
Jared Carter

(1801–1855)

D&C 52:38; 79; 94:14; 102:3

In January 1831 twenty-nine-year-old Jared Carter visited with John Peck, who shared with him a copy of the Book of Mormon. Jared read the Book of Mormon and “became immediately convinced that it was a revelation of God.” He wrote,

It had such an influence on my mind that I had no mind to pursue my business. I felt it my duty to separate from Babylon and be baptized. Accordingly I was baptized by Hyrum Smith about the 20th of February [1831], for the remission of sins. As I was baptized I felt the influences of the spirit of God, for as I stepped out of the water I was wrapped in the spirit both soul and body, even so that the chill of the cold water was taken from me.¹

When Jared returned to his home in Chenango, New York, expounding upon his new religious beliefs, “some of [his] best friends” now became his worst enemies. His reaction to their mocking of the sacred was to pen, “Not for fifteen of the best farms in the place would I stay in Chenango one year.”²

Jared immediately made plans to gather with the Saints in Ohio. He attended the fourth general conference of the Church in June 1831 and wrote of hearing the Prophet Joseph Smith speak: “Notwithstanding he is not naturally talented for a speaker yet he was filled with the power of the Holy Ghost so that he spoke as I never heard man speak for God.”³

¹ Autobiography of Jared Carter, typescript, 1. Church History Library. Salt Lake City.

² Autobiography of Jared Carter, 2.

³ Autobiography of Jared Carter, 4.

Jared is most remembered as a very successful missionary. Of preaching in his hometown of Benson, Vermont, he penned, "I commenced holding meetings and the Lord was with me. . . . Baptised 27 in number."⁴ His labors in New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Vermont led to the baptism of 79 converts. Jared is also credited with establishing the first Latter-day Saint branch of converts in Michigan. Of his missionary labors he wrote, "I have seen many marvelous manifestations of the power of God in more than eighty instances, by the instrumentality of myself and other elders in this Church of Christ."⁵

As time passed, Jared became less faithful. "The spirit of God in a measure has left me,"⁶ he penned. Jared didn't rectify the problem, although he accepted assignments to serve on the Church building committee and to forward the construction of the Kirtland Temple. He was warned by Joseph Smith Sr. to repent and confess his sins before the Church. Following the warning, Jared confessed his wrongs, asked for forgiveness, and promised abiding faithfulness. Such a promise never materialized.

When the Saints fled from religious persecution in Nauvoo to Iowa Territory, Jared made a final decision as to his faith. He left The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and never again sought fellowship. He settled in Chicago before moving in 1848 to DeKalb County, Illinois. He died in DeKalb County at age 54.

In reflecting upon the life of Jared Carter, Elder George A. Smith wrote, "I remember, when in Kirtland, having heard Jared Carter say that he had sacrificed everything that ever would be required of him. He said I have sacrificed all my property once, but I will never do it again. Where is that man? He is numbered in the long catalogue of apostates."⁷

⁴ Autobiography of Jared Carter, 8.

⁵ Autobiography of Jared Carter, 23.

⁶ Autobiography of Jared Carter, 28.

⁷ George A. Smith, "Prosperity of Zion, &c.," *Journal of Discourses* 26 vols. (Liverpool: Latter-Day Saints Book Depot, 1862), 9:72.