



Zebedee Coltrin

1804–1887

D&C 52:29

In the evening of January 8, 1831, twenty-seven-year-old Zebedee Coltrin first heard the Restoration message preached by Solomon Hancock. On that occasion, Zebedee “resolved to be baptized and as I lay meditating the room became lighted up with a brilliant light and I saw a number of men dressed in white robes.”¹ The next day, he was baptized in a pond near his father’s farm in Strongsville, Ohio, by Brother Hancock. Zebedee was ordained an elder less than three weeks later by John Whitmer.

On June 7, 1831, the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation calling Zebedee to journey with Levi Hancock to Missouri (D&C 52:29). That mission was fulfilled in the summer of 1831. Zebedee served another mission that took him to the states of Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan before being ordained a high priest by Hyrum Smith on July 27, 1832.

In the winter of 1832–33, Zebedee attended the School of the Prophets. He reported that at the school “I saw a personage passing through the room as plainly as I see you now

¹ Minutes of a High Priest Meeting in Spanish Fork, Utah, 5 February 1878. Church History Library.

[high priests in Spanish Fork]. Joseph [Smith] asked us if we knew who it was and answered himself, that is Jesus, our elder brother, the Son of God." When the vision closed, Zebedee said, "Again I saw passing through the same room, a personage whose glory and brightness was so great, that I can liken it to nothing but the burning bush that Moses saw, and its power was so great that had it continued much longer I believe it would have consumed us."²

This was not the only time that Zebedee was privileged to see heavenly beings. When he was serving as one of the Seven Presidents of the Seventy, the Prophet Joseph Smith said, "President Zebedee Coltrin ... saw the Savior extended before him, as upon the cross, and a little after, crowned with glory upon his head above the brightness of the sun."³

Although Zebedee enjoyed marvelous visions, he was not immune from religious persecution in Kirtland or Missouri. He fled with the Saints from Missouri to Illinois and settled for a short season in Commerce, Illinois. By 1841 he had returned to Kirtland and was serving as a counselor to Almon W. Babbitt in the Kirtland Stake presidency. By 1843 he was back in Illinois and attending meetings of the Nauvoo high priests quorum. Zebedee supported his family as a merchant during the Nauvoo years.

He and his family joined the Latter-day Saint exodus to the west. Zebedee journeyed with Brigham Young in the vanguard company of 1847. A month after arriving in the Salt Lake Valley, he returned to Iowa where he remained for the next four years. When he came to the valley again in 1852, he resided on Main Street in Salt Lake City before receiving a call to settle in Palmyra near Spanish Fork Canyon. He became a prominent figure in Spanish Fork, being elected a city councilman.

On May 31, 1873, Zebedee was ordained a patriarch by Elder John Taylor. Zebedee died in 1887 in Spanish Fork at age eighty-two. On his tombstone is inscribed:

A friend of Joseph Smith lies here
A patriarch and pioneer
His life was marked by faith and zeal
His mission was to bless and heal

² Minutes of a High Priest Meeting, 5 February 1878.

³ History, 1838–1856, volume B-1 [1 September 1834–2 November 1838], 699. Joseph Smith Papers.