
Blessings Come after Tribulations

D&C 58:4

The Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith on August 1, 1831, “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” (D&C 58:2). The command was in many respects a warning of the trials that awaited the Saints in Jackson County. Yet, with the warning came the promise that “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” (v. 3).

Adversity for the Saints in Jackson County came from unruly mobs who scoffed at religious truths and forced the Saints to abandon their Zion-like society and cross the Missouri River to Clay County. Yet the stricken Saints, like the people in the days of Alma, were admonished, “Whosoever shall put their trust in God shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions, and shall be lifted up at the last day” (Alma 36:3).

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “[Jehovah] will not deliver us unless we prove ourselves faithful to him in the severest trouble. For he that will have his robes washed white in the blood of the Lamb must come up through great tribulation.”¹ He also taught, “The power of the Gospel will enable us to stand and bear with patience the great affliction that is falling upon us on all sides” and “stand fast, ye Saints of God, hold on a little while

¹ History, 1838–1856, volume D-1 [1 August 1842–1 July 1843], 3. Joseph Smith Papers.

longer, and the storm of life will be past, and you will be rewarded by that God whose servants you are.”²

The same message that blessings follow tribulation is given by Church leaders today. Elder Carl B. Cook in his general conference address in October 2011 told of a time he felt weighed down with the cares of life:

At the end of a particularly tiring day toward the end of my first week as a General Authority, my briefcase was overloaded and my mind was preoccupied with the question “How can I possibly do this?” I left the office of the Seventy and entered the elevator of the Church Administration Building. As the elevator descended, my head was down and I stared blankly at the floor.

The door opened and someone entered, but I didn’t look up. As the door closed, I heard someone ask, “What are you looking at down there?” I recognized that voice—it was President Thomas S. Monson.

I quickly looked up and responded, “Oh, nothing.” (I’m sure that clever response inspired confidence in my abilities!)

But he had seen my subdued countenance and my heavy briefcase. He smiled and lovingly suggested, while pointing heavenward, “It is better to look up!” As we traveled down one more level, he cheerfully explained that he was on his way to the temple. When he bid me farewell, his parting glance spoke again to my heart, “Now, remember, it is better to look up.”³

² Letter to Church Leaders in Jackson County, Missouri, 18 August 1833, Document Transcript, Joseph Smith Papers; Report of the First Presidency to the Church, circa 7 April 1841, Document Transcript, Joseph Smith Papers.

³ Carl B. Cook, “It is better to Look Up!” *Ensign*, November 2011.