

WHAT PIECES OF THE  
PUZZLE DO WE HAVE?

THE  
**NEW  
JERUSALEM**

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A HOLY CITY  
NOT FORSAKEN



**RYAN C. JENKINS**

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

# 1

## EMMA SMITH AND OUR INHERITANCE IN ZION

*“I desire the Spirit of God to know and understand myself, that I might be able to overcome whatever of tradition or nature that would not tend to my exaltation.”<sup>22</sup>*

**I**n a book about a holy city to be prepared and built up by the Lord and His people in the last days, why would I draw attention to Emma Hale Smith?

According to an early revelation in the Church (see D&C 25), Emma Smith was the first person promised by the Lord that she would receive an inheritance in Zion. And, the revelation she received (which was shortly after her baptism) is the Lord’s “voice unto all.”<sup>23</sup> This was emphasized poignantly for me one day from the following experience.

The first time my wife and I met the family of our daughter-in-law, Katie, we witnessed a tender interchange. Katie has a large family. The day of this interchange had many of them present. We were in the backyard of her sister’s home. After dinner, Grandpa and Grandma (Katie’s parents) called everyone around. The grandchildren and nearly all the adults gathered. Imagine a football team gathering on the sideline just before going onto the field. This is what the gathering looked like.

Grandpa and Grandma were in the middle being surrounded by their posterity. Like a sports team, there was hype and excitement. Arms were around each other, movement up down. Everyone knew what was coming. It wasn’t rehearsed, but it was a rich part of their large family gatherings. As the huddle became more cohesive and intimate, the grandparents led everyone in a recitation.

It caught me by surprise. All joined in saying, “Wherefore, lift up thy heart and rejoice, and cleave unto the covenants which thou hast made.”<sup>24</sup>

I was taken aback by the powerful feeling that overcame me. I instantly fell in love with these people. The words “cleave unto the covenants which thou hast made” reverberated in my mind. I knew the language was from the Doctrine and Covenants. I pulled out my phone to confirm it was a revelation given to Emma Smith. This revelation, and with Emma Smith, is where I want to spend a few paragraphs with you.

Harmony Township, Pennsylvania, now called Oakland, is the birthplace of Emma Hale Smith. This region in southern Pennsylvania has beautiful hills and valleys. It was here that Emma Hale flourished into a radiant young adult. It was here that her kind, yet

resilient nature developed. She was born into an industrious home with responsible parents.<sup>25</sup> Her spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical strength matured in such a way that prepared her to marry a unique man.

On January 18, 1827, Emma Hale married Joseph Smith, a man whom the Lord was tutoring and preparing to restore truth and authority that would extend the blessings of exaltation to all our Father in Heaven's children. Through appointed messengers, Jesus Christ would bestow the keys of the priesthood upon Joseph Smith, which granted the right and responsibility to set forth the ordinances of exaltation. In June of 1830, Emma would enter the waters of baptism, the first significant ordinance leading to exaltation.<sup>26</sup> At this point in her life she had now accepted two significant ordinances required for exaltation—baptism and marriage. Both baptism and marriage were clearly taught by the Savior.<sup>27</sup> A higher order of the marriage covenant through ordinance would be received by them in 1843.<sup>28</sup>

It was also at this time that she began to claim a promise the Savior issued during His mortal ministry: "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."<sup>29</sup>

What did Emma forsake? In a rather short amount of time after she was married to Joseph, Emma Smith had financial difficulties and persecution thrust upon her. She would forsake all eight elements mentioned by the Savior in the above verse. Upon leaving Pennsylvania she would never see her parents again. "After moving, she never returned to the Susquehanna, and her parents seem to have cut off contact with her until after her father's death in 1839."<sup>30</sup> She would see some of her siblings again, but not all. Within fourteen years she would forsake numerous homes and lands for the gospel's sake. She buried several children, some of which may have lived if persecution hadn't been thrust upon them. She also buried her husband after seventeen years of marriage, a husband who was killed in cold blood giving his life to the Savior and His restored Church.

Though conflicted for a time, Emma stayed "virtuous and pure" before the Lord in her marriage covenant.<sup>31</sup> The Lord exhorted her to "abide and cleave" unto Joseph in the new and everlasting covenant of marriage, which included plural marriage. Without breaking her marriage covenant she fought through her feelings and objections to the institution of this doctrine until the death of her husband.<sup>32</sup>

In His exhortation, the Lord encouraged Emma to "forgive" Joseph his trespasses, with the promise that if she did, she would be forgiven. She was also promised that the Lord would personally "bless her, and multiply her, and make her heart rejoice."<sup>33</sup> In the revelation on plural marriage, and at the deepest anguish she may have been passing through, the Lord refers to her as His "handmaid."<sup>34</sup> This is a respectful term. One author summarizes the title: "A handmaid is a personal female servant. In the same sense in which John the Baptist referred to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery as his 'fellow servants' in the ministry of the Messiah (D&C 13:1), women who so serve are often referred to as handmaidens."<sup>35</sup> This is something to keep in mind, as some cast judgment or mischaracterize this significant Latter-day Saint.<sup>36</sup>

The Lord told Emma to "lay aside the things of this world."<sup>37</sup> In many instances she didn't have to lay them aside—they were taken from her by the hands of wicked people. In many instances, her sufferings subdued any clamoring over the vanity of the world.

She responded favorably to the calls and plight of other individuals. A quality or trait those caught up in the world have no interest in. For these reasons it is not surprising that in modern revelation, Emma Smith was the first person promised an inheritance in Zion.<sup>38</sup>

There is no evidence this grand promise to Emma was ever revoked. Her diligence may prove to swallow up any personal blemishes. If repentance is granted to us, it has surely been granted to her. She will once again enjoy beautiful hills and valleys like unto her birthplace.<sup>39</sup> Her inheritance in Zion will be glorious. Her heart will rejoice. When Joseph Smith Sr. blessed her in December of 1834 he stated: “Thou shall see many days; yea, the Lord will spare thee till thou art satisfied, for thou shalt see thy Redeemer. Thy heart shall rejoice in the great work of the Lord, and no one shall take thy rejoicing from thee.”<sup>40</sup>

Shouldn't we be interested in the counsel of the Lord to an individual who was promised an inheritance in Zion? For us to accomplish the buildup of Zion we will need spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical strength as exemplified in Emma Hale Smith. Doctrine and Covenants 25 lays out what we will need to do. We will need to “lay aside the things of this world.” We are going to have to choose faithfulness and “walk in the paths of virtue.” We are going to have to choose, or as the Lord said, “seek for things of a better.” For us to build up Zion we will have to “lift up [our] heart[s] and rejoice, and cleave unto the covenants which [we] have made.” We must “beware of pride.”<sup>41</sup> We must be alert and discerning.

And as Brigham Young taught, we must not only forsake many things and perhaps family and friends for the Lord's cause, but we must also work a change personally. “Many Latter-day Saints think when they have obeyed the Gospel, made a sacrifice in forsaking their homes, perhaps their parents, husbands, wives, children, farms, native lands, or other things held dear, that the work is done; but it is only just commenced. The work of purifying ourselves and preparing to build up the Zion of God . . . has only just begun.”<sup>42</sup>

A unique work will require a ready people with remarkable hearts and willing minds to accomplish things that may have never been thought of.<sup>43</sup> A marvelous work and a wonder requires marvelous people. Emma Hale Smith provided a fine example. Again, we ought to accept the fact that if repentance is granted to us it surely is granted to her. The revelation given to her (now known as D&C 25) should be very familiar to us, something to know and remember as we push forward to understand and to establish Zion, the New Jerusalem, the Holy City.

On October 29, 1835, Emma Smith hosted a large dinner party. Edward Partridge, the bishop of Zion, was visiting Kirtland, Ohio. At dinner, Newel K. Whitney, a bishop in Kirtland, “told Edward that he hoped to dine with him the next year in Zion.” The remark influenced Emma. Turning to her friends at the dinner she said she hoped everyone at the table might be able to join them in the promised land as well.<sup>44</sup>

Imagine yourself at that dinner table. She was speaking to you. She was speaking to me. She was on the front end of the buildup of Zion. We are approaching the back end of the buildup of Zion. I look forward to the day when we join each other in the promised land of Zion, the New Jerusalem.

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22. Emma Smith, *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 12.

23. D&C 25:16.
24. Long live the Frank and Ginny Judd Family. This experience happened in June of 2018. D&C 25:13.
25. Daughter of Isaac Hale and Elizabeth Lewis. Member of Methodist church at Harmony (later in Oakland). See *JSP Website, People*. Emma Smith.
26. Matthew 3:13–17; 7:13–14.
27. See John 3:3–7 and Matthew 19:3–8.
28. May 28, 1843. Joseph and Emma were sealed under the power of the holy priesthood (*BYU Studies*, Vol. 46, No.4, 148).
29. Matthew 19:29. See also Matthew 10:34–38.
30. Mark L. Staker and Curtis Ashton, “Emma’s Susquehanna: Growing Up in the Isaac and Elizabeth Hale Home,” August 25, 2015. Priesthood Restoration Site, churchofjesuschrist.org. Additionally, the words of the Savior might be considered here: “For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law” (Matthew 10:35).
31. D&C 132:52.
32. D&C 132:54. The language in this revelation should be carefully studied. For example, when the word “destroyed” is used it may be best to consider the idea “cut off” or “destroyed among the people.” See Acts 3:23. Emma was severed from the body of the Saints. It is indisputable that she chose to cut herself off from the association of the Saints moving west. However, The Lord or His servants never had her excommunicated. Also, in some respects her name has been destroyed by the ignorance and miscalculations of people up to this day.
33. D&C 132:56.
34. D&C 132:51, 54, 56, for example.
35. Hoyt W. Brewster, *Doctrine and Covenants Encyclopedia*, 229.
36. Wilford Woodruff felt to dignify her in 1892 when women of the Relief Society were celebrating fifty years of their organization through jubilee. Portraits of Emma and Joseph were going to be hung in the tabernacle as part of the celebration. Some took umbrage because Emma did not come west and had joined her sons Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Zina Young asked President Woodruff what he thought about the debate. He matter-of-factly stated, “Anyone who opposes it, must be very narrow-minded indeed.” Few living new Emma and her situation as good or better than Wilford Woodruff. See *Saints: No Unhallowed Hand* (vol. 2), The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2020, 632.
37. D&C 25:10.
38. D&C 25:2.
39. See D&C 35:24: 39:13.
40. “Blessing from Joseph Smith Sr., 9 December 1834,” *The Joseph Smith Papers*, 4, accessed January 19, 2021, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/blessing-from-joseph-smith-sr-9-december-1834/2>.
41. Again, I draw attention to the whole section of D&C 25.
42. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, 444.
43. See D&C 64:34.
44. *Saints: [The Standard of Truth]*, Vol. 1:222–223.

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