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## Creating Zion

Chauncey C. Riddle  
Philosophy

*I see the place of BYU in Zion to be a bridge between the world and the kingdom of God.*

Seventeen years ago I produced a piece entitled "A BYU for Zion." In preparation for this conference I wrote another version of that talk. But both missed the point. They missed because in each case I approached the problem by trying to specify the institutional results that would obtain a BYU in Zion. While those questions could be interesting, what is needed more is an understanding of just how we can go about creating this Zion for which we hope. The creation of Zion is not accomplished by reorganizing institutions. It is only done by individual persons who reorganize themselves in and through our Savior.

The personal self-reorganization requisite to the establishment of Zion is known either as education or repentance, depending on how you look at it. It cannot be done by training, imposed by one person on another; however, an individual can learn and bring himself or herself through the requisite changes. We call it education when we discuss the human side of the changes from a secular point of view. We call it repentance when we remember that human power cannot create Zion, that it is yielding to and using the gifts and power of God that makes Zion a reality. In other words, human education is never complete without divine assistance.

The beginning of human repentance is familiar to all who know the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Prerequisite to such repentance is the hearing and understanding of the gospel message. Repentance is the response that places hope and trust in Jesus Christ (a response known as faith), that turns away from known sinning (the beginning of repentance), that seeks and accepts the covenant of baptism, and that actually receives the Holy Ghost after the laying on of hands.

That beginning, wonderful as it is, will not

establish Zion. What yet remains after these four principles and ordinances of the gospel is the fifth part of the gospel message: enduring to the end. When an individual endures to the end, he or she is fit to be an inhabitant of Zion. When a group of individuals has endured to the end, they are Zion, and the place of Zion is wherever they are. I do not know what the required critical mass of individuals who have endured to the end is, but I suspect that it is a relatively small number. What we describe in telling of the establishment of Zion is the definition of what it means to endure to the end.

There are several simple ways to denote the condition of having endured to the end. "Life eternal," "attaining the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," "receiving the Second Comforter," "having your calling and election made sure," and "having the day star arise in your hearts" are ways the scriptures name this condition. What we need for our purposes is a further breakdown of this condition into more understandable pieces. We shall attempt to break this state into four parts, in the hope that we shall better understand what it means to endure to the end. Then we will show how those four parts would affect a BYU in Zion, thus fulfilling the promise of this hour.

But first a caveat. In what follows we will be discussing human perfection. Many persons find such discussions discouraging, because they cannot see any possibility of attaining to such ideal states for themselves. I understand such discouragement. But this discussion has as its goal encouragement. I deem the difference between discouragement and encouragement to hinge on the simple notion of how perfection is to be attained. Those who think they have to do it all immediately, and by their own power, will find these ideas discouraging. Those who see

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that what we are talking about is attained only gradually, that it is done by the power of God, and that every human being who will be sufficiently humble before God can and will do it eventually, should be encouraged. It is encouraging to understand what the Lord has in store for the faithful. But I admit that there is a hopelessness that necessarily accrues when one has tried to obtain revelation and has failed or has been fooled by the adversary. It seems that only the stout-hearted, those who are willing to fall on their face and try again, can profit.

But now to the four parts of enduring to the end, which I shall describe by discussing one who has endured to the end, thus obtaining the perfected state.

The first requisite of the "end" is to have a pure heart. Only then can one love with a pure love and be able to fulfill the Lord's injunction to love him with all of our heart, might, mind, and strength. To love purely is to be wholly concerned about the welfare of others and minimally concerned about one's own welfare. It enables the person to trust in God completely, to have a fullness of faith. It enables the person to make any necessary sacrifice. It fulfills all of the wondrous attributes enumerated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 13. God is love. To have a heart that has been stripped of all pride and selfishness is to be able to love as God loves. This is the fundamental aspect of being as God is.

But how does one become pure in heart? That kind of heart is a gift from God, given to all who seek it according to his instructions. What we must first have is an honest heart, a heart that admits that it is not pure. An honest heart will acknowledge the whisperings of the Holy Spirit and will come down in the depths of humility when it encounters Christ and his Holy Spirit. The honest heart will enter in at the gate and follow the straight and narrow path to the end, as Jesus did. After the honest heart has done all it can do, our Savior does the rest and gives the person a new heart. Then they can no longer look upon sin with the least degree of allowance;

their being has been changed. They are new creatures in Christ, heirs of all that he has and is. They will be exalted eventually, in the meanwhile learning enough to do enough to live in Zion.

What if one is not honest in heart? I do not know the answer to this questions. But I suppose that these are they who cannot inhabit either Zion or the Celestial Kingdom. But then I do not know who the Lord can save and who he cannot. I suppose we can find out about ourselves and our own possibility of salvation, and will find out, by this mortal experience, and that is all that is necessary.

The mark of one who is pure in heart is that they are easy to be entreated and persuaded by our Savior or his servants. They are without guile, their conscience is strong, and their ear is attuned to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. Anything of Christ which they encounter is beautiful to them. Thus every human being is beautiful to them, as is every truth, every piece of truth wisdom, every noble life striving. They are entreated by the Holy Spirit unto the laying hold of every good thing in and through Christ.

The second characteristic of one who has endured to the end is that they operate on the basis of pure knowledge. While they will be aware of the traditions and fabrications of men, the knowledge base from which they act and understand is wholly given of God. They have searched his ways and know his mysteries, the hidden things of the kingdom of God and the things of the nature, and the history and future of the earth. Because each is a prophet and seer in his or her own right, each has access to knowledge of everything necessary for their stewardship pertaining to this world.

This pure knowledge is learned principally by vision and by doing. Rather than going through language, the child of Christ sees the future with its interaction of heaven and earth. The secret acts of men are known in every age on a "need-to-know" basis. Knowing "how to" do things is

gained by instruction from mentors beyond the veil who are masters of the technique in question. Pure knowledge will go far beyond the present dreams of men, and will surpass the horizons of science fiction unto the true reality of things.

The means to this pure knowledge is revelation—but that revelation can and will come only to those who have qualified for the pure heart. It is necessary to be *good* before one can become *knowledgeable*. And when one has become good and knowledgeable, only then can revelation make them truly wise. Then they will not only understand all things, but will be able to know and do whatever is necessary to solve every problem that they encounter.

The mark of one who possesses pure knowledge is a complete unwillingness to contend about anything and a reticence to speak except as moved upon by the Holy Ghost. Wise in counsel and penetrating in insight, the possessor of true knowledge is quite aware that the ordinary human being can and will receive little of what he has to say from the things of this world, being caught up in the traditions and fables of the cultures of mankind. But such a one is ever ready to bear humble witness of Christ and of the goodness of God, and will explain the fundamentals of the restored gospel to anyone and everyone with delight. For they know that everyone must come to Christ as a little child to get a solid grasp of how to solve human problems.

The solving of problems is the third aspect of having endured to the end. The standard here is that the person does all things that they do in the name of Jesus Christ. I understand this to mean that anything and everything that both men and women do will be done under the direction and permission of Jesus Christ and by his power, in and through the holy Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods. Things of a temporal order, and matters relating to those who are not of the kingdom of God, will be conducted under the auspices of the Aaronic Priesthood. Matters of a

spiritual nature, and especially those having ramifications into eternity, will be conducted under the ordinances and orders of the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Having been drawn up into this holy order of God, God's disciples will never step out of it to conduct any conversation, business, or interaction by any other power. They will always be servants of Gods, acting in his authority and by his power in every act of their daily life. The fact that they are thus acting in and through the priesthood of God in all things may not always be known to those humans with whom they interact; that is, they will not always announce their authority and mission. But every act of their lives will be an act done by authority and as part of their mission. Having relinquished their own heart and desires, it is their fierce desire of their pure hearts and minds to serve the true and living God in every act unto the fulfilling of his divine purposes of the power of love in the earth.

The ramifications of acting on this priesthood platform from which all things are done are many. Now these persons will pray, speak, and communicate only in the Lord. Everything they say to anyone will be given them by the Holy Spirit unto the edification of all concerned. They will not take pleasure or nourishment or award or praise except as it is good in their Father's eyes and can be done in holiness. They will not amuse themselves with the diversions of men, but will be wholly concerned to bring others to know Father and the goodness of his love. They will teach or preach only that portion of the truth that will help their hearers to come to God.

The scriptures bear succinct witness as to how the servant of God uses the holy priesthood: "No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile" (D&C 121:41-42).

The mark of those true servants of the Lord is that their purposes fail not. Whatever they are sent by God to do, they do, unless the agency of others who are not thus obedient to God is involved. The prophet Abinadi was sent to witness to King Noah and his priests, and he could not be stopped from delivering his witness. But most of them did not accept, for their agency was involved.

Satan is the foe of all righteousness and especially of Zion. He is a worthy adversary, for he searches every personal and organizational weakness to destroy the work of God. As the saints of God attempt to purify their faith so that Zion may be established, Satan assures that the effort does not go off half-cocked. When Zion is established, it is done by the united efforts of persons who are pure in heart, full of the pure knowledge of God, and by priesthood power, and those who use the power of the Savior's priesthood without hypocrisy and without guile, Satan notwithstanding. Satan must then bear witness that the servants of Christ have escaped his power through their faithfulness.

The fourth and final aspect of enduring to the end is that each of those servants of Christ who thus endure is renewed in the flesh. No power of man nor prerogative of Satan can then be wielded against their person successfully except as it fulfills the Father's purposes. Even as the Savior could not be stopped from fulfilling his mission, even so the faithful servants of Christ cannot be prevented from doing what they are sent to do. And even as Christ voluntarily gave his life on the cross, so each faithful servant will voluntarily give his or her life when the appropriate time comes. Thus the strength of the person becomes godly, wholly of the order of God, thus able to fulfill all of God's commands on this earth.

This fourth aspect of enduring to the end seems almost incidental, because it follows from the other three without much attention needing to be paid to it. The personal struggle each of us has is to gain the pure heart, to search out the pure

knowledge, to strive to do all things in the name of Christ. Then our Savior will strengthen our mortal tabernacles in the manner and to the degree that is requisite for our earthly mission without great effort on our part. Or so it seems.

Those who are faithful are concerned about their physical tabernacles. They pay close attention to the commandments of God, such as those given in the Word of Wisdom. They strive to govern their own body and make it subject to the will of God. This personal struggle for control of the flesh, however, is not the great focus of their endeavor. It is there but it is unobtrusive, for the great emphasis is on struggling to love God and neighbor with all of one's heart, might, mind, and strength.

The mark of those who are renewed in the flesh is that their countenance shines with the image of Christ. They radiate the love of God unto all. Where some persons are of a dark countenance, those renewed in the flesh have a shining countenance. Their whole body is full of light, and their eyes are especially radiant with this light. To be in their presence is to feel the power and majesty of God emanating from their person.

Now, having been perfected as a human being in heart, mind, might, and strength, this person can truly love God with all heart, might, mind, and strength. Thus the person will have fulfilled the law of God as pertains to mortality. They are not yet exalted, for they have only attained to the fullness of God as pertains to this earthly sphere. But having done this, there is nothing that can or will bar them from progressing to the fullness of what Father is and has in eternity. Their exaltation is assured.

Now, you say, this may sound wonderful, but has anyone ever done it? Isn't this all so far beyond the possibilities for a human being that you are telling us fairy tales?

This is the state to which all of the ancient patriarchs and their wives came, as also everyone who has inhabited one of the many Zions, as

also those who have been translated in any dispensation. It is the state to which John the Beloved and the three Nephites came. It is that blessed and happy state to which everyone who has become a saint may aspire. To become a saint is to have entered the gate through faith, repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost and the forgiveness of sins. To endure to the end is to go on from the gate as a little child in Christ, submitting to the Father's will in all things, until both education and repentance are complete, until we come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

I understand that to become exalted is to go beyond the state we have described until one is knowledgeable about and has mastered all of the kingdoms of the universe. What we have been describing as enduring to the end is to become perfect in the sphere of this earth; to become exalted is to become perfect in the sphere of the universe. It is plain that one who will not become perfect in the sphere of this earth can never become perfect in the sphere of the universe.

Now let us say a few words as to how all of these ideas relate to BYU in Zion. It seems plain to me that BYU will not be used by the Father to assist people in enduring to the end. The specific institution established for doing that is the holy temple, and BYU cannot and will not attempt to take the place of the temple.

But of course BYU will have in its community, if it is in Zion, people who have endured to the

end. Having thus repented, they can then encourage others to repent.

I see the place of BYU in Zion to be a bridge between the world and the kingdom of God. It will become a center of truth and ability, which surpasses every other institution in the world that is not related to the Church. It will be a light from Christ to all the world, to teach the world how to live in harmony, peace, prosperity, and technical benevolence. It will help those who do not accept the restored gospel of Christ to profit from the other blessings of Christ. Through this means many will be brought to Christ and will enter at the narrow way.

The scriptures tell us that all nations will come to Zion, accept the gospel, and find in the holy temples the knowledge and power to endure to the end. Some will come to Zion because they are spiritual. But there may be some who are more of the "intellectual" type who will be attracted to the work of the Lord through a BYU. They might be honest in heart enough to recognize the intellectual superiority of an institution filled with the servants of God, and be caused to turn to spirituality as they become curious as to the cause of this intellectual superiority.

God today has spread his intellectual gifts among all nations and peoples. The members of his Church do not enjoy noteworthy superiority over other peoples in contributing to art, technology, science, etc. But the members of this Church will and must enjoy such superiority if they are to be part of Zion.