

## EASTER TALK

We sort of jokingly say there is nothing sure in this life but death and taxes. Although we all have to pay taxes in this country, it may not be so in other places. So that leaves Death as the only absolutely sure thing that will happen to every mortal person. It takes no faith to believe in death. But it does take faith to believe in Jesus Christ and accept and live the gospel.

Why do we have to die? That is simply a part of the plan we accepted in our pre-earth life. There was a war in Heaven to decide which of two conflicting plans would be followed on earth. Everyone who is born chose the plan of Jesus and that plan included letting us have our agency to choose how we will behave. We were to be taught righteous principles and it was intended that we would govern ourselves accordingly. **BUT WE MAKE THE CHOICE.** However, God and Jesus knew we would not always do it right and we would commit sins and those sins would make us unfit to come back and live with them. Then when we died our spirits would become subject to Satan. We would be his servants and become like him..... wicked and miserable and no way to get out of it.

However, the glorious part of Jesus' plan was that He would be born in this mortal earth and give His life to bring about the resurrection for everyone. And beyond that he would atone for our sins so that we can be forgiven **IF** we have faith in Him and repent, and if we are baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost and go forward keeping His commandments.

Thankfully we are not on earth without knowledge of why we are here or where we are going. The Lord has revealed his Plan of Salvation to his prophets from Adam on down through the ages to Pres. Hinckley. We have the old and the new scriptures to guide us, and all the current instructions from our General Authorities.

We read in the D & C 18: 23: Behold, Jesus Christ is the name which is given of the Father, and there is none other name given whereby man can be saved. And in Mosiah 3:17 King Benjamin taught : And moreover, I say unto you, that there shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent.

Jesus has purchased us with his blood: the blood He sweat in the Garden of Gethsemane, caused from the agony of taking upon himself the sins of all mankind; the blood running from the wounds caused by the whip; the blood dripping from puncture wounds caused by the crown of thorns; the blood flowing from being brutally nailed to the cross, and the blood mixed with water that gushed from his pierced side when the Roman soldier thrust in his spear to find if

Jesus was really dead. As recorded in 1 Peter 3:18: “ 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”..... . He loves all of us and He has promised to be our advocate (pleader) with the Father. That is why we pray to the Father and end all our prayers with “In the name of Jesus Christ”. By doing this we are acknowledging that we belong to the Savior and are recognizing he has special influence with the Father in our behalf, because he fulfilled all of his Father’s commandments.

We are promised the great blessings of immortality and eternal life if we prove ourselves faithful. We read in Paul’s letter to the Romans 8:16-17 “The spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” The way we “suffer with Christ” is to take upon us his name, which we have done by becoming members of his church, then to accept and meet the stresses, the challenges, the sorrows, the pain, the anguish and the disappointments of life and keep trying. We must not give up and shrink when things get tough. We need to always be doing the good things Jesus did such as teaching, helping, blessing, uplifting and serving others. We need to be faithful and endure to the end.

I think it is the author of humorous poetry, Ogden Nash, who said that everything there is to say has already been said and said better. I fully agree with his observation so now I would like to read part of what Pres. Hinckley wrote about the Easter Miracle. He REALLY said it better. This was taken from the April 1997 Ensign.

“Easter is the day when we, with Christian people everywhere, celebrate the most significant event in human history—the Resurrection from the grave, the return to life from death, of the Son of God. Among all the facts of mortality, nothing is so certain as its deathly end. How tragic, how poignant is the sorrow of those left behind.

But thanks be to God for the wonder and the majesty of His eternal plan. Thank and glorify His Beloved Son, who, with indescribable suffering, gave His life on Calvary’s cross to pay the debt of mortal sin. He it was who, through His atoning sacrifice, broke the bonds of death and with godly power rose triumphant from the tomb. He is our Redeemer, the Redeemer of all mankind. He is the Savior of the world. He is the Son of God, the Author of our salvation.

The Christ alone, of all the millions who up to that time had walked the earth, was the first to emerge from the grave triumphant, a living soul complete in spirit and body. He became “the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Cor.15:20).

His death sealed the testimony of His love for all mankind. His Resurrection opened the gates of salvation to the sons and daughters of God of all generations.

In all of history there has been no majesty like His majesty. He, the mighty Jehovah, condescended to be born to mortal life in a stable of Bethlehem.

He was baptized by John in the waters of Jordan, “and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: “And, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:16–17).

During the three years of His earthly ministry, He did what none other had ever done before; He taught as none other had previously taught.

Then came His time to be offered. There was the supper in the Upper Room, His last with the Twelve in mortality. As He washed their feet, He taught a lesson in humility and service they would never forget. There followed the suffering of Gethsemane, “which suffering,” He said, “caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit” (D&C 19:18).

He was taken by rough and crude hands, and in the night, contrary to the law, was brought before Annas, and then Caiaphas, the wily and evil officer of the Sanhedrin. There followed early the next morning the second appearance before this scheming, vicious man. Then He was taken to Pilate, the Roman governor. The Roman, thinking to evade responsibility, sent Him to Herod, the corrupt, debauched, and evil tetrarch of Galilee. Christ was abused and beaten. His head was crowned with sharp and platted thorns; a mocking robe of purple was thrown upon His bleeding back. Again He was taken before Pilate, to whom the mob cried, “Crucify him, crucify him” (Luke 23:21).

With stumbling steps He walked the way to Golgotha, where His wounded body was nailed to the cross in the most inhumane and pain-ridden method of execution that sadistic minds could conjure.

Yet he cried out, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23-34).

The hours passed as His life ebbed in pain. The earth shook; the veil of the temple was rent. From His parched lips came the words, “Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost” (Luke 23:46).

It was over. His mortal life was finished. He had offered it as a ransom for all.

Gone were the hopes of those who loved Him. Forgotten were the promises He had made. His body was hurriedly but tenderly placed in a borrowed tomb on the eve of the Jewish Sabbath. That Sabbath came and went. Then, early in the morning of Sunday, Mary Magdalene and other women came to the tomb. Arriving, they saw an angel who spoke to them. “I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. “He is not here: for he is risen, as he said” (Matt.28:5–6).

It had never before happened. The empty tomb was the answer to the question of the ages: “If a man die, shall he live again?” (Job 14:14). Well did Paul say: “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (1 Cor. 15:55).

The miracle of that resurrection morning, that first Easter Sunday, is a miracle for all mankind. It is the miracle of the power of God, whose Beloved Son gave His life to atone for the sins of all, a sacrifice of love for every son and daughter of God. In so doing He broke the seals of death. All of us will die. But that will not be the end. Each of us continue as individual personalities capable of learning and teaching and other activities.

And just as He took up His body and came forth from the tomb, even so shall all of us enjoy a reunion of body and spirit to become living souls in the day of our own resurrection.

We rejoice, therefore, as do many, when we remember the most glorious, the most comforting, the most reassuring of all events of human history—the victory over death.

My own testimony.