



Lesson Ten: The Utah Mission

Inquiry Questions:

- What does it mean to succeed?
- Is it always defined by the situation?
- Can success in one situation, be failure in another?

Historical Context: Excerpt from Joseph Smith III's memoirs concerning his first visit to Utah:

“The day before my first meeting was to be held, I took a walk from Brother Reinsmar’s, down into the city and back again. I enjoyed noting the splendid streets, one hundred feet wide, with their good walks on either side, twelve feet in width, and paralleled by the little ditches in which streams of water were running. This water, brought down from the mountains for irrigation, drinking, cooking, and other household uses, was clear and cold. The system has always been one of the great attractions of the city.

During my long walk I think I met with as cool treatment as a recognized enemy would have received under the same circumstances. I met no one whom I knew, of course, but there were many who must have known or suspected who I was, and not one of them had a pleasant look, a friendly word, or a casual greeting such as usually passes between even strangers when they meet. It seemed that everybody knew me, however. Some conduct I observed seemed rather amusing. For instance, in walking down the west side of the street, at a crossing I met a man carrying under his left arm what appeared to be a bundle of clothing. As we met, he looked into my face rather sharply, but said nothing, and I passed on. Soon I was surprised to have the man pass me, walking rather close to me and giving me another close scrutiny. When he had gotten eight or ten paces ahead of me, he turned around, and came towards me again. As he approached, he looked to the right and left as if to make sure no one say him, and then, allowing me to meet him on the inner side of the walk, said abruptly:

‘Are you the son of the prophet?’

I answered, ‘Yes, sir,’ and he, without stopping in his walk, and casting the remark back over his shoulder as passed on, said, ‘I thought so.’” (162)

Pre-Class Reading:

Joseph Smith III: A Pragmatic Prophet by Roger Launius, Chapter Ten: The Utah Mission

Discussion Questions:

Return to page 221 for discussion:

- What was included in the “three-pronged message of salvation?”
- What were the prongs?
- What did Joseph admit he wrongly understood about the Utah Mormons?



- Did the Utah Mission fail? How is failure or success defined in this case?

What do you think were some of the hoped for outcomes when Joseph sent his two brothers, Alexander and David, to Utah?

- What came from their presence in Utah and later in California?
- What happened to David on the trip?

David arrives in Utah on page 227. Skim the next few paragraphs and discuss the remainder of David's life.

- What sort of a burden do you think this situation placed on Joseph and Alexander and the rest of the family?

Class Activity:

Compare the first four trips Joseph III makes to Utah. How do they change over time?

Reading Assignment:

Joseph Smith III: Pragmatic Prophet, Chapter Eleven: Politicking Against Polygamy

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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