



Lesson Eight: And the Lord Called His People, Zion

Inquiry Questions:

- What do you think of when you hear the word Zion?
- How do you envision Zion on earth? Is it a place, a way of living, or something different?

Historical Context: Excerpts for Joseph III's memoirs about Lamoni:

“The year of 1881 was marked by the usual cares of the *Herald* office and church work, and the unusual ones connected with the building of a new office for the Herald plant, at Lamoni, the erection of a home there for myself and family, and the removal thereto.”

Brother Israel A. Rogers, Brother David Dancer, and I were appointed a committee charged with the duty of erecting a suitable building to house the printing plant, including presses, an eight-horse-power engine with boiler room adjoining, and adequate typesetting, business and editorial rooms.” (194 b)

“In the early part of October, 1881, following the fortunes of the Herald office, we removed to Lamoni, Decatur County, Iowa, establishing ourselves in a comfortably large house which I built a short distance west of town. This home became known as Liberty Hall, and there my wife and I spent fifteen busy, contented years together.” (57 ab)

“Liberty Hall throbbed with life, teeming with the bustling activities of a large and growing family. Birth, death, and marriage occurred within its walls, and much of romance might be included in the history there made, as joys and sorrows succeeded each other as days the nights.” (57 b)

“Our beloved Liberty Hall well earned its reputation for freedom and good cheer, and its doors stood ever open for all who wished to enter and enjoy its hospitality, and to depart thence in kindness and love.” (58 a)

Pre-Class Reading:

Joseph Smith III: A Pragmatic Prophet by Roger Launius, Chapter Eight: And the Lord Called His People, Zion

Discussion Questions:

- What did the construction of Zion mean to church members during Joseph Smith Jr.'s life?
- What expectations did that put on Joseph III's leadership? Give some examples of how early Reorganization members viewed the concept of gathering.



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On the subject of gathering to one community of believers, Joseph III believed “the early Mormons had tried to accomplish too much too quickly,” without proper preparation. This, he explained, is why some of his father’s plans ended in violence and misunderstanding.

- Based on your knowledge and reading, do you agree with his opinion?
- What lessons can be learned from Joseph Jr.s failed approach?
- How do you think Joseph III sought to minimize the likelihood of similar events occurring to him?

In 1881, Joseph moves his family from Plano, Illinois, to Lamoni, Iowa.

- Name some of the reasons for the move.
- Think back to an earlier chapter and compare and contrast the reasons for his move to Lamoni with his earlier 1866 move from Nauvoo to Plano.

Class Activity:

Find and read scripture passages which you believe speak of the concept of a literal Kingdom of God on earth. Consider how earlier generations of members may have viewed these, and what resources they would have considered to point them towards this goal.

Contrary to his father’s belief, Joseph III believed church members had to be “moral crusaders in the world,” rather than isolated from the world in order for Zion to be achieved. Weigh the pros and cons of both approaches. If the mutual goal is the establishment of the earthly Kingdom of God, what are the positives and negatives of isolating yourself from outside influences? What are the positive and negative from being a part of “the world?”

Reading Assignment:

Joseph Smith III: Pragmatic Prophet, Chapter Nine: The Legacy of Plural Marriage

Joseph Smith III: Pragmatic Prophet by Roger Launius and a variety of historical reprints are available at www.redbrickstore.com. All Red Brick Store purchases help preserve Community of Christ historic sites.

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