

Jesus Christ Is the Life – Resurrection

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The essential problem in life is separation from God Our Father. The consequences that flow from that separation are chaos, darkness, and death. Jesus Christ bridges the gap and qualifies us to be endowed with divine power and return to God’s presence if we will believe and follow Him to the end, engaged in His work. He is the Way, the destination offsetting chaos. He is not only the Truth, how to get there, offsetting darkness, but He is also the Life, the end result when you do, offsetting death.

Hello, I am Larry Corbridge, and this is Episode 36 of the *Stand Forever Series*. In these last episodes, we will reflect on Jesus Christ as the Life. Today we will focus primarily on life and resurrection.

Resurrection: “I am the Resurrection”

Jesus said to Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”¹ There are two critical dimensions to Christ as the Life. He is the Resurrection (victory over physical death) and the Life (victory over spiritual death) as well.

The promise of the resurrection is a glorious promise of a bright future, but no more glorious than the blessing of the human body in the first place. You can’t fully appreciate the wonder of resurrection without appreciating the wonder of the body today.

One of the primary reasons for the creation of the earth and the heavens, one of the central purposes of God’s plan for all His children, is to receive the incomprehensible blessing of a physical body. A body is a major step toward godliness. Joseph Smith simply said, “We came into this earth that we might have a body and present it pure before God in the celestial kingdom.”²

Because of their rebellion before the world began, Satan and those who followed him are deprived of physical life, deprived of a body forevermore. They will never feel the rain on their face or wind in their hair. They will never experience physical fatigue and the sweet rest of the night. They will never know the glory, refreshment, and renewal

¹ John 11:25

² Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 181

of the dawning of a new day, the cold of winter or the warmth of the sun. They will never know the birth of a child; they will never have children. They will never know the magical beat of the heart, or a million other wonders of the body. That condition is so awful they find it better to possess the bodies of swine than to be without a body of any kind.³

It stands to reason one of Satan's primary ploys is to defile and abuse what he and his minions will never have. It is no surprise they promote promiscuity, abortion, tattooing, piercing, cutting, battery, and killing. They will never know physical life, but they can do much to desecrate and destroy it that others may be as miserable as they.

The Lord said, "The elements are the tabernacle of God; yea, man is the tabernacle of God, even temples; and whatsoever temple is defiled, God shall destroy that temple."⁴ I'm not certain all that is implied with the somber warning that the temple will be destroyed if defiled, but I do think it at least means it will be destroyed as a temple of God, where God's presence may reside. And that is the worst of all.

"He Lives"

"He is not here: for he is risen." Those angelic words may be the most important words, the most beautiful words uttered anytime, anywhere, by anyone ever. After Christ's death on the cross, no one imagined those words. No one expected Him to rise again. How could they? It had never happened before. Yes, Elijah raised the widow's son from death, and Christ raised the dead. But never before did one cross over the veil of death and take up his body as a resurrected, immortal being.

Death was never the end of the spirit; it always survives separation from the body. But never did a spirit reunite with its physical body never to be separated again until that pivotal moment in the garden tomb. One of the most glorious events of all time happened in the darkness of a tomb beyond the view of the human eye.

"He is not here: for he is risen." This was victory, final and complete, unimaginable victory over death. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"⁵ Nowhere!

Two words sum up a testimony of Jesus Christ: "He lives". You can't have a testimony of Christ without a testimony of the Resurrection.

³ Mark 5:1-20

⁴ Doctrine and Covenants 93:35

⁵ 1 Corinthians 15:55

Joseph Smith declared, “And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!”⁶ Of everything that might have been said, two simple words—“He lives”—say it all, not in some hazy, metaphorical sense but literally a glorious resurrected being of flesh and bones. He walked, talked, and ate with His disciples. They and thousands of others felt the wounds in His hands, feet, and side. And He lives today.

The resurrection is the hinge point of the greatest story ever told. Whether it is myth or historical truth hinges on what transpired at the tomb. If He was resurrected, then He is the Christ who showed the way, revealed the truths to be reconciled with God Our Father, and atoned for the sins of all mankind. If He did not rise again, then He was a charlatan, along with the men and women who were His disciples, the Atonement is a sham, and there is no hope for anyone—no hope at all for anyone, not one, not ever if the resurrection was a hoax!

Jacob wrote in his beautiful prose, “O the wisdom of God, his mercy and grace! For behold, if the flesh should rise no more our spirits must become subject to that angel who fell from before the presence of the Eternal God, and became the devil, to rise no more. And our spirits must have become like unto him, and we become devils, angels to a devil, to be shut out from the presence of God [which is the essential problem in life and the worst of all human conditions] and to remain with the father of lies, in misery, like unto himself.”⁷

Jacob either meant that disembodied spirits are more exposed to Satan or if Christ did not rise again, there was no Atonement either, and Satan lays claim on everyone. Whichever of the two interpretations Jacob intended, both statements are correct. Joseph Smith did teach all beings “who have tabernacles [bodies], have power over those who have not.”⁸ The second interpretation, however, is more likely what he intended.

Joseph Smith said the resurrection is “the point on which the hope of all who believe the inspired record is found for their future happiness and enjoyment; because, ‘If Christ be not raised,’ said Paul to the Corinthians, ‘your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. They also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished’ (see 1 Corinthians 15).”

⁶ Doctrine and Covenants 76:22

⁷ 2 Nephi 9:8,9

⁸ Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 190

He continued, “If the resurrection from the dead be not an important point, or item in our faith, we must confess that we know nothing about it; for if there be no resurrection from the dead, then Christ has not risen; and if Christ has not risen He was not the Son of God; and if He was not the Son of God there is not nor cannot be a Son of God, if the present book called the Scriptures is true; because the time has gone by when, according to that book, He was to make His appearance . . . And if He has risen from the dead, He will by His power, bring all men to stand before Him; for if He has risen from the dead the bands of the temporal death are broken that the grave has no victory, if then, the grave has no victory, those who keep the sayings of Jesus and obey His teachings have not only a promise of a resurrection from the dead, but an assurance of being admitted into His glorious kingdom.”⁹

President Elder D. Todd Christofferson taught: “The ultimate promise of the Restoration is redemption through Jesus Christ. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the proof that He, in fact, possesses power to redeem all who will come unto Him — redeem them from sorrow, injustice, regret, sin, and even death We remember, we always remember, Christ’s suffering and death to atone for our sins, and we celebrate that most wonderful of Sundays, the Lord’s day, on which He rose from the dead. Because of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Restoration has meaning, our mortal lives have meaning, and ultimately our very existence has meaning.”¹⁰

The resurrection is not more important than the Atonement, but apart from the resurrection there is no tangible proof, no visible evidence of the Atonement. Not so, however, with his death and resurrection. The importance of the resurrection is not only the glorious hope that we will all rise from the dust with a perfect immortal body, but more than anything the resurrection is proof of Christ’s divinity including proof of His atoning sacrifice, proof we can be forgiven of sin, endowed with heavenly power and return to the presence of God. Therefore, a testimony of Christ can be summed up in two words, “He lives.”

Resurrection in the Light of the Restoration

There is no consensus and hardly a common thread among the beliefs of other Christian religions about the resurrection. Some don’t believe it happened; others believe it did, but the dead sleep until the day of resurrection. Some say there is no known doctrine about it one way or the other. Some believe in a spiritual resurrection. Others claim

⁹ Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 62

¹⁰ D. Todd Christofferson, *Sharing the Message of the Restoration and the Resurrection*, General Conference, April 2020

Christ will decide who is worthy of resurrection, and some suggest individuals should decide on their own what it all means for them.

And that's just the Christian world, to say nothing of the grim prospect offered by many non-Christian religions such as reincarnation. The idea you may live again as a chicken is hardly a noble or inspiring aspiration.

Because of the restoration and the truths revealed through Joseph Smith, we know much more about the resurrection than any people of any other time along with everyone else living today. It is one of the thousand, and one evidences that Joseph Smith was a prophet and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the kingdom of God on earth. Just look at all we know about the resurrection through Joseph Smith and ask, where did it come from? The answer is clear, from God.

Amulek taught Zeezrom,

Therefore the wicked remain as though there had been no redemption made, except it be the loosing of the bands of death; for 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, and shall be brought and be arraigned before the bar of Christ the Son, and God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, which is one Eternal God, to be judged according to their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil.

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, that they can no more see corruption.”¹¹

Alma also said, “The soul shall be restored to the body, and body to the soul; yea, and every limb and joint shall be restored to its body; yea, even a hair of the head shall not be lost; but all things shall be restored to their proper and perfect frame.”¹²

Because of Jesus Christ and because everyone will die through no fault of their own, everyone will eventually be resurrected. Throughout the limitless diversity among all people of the world, we all share the inevitability of death and resurrection. As surely as everyone will die, all will be made alive again, everyone will be resurrected. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”¹³

Given the universality of the resurrection, because it is certain for everyone, it is possible to be grateful and yet somewhat indifferent about it. If it is viewed as a given, it may not inspire a better life. Why try harder if everyone is going to be resurrected anyway? That kind of thinking is flawed.

Correctly understood, resurrection should beckon you to greater heights, because while it is true, everyone will be resurrected, not all will be raised to the same glory nor at the same time.

Considering the importance of the physical body as part of the process to become more like our Heavenly Parents, it stands to reason we would be blessed to have it beyond our brief stay on earth. It would be useless to invest greatly in the training of new pilots only to take their aircraft away when they have learned to fly. But it would be a mistake to assume that because all will be restored to its proper and perfect frame, all will be the same in the resurrection. Although many pilots may be given a plane in perfect condition and order, not all aircraft are the same—not hardly. Some fly higher and faster than others ever will.

Alma taught his son Corianton,

I say unto thee, my son, that 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.

¹¹ Alma 11:41-45

¹² Alma 40:23

¹³ 1 Corinthians 15:22

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.

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, every thing to its natural frame—mortality raised to immortality, corruption to incorruption—raised to endless happiness to inherit the kingdom of God, or to endless misery to inherit the kingdom of the devil, the one on one hand, the other on the other—

The one raised to happiness according to his desires of happiness, or good according to his desires of good; and the other to evil according to his desires of evil; for as he has desired to do evil all the day long even so shall he have his reward of evil when the night cometh.

And so it is on the other hand. If he hath repented of his sins, and desired righteousness until the end of his days, even so he shall be rewarded unto righteousness.

These are they that are redeemed of the Lord; yea, these are they that are taken out, that are delivered from that endless night of darkness; and thus they stand or fall; for behold, they are their own judges, whether to do good or do evil.”¹⁴

That’s what Alma said. Joseph Smith said, “All will not be raised to the same glory in the resurrection.”¹⁵ “Some dwell in higher glory than others.”¹⁶ And the glory of each person will be glory by which his or her body is quickened, celestial, terrestrial or telestial.¹⁷ The Apostle Paul taught those glories differ as the sun, the moon, and the stars.¹⁸

¹⁴ Alma 41:2-7

¹⁵ *Resurrection*, Bible Dictionary,

¹⁶ Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 367

¹⁷ Doctrine and Covenants 88:27-31

¹⁸ 1 Corinthians 15:40-42

The resurrection itself will be a form of judgment. Some will be raised to happiness according to their desires for happiness, or good according to their desires for good, while others will be raised to evil according to his desires for evil.¹⁹ In the end, we will be rewarded with what we want the most.

The resurrection will also differ in timing. The faithful will be raised in the first resurrection which commenced with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Many of the faithful will be resurrected at the second coming of Jesus Christ²⁰ and continue throughout the thousand-year millennial reign. The righteous who live and die during that glorious time will be resurrected in a “twinkling of an eye.”²¹

The first resurrection will include those who qualify for celestial and terrestrial glory followed by the final resurrection, or resurrection of the unjust, at the end of the Millennium for those destined for telestial glory or perdition.²²

A thousand years is a long time to wait for what will be sorely missed, more than we can now begin to imagine. The Lord said, “The elements are eternal, and spirit and element inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy. And when separated, man cannot receive a fulness of joy.”²³

According to the Bible Dictionary, “To obtain a resurrection with a celestial, exalted body is the center point of hope in the gospel of Jesus Christ.”²⁴

Joseph Smith referred to the resurrection as “principles of consolation.” He said, “let these truths sink down in our hearts that, we may even here, begin to enjoy that which shall be in full hereafter.” He then added this comforting promise: “All your losses will be made up to you in the resurrection, provided you continue faithful. By the vision of the Almighty I have seen it.”²⁵ Think of that, “all your losses will be made up to you in the resurrection provided you continue faithful.”

¹⁹ Alma 41:5

²⁰ 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17; Doctrine and Covenants 45:44,45

²¹ Doctrine and Covenants 63:51

²² Revelation 20:5; Douglas L. Callister, *Resurrection*, “Encyclopedia of Mormonism” Vol. 3, p. 1223

²³ Doctrine and Covenants 93:33,34

²⁴ *Resurrection*, Bible Dictionary

²⁵ *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 296

He Is the Life

The Lord Jesus Christ is not only the Way (destination), He is not only the Truth, (how to get there), He is also the Life (the end result when you do). He conquers chaos, darkness, and death. He is the Resurrection and the Life.

In the next two episodes, we will reflect on Christ as the Life overcoming the worst of all human conditions, spiritual death by His Infinite Atonement. I hope you will join me for that.