

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Written by Eric Shuster
 Founder and Executive Director of the Foundation for Christian Studies



The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is celebrated annually in all of Christendom, typically during the season of Easter. Outside of Christmas, Christian churches experience their highest attendance of the year at Easter as young girls are dressed in bright Easter attire with hats and ribbons, and young men in new suits. One hopes that there is more to Easter than baskets, eggs, and new clothes.

The Impact of the Resurrection on Humankind

Through the Atonement and the Resurrection, Christ was able to overcome physical death and open up the pathway of Resurrection to us all (1 Corinthians 15:21-22). The Prophet Alma taught that everyone who has ever lived will be resurrected, "...both old and young, both bond and free, both male and female, both the wicked and the righteous" (Alma 11:44). As resurrected beings we will be in a state of immortality, where we "...can die no more" (Alma 11:45).

Between Christ's Physical Death and Resurrection

Three days following his crucifixion, Christ's spirit was eternally reunited to his body and was resurrected. Before his resurrection, after his crucifixion, Christ descended into the spirit prison to preach the gospel. The Apostle

Peter describes this act of love by the Savior: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison" (1 Pet. 3:18-19).

Vision of the Spirit Prison Where Christ Preached

Joseph F. Smith recorded a vision in which he saw Christ visit the righteous spirits in the spirit world. It was there that Christ organized missionary work for the dead, including the appointment and endowment of messengers to "...carry the light of the gospel to them that were in the darkness, even to all the spirits of men" (D&C 138:20).

While the Bible introduces the concept of Christ having visited the spirits in prison, the details provided in the vision by Joseph F. Smith are remarkable and worth considerable amounts of pondering and thought. The Prophet's vision described how Christ, during the time between his death and resurrection, organized the preaching of the gospel in the spirit world. During the period of Christ's preaching among the "realm of the dead," Jesus organized the missionary effort to preach the gospel in the spirit world. This effort not only took place when he was there, but it was organized to continue after he left. See the Sword Series™ essay on the spirit world for more details.

Jesus and His Physical Body in the Resurrection

Following his resurrection, Jesus demonstrated the physical nature of his body by showing himself to his apostles to touch for themselves (Luke 29:39-40), and eating fish and honeycomb (Luke 29:42-43). The corporeal nature of Christ's body after the resurrection causes us to ponder the logistics of His ascension and the physical nature of God (addressed in the Sword Series™ essay on God the Father).

Our Personal Resurrection

The Foundation discusses the subject of our personal resurrection in the Sword Series™ essay on the resurrection of man. It is key to recognize that our own resurrection would not be possible without Jesus Christ having broke the bands of death on the cross at Calvary.

Conclusion

By and through His resurrection Jesus Christ overcame death and made immortality possible for all of the children of God. Before His resurrection Christ descended into the spirit world to commence the preaching of the gospel, organizing missionary work that will continue until the conclusion of the millennial reign of Christ on earth. Jesus Christ ascended from the earth in a glorified, perfected, and resurrected body and stands at the right hand of the Father, promising to come again in a like manner. Following our own physical death we too will be resurrected, with the choices we make here on earth dictating the type of resurrection we will have.

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About The Sword Series™

The Sword Series™ is an ongoing collection of Christian theological essays that are freely distributed by the FCS for the education and enjoyment of all. For more information on the Sword Series™ visit the FCS website at www.studychristianity.org.

For online versions of all four standard works of scripture (Old Testament, New Testament, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants) see: <http://scriptures.lds.org/>

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