



# What Is Zion?



### The City of Zion

Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord asked the Latter-day Saints in 1831 to gather and build Zion in Independence, Missouri (see Doctrine and Covenants 62:2–4; 63:24–48). Here are some descriptions of it at the time:

It was in a region containing only “two or three merchant stores, and fifteen or twenty dwelling houses, built mostly of logs hewed on both sides.”<sup>1</sup>

Another described Independence as “full of promise” but containing only “five or six rough log huts, two or three clapboard houses, two or three so-called hotels, alias grogshops; [and] a few stores.”<sup>2</sup>

**Eliza Lyman** described how little her family had after moving there: “We . . . occupied a small brick house which my father had rented for the winter, as he had not yet had time to build.

We lived very poor that winter, as the people of that country did not want much but corn bread [and] bacon and raised but very little of anything else; consequently there was but very little to be bought, but I remember we had a barrel of honey and what vegetables we could get, but no wheat bread, as wheat was not to be bought in the land.”<sup>3</sup>

From these humble beginnings, the Saints built a bustling community of 1,200 individuals by July 1833. However, later that fall, mobs expelled them from the county and then, in 1838, from the entire state of Missouri.

### WHERE IS ZION TODAY?

“Now the gathering takes place in each nation. The Lord has decreed the establishment of Zion (see Doctrine and Covenants 6:6; 11:6) in each realm where He has given His Saints their birth and nationality. The place of gathering for Brazilian Saints is in Brazil; the place of gathering for Nigerian Saints is in Nigeria; the place of gathering for Korean Saints is in Korea. Zion is ‘the pure in heart’ (Doctrine and Covenants 97:21). It is wherever righteous Saints are.”

President Russell M. Nelson, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “The Future of the Church: Preparing the World for the Savior’s Second Coming” *Ensign or Liahona*, Apr. 2020, 9–10.



### HOW DO WE ESTABLISH ZION IN OUR DAY?

“Zion is Zion because of the character, attributes, and faithfulness of her citizens. Remember, ‘the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them’ (Moses 7:18). If we would establish Zion in our homes, branches, wards, and stakes, we must rise to this standard. It will be necessary (1) to become unified in one heart and one mind; (2) to become, individually and collectively, a holy people; and (3) to care for the poor and needy with such effectiveness that we eliminate poverty among us. We cannot wait until Zion comes for these things to happen—Zion will come only as they happen.”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Come to Zion,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 38.



INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI, 1831, BY AL ROUNDS; LINE DRAWING BY GREG NEWBOLD; ILLUSTRATION OF CONGREGATION COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

### NOTES

1. Ezra Booth, “Mormonism—No. VI,” *Ohio Star*, Nov. 17, 1831, [3].
2. Charles Joseph Latrobe, *The Rambler in North America* (1835), 1:104.
3. Eliza P. Lyman journal, 1846 February–1885 December, 8–9, Church History Library, Salt Lake City; spelling and punctuation standardized.