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Mormonbasics.com is humbled to bring you a commentary on the hymns published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This commentary is presented in a two-column format. The original text, as presented in the hymnbook published by the LDS Church, is in the left column. The comments on the right are provided by mormonbasics.com. We have even changed the color of the text so there won't be any question as to who wrote what.

**Personal note from the commentator:**

The hymns of the Church are sacred text. The Lord has made it very clear to us through his prophets that the singing of hymns is a form of prayer, and as such is sacred communication. Much of the sacred Spirit and reverence we experience in our meetings, especially Sacrament Meeting, comes from the Spirit that accompanies the singing of the hymns.

The hymns are written in poetic form, and as such are able to take certain licenses and liberties with the English language that cannot normally be expressed in any other way. It is certainly not the aim of this commentary to improve on the beauty of the poetic expressions found in our sacred hymns. As a teacher of English to those who speak other languages, I have found that many of the hymns have expressions that are difficult for some people to understand.

Because hymns are written to fit a set rhythmic pattern or meter, often the expression has to be condensed to fit in a small space, but still convey its intended meaning. It is the combination of the rhythm, text, and music that create such a powerful Spiritual experience when singing the hymns. My attempts to explain some of the meaning behind the text should not detract from the original meaning, nor should it replace the original meaning. Hymns, like parables, take on different meanings as the circumstances of our lives change. My commentary is only a starting point for (hopefully) a better understanding of the overall meaning of the hymn in this work. Anyone else writing this same commentary would have different perspectives and points to make. That is the nature of a commentary. I pray that what I say will, in some way, help in your understanding of this hymn. Since this is a personal study of the hymns, I will sometimes use the first person when writing the commentary.

Kelly P. Merrill

# Arise, O Glorious Zion

1. Arise, O glorious Zion,  
 Thou joy of latter days,  
 Whom countless Saints rely on  
 To gain a resting place.  
 Arise and shine in splendor  
 Amid the world's deep night,  
 For God, thy sure defender,  
 Is now thy life and light.

2. From Zion's favored dwelling  
 The gospel issues forth,  
 The covenant revealing  
 To gather all the earth;  
 And Saints, the message bringing  
 To all the sons of men,  
 With the redeemed shall, singing,  
 To Zion come again.

3. Thru painful tribulation  
 We walk the narrow road  
 And battle with temptation  
 To gain the blest abode.  
 But patient, firm endurance,  
 With glory in our view,  
 The Spirit's bright assurance  
 Will bring us conquerors through.

4. Oh, grant, Eternal Father,  
 That we may faithful be,  
 With all the just to gather,  
 And thy salvation see!  
 Then, with the hosts of heaven,  
 We'll sing th'immortal theme:  
 To him be glory given  
 Whose blood did us redeem.

## MUSIC

George Careless, 1839-1932

## TEXT

William G. Mills, 1822-1895

## SCRIPTURES

This is an anthem, a song sung in celebration. The words and music work together to create a feeling of rejoicing when this hymn is sung.

Zion, the pure in heart, are the joy of the latter days. Countless Saints of earlier times rely on the work performed by the latter-day saints to help them gain a resting place with their Lord. This is a reference to temple work.

References to light and dark in hymns generally refer to states of enlightenment from truth versus darkness from spiritual ignorance. So arise, get up, and shine in splendor so the dark world can see, for our God, and our defender is our life and our light.

Originally this reference to Zion's favored dwelling would have meant Utah, the center of the Church, but now the Church is all over the world. It still works with a global application. From where the Saints of Zion live the gospel goes forth to gather all the people of the earth. The message to all people (sons of men) is that the redeemed, those who accept the covenants of the gospel, will come singing (with joy) to Zion. In other words, the converts to the Lord's Church will rejoice in the midst of His people.

The Savior said that the path (road) back to God is straight and narrow. Life can be painful, and full of trials (tribulation). It is along this narrow road we walk as we go through life. We must fight (battle) our weaknesses and temptations in order to get to our heavenly home (blest abode). But if we are patient and have a firm determination (endurance), with the glory we seek in our minds along the way, the Spirit will assure us that He can bring us to our goal as conquerors.

Grant us the ability, Father, that we can be faithful, so that with the just, those who have kept the commandments, we can see the Lord's salvation. Then, with the hosts of heaven we will sing praises to God (the immortal theme), who redeemed us with His blood (in Gethsemane).

2 Nephi 12:2-3, Doctrine and Covenants 115:5-6