

## The Closer Look Series

# Zion

## and Joseph Smith

### Zion versus Jerusalem?

*“For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.” (Isaiah 2:3)*

This verse and others like it are often cited by RLDS to support the idea that there will be two distinct centers of influence for God’s people—*Zion* versus *Jerusalem*. They claim that “out of *Zion* shall go forth the law,” whereas “the *word of the LORD* [shall go forth] from *Jerusalem*,” as if these were two separate activities occurring in two separate cities. All Latter Day saints believe the *Zion* spoken of here refers to Independence, Missouri.

This interpretation displays a major lack of understanding of the Old Testament. Large portions of the Old Testament, especially the Prophets and Psalms, are written in Hebrew poetic structure, a predominant characteristic of which is *parallelism*. The simplest and most common type is *synonymous parallelism*, where the thought of the first line is echoed—and therefore reinforced—by the second line. This is done by using words or phrases having equivalent meanings. Consider these examples:

*“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul,*

*The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.” (Psalm 19:7)*

*“I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins.” (Isaiah 44:22)*

Therefore, to cite Isaiah 2:3 in support of a *Zion* in Independence, Missouri is self-defeating. The scripture actually

	<b>Biblical New Jerusalem</b>	<b>Joseph Smith’s New Jerusalem</b>
<b>Location</b>	Jerusalem of Israel	Independence, Missouri
<b>Builder</b>	God <i>alone</i> builds it for His children	Latter Day Saints build it for God
<b>Timing</b>	<i>after</i> Christ’s millennial return, all things made <i>new</i>	<i>before</i> Christ’s millennial return, and in preparation for it
<b>Number of cities</b>	only <i>one</i>	<i>two</i> —New Jerusalem in Independence, Missouri and “old” Jerusalem in Israel coexist, before and after Jesus’ return

proves that *Zion* and *Jerusalem* are synonymous terms—*they are really just different names for the same city.*

### What Does the Bible Say About Zion?

The Bible uses the name *Zion* in three general senses.

**1. Israel’s Capital.** The term *Zion* is first used in the Bible as the title of the Jebusite fortress conquered by David circa 1,000 b.c., also known as *Jerusalem* (2 Sam. 5:6-7). After he conquered *Zion* David renamed it the “City of David,” which title remains to this day. Just north of the the City of David is the temple mount where David’s son Solomon built Israel’s first temple, resulting in its designation as “Mount *Zion*.” The term *Zion* ultimately came to refer to the entire ever-expanding city of *Jerusalem*.

**2. Millennial *Zion*.** “For out of *Zion* shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from *Jerusalem*” (Isaiah 2:3), is one of many prophecies about Jesus conducting His millennial rule from *Jerusalem*, or *Zion* (see also Isa. 1:27, 4:1-6; Joel 3:16; Zech. 1:16-17; 8:3-8). In the Bible, *Zion* refers only to *Jerusalem*. It has nothing to do with *any* other city or *any* other land whatever.

**3. New *Jerusalem*.** Finally, *Zion* (or Mt. *Zion*) in the Bible also refers to the eternal city of God which comes to reside on earth after all things have been made new following the millennial Kingdom Age (compare Heb. 11:10; 12:22-24 to Rev. 21-22). In the book of Revelation the eternal city is called the *Holy City* or the *New Jerusalem*. God’s new creation will replace everything in the universe (Rev. 21:1-4). The curse of deterioration and death brought by mankind’s sinfulness will be lifted from the new eternal world (Rev. 22:3). It is only fitting that the Lord’s seat of power dur-

ing that coming age be referred to as the *New Jerusalem*.

### Conclusion

It is clear that by designating Independence, Missouri as the *New Jerusalem*, Joseph Smith created an “upside-down” city of promise bearing no resemblance at all to the *New Jerusalem* of the Bible (see chart above). This doomed his followers to lives of confusion and frustration trying to build a city which was never a part of God’s will, but only a figment of Joseph’s own imagination. As a result, even today Latter Day Saints are blinded to God’s *real* plan as given in the Bible. The new RLDS name “Community of Christ” is another way to say “*Zion*.”

**God does NOT change.  
Read Galatians 1:6-9.**

This tract was condensed from  
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Bringing followers of Joseph Smith  
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