



# **IS THERE LIFE AFTER DEATH?**

## *A Message from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles*

**In a continuing series of articles regarding the *Last Dispensation of Time*, this two part issue focuses on the *Resurrection***

For thousands of years men and women from all walks of life have been asking, “Is there life after death?” One way to answer this question is, “It depends on who you ask,” or even more importantly, “Whom do you want to believe?!” Here is a sampling of answers from several wise and learned people who have no doubt given much time and effort to understand the phenomena of life and death:

- Death is one of two things...Either it is annihilation, and the dead have no consciousness of anything: or, as we are told, it is really a change: a migration of the soul from one place to another – *Socrates*
- A man’s ethical behavior should be based effectually on sympathy, education, and social ties – no religious basis is necessary. Man would indeed be in a poor way if he had to be restrained by fear of punishment and hope of reward after death – *Albert Einstein*
- We are ignorant of the beyond because this ignorance is the condition of our own life. Just as ice cannot know fire except by melting and vanishing – *Jules Renard*
- As a well spent day brings happy sleep, so life well used brings happy death – *Leonardo DaVinci*
- You live on earth only for a few short years which you call an incarnation, and then you leave your body as an outworn dress and go for refreshment to your true home in the spirit – *White Eagle*
- Everything is changeable, everything appears and disappears: there is no blissful peace until one passes beyond the agony of life and death – *Buddha*
- I believe there are two sides to the phenomenon known as death, this side where we live, and the other side where we shall continue to live. Eternity does not start with death. We are in eternity now – *Norman Vincent Peale*

Each of these quotes reflects the wisdom of man, trying to understand life and death, in some cases confessing they do not know, and in other cases trying to justify, rationalize or take comfort in the life beyond. They mostly acknowledge that there is life after death but do not articulate what options the after-life may offer, either good or bad. Furthermore, if there is a good place to go versus a bad place, they seem to have no idea of any requirements to get there! It seems to be a mystery to them, even though all seem optimistic that the after-life is a good place. We could examine their lives and try to understand why they spoke as they did, but in the end, we cannot be satisfied with their knowledge or authority to speak about life and death. As previously noted, “Whom do you want to believe?!” We must go to the Word of God.

The *Book of Mormon* teaches that, “For he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of

God shall be unfolded unto them by the power of the Holy Ghost..." (1 Nephi 10:19). The *Bible* also teaches that ministers of Christ are "stewards of the mysteries of God." (1 Corinthians 4:1). Therefore, let us not make the mistake of believing the opinions of men over the truth of the Holy Scriptures given to us to understand God's mysteries. The Holy Scriptures contain the words of Jesus Christ, and the writings of inspired men, who have unlocked the mysteries of God. Without the scriptures to guide us we could never understand God's promises of the *Resurrection* and *Eternal Life*.

**For God so Loved the World that He gave His only begotten son that Whosoever believeth in Him should not Perish but have Everlasting Life – John 3:16**

The Scriptures emphasize that there is life after death and that the *Resurrection* was made possible because of God's love for mankind. Man fell from grace in the Garden of Eden and was consigned to eternal death. Only God's divine love could release him from death to life through the Crucifixion and *Resurrection* of Christ as an *Atonement* for the sins of all mankind. Without the mercy of God the *Plan of Salvation* culminating with the *Resurrection* could not have happened – we know that belief upon Jesus Christ is the key to *Eternal Life* with the Lord:

**Body and Soul**

In order to understand the *Resurrection*, we must first understand this life. We must acknowledge that God created man with a body that will die and a soul that will live forever: The scriptures summarized below make it clear that this is so:

- When God created man of the dust of the earth he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul – *Genesis 2:7*
- God will preserve our whole spirit and soul and body unto the coming of Jesus Christ – *1 Thessalonians 5:23*
- We are not to fear them which kill the body, but to fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell – *Matthew 10:28*
- The dust shall return to the earth and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it – *Ecclesiastes 12:7*
- David wrote that Christ would Resurrect from the dead, that his soul would not be left in hell – *Psalms 16:7-11*; Peter referenced this Psalm and wrote that the Apostles confirmed the *Resurrection* – *Acts 2:25-32*

**Life After Death is Proven by the Resurrection**

The *Faith and Doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ*, Article 15, embraces the concept of Life after Death through the *Resurrection* of Jesus Christ:

We believe in the *Resurrection* of Jesus Christ as recorded in the scriptures, which was a victory over the power of death and a reintroduction of the principle of continuous or eternal existence; that this principle of continuous existence was not only attained for Himself but for all Adam's race, the wicked as well as the righteous, by which the former will be accountable for their conduct during this life and receive due punishment. Also, that the latter may be duly rewarded for their righteousness or good conduct. We also believe that the righteous that lived previous to the days of Jesus Christ expected their resurrection through and as a direct result of, Christ's resurrection; also, that there was a general resurrection of the righteous that lived before the days of Christ (in the flesh) immediately following Christ's resurrection. The scriptures inform us, "and many bodies of the saints which slept arose...and appeared unto many." A few moments of reflection by a person acquainted in a reasonable degree with the principles of God's divine justice

will force him to conclude that God could not grant this great privilege of the resurrection to some (at that time) and deny it to others, who were equally worthy and expectant, and deprive them of the enjoyment of the benefits of Christ's resurrection until a period still beyond our day when Christ will come again. We believe, also, in a future resurrection of those that die after Christ, according to the scriptures.

Reference: *Matthew 27:52-54; Alma 40; 2 Nephi 9:4-22; 3 Nephi 23:9-11.*

The scripture summaries below provide greater understanding of the *Plan of Salvation* and Christ's *Atonement* for the sins of mankind, which were necessary to enable the *Resurrection*:

- Because of transgression against God in the Garden of Eden, when man disobeyed God and ate of the *Tree of Knowledge*, he was cut off from the presence of the Lord and consigned to everlasting death. However, God, because of His mercy, took on flesh and died for the sins of mankind that they might be redeemed through His sacrifice. Only the infinite *Atonement* of Jesus Christ and the power of the *Resurrection* could restore mankind back to the presence of the Lord. – *2 Nephi 9:4-7; Genesis 2*
- *The Church of Jesus Christ* believes that the *Plan of Salvation* affords all people an opportunity to repent of their sins, to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and have their names written in the *Lamb's Book of Life*. God is just, and for those who never knew the *Plan of Salvation*, the *Atonement* offers a provision for all to participate in salvation at the time of judgment. (This will be explained in part two of this article.) – *John 3:3-21; 2 Nephi 31:2-21; Mosiah 3:10-22.*
- Without the *Atonement*, man would have been consigned to hell for eternity. God prepared a way for our escape from the grasp of this awful monster, death and hell, which is the death of the body and also the death of the spirit. The grave cannot hold the body and hell cannot hold the soul as immortal bodies will be reunited with their souls at the *Resurrection*. – *2 Nephi 9:8-13; 1 Nephi 14:1-7; 2 Nephi 1:13:22*
- The *Resurrection* of Christ was a sign that the *Plan of Salvation* was a reality. Graves were opened and many bodies of the saints arose and came out of the graves and appeared unto many. The Roman soldiers guarding the tomb feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God." Many scriptures testify of the *Resurrection* and how it would take place and confirm that it was known hundreds of years before it happened – *Matthew 27:52; 1 Corinthians 15; Jacob 4:4-13; Mosiah 18:7-10; Helaman 8:13-20*
- There is a time appointed, known only to God, for all to come forth from the dead. There is a space between the time of death and the time of *Resurrection*. All will be judged by God for their deeds. – *Alma 40:1-6; Alma 12; Alma 20:17; Alma 34:31-35; Mosiah 26:25-28; Isaiah 38:18-19*
- As for the soul after death, the spirits of all men, as soon as they depart from their mortal body, are taken home to that God who gave them life. – *Alma 40:7-11*
- The spirits of the righteous are consigned to *Paradise*, which is a state of rest and peace. The spirits of the wicked, who are evil, have no part of the Spirit of the Lord and are consigned to outer darkness where there shall be weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth. The righteous and the wicked will remain in their respective states until the time of their resurrections. – *Alma 40:12-20*
- At the appointed time, the dead shall come forth and their bodies and souls shall be reunited. Then, they shall stand before God and be judged according to their works for permanent assignment of their immortal bodies. The righteous will shine forth in the kingdom of God but an awful death will come upon the wicked and they will be cast out to drink the dregs of a bitter cup. – *Alma 40:21-26*

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- Alma and others continue to explain the judgment, mercy and justice of God. Our time on earth is a probationary time to repent and serve God. – *Alma 41 and 42; John 6:40; John 3:16; 3 Nephi 26.*
- Everyone will resurrect, the just and the unjust, and will face the judgment of God. The spirit we carry in this life (hopefully: good desires, love for man, love for God, faith, etc.) stays with us after death. The righteous will remain in their righteous state and the sinners (filthy) will remain in their filthy state. The righteous shall inherit the Kingdom of God and the filthy will go into an everlasting lake of fire. Through the *Atonement* all men have an opportunity to enjoy eternity with God if they repent, are baptized in the name of Christ, have faith in the Holy One of Israel and endure to the end. For those who never knew the *Plan of Salvation* and have not been given the law, the *Atonement* offers a provision to be delivered from that awful monster, death and hell, and the devil, and the lake of fire and brimstone, which is endless torment, but no one should be lulled to believe that the unrighteous will be able to change to righteous. (More detail will be given in part two of this article). – *2 Nephi 9:14-26; John 5:24-29; Alma 34:16-17; Mosiah 3:11-22; Mosiah 15: 21-26; Moroni 8:22-26*

### **From Birth to Death to Life: A Summary of the Journey of Life**

A quick reference is provided for clarity:

- All men are born into this life with a natural body of flesh and a soul that does not die when the body dies
- While the natural bodies return to the dust they came from, the souls are consigned according to the way they lived:
  - The souls of the “evil” are consigned to outer darkness where there is weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth
  - The souls of the “righteous” are consigned to Paradise – a state of rest and peace and freedom from sorrow
- In the *Resurrection(s)* all souls are reunited with their bodies in an immortal state
  - The “evil” are cast out to a state of endless misery – consigned to partake of the fruits of their works
  - The “righteous” shine forth in the Kingdom of God

### **Christ’s words on the Resurrection**

In conclusion, it is well to remember that Christ willingly gave up His life that we might have *Eternal Life* with Him. May we cherish His words always:

- And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. – *John 6:40*
- I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world. – *John 6:51*
- Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? - *John 11:25-26*
- Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. – *John 14:19; Matthew 24:21-31*

***This article will be continued. Part two will address the First and Second Resurrections:  
When are they and who will participate in each of them?***

In the Love of God,

The Quorum of Twelve Apostles

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