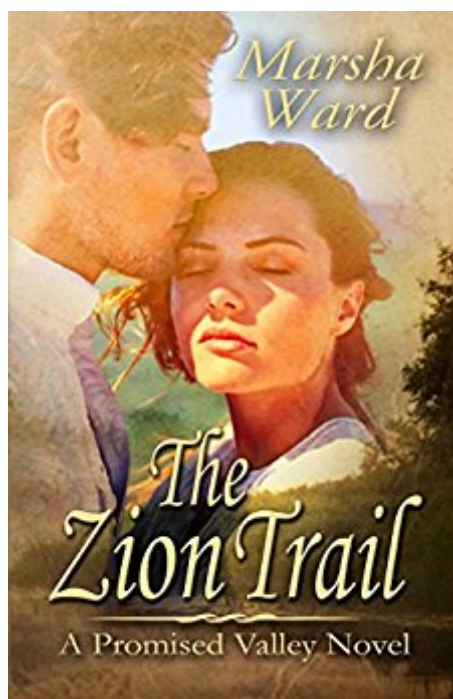


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# The Zion Trail (Promised Valley Book 1)



## Synopsis

On a hot summer day, young Elijah Marshall stops plowing to give a drink of water to two strangers and invite them to lunch with his family. His neighborly act sets in motion events that will drastically change his future. The strangers share a new religion, which the family embraces. But the neighbors want no part of Mormons. Multiple acts of unkindness and starvation drive the Marshall family to flee to the Mormon city on the banks of the Mississippi River, Nauvoo. Then the path of Elijah's life takes perilous detours, with twists and turns he never expected to make. In a 19th century coming-of-age story ranging from Pennsylvania to the Great Salt Lake Valley, Elijah plunges into harrowing adventures filled with sorrow, danger, and romance. "Once again, Marsha Ward has woven an exciting historical novel. Elijah Marshall's adventures, trials, and faith building experiences as he journeys on The Zion Trail will keep readers turning pages until the end!" ~Loralee Evans, author of *The Shores of Bountiful*, and other novels. "Marsha Ward's genius rises to her highest peak in *The Zion Trail*, with spot-on period terminology and meticulous attention to detail. It pulled me back to that time when my fourth-great-grandfather converted to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and took that Zion trail, and beyond." ~Debra Erfert, author of *Window of Time*, *Changes of the Heart*, *It Takes a Sleuth*, and *Relative Evil*. *Promised Valley, Book 1* For the early Mormon Saints, the Great Basin became their refuge in the West, beginning with the Great Salt Lake Valley. That was their land of promise. Historical novelist Marsha Ward begins her new series with the story of Elijah Marshall. Other tales featuring familiar characters, as well as new ones, will follow. Come for the adventure. Stay for the romance.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Zion Trail by Marsha Ward Reviewed by Andy McKinney Author Marsha Ward takes her readers back in time to pre-Civil War Pennsylvania and introduces us to Elijah Marshall, a teen age boy. When we meet Elijah he has a horse and plow in front of him, working on his family farm. The boy has grown enough to be of real use to his father on the farm, helping to provide food for his folks and his two younger siblings, an older boy and a younger girl. When two thirsty missionaries from a church Elijah had never heard of stop to talk, his life and the lives of his whole family change dramatically. Ward leads us on two different but parallel travels. Elijah embarks upon a spiritual journey as he delves deeper and deeper into the new teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. And as his family become committed Mormons, the family takes up a worldly journey to leave their home and travel to Nauvoo. In Nauvoo, on the banks of the mighty Mississippi River, members of the infant faith struggle to build a new community in the face of bloody opposition. Marsha Ward tells her story with a strong, sure handed style and makes Elijah live and breathe for us. The young man on the cusp of adulthood has situations thrown upon him that he has no preparation for-that no one of his age could be prepared for. But we nearly hold our breath as we hope against hope for our hero to succeed-or at least to survive. Elijah has a lot to deal with. Elijah has those typical American attributes of determination, optimism and the ability to quickly and without emotion to take advantage of even the smallest opportunity. He refuses to be beaten and so he cannot be beaten, no matter what life puts in his path.

The Zion Trail, by award-winning author Marsha Ward, is a masterful story of early Mormon settlers' conversion and trek west. Her knowledge of the complex and painful early history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, (Mormons) is evident. Historic characters and events are seamlessly incorporated with those she has created, giving readers accurate glimpses into the trials and triumphs of these western pioneers. Ward writes with a golden quill, seemingly dipped in the very sweat, joys, and tears, of these settlers. The Zion Trail reads like a personal journal of her main

character, Elijah (Lije) Marshall, whose life is forever changes when he takes a pair of tired Mormon missionaries home to dine with his family. Though his Christian parents readily accept the missionaries message and the Book of Mormon they are given, they are completely unprepared for the backlash they face when neighbors find out about their baptism and new faith. As the persecution mounts, so does the cost to the Marshall family. Ward allows Lije's spiritual growth to develop as gently and naturally as his social and physical maturity, and we feel his suffering over past mistakes, and his self-doubt as he is called on, again and again, to become a man in his youth. The story Ward weaves of the trek west had me fully invested, but her introduction of a young widow and the wagon master's edict, charging her care and that of her infant son to Lije, added additional tension and expectation to the book. Ward's experience in this genre shines through. She holds to the period and voice of her hero perfectly until you seriously forget that this is a work of fiction. The Zion Trail is not just for Mormons, though they will love it.

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