

Waiting a Little Season

BY BROOKE ANN SMITH

I was surprised to learn that the Lord's message for Zion's Camp was also a message for me.

My favorite institute class during college was on “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.” As our instructor helped us understand the principles contained in each line, I gained a strong testimony that marriage “is ordained of God” and that “the family is central to [His] plan.”¹ My gratitude for inspired priesthood leadership increased as I began to think of the proclamation as one of the most powerful defenses in the war being waged against the family.

That semester I enlisted myself in the conflict, inwardly resolving to promote and defend the family every opportunity I had.

A few years later on a warm summer evening, I felt I was losing the battle. Being a wife and mother was the deepest desire of my heart, but it hadn't yet happened for me. I felt I had done my best to be patient and trust in the Lord's timing, but that night I was wholly discouraged. Frustrated, I knelt in prayer—to ask not necessarily for

PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG DIMOND, POSED BY MODEL; BACKGROUND: ENGRAVING, ZION'S CAMP ARRIVES IN MISSOURI



a husband but for understanding. “Please, Lord, help me know why I am single and what I should be doing with my life.”

I finished my prayer and opened my scriptures to the Doctrine and Covenants, where I had been reading the previous night. I couldn’t concentrate on the section where I’d left off, so I began leafing through the pages, pausing to read text I’d highlighted or annotated before. Section 105 caught my eye, and I stopped. Two weeks earlier I had taught a Relief Society lesson on the spiritual heritage of members of the Church and had spent time reading and marking this section. As I read that night, however, the verses took on new meaning.

The winter of 1833–34 was harsh for early Latter-day Saints. Driven from their homes in Jackson County, Missouri, they had taken up residence in abandoned cabins, crude huts, or tents in nearby Clay County. Though the Saints petitioned the government for assistance in regaining their lands, they were denied help. In response to this situation, Joseph Smith received instruction from the Lord to raise an army in Kirtland and march to the aid of the Saints in Missouri. This body came to be known as Zion’s Camp.

Approximately 200 men marched in that army. The 900-mile journey was not easy—dissension, disease, and discouragement stalked them, as did hostile mob members. After being protected from mob attacks by an intense storm at Fishing River, Clay County, the army was disbanded at the commandment of the Lord, not having fulfilled the mission of redemption. Section 105, where I had paused to read, gives the reasons behind the dismissal:

“It is expedient in me that mine elders should wait for a little season for the redemption of Zion—

“That they themselves may be prepared, and that my people may be taught more perfectly, and have experience, and know more perfectly concerning their duty, and the things which I require at their hands. . . .



COME TO KNOW HIM

“To be in control of your life, to be a success regardless of your situation as a single, I recommend you come to know your Father in Heaven. Come to love Him. Always remember that He loves you and will give you guidance and support if you will but give Him the chance. Include Him in your decision making. Include Him in your heartaches and heartbreaks. Include Him when you take inventory of your personal worth. ‘For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men [and women] to perform their labors.’ (Alma 34:32.)”

Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915–94) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Be a Quality Person,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1993, 66.

“For behold, I have prepared a great endowment and blessing to be poured out upon them, inasmuch as they are faithful and continue in humility before me. . . .

“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 fulfill—I will fight your battles” (D&C 105:9–10, 12, 14).

As I read, the message for me became strikingly clear: the purposes of the Lord in disbanding Zion’s Camp can be likened to His purposes in directing *my* life. He would have me experience “a little season” of waiting before I marry, that I may be prepared to do what is required of me and have experiences that promote learning and growth.

Heavenly Father answered my prayer that night when, as a discouraged daughter, I sought direction and comfort. Through the scriptures, I learned that the Lord is not disregarding the

miles I’ve traveled with His army but is purposefully building on those efforts so that I can be a stronger defender in His kingdom. As I strive to be faithful, humble, and patient, I will know more perfectly *my* duty and the things that He requires at my hands. ■

NOTE

1. *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.