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Sisters in Zion

You will be an essential force in the gathering of Israel and in the creation of a Zion people.

My beloved sisters, I am blessed to speak during this wonderful time in the world's history. Every day, we are approaching closer to the glorious moment when the Savior Jesus Christ will come to earth again. We know something of the terrible events that will precede His coming, yet our hearts swell with joy and confidence also knowing of the glorious promises that will be fulfilled before He returns.

As the beloved daughters of Heavenly Father, and as the daughters of the Lord Jesus Christ in His kingdom,¹ you will play a crucial part in the grand times ahead. We know that the Savior will come to a people who have been gathered and prepared to live as the people did in the city of Enoch. The people there were united in faith in Jesus Christ and had become so completely pure that they were taken up to heaven.

Here is the Lord's revealed description of what would happen to Enoch's people and what will happen in *this* last dispensation of the fulness of times:

"And the day shall come that the earth shall rest, but before that day the heavens shall be darkened, and a veil of darkness shall cover the earth; and the heavens shall shake, and also the earth; and great tribulations shall be

among the children of men, *but my people will I preserve;*

"And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth *out of the earth*, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men; and righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare, an Holy City, that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the

time of *my coming*; for *there* shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem.

"And the Lord said unto Enoch: Then shalt thou and all thy city meet them there, and we will receive them into our bosom, and they shall see us; and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks, and we will kiss each other;

"And *there* shall be mine abode, and it shall be Zion, which shall come forth out of all the creations which I have made; and for the space of a thousand years the earth shall rest."²

You sisters, your daughters, your granddaughters, and the women you have nurtured will be at the heart of creating that society of people who will join in glorious association with the Savior. You will be an essential force in the gathering of Israel and in the creation of a Zion people who will dwell in peace in the New Jerusalem.

The Lord has, through His prophets, made a promise to you. In the



Temecula, California, USA

early days of the Relief Society, the Prophet Joseph Smith said to the sisters, “If you live up to your privileges, the angels cannot be restrained from being your *associates*.”³

That marvelous potential lies within you, and you are being prepared for it.

President Gordon B. Hinckley said:

“You sisters . . . do not hold a second place in our Father’s plan for the eternal happiness and well-being of His children. You are an absolutely essential part of that plan.

“Without you the plan could not function. Without you the entire program would be frustrated. . . .

“Each of you is a daughter of God, endowed with a divine birthright.”⁴

Our current prophet, President Russell M. Nelson, has given this description of the part you play in preparation for the Savior’s coming:

“It would be impossible to measure the influence that . . . women have, not only on families but also on the Lord’s Church, as wives, mothers, and grandmothers; as sisters and aunts; as teachers and leaders; and especially as exemplars and devout defenders of the faith.

“This has been true in every gospel dispensation since the days of Adam and Eve. Yet the women of *this* dispensation are distinct from the women of *any* other because this dispensation is distinct from any other. This distinction brings both privileges and responsibilities.”⁵

This dispensation is distinct in that the Lord will lead us to become prepared to be like the city of Enoch. He has described through His apostles and prophets what that transformation to a Zion people will entail.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught:

“[Enoch’s] was a day of wickedness

and evil, a day of darkness and rebellion, a day of war and desolation, a day leading up to the cleansing of the earth by water.

“Enoch, however, was faithful. He ‘saw the Lord,’ and talked with him ‘face to face’ as one man speaks with another. (Moses 7:4.) The Lord sent him to cry repentance to the world, and commissioned him to ‘baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son, which is full of grace and truth, and of the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of the Father and the Son.’ (Moses 7:11.) Enoch made covenants and assembled a congregation of true believers, all of whom *became* so faithful that ‘the Lord came and dwelt with his people, and they dwelt in righteousness,’ and were blessed from on high. ‘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.’ (Moses 7:18.) . . .



Chiba, Japan

“After the Lord called his people Zion, the scripture says that Enoch ‘built a city that was called the City of Holiness, even Zion;’ that Zion ‘was taken up into heaven’ where ‘God received it into his own bosom;’ and that “from thence went forth the saying, Zion is fled.’ (Moses 7:19, 21, 69.) . . .

“This same Zion which was taken up into heaven shall return . . . when the Lord brings again Zion, and its inhabitants shall join with the new Jerusalem, which shall then be established.”⁶

If the past is prologue, at the time of the Savior’s coming, the daughters who are deeply committed to their covenants with God will be more than half of those who are prepared to welcome Him when He comes. But whatever the numbers, your contribution in creating unity among the people prepared for that Zion will be far greater than half.

I will tell you why I believe that will be so. The Book of Mormon gives an account of a Zion people. You remember that it was after they had been taught, loved, and blessed by the resurrected Savior that “there was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people.”⁷

My experience has taught me that Heavenly Father’s daughters have a gift to allay contention and to promote righteousness with their love of God and with the love of God they engender in those they serve.

I saw it in my youth when our tiny branch met in my childhood home. My brother and I were the only Aaronic Priesthood holders, my father the only Melchizedek Priesthood holder. The branch Relief Society president was a convert whose husband was unhappy

with her Church service. The members were all older sisters without a priesthood holder in their homes. I watched my mother and those sisters love, lift, and care for each other unfailingly. I realize now that I was given an early glimpse of Zion.

My tutorial in the influence of faithful women continued in a small branch of the Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I watched the branch president's wife, the district president's wife, and the Relief Society president warm the heart of every newcomer and convert. The Sunday I left Albuquerque, after two years observing the influence of sisters there, the first stake was created. Now the Lord has placed a temple there.

I moved next to Boston, where I served in the district presidency that presided over little branches spread across two states. There were contentions that more than once were resolved by loving and forgiving women who helped soften hearts. The Sunday I left Boston, a member of the First Presidency organized the first stake in Massachusetts. There is a temple there now, close to where the district president once lived. He had been brought into Church activity and was later called to serve as a stake president and then as a mission president, influenced by a faithful and loving wife.

Sisters, you were given the blessing of being daughters of God with special gifts. You brought with you into mortal life a spiritual capacity to nurture others and to lift them higher toward the love and purity that will qualify them to live together in a Zion society. It is not by accident that the Relief Society, the first Church organization specifically for Heavenly Father's daughters, has as its motto "Charity Never Faileth."



San Lucas Sacatepéquez, Guatemala

Charity is the pure love of Christ. And it is faith in Him and the full effects of His infinite Atonement that will qualify you, and those you love and serve, for the supernal gift to live in that sociality of a long-looked-for and promised Zion. There you will be sisters in Zion, loved in person by the Lord and those you have blessed.

I testify that you are citizens of the Lord's kingdom on the earth. You are daughters of a loving Heavenly Father, who sent you into the world with unique gifts that you promised to use to bless others. I promise you

that the Lord will lead you by the hand, through the Holy Ghost. He will go before your face as you help Him prepare His people to become His promised Zion. I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. See Doctrine and Covenants 25:1.
2. Moses 7:61–64; emphasis added.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 454; emphasis added.
4. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Women of the Church," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 67.
5. Russell M. Nelson, "A Plea to My Sisters," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 95–96; emphasis added.
6. Bruce R. McConkie, "Building Zion," *Tambuli*, Sept. 1977, 13; emphasis added.
7. 4 Nephi 1:15.