



RESURRECTION

“A MATTER OF SURPASSING WONDER”

Elder Gary J. Coleman

IN DECEMBER 1961 a poster appeared on the walls of several campus buildings at Washington State University. It said that a young Mormon returned missionary was going to speak at the Student Union Building under the banner of the YMCA about “The Mormon Attitude of Life and Death.” I contemplated whether or not I could go to the presentation. I was twenty years old and had been considering the ministry in the Catholic Church for the past decade of my life. An earnest wrestle for my soul began. Would I commit a mortal sin and enter the building that night to listen to the presentation about the Mormons? I entered that room and began

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to learn the truth about the plan of salvation and the Resurrection. For the past fifty years, I have been on the journey to learn about the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. I will share the things of my soul.

Thousands of years ago the Lord spoke to Father Adam. In the sixth chapter of Moses, we read, “This is the plan of salvation unto all men, through the blood of mine Only Begotten, who shall come in the meridian of time. . . . All things have their likeness, and all things are created and made to bear record of me, both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath: all things bear record of me” (Moses 6:62–63). Everything around us this Easter season supports this message: the birds are building their nests, the cows are having their calves, the sheep are having their lambs, the horses are having their foals, the flowers are blooming, and the trees are in full blossom. All things bear record of Him this Easter season.

The Bible that I had when I was a young man did not contain a topical guide, a dictionary, an index, or any pictures. However, in the Bible Dictionary accompanying the scriptures of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints we find this definition of the word *resurrection*: “The resurrection consists in the uniting of a spirit body with a body of flesh and bones, never again to be divided” (Bible Dictionary, “Resurrection,” 761). On this and surrounding

pages are other significant words such as *redemption*, *regeneration*, *repentance*, *replenish*, *restoration*, *restitution*, and *revelation*. All of those concepts make such a difference in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, but today I will speak about the Resurrection, "a matter of surpassing wonder."¹

BIBLICAL TEACHINGS

The word *resurrection* does not occur in the Old Testament, though there are many words like it. In the New Testament, however, the word *resurrection* occurs many times. In John 5, Jesus said, "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. . . . All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:26, 28–29). We learn here that all will be resurrected. From Luke we read, "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14). And in John 11, we read these words from Jesus: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).

The four Gospels, however, do not use the word *resurrection* surrounding the very event of Christ's Resurrection. Picture in your mind these various accounts: "He is not here: for he is risen" (Matthew 28:6). "He is risen; he is not here" (Mark 16:6). "He is not here, but is risen" (Luke 24:6). And then when the resurrected Christ

meets with His disciples, we read, “Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, . . . It is I myself: handle me, and see” (Luke 24:36, 39). “Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, . . . Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father” (John 20:16, 17). And from 3 Nephi 11, “Behold my Beloved Son . . . hear ye him. . . . He came down and stood in the midst of them” (3 Nephi 11:7, 8). “Arise and come forth unto me, . . . feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet” (3 Nephi 11:14).

In Acts 7, Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, sees God and Jesus. He says, “I see . . . the Son of man standing on the right hand of God” (Acts 7:56). That would be the resurrected Jesus. In Acts 9, we read about Paul’s conversion. A light shone around him, and a voice said, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? . . . I am Jesus whom thou persecutest” (Acts 9:4–5). And later, in Acts 26, Paul testifies, “I heard a voice speaking unto me. . . . And he said, I am Jesus. . . . I have appeared unto thee” (Acts 26:14–16). Again, the resurrected Jesus was seen. Other references in Acts through Revelation testify that many bore witness to the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the Resurrection of the dead, and the First Resurrection.

In your mind, are you seeing Christ through the eyes of those who saw Him? That is what scripture, vision, and latter-day prophecy have done for us. We can see Him through the eyes of others.

THE BOOK OF MOSES

There are so many places in the latter-day revelations where we learn of resurrection. Latter-day scripture is truly, for me, the treasure trove of information about the Resurrection. Early in this revelatory history, we have what is perhaps the first divine proclamation about the Resurrection: "This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

In Moses 6 the prophet Enoch speaks of the days of Christ thousands of years before His coming: "Jesus Christ [is] the only name which shall be given under heaven, whereby salvation shall come unto the children of men" (Moses 6:52). In verse 57, we read about the kingdom of God, in which the "Man of Holiness" dwells, "and the name of his Only Begotten is the Son of Man, even Jesus Christ" (Moses 6:57). Continuing, we read, "Enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory" (Moses 6:59). Here we find many concepts associated with Resurrection: eternal life, salvation, glory, and kingdoms. What a wondrous thing to ponder on during Easter and springtime, when all things seem to come anew again and are symbolic of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In Moses 7 we read a vision of things that were to come: "the saints arose" (v. 56), "the spirits . . . came forth" (v. 57), and "the Son of Man ascend[ed]" (v. 59). In addition, God says, "Truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his

resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men” (v. 62). From the very beginning of mankind, God has taught His children that Christ would do a great work for all.

THE BOOK OF MORMON

The Book of Mormon prophets speak of the Resurrection of Christ hundreds of years before His divine birth. For example, in 1 Nephi 11, Nephi has a vision of Christ’s life and ministry. In 1 Nephi 12, he has the vision of the Redeemer’s life and ministry among the multitudes in the Americas.

The prophet Lehi says, “Redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah” (2 Nephi 2:6). This scripture introduces a new word to the text of the Book of Mormon: *redemption*. Afterward, Lehi says, “How great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth . . . that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah, who layeth down his life according to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit, that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise” (v. 8). We must now ask ourselves, how are these truths made known? The answer is that we can know them through latter-day revelation and scripture.

In addition to teaching about the Resurrection, Book of Mormon prophets taught how the plan of God is in direct contrast to the

plan of the evil one since the beginning. In 2 Nephi 9, Jacob writes of the great power of the Resurrection through the Redeemer. And yet in the same chapter we hear of the plan of the evil one because throughout our mortal time there is always going to be an effort that will be opposed to this work and this knowledge. To fulfill the merciful plan of the Great Creator, there needs to be a power of the Resurrection that will restore the bodies and spirits of men one to another. "O how great the plan of our God!" (2 Nephi 9:13). Before I became a convert to this Church, I had never heard the words "the plan of our God," "the plan of redemption," "the plan of mercy," or "the plan of restoration"! The grand idea of God's plan comes from latter-day revelation.

The Holy One of Israel wrought the Atonement for all who belong to the family of Adam so that the Resurrection might come to pass for all men, so that all might stand before Him at the great Judgment Day. The plan of Resurrection will come to pass with the sons and the daughters we have lost, the brothers and sisters, the mothers and fathers, the grandparents, the cousins, the friends and neighbors and prophets. Because of the Resurrection, they will live again!

The prophets Adam, Abinadi, Aaron, Samuel, and Moroni and the resurrected Lord Himself all speak of multiple facets of the Resurrection. Alma, like Paul, speaks of the different states of the soul between death and resurrection. Moroni, the concluding writer

of the Book of Mormon, quotes the words of his father: “Ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal, and this because of your faith in him” (Moroni 7:41). This seems to be a summary of the plan of salvation.

THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS

The Doctrine and Covenants mentions the Resurrection many times with wonderful illumination of the glorious doctrine in the Father’s plan for us. Among the latter-day scriptures that discuss the Resurrection are sections 42, 45, and 63, which date from the early days of the Church, and then section 76, in which we see the contrast between the plan of God and the plan of the evil one once again. This vision from February 1832 is introduced by its two witnesses, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, who say, “Our eyes were opened and our understandings were enlightened, so as to see and understand the things of God” (D&C 76:12).

Let us see these things with them. They bear record of “the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, . . . whom we saw and with whom we conversed in the heavenly vision” (v. 14). Continuing, they say, “We beheld the glory of the Son, on the right hand of the Father, . . . and saw the holy angels, and them who are sanctified. . . . He lives! For we saw him, even on the right hand of God” (vv. 20–23).

Now we see the opposite in the vision: "An angel of God who was in authority . . . who rebelled against the Only Begotten Son whom the Father loved . . . was thrust down from the presence of God" (v. 25). "Lucifer, a son of the morning" (v. 26), makes "war with the saints" (v. 29). He chooses to have people suffer, to "deny the truth and defy [God's] power" (v. 31). Section 76 also describes the sons of perdition as "vessels of wrath" (v. 33) and "the only ones who shall not be redeemed" (v. 38); Jesus "saves all except them" (v. 44).

In addition, we read from section 110, "We saw the Lord. . . . And his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying: . . . I am he who liveth" (D&C 110:2–4). Section 128 is also a glorious doctrinal presentation: "Herein is glory and honor, and immortality and eternal life—the ordinance of baptism by water, . . . to be immersed in the water and come forth out of the water is in the likeness of the resurrection of the dead" (D&C 128:12). Quietly, sacredly, by power and authority, baptism is repeated over and over again "in the likeness of the resurrection of the dead" (v. 12).

Sections 88, 130, 132, and 133 also speak of the Resurrection. Later we will speak more about the vision of the Father and the Son in section 137. Section 138 describes our Lord's visit to the spirit world, to those firm in the hope of a glorious resurrection.

THE PLAN OF SALVATION

So what is the key to the doctrine of the Resurrection? It is a correct knowledge of the Godhead. What is our first article of faith? “We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.” What was the doctrine of God from the beginning?



Elder Quentin L. Cook
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Elder Quentin L. Cook wrote,

“Among the first principles lost in the Apostasy was an understanding of God the Father. It is not surprising, then, that among the first principles revealed in the Restoration was an understanding of God the Father. . . . Eternal life is to know the Father and His holy Son, Jesus Christ. Family relationships . . . extend beyond the grave. We can return to the presence of God, eternally united with our families.”²

I condemn not the teaching of my faithful, religious parents—taking us to Mass, taking us to Bible School and to catechism lessons, repeating the rosary tens of thousands of times during my youth as we knelt in our living room and prayed. Our family’s motto was “A family that prays together stays together.”

I condemn not the religious teachers and mentors of my youth and early young adult years—Sister Teresa, Sister Mary Veronica,

and Father O'Neil, who taught me the Latin of the Mass and how to respond as an altar boy for the next twelve years. I condemn not Father O'Donnell, Father Verdorn, and Father Graff, who took me with them on religious retreats to visit St. Edward's Seminary, St. Andrew's Seminary, and Mount St. Michael's Seminary to try to persuade me to become a Catholic priest. I believe that they did the best they could with what they had.

In John 17 we read, "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:1-3). This scripture tells me that if we don't understand the Godhead correctly, we don't understand the doctrine of man's potential correctly.

In my first experience with the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I was drawn to a simple illustration of the plan of God. This first understanding occurred the night I described earlier, at the YMCA program. I knew the fear of serious sin for attending another church, the fear of damnation for seeking truth—hoping for heaven after this life but fearing hell. Those were burdens that I bore as I walked back and forth outside of that auditorium, as the presentation had already begun. I struggled to enter the room, because it would be an assault on the doctrine I had in

my heart at that time, a mortal sin if I went in and listened to this returned missionary. Finally, I went in the room and joined with the audience, where that returned missionary taught me the plan of salvation.

The presentation was so clear and simple! I had never heard or seen such things before! But I knew I was learning the truth about God's plan. This plan had in it such words as *pre-earth*, *mortality*, *resurrection*, *judgment*, and *glory*. Several months later, someone gave me a Book of Mormon. Eighty-seven of its verses were marked, with notes referring me onward in my reading. You can get through the Book of Mormon in about thirty minutes if you read only eighty-seven verses. These scriptures were among the first five verses I read: "O how great the plan of our God!" (2 Nephi 9:13) and "He suffereth this that the resurrection might pass upon all men" (v. 22).

So I began to learn that the Resurrection is the crown jewel of the plan. In fact, Joseph Smith taught, "The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and *all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.*"³ I am a living witness of the power of the restoration of this doctrine and a believer in the magnificent doctrine of the Resurrection. I learned, as the Prophet Jacob has taught, that "it is impossible that man should find out all his

ways. And no man knoweth of his ways save it be revealed unto him; wherefore, brethren, despise not the revelations of God" (Jacob 4:8).

A WRESTLE WITH GOD

While I was growing up, I was taught that the Trinity was incomprehensible, that there could be no more scripture after the New Testament, and even that prophets in our day were false. When I learned of the Prophet Joseph Smith, I went through a terrible struggle. This wrestle with truth may be common to many people who grow up being taught false doctrines before they are introduced to the restored gospel. But because I had the opportunity to break through this struggle and accept Joseph as a prophet, it was a great day in my life. I know that truths taught in the latter days are ratified by the Holy Ghost, who will enable us to throw off the shackles and the burdens of the false teachings of men. I am a witness of the truths being restored in the last days.

The prophet Nephi taught that in the last days there would be many churches (see 2 Nephi 28:3). They would be full of men's doctrines, apostasy, and false teachers (see v. 4). He even said many people would say that there was no hell and no devil and that we did not need any more scripture (see vv. 21, 27). Nephi glories in plainness and condemns apostate doctrine wherever found in the world (see 2 Nephi 25:4). He says we cannot err nor misunderstand his teachings with respect to Christ (see v. 28). The prophets Mormon and



What power from the unseen world tried to prevent this fourteen-year-old boy from learning the truth about the Godhead, the Resurrection, and revelation?
(Walter Rane, *The Desires of My Heart*,
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Moroni taught of the evils of baptizing little children (see Moroni 8:8–9), transfiguring the word of God (see Mormon 8:33), forgiving sins for money, polluting doctrines, perverting the ways of the Lord, mocking God in abominations, and teaching wickedness in the name of religion (see Moroni 8:23). The true doctrine of the Resurrection is taught clearly and beautifully in the Book of Mormon by all the prophets cited therein.

So what preceded the First Vision? What power from the unseen world tried to prevent this fourteen-year-old boy from learning the truth about the Godhead, the Resurrection, and revelation? How powerful is the influence of darkness and confusion on the mind? How powerful is this opposition to the honest investigator? What happened to Joseph in this year? He said the Spirit moved him: “Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine. It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. I reflected on it again and again . . . for how to act I did not know, and unless I could get more wisdom than I then had, I would never know” (Joseph Smith—History 1:12).

Have you ever been there—having to choose between remaining in “darkness and confusion” or, as Joseph Smith said, asking of God (v. 13)? God gives us agency that we might choose to leave a religion and enter the Lord’s Church. The Spirit is a loving guidance to those who choose to do these things. It enables us to be free, free

from false traditions and uninspired doctrines that bind and lead the soul captive.

Joseph Smith said, “I *must* . . . ask of God” (v. 13; emphasis added). So Joseph acted on this determination. He continued, “I retired to the woods. . . . It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt” to pray vocally (v. 14). “I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue. . . . Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction” (v. 15). Remember that he was only a boy! “[I exerted] all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy [this diabolical coward, this wretched enemy of truth] which had seized upon me . . . not . . . an imaginary ruin, but . . . the power of some actual being from the unseen world, who had such marvelous power as I had never before felt in any being” (v. 16).

Then came the light and the glorious deliverance! How many unseen beings had combined against him? Why would they combine against a mere boy? Is truth so precious, so wondrous, so filled with power that it actually frees one from the chains that bind? Yes! I know the freedom of this process that Jesus taught. I know that truth will make you free (see John 8:32)!

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “It is the doctrine of the devil to retard the human mind, and hinder our progress.”⁴ He also

said that “whatever we may think of revelation, . . . without it we can neither know nor understand anything of God, or the devil. . . . Without a divine communication [we] must remain in ignorance.”⁵ Satan’s power is real. The Lord does not often make known the devil’s evil workings, but sometimes we can know of them through our own experience with the awful presence of evil. Satan may even try to persuade the servants of God to give up their work. Satan knows that “where there is no kingdom of God there is no salvation. . . . Where the oracles of God are not, there the kingdom of God is not!”⁶

In the Sacred Grove, the resurrected Jesus said to Joseph that he “must join none of them [the current sects and churches], for they were all wrong” (Joseph Smith—History 1:19). Jesus said that “all their creeds were an abomination,” that “those professors were all corrupt,” that “they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.” Those rituals I had grown up with—transubstantiation, the baptism of children, Mary as a coredeemer—were not the divine truth as Jesus had taught it.

The Prophet was often asked, “Wherein do you differ from others in your religious views?” He said, “One of the grand fundamental principles of ‘Mormonism’ is to receive truth; let it come from whence it may.”⁷ Further the Prophet said, “God has revealed His Son from the heavens and the doctrine of the resurrection also. I

cannot find words to express myself. I care not what the theories of man are. We have the testimony that God will raise us up and he has the power to do it!" I am grateful that the teachings of my youth were enhanced, strengthened, and corrected by the glorious truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

At my mother's funeral mass, the priest in her parish was not present; he was on vacation. A substitute priest was asked to perform the mass, but he was going to be gone also. So the substitute for the substitute presided at my mother's funeral mass. But there was an elder of Israel there, and I told this man that I would give the sermon that day. He said, "Well, that would be highly unusual."

I said, "It *will* be unusual. I will teach of her life and her destiny through the Resurrection." He granted me permission to preach the sermon at the mass.

I gave that sermon because *we* have the doctrine of the Resurrection, the doctrine of eternal life, and the doctrine of the plan of salvation. The Doctrine and Covenants, the Book of Mormon, and the New Testament all speak about these last days, when incorrect doctrines would abound. But Jesus overcame the human predicament. He has all power over mortality and immortality. He has all power over resurrection, over redemption, over salvation, and over exaltation.

THE GLORIOUS DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION

Let's now look at the words of this beautiful latter-day hymn:

*While of these emblems we partake
In Jesus' name and for his sake,
Let us remember and be sure
Our hearts and hands are clean and pure.*

*For us the blood of Christ was shed;
For us on Calvary's cross he bled,
And thus dispelled the awful gloom
That else were this creation's doom.*

*The law was broken; Jesus died
That justice might be satisfied,
That man might not remain a slave
Of death, of hell, or of the grave,*

*But rise triumphant from the tomb,
And in eternal splendor bloom,
Freed from the pow'r of death and pain,
With Christ, the Lord, to rule and reign.⁸*

Perhaps we could add another verse:

*How wondrous thine eternal plan,
To help us come to thee again*



In the almost two hundred years since Joseph Smith saw two personages, God the Father and His Only Begotten Son, standing above him in the air, the vast majority of the people of this earth have not learned of this wondrous truth pertaining to the Godhead. (Del Parson, *First Vision*, © 1988 Intellectual Reserve, Inc.)

And live with those we dearly love,

All worthy of thy home above.

My own father, beset for thirty years by mental illness, died a ghastly death in August of 1984. His lonely and shrinking world had been most difficult for him. I know I will see him again in the glorious kingdoms of the Resurrection. The plain and precious doctrines of the Resurrection, though dismissed by the philosophies and false teachings of the world, are manifest in this gospel. In the almost two hundred years since Joseph Smith saw two personages, God the Father and His Only Begotten Son, standing above him in the air, the vast majority of the people of this earth have not learned of this wondrous truth pertaining to the Godhead. "There are many yet on the earth among all sects, parties, and denominations" who just don't know where to find this truth (D&C 123:12). Joseph said that many years ago, and it's still true today. Surely truth seekers everywhere would welcome latter-day revelations with respect to the True and Living God and His Glorified and Resurrected Son who have spoken to prophets in our time. But no. Man is content to expound creeds that remain an abomination in the sight of God and "teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but . . . deny the power thereof" (Joseph Smith—History 1:19).

While serving as a mission president, I was invited to a prayer breakfast in West Covina, California. I was accompanied by six

THE FAMILY A PROCLAMATION TO THE WORLD

THE FIRST PRESIDENCY AND COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES
OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

WHILE THE FIRST PRESIDENCY and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children.

to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, and to teach them to love and serve one another, observe the commandments of God, and be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.

ordained of God. Marriage between man and wife is His eternal plan. Children are ordained into His eternal plan. Children are ordained into the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by mother who loves marital vows with complete happiness in family life to most fully be blessed upon the teachings of the Lord. Successful marriages and families are established on principles of faith, prayer, respect, love, compassion, work, and mutual submission. By divine design, fathers revere their families in love and righteousness to provide the necessities of life and their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the children. In these sacred responsibilities and mothers are obligated to help one another. Disability, death, or other circumstances necessitate individual adaptation. Extended family support when needed.

at individuals who violate covenants of these spouses or offspring, or who fail to fulfill obligations will one day stand accountable before God; we warn that the disintegration of being upon individuals, communities, and families revealed by ancient and modern

is responsible citizens and officers of government to promote those measures designed to strengthen the family as the fundamental

ment of his ministry at the Salt Lake City, Utah

THE LIVING CHRIST

THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES
THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

As we commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ two millennia ago, we offer our testimony of the reality of His matchless life and the infinite virtue of His great atoning sacrifice. None other has had so profound an influence upon all who have lived and will yet live upon the earth.

He was the Great Jehovah of the Old Testament, the Messiah of the New. Under the direction of His Father, He was the creator of the earth. "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3). Though sinless, He was baptized to fulfill all righteousness. He "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38), yet was despised for it. His gospel was a message of peace and goodwill. He extended all to follow His example. He walked the roads of Palestine, healing the sick, casting the blind to see, and raising the dead. He taught the truths of eternity, the reality of our personal existence, the purpose of our life on earth, and the potential for the sons and daughters of God in the life to come.

He instituted the sacrament as a reminder of His great atoning sacrifice. He was arrested and condemned on spurious charges, convicted to satisfy a mob, and sentenced to die on Calvary's cross. He gave His life to atone for the sins of all mankind. His was a great vicarious gift in behalf of all who would ever live upon the earth.

We solemnly testify that His life, which is central to all human history, neither began in Bethlehem nor concluded on Calvary. He was the Firstborn of the Father, the Only Begotten Son in the flesh, the Redeemer of the world.

He rose from the grave to "become the firstfruits of them that sleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20). As Risen Lord, He visited among those He had loved in life. He also ministered among His "other sheep" (John 10:16) in ancient America. In the modern world, He and His Father appeared to the boy Joseph Smith, ushering in the long-promised "dispensation of the fulness of times" (Ephesians 1:10).

THE FIRST PRESIDENCY

James A. Hancock
Robert Morgan
John & David

January 1, 2000

THE QUORUM OF THE TWELVE

Boyd K. Packer
Richard L. Evans
Robert D. Matthews
David A. Bednar
Richard W. Young
David H. Burton

W. Mark Ballal
Boyd K. Packer
Robert D. Matthews
David A. Bednar
Richard W. Young
David H. Burton

Living apostles and prophets have often proclaimed the doctrine of the Resurrection.

men from other religions, and we were to speak of our belief in the Resurrection that Easter weekend. As these six religious men spoke, not one time was the Resurrection or Easter mentioned. It was left to the Mormon leader to speak of resurrection and eternal life through the Savior.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches about the doctrine of the Resurrection frequently. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" speaks of these things. "The Living Christ" speaks of these things. In the Leadership Training Emphasis of the Church, we speak of preparing families for exaltation. From the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, we have this statement: "Resurrection is as universal as death. All must die and all must be resurrected. It is a free gift to all men. It is not the result of the exercise of faith or accumulated good works."⁹

From a 2008 special edition of the *Ensign* we read about the Lord Jesus Christ, and from a special edition of the *Ensign* in 2010 we read of the purpose of temples and the messages of the Resurrection and how we may help persons in our families who need the ordinances of salvation. In 2011, another special edition of the *Ensign* magazine featured the Book of Mormon and the plain and precious doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The first two lessons of *Preach My Gospel* teach of the Godhead and the Restoration, the plan of salvation, the Atonement, the Resurrection, the Final Judgment, immortality, and the kingdoms of glory. But very few

people who receive those two lessons are eventually baptized. Along the way, the missionaries are turned aside, most likely because the teachings and philosophies of men have ensnared the lives of these investigators.

TEACHINGS OF CHURCH PRESIDENTS

In the past decade we have been learning in our Relief Society and priesthood meetings from eight volumes of the *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*. Following is a sample of lessons about the Resurrection from those manuals.

The Prophet Joseph Smith. “The heavens were opened upon us, and I beheld the celestial kingdom of God, and the glory thereof. . . . I also beheld that all children who die before they arrive at the years of accountability are saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven.”¹⁰

“In knowledge there is power. God has more power than all other beings, because He has greater knowledge; and hence He knows how to subject all other beings to Him. He has power over all.”¹¹

Brigham Young. “Jesus is the first begotten from the dead, as you will understand. Neither Enoch, Elijah, Moses, nor any other man that ever lived on earth, no matter how strictly he lived, ever obtained a resurrection until after Jesus Christ’s body was called from the tomb by the angel. He was the first begotten from the dead. He is the Master of the resurrection—the first flesh that lived here after receiving the glory of the resurrection. . . . Jesus had this power in

and of himself; the Father bequeathed it to him; it was his legacy, and he had the power to lay down his life and take it again."¹²

John Taylor. "It now becomes our duty to enquire . . . what was accomplished by the atonement.

"First, the Resurrection. The penalty of the broken law in Adam's day was death; and death is passed upon all. The word of the Lord was, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' [Genesis 2:17; see also Moses 3:17.] The atonement made by Jesus Christ brought about the resurrection from the dead, and restored life. And hence Jesus said: 'I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live;' (John 11:25) and Jesus Himself became the first fruits of those who slept."¹³

Wilford Woodruff. "The Savior Himself tasted of death; He died to redeem the world; His body was laid in the tomb, but it did not see corruption; and after three days it arose from the grave and put on immortality. He was the first fruit of the resurrection.

"I am satisfied, always have been, in regard to the resurrection. I rejoice in it. The way was opened unto us by the blood of the Son of God.

". . . This doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is most glorious."¹⁴

Heber J. Grant. "The perfect and absolute knowledge that we as Latter-day Saints have of the divinity of the work in which we are

engaged, the absolute assurance that when life ends, if we have been faithful we are to have the pleasure and the privilege of going back into the presence of those whom we have loved and who have gone on before.”¹⁵ These doctrines can give us comfort through our trials in this life. My own dear convert sister and her faithful husband were baptized and confirmed by my brother and me and then sealed in the holy temple. They were killed in an automobile accident and left behind six orphans. But they had the ordinances necessary for eternal life, so their family can be reunited after death. They will be participants in the holy resurrection of the just.

George Albert Smith. “When Jesus was raised from the dead He became the first fruits of the resurrection. The spirit begotten of the Father (the intelligent part of His soul) reinhabited His earthly tabernacle which had been purified, and He became a glorified celestial being, and took His place, on the right hand of the Father, as one of the Godhead.”¹⁶

“We accept without reservation the testimony of all the evangelists contained in the New Testament with reference to the resurrection of the Redeemer of mankind. It is so plain that it seems to me that no thoughtful person can fail to comprehend it.”¹⁷

“In the day and age in which we live there arose another individual. . . . [Joseph Smith] not only had the witness of the Bible that Jesus was the Christ, but he saw God the Father standing in the clouds of heaven, clothed with glory, and Jesus Christ, the Redeemer

of the world, exalted at His right hand, and he heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'This is My Beloved Son, hear Him.' [See Joseph Smith—History 1:16–17.]”¹⁸

David O. McKay. “Establish it as a fact that Christ did take up His body and appeared as a glorified, resurrected Being, and you answer the question of the ages—‘If a man dies, shall he live again?’ [see Job 14:14.]

“That the literal resurrection from the grave was a reality to the disciples who knew Christ intimately is a certainty. . . .

“The latest and greatest confirmation that Jesus rose from the grave is the appearance of the Father and the Son to the Prophet Joseph Smith, nineteen hundred years after the event. . . . This miracle of life is significant not only in itself, but in its connotation of all the basic principles of true Christianity.”¹⁹

Spencer W. Kimball. “Jesus of Nazareth was the one who, before the world was created, was chosen to come to earth to perform this service, to conquer mortal death. This voluntary action would atone for the fall of Adam and Eve and permit the spirit of man to recover his body, thereby reuniting body and spirit.

“This resurrection referred to is the work of Jesus Christ, the Savior, who, because he was both mortal (the son of Mary) and divine (the Son of God), was able to overcome the powers governing the flesh. He actually gave his life and literally took it up again as

the ‘first fruits,’ to be followed by every soul that has ever lived [see 1 Corinthians 15:22–23].”²⁰

President Thomas S. Monson often speaks of the Resurrection. For instance, he has said, “With all my heart and the fervency of my soul, I testify as a special witness that God does live. Jesus is his Son, the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh. He is our Redeemer; he is our mediator with the Father. He it was who died on the cross to atone for our sins. He became the firstfruits of the resurrection. Oh, sweet the joy this sentence gives, ‘I know that my Redeemer lives!’”²¹ Resurrection was the theme of his general conference address in April 2012. In fact, during the April 2012 general conference, seven of our apostles and prophets spoke of the Resurrection, and the April 2012 issue of the *Ensign* had a Resurrection theme. We are not through learning and teaching about this doctrine!

CONCLUSION

I have spent the last two decades serving the Lord full-time, ten of those years in Latin America and the islands of the sea. I have seen the national cemeteries, the billboards, the highway memorials, the home shrines, and the tributes to the dead in newspapers and magazines. I have seen church buildings silent and decaying. I have seen the public mourning for the dead, and it is beyond comprehension, while private mourning is also beyond description. One thing prevails among the human family, and that is hope that someday

they will see their family members and loved ones again. I testify that the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ has brought that hope to reality in the true doctrine of the Resurrection. Members of our Church have been participants in war and conflict among nations, but I am grateful that members of our Church have also been participants in the conflicts and wars for the minds and souls of men and have taught millions of Father's children the true gospel.

I know of the despair of living under the burdens of false doctrines and works of darkness that bind the mind and pervert the right ways of the Lord. I know the Lord has revealed greater knowledge of the Resurrection, one of the great and glorious doctrines of the gospel, reaffirmed in the restoration of eternal truths in these latter days. May I speak now for those of us who have found the gospel and all things pertaining to the kingdom of God and the His Beloved Son. I thank you, the missionaries and faithful members of the Church, for inviting us to leave the darkness and come into the light. Thank you for visiting with us, for praying for us, for sharing this precious gospel with us, and for teaching us truths that would change our lives that we may know for ourselves about God the Father and His precious Son through the Holy Ghost. I thank you for your fellowship, your friendship, and your discipleship, through which we, the converts of the Church, might come to know the truths of the gospel today. Your service to us has been marvelous. You have brought us hope in the Resurrection to

eternal life through the things you have done for us. Thank you for teaching us who we really are as the people of the covenant in the house of Israel, to be numbered among those from the families of the earth to be blessed with this everlasting gospel of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I thank God that He has revealed these things to us in the last days.

NOTES

1. James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1924), 77.
2. Quentin L. Cook, “The Doctrine of the Father,” *Ensign*, February 2012, 33–34.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2007), 49; emphasis added.
4. *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 5:24.
5. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*, 387.
6. *History of the Church*, 5:257.
7. *History of the Church*, 5:499.
8. John Nicholson, “While of These Emblems We Partake,” *Hymns* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), no. 174; I have added an additional verse to this hymn.
9. Douglas L. Callister, “Resurrection,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 3:1222–23.
10. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*, 95.
11. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*, 265.
12. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1997), 275.
13. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: John Taylor* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2001), 50.
14. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004), 81.

15. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Heber J. Grant* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2002), 45.
16. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: George Albert Smith* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004), 74.
17. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: George Albert Smith*, 24.
18. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: George Albert Smith*, 26–27.
19. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003), 65–66.
20. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2006), 27.
21. *Pathways to Perfection: Discourses of Thomas S. Monson* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973), 8.

Our love for and observance of the Sabbath day or the Lord's day is forever changed and enhanced as we come to understand and remember that every Sunday, not only Easter Sunday, is the Lord's day.



(Harry Anderson, *Jesus*,
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