

Lesson 36 “The Desert Shall Rejoice, and Blossom as the Rose”

“The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose” (Isaiah 35:1).

“For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody” (Isaiah 51:3)

1. “Right here will stand the temple of our God.”

Elder John A. Widtsoe: “The pioneers were hungry and weary; they needed food and rest; a hostile desert looked them in the face; yet in the midst of such physical requirements **they turned first to the building of temples and to the spiritual food and strength that the temples provide**” (Conference Report, Apr. 1943, 38).

President Howard W. Hunter: “We ... emphasize the personal blessings of temple worship and the sanctity and safety that are provided within those hallowed walls. It is the house of the Lord, a place of revelation and of peace. As we attend the temple, we learn more richly and deeply the purpose of life and the significance of the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. **Let us make the temple, with temple worship and temple covenants and temple marriage, our ultimate earthly goal and the supreme mortal experience. ...**

“May you let the meaning and beauty and peace of the temple come into your everyday life more directly” (Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 118; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 87–88).

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, comparing the building of our lives to the building of the Salt Lake Temple:

“The prestigious *Scientific American* referred to [the Salt Lake Temple] as a ‘monument to Mormon perseverance.’ And so it was. Blood, toil, tears, and sweat. **The best things are always worth finishing.** ‘Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?’ (1 Corinthians 3:16.) Most assuredly we are. As long and laborious as the effort may seem, we must keep shaping and setting the stones that will make *our* accomplishments ‘a grand and imposing spectacle.’ **We must take advantage of every opportunity to learn and grow**, dream dreams and see visions, work toward their realization, **wait patiently when we have no other choice**, lean on our sword and rest a while, **but get up and fight again.** ... We are laying the foundation of a great work—our own inestimable future” (*However Long and Hard the Road* [1985], 127).

2. The Saints were obedient as they settled and colonized the Salt Lake Valley and the surrounding areas.

Discuss what each passage teaches about obedience:

D&C 58:2 For verily I say unto you, blessed is he that keepeth my commandments, whether in life or in death; and he that is faithful in tribulation, the reward of the same is greater in the kingdom of heaven.

3 Ye cannot behold with your natural eyes, for the present time, the design of your God concerning those things which shall come hereafter, and the glory which shall follow after much tribulation.

4 For after much tribulation come the blessings. Wherefore the day cometh that ye shall be crowned with much glory; the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand.

D&C 64:33 Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great.

34 Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind; and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days.

D&C 82:10 I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise.

D&C 93:1 VERILY, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that **every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me**, and calleth on my name, and **obeyeth my voice**, and **keepeth my commandments**, shall see my face and know that I am;

D&C 130:19 And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life **through his diligence and obedience** than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come.

20 There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—

21 And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by **obedience to that law** upon which it is predicated.

President Spencer W. Kimball: “The way to perfection is through obedience. Therefore, to each person is given a pattern—**obedience through suffering, and perfection through obedience**. Let each person learn obedience of faith in all things and thus exemplify the attributes of the Master” (TSWK, 168).

Contemplate the experiences that have taught you the importance of obedience.

3. Missionaries made sacrifices to teach the gospel throughout the world.

President George Albert Smith: “As I have traveled to and fro in the world bearing this message, my soul has been filled with joy, and my eyes have been dimmed with tears, when I have seen how perfectly men’s lives may be transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ. I have seen those who were discouraged, those who were in darkness, those who questioned the purpose of their being, and when they have been taught to them the glorious truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ, they have changed, they have learned to be happy, to be contented, to be satisfied, to be enthusiastic in believing and teaching the gospel that was proclaimed by Jesus Christ when he dwelt upon this earth and traveled in Galilee.

Brethren and sisters, the world does not understand that, but it is **our mission to assist them to understand it**, and it is not with egotism, it is not with arrogance, but **with charity** to all, with loving tenderness, that His message is sent forth” (*The Teachings of George Albert Smith*, 140).

Conclusion

Ed J. Pinegar: “From a careful stud of Church history in modern times, **we gain new insight** into and appreciation for the profound blessings of having a **temple** in our midst. We strengthen our conviction that **obedience** to the prophet of God results in the flourishing of His expanding kingdom in the latter days, particularly through **the sacrifice** of devoted missionaries in every quarter of the earth. From the blossoming of the Church in the desert valleys of Utah to the unfolding of the kingdom of God in glory around the globe, **we deepen our grateful realization of the design of the Father to bless and nurture His children as they rise in the majesty of their potential**” (*Teachings and Commentaries on the D&C*, 476)