
Jesse Baker

1778–1846

D&C 124:137

Jesse grew to manhood in Rhode Island. As a young man he left his parental home to seek adventure and prosperity. After a series of moves in the Eastern States, Jesse settled in Hoosick, New York. It was not until 1835 that fifty-seven-year-old Jesse moved to Ohio. He supported himself and his family in Ohio as a shoemaker and a physician, emphasizing herbal healing.

After Jesse entered baptismal waters, he received a patriarchal blessing from Joseph Smith Sr. In his blessing, received on March 22, 1836, Jesse was told,

Brother, thou art an Elderly man and according to the common course of nature must soon go down to the grave, yet the Lord thy God is able to keep thee many years. . . . Thou shalt see thy redeemer in the flesh . . . and when thou shalt desire to depart and live with him, then it shall be thy privilege for thou shalt have thy desire in this matter.¹

Not only was his patriarchal blessing unusual but also a vision Jesse shared with John Pulsipher and his father, Elias Pulsipher. According to the writings of John Pulsipher—

One pleasant day in March [1838], while I was at work in the woods, about one mile from the Temple, with father, Elias Pulsipher and Jesse Baker, there was a steamboat past over Kirtland in the air! . . . When we first heard the distant noise, we all stopped work. When it got down to the city it was seen by a number of persons. It was a large fine and

¹ Patriarchal Blessing of Jesse Baker, March 22, 1836, in H. Michael Marquardt, *Early Patriarchal Blessings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2007), 66.

beautiful boat, painted in the finest style. It was filled with people. All seemed full of joy. . . . As it arrived over the Temple a part of it broke off and turned black and went north and was soon out of sight, while the boat, all in perfect shape, went to the west more beautiful and pure than before.²

Within days of the vision Jesse subscribed to the Kirtland Camp Constitution, indicating that he would journey to Missouri with the camp. After arriving in Missouri, Jesse purchased land not knowing that religious persecution would force him to abandon his property and flee from the state.

Finding refuge in Quincy, Illinois, Jesse wrote a Missouri Redress Petition in 1839, itemizing his real and personal property losses in Missouri:

Illenois Quincy May th11 1839

a bill of Damages Sustaned in the State of Missorie

for mooveing into the State \$100.00

Fo propperty lost in the State 150.00

For mooveing out of the State and loss of propperty 500.00

I certify the a bove to Be Just and true a cording to the Best of my knowledge—

Jesse Baker

[Sworn to before C. M. Woods, C.C.C., Adams Co., IL, 11 May 1839.]³

Jesse never received any monies for his losses.

Jesse retained his faith through these difficult times and joined other Latter-day Saints in Nauvoo. On January 19, 1841, the Lord through his Prophet Joseph Smith called Jesse to be a counselor to John A. Hicks in the Elders Quorum presidency (see D&C 124:137). It appears from extant Church records that Jesse had responsibility for leading the Elders Quorum from 1841 to 1844. A member of the quorum, William Adams, wrote, "Thereupon a number of elders were sent out on missions to gather tithing and

² Autobiography of John Pulsipher, typescript, 2. L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.

³ Jesse Baker petition, in Clark V. Johnson, ed., *Mormon Redress Petitions. Documents of the 1833–1838 Missouri Conflict* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1992). 130.

donations to build the temple of the Lord, and a great deal of by Jesse Baker, president of the elders' quorum."⁴

Jesse's leadership in the Elders Quorum presidency ended in 1845 when he was ordained to the office of High Priest. In 1846 Jesse fled from religious persecution in Nauvoo to Iowa. He died on November 1, 1846, near Council Bluffs at the age of sixty-eight.

⁴ Autobiography of William Adams, typescript, 14, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University. Provo, UT.