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## RESURRECTION: THE ULTIMATE TRIUMPH

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*Robert J. Matthews*

Resurrection: The Ultimate Triumph\* is a phrase borrowed from President Howard W. Hunter, who said: "The doctrine of the Resurrection is the single most fundamental and crucial doctrine in the Christian religion. It cannot be overemphasized, nor can it be disregarded. Without the Resurrection, the gospel of Jesus Christ becomes a litany of wise sayings and seemingly unexplainable miracles . . . with no ultimate triumph. No, the ultimate triumph is in the ultimate miracle. . . . [Jesus'] triumph over physical and spiritual death is the good news every Christian tongue should speak."<sup>1</sup> President Hunter's inspiring thoughts form the basis of what I wish to elucidate, and which I have arranged in five categories:

1. The meaning of the word *resurrection*
2. The resurrection of Jesus Christ

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1. Howard W. Hunter, Conference Report, April 1986, 18.

3. God's interaction with physical element
4. The divine plan of restoration
5. The resurrection of all mankind and all other living creatures

### THE MEANING OF THE WORD *RESURRECTION*

The English word *resurrection* comes from two Latin terms<sup>2</sup>—*re*, meaning "again"; and *surgere*, "to rise." It is also related to the word *surge*, meaning that the rising again is accomplished with power. Resurrection means that a dead body is restored to active, everlasting life. Literally, the spirit and the body are permanently reunited.

### KNOWLEDGE OF THE RESURRECTION COMES ONLY FROM GOD

The body of a person newly dead is limp and lifeless. A few hours later, the body is hard as a rock and stone-cold. If you have ever touched such a body you will never forget the sensation.

The mortal world cannot demonstrate the Resurrection to our natural senses. We see death occurring all around us, and it seems so final. Our knowledge and hope of the Resurrection comes only because of the scriptures, the story of Jesus, the witness of the Holy Spirit, personal revelation, and the testimony of the latter-day prophets. These are the only reliable sources and are the sources I have used to compile this essay, because I know them to be true. I am grateful for such marvelous information.

As mortals we see the Resurrection through the eyes of our faith until we individually receive a witness by the Spirit. Many have also received a personal experience like those whom the resurrected Jesus visited, and they have felt his

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2. *Webster's Third International Dictionary*, s.v. "resurrection," "surge."

warm, resilient, breathing, tangible, gloriously immortal body for themselves.

The doctrine of resurrection is so important in the plan of redemption that the Prophet Joseph Smith said that it must be taught with the first principles of the gospel, and in company with the doctrine of eternal judgment.<sup>3</sup>

#### A PERSONAL COMMENT ABOUT RESURRECTION

It is my conviction that all human beings are created in the express image of the bodies of our heavenly parents (see Moses 6:8-9; Ether 3:15-16). This means that our spirit body and our physical body resemble each other, and each has the corresponding parts, features, organs, and likeness that the other has (see D&C 77:2). It follows, also, that these are the features of the bodies of our heavenly parents.

Since God has a definite purpose in the creation of man, which includes man becoming exalted like unto God, and since God has a body, and since mortal humans die as a result of the fall of Adam, a resurrection of the dead body is essential to the plan. This resurrection must be all-inclusive and permanent or the plan of God would not be successful.

Resurrected bodies have size, weight, shape, and occupy space. They have every limb, joint, hair, and body parts that are natural to the physical body, and they enjoy never-ending youth without sickness or pain. They are dynamic; they eat, drink, and digest food, along with other functions, including metabolism and bodily warmth. They have spirit fluid in their veins instead of red blood and do not require sleep.

Resurrection of the body is essential for maximum happiness and progress in the eternities. The quality of the

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3. See Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 149, 365.

resurrected body differs among individuals according to how well they conformed to gospel law while in mortality. Although all resurrected bodies are immortal, only celestial bodies have total capability and function with family, eternal increase, personal perfection, and complete emotional fulfillment.

Resurrection is available only because of the atonement and resurrection of Jesus Christ; and for this gift we owe Jesus our sincere gratitude with our whole heart forever.

### THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

The central purpose of Jesus' earthly life was to obtain a body Himself and to conquer physical and spiritual death for Himself and all the world. In order to do that, He had to have power over death, which He received by being the biological Son of God the Father in the flesh. He had power to lay His body down, and He had power to take it up again (see John 5:26; 10:17-18; Helaman 5:10-11). Jesus is the only one to whom this power has been given while in mortality. Even though He obtained this power by inheritance, He could not have retained and used that power if He had not obeyed completely the Father's plan of redemption.

Jesus kept every commandment of His Father; He held the Melchizedek Priesthood and observed every ordinance of the priesthood pertaining to mortality, including all ordinances of the temple.<sup>4</sup> By taking upon Himself the pains, sicknesses, and sins of mankind, He experienced the sorrows of spiritual death. This reached fulfillment in Gethsemane and on Calvary. He thereafter experienced physical death on the cross and was buried in a tomb cut out of a rock just outside the walls of Jerusalem.

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4. See Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 308.

## BURIAL AND RESURRECTION

The burial of Jesus' body by His friends was hastily done because the Sabbath was approaching at sundown. His body was wrapped in a white linen cloth, with spices; a smaller cloth was put around His head to keep His chin in place. He was laid in the tomb, and a large stone was rolled across the opening so no one could steal the body.

After the Sabbath, a few women, sad and in mourning, started toward the tomb with additional spices to give Jesus a more appropriate burial. They were concerned about how to move the huge stone, but when they arrived they found that it had already been rolled away. They were perplexed to discover that the body was gone and were startled to see two angels dressed in white sitting on the stone. The angels addressed the women: "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen" (Luke 24:5-6). With their sadness rapidly changing to joy and amazement, the women hurried to tell the brethren that Jesus had risen from the dead.

John alone tells of an emotional meeting of Mary Magdalene and Jesus near the tomb. He prevented her intended embrace by explaining that He had not yet ascended to His Father but was about to do so. He instructed Mary to carry that message to the brethren (see John 20:1, 11-18).

I do not know the identity of the angels, but I am certain that they were there as official witnesses of the greatest event that has occurred on this earth. Years ago I found mention of an early Christian tradition identifying the angels as Michael and Gabriel. This being a non-LDS source, the author would not have known, as we do, who Michael and Gabriel really are. I am sorry that I have lost my notes and thus do not now have the reference. However, I see no reason why it could not have been they. Witnesses for this special event would not have been chosen randomly. Who could qualify more?

Michael is Adam, the patriarch of the human family, who opened the way of the world and introduced mortality and death. Gabriel is Noah, standing next to Adam in authority and has been given the keys of the restoration of all things.<sup>5</sup> I think there is an official priesthood assignment demonstrated in this event.

#### "BY MANY INFALLIBLE PROOFS"

Acts 1:1-3 tells us that after His resurrection Jesus showed Himself alive "by many infallible proofs." He did this in a variety of ways. The personal nature of Jesus' appearances attest to the fact of His resurrection and also reveal what a resurrected body can do.

On the same day that Jesus was resurrected, He appeared to the women who had come to the tomb, and they held His feet (see Matthew 28:9). This appears to have been after He had ascended to His Father and returned to earth. He also appeared privately to Peter (see Luke 24:33-35; 1 Corinthians 15:5). During the same day, Jesus walked and talked with two disciples along a country road and then disappeared before their eyes when they recognized Him (see Luke 24:13-33). In the evening, He appeared to the Twelve in Jerusalem, Thomas being absent. They thought Jesus was a spirit, so He said, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And . . . he shewed them his hands and his feet" (Luke 24:39-40) He also ate broiled fish and honey before them (see also vv. 37-43). Jesus' reference to His hands and feet must

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5. Gabriel is identified as Noah by the Prophet Joseph Smith (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 157). Gabriel is the angel who visited Zacharias as recorded in Luke 1:5-25. D&C 27:6-7 identifies this angel also as Elias to whom is given the keys of the restoration of all things. We conclude, therefore, that Noah, Gabriel, and Elias are the same in this instance.

have been because that is where the wounds of crucifixion were. Those wounds, and His words "It is I myself" seem to be Jesus' way of saying, "Be assured, brethren, this is the same body by which you knew me before I died."

A week later, Jesus reappeared, Thomas being present, and Jesus again emphasized the wounds, including the hole in his side (see John 20:26-27), verifying that this is the very body that was nailed to the cross and pierced by the soldier's spear.

In both of these instances, the doors had been shut before Jesus arrived, yet He came through unhampered (see John 20:19, 26), showing that resurrected flesh, though tangible, is not subject to mortal barrier. This leads to an awareness that the angels had rolled away the stone from the tomb, not so that Jesus could get out, but so that the women and the brethren could get in and know that Jesus' body was not there.

Peter testified to the Jews that the resurrected Jesus ate and drank real food with the Apostles (see Acts 10:40-41). The Lord's purpose in eating and drinking with them, and Peter's purpose in telling the world about it, must have been that they wanted to demonstrate just how real and how physical a resurrected body is.

Jesus also appeared to large crowds: over five hundred in the Holy Land (see 1 Corinthians 15:6); to 2,500 in the Western Hemisphere, each person touching his body (see 3 Nephi 11:8-17; 17:25); and He spoke of his intention to show his body to the lost tribes of Israel (see 3 Nephi 16:1-3; 17:4).

Other appearances include visits to Paul, to John, and on numerous occasions in the latter days to other persons of strong faith, beginning with the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Jesus' resurrection is the ultimate statement about who He is and what He has done for mankind. The empty tomb

and the variety of His appearances show that His victory over death is complete.

### GOD'S INTERACTION WITH PHYSICAL ELEMENT

It is fundamental doctrine that God our Father is a resurrected man with a tangible, immortal body of flesh and bone. Jesus likewise has such a body (see D&C 130:22). It is also basic doctrine that the term *create* does not mean to make something out of nothing, but it means to organize already existing element (see Abraham 4:1). This is in harmony with the axiom that matter cannot be made or destroyed, only changed in form. The book of Abraham states that the Lord took of the materials and formed the earth (see Abraham 3:24; 4:1-2). It was Jesus who did this, under direction of the Father.

While Jesus was a mortal on earth, He possessed godly powers and continued to manage the physical elements. He restored the withered hand of a man at Capernaum (see Luke 6:6-10). This was an instant reconstruction of the tissues, nerves, and vessels of a misshapen hand. Under normal conditions, new flesh might have grown eventually, but the miracle was immediate.

Jesus fed a multitude with five loaves of bread and two small fish. In some miraculous way, He multiplied those fish and loaves into an abundance of real food that fed five thousand persons and resulted in twelve basketsful of leftovers (see Matthew 14:15-21). Jesus instantly created fish already cooked and bread already baked. He did not have to wait for the natural process of planting, growing, harvesting, grinding, mixing, rising, and baking time because He knew how to manage physical, earthly element and how to override the natural laws of mortality.

Jesus instantaneously produced more than one hundred gallons of wine out of water (see John 2:1-10). The wine



possessed the flavor and properties that normally would come only with aging and fermentation of grape juice.

When He instituted the sacrament among the Nephites, Jesus instantaneously and miraculously provided both bread and wine for a sacrament service (see 3 Nephi 20:3–7).

How Jesus did these things I don't know, but they are not deceptions; they are real. He had the divine power to manage physical element. If we believe and accept these miraculous events, we should have no difficulty accepting the miracle of the bodily resurrection—whether it be Jesus' resurrection or our own future resurrection. Is anything too hard for the Lord?

### THE DIVINE PLAN OF RESTORATION

The scriptures state that the design of our Heavenly Father for this earth includes a restoration of all things. This is called the plan of restoration, but I think we could also call it the law of restoration. Restoration is a major part of the redemptive mission of the Lord Jesus Christ and will affect the whole earth and will involve every human being.

A restoration of all things is spoken of by Peter (see Acts 3:21) and is also repeatedly mentioned in the Doctrine and Covenants (see 27:6; 77:14; 86:10). We learn from these passages that both Gabriel (Noah) and John the Revelator have major managerial roles in the restoration of all things. It is because of the plan of restoration that the priesthood, the Church, the covenant of Abraham, and the gathering of Israel are all actively in operation on the earth today. The law of restoration will also eventually restore the continents to their original location when the land was in one place at the time of creation, as spoken of in Genesis 1:9–10; 10:25; and D&C 133:23–24. Also the earth will be restored to its paradisiacal glory (see Article of Faith 1:10). You note these are all group projects of worldwide scope. How will the plan of restoration

reach you and me individually? I can assure you that it will capture our individual attention to the fullest extent.

#### RESURRECTION AND FINAL JUDGMENT ARE PERSONAL RESTORATIONS

Book of Mormon prophets present the clearest description of how the plan of restoration will reach every soul individually by the resurrection of our body and the verdict of the Final Judgment. These prophets use the words *resurrection*, *judgment*, and *restoration* all in the same breath.

#### JESUS RESTORES THAT WHICH WAS LOST BY THE FALL OF ADAM

The Fall brought two kinds of death to Adam and Eve. Each of us inherits these deaths, or separations, by birth into mortality. We are shut out from the presence of God, which is a spiritual type of death; and we suffer a separation of our body from our spirit, which is the physical death. We also experience loss of memory. The atonement and resurrection of Jesus Christ rescues every human being from all of these conditions. The prophet Jacob explains that at the time of each person's resurrection this is what happens: "The spirit and the body is restored to itself again, and all men become . . . immortal, . . . having a perfect knowledge like unto us in the flesh, save it be that our knowledge shall be perfect. . . . [Then] they must appear before the judgment-seat of the Holy One of Israel" (2 Nephi 9:13, 15).

Now note also the words of Amulek as he teaches the same doctrine. He uses the word *resurrection* only once, whereas he uses the words *restoration* and *restored* several times:

Behold, the day cometh that all shall rise from the dead and stand before God, and be judged according to their works.

Now, there is a death which is called a temporal death; and the death of Christ shall loose the bands of this temporal death, that all shall be raised from this temporal death.

The spirit and the body shall be reunited again in its perfect form; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame, even as we now are at this time; and we shall be brought to stand before God, knowing even as we know now, and have a bright recollection of all our guilt.

Now, this restoration shall come to all, both old and young, both bond and free, both male and female, both the wicked and the righteous; and even there shall not so much as a hair of their heads be lost; but every thing shall be restored to its perfect frame, as it is now, or in the body. . . .

Now, behold, I have spoken unto you concerning the death of the mortal body, and also concerning the resurrection of the mortal body. I say unto you that this mortal body is raised to an immortal body, that is from death, even from the first death unto life, that they can die no more; their spirits uniting with their bodies, never to be divided; thus the whole becoming spiritual and immortal. (Alma 11:41-45)

Both Jacob and Amulek speak of three kinds of restoration: (1) the restoration of the body to the spirit, (2) the restoration of the person to the presence of God for judgment, and (3) the restoration of memory.

Here is the prophet Alma's definition of the plan of restoration as it pertains precisely to our own resurrection and to the Day of Judgment.

Concerning the body: "The plan of restoration is requisite with the justice of God; for it is requisite that all things should be restored to their proper order. Behold, it is requisite and just, according to the power and resurrection of Christ, that

the soul of man should be restored to its body, and that every part of the body should be restored to itself" (Alma 41:2).

Concerning the Judgment: "And it is requisite with the justice of God that men should be judged according to their works; and if their works were good in this life, and the desires of their hearts were good, that they should also, at the last day, be restored unto that which is good. And if their works are evil they shall be restored unto them for evil. Therefore, all things shall be restored to their proper order" (Alma 41:3-4). "Do not suppose, because it has been spoken concerning restoration, that ye shall be restored from sin to happiness. Behold, I say unto you, wickedness never was happiness" (Alma 41:10).

Meaning of the word *restoration*: "And now behold, is the meaning of the word restoration to take a thing of a natural state and place it in an unnatural state, or to place it in a state opposite to its nature? O, my son, this is not the case; but the meaning of the word restoration is to bring back again evil for evil, or carnal for carnal, or devilish for devilish—good for that which is good; righteous for that which is righteous; just for that which is just; merciful for that which is merciful. . . . For that which ye do send out shall return unto you again, and be restored" (Alma 41:12-13, 15).

What does restoration mean in terms of the resurrected body? For one thing, it will be complete: "every part of the body restored to itself." More specifically, it will be the same body we lived in as mortals. Any other body would not be a restoration but would be a replacement or a substitution. The scriptures do not speak of the plan of replacement or substitution but of restoration. This is a crucial point of doctrine declared both in the New Testament and in the Book of Mormon. Likewise, the Lord has spoken in the Doctrine and Covenants, giving the same assurance. We read in section 88:28, "They who are of a celestial spirit shall receive the same

body which was a natural body; even ye shall receive your bodies." Our present mortal body is our natural body, and the only body we will ever have. Because of Christ our natural body will be resurrected and "fashioned like unto His glorious [resurrected] body" (Philippians 3:21), and when that happens we will be a marvel even to ourselves.

If our spirit were to receive any other body instead of our own natural body, it would be a type of reincarnation, and the Prophet Joseph Smith declared that reincarnation is absolutely not a true gospel principle.<sup>6</sup>

#### COUNSEL FROM THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH

I am aware that the emphasis given in the scriptures concerning the body might raise certain physiological and philosophical questions. I am also aware that the mortal body changes through the years. We gain weight, we lose weight; tissues slough off and others grow. Part of our bodily size has been attained by our consumption of animal flesh, and yet animals, birds, and fish also will be resurrected. How does that play out in the Resurrection and restoration? I do not know the process, but I do know that we ought to hold true to the principle of resurrection and restoration. The Prophet Joseph Smith counseled the Brethren on this matter. We do not have the full context of the Prophet's statement, but it was prompted by a remark from Elder Orson Pratt that the body of a person changes every seven years. What other ideas were involved are not documented, but the Prophet's response covers more than that one concept. Furthermore, the intensity of the Prophet's reply shows that he had very strong feelings on this subject. Here is the statement as reported in the *History of the Church*: "There is no fundamental principle belonging to

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6. See Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 104-5.

a human system that ever goes into another in this world or in the world to come; I care not what the theories of men are. We have the testimony that God will raise us up, and he has the power to do it. If any one supposes that any part of our bodies, that is, the fundamental parts thereof, ever goes into another body, he is mistaken."<sup>7</sup> What the Prophet meant by "the fundamental parts" of the body is not defined, but the vigor of the Prophet's testimony says that he wanted the Brethren to have no misunderstanding on this matter: The resurrection of the human body is absolute, it is the work of God, nothing can prevent it, and there is no mixing of fundamental parts between bodies, not in this world nor in the next.

I suppose that each person's DNA code has a controlling influence in maintaining personal identity and integrity and would apply to both the human system and also all other forms of life. Individual integrity will be preserved across the board.

The Prophet's counsel was not given in vain, for there are recorded several discourses by leading Brethren in which the doctrinal points emphasized by Joseph Smith are clearly set forth, sometimes almost verbatim. Space will permit only two examples. President Brigham Young, speaking at a funeral service, made special reference to the body then lying before the congregation: "This tabernacle is from the elements of the earth . . . yet this tabernacle, through faithfulness whilst here in the flesh, has the promise of a glorious resurrection. . . . All the component parts of this body, which now lies before us, will be resurrected. . . . Some have supposed that it matters not what particles we receive again. In this they are mistaken.

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7. Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957), 5:339.

The parts which have been honored by the faithfulness of the spirit in this life will be joined in the life to come."<sup>8</sup>

On another occasion, President Young emphasized that the Resurrection is governed by divine law. He cited Doctrine and Covenants 88:34, "That which is governed by law is also preserved by law." He stated that the particles that compose the bodies of man, beasts, fowls, insects, and vegetables can never become the "component parts" of other men or beasts, etc., because "a divine law . . . governs and controls them. . . . They are watched over and will be preserved until the resurrection."<sup>9</sup> By "component parts" he must have meant the "fundamental parts" referred to by the Prophet Joseph. President Young does not categorically so state, but he is describing the plan and law of restoration taught in the Book of Mormon.

Other discourses on the Resurrection, obviously influenced by Joseph Smith's counsel, were given by Elder John Taylor<sup>10</sup> and Elder Orson Pratt.<sup>11</sup>

### THE RESURRECTION OF ALL MANKIND AND ALL LIVING CREATURES

We now approach the final segment of this essay by observing that the Resurrection will come to all forms of life. Everything that has a premortal spirit and a physical mortal body, and that dies, will at some time be resurrected. The scriptures teach that death came into the world by way of the fall of Adam, and that it was by great personal suffering and exertion that Jesus Christ atoned for the fall of Adam and also

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8. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-86), 13:76.

9. Ben E. Rich, *Scrapbook of Mormon Literature* (Chicago: H. C. Etten, n.d.), 2:41.

10. See John Taylor, *Journal of Discourses*, 18:333.

11. See Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses*, 16:353-68.



for man's individual sins on condition of repentance, and thus he conquered both spiritual and physical death. If just one person or one animal were not raised, Christ's victory over death would not be complete.

#### RESURRECTION IS NECESSARY FOR ETERNAL JOY

Why would it matter if someone or something were not resurrected? Most people give little thought to the doctrine of resurrection in this life, and even most religious philosophies do not give it much attention, and major world religions that subscribe to reincarnation overtly deny it.<sup>12</sup> The correct answer has to be that we need the body for the greatest happiness. This answer could only have been learned from the revelations of the Lord. God, who knows what eternity is, has revealed this doctrine for our benefit so we can have comfort in the loss of loved ones and also so we can prepare ourselves for eternity.

The Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith that the spirit and the body constitute the soul and that the resurrection of the dead is the redemption of the soul (see D&C 88:15-16). The Lord further explained that the spirit and the body cannot have a fulness of joy until they are "inseparably connected." That condition comes only with resurrection. The Lord revealed also that when the spirit is separated from the body, as in the postmortal spirit world after this mortal life, the spirit experiences limitations because of having no physical body, and

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12. Many non-Christian world religions that have been embraced by billions hold to a belief that each person experiences several mortal lives through a cycle of births, deaths, and rebirths in separate mortal bodies. This continues until the spirit "self" is sufficiently disciplined that it no longer needs a physical body and unites with the eternal spiritual essence they call God. The need for a physical bodily resurrection is totally rejected. It is my experience also that even professing Christians have slight understanding of what resurrection is or why they will need it.



such spirits view this separation as a bondage that can be remedied only by resurrection (see D&C 45:17; 138:50–51).

The Prophet Joseph Smith declared: "We came to this earth that we might have a body and present it pure before God in the celestial kingdom. The great principle of happiness consists in having a body. The devil has no body, and herein is his punishment."<sup>13</sup> Joseph Smith said further: "Perhaps there are principles here that few men have thought of. No person can have this salvation except through a tabernacle," and "the greatness of [Lucifer's] punishment is that he shall not have a tabernacle."<sup>14</sup>

If a physical body is so important that it is sufficient punishment for the devil not to have one, then by contrast we can see that for us to have a body is the greatest of blessings, even though we might not presently realize it because of our lack of understanding. Because man does not know, and God does know, He has revealed to us the significance of our body and has shown to us that the number one priority of our coming to earth is to get a body. The number two priority is experience.

#### GOD'S LOVE IS DEMONSTRATED BY THE RESURRECTION

It is a prominent teaching of the Book of Mormon that without the infinite atonement and resurrection of Jesus Christ, every man, woman, and child would become a devil, forever miserable and without hope (see 2 Nephi 9:6–12). Jesus has saved the world from that fate, except the sons of perdition, who because of rebellion lose the benefits of the Atonement. Without the fulness of the gospel, humans do not know about the purposes of God or the destiny of mankind and do not realize what Jesus has done for them. When those

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13. Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 181.

14. Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 297.

persons get into the spirit world after death, they will sooner or later become dissatisfied with the lack of understanding they had as mortals and will come to realize that God and Jesus knew the whole course of events from the beginning and in love for mankind made provision for every person to receive his or her body in the Resurrection. All true prophets from Adam on down have known of Christ and the Resurrection (see Mosiah 13:33-35).

#### SALVATION OF ALL LIVING THINGS

Latter-day revelation teaches that not only is man a living soul, but so also are animals and plants (see Moses 3:7, 9, 19). Doctrine and Covenants 77:2-3 explains that animals have spirits that resemble their bodies, and animals will enjoy eternal happiness and felicity. The doctrine of resurrection in relation to animals is easily determined. If they are the creations of God, and they have spirits, and their bodies are subject to mortal death, they are candidates for the Resurrection through the atonement of Jesus Christ. Speaking of "men, and beasts, the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea," the Lord has said, "not one hair, neither mote, shall be lost, for it is the workmanship of mine hand" (D&C 29:24-25). Hair and motes are very small things. The Lord is saying that nothing will be overlooked. The Prophet Joseph Smith further explained that the salvation of animals is part of the redemptive mission of Jesus Christ and that in eternity the beasts will praise Jesus for their redemption.<sup>15</sup>

#### "HOW ARE THE DEAD RAISED UP?"

In Paul's magnificent discourse in 1 Corinthians 15 on the Resurrection, he poses two questions: "How are the dead

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15. See Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 291-92.

raised up?" and "With what body do they come?" (v. 35). In answer to the second question, Paul says that resurrected bodies differ in glory. More precise information is given to us in Doctrine and Covenants 76 and 88. Because of the law of restoration, each person will receive a body commensurate with the law he or she chose to follow in mortality—one's lifestyle. Thus, we largely determine the quality and glory of our resurrected body and whether we will rise in the first or in the last resurrection.

#### RESURRECTION IS A PRIESTHOOD ORDINANCE

As to the first question—how the dead are raised—we know that it is by the power of Jesus Christ because He holds the keys of death, hell, and resurrection. However, latter-day prophets have clarified how that power is activated in our behalf. President Brigham Young<sup>16</sup> and Elder Erastus Snow<sup>17</sup> taught that the Resurrection will be conducted much as other things are done in the kingdom, by those in authority and by delegation. As one cannot baptize himself, nor can he baptize others until he himself is baptized, ordained, and directed by the presiding officers, so one cannot resurrect himself but will be called forth by someone in authority. Men will be given the keys of this ordinance after they themselves are resurrected, and they then will resurrect others. I expect that a righteous father will be given the keys to resurrect his family.

In the April 1977 general conference, President Spencer W. Kimball quoted President Brigham Young: "We are in possession of all the ordinances that can be administered in the flesh; but there are other ordinances and administrations that must be administered beyond this world. I know you would

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16. See Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 6:275; 15:136–39.

17. See Erastus Snow, *Journal of Discourses*, 25:34.

like to ask what they are. I will mention one. We have not, neither can we receive here, the ordinance and the keys of resurrection."<sup>18</sup> President Kimball then explained that resurrection is the work of God and that the world by its wisdom has not produced the power to resurrect anyone.

#### RESURRECTION IS CERTAIN

During World War II, a young man whom I knew was killed in battle in the South Pacific. I was in his parents' home shortly thereafter and observed their deep sorrow. Although this was a Latter-day Saint family, the father stated that if his son had died on land and received a burial he would expect to see him again, but as he was blown apart in the sea and no doubt eaten by fish, the father said he had no hope or expectation of the young man ever being resurrected. I was only sixteen and relatively unfamiliar with the scriptures or the teachings of the Brethren, yet a feeling came over me that what the father said was not doctrinally correct. I didn't say anything, but I knew within me that the plan of God was better than that and could not be frustrated. I have not seen the family since that day, but their pain was more severe than it would have been if they had had a stronger faith and testimony of Christ's victory over death. They could have said with Paul, "O death, where is thy sting? . . . Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:55, 57). With what we know about the law of restoration, the ordinances of the priesthood, and of Jesus' ultimate triumph over death, we know assuredly that not only will the young man be resurrected with his own body, whole and complete, but we can contemplate that his once-reluctant

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18. Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 15:137, in Spencer W. Kimball, Conference Report, April 1977, 69.

father, who ached under the sting of death, might even be the very one to exercise the priesthood to call him forth in the name of Jesus. Then at that sacred moment will he not say, with Paul, and with us, "Thanks be to God [for] . . . our Lord Jesus Christ."