come against you… ye shall curse them**

Zion’s Camp was armed with whatever weapons were available to the men at the time.  Most of the men likely expected a fight, but that is not what the revelation said.  It said the Lord would avenge them *bycursings* from the Lord rather than military conquest.  In a subsequent revelation to Zion’s camp, the Lord declared, “For behold, I do not require at their hands to fight the battles of Zion; for, as I said in a former commandment, even so will I fulfil—I will fight your battles.” (D&C 105:114)

“The Saints were promised they would possess ‘the goodly land’… but how these men were to engage the enemy is not explained.  If attacked in Zion, were they to fight?  The revelation said to ‘avenge me of mine enemies,’ but nothing about fighting.  The saints were to ‘curse them,’ not shoot them.  When the little band finally reached Missouri, it was disbanded before a shot was fired.  Joseph’s military flourishes usually stopped short of battle.” (Richard Lyman Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling,* [New York: Random House, 2005], 236)

**DC 103:27 Let no man be afraid to lay down his life for my sake**

**James E. Faust**

True followers of the Savior should be prepared to lay down their lives, and some have been privileged to do so. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, “When Christ calls a man, He bids him to come and die.” The Doctrine and Covenants counsels us:

   Let no man be afraid to lay down his life for my sake; for whoso layeth down his life for my sake shall find it again.

   And whoso is not willing to lay down his life for my sake is not my disciple (D&C 103:27–28).

For most of us, however, what is required is not to die for the Church but to live for it. The price of discipleship may mean leaving behind many things. Some have learned how dear a price it is to leave loved ones in order to be baptized. Yet Jesus taught, “Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive anhundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life” (Matt. 19:29).

Living a Christlike life every day may for many be even more difficult than laying down one’s life. We learned during wartime that many men were capable of great acts of selflessness, heroism, and nobility with regard to life. But when the war was over and they came home, they could not bear up under the burdens of living the eternal every day and became enslaved by tobacco, alcohol, drugs, and debauchery that in the end caused them to forfeit their lives. (“The Price of Discipleship,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1999, 3-4)

**DC 103:33 seek diligently that peradventure ye may obtain one hundred**

“The Zion’s Camp journey began in May 1834 with about 100 men. As they marched, new recruits joined them. By the middle of June, the group numbered 207 men, 11 women, 11 children, and 25 baggage wagons. The oldest member of the army was Samuel Baker, who was 79; the youngest member was sixteen-year-old George A. Smith, a cousin to the Prophet Joseph.

“Originally the Lord had asked for 500 men to march to Missouri to help Church members regain lands that mobs had driven them from. But He also said that if 500 couldn’t be found, fewer would do—but no fewer than 100.” (Sherrie Johnson, “March of Zion’s Camp,” *Friend*, May 1993, 47)

**DC 103:37 Let my servant Parley P. Pratt journey with my servant Joseph Smith, Jr.**

**Parley P. Pratt**

A further mission was appointed us. In fulfilment of which we continued our journey eastward, in connection with President Joseph Smith, S. Rigdon, Hyrum Smith, Frederick G. Williams, Orson Hyde and Orson Pratt.

We journeyed two and two in different routes, visiting the churches and instructing the people as we travelled. President Joseph Smith and myself journeyed together. We had a pleasant and prosperous mission among the churches, and some very interesting times in preaching to the public. We visited Freedom, Catteraugus County, N. Y.; tarried over Sunday, and preached several discourses, to which the people listened with great interest; we were kindly and hospitably entertained among them. We baptized a young man named Heman Hyde; his parents were Presbyterians, and his mother, on account of the strength of her traditions, thought that we were wrong, and told me afterwards that she would much rather have followed him to an earthly grave than to have seen him baptized.

Soon afterwards, however, herself, her husband, and the rest of the family, with some thirty or forty others, were all baptized and organized into a branch of the Church—called the Freedom branch—from which nucleus the light spread and souls were gathered into the fold in all the regions round. Thus mightily grew the word of God, or the seed sown by that extraordinary personage, the Prophet and Seer of the nineteenth century.

As we journeyed day after day, and generally lodged together, we had much sweet communion concerning the things of God and the mysteries of His kingdom, and I received many admonitions and instructions which I shall never forget. (*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, edited by his son, Parley P. Pratt [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985], 89-90)

**Joseph Smith**

Wednesday February 26th—Started from home to obtain volunteers for Zion…

March 1st—arrived at Brother Job Lewis and on the 2nd, the Sabbath, Brother Parley preached in this place, and I preached in the evening.  Had a good meeting.  There is a small church in this place that seems to be strong in the faith.  Oh may God keep them in the faith and save them and lead them to Zion.

…March 4th—took our journey from Westfield accompanied by Brother John Gould.  Rode 33 miles.  Arrived in Villanova.  Stayed all night with a Brother Reuben McBride.  Next morning went 4 miles to Brother Freeman Nickerson’s.  We found him and his household full of faith and of the Holy Spirit.  We called the church together and related unto them what had happened to our Brethren in Zion, opened to them the prophecies and revelations concerning the order of the gathering to Zion and the means of her redemption, and Brother Joseph prophesied to them and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon them, and with all readiness, the young and middle aged volunteered for Zion. (*The Joseph Smith Papers*, [SLC:  Church Historian’s Press, 2008], 1:28-32, spelling and punctuation modernized)

**DC 103:38 Let my servant Lyman Wight journey with my servant Sidney Rigdon**

“In accordance with a revelation given February 24, 1834, Sidney Rigdon and Lyman Wight started soon after on a mission to the country eastward, to preach and to endeavor to get some young and middle aged volunteer brethren to go to Jackson County, Missouri, and assist in the redemption of Zion.

“With Joseph Smith and other elders, Sidney and Lyman attended a conference, March 17, at Avon, Livingston County, New York, with this purpose in view, and also to raise means to free the Kirtland Church from debt. Joseph, Sidney and Lyman started back for Kirtland on the 19th, arriving there on the 28th.” (*Improvement Era*, 1899, Vol. Iii. December, 1899. No. 2)