

New Jerusalem in America

The Puritans who settled in America had a feeling of being the chosen people, living in the Land of Promise as a new Israel. The idea of a western New Jerusalem was mentioned in the seventeenth century by Samuel Sewall when he asked "why the Heart of America may not be the seat of the New Jerusalem." Cotton Mather thought that the New Jerusalem would be westward, beyond the confines of New England.¹

While some looked for a New Jerusalem in the state of New York, others spiritualized the idea and saw the cause of Zion in the revivals of the 1820s. Such expressions as "growing zeal for the prosperity of Zion," "enquiring the way to Zion" and "wishes well to the cause of Zion" were expressions of the revival movement and referred to the building up of the church.²

Out of this background came the Book of Mormon. According to this record Jesus Christ gave instructions to the forefathers of the Native Americans concerning the New Jerusalem to be built on this land. The Gentiles (who believe) "shall assist my people, the rem[n]ant of Jacob [Native Americans]; and also, as many of the house of Israel as shall come, that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem."³

The development of this idea in the Book of Mormon occurs in the books of 3 Nephi and Ether. This land of America shall be a New Jerusalem with Jesus Christ being in the midst of the Native American people.⁴ A city would be built "called the New Jerusalem," and it would become an earthly city that the Gentiles would assist the Native Americans to build.⁵ The book of Ether explains that America "became a choice land above all other lands, a chosen land of the Lord."⁶

¹ Alan Heimert, "Puritanism, the Wilderness, and the Frontier," *New England Quarterly* 26 (September 1953):380-81. See also Gustav H. Blanke with Karen Lynn, "God's Base of Operations: Mormon Variations on the American Sense of Mission," *Brigham Young University Studies* 20 (Fall 1979):83-92. James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard wrote: "The Puritans saw themselves as a chosen people, commissioned by God to build a New Jerusalem, or a City of Zion, in America—an exemplary community that all could observe and emulate." *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 9. The 1992 second edition changed "chosen people" to "covenant people" and dropped the words "in America" (11).

² Rev. George Lane, "Revival of Religion on Ontario District," *The Methodist Magazine* (New York) 8 (April 1825):161, letter dated January 25, 1825; *The Christian Herald* (Portsmouth) 8 (March 1825):7 and *Wayne Sentinel* 2 (March 2, 1825):4, Palmyra, New York. The minutes of the Geneva Presbytery states: "In the congregation of Palmyra, the Lord has appeared in his glory to build up Zion." Geneva Presbytery Minutes, D:27, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

³ 1830 BOM, 501; LDS 3 Nephi 21:23; RLDS 10:1.

⁴ 1830 BOM, 497; LDS 3 Nephi 20:22 (see also 21:25); RLDS 9:58-59 (see also 10:4).

⁵ 1830 BOM, 501; LDS 3 Nephi 21:23; RLDS 10:1.

⁶ 1830 BOM, 566; LDS Ether 13:2; RLDS 6:2.

and that it was the place of the New Jerusalem, which should come down out of Heaven, and the Holy Sanctuary of the Lord. Behold, Ether saw the days of Christ, and he spake concerning a New Jerusalem upon this land . . . wherefore the remnant of the house of Joseph [Native Americans] shall be built upon this land; and it shall be a land of their inheritance; and they shall build up a holy city unto the Lord, like unto the Jerusalem of old.⁷

Ether stated that after the earth passes away "there shall be a new heaven and a new earth" and then the New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven.⁸ The New Jerusalem becomes identifiable with the heavenly city of Revelation 21 coming down "out of heaven."⁹

In September 1830, five months after Joseph Smith Jr. organized the restoration Church of Christ, one of the eight witnesses to the Book of Mormon, Hiram Page claimed to receive revelations "concerning the upbuilding of Zion" and other matters through the medium of a seer stone. "Finding, however, that many especially the Whitmer family and Oliver Cowdery were believing much in the things set forth by this stone" Joseph Smith inquired of God concerning this matter and Page was told that what had been written was not of God.¹⁰ In a revelation originating at Fayette, New York, Oliver Cowdery, the second elder, was called to "go unto the Lamanites [Native Americans] & Preach my Gospel unto them & cause my Church to be established among them."¹¹ Concerning the city called New Jerusalem Oliver was told that "it is not Revealed & no man knoweth where the City shall be built But it shall be given hereafter Behold I say unto you that it shall be among the Lamanites."¹²

Later three others (including Peter Whitmer Jr.) were called to accompany Oliver Cowdery on this mission. In October, Parley P. Pratt, and Ziba Peterson were called as well. The instructions stated that Pratt "shall go with my servant Oliver and Peter into the wilderness among the Lamanites and Ziba also shall go with them and I myself will go with them and be in their midst and I am their advocate with the Father and nothing shall prevail" against them.¹³ On October 17, 1830 at Manchester, New York, Cowdery himself stated that he was going "to rear up a pillar as a witness to where the Temple of God shall be built, in the glorious New-Jerusalem."¹⁴

⁷ 1830 BOM, 566; LDS Ether 13:3-4, 8; RLDS 6:3-4, 8.

⁸ 1830 BOM, 566; LDS Ether 13:9, 10; RLDS 6:9, 10.

⁹ Revelation 21:2, 10.

¹⁰ Manuscript History, Book A-1:54; *History of the Church* 1:109-110; Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith* 1:263, 323. See also BC 30:11; LDS D&C 28:11; RLDS D&C 27:4.

¹¹ BCR, 41, CHL; BC 30:7; LDS D&C 28:8; RLDS D&C 27:3. "Lamanites" is a Book of Mormon term for the Native Americans.

¹² BCR, 41. Changed to "on the borders by" the Lamanites. See BC 30:8-9; LDS D&C 28:9; RLDS D&C 27:3.

¹³ Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 92; LDS D&C 32:2-3; RLDS D&C 31:1. This revelation was not published in the BC.

¹⁴ Statement signed by Oliver Cowdery and dated October 17, 1830, cited in a letter of Ezra Booth to Rev. Ira Eddy, November 24, 1831 and published in the *Ohio Star* 2 (December 8, 1831):3, Ravenna, Ohio..

While there were Native Americans living in New York, the four elders "were appointed to go into the wilderness through the western States, and to the Indian territory."¹⁵ The western states were those west of New York, including Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri. The Indian country, where some of the woodland tribes had been relocated west of the Missouri River, was at that time politically unorganized. These missionaries knew the general location of where they were going prior to their departure. Their destination would be outside the states in Indian Territory.

The missionaries traveled to what Pratt called the Cattaraugus Indians (actually the Seneca and Onondagas tribes) near Buffalo, New York.¹⁶ They stayed a few hours and left two copies of the Book of Mormon. Then the Lamanite missionaries eventually traveled through the state of Ohio, to the Delaware Nation in the territory west of Missouri. But, lacking credentials, they were reduced to preaching to the white population in Jackson and Lafayette counties, Missouri. In essence, the mission failed—the Church of Christ was not established among the native population.

The missionaries arrived at Kirtland, Ohio, on October 29, 1830.¹⁷ They preached and baptized seventeen people into the church on November 5. Pratt's former minister Sidney Rigdon was baptized a few days later. One of the converts, Frederick G. Williams, accompanied the missionaries as they set out on the next leg of their journey. As they were preparing to depart, the Painesville *Telegraph* reported, "We understand that he [Cowdery] is bound for the regions beyond the Mississippi, where he contemplates founding a 'City of Refuge' for his followers, and converting the Indians, under his prophetic authority."¹⁸ The five men traveled to Sandusky, Ohio, called upon the Wyandot Indians, and spent several days there. Then they continued on to Cincinnati on the Ohio River and walked to St. Louis, Missouri. From St. Louis they continued to Independence, Jackson County, Missouri, arriving about January 13, 1831. Of their arrival, Peter Whitmer Jr. wrote:

We came to independence on the twelfth [sic; first] month on the 13 d[ay] of the month on the 14 daye of the month [January 14, 1831] I began to Labour with mine owne hands Brother Oliver & Parl[e]y and Frederick started to see the deleware tribe in a few dayes they came to see me & brother Ziba and they declared that the Lamanites received them with great joy my brethren started againe to the deleweres- and also <to> the Shayneye¹⁹

¹⁵ *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, 35.

¹⁶ "History of Parley P. Pratt," *Deseret News* 8 (May 19, 1858):53.

¹⁷ Copy of Oliver Cowdery letter, dated November 12, 1830, in a Newel Knight journal currently in private possession.

¹⁸ *Telegraph* 2 (November 16, 1830):3.

¹⁹ Statement of Peter Whitmer Jr., December 13, 1831, CHL. That Whitmer is incorrect as to their arrival in "the twelfth month" is clear from the writings of Pratt and Cowdery. Pratt wrote that they were near St. Louis in "the beginning of 1831." *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, 40. Cowdery reported on January 29, 1831 "we ar[r]ived at this place a few days since." Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 256.

Parley Pratt mentioned that "two of our number [Whitmer and Peterson] now commenced work as tailors in the village of Independence, while the others crossed the frontier line and commenced a mission among the Lamanites, or Indians."²⁰ Oliver Cowdery wrote that he

had two intervieuws with the Chief of the Delaware, who is a very old & venerable looking man. after laying before him & eighteen or twenty of the Council of that nation the truth, he said that he and they were very glad for what I their Brother had told them and they had received it in their hearts &c- But how the matter will go with this tribe to me is uncertain neither Can I at present Conclude much about it²¹

Cowdery, Pratt, and Frederick G. Williams started to preach and instruct the Shawnee and Delaware; but lacking a government license, they were ordered off the reservation by Indian agent Richard Cummins. They were told they could obtain a permit from General William Clark, who was in charge of Indian affairs in St. Louis, and had co-led the famed Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific.

Both Pratt and Cummins wrote to Clark in St. Louis. Clark was not available from November 30, 1830, through March 31, 1831. Clark's business was being conducted by John Ruland, sub-agent.²² Cowdery's letter written on February 14 read:

As I have been appointed by a society of Christians in the State of New York to superintend the establishing Missions among the Indians I doubt not but I shall have the approbation of your honour and a permit for myself and all who may be recommended to me by that Society to have free intercourse with the several tribes in establishing schools for the instruction of their children and also teaching them the Christian religion without intruding or interfering with any other Mission now established.²³

Cummins's letter to Clark of February 15 contained the following comments:

A few days agoe three Men all Strangers to me went among the Indians Shawanees & Delawares, they say for the purpose of preaching to and Instructing them in Religious Matters, they say they are sent by God and must proceed, they have a new Revelation with them, as there [their] Guide in teaching the Indians which they say was shown to one of their Sects in a miraculous way, and that an Angel from Heaven appeared to one of their Men and two others of their Sect, and shewed them that the work was from god and much more &c. I have refused to let them stay or, go among the Indians unless they first obtain permission from you

²⁰ *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, 41.

²¹ Cowdery to "My dearly beloved bretheren," January 29, 1831, copy of letter in letter of Joseph Smith to Hyrum Smith, March 3-4, 1831. See Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 256-57.

²² Warren A. Jennings, "The First Mormon Mission to the Indians," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 37 (Autumn 1971):298.

²³ "U.S. Superintendency of Indian Affairs," Vol. 6:103; William Clark Papers, MS 95, (microfilm edition), Manuscript Division, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas.

or, some of the officers of the Genl. Government who I am bound to obey. I am informed that they intend to apply to you for permission to go among the Indians, if you refuse, then they will go to the Rocky Mountains.²⁴

Pratt wrote in his autobiography: "Passing through the tribe of Shawnees we tarried one night with them, and the next day crossed the Kansas river and entered among the Delawares,"²⁵ where they met Chief William Anderson.

We continued for several days to instruct the old chief and many of his tribe. . . . The excitement now reached the frontier settlements in Missouri, and stirred up the jealousy and envy of the Indian agents and sectarian missionaries to that degree that we were soon ordered out of the Indian country as disturbers of the peace; and even threatened with the military in case of non-compliance. We accordingly departed from the Indian country, and came over the line, and commenced laboring in Jackson County, Missouri, among the whites. We were well received and listened to by many; and some were baptized and added to the Church. Thus ended our first Indian Mission in which we had preached the gospel in its fulness, and distributed the record of their forefathers among three tribes, viz: the Catteraugus Indians [sic], near Buffalo, N.Y., the Wyandots of Ohio, and the Delawares west of Missouri.²⁶

It was agreed that Pratt should travel to St. Louis. In a letter to Smith and others on April 8, Oliver Cowdery reported the following:

we had been long looking for [a] letter from you with the hope that the news we should received wou[l]d give our friend[s] who reside in this Land joy by confirming them in the belief that we were men of truth and the Lord God of hosts has not forsaken the earth but is in very deed about to redeem his ancien[t] covenant people & lead them with the fulness of the Gentiles to springs, yea, fountain of living waters to his holy hill of Zion²⁷

Cowdery continued his letter:

[T]he principl[e] chief says he believes ev[e]ry word of the Book [of Mormon] & there are many more in the Nation who believes & we understand there are many among the Shawnees who also believe & we trust that when the Lord shall open our way we shall have glorious times. . . . [T]he agent for the Lamanites is very strict with us and we think some what strenuous respecting our having liberty to visit our brethren the Lamanites but we trust that when our brother Parley returns we shall have a permit from General Clark, who is the Superintendent of Indian

²⁴ Ibid. 6:113-14.

²⁵ *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, 41.

²⁶ Ibid., 44.

²⁷ Cowdery to "My dearly beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord," April 8, 1831, copy of letter in Joseph Smith Letterbook 1:10, CHL.

affairs west of the Missi[ssi]ppi who must have a recommend or security before he can give a permit for any stranger or foreigner to go among them to teach or preach.

While Cowdery stated that his teachings were received with gladness, there was no mention of baptisms being performed. The Church of Christ was not established among the native population.

It is possible that Pratt carried Cowdery's letter to Clark personally. Another letter from Cowdery of April 16 is not extant. On May 7 Oliver wrote to Smith, "I have nothing particular to write as concerning the Lamanites."²⁸ Pratt left St. Louis and arrived in Kirtland, Ohio, near the end of March, and from there embarked on a mission to the Shakers.

Joseph Smith's history contains the following: "From P. P. Pratt, who had returned from the expedition of last fall, during the spring we had verbal information; and from letters from the still remaining elders we had written intelligence," and also that "this was the most important subject which then engrossed the attention of the saints."²⁹

Two of the first converts among the white population in Jackson County were Joshua Lewis and his wife who lived in Kaw Township, west of Independence. They were baptized in early 1831.³⁰ Peter Whitmer Jr. stated, "then [we] resorted among the gentiles and declared the word and Babtized 7."³¹

While the mission to the Native Americans was in progress Joseph Smith continued his revision of the Bible still working on the book of Genesis. During the month of December 1830 he dictated what was called the "Prophecy of Enoch" which contained a story about another holy city, known as the city of Enoch, built in Old Testament times and taken from the earth into heaven. The city was described in this way:

And the Lord called his people, Zion, because they were of one heart and of one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there were no poor among them. And Enoch continued his preaching in righteousness unto the people of God. And it came to pass in his days, that he built a city that was called the city of Holiness, even Zion.³²

Enoch saw in vision that "Zion in [the] process of time was taken up into heaven." The elect were to be gathered "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

²⁸ Cowdery to "Our dearly beloved Brethren," May 7, 1831, Ibid. 1:12.

²⁹ *Times and Seasons* 5 (February 15, 1844):432. For a change in the manuscript history after the 1844 publication, see Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:354 and *History of the Church*, 1:181-82.

³⁰ Jessee, "Joseph Knight's Recollection," 39; see also *Journal History of the Church*, February 3, 1831, CHL.

³¹ Statement of Peter Whitmer Jr., December 13, 1831, CHL.

³² Genesis 7:23-25 (JST); LDS Moses 7:18-19; RLDS D&C 36:2-3; Old Testament Dictated Manuscript, 16, CCLA; *The Evening and the Morning Star* 1 (August 1832):2, Independence, Missouri.

coming; for there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion; a New Jerusalem."³³ In addition, the promise was made that in the last days Enoch's city of Zion "should again come on the earth."³⁴

In January 1831 church leader Joseph Smith with others started to move from Fayette, New York, to Kirtland, Geauga County, Ohio, and established church headquarters there. Within a week, Smith revealed instructions on the laws of the church. These instructions also told the saints that what was left over from their consecrations to the church would be used for: "building up the New Jerusalem which is hereafter to be revealed that my Covenant people may be gathered in me in the day that I shall come to my Temple this do for the salvation of my people."³⁵

After receiving a letter from Oliver Cowdery, Joseph received in March 1831 another revelation which instructed church members to gather their riches (money) so they could purchase an inheritance that would be designated later:

It shall be called the New Jerusalem, a land of peace, a City of refuge, a place of safety for the saints of the most high God . . . & it shall come to pass that the righteous shall be gathered out from among all nations & shall come to Zion singing with songs of everlasting joy.³⁶

Following a church conference in June 1831 at Kirtland, Ohio, certain men were instructed to convene the next conference in Missouri where missionaries to the Native Americans had gone. Missouri was "the land which I will consecrate unto my People, which are a remnant of Jacob [Native Americans], & them who are heirs according to the covenant. . . . [I]f ye are faithful, ye shall assemble yourselves together to rejoice upon the land of Missouri [Missouri], which is the Land of your inheritance, which is now the land of your enemies. [B]ut behold I the Lord will hasten the City in its time."³⁷ The region westward unto the "borders of the Lamanites" was where the saints were to obtain inheritance and the physical location of their city of Zion—the New Jerusalem.³⁸

³³ Genesis 7:27, 70 (JST); LDS Moses 7:21, 62; RLDS D&C 36:3, 12; compare with Book of Commandments 29:8-9; LDS D&C 29:7-8; RLDS D&C 28:2. "And it came to pass, that Zion [the city of Enoch] was not, for God received it up into his own bosom; and from thence went forth the saying, Zion is fled." Genesis 7:78 (JST); LDS Moses 7:69; RLDS D&C 36:14.

³⁴ Genesis 9:21 (JST). The coming together of the city of Enoch (Zion) and the New Jerusalem is further described in a revelation to Joseph Smith: "The Lord hath brought down Zion [of Enoch] from above. The Lord hath brought up Zion [the New Jerusalem] from beneath." LDS D&C 84:100; RLDS D&C 83:17; *The Evening and the Morning Star* 1 (January 1833):3.

³⁵ Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 108; BC 44:29-30; LDS D&C 42:35-36; RLDS D&C 42:10 (February 9, 1831).

³⁶ Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 124; BC 48:59, 67; also published in *The Evening and the Morning Star* 1 (June 1832):2; see LDS D&C 45:66, 71; RLDS D&C 45:12, 14. On February 9 Joseph Smith mentioned the New Jerusalem that was to be built. See BC 44:9, 29, 47, 51; LDS D&C 42:9, 35, 62, 67; RLDS D&C 42:3, 10, 17, 18.

³⁷ BCR, 87, 89; BC 54:1, 43-44; LDS D&C 52:2, 42-43; RLDS D&C 52:1, 9 (June 6, 1831).

³⁸ BCR, 90; BC 56:9; LDS D&C 54:8; RLDS D&C 54:2. See revelation given May 15, 1831, which also mentions the borders of the Lamanites. BCR, 85.

On June 19, 1831 Joseph Smith Jr., Sidney Rigdon, Martin Harris, Edward Partridge, William W. Phelps, Joseph Coe, A. Sidney Gilbert, and Elizabeth Gilbert left together for the cities of Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Louisville, Kentucky. The group arrived at St. Louis on July 1. They then divided into two groups with Smith, Harris, Phelps, Partridge, and Coe walking from St. Louis to Independence where they arrived on July 14. Members of the Colesville branch arrived in Independence eleven days later.

Ezra Booth gave a brief description of Independence when he arrived with Sidney Rigdon:

It is a new Town, containing a courthouse built of brick, two or three merchant stores, and fifteen or twenty dwelling houses, built mostly of logs hewed on both sides; and is situated on a handsome rise of ground, about three miles south of the Missouri River, and about twelve miles east of the dividing line between the U. S. and the Indian Reserve, and is the County seat of Jackson County.³⁹

Joseph Smith found no Lamanite church established among the natives. On July 20, 1831, Smith received the following revelation that mentioned the location of the temple to be built in the New Jerusalem:

the land of Missorie [Missouri] which is the Land which I, have appointed & consecrated for the gathering of the Saints Wherefore, this is the land of promise & the place for the City of Zion. & thus saith the Lord your God, If ye will receive wisdom here is wisdom. Behold the place which is now called Independence is the centre place, & the spot for the Temple is lying westward upon a lot which is not far from the court-house. Wherefore it is wisdom that the land should be purchased by the saints & also every tract lying westward even unto the line run[n]ing directly betwe[e]n Jew [Native Americans] & gentile And also every tract bordering by the Prairies in as much as my Deciples are enabled to buy lands. Behold this is wisdom that they may obtain it for an everlasting inheritance.⁴⁰

Three manuscripts exist of the July 20, 1831, revelation regarding the gathering to Missouri and also concerning A. Sidney Gilbert. This revelation pointed to Independence as "the land of promise & the place of the City of Zion" and the gathering. The temple property was designated as "lying westward upon a lot which is not far from the court-house," west of Independence.⁴¹ The revelation also indicated that the gospel would be preached unto the Lamanites (Native Americans) by "clerks employed" in Gilbert's service at a future store, sending goods to the Lamanites under license.

³⁹ Booth to Rev. Ira Eddy, November 14, 1831 in *Ohio Star* 2 (November 17, 1831):3, Ravenna, Ohio.

⁴⁰ BCR, 93; LDS D&C 57:1-5; RLDS D&C 57:1.

⁴¹ On the courthouse, see Max H Parkin, "The Courthouse mentioned in the Revelation on Zion," *Brigham Young University Studies* 14 (Summer 1974):451-57. On additional background see Pearl Wilcox, *The Latter Day Saints on the Missouri Frontier* (Independence: Author, 1972), 15-42.

Though there were no Indian converts when Joseph Smith and his associates arrived in Independence, it is evident that Smith was still planning to preach to the Native Americans. He could not have struck upon a doctrine more provocative on the frontier than his belief that the "Lamanites" would unite with the Mormons to prepare the way for Christ's return. Ezra Booth, one of the elders who arrived at Independence, wrote four months later as a former member:

Another method has been invented, in order to remove obstacles which hitherto have proved insurmountable. "The Lord's store-house," is to be furnished with goods suited to the Indian trade, and persons are to obtain license from the government to dispose of them to the Indians in their own territory; at the same time, they are to disseminate the principles of Mormonism among them. From this smug[g]ling method of preaching to the Indians, they anticipate a favorable result.

Booth also mentioned an alternate plan to get into the Indian Territory:

In addition to this, and to co-operate with it, it has been made known by revelation, that it will be pleasing to the Lord, should they form a matrimonial alliance with the Natives; and by this means the Elders, who comply with the thing so pleasing to the Lord, and for which the Lord has promised to bless those who do it abundantly, gain a residence in the Indian territory, independent of the agent.⁴²

Oliver Cowdery wrote an account of the dedication ceremony for the place where the temple was to be built:

The day following [August 3] eight Elders viz. Joseph Smith Jr., Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, Peter Whitmer Jr., Frederick G. Williams, Wm. W. Phelps, Martin Harris, and Joseph Coe. assembled together where the temple is to be erected. Sidney Rigdon dedicated the ground where the city is to Stand: and Joseph Smith Jr. laid a stone at the North east corner of the contemplated Temple in the name of the Lord Jesus of Nazareth. After all present had rendered thanks to the great ruler of the universe. Sidney Rigdon pronounced this Spot of ground wholly [sic] dedicated unto the Lord forever: Amen.⁴³

The land and site of the temple was outside the Independence city boundary, and at the time of the dedication the property was owned by the state of Missouri. Sidney Rigdon had been instructed previously to "consecrate & dedicate this land, & the spot of the temple."⁴⁴ John

⁴² Booth to Rev. Ira Eddy, December 6, 1831, in *Ohio Star* 2 (December 8, 1831):3.

⁴³ As copied into "The Book of John Whitmer Kept by Commandment," chapter 9, page 32, CCLA; published in *Journal of History* 1 (January 1908):59-60; and Bruce N. Westergren, ed., *From Historian to Dissident: The Book of John Whitmer* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 86-87.

⁴⁴ BCR, 97; BC 59:70; LDS D&C 58:57; RLDS D&C 58:13 (August 1, 1831).

Whitmer mentioned that the stone laid was the "cornerstone of the Temple."⁴⁵ Ezra Booth described the event:

Should the inhabitants of Independence, feel a desire to visit this place, destined at some future time to become celebrated, they will have only to walk one half of a mile out of the Town, to a rise of ground, a short distance south of the road. They will be able to ascertain the spot, by the means of a sappling, distinguished from others by the bark being taken off on the north and on the east side. –On the south side of the sappling will be found the letter, T, which stands for Temple; and on the east side ZOM for Zomar; which Smith says is the original word for Zion. Near the foot of the sappling [sapling], they will find a small stone, covered over with bushes, which were cut for that purpose. This is the corner-stone for the Temple.⁴⁶

On August 9, five days after the church conference held in the land of Zion, Joseph Smith and a number of elders left Independence and used canoes to travel on the Missouri River as they returned to Kirtland, Ohio. On the 11th, about a hundred miles from Independence, the canoe in which Smith and Rigdon were riding in almost capsized as it ran into some wood and those aboard could have drowned.⁴⁷ William Phelps "in an open vision, by daylight, saw the Destroyer [the devil], in his most horrible power, ride upon the face of the waters. Others heard the noise, but saw not the vision."⁴⁸ They stopped for the night at a location known as McIlwaine's Bend. In the morning Joseph Smith received a revelation telling the group of the dangers of traveling on the river.

But verily I say unto you that it is not needfull for this whole company of mine Elders to be moveing swiftly upon the waters whilst the Inhabitants on either side are perishing in unbelief nevertheless I suffered it that ye might bear record Behold there are many dangers upon the waters & more especially hereafter for I the Lord have decreed, in mine anger many distructions [destructions] upon the waters yea & especially upon these waters nevertheless all flesh is in mine hand & he that is faithfull among you shall not perish by the waters. . . . Behold I the Lord in the begin[n]ing belessed [blessed] the waters but in the last days by the mouth of my servant John I cursed the waters wherefore the days will come that no flesh shall be safe upon the waters & it shall be said in days to come that none is able to go up to the land of Zion upon the waters but he that is upright in heart.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Westergren, *From Historian to Dissident*, 85.

⁴⁶ Booth to Rev. Ira Eddy, November 14, 1831 in *Ohio Star* 2 (November 17, 1831):3. That Joseph Smith considered "Zomar" to be Zion, see "Grammar & A[l]phabet of the Egyptian Language," 23, 1835 manuscript book located in CHL. See H. Michael Marquardt, comp., *The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papers* (Cullman, AL: Printing Service, 1981), 49-50.

⁴⁷ Booth to Edward Partridge, September 20, 1831, copy of letter included in Booth to Rev. Ira Eddy, November 21, 1831, *Ohio Star* 2 (November 24, 1831):3.

⁴⁸ Manuscript History, A-1:142; Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith* 1:362.

⁴⁹ BCR, 101-102; BC 62:3-7, 16-17; LDS D&C 61:3-6, 14-16; RLDS D&C 61:1, 3 (August 12, 1831).

After these instructions were given, Smith, Rigdon, and Oliver Cowdery went by land to St. Louis and then took a stage to Kirtland, arriving August 27. While in Jackson County, Sidney Rigdon was commanded to write a description of "the Land of Zion" in "an Epistle & subscription, to be presented unto all the Churches to obtain moneys, to be put into the hands of the Bishop, to purchase lands for an inheritance for the children of God."⁵⁰ In Kirtland Joseph was told in a revelation that Rigdon's initial writing was not acceptable to the Lord and he had one more chance to make another one or he could no longer hold church office.⁵¹ Rigdon made another epistle and briefly described the area in Missouri for building the New Jerusalem:

This land being situated [situated] in the centre of the continent on which we dwell with an exceeding fertile soil & cleared ready for the hand of the cultivator bespeaks the goodness of our God in providing so goodly a heritage & its climate <suited> to persons from every quarter of this continent whether east west north or south yea I think I may say for all constitutions from every part of the world & its productions nearly all the verieties [varieties] of both grain & vegetables which are common to this coun[r]ty. . . . I may say that the whole properties of the country invite the saints to come & partake in their blessings.⁵²

Oliver Cowdery and Newel K. Whitney were to take Sidney Rigdon's epistle to the various churches or branches and solicit funds to purchase land in Jackson County, Missouri, the land of their inheritance. Shortly afterwards Smith was told that the saints would be able to stay in Kirtland for at least five years: "for I the Lord willeth to retain a Strong hold in the Land of Kirtland for the space of five years in the which I will not overthrow the wicked that thereby I may save some."⁵³

Joseph and Emma Smith moved to Hiram, Portage County, Ohio in September 1831. In the month of October, William E. McLellin met Joseph for the first time. A revelation was given to McLellin calling him to repentance. In November a series of conference were held relating to publishing Joseph Smith's revelations. The appendix to the manuscript collection included instructions for church members to prepare, sanctify themselves, and gather together "upon the Land of Zion, all you that have not been commanded to tarry. [G]o ye out from Babylon." The saints were told that the Savior shall reign over all flesh and about the return of the ten tribes with their prophets from countries north of Ohio:

& they who are in the North countries shall come in remembranc[e] before the Lord, and their Prophets shall hear his voice, & shall no longer stay themselves & they shall smite the rocks, & the ice shall folow [flow] down at their presenc[e] & an high way shall be cast up in the midst of the great deep. their enemies shall become a prey unto them, & in the barren deserts there shall come forth pools of living water; & the parched ground shall no longe[r] be a thirsty land; & they shall bring forth th[e]ir rich treasures unto the Children of Ephraim my servents

⁵⁰ BCR, 97; BC 59:63; LDS D&C 58:50-51; RLDS D&C 58:11.

⁵¹ BCR, 108; BC 64:62-63; LDS D&C 63:56; RLDS D&C 63:14.

⁵² Sidney Rigdon's Epistle, Aug. 31, 1831, Sidney Rigdon Collection, CHL.

⁵³ BCR, 110; BC 65:27; LDS D&C 64:21; RLDS D&C 64:4 (September 11, 1831).

[servants]. & the boundaries of the everlasting hills shall trembl[e] at their presence. & these [then] shall they fall down & be crowned with glory, even in Zion, by the hands of the Servents of the Lord, even the children of Ephraim; & they shall be filled with songs of everlasting Joy.⁵⁴

Church members consecrated and donated money to the church. With these funds Bishop Edward Partridge was able to purchase land in the area near Independence including the spot where the contemplated temple was to be erected. This purchase was made on December 19, 1831, and included a little over 63 acres.⁵⁵

In September 1832, Joseph Smith and six elders met together in Kirtland where Smith received a revelation giving additional instructions for the gathering of the saints:

to stand upon mount Zion which shall be called the city New Jerusalem, which city shall be built begin[n]ing at the Temple lot which is appointed by the finger of the Lord in the western boundaries of the State of Misso[uri] and dedicated by the hand of Joseph [Smith Jr.] and others with whom the Lord was well pleased, verily this is the word of the Lord that the city New Jerusalem shall be built by the gath[e]ring of the saints begin[n]ing at this place, even the place of the Temple, which Temple shall be reared in this generation, for verely [verily] this generation shall not pass away untill an house shalt be built unto the Lord and a cloud shall rest upon it . . . which house shalt be built unto the Lord in this generation upon the consecrated spot as I have appointed.⁵⁶

The saints in Missouri were not living the commandments given through Joseph Smith. Joseph rebuked them, stating: "If Zion will not purify herself so as to be approved of in all things in his sight he will seek another people."⁵⁷

During this period, the thought was that only one temple would be built at the center place. But in June 1833 a draft containing a drawn plat of the city of Zion with explanations regarding the city center and plans for a number of houses called temples was sent to Missouri. This included a draft for "the house of the Lord which is to be built first in Zion."⁵⁸

On the plat were marked numbers for twenty-four "temples," that were to be twenty-four buildings for the purpose of "houses of worship" and "schools." The twenty-four temples were divided into two groups, one set of twelve for the high priesthood and the second group of twelve for the lesser priesthood.

The draft of the temple to be built for the presidency of the high priesthood was in all essential features similar to the Kirtland Temple. It was to have two meeting rooms with pulpits

⁵⁴ BCR, 116-18; LDS D&C 133:4-5, 26-33; RLDS D&C 108:2, 6 (November 3, 1831).

⁵⁵ Arthur M. Smith, *Temple Lot Deed*, 3rd ed., (Independence, Missouri: Board of Publications, Church of Christ, 1963), 5. See also Jackson County, Deed Record, Book B:1-3; *Deseret News*, Church Section, January 23, 1932, p. 1; Richard Price and Pamela Price, *The Temple of the Lord* (Independence, Missouri: authors, 1982), 32-38.

⁵⁶ Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 212-13; LDS D&C 84:2-5, 31; RLDS D&C 83:1-2, 6.

⁵⁷ Smith to William W. Phelps, January 11, 1833, copy in Joseph Smith Letterbook 1:19, CHL; *History of the Church* 1:316. Compare with LDS D&C 84:56-59; RLDS D&C 83:8.

⁵⁸ Joseph Smith Letterbook 1:41; *History of the Church* 1:359.

at each end. Veils could be lowered whenever necessary, and the congregation could view each series of pulpits by means of reversible seating just like the temple commanded to be built in Kirtland.⁵⁹ In the summer of 1833, a revelation was given which said in part:

Verily I say unto you that it is my will that an house should be built unto me in the land of Zion, like unto the pattern which I have given you. Yea, let it be built speedily by the tithing of my people . . . for a place of instruction for all those who are called to the work of the ministry in all their several calling[s] and offices.⁶⁰

The saints were soon persecuted in Independence and were asked to leave Jackson County.⁶¹ Oliver Cowdery hurried to Kirtland, arriving on August 9, 1833. Cowdery and Frederick G. Williams made corrections to the city plat of Zion and also the plan for the "house for the presidency" which was to be "built first in Zion."⁶²

This temple for the presidency was to be ten feet longer than the previous draft indicated. Instead of five side windows for each story (level), these new plans added four more windows, which made nine. The area for the storehouse in the earlier draft was removed, the lots for homes made smaller, changes in the location of the twelve temples for the lesser priesthood were made, and street names were added to the plat. The five named streets were Zion, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Chapel, and Kirtland.⁶³

After settling in various locations in Jackson County, Missouri, the saints were forced out of the county in November 1833. Their plans to establish the New Jerusalem were shattered, but they hoped that eventually they would complete the vision of Joseph Smith in constructing the city of peace.

⁵⁹ Joseph Smith Letterbook 1:38-41, CHL; Manuscript History, Book A-1:303-307; *History of the Church* 1:357-59. See Richard H. Jackson, "The Mormon Village: Genesis and Antecedents of the City of Zion," *Brigham Young University Studies* 17 (Winter 1977):223-40. This article is based on the first draft of the City of Zion sent to Independence. For plans on the Kirtland Temple in Ohio, see Kirtland Revelations Book, 59-60, CHL; LDS D&C 95; RLDS D&C 92. See also Ronald E. Romig and John H. Siebert, "The Genesis of Zion and Kirtland and the Concept of Temples," *Restoration Studies IV* (Independence, MO: Herald Publishing House, 1988), 99-123.

⁶⁰ Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 242; LDS D&C 97:10-11, 13; RLDS D&C 94:3 (August 2, 1833).

⁶¹ On persecution in Jackson County, see Warren A. Jennings, "Zion Is Fled: The Expulsion of the Mormons from Jackson County, Missouri" (Ph.D. diss., University of Florida, 1962).

⁶² Concerning modifications to the plans of the Independence Temple in Zion, see T. Edgar Lyon, "The Sketches on the Papyri Backings," *Improvement Era* 71 (May 1968):18-23. Oliver Cowdery wrote: "Those patterns previously sent you per mail. by our brethren were incorrect in some respects being drawn in greta [great] haste."

⁶³ The new sketch of the City of Zion "Drawn by F. G. Williams" is housed in the CHL. See Ronald E. Romig and John H. Siebert, "Jackson County, 1831-1833: A Look at the Development of Zion," *Restoration Studies III* (Independence, MO: Herald Publishing House), 286-304. Page 297 contains a photo of the revised plat of the City of Zion (August 1833).

The gathering would have to take place temporarily in other locations including Kirtland, Ohio, and northwestern Missouri. It was evident that the idea of building the New Jerusalem would have to be postponed. How long it would be until they could be on the land of their inheritance would depend on the saints. They were told that it was because of their transgression that Zion was lost for a “little season.”⁶⁴

Many saints were promised that if they were faithful, they would live in the American New Jerusalem when Christ would appear. The dream of living and having an everlasting inheritance in the city of Zion upon the Missouri land of promise was never realized during their lifetime.

⁶⁴ Kirtland Revelations Book, 97, CHL; LDS D&C 105:9; RLDS D&C 102:3.