



## Moses 7.<sup>18</sup>— Meditation

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And 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.

While working on his “translation” of the Bible in the late summer, and then fall and early winter of 1830, Joseph Smith received what is today known as the Book of Moses found in the LDS Pearl of Great Price. The Book of Moses is a reworking of Genesis 1.<sup>1</sup>-6.<sup>13</sup>. There is much here that fascinates and inspires. However, Joseph seems to have been most captured by the material concerning Enoch, and, more specifically, his gathering of disciples and the establishment of a community called, Zion. As evidence for this assertion, we would point to a few facts.

We find references to Zion in parts of the Doctrine and Covenants that predate the composition of the Book of Moses. These are often formulaic,<sup>1</sup> with Zion being little more than an abstraction. They provide little or no insight into Joseph’s conception of the title at this stage of his development.<sup>2</sup> However, with DC 28 composed in the fall of 1830, Zion ceases to be an abstraction and becomes very, very concrete.

“And now, behold, I say unto you that it is not revealed, and no man knoweth where the city Zion shall be built, but it shall be given hereafter.”<sup>3</sup>

Hereafter, Zion becomes an actual city that Joseph is to establish and build. By the end of the year, Joseph is moving the center of the church in preparation for the “gathering” associated with Zion’s establishment.

“And again, a commandment I give unto the church, that it is expedient in me that they should assemble together at the Ohio...”<sup>4</sup>

From here on, whether in the form of a center “stake” or dispersed “stakes,” Zion’s establishment becomes the center focus of Joseph’s thoughts and efforts. Whether the title is used or not, the next fifty or so sections of the DC—often entire sections—are devoted to the city, how it is to be built, and upon what principles it exists and endures. While there are many principles associated with the establishment of Zion, no principle gets more press or is more critical for the establishment and endurance of Zion than the economic principles upon which it is based. It will become abundantly clear that one of the goals and, indeed, one of the principal character traits of the Zion society is that there are “no poor” in its midst. Zion accomplishes this extermination of poverty through the redistribution of wealth, the Lord’s “own way.”

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, 11.<sup>6</sup>, 12.<sup>6</sup>, and 14.<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Additional references are 21.<sup>7</sup>, 24.<sup>7</sup>, and 25.<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Verse 9

<sup>4</sup> DC 37.<sup>3</sup>

“But it must needs be done in mine own way; and behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low.”<sup>5</sup>

The oneness of “heart” and “mind” found in today’s text is not some abstraction of sentimentalism. It is literal and concrete. Among other areas, the oneness is found in the identification of and the temporal assistance toward the poor so that they cease to be poor. Indeed, the existence of poverty is incompatible with righteousness, with oneness, and with Zion. The incompatibility of poverty with Zion is not found only in individual callousness toward the poor but in community policies that do not care for the poor through the distribution of resources.

The economic principle whereby resources are distributed evenly or “equally,” based upon “need” and “want” rather than “merit,” is called the Law of Consecration. It is at times called “the Order of Enoch” after the individual who initiated Joseph into the existence and meaning of Zion.

Oneness in Zion calls for the distribution of resources such that “rich” and “poor” are “equal” until there are no rich or poor. There is no righteousness so long as there are poor citizens. Joseph learned these truths from Enoch. Over the following months and years, the Lord would give Joseph additional details and practical instructions on how to carry out this divine plan for the establishment of Zion.

Unfortunately, the Doctrine and Covenants also details the failure of the “saints” to fulfil the divine plan. It is a sad tale of a missed opportunity. Even now, after nearly two hundred years, the “saints” continue the earlier failures, often kicking against the pricks and belligerently offering up vain justifications for their failure—justifications that partake of the false wisdom and lustful traditions of a fallen world.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

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<sup>5</sup> DC 104.16