



GOD WILL FIGHT YOUR BATTLES— *in His Way*

*The early Saints learned a thing
or two about God's ways.*

By David Dickson
Church Magazines

WITH AN ANGRY MOB of more than 300 promising to destroy them in the morning, the group of Saints who made up Zion's Camp was hoping and praying for a miracle.

Under Joseph Smith's leadership, Zion's Camp had been marching for weeks from Ohio to Missouri. These Church members were hoping to help the Saints who had been driven out of Jackson County, Missouri, USA, to regain their lands. But they faced threats and opposition throughout their march. And now, yet another mob was threatening them.

The miracle that the Zion's Camp Saints prayed for would soon arrive. It came in the form of dark clouds gathering in the distance. A violent thunderstorm erupted on all sides and dumped massive hailstones. The storm stopped the mob in its tracks.

"It seemed as if the mandate of vengeance had gone forth from the God of battles to protect his servants from the destruction of their enemies," Joseph Smith's history explains. "The hail fell on them, and not on us, and we suffered no

harm except the blowing down of some of our tents and getting some wet, while our enemies had holes made in their hats and otherwise received damage, even the breaking of their rifle stocks and the fleeing of their horses.”¹

Destructive hailstones were just one part of the storm. Rain poured down so hard that Fishing River, the river separating the two groups, swelled to almost 40 feet (12 meters) deep. It had only been ankle deep in the morning.

The Lord promised the members of Zion’s Camp, “I will fight your battles” (Doctrine and Covenants 105:14). When that happens, there’s no doubt which side is going to win.

MODERN-DAY MIRACLES

Sometimes when you read accounts like this one, you might wonder why such dramatic miracles don’t seem to happen to *you* in *your* struggles.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles recently shared some insights that can help. He said: “Please understand that He who never sleeps nor slumbers cares for the happiness and ultimate exaltation of His children above all else that a divine being has to do. He is pure love, gloriously personified, and Merciful Father is His name.

“‘Well, if this is the case,’ you might say, ‘shouldn’t His love and mercy simply part our personal Red Seas and allow us to walk through our troubles on dry ground?’”

In other words, if God has fought such battles for His children in the past, why not do so now? Why not wipe out all disease? Why not put an end to war and hunger and suffering throughout the world?

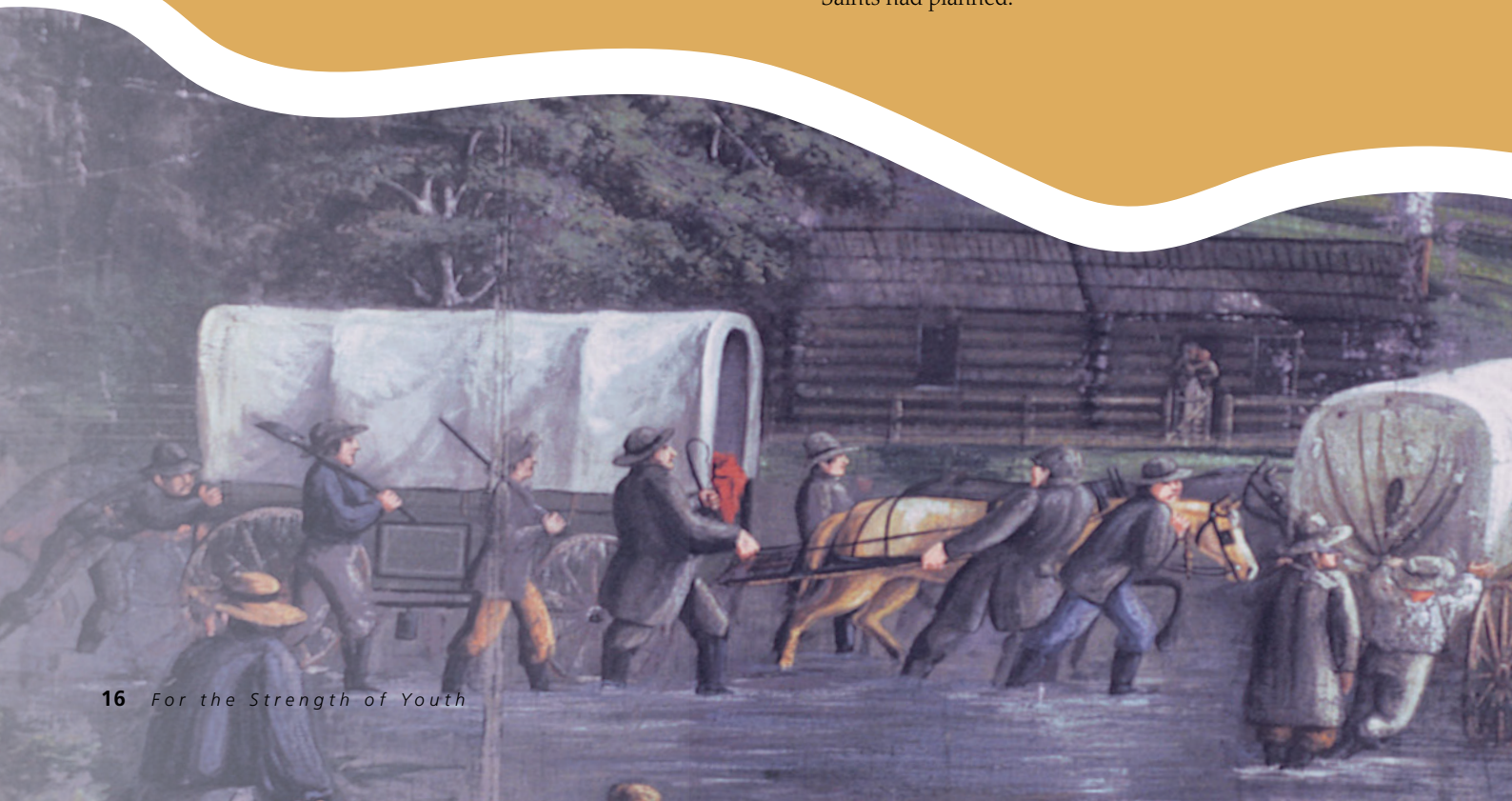
Or why not at least stop that bully who won’t leave you alone? Or help your family get along better?

Elder Holland taught further: “The answer to such questions is ‘Yes, God can provide miracles instantaneously, but sooner or later we learn that the times and seasons of our mortal journey are His and His alone to direct.’ He administers that calendar to every one of us individually.”²

When you follow God’s commandments, you are entitled to God’s help. But none of us can choose how or when that help arrives.

UNEXPECTED BLESSINGS

Let’s return to Zion’s Camp for a bit. The miracle at Fishing River was certainly dramatic. And it wasn’t the only miracle the members of Zion’s Camp saw during their march. But as you’ll read in *Come, Follow Me* and learn in seminary this month, things didn’t turn out the way the Saints had planned.



They thought the whole point of Zion’s Camp was to help regain lands in Jackson County that had been stolen from the Saints by angry mobs.

Did the Saints get their lands back? No.

Did the Saints suffer on the nearly 900-mile (1,448-kilometer) march to Missouri? Well, yes. Sometimes a lot. At the worst of it, an outbreak of cholera swept through the camp and killed 13.

On the surface, it might seem like the whole effort was a failure. But that’s not the way many who marched in the camp saw it. Brigham Young said of this experience, “I was well paid—paid with heavy interest—yea . . . my measure was filled to overflowing with the knowledge that I had received by traveling with the Prophet [Joseph Smith].”³

Many other members of Zion’s Camp also talked about the lessons learned and the value of the march. The Prophet Joseph Smith himself said: “Brethren, some of you are angry with me, because you did not fight in Missouri; but let me tell you, God did not want you to fight. He could not organize his kingdom . . . unless he took [his leaders] from a body of men who had offered their lives, and who had made as great a sacrifice as did Abraham.”⁴

Their faithfulness may not have resulted in their lands being restored. But they were richly blessed in other ways. That’s a pattern you might notice in your life as well. And what God helps us become *through* our trials is often a greater miracle than His delivering us *from* our trials.

GOD’S CERTAIN VICTORY

As you study the lives of early Saints, you can detect God’s influence time and again. You read about profound blessings. You also find times of deep struggle. But for those who trusted God to the end, their eternal reward was sure.

When you follow God and trust in Him, He will fight your battles and provide the miracles you need! These miracles will come in His own way and time, but the outcome is certain. Any trial will ultimately be resolved—in this life or the next. Equally important, as you follow Him, you’ll never have to walk alone. “Therefore, be faithful; and behold, and lo, I am with you even unto the end” (Doctrine and Covenants 105:41). 🏠

NOTES

1. History, 1838–1856, volume A-1 (23 December 1805–30 August 1834), 497, josephsmithpapers.org.
2. Jeffrey R. Holland, Oct. 2020 general conference (*Ensign*, Nov. 2020, 116).
3. Brigham Young, “Discourse,” *Deseret News*, Dec. 3, 1862, 177.
4. Joseph Smith, in Joseph Young Sr., *History of the Organization of the Seventies* (1878), 14.

COME, FOLLOW ME

Trials can teach us unique and valuable lessons. What have you learned from your own trials? Which of these lessons are you grateful for?

