

Establishing Zion in Missouri

The Early Years in Missouri

At the same time the Saints were striving to build the kingdom of God in Kirtland, Ohio, many members of the Church were undergoing great struggles in Jackson County, Missouri.

When called upon to do so, the Saints living in Colesville, New York, had willingly left their homes to gather to Kirtland (see page 18). When they arrived in Ohio in mid-May 1831, they found that the land set aside for them was not available. The Prophet Joseph Smith took the plight of these Saints to the Lord in prayer. He had just received the revelation directing himself, Sidney Rigdon, and 28 other elders to go on a proselyting mission to Missouri, and the Lord instructed that the Colesville Saints also journey “unto the land of Missouri” (D&C 54:8). They were the first group of Saints to settle in the land that was to become known as Zion.

Newel Knight, president of the Colesville Branch, immediately gathered his people. Emily Coburn related, “We most truly were a band of pilgrims, started out to seek a better country.”¹ At Wellsville, Ohio, they boarded a steamboat and, using the Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri Rivers, traveled to Jackson County, Missouri. The captain of the steamboat said that they “were the most peaceable and quiet emigrants they had ever carried west; ‘no profanity, no bad language, no gambling and no drinking.’”²

Using an overland route, the Prophet and other Church leaders hurried ahead of the Colesville Saints to make advance arrangements for locating them in Jackson County. The Prophet’s party reached Independence, Missouri, on 14 July 1831. After viewing the country and prayerfully seeking divine guidance,

the Prophet said, “[The Lord] manifested himself unto me, and designated to me and others, the very spot upon which he designed to commence the work of the gathering, and the upbuilding of an holy city, which should be called Zion.”³

This revelation specified that Missouri was the place intended by the Lord for the gathering of the Saints, and that “the place which is now called Independence is the center place; and a spot for the temple is lying westward, upon a lot which is not far from the courthouse” (D&C 57:3). The Saints were to buy every tract of land lying west of that city to the line separating the state of Missouri and Indian territory (see D&C 57:1–5).

Joseph Smith and Bishop Partridge acquired land for the Colesville Branch in Kaw Township, some 12 miles west of Independence. On 2 August 1831, after the arrival of the branch members, a ceremony was conducted that was filled with symbolism. Twelve men, representing the 12 tribes of Israel, carried a freshly cut oak log and placed it across a stone that had been set by Oliver Cowdery, thus laying the symbolic foundation for the establishment of Zion. From that humble beginning the Saints constructed a building that was used as both a church and a schoolhouse.⁴

On the following day, a number of the brethren gathered at an elevated point one-half mile west of the Independence courthouse. The Prophet Joseph Smith set in place the cornerstone for the contemplated temple and dedicated it in the name of the Lord. The central feature of the land of Zion was to be the house of the Lord.⁵

The Prophet returned to Kirtland, and the Saints in Jackson County began to receive parcels of land from Bishop Edward Partridge. They were very poor and did not even have tents to protect them from the elements while building cabins. They were also almost entirely without farm implements until teams were sent more than 200 miles east to St. Louis to obtain them. Once the Saints were outfitted, they began to break up the ground for planting. Greatly impressed by what she witnessed, Emily Coburn

related: "It was a strange sight indeed, to see four or five yoke of oxen turning up the rich soil. Fencing and other improvements went on in rapid succession. Cabins were built and prepared for families as fast as time, money and labor could accomplish the work."⁶

Despite the inconveniences of the frontier, the Colesville Saints remained cheerful and happy. Parley P. Pratt, who settled with them, said: "We enjoyed many happy seasons in our prayer and other meetings, and the Spirit of the Lord was poured out upon us, and even on the little children, insomuch that many of eight, ten or twelve years of age spake, and prayed, and prophesied in our meetings and in our family worship. There was a spirit of peace and union, and love and good will manifested in this little Church in the wilderness, the memory of which will be ever dear to my heart."⁷

The Saints were blessed by a second visit from the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon in April of 1832. These leaders had just come from a very painful experience at the John Johnson farm in Hiram, Ohio, where they had been working on the translation of the Bible. A mob of enemies of the Church had dragged Joseph Smith from his home during the night. They had choked him, stripped him, and covered his body with tar and feathers. Sidney Rigdon had been dragged by his heels along frozen, rough ground, causing severe lacerations to his head.

Now, in contrast to that physical beating, they were safe with friends. Joseph affirmed that he "received a welcome only known by brethren and sisters united as one in the same faith, and by the same baptism, and supported by the same Lord. The Colesville branch, in particular, rejoiced as the ancient Saints did with Paul. It is good to rejoice with the people of God."⁸

Persecution in Jackson County

Following the commandment of the Lord, Bishop Partridge purchased hundreds of acres of land in Jackson County for the many Saints who were emigrating from Ohio and elsewhere. The

leaders initially set up the Independence, Colesville, Whitmer, Big Blue, and Prairie Branches for these members. A total of ten branches were established by the latter part of 1833.⁹ There were probably more than 1,000 Saints present when the combined branches met at the Big Blue River in April 1833 to celebrate the third anniversary of the founding of the Church. Newel Knight said that this gathering was the first commemoration of its kind in Zion and the Saints had a spirit of general rejoicing. However, Newel also observed, "When the Saints rejoice, the devil is mad, and his children and servants partake of his spirit."¹⁰

Before April had ended, the spirit of persecution manifested itself. At an early stage, local citizens warned Church members that they were displeased with the arrival of so many Latter-day Saints, who, they feared, would soon overwhelm them at the voting polls. The Saints were primarily from the northern states and generally were against black slavery, which was then legal in the state of Missouri. The Saints' belief in the Book of Mormon as scripture, their claim that Jackson County was ultimately to be their Zion, and their assertion that they were led by a prophet were very unsettling. Too, the charge that they had contact with the Indians aroused the suspicions of the local citizens.

A circular, sometimes referred to as the secret constitution, was passed around by the opposition to obtain the signatures of those willing to eliminate the "Mormon scourge." These feelings of animosity culminated on 20 July 1833 when a mob, numbering some 400 men, met at the courthouse in Independence to coordinate their efforts. Written demands were placed before the leaders of the Church calling upon the Saints to leave Jackson County; to cease printing their newspaper, *The Evening and the Morning Star*; and to not allow any additional Church members to come into Jackson County. When the mob found that the Church's leaders would not agree to these illegal requirements, they attacked the newspaper office, which was also the home of the editor, William W. Phelps. The attackers stole the printing press and demolished the building.

Destruction of the Book of Commandments

The most important project being printed at the newspaper office was the Book of Commandments, the first compilation of revelations received by the Prophet Joseph Smith. When the mob attacked the building, they tossed the unbound pages of the book into the street. Seeing this, two young Latter-day Saints, Mary Elizabeth Rollins and her sister, Caroline, at the peril of their own lives, sought to rescue what they could. Mary Elizabeth recalled:

“[The mob] brought out some large sheets of paper, and said, ‘Here are the Mormon Commandments.’ My sister Caroline and myself were in a corner of a fence watching them; when they spoke of the commandments I was determined to have some of them. Sister said if I went to get any of them she would go too, but said ‘they will kill us.’ ” While the mob was busy at one end of the house, the two girls ran and filled their arms with the precious sheets. The mob saw them and ordered the girls to stop. Mary Elizabeth reported: “We ran as fast as we could. Two of them started after us. Seeing a gap in a fence, we entered into a large cornfield, laid the papers on the ground, and hid them with our persons. The corn was from five to six feet high, and very thick; they hunted around considerable, and came very near us but did not find us.”

When the ruffians had gone, the girls made their way to an old log stable. Here, as reported by Mary Elizabeth, they found that “Sister Phelps and children were carrying in brush and piling it up at one side of the barn to lay her beds on. She asked me what I had—I told her. She then took them from us. . . . They got them bound in small books and sent me one, which I prized very highly.”¹¹

Tarring and Feathering of Bishop Partridge

The mob next seized Bishop Edward Partridge and Charles Allen. They were taken to the public square in Independence and commanded to renounce the Book of Mormon and leave the county. Bishop Partridge said, “I told them that the Saints had

suffered persecution in all ages of the world; that I had done nothing which ought to offend anyone; that if they abused me, they would abuse an innocent person; that I was willing to suffer for the sake of Christ; but, to leave the country, I was not then willing to consent to it."

With this refusal, the men were stripped of their outer clothing and their bodies were covered with tar and feathers. Bishop Partridge observed, "I bore my abuse with so much resignation and meekness, that it appeared to astound the multitude, who permitted me to retire in silence, many looking very solemn, their sympathies having been touched as I thought; and as to myself, I was so filled with the Spirit and love of God, that I had no hatred towards my persecutors or anyone else."¹²

Battle of the Big Blue

The mob came again on 23 July, and Church leaders offered themselves as ransom if they would not harm the people. But the mob threatened injury to the whole Church and forced the brethren to agree that all Latter-day Saints would leave the county. As the actions of the mob were illegal, running counter to the constitutions of the United States and the state of Missouri, Church leaders sought the aid of the governor of the state, Daniel Dunklin. He advised them of their civil rights and directed the Saints to get legal counsel. Alexander W. Doniphan and others were hired to represent Church members, an action that further infuriated the mob.

At first the Latter-day Saints attempted to avoid direct conflict; however, the beatings of members and the destruction of property eventually led to a battle near the Big Blue River. Two members of the mob were killed, and the Saints lost Andrew Barber. Philo Dibble was shot three times in the stomach. Newel Knight was called to administer to him, with miraculous results. Brother Dibble related:

"Brother Newel Knight came to see me, and sat down on the side of my bed. . . . I felt the Spirit resting upon me at the crown

of my head before his hand touched me, and I knew immediately that I was going to be healed. . . . I immediately arose and discharged three quarts of blood or more, with some pieces of clothes that had been driven into my body by the bullets. I then dressed myself and went out doors. . . . From that time not a drop of blood came from me and I never afterwards felt the slightest pain or inconvenience from my wounds, except that I was somewhat weak from the loss of blood.”¹³

Governor Dunklin interceded and instructed Colonel Thomas Pitcher to disarm both sides. However, Colonel Pitcher’s sympathies were with the mob, and he took the weapons from the Saints and delivered them to the mob. The defenseless Saints were attacked and their homes destroyed. The men had to seek refuge in the woods or suffer severe beatings. Finally Church leaders called on the people to take their belongings and flee from Jackson County.

Refuge in Clay County

In late 1833 the majority of the Saints crossed the Missouri River north into Clay County and found temporary refuge there, as described by Parley P. Pratt:

“The shore began to be lined on both sides of the ferry with men, women and children; goods, wagons, boxes, provisions, etc., while the ferry was constantly employed; and when night again closed upon us the cottonwood bottom had much the appearance of a camp meeting. Hundreds of people were seen in every direction, some in tents and some in the open air around their fires, while the rain descended in torrents. Husbands were inquiring for their wives, wives for their husbands; parents for children, and children for parents. Some had the good fortune to escape with their families, household goods, and some provisions; while others knew not the fate of their friends, and had lost all their goods. The scene . . . would have melted the hearts of any people on the earth, except our blind oppressors, and a blind and ignorant community.”¹⁴

The opportunity to build Zion and a temple to their God in Jackson County was thus temporarily wrested from the Saints. About 1,200 Church members now did what was necessary to survive an inhospitable winter by the river in Clay County. Some took shelter in wagon boxes, tents, or dugouts in the hillside, while others occupied abandoned cabins. Newel Knight endured the winter in an Indian wigwam.

One of the first buildings constructed by the Saints in Clay County was a small log church house in which to worship. Here they “did not forget to return thanks unto Almighty God for deliverance from the hands of their vile enemies and to seek His protecting care for the future—that He would soften the hearts of the people to whom they had fled, that they might find among them something to sustain themselves.”¹⁵

Persecution of Zion’s Camp

As described in chapter 3, the Lord commanded Joseph Smith to gather a group of men to march from Kirtland to Missouri to help the Saints who had been driven from their lands in Jackson County. When Zion’s Camp reached eastern Clay County, Missouri, in late June 1834, a mob of over 300 Missourians came out to meet them—intent on their destruction. Under the direction of the Prophet Joseph, the brethren set up camp at the junction of the Little and Big Fishing Rivers.

The mob began to attack with cannon fire, but the Lord was fighting the battle of the Saints. Clouds quickly began to form overhead. The Prophet described the circumstances: “It began to rain and hail. . . . The storm was tremendous; wind and rain, hail and thunder met them in great wrath, and soon softened their direful courage and frustrated all their designs to ‘kill Joe Smith and his army.’ . . . They crawled under wagons, into hollow trees, filled one old shanty, etc., till the storm was over, when their ammunition was soaked.” After experiencing the pelting of the storm all night, “this ‘forlorn hope’ took the ‘back track’ for Independence, to join the main body of the mob, fully

satisfied . . . that when Jehovah fights they would rather be absent. . . . 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.”¹⁶

When it became apparent that a mob army was confronting the Saints and that Governor Dunklin would not keep his promise to help them, the Prophet prayed for instruction from the Lord. The Lord told him that conditions were not then right for the redemption of Zion. The Saints had much to do to prepare their personal lives in order to build Zion. Many of them had not yet learned to be obedient to the things the Lord required: “Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom; otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself. And my people must needs be chastened until they learn obedience, if it must needs be, by the things which they suffer” (D&C 105:5–6).

The Lord instructed that Zion’s Camp should not pursue its military objective: “In consequence of the transgressions of my people, 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” (D&C 105:9–10). The brethren in Zion’s Camp were honorably released, and the Prophet returned to Kirtland.

Church Headquarters at Far West

Most of the Missouri Saints continued in Clay County until 1836, when they were reminded by the citizens of that county that they had promised to remain only until they could return to Jackson County. As this now seemed impossible, they were asked to leave as pledged. Legally the Saints did not have to comply, but rather than create a conflict, they moved once again. Through the efforts of their friend in the state legislature, Alexander W. Doniphan, two new counties, named Caldwell and Daviess, were created out of Ray County in December 1836. The Saints were allowed to establish their own community of Far West, about 60 miles north of Clay County, as the county seat of Caldwell. The

primary officers of the county were Latter-day Saints, and many people hoped this would end the persecutions of the Saints.

After a difficult journey from Kirtland, Ohio, the Prophet Joseph Smith arrived in Far West, Missouri, in March 1838 and established the Church headquarters there. In May he went north into Daviess County and, while visiting the Grand River, prophetically identified the area as the Valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, the “place where Adam shall come to visit his people” (D&C 116:1).¹⁷ Adam-ondi-Ahman became the primary community of the Saints in Daviess County. The cornerstones for a temple were dedicated at Far West on 4 July 1838, and the Saints began to feel that they had at last found a respite from their enemies.

The Battle of Crooked River

Persecution soon began again, however. On 6 August 1838, a mob of 100 people at the election polls in Gallatin, Daviess County, would not let the Saints cast their ballots. This led to a brawl in which several people were injured. The growing disorder fostered by the mob in Caldwell and Daviess Counties caused Governor Lilburn W. Boggs to bring in the state militia to keep the peace.

Captain Samuel W. Bogart, one of the militia officers, was in reality closely allied with the mob. He decided to begin a conflict by kidnapping three Latter-day Saints and holding them in his camp on the Crooked River in northwestern Ray County. A company of Latter-day Saint militia was dispatched to rescue these men, and a fierce battle was waged on 25 October 1838. Captain David W. Patten, one of the Twelve Apostles, led the company and was among those mortally wounded in the fray. David’s wife, Phoebe Ann Patten; Joseph and Hyrum Smith; and Heber C. Kimball came from Far West to be with him before he died.

Heber said of David Patten: “The principles of the Gospel which were so precious to him before, afforded him that support and consolation at the time of his departure, which deprived death of its sting and horror.” The dying man spoke to those at

his bedside concerning some Saints who had fallen from their steadfastness into apostasy, exclaiming, " 'O that they were in my situation! For I feel that I have kept the faith.' " Next he addressed Phoebe Ann, saying, " 'Whatever you do else, Oh do not deny the faith.' " Just before he died, he prayed, " 'Father, I ask Thee in the name of Jesus Christ, that Thou wouldst release my spirit, and receive it unto Thyself.' " And then to those around him he pleaded, " 'Brethren, you have held me by your faith, but do give me up, and let me go, I beseech you.' " Brother Kimball said, "We accordingly committed him to God, and he soon breathed his last, and slept in Jesus without a groan."¹⁸

Captain Samuel Bogart's company had acted more like a mob than like state militia. Nevertheless, the death of a militiaman in the Battle of Crooked River, along with other reports, was employed by Governor Lilburn W. Boggs in formulating his infamous "extermination order." That decree, dated 27 October 1838, stated in part, "The Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the State if necessary, for the public peace—their outrages are beyond all description."¹⁹ A militia officer was appointed to carry out the governor's order.

Haun's Mill Massacre

On 30 October 1838, three days after the extermination order was issued, some 200 men mounted a surprise attack against the small community of Saints at Haun's Mill on Shoal Creek, Caldwell County. The assailants, in an act of treachery, called for those men who wished to save themselves to run into the blacksmith shop. They then took up positions around the building and fired into it until they thought all inside were dead. Others were shot as they tried to make their escape. In all, 17 men and boys were killed and 15 wounded.

After the massacre, Amanda Smith went to the blacksmith shop, where she found her husband, Warren, and a son, Sardius, dead. Among the carnage she was overjoyed to find another son, little Alma, still alive though severely wounded. His hip had been blown

away by a musket blast. With most of the men dead or wounded, Amanda knelt down and pleaded with the Lord for help:

“Oh my Heavenly Father, I cried, what shall I do? Thou seest my poor wounded boy and knowest my inexperience. Oh Heavenly Father direct me what to do!” She said that she “was directed as by a voice,” instructing her to make a lye from the ashes and cleanse the wound. She then prepared a slippery elm poultice and filled the wound with it. The next day she poured the contents of a bottle of balsam into the wound.

Amanda said to her son, “ ‘Alma, my child, . . . you believe that the Lord made your hip?’

“ ‘Yes, mother.’

“ ‘Well, the Lord can make something there in the place of your hip, don’t you believe he can, Alma?’

“ ‘Do you think that the Lord can, mother?’ inquired the child, in his simplicity.

“ ‘Yes, my son,’ I replied, ‘he has shown it all to me in a vision.’

“Then I laid him comfortably on his face, and said: ‘Now you lay like that, and don’t move, and the Lord will make you another hip.’

“So Alma laid on his face for five weeks, until he was entirely recovered—a flexible gristle having grown in place of the missing joint and socket.”²⁰

Amanda and others had the awful task of seeing to the burial of their loved ones. Only a few able-bodied men remained, including Joseph Young, the brother of Brigham Young. Because they feared the return of the mob, there was no time to dig conventional graves. The bodies were thrown into a dry well, forming a mass grave. Joseph Young helped to carry the body of little Sardius but declared “he could not throw that boy into this horrible grave.” He had played with the “interesting lad” on their journey to Missouri, and Joseph’s “nature was so tender” that he could not do it. Amanda wrapped Sardius in a sheet, and the next day she and another son, Willard, placed the body in the well. Dirt and straw were then thrown in to cover the dreadful scene.²¹

At Adam-ondi-Ahman, 20-year-old Benjamin F. Johnson was spared a similar fate at the hands of a Missourian who was determined to shoot him. Benjamin had been arrested and kept under guard for eight days in intensely cold weather before an open campfire. While he was sitting on a log, a “brute” came up to him with a rifle in his hands and said, “You give up Mormonism right now, or I’ll shoot you.” Benjamin decisively refused, upon which the ruffian took deliberate aim at him and pulled the trigger. The gun failed to discharge. Cursing fearfully, the man declared that he had “used the gun 20 years and it had never before missed fire.” Examining the lock, he reprimed the weapon and again aimed and pulled the trigger—without effect.

Following the same procedure he tried a third time, but the result was the same. A bystander told him to “fix up his gun a little” and then “you can kill the cuss all right.” So for a fourth and final time the would-be murderer prepared, even putting in a fresh load. However, Benjamin declared, “This time the gun bursted and killed the wretch upon the spot.” One of the Missourians was heard to say, “You’d better not try to kill that man.”²²

The Prophet Confined in Prison

Shortly after the massacre at Haun’s Mill, the Prophet Joseph Smith and other leaders were taken prisoner by the state militia. A court-martial was held and the Prophet and his fellows were condemned to be shot to death by a firing squad the following morning in the town square at Far West. However, General Alexander W. Doniphan of the militia refused to carry out the shooting, calling the decision “cold-blooded murder.” He warned the general who commanded the militia that if he continued his efforts to kill these men, “I will hold you responsible before an earthly tribunal, so help me God.”²³

The Prophet and the others were first taken to Independence, and then sent to Richmond, Ray County, where they were jailed awaiting trial. Parley P. Pratt was one of those with the Prophet.



While confined in Liberty Jail, the Prophet Joseph Smith pled with the Lord for the suffering Saints and received the divine direction and comfort now recorded in sections 121, 122, and 123 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

He said that one evening the guards were taunting the prisoners by telling of their deeds of rape, murder, and robbery among the Latter-day Saints. He knew that the Prophet was awake beside him and recorded that Joseph suddenly stood on his feet and rebuked the guards with great power:

“SILENCE, ye fiends of the infernal pit. In the name of Jesus Christ I rebuke you, and command you to be still; I will not live another minute and hear such language. Cease such talk, or you or I die THIS INSTANT!”

“He ceased to speak. He stood erect in terrible majesty. Chained, and without a weapon; calm, unruffled and dignified as an angel, he looked upon the quailing guards, whose weapons were lowered or dropped to the ground; whose knees smote

together, and who, shrinking into a corner, or crouching at his feet, begged his pardon, and remained quiet till a change of guards.”

Parley then observed, “I have tried to conceive of kings, of royal courts, of thrones and crowns; and of emperors assembled to decide the fate of kingdoms; but dignity and majesty have I seen but *once*, as it stood in chains, at midnight, in a dungeon in an obscure village of Missouri.”²⁴

When the court of inquiry was over, Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Lyman Wight, Caleb Baldwin, and Alexander McRae were sent to Liberty Jail in Clay County, arriving on 1 December 1838. The Prophet described their situation: “We are kept under a strong guard, night and day, in a prison of double walls and doors, proscribed in our liberty of conscience, our food is scant. . . . We have been compelled to sleep on the floor with straw, and not blankets sufficient to keep us warm. . . . The Judges have gravely told us from time to time that they knew we were innocent, and ought to be liberated, but they dare not administer the law unto us, for fear of the mob.”²⁵

Exodus to Illinois

While their Prophet remained imprisoned, over 8,000 Saints crossed from Missouri east into Illinois to escape the extermination order. They were forced to leave in the cold of winter, and although Brigham Young, the President of the Quorum of the Twelve, directed them and gave them every possible assistance, they suffered greatly. The John Hammer family was one of the many families who sought refuge. John recalled the difficult conditions:

“Well do I remember the sufferings and cruelties of those days. . . . Our family had one wagon, and one blind horse was all we possessed towards a team, and that one blind horse had to transport our effects to the State of Illinois. We traded our wagon with a brother who had two horses, for a light one horse wagon, this accommodating both parties. Into this small wagon we placed our clothes, bedding, some corn meal and what scanty provisions

we could muster, and started out into the cold and frost to travel on foot, to eat and sleep by the wayside with the canopy of heaven for a covering. But the biting frosts of those nights and the piercing winds were less barbarous and pitiful than the demons in human form before whose fury we fled. . . . Our family, as well as many others, were almost bare-footed, and some had to wrap their feet in cloths in order to keep them from freezing and protect them from the sharp points of the frozen ground. This, at best, was very imperfect protection, and often the blood from our feet marked the frozen earth. My mother and sister were the only members of our family who had shoes, and these became worn out and almost useless before we reached the then hospitable shores of Illinois."²⁶

The Prophet had to wait helplessly in prison while his people were driven from the state. The anguish of his soul is measured in his plea to the Lord, recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants, section 121:

"O God, where art thou? And where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place?

"How long shall thy hand be stayed, and thine eye, yea thy pure eye, behold from the eternal heavens the wrongs of thy people and of thy servants, and thine ear be penetrated with their cries?" (D&C 121:1–2).

The Lord answered him with these comforting words: "My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

"And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes.

"Thy friends do stand by thee, and they shall hail thee again with warm hearts and friendly hands" (D&C 121:7–9).

The words of the Lord were literally fulfilled in April 1839. After six months of illegal imprisonment, changes of venue took the prisoners first to Gallatin in Daviess County, Missouri, and then toward Columbia in Boone County. However, Sheriff William Morgan was instructed "never to carry [them] to Boone County."

A person or persons in high places had determined that the prisoners would be allowed to escape, perhaps to avoid the public embarrassment of bringing them to trial when there was no evidence to convict them. The prisoners were given the opportunity to purchase two horses and elude their guards. Hyrum Smith said, "We took our change of venue for the state of Illinois, and in the course of nine or ten days arrived safe at Quincy, Adams county, where we found our families in a state of poverty, although in good health."²⁷ There they were indeed greeted "with warm hearts and friendly hands."

Wilford Woodruff said of his reunion with the Prophet: "Once more I had the happy privilege of taking Brother Joseph by the hand. . . . He greeted us with great joy. . . . [He] was frank, open, and familiar as usual, and our rejoicing was great. No man can understand the joyful sensations created by such a meeting, except one who has been in tribulation for the gospel's sake."²⁸ The Lord had miraculously preserved his Prophet and the body of the Church. Modern-day Israel began to gather once again in a new land with new opportunities and covenants before them.