

Resurrection of the Dead--- When Shall It Be?

BY DR. JAMES E. TALMAGE

Of the Council of the Twelve, Church of
Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,
Salt Lake City, Utah.

The eventual resurrection of every soul who has lived and died on earth is a scriptural certainty. The resurrection consists of a literal and material re-embodiment of spirits, following their post-mortal experience in the spirit world, whether this shall have been the freedom and joy of Paradise or the restraint and remorse of the prison house. We are destined to exist through the eternities beyond the resurrection with spirit and body reunited. Only in such union is a fullness of glory, opportunity, and achievement possible.

Thus spake the Lord Jesus Christ to the Church in 1833: "*For man is spirit. The elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receiveth a fullness of joy. And when separated, man cannot receive a fullness of joy.*" (Doctrine & Covenants 93:33-34.)

The word of ancient Scripture affirms beyond any reasonable question or doubt that Jesus Christ, who has been exalted to authority and power by the side of

His and our Eternal Father, exists as a Spirit clothed in an immortalized body of flesh and bones; for in such a body did He manifest Himself after His resurrection; and in that same body did He ascend from Olivet in the full sight of the apostles, while angelic attendants solemnly proclaimed: "*This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*" (Acts 1:11.)

When the Savior does so return, His body will be found to bear the marks of the cruel piercings received on Calvary; and He shall say: "*These wounds are the wounds with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. I am he who was lifted up. I am Jesus that was crucified. I am the Son of God.*" (Doctrine & Covenants 45:52.)

The Eternal Father is likewise a Spirit tabernacled in an immortalized "body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's." (Doctrine & Covenants 130:22.)

So shall it be with every one of God's spirit-children who has been born in flesh; he shall be resurrected in flesh; for, through the infinite Atonement, physical death is but a temporary separation of spirit from body.

But though a fullness of joy eternal is possible only to resurrected beings, not all shall find that ineffable happiness. To the contrary, many shall be consigned to anguish and remorse unspeakable, because of their misdeeds in the body

and their unrepentant state during the period of disembodiment.

The resurrection from the dead was inaugurated by Christ, who had power over death, and who laid down His body and took it up again as and when He willed (John 10:17-18). Other resurrections of the righteous dead followed (Matt. 27:52-53; and Book of Mormon, 3 Nephi 23:9-10). This, the first resurrection, or that of the just, has been in operation since John the Baptist, and both Peter and James, each of whom met a martyr's death, have severally appeared upon the earth and ministered in their resurrected bodies in these latter times. (Doctrine & Covenants 13; and 27:8-13). In this circumstance the continuance of service in the Holy Priesthood, through both mortal and resurrected beings, is profoundly exemplified.

Moroni, a Nephite prophet who died about 420 A. D., appeared as a resurrected man to Joseph Smith in 1823, and at later times, and committed to the latter-day prophet the original record from which the Book of Mormon has been translated. (See Pearl of Great Price, p. 88.)

Christ affirmed that there would be a resurrection of the just and a later resurrection of the unjust, or resurrection unto life and damnation respectively. (John 5:29). Apostolic Scriptures are definite in segregating individual resurrections,

in that every man shall come forth "in his own order" according to worthiness. (1 Cor. 15:20-23, Rev. 20:4-6.)

The imminent but yet future advent of Jesus Christ is to be accompanied by a general resurrection of the just, while the yet unregenerate dead shall remain in their unrepentant state of duress until the Lord's blessed reign of a thousand years on earth shall have passed. Then, in a period following shall come the resurrection of the wicked.

The Book of Mormon makes plain that the resurrection of both just and wicked shall precede the last judgment: "*And they [the dead] shall come forth, both small and great, and all shall stand before his bar, being redeemed and loosed from this eternal band of death, which death is a temporal death. And then cometh the judgment of the Holy One upon them.*" (Mormon 9:13-14.)

No spirit shall remain disembodied longer than he deserves, or than is requisite to accomplish the just and merciful purposes of God. The resurrection of the just began with Christ; it has been in process and shall continue till the Lord comes in glory, and thence onward through the Millennium. The final resurrection, or that of the wicked, the resurrection to condemnation, is to be yet later.