

Podcast Episode 26: Defending Zion

Question: With all of the wars and destruction prophesied for the end of the world, how will the Lord defend and protect Zion?

DENVER: Mormon wrote his book and had us in mind as his audience. After Mormon finished his book, there was one reader, and that was his son Moroni, who buried it. Everything Mormon did, he did for this audience today-- the last days, the gentiles. As he's finishing up his record (this is in Mormon 8:31), he talks about us and says: *"There shall be many who will say, Do this, or do that, and it mattereth not, for the Lord will uphold such at the last day. But wo unto such, for they are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity."*

There is a right way, and it will be done according to the Lord's will. And the Lord is actively working to bring that about right now, in our day. The potential for Zion and the covenants being fulfilled in our day is as great as it has been in any generation from the days of Adam until now. And yet, in all those generations, there have only been two successes that the scriptures have captured.

Well, the original priesthood and the original pattern will have to return in order for the last-days Zion to exist. The first Zion, in Moses 7:13, *"So great was the faith of Enoch that he led the people of God, and their enemies came to battle against them; and he spake the word of the Lord, and the earth trembled, and the mountains fled, even according to his command; and the rivers of water were turned out of their course; and the roar of the lions was heard out of the wilderness; and all nations feared greatly,... so great was the power of the language which God had given him."*

When the government of God is upon the earth in the form of Zion, then God protects and defends it. God will be the force with which the nations of the earth must contend if they intend to do harm to Zion. Because it is His government, it is His handiwork, and it is an affront to Him to challenge His authority in attacking Zion. Hence Enoch's ability to speak the word of God and to have those that would bring harm upon Zion vanquished.

Hence further, the reason why, before the Flood, it was necessary to remove Zion. Because God cannot destroy the righteous. The wicked can destroy the wicked. The wicked can destroy the righteous. But when Zion is here, the wicked cannot destroy Zion, because God is asserting His

government. And because the wicked cannot destroy Zion, and God will not do so, Zion necessarily was taken up into heaven. The same thing happened with Melchizedek's city.

The Lord lamented: *“How oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chicks under her wings, and ye would not!”* (Matthew 23:37; Luke 13:34; 3 Nephi 10:4-6; D&C 43:24).

There have been occasions on which it would have been possible to have established Zion, but men would not. And when that happens, and men will not, the same rules apply as applied at the beginning. Hence the necessity for removing Moses out of the midst of Israel, because through Moses we could have had Zion, but the children of Israel were not interested. Hence the reason why Elijah was taken up into heaven, because Elijah was an opportunity in which it would have been possible for Zion to have been established.

Well, that same priesthood which was in the beginning that allowed Melchizedek to establish the city of peace, the city of righteousness, the city that God Himself would defend, necessarily must return. If you look at D&C 133, beginning at verse 26:

“And they who are in the north countries shall come in remembrance before the Lord; and their prophets shall hear his voice, and shall no longer stay themselves; and they shall smite the rocks, and the ice shall flow down at their presence. And an highway shall be cast up in the midst of the great deep. Their enemies shall become a prey unto them, And in the barren deserts there shall come forth pools of living water; and the parched ground shall no longer be a thirsty land. And they shall bring forth their rich treasures unto the children of Ephraim, my servants. And the boundaries of the everlasting hills shall tremble at their presence. And there shall they fall down and be crowned with glory, even in Zion, by the hands of the servants of the Lord, even the children of Ephraim. And they shall be filled with songs of everlasting joy. Behold, this is the blessing of the everlasting God upon the tribes of Israel, and the richer blessing upon the head of Ephraim and his fellows” (D&C 133:26-34).

Heaven will protect the last-days Zion. It will belong to Him, and therefore God will not allow it to be overtaken or overcome. D&C 45 has another prophecy about the last-days Zion, beginning at verse 66:

“And 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; And the glory of the Lord shall be there, and the terror of the Lord also shall be there, insomuch that the wicked will not come unto it, and it shall be called Zion. And it shall come to pass among the wicked, that every man that will not take his sword against his neighbor must needs flee unto Zion for safety. And there shall be gathered unto it out of every nation under heaven; and it shall be the only people that shall not be at war one with

another. And it shall be said among the wicked: Let us not go up to battle against Zion, for the inhabitants of Zion are terrible; wherefore we cannot stand” (D&C 45:66-70).

When they came to arrest the Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane after His suffering, even though He intended to submit Himself and to be abused and ultimately killed, when they entered, the Apostle John records that Christ, despite the ordeal He had just concluded, stood up, confronted them in their arms, and said: *“Whom seek ye?”* And they said: *“Jesus of Nazareth.”* And He said: *“I am he” (John 18:4-6).* And they stumbled backwards, tripped over one another's feet, and they fell down.

An armed group bearing swords and weapons were intimidated by the Lord identifying Himself. He made no attempt to defend Himself, but had He elected to do so, they could not have taken Him. He went as a lamb to the slaughter, because He intended, though the Lion of Judah, to submit Himself to become the Sacrificial Lamb.

Heaven protected Zion in its first iteration, and heaven is going to protect the last-days Zion. As a consequence of that, the time is going to come when it will not be the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt that people cite as evidence of the power of God. You see, Egypt had to be subdued. Moses was sent to subdue them because Egypt was, at the time, the greatest kingdom, the greatest nation on the earth. And Moses was sent to them to establish the government of God. When you confront the government of God against the most powerful nation on the earth, it's the most powerful nation that must yield the field and not the Lord.

Well in the last days, Jeremiah prophesied the time is going to come when the talk about the power of God is no longer making reference to what the Lord did anciently with Egypt, it's going to be what the Lord intends to do with the last-days Zion. This is Jeremiah 16, beginning at verse 14: *“Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers” (verses 14-15).*

That will be the reference point to which people will point as evidence of God's intention to establish His rule, His reign upon the earth, His authority over the nations of the earth.

Well, *it is going to come to pass.* In your enthusiasm, it would be better to demonstrate the virtue of patience as the Lord brings His work about than to exhibit the character flaw of impatience and enthusiasm in trying to bring about what the Lord intends Himself to cause to happen.

Because you cannot give birth prematurely to a living Zion, or it will choke, and it will die because it is unable to be viable outside of the hands of the Lord. We have to wait on Him.

If the original Mormonism needed to recover the fullness that was lost, then to revive an original it will require a recovery of what was lost and more. If recovered, believers will be able to receive a holy spot, accepted and defended by God. In that place the religion of Adam will be taught. The promised original religion includes the revelation of everything. Nothing shall be withheld.

Today's Mormonism has a great deal withheld. But the religion of Abraham (and therefore the religion of Adam) included "*a knowledge of the beginning of the creation, and also of the planets, and of the stars, as they were made known unto the fathers*" (Abraham 1:31). The original Mormonism must grow in ancient knowledge and understanding until their understanding reaches into heaven-- not just spiritual understanding but also physical understanding of the layout of the universe. The placement of the lights in the firmament was for "signs" to man and, therefore, were deliberately placed and contain information originally understood by Adam.

Because of prophecies made to the patriarchal fathers, the right to found this future city of peace descends from a specific ancient line. There will be an heir descended from both Jesse and Joseph who will accomplish it. Occupants of the community will likewise have lineal qualification. The last-days Zion is an accomplishment promised earlier to the patriarchal fathers, and it is through their descendants God intends to vindicate the promises. The result of this alignment will be a priestly city of Zion that will return to that power which she has lost.

The original iteration of Mormonism was apocalyptic. But it was oddly practical about the apocalypse, assuming there were things that could be done to prepare-- not in haste, which was condemned, but it was a physical and spiritual enterprise to be accomplished by the hard effort of those interested in welcoming the Lord's return.

A temple is the Lord's house. It's not actually a temple unless He comes to, visits, and accepts it. And then it is His house until it has been profaned. Therefore, when it is the Lord's, the timing of when it is to be built, where it is to be built, how it is to be built, and exactly what it is that He wants to be built are entirely within His control.

We don't have the right to select a spot. I mean, if you read carefully the word of the Lord in D&C 124, He does say to the people in Nauvoo, "The site that you have chosen for the building of the temple is acceptable." But remember that the Lord has everything in front of Him, and therefore, it's acceptable. In other words, "Yeah that site will do, just like any other site you want

to choose will do, given where I know you're headed! Given the end result of this massively stupid experiment that you've got under way at present, build the temple there, build it anywhere. It's acceptable to me; go for it."

"Now I want you to know something," the Lord goes on to say, "if you will do it, and if you'll follow me, and if you'll do-- if you meet the conditions, I will come there, and I will not only make it my house, I will protect you. You will not be moved out of your place. I will be the one who establishes you in this spot, and I will protect and defend you, and this will become the corner of Zion."

And He meant it when He made the promise. But again, He knew what was about to happen. He knew the hearts of the people that were involved. And it doesn't matter how eager or earnest Joseph or Hyrum were; it doesn't matter. You don't have a temple without a people, and we did not have the required people at the time.

One of the interesting things about the gathering into Zion is that apparently, although there may be yet more revelations and commandments that roll out, apparently it will be in Zion where the "rich treasures" of the records of other scattered tribes are to be brought in order for that information or body of material to be reclaimed. If the revelations and the prophecies are correct, the records of the Jews and the records of the Nephites-- they get gathered, and they are the first. But eventually there will be many others that get gathered in.

The description that's given of bringing the rich treasures unto the children of Ephraim in the everlasting mountains is a description of bringing them into the place that will be built by a covenant people who have the legal right to the land.

And first of all, I believe we could choose, as a people, a place to build a temple, and we would get exactly the same response that we see in the *Doctrine and Covenants* that was given to Joseph when the Nauvoo Temple began: "The site that you have selected is acceptable to me." And we'd probably reach exactly the same conclusion. I will not, therefore, choose a site. If God doesn't choose a site, it will remain unchosen. If God chooses the site, it's His, and then He has the responsibility to defend it.

If you read about the site selected in Nauvoo, in the Nauvoo site the Lord said, "Yeah, that's acceptable to me...and if..., and if..., and if..., *then*...." But if God chooses the site, it's His. There's no "if"-- well, there might be one "if." And that one "if" is, "Now if you want to live and not be slain by me on the land that I've chosen, then you better be careful." But it's His land-- it's His to defend. It's His choice. It's His house. It's His Zion. It will be His New Jerusalem. And therefore, no man is going to say (and if they do say, I'm going to have nothing to do with

them), “Is this acceptable to you, Lord?” It’s got to be His. And if it is His, it carries the weight of God having chosen it.

He’s known where it is for millennia now, and He’s had prophets describe it. It’s in the everlasting mountains; it’s not on the plains of Missouri. And the people that are going to go there are going to say, “Let us go up to the mountain where the Lord has an ensign erected.” And that will be His house. And He will come, and He will accept it, or we won't have Zion.

If you go to the book of Enoch-- the Enoch vision chapters of the book of Moses-- Enoch is in heaven, and he’s looking down at the mess that is going on on the earth. And while he is beholding the earth, there is a voice that comes out of the earth itself. So this is the voice of the earth, and it’s a female. It’s a she. Our earth is a feminine creature-- creation. The earth says: “*Wo is me the mother of men*” (*Moses 7:48*). And she laments the wickedness that is upon her by what men are doing. The earth would rather rejoice at our presence and yield her abundance to us.

One of the reasons why there is no paradise on earth as there was in the Garden of Eden is because the earth herself knows the wickedness of men-- the destructiveness of man. And so she withholds her abundance because of our wickedness. She asks in that Enoch account, “When shall righteousness return to my face?” If a group of people give the earth reason to rejoice that they are there on her surface, the earth can reward those people; indeed, the earth can protect those people. And if need be, the earth can destroy whatever comes against the people she decides to protect. Rivers can turn out of their course, as happened with Enoch’s Zion. Mountains can be moved out of their place.

Okay. This is just an exercise for those of you that are willing to entertain the exercise. Go sometime onto YouTube and do a search for videos of landslides. Watch a few videos of landslides, and ask yourself, what army could come up against that? If mountains are moved out of their course, there is no weapon formed against that that can prosper. It will obliterate anything.

Well, the earth has an incentive to protect Zion because the earth wants righteousness to return again upon her face. It’s one of the reasons why I think Zion necessarily has to be built in the mountains, because it’s built in a place that the earth herself can protect the residents of Zion.

It becomes increasingly clear that the target of the first missionary effort had nothing to do with stopping at Independence, Missouri. It had a great deal to do with going into the western mountains, the Rocky Mountains, and establishing Zion. But the good Reverend Isaac McCoy, the father of the Indian Relocation Act, whose daughter was there on the scene, who was married

to a minister, who had a grievance motivated by false religious ideals (and the best way to oppose Zion is always to have false religious ideas)-- were right on the spot at the very moment when, at its incipient stage, under the guidance of Joseph Smith, some effort could have been made to establish the New Jerusalem. But they couldn't.

If you take a look at Doctrine and Covenants 124, Joseph was told that when they located in Kirtland, that it would be temporary. And the location in Kirtland was temporary. When they went out, and they found the "center place," (and that was found not by Joseph Smith; that was found by the four missionaries-- five, because another guy joined them as a result of proselytizing in Kirtland, and so they had five when they got there)-- they said, "We can go so far and no further, and at this spot we are in the center." And so that spot, given all the legal entanglements and prohibitions, that spot became as close as you could get. They established a trading post where they would trade with the Indians. And the idea was that since they couldn't go into the Indian territories to proselytize them, that they established a trading post, and they traded with them fairly-- that the Indians would cross the border (which they were not prohibited from doing), and they could come to their trading post and get a fair price. And so if the Mormon missionaries established a trading post and dealt with the Indians fairly, they'd have a chance to proselytize when they came to them. These are not ideal circumstances, and as it turns out, not much was able to be done.

Later (and this is during 1841)-- this is in Nauvoo, and a temple is being required of the saints in Nauvoo. There's this interesting statement within the revelation about constructing the temple in Nauvoo: *"And ye shall build it on the place where you have contemplated building it, for that is the spot which I have chosen for you to build it. If ye labor with all your might, I will consecrate that spot that it shall be made holy. And if my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place"* (D&C 124:43-45).

So what this opportunity in the Nauvoo temple represents is: We'd lost Kirtland. We'd been forcibly expelled from Missouri. We had attached the idea of a center temple where God would come to dwell with this people, and a place that would be a refuge that would be preserved by the power of God, to that location. But we got kicked out of there, and we went back across the Mississippi to Nauvoo. And the Lord said, "You going to build the temple in Nauvoo? I'll command you to do that. You build it; I'll give you sufficient time within which to do it. And if you go to and you do it, I'm going to consecrate *that* spot. And I will make *that* spot holy to you. And I will make it so that you cannot be moved out of *that* spot by your enemies. And I will come there, and I will restore to you what has been lost-- the fullness. I will give that to you, and I will do it in Nauvoo." And it didn't happen. And the flow of events took over.

I want to read you from Joseph Smith's history, at the very end of his life on Saturday, June 22 (five days before he would be slain)-- June 22 of 1844. You can read this in the *Documentary History of the Church*, at volume 6, page 547:

“*Saturday, June 22 1844.*-- about 9 P.M. Hyrum came out of the mansion and gave his hand to Reynolds Cahoon, at the same time saying, ‘A company of men are seeking to kill my brother Joseph, and the Lord has warned him to flee to the Rocky Mountains to save his life. Good-by Brother Cahoon, we shall see you again.’ In a few minutes afterward Joseph came from his family, his tears were flowing fast. He held a handkerchief to his face, and followed after Brother Hyrum without uttering a word.”

So Joseph received a revelation on June the 22nd of 1844 telling him, “Now, *now* go to the Rocky Mountains.”

When we have an opportunity to accomplish something with the approval of the Lord, the Lord is going to be the one who ultimately decides where the actual accomplishment will take place. When it takes place, it's going to be in the mountains, and you needn't guess which mountains. The mountains are going to be out here in the west, exactly where the first missionaries were sent to try and find it but were hedged up by the confluence of what was happening in the law, and in society, and in the management of the Indian tribes in 1831 when they tried to cross and go out west, and were told they can't. Well, if we can't go out there and find that New Jerusalem city-- if we can't go out there, then we'll settle here, and we'll take these local Indians, these relocated Indians, and we'll fetch ourselves a Zion right here in this spot.

And the Lord gave a series of revelations in which He said, “If you can do that, you do that. And that is acceptable to me, and that will be Zion. Go to, have at it.” And then He says, “Here's why you didn't pull it off: your jarrings, your envies, your lusts, your contentions. That's why you didn't pull it off.” And He has said repeatedly in one of those extraordinarily clever things that the Lord has done throughout history, “*Zion will not be moved out of its place*” (*D&C 97:19; 101:17*).

“Oh, I know, I know! I've got the answer. The answer is, What is Independence, Missouri? That's a Daily Double, and Alex is telling me I'm wrong. I've just lost everything I bet!”

“Oh, oh I know! It's Nauvoo, and it's Nauvoo because the Lord changed His mind and said He would accept Nauvoo as a substitute Zion and not move the saints out of *that* place if they would do what He said.” Wrong again, wrong again!

Zion will not be moved out of its place, which place you know not yet. But Joseph knew it was in the Rocky Mountains, and he intended to go there. And the Lord knew it was in the Rocky Mountains when He revealed that to Isaiah in his prophecy. And Father Jacob knew it when he was prophesying and blessing his son, Joseph.

Now, let me give the Lord the latitude that the Lord is entitled to have, because of a statement that Joseph Smith made. Joseph said, "Oh, you know nothing more than a baby in a cradle, because the whole of North and South America are Zion." Okay? So if the Lord says, "Yeah, you can build it in Missouri, that's copacetic. Go for it! Go for it my son!...Oh, big boo-boo my son." "How about here?" "Okay, okay, go for it my son there...Oh, big mess, big mess! Plagues, locusts, starvation-- that's not good, not good."

Time and time again, the location of Zion is approved by the Lord in different spots precisely because the entirety of North and South America would be an acceptable place to found Zion. But within those general geographic parameters, it must be in the mountains. It must be among the natives who are originally here. It must be established under the guidance of someone who hails from both the tribe of Ephraim and is a descendent of Jesse. You can read that in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. And it will surely come.

There is absolutely no reason for the Lord to tell you another place to go and pollute, if you don't rise up to bring with you the worthiness necessary to turn, at last, a place into the New Jerusalem-- where the Lord can come and dwell among you, where you can be of one heart, where you can be of one mind, where there are no poor among you, and where you have all things in common, where you meet the requirements. And there's no reason to assemble you together at any spot. You can do everything that needs to be done preliminarily, from wherever it is you dwell at present. And you can prepare your hearts, and you can prepare your minds, and you can begin to understand the difficulties. And instead of judging our failure that went on before, you can rather empathize with the failures that went on before and come to some appreciation for the fact that it's not going to be any easier for you than it was for them. It's not going to be any less filled with the temptation to be envious and filled with lust and have jarrings and contentions for you than it has been for those that went and attempted before.

MAN:

"It is not enough to receive my covenant, but you must also abide it. And all who abide it, whether on this land or any other land, will be mine and I will watch over them and protect them in the day of harvest, and gather them in as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. I will number you among the remnant of Jacob, no longer outcasts, and you will inherit the promises of Israel. You shall be my people and I will be your God and the

sword will not devour you. And unto those who will receive will more be given until they know the mysteries of God in full....

And the angels are given charge to watch over and protect my people.

My eyes are over the whole earth and all men everywhere are before me. Men conspire to overthrow and oppress and use violence to control others through fear. My Spirit restrains the destroyer to allow those who are in the world and willing to give heed to my words time to prepare, but I will not always suffer with the wickedness of man.

The Earth groans under the wickedness of mankind upon her face, and she longs for peace to come. She withholds the abundance of her bounty because of the offenses of men against me, against one another, and against her. But if righteousness returns and my people prove by their actions, words and thoughts to yield to my Spirit and hearken to my commandments, then will the Earth rejoice, for the feet of those who cry peace upon her mountains are beautiful indeed, and I, the Lord, will bring again Zion, and the earth will rejoice.

In the world tares are ripening. And so I ask you, What of the wheat? Let your pride, and your envy, and your fears depart from you. I will come to my tabernacle and dwell with my people in Zion, and none will overtake it.

Cry peace. Proclaim my words. Invite those who will repent to be baptized and forgiven, and they shall obtain my Spirit to guide them. The time is short and I come quickly, therefore open your mouths and warn others to flee the wrath which is to come as men in anger destroy one another. The wicked shall destroy the wicked, and I will hold the peacemakers in the palm of my hand and none can take them from me.

Be comforted, be of good cheer, rejoice, and look up, for I am with you who remember me, and all those who watch for me, always, even unto the end. Amen” (Answer and Covenant, p. 7, 9-10).

DENVER:

“And I, the Lord your God, will be with you and will never forsake you and I will lead you in the path which will bring peace to you in the troubling season now fast approaching.

I will raise you up and protect you, abide with you, and gather you in due time, and this shall be a land of promise to you as your inheritance from me.

The Earth will yield her increase, and you will flourish upon the mountains and upon the hills, and the wicked will not come against you because the fear of the Lord will be with you.

I will visit my house, which the remnant of my people shall build, and I will dwell therein, to be among you, and no one will need to say, Know ye the Lord, for you all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

I will teach you things that have been hidden from the foundation of the world and your understanding will reach unto Heaven.

And you shall be called the children of the Most High God, and I will preserve you against the harvest.

And the angels sent to harvest the world will gather the wicked into bundles to be burned, but will pass over you as my peculiar treasure” (Answer and Covenant, p. 11-12).

The foregoing are excerpts taken from:

- Denver’s lecture entitled “Zion Will Come,” given near Moab, UT on April 10, 2016;
- The presentation of Denver’s paper entitled “Was There an Original,” given at the Sunstone Symposium on July 29, 2016;
- The Q&A session following his lecture entitled “The Doctrine of Christ,” given in Boise, ID on September 11, 2016;
- The Q&A session following his lecture entitled “Things to Keep Us Awake at Night,” given in St. George, UT on March 19, 2017;
- His remarks at “A Day of Faith and Connection” Youth Conference in Utah on June 10, 2017;
- His *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #6 entitled “Zion,” given in Grand Junction, CO on April 12, 2014; and
- The presentation of “Answer and Covenant,” given at the Covenant of Christ Conference in Boise, ID on September 3, 2017.