

The Parable of the Nobleman and the Olive Trees

Doctrine and Covenants 101:44–64

“It would seem that the parable is to be interpreted in this way: the nobleman is the Lord, whose choice land in His vineyard is Zion in Missouri. The places where the Saints live in Zion are the olive trees. The servants are the Latter-day Saint settlers, and the watchmen are their officers in the Church.



While yet building in Zion, they become at variance with each other and do not build the tower or Temple whose site had been dedicated as early as August 3, 1831. Had they built it as directed, it would have been a spiritual refuge for them, for from it the Lord’s watchmen could have seen by revelation the movements of the enemy from afar. This foreknowledge would have saved them and their hard work when the enemy made his assault.

“But the Saints in Missouri were slothful, lax, and asleep. The enemy came, and the Missouri persecutions were the result. The Lord’s people were scattered and much of their labors wasted. The Almighty rebuked His people, as we have already seen, but He commanded one of His servants (vs. 55), Joseph Smith (103:21), to gather the ‘strength of Mine house’ and rescue His lands and possessions gathered against them.

“Subsequently, the Prophet and his brethren in the famous Zion’s Camp did go to Missouri in 1834 in an attempt to carry out the terms of the parable. Before they went, additional revelation was received (*see* 103:21–28) concerning the redemption of Zion. The brethren were instructed to try to buy land in Missouri, not to use force; and if the enemy came against them, they were to bring a curse upon them. Zion was not redeemed at that time, but we may look for it in the not-too-distant future. ... It will be redeemed when the Lord wills it.”

(Sidney B. Sperry, *Doctrine and Covenants Compendium* [1960], 521–22; quoted in *Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual* [Church Educational System manual, 2001], 243).