



Mormonbasics.com is not affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We are a private website, and the comments and opinions expressed here are not from the LDS Church. The opinions expressed in this work are solely the product of this website. If you have comments or suggestions on how we can improve these commentaries in the future, please click [here](#) and leave a comment. This will help us give you the best assistance for your studies in the future.

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

Hail to the Brightness of Zion's Glad Morning!

1. Hail to the brightness of Zion's glad morning!
Joy to the lands that in darkness have lain!
Hushed be the accents of sorrow and mourning.
Zion in triumph begins her glad reign.

2. Hail to the brightness of Zion's glad morning,
Long by the prophets of Israel foretold!
Hail to the millions from bondage returning!
Gentiles and Jews the glad vision behold.

3. Lo! in the desert the flowers are springing;
Streams, ever copious, are gliding along.
Loud from the mountaintops echoes are ringing;
Wastes rise in verdure and mingle in song.

4. Hark! from all lands, from the isles of the ocean,
Praise to Jehovah ascending on high.
Fallen the engines of war and commotion;
Shouts of salvation are rending the sky.

To hail the brightness of Zion's glad morning is to greeting the coming of the gospel of Christ with enthusiastic approval. The morning referred to is the beginning of the last dispensation of time. This morning is the coming of the light of truth. There is joy in the lands or countries that have long been in the darkness of spiritual ignorance.

There are sounds associated with sorrow and mourning, like weeping, sighing, and crying. These "accents" of sorrow and mourning can be hushed or quieted because the kingdom of God has been restored to the earth (begins her glad reign).

In verse two we are given another reason to hail or cheer that Zion, the pure in heart, has been brought back to the earth. The prophets have foretold of this restoration of the gospel for centuries. Millions of people will be coming out of spiritual bondage into the light of spiritual freedom. Both the Jews and the Gentiles will begin to "see" or understand the grand vision of the gospel in the latter days.

Lo means to look or to see. This verse is a poetic description of the mountain home of the Saints of God in the last days. It describes how the barren valley floors meet with the flowing streams coming down from the forested mountains. The wastes are the barren valley floors and the verdure are the green and beautiful mountains which surround them. There are many hymns that describe the beauty of the Rocky Mountains where the Saints settled in the mid 1800s.

Hark or listen to the shouts of praise to Jesus, who is Jehovah that are rising up to the sky. These shouts are coming from both the continents and the islands of the sea. In this place of peace from the persecution of the Saints there are no more "engines of war and commotion." Here the Saints are free to shout or sing their songs of salvation to the sky. To rend the sky means to pierce or tear through something. The last line of this hymn is

referring to the joyous songs of praise and salvation
the Saints are free to sing aloud and out in the open
in their new mountain home.

MUSIC

Edwin F. Parry, 1850-1935

TEXT

Thomas Hastings, 1784-1872

SCRIPTURES

Isaiah 35:1-2, 10, 2 Nephi 8:3, 11