

# JESUS THE CHRIST

*A Study of the Messiah and His Mission according to  
Holy Scriptures both Ancient and Modern*

**By JAMES E. TALMAGE**

One of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Commentary (Indented Italics), Underlining and Bolding by  
**Brenda L. High**

*PUBLISHED BY THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS - SIXTH EDITION -  
TWENTY-EIGHTH TO THIRTIETH THOUSAND INCLUSIVE - Salt Lake City, Utah - Deseret Book Company,  
1922; Copyright, September 1915, December 1915, April 1916, and November 1916, by JOSEPH F. SMITH,  
Trustee-in-Trust for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Copyright, October, 1922 By HEBER J.  
GRANT, Trustee-in-Trust for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Printed in the United States of  
America - Now in the Public Domain*

## **PREFACE**

The scope of the subject presented in this work is expressed on the title page. It will be readily seen that the author has departed from the course usually followed by writers on the Life of Jesus Christ, which course, as a rule, begins with the birth of Mary's Babe and ends with the ascension of the slain and risen Lord from Olivet. The treatment embodied in these pages, in addition to the narrative of the Lord's life in the flesh comprises the Antemortal existence and activities of the world's Redeemer, the revelations and personal manifestations of the glorified and exalted Son of God during the apostolic period of old and in modern times, the assured nearness of the Lord's second advent, and predicted events beyond—all so far as the Holy Scriptures make plain.

It is particularly congruous and appropriate that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—the only Church that affirms authority based on specific revelation and commission to use the Lord's Holy Name as a distinctive designation—should set forth her doctrines concerning the Messiah and His mission.

The author of this volume entered upon his welcome service under request and appointment from the presiding authorities of the Church; and the completed work has been read to and is approved by the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve. It presents, however, the writer's personal belief and profoundest conviction as to the truth of what he has written. The book is published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

A characteristic feature of the work is the guidance afforded by modern scriptures and the explication of the Holy Writ of olden times in the light of present day revelation, which, as a powerful and well directed beam, illumines many dark passages of ancient construction.

The spirit of the sacredness inherent in the subject has been a constant companion of the writer throughout his pleasing labor, and he reverently invokes the same as a minister to the readers of the volume.

JAMES E. TALMAGE.  
Salt Lake City, Utah,  
September, 1915.

## **PREFACE TO THE SIXTH EDITION**

The second edition of this work appeared in December, 1915, and the third in March, 1916. The third edition presented several minor alterations in wording and contained additional notes and references. Succeeding issues, including the fifth which was printed on India paper, and the present edition are practically uniform with the third.

JAMES E. TALMAGE.  
Salt Lake City, Utah,  
October, 1922.

## CONTENTS

### CHAPTER 35 - DEATH AND BURIAL

On the way to Calvary – The Lord's address to the daughters of Jerusalem – The crucifixion – Occurrences between the Lord's death and burial – The burial – The sepulchre guarded

### CHAPTER 36 - IN THE REALM OF DISEMBODIED SPIRITS

Actuality of the Lord's death – Condition of spirits between death and resurrection – The Savior among the dead – The gospel preached to the spirits in prison

### CHAPTER 37 - THE RESURRECTION AND THE ASCENSION

Christ is risen – The women at the sepulchre – Angelic communications – The risen Lord seen by Mary Magdalene – And by other women – A priestly conspiracy of falsehood – The Lord and two disciples on the Emmaus road – He appears to disciples in Jerusalem and eats in their presence – Doubting Thomas – The Lord appears to the apostles at the sea of Tiberias – Other manifestations in Galilee – Final commission to the apostles – The ascension

### CHAPTER 38 - THE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY

Matthias ordained to the apostleship – Bestowal of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost – The apostles' preaching – Imprisoned and delivered – Gamaliel's advice to the council – Stephen the martyr – Saul of Tarsus, his conversion – Becomes Paul the apostle – The record by John the Revelator – Close of the apostolic ministry

# 35

## DEATH AND BURIAL ON THE WAY TO CALVARY [1301]

Pontius Pilate, having reluctantly surrendered to the clamorous demands of the Jews, issued the fatal order; and Jesus, divested of the purple robe and arrayed in His own apparel, was led away to be crucified. A body of Roman soldiers had the condemned Christ in charge; and as the procession moved out from the governor's palace, a motley crowd comprising priestly officials, rulers of the Jews, and people of many nationalities, followed. Two convicted criminals, who had been sentenced to the cross for robbery, were led forth to death at the same time; there was to be a triple execution; and the prospective scene of horror attracted the morbidly minded, such as delight to gloat over the sufferings of their fellows. In the crowd, however, were some genuine mourners, as shall be shown. It was the Roman custom to make the execution of convicts as public as possible, under the mistaken and anti-psychological assumption, that the spectacle of dreadful punishment would be of deterrent effect. This misconception of human nature has not yet become entirely obsolete.

The sentence of death by crucifixion required that the condemned person carry the cross upon which he was to suffer. Jesus started on the way bearing His cross. The terrible strain of the preceding hours, the agony in Gethsemane, the barbarous treatment He had suffered in the palace of the high priest, the humiliation and cruel usage to which He had been subjected before Herod, the frightful scourging under Pilate's order, the brutal treatment by the inhuman soldiery, together with the extreme humiliation and the mental agony of it all, had so weakened His physical organism that He moved but slowly under the burden of the cross. The soldiers, impatient at the delay, peremptorily impressed into service a man whom they met coming into Jerusalem from the country, and him they compelled to carry the cross of Jesus. No Roman or Jew would have voluntarily incurred the ignominy of bearing such a gruesome burden; for every detail connected with the carrying out of a sentence of crucifixion was regarded as degrading. The man so forced to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, bearing the cross upon which the Savior of the world was to consummate His glorious mission, was Simon, a native of Cyrene. From Mark's statement that Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus we infer that the two sons were known to the evangelist's readers as members of the early Church, and there is some indication that the household of Simon the Cyrenian came to be numbered with the believers.[1302]

Among those who followed or stood and watched the death-procession pass, were some, women particularly, who bewailed and lamented the fate to which Jesus was going. We read of no man who ventured to raise his voice in protest or pity; but on this dreadful occasion as at other times, women were not afraid to cry out in commiseration or praise. Jesus, who had been silent under the inquisition of the priests, silent under the humiliating mockery of the sensual Herod and his coarse underlings, silent when buffeted and beaten by the brutal legionaries of Pilate, turned to the women whose sympathizing lamentations had reached His ears, and uttered these pathetic and portentous words of admonition and warning: **"Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"** It was the Lord's last testimony of the impending holocaust of destruction that was to follow the nation's rejection of her King. Although motherhood was the glory of every Jewish woman's life, yet in the terrible scenes which many of those there weeping would live to witness, barrenness would be accounted a blessing; for the childless would have fewer to weep over, and at least would be spared the horror of seeing their offspring die of starvation or by violence; for so dreadful would be that day that people would fain welcome the falling of the mountains upon them to end their sufferings.[1303] If Israel's oppressors could do what was then in process of doing to the "Green Tree," who bore the leafage of freedom and truth and offered the priceless fruit of life eternal, what would the powers of evil not do to the withered branches and dried trunk of apostate Judaism?

Along the city streets, out through the portal of the massive wall, and thence to a place beyond but yet nigh unto Jerusalem, the cortege advanced. The destination was a spot called Golgotha, or Calvary, meaning "the place of a skull."[1304]

## CRUCIFIXION [1305]

At Calvary the official crucifiers proceeded without delay to carry into effect the dread sentence pronounced upon Jesus and upon the two criminals. Preparatory to affixing the condemned to the cross, it was the custom to offer each a narcotic draught of sour wine or vinegar mingled with myrrh and possibly containing other anodyne ingredients, for the merciful purpose of deadening the sensibility of the victim. This was no Roman practice, but was allowed as a concession to Jewish sentiment. When the drugged cup was presented to Jesus He put it to His lips, but having ascertained the nature of its contents refused to drink, and so demonstrated His determination to meet death with faculties alert and mind unclouded.

Then they crucified Him, on the central cross of three, and placed one of the condemned malefactors on His right hand, the other on His left. Thus was realized Isaiah's vision of

the Messiah numbered among the transgressors.[1306] But few details of the actual crucifixion are given us. We know however that our Lord was nailed to the cross by spikes driven through the hands and feet, as was the Roman method, and not bound only by cords as was the custom in inflicting this form of punishment among some other nations. Death by crucifixion was at once the most lingering and most painful of all forms of execution. The victim lived in ever increasing torture, generally for many hours, sometimes for days. The spikes so cruelly driven through hands and feet penetrated and crushed sensitive nerves and quivering tendons, yet inflicted no mortal wound. The welcome relief of death came through the exhaustion caused by intense and unremitting pain, through localized inflammation and congestion of organs incident to the strained and unnatural posture of the body.[1307]

As the crucifiers proceeded with their awful task, not unlikely with roughness and taunts, for killing was their trade and to scenes of anguish they had grown callous through long familiarity, the agonized Sufferer, void of resentment but full of pity for their heartlessness and capacity for cruelty, voiced the first of the seven utterances delivered from the cross. In the spirit of God-like mercy He prayed: "*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*" Let us not attempt to fix the limits of the Lord's mercy; that it would be extended to all who in any degree could justly come under the blessed boon thereof ought to be a sufficing fact. There is significance in the form in which this merciful benediction was expressed. Had the Lord said, "I forgive you," His gracious pardon may have been understood to be but a remission of the cruel offense against Himself as One tortured under unrighteous condemnation; but the invocation of the Father's forgiveness was a plea for those who had brought anguish and death to the Father's Well Beloved Son, the Savior and Redeemer of the world. Moses forgave Miriam for her offense against himself as her brother; but God alone could remit the penalty and remove the leprosy that had come upon her for having spoken against Jehovah's high priest.[1308]

It appears that under Roman rule, the clothes worn by a condemned person at the time of execution became the perquisites of the executioners. The four soldiers in charge of the cross upon which the Lord suffered distributed parts of His raiment among themselves; and there remained His coat,[1309] which was a goodly garment, woven throughout in one piece, without seam. To rend it would be to spoil; so the soldiers cast lots to determine who should have it; and in this circumstance the Gospel-writers saw a fulfillment of the psalmist's prevision: "**They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.**"[1310]

To the cross above the head of Jesus was affixed a title or inscription, prepared by order of Pilate in accordance with the custom of setting forth the name of the crucified and the nature of the offense for which he had been condemned to death. In this instance the title was inscribed in three languages, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, one or more of which would be understood by every observer who could read. The title so exhibited read:

*"This is Jesus the King of the Jews"; or in the more extended version given by John "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews."*[1311] The inscription was read by many, for Calvary was close to the public thoroughfare and on this holiday occasion the passers-by were doubtless numerous. Comment was aroused; for, if literally construed, the inscription was an official declaration that the crucified Jesus was in fact King of the Jews. When this circumstance was brought to the attention of the chief priests, they excitedly appealed to the governor, saying: "Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written." Pilate's action in so wording the title, and his blunt refusal to permit an alteration, may have been an intended rebuff to the Jewish officials who had forced him against his judgment and will to condemn Jesus; possibly, however, the demeanor of the submissive Prisoner, and His avowal of Kingship above all royalty of earth had impressed the mind if not the heart of the pagan governor with a conviction of Christ's unique superiority and of His inherent right of dominion; but, whatever the purpose behind the writing, the inscription stands in history as testimony of a heathen's consideration in contrast with Israel's ruthless rejection of Israel's King.[1312]

The soldiers whose duty it was to guard the crosses, until loitering death would relieve the crucified of their increasing anguish, jested among themselves, and derided the Christ, pledging Him in their cups of sour wine in tragic mockery. Looking at the title affixed above the Sufferer's head, they bellowed forth the devil-inspired challenge: "If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself." The morbid multitude, and the passers-by "railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down from the cross." But worst of all, the chief priests and the scribes, the elders of the people, the unvenerable Sanhedrists, became ring-leaders of the inhuman mob as they gloatingly exulted and cried aloud: "He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God."[1313] Though uttered in ribald mockery, the declaration of the rulers in Israel stands as an attestation that Christ had saved others, and as an intended ironical but a literally true proclamation that He was the King of Israel. The two malefactors, each hanging from his cross, joined in the general derision, and "cast the same in his teeth." One of them, in the desperation incident to approaching death, echoed the taunts of the priests and people: **"If thou be Christ, save thyself and us."**

The dominant note in all the railings and revilings, the ribaldry and mockery, with which the patient and submissive Christ was assailed while He hung, **"lifted up"** as He had said He would be,[1314] was that awful **"If"** hurled at Him by the devil's emissaries in the time of mortal agony; as in the season of the temptations immediately after His baptism it had been most insidiously pressed upon Him by the devil himself.[1315] That **"If"** was Satan's last shaft, keenly barbed and doubly envenomed, and it sped as with the fierce hiss of a viper. Was it possible in this the final and most dreadful stage of

Christ's mission, to make Him doubt His divine Sonship, or, failing such, to taunt or anger the dying Savior into the use of His superhuman powers for personal relief or as an act of vengeance upon His tormentors? To achieve such a victory was Satan's desperate purpose. The shaft failed. Through taunts and derision, through blasphemous challenge and diabolical goading, the agonized Christ was silent.

Then one of the crucified thieves, softened into penitence by the Savior's uncomplaining fortitude, and perceiving in the divine Sufferer's demeanor something more than human, rebuked his railing fellow, saying: "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss." His confession of guilt and his acknowledgment of the justice of his own condemnation led to incipient repentance, and to faith in the Lord Jesus, his companion in agony. "**And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.**"[1316] To the appeal of penitence the Lord replied with such a promise as He alone could make: "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."[1317]

Among the spectators of this, the greatest tragedy in history, were some who had come in sympathy and sorrow. No mention is found of the presence of any of the Twelve, save one, and he, the disciple "whom Jesus loved," John the apostle, evangelist, and revelator; but specific record is made of certain women who, first at a distance, and then close by the cross, wept in the anguish of love and sorrow. "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene."[1318]

In addition to the women named were many others, some of whom had ministered unto Jesus in the course of His labors in Galilee, and who were among those that had come up with Him to Jerusalem.[1319] First in point of consideration among them all was **Mary, the mother of Jesus**, into whose soul the sword had pierced even as righteous Simeon had prophesied.[1320] Jesus looking with tender compassion upon His weeping mother, as she stood with John at the foot of the cross, commended her to the care and protection of the beloved disciple, with the words, "Woman, behold thy son!" and to John, "Behold thy mother!" The disciple tenderly led the heart-stricken Mary away from her dying Son, and "took her unto his own home," thus immediately assuming the new relationship established by his dying Master.

Jesus was nailed to the cross during the forenoon of that fateful Friday, probably between nine and ten o'clock.[1321] At noontide the light of the sun was obscured, and black darkness spread over the whole land. The terrifying gloom continued for a period of three hours. This remarkable phenomenon has received no satisfactory explanation from science. It could not have been due to a solar eclipse, as has been suggested in ignorance, for the time was that of full moon; indeed the Passover season was determined by the first occurrence of full moon after the spring equinox. The darkness



was brought about by miraculous operation of natural laws directed by divine power. It was a fitting sign of the earth's deep mourning over the impending death of her Creator.[1322] Of the mortal agony through which the Lord passed while upon the cross the Gospel-scribes are reverently reticent.

At the ninth hour, or about three in the afternoon, a loud voice, surpassing the most anguished cry of physical suffering issued from the central cross, rending the dreadful darkness. It was the voice of the Christ: "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" What mind of man can fathom the significance of that awful cry? It seems, that in addition to the fearful suffering incident to crucifixion, the agony of Gethsemane had recurred, intensified beyond human power to endure. In that bitterest hour the dying Christ was alone, alone in most terrible reality. That the supreme sacrifice of the Son might be consummated in all its fullness, the Father seems to have withdrawn the support of His immediate Presence, leaving to the Savior of men the glory of complete victory over the forces of sin and death. The cry from the cross, though heard by all who were near, was understood by few. The first exclamation, *Eloi*, meaning *My God*, was misunderstood as a call for Elias.

The period of faintness, the conception of utter forsakenness soon passed, and the natural cravings of the body reasserted themselves. The maddening thirst, which constituted one of the worst of the crucifixion agonies, wrung from the Savior's lips His one recorded utterance expressive of physical suffering. "I thirst!" He said. One of those who stood by, whether Roman or Jew, disciple or skeptic, we are not told, hastily saturated a sponge with vinegar, a vessel of which was at hand, and having fastened the sponge to the end of a reed, or stalk of hyssop, pressed it to the Lord's fevered lips. Some others would have prevented this one act of human response, for they said: "Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him." John affirms that Christ uttered the exclamation, "I thirst," only when He knew "that all things were now accomplished"; and the apostle saw in the incident a fulfillment of prophecy.[1323]

Fully realizing that He was no longer forsaken, but that His atoning sacrifice had been accepted by the Father, and that His mission in the flesh had been carried to glorious consummation, He exclaimed in a loud voice of holy triumph: "It is finished!" In reverence, resignation, and relief, He addressed the Father saying: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."[1324] He bowed His head, and voluntarily gave up His life.

Jesus the Christ was dead. His life had not been taken from Him except as He had willed to permit. Sweet and welcome as would have been the relief of death in any of the earlier stages of His suffering from Gethsemane to the cross, He lived until all things were accomplished as had been appointed. In the latter days the voice of the Lord Jesus has been heard affirming the actuality of His suffering and death, and the eternal

purpose thereby accomplished. Hear and heed His words: "**For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him.**"[1325]

## **IMPORTANT OCCURRENCES BETWEEN THE LORD'S DEATH AND BURIAL**

The death of Christ was accompanied by terrifying phenomena. There was a violent earthquake; the rocks of the mighty hills were disrupted, and many graves were torn open. But, most portentous of all in Judaistic minds, the veil of the temple which hung between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies[1326] was rent from top to bottom, and the interior, which none but the high priest had been permitted to see, was thrown open to common gaze. It was the rending of Judaism, the consummation of the Mosaic dispensation, and the inauguration of Christianity under apostolic administration.

The Roman centurion and the soldiers under his command at the place of execution were amazed and greatly affrighted. They had probably witnessed many deaths on the cross, but never before had they seen a man apparently die of his own volition, and able to cry in a loud voice at the moment of dissolution. That barbarous and inhuman mode of execution induced slow and progressive exhaustion. The actual death of Jesus appeared to all who were present to be a miracle, as in fact it was. This marvel, coupled with the earthquake and its attendant horrors, so impressed the centurion that he prayed to God, and solemnly declared: "Certainly this was a righteous man." Others joined in fearsome averment: "**Truly this was the Son of God.**" The terrified ones who spoke and those who heard left the place in a state of fear, beating their breasts, and bewailing what seemed to be a state of impending destruction.[1327] A few loving women, however, watched from a distant point, and saw all that took place until the Lord's body was laid away.

It was now late in the afternoon; at sunset the Sabbath would begin. That approaching Sabbath was held to be more than ordinarily sacred for it was a high day, in that it was the weekly Sabbath and a paschal holy day.[1328] The Jewish officials, who had not hesitated to slay their Lord, were horrified at the thought of men left hanging on crosses on such a day, for thereby the land would be defiled;[1329] so these scrupulous rulers went to Pilate and begged that Jesus and the two malefactors be summarily dispatched by the brutal Roman method of breaking their legs, the shock of which violent treatment had been found to be promptly fatal to the crucified. The governor gave his consent, and the soldiers broke the limbs of the two thieves with cudgels. Jesus, however, was found to be already dead, so they broke not His bones. Christ, the great Passover sacrifice, of whom all altar victims had been but suggestive prototypes, died through violence yet without a bone of His body being broken, as was a prescribed condition of the slain paschal lambs.[1330] One of the soldiers, to make sure that Jesus was actually dead, or to surely kill Him if He was yet alive, drove a spear into His side,

making a wound large enough to permit a man's hand to be thrust thereinto.[1331] The withdrawal of the spear was followed by an outflow of blood and water,[1332] an occurrence so surprising that John, who was an eye-witness, bears specific personal testimony to the fact, and cites the scriptures thereby fulfilled.[1333]

## **THE BURIAL [1334]**

A man known as Joseph of Arimathea, who was at heart a disciple of Christ, but who had hesitated to openly confess his conversion through fear of the Jews, desired to give the Lord's body a decent and honorable interment. But for some such divinely directed intervention, the body of Jesus might have been cast into the common grave of executed criminals. This man, Joseph, was "**a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just.**" It is expressly said of him that he "**had not consented to the counsel and deed of them**"; from which statement we infer that he was a Sanhedrist and had been opposed to the action of his colleagues in condemning Jesus to death, or at least had refrained from voting with the rest. Joseph was a man of wealth, station, and influence. He went in boldly unto Pilate and begged the body of Christ. The governor was surprised to learn that Jesus was already dead; he summoned the centurion and inquired as to how long Jesus had lived on the cross. The unusual circumstance seems to have added to Pilate's troubled concern. He gave command and the body of Christ was delivered to Joseph.

The body was removed from the cross; and in preparing it for the tomb Joseph was assisted by Nicodemus, another member of the Sanhedrin, the same who had come to Jesus by night three years before, and who at one of the conspiracy meetings of the council had protested against the unlawful condemnation of Jesus without a hearing.[1335] Nicodemus brought a large quantity of myrrh and aloes, about a hundredweight. The odorous mixture was highly esteemed for anointing and embalming, but its cost restricted its use to the wealthy. These two revering disciples wrapped the Lord's body in clean linen, "with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury"; and then laid it in a new sepulchre, hewn in the rock. The tomb was in a garden, not far from Calvary, and was the property of Joseph. Because of the nearness of the Sabbath the interment had to be made with haste; the door of the sepulchre was closed, a large stone was rolled against it;[1336] and thus laid away the body was left to rest. Some of the devoted women, particularly Mary Magdalene, and "the other Mary," who was the mother of James and Joses, had watched the entombment from a distance; and when it was completed "they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment."

## **THE SEPULCHRE GUARDED [1337]**

On the day following the "preparation," that is to say on Saturday, the Sabbath and "high-day,"[1338] the chief priests and Pharisees came in a body to Pilate, saying: "**Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will**

rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first." It is evident that the most inveterate of the human enemies of Christ remembered His predictions of an assured resurrection on the third day after His death. Pilate answered with terse assent: "Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can." So the chief priests and Pharisees satisfied themselves that the sepulchre was secure by seeing that the official seal was affixed at the junction of the great stone and the portal, and that an armed guard was placed in charge.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 35

**1. Simon the Cyrenian** – Simon, upon whom the cross of Jesus was laid, was a member of the Jewish colony in northern Africa, which had been established nearly three centuries before the birth of Christ by Ptolemeus Lagi, who transported thither great numbers of Jews from Palestine (Josephus, Antiquities, xii, chap. 1). Cyrene, the home of Simon, was in the province of Libya; its site is within the present boundaries of Tunis. That the African Jews were numerous and influential is evidenced by the fact that they maintained a synagogue in Jerusalem (Acts 6:9) for the accommodation of such of their number as visited the city. Rufus and his mother are mentioned in friendly reference by Paul over a quarter of a century after the death of Christ (Romans 16:13). If this Rufus be one of the sons of Simon named by Mark (15:21), as tradition indicates, it is probable that Simon's family was prominently identified with the Primitive Church. As to whether Simon had become a disciple before the crucifixion, or was converted through his compulsory service in bearing the Lord's cross, or became a member of the Church at a later date, we are not definitely told.

**2. Christ's Words to the Daughters of Jerusalem** – "The time would come, when the Old Testament curse of barrenness (Hosea 9:14) would be coveted as a blessing. To show the fulfillment of this prophetic lament of Jesus it is not necessary to recall the harrowing details recorded by Josephus (Wars, vi, 3:4), when a frenzied mother roasted her own child, and in the mockery of desperateness reserved the half of the horrible meal for those murderers who daily broke in upon her to rob her of what scanty food had been left her; nor yet other of those incidents, too revolting for needless repetition, which the historian of the last siege of Jerusalem chronicles. But how often, these many centuries, must Israel's women have felt that terrible longing for childlessness, and how often must the prayer of despair for the quick death of falling mountains and burying hills rather than prolonged torture (Hosea 10:8), have risen to the lips of Israel's sufferers! And yet, even so, these words were also prophetic of a still more terrible future (Rev. 6:10). For, if Israel had put such flame to its 'green tree' how terribly would the divine judgment burn among the dry wood of an apostate and rebellious people,

that had so delivered up its Divine King, and pronounced sentence upon itself by pronouncing it upon Him!" – Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* vol. 2, p. 588.

Concerning the prayer that mountains fall to crush and hide, Farrar (*Life of Christ*, p. 645, note), says: "These words of Christ met with a painfully literal illustration when hundreds of the unhappy Jews at the siege of Jerusalem hid themselves in the darkest and vilest subterranean recesses, and when, besides those who were hunted out, no less than two thousand were killed by being buried under the ruins of their hiding places." A further fulfillment may be yet future. Consult Josephus, Wars, vi. 9:4. See also Hos. 9:12-16; 10:8; Isa. 2:10; compare Rev. 6:16.

**3. "The Place of a Skull"** – The Aramaic Hebrew name "Golgotha", the Greek "Kranion", and the Latin "Calvaria" or, as Anglicized, "Calvary", have the same meaning, and connote "a skull". The name may have been applied with reference to topographical features, as we speak of the brow of a hill; or, if the spot was the usual place of execution, it may have been so called as expressive of death, just as we call a skull a death's head. It is probable that the bodies of executed convicts were buried near the place of death; and if Golgotha or Calvary was the appointed site for execution, the exposure of skulls and other human bones through the ravages of beasts and by other means, would not be surprising; though the leaving of bodies or any of their parts unburied was contrary to Jewish law and sentiment. The origin of the name is of as little importance as are the many divergent suppositions concerning the exact location of the spot.

**4. Crucifixion** – "It was unanimously considered the most horrible form of death. Among the Romans also the degradation was a part of the infliction, and the punishment if applied to freeman was only used in the case of the vilest criminals.... The criminal carried his own cross, or at any rate a part of it. Hence, figuratively, to take, take up or bear one's cross is to endure suffering, affliction, or shame like a criminal on his way to the place of crucifixion (Matt. 10:38; 16:24; Luke 14:27, etc.). The place of execution was outside the city (1 Kings 21:13; Acts 7:58; Heb. 13:12), often in some public road or other conspicuous place. Arrived at the place of execution, the sufferer was stripped naked, the dress being the perquisite of the soldiers (Matt. 27:35). The cross was then driven into the ground, so that the feet of the condemned were a foot or two above the earth, and he was lifted upon it; or else stretched upon it on the ground and then lifted with it." It was the custom to station soldiers to watch the cross, so as to prevent the removal of the sufferer while yet alive. "This was necessary from the lingering character of the death, which sometimes did not supervene even for three days, and was at last the result of gradual benumbing and starvation. But for this guard, the persons might have been taken down and recovered, as was actually done in the case of a friend of Josephus.... In most cases the body was suffered to rot on the cross by the action of sun and rain, or to be devoured by birds and beasts. Sepulture was generally therefore forbidden; but in consequence of Deut. 21:22, 23, an express national exception was

made in favor of the Jews (Matt. 27:58). This accursed and awful mode of punishment was happily abolished by Constantine." *Smith's Bible Dict.*

**5. Pilate's Inscription** – "The King of the Jews." – No two of the Gospel-writers give the same wording of the title or inscription placed by Pilate's order above the head of Jesus on the cross; the meaning, however, is the same in all, and the unessential variation is evidence of individual liberty among the recorders. It is probable that there was actual diversity in the trilingual versions. John's version is followed in the common abbreviations used in connection with Roman Catholic figures of Christ: J. N. R. J.; or, inasmuch as "I" used to be an ordinary equivalent of "J", – I. N. R. I. – "Jesus of Nazareth, King [Rex] of the Jews."

**6. The Women at the Cross** – "According to the authorized version and revised version, only three women are named, but most modern critics hold that four are intended. Translate, therefore, 'His mother, and His mother's sister, (i.e. Salome, the mother of the evangelist [John]); and Mary the wife of Cleophas; and Mary Magdalene.'" – Taken from Dummelow's commentary on John 19:25.

**7. The Hour of the Crucifixion** – Mark (15:25) says: "And it was the third hour and they crucified him"; the time so specified corresponds to the hour from 9 to 10 a.m. This writer and his fellow synoptists, Matthew and Luke, give place to many incidents that occurred between the nailing of Christ to the cross and the sixth hour or the hour from 12 noon to 1 p.m. From these several accounts it is clear that Jesus was crucified during the forenoon. A discrepancy plainly appears between these records and John's statement (19:14) that it was "about the sixth hour" (noon) when Pilate gave the sentence of execution. All attempts to harmonize the accounts in this particular have proved futile because the discrepancy is real. Most critics and commentators assume that "about the sixth hour" in John's account is a misstatement, due to the errors of early copyists of the manuscript Gospels, who mistook the sign meaning 3rd for that signifying 6th.

**8. The Physical Cause of Christ's Death** – While, as stated in the text, the yielding up of life was voluntary on the part of Jesus Christ, for He had life in Himself and no man could take His life except as He willed to allow it to be taken, (John 1:4; 5:26; 10:15-18) there was of necessity a direct physical cause of dissolution. As stated also the crucified sometimes lived for days upon the cross, and death resulted, not from the infliction of mortal wounds, but from internal congestion, inflammations, organic disturbances, and consequent exhaustion of vital energy. Jesus, though weakened by long torture during the preceding night and early morning, by the shock of the crucifixion itself, as also by intense mental agony, and particularly through spiritual suffering such as no other man has ever endured, manifested surprising vigor, both of mind and body, to the last. The strong, loud utterance, immediately following which He bowed His head and "gave up the ghost", when considered in connection with other recorded details, points to a physical rupture of the heart as the direct cause of death. If the soldier's spear was

thrust into the left side of the Lord's body and actually penetrated the heart, the outrush of "blood and water" observed by John is further evidence of a cardiac rupture; for it is known that in the rare instances of death resulting from a breaking of any part of the wall of the heart, blood accumulates within the pericardium, and there undergoes a change by which the corpuscles separate as a partially clotted mass from the almost colorless, watery serum. Similar accumulations of clotted corpuscles and serum occur within the pleura. Dr. Abercrombie of Edinburgh, as cited by Deems (*Light of the Nations*, p. 682), "gives a case of the sudden death of a man aged seventy-seven years, owing to a rupture of the heart. In his case 'the cavities of the pleura contained *about three pounds of fluid*, but the lungs were sound.'" Deems also cites the following instance: "Dr. Elliotson relates the case of a woman who died suddenly. 'On opening the body the pericardium was found distended with *clear serum*, and a very large coagulum of blood, which had escaped through a spontaneous rupture of the aorta near its origin, without any other morbid appearance.' Many cases might be cited, but these suffice." For detailed treatment of the subject the student may be referred to Dr. Wm. Stroud's work *On the Physical Cause of the Death of Christ*. Great mental stress, poignant emotion either of grief or joy, and intense spiritual struggle are among the recognized causes of heart rupture.

The present writer believes that the Lord Jesus died of a broken heart. The psalmist sang in dolorous measure according to his inspired prevision of the Lord's passion: **"Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."** (Psalm 69:20, 21; see also 22:14.)

**9. The Request that Christ's Tomb be Sealed**— Many critics hold that the deputation called upon Pilate on Saturday evening, after the Sabbath had ended. This assumption is made on the ground that to do what these priestly officials did, in personally supervising the sealing of the tomb, would have been to incur defilement, and that they would not have so done on the Sabbath. Matthew's statement is definite — that the application was made on "the next day, that followed the day of the preparation." The preparation day extended from sunset on Thursday to the beginning of the Sabbath at sunset on Friday.

## FOOTNOTES

[1301] Matt. 27:31-33; Mark 15:20-22; Luke 23:26-33; John: 16, 17.

[1302] Note 1, end of chapter.

[1303] Note 2, end of chapter.

[1304] Note 3, end of chapter.

[1305] Matt. 27:34-50; Mark 15:23-37; Luke 23:33-46; John 19:18-30.

[1306] Isa. 53:12; compare Mark 15:28; Luke 22:37.

[1307] Note 4, end of chapter.

- [1308] Numb. 12.
- [1309] Revised version, marginal reading, "tunic."
- [1310] Matt. 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34; John 19:23,24; compare Psa. 22:18.
- [1311] Note 5, end of chapter.
- [1312] See chapter 7 herein.
- [1313] Matt. 27:42, 43. The clause "if he be the King of Israel" in verse 42 of the common text is admittedly a mistranslation; it should read "He is the King of Israel." See revised version; also Edersheim, vol. 2, p. 596; compare Mark 15:32.
- [1314] John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32.
- [1315] Matt. 4:3, 6; see chapter 10 herein.
- [1316] Luke 23:42; the revised version reads "when thou comest in thy kingdom."
- [1317] See chapter 26 herein.
- [1318] John 19:25; compare Matt. 27:55, 56; Mark 15:40, 41; Luke 23:48, 49. See Note 6, end of chapter.
- [1319] See references last cited; and Luke 8:2, 3; also see chapter 18 herein.
- [1320] Luke 2:34, 35; see chapter 8 herein.
- [1321] Mark 15:25; see Note 7, end of chapter.
- [1322] Compare P. of G.P., Moses 7:37, 40, 48, 49, 56.
- [1323] John 19:28; compare Psa. 69:21.
- [1324] **The Gospel writers leave us in some uncertainty as to which of the last two utterances from the cross. — "It is finished," and "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," was spoken first.**
- [1325] Doc. and Cov. 18:11; revelation given in June 1829; see also 19:16-19, and chapter 33 herein.
- [1326] See "The House of the Lord," pages 59, 60.
- [1327] Matt. 27:51-54; Mark 15:38, 39; Luke 23:47-49.
- [1328] John 19:31-37.
- [1329] Deut. 21:23.
- [1330] Exo. 12:46; Numb. 9:12; Psa. 34:20; John 19:36; 1 Cor. 5:7.
- [1331] John 20:27; B. of M., 3 Nephi 11:14, 15.
- [1332] Note 8, end of chapter.
- [1333] John 19:34-37; compare Psa. 22:16, 17; Zech. 12:10; Rev. 1:7.
- [1334] Matt. 27:57-61; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42.
- [1335] John 3:1, 2; 7:50; see chapters 12 and 25 herein.
- [1336] See revised version, Mark 15:46.
- [1337] Matt. 27:62-66.
- [1338] Note 9, end of chapter.



# 36

## IN THE REALM OF DISEMBODIED SPIRITS

Jesus the Christ died in the literal sense in which all men die. He underwent a physical dissolution by which His immortal spirit was separated from His body of flesh and bones, and that body was actually dead. While the corpse lay in Joseph's rock-hewn tomb, the living Christ existed as a disembodied Spirit. We are justified in inquiring where He was and what were His activities during the interval between His death on the cross and His emergence from the sepulchre with spirit and body reunited, a resurrected Soul. The assumption that most naturally suggests itself is that He went where the spirits of the dead ordinarily go; and that, in the sense in which while in the flesh He had been a Man among men, He was, in the disembodied state a Spirit among spirits. This conception is confirmed as a fact by scriptural attestation.

As heretofore shown<sup>[1339]</sup> Jesus Christ was the chosen and ordained Redeemer and Savior of mankind; to this exalted mission He had been set apart in the beginning, even before the earth was prepared as the abode of mankind. Unnumbered hosts who had never heard the gospel, lived and died upon the earth before the birth of Jesus. Of those departed myriads many had passed their mortal probation with varying degrees of righteous observance of the law of God so far as it had been made known unto them, but had died in unblamable ignorance of the gospel; while other multitudes had lived and died as transgressors even against such moiety of God's law to man as they had learned and such as they had professed to obey. Death had claimed as its own all of these, both just and unjust. To them went the Christ, bearing the transcendently glorious tidings of redemption from the bondage of death, and of possible salvation from the effects of individual sin. This labor was part of the Savior's foreappointed and unique service to the human family. The shout of divine exultation from the cross, "It is finished," signified the consummation of the Lord's mission in mortality; yet there remained to Him other ministry to be rendered prior to His return to the Father.

To the penitent transgressor crucified by His side, who reverently craved remembrance when the Lord should come into His kingdom,<sup>[1340]</sup> Christ had given the comforting assurance: "**Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.**" The spirit of Jesus and the spirit of the repentant thief left their crucified bodies and went to the same place in the realm of the departed.<sup>[1341]</sup> On the third day following, Jesus, then a resurrected Being, positively stated to the weeping Magdalene: "I am not yet ascended to my Father." He had gone to paradise but not to the place where God dwells. Paradise, therefore, is not Heaven, if by the latter term we understand the abode of the Eternal Father and His celestialized children.<sup>[1342]</sup> Paradise is a place where

dwell righteous and repentant spirits between bodily death and resurrection. Another division of the spirit world is reserved for those disembodied beings who have lived lives of wickedness and who remain impenitent even after death. Alma, a Nephite prophet, thus spake of the conditions prevailing among the departed:

**"Now concerning the state of the soul between death and the resurrection. Behold, it has been made known unto me, by an angel, that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body; yea, the spirits of all men, whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life. And then shall it come to pass that the spirits of those who are righteous, are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise; a state of rest; a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow, etc. And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of the wicked, yea, who are evil; for behold, they have no part nor portion of the Spirit of the Lord; for behold, they chose evil works rather than good; therefore the spirit of the devil did enter into them, and take possession of their house; and these shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth; and this because of their own iniquity; being led captive by the will of the devil. Now this is the state of the souls of the wicked: yea, in darkness, and a state of awful, fearful, looking for the fiery indignation of the wrath of God upon them; thus they remain in this state, as well as the righteous in paradise, until the time of their resurrection."**[1343]

While divested of His body Christ ministered among the departed, both in paradise and in the prison realm where dwelt in a state of durance the spirits of the disobedient. To this effect testified Peter nearly three decades after the great event: **"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; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."**[1344]

The disobedient who had lived on earth in the Noachian period are especially mentioned as beneficiaries of the Lord's ministry in the spirit world. They had been guilty of gross offenses, and had wantonly rejected the teachings and admonitions of Noah, the earthly minister of Jehovah. For their flagrant sin they had been destroyed in the flesh, and their spirits had endured in a condition of imprisonment, without hope, from the time of their death to the advent of Christ, who came as a Spirit amongst them. We are not to assume from Peter's illustrative mention of the disobedient antediluvians that they alone were included in the blessed opportunities offered through Christ's ministry in the spirit realm; on the contrary, we conclude in reason and consistency that all whose wickedness in the flesh had brought their spirits into the prison house were sharers in the possibilities of expiation, repentance, and release. Justice demanded that the gospel be preached among the dead as it had been and was to be yet more widely

preached among the living. Let us consider the further affirmation of Peter, as part of his pastoral admonition to the members of the Primitive Church: **"Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit."**[1345]

That Jesus knew, while yet in the body, that His mission as the universal Redeemer and Savior of the race would not be complete when He came to die is sufficiently demonstrated by His words to the casuistical Jews, following the Sabbath day healing at Bethesda: **"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."**[1346] The solemn truth, that through the atonement of Christ salvation would be made possible to the dead as well as to the living, was revealed to the prophets centuries before the meridian of time. Isaiah was permitted to foresee the fate of the ungodly, and the state prepared for haughty and rebellious offenders against righteousness; but the dread vision was in part brightened by the deliverance that had been provided. **"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited."**[1347] To the same mighty prophet was shown the universality of the Savior's atoning victory, as comprising the redemption of Jew and Gentile, living and dead; and convincingly he voiced the word of revelation: **"Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house."**[1348]

David, singing the praises of the Redeemer whose dominion should extend even to the souls in hell, shouted in joy at the prospect of deliverance: **"Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."**[1349]

From these and other scriptures it is evident that the ministry of Christ among the disembodied was foreseen, predicted, and accomplished. The fact that the gospel was

preached to the dead necessarily implies the possibility of the dead accepting the same and availing themselves of the saving opportunities thereof. In the merciful providence of the Almighty, provision has been made for vicarious service by the living for the dead, in the ordinances essential to salvation; so that all who in the spirit-world accept the word of God as preached to them, develop true faith in Jesus Christ as the one and only Savior, and contritely repent of their transgressions, shall be brought under the saving effect of baptism by water for the remission of sins, and be recipients of the baptism of the Spirit or the bestowal of the Holy Ghost.[1350] Paul cites the principle and practice of baptism by the living for the dead as proof of the actuality of the resurrection: "**Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?**"[1351] Free agency, the divine birthright of every human soul, will not be annulled by death. Only as the spirits of the dead become penitent and faithful will they be benefited by the vicarious service rendered in their behalf on earth.

Missionary labor among the dead was inaugurated by the Christ; who of us can doubt that it has been continued by His authorized servants, the disembodied, who while in the flesh had been commissioned to preach the gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof through ordination in the Holy Priesthood? That the faithful apostles who were left to build up the Church on earth following the departure of its divine Founder, that other ministers of the word of God ordained to the Priesthood by authority in the Primitive as well as in the Latter-day Church, have passed from ministerial service among mortals to a continuation of such labor among the disembodied, is so abundantly implied in scripture as to be made a certainty. They are called to follow in the footsteps of the Master, ministering here among the living, and beyond among the dead.

The victory of Christ over death and sin would be incomplete were its effects confined to the small minority who have heard, accepted, and lived the gospel of salvation in the flesh. Compliance with the laws and ordinances of the gospel is essential to salvation. Nowhere in scripture is a distinction made in this regard between the living and the dead. The dead are those who have lived in mortality upon earth; the living are mortals who yet shall pass through the ordained change which we call death. All are children of the same Father, all to be judged and rewarded or punished by the same unerring justice, with the same interposition of benign mercy. Christ's atoning sacrifice was offered, not alone for the few who lived upon the earth while He was in the flesh, nor for those who were to be born in mortality after His death, but for all inhabitants of earth then past, present, and future. He was ordained of the Father to be a judge of both quick and dead;[1352] He is Lord alike of living and dead,[1353] as men speak of dead and living, though all are to be placed in the same position before Him; there will be but a single class, for all live unto Him.[1354] While His body reposed in the tomb, Christ was actively engaged in the further accomplishment of the Father's purposes, by offering the boon of salvation to the dead, both in paradise and in hell.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 36

**1. Paradise**—The scriptures prove that at the time of the final judgment every man will stand before the bar of God, clothed in his resurrected body, and this, irrespective of his condition of righteousness or guilt. While awaiting resurrection, disembodied spirits exist in an intermediate state, of happiness and rest or of suffering and suspense, according to the course they have elected to follow in mortality. Reference to paradise as the abode of righteous spirits between the time of death and that of the resurrection is made by the prophet Nephi (2 Nephi 9:13), by a later prophet of the same name (4 Nephi 14), by Moroni (Moroni 10:34); as also by Alma whose words are quoted in the text (Alma 40:12, 14). New Testament scripture is of analogous import (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7). The word "**paradise**" by its derivation through the Greek from the Persian, signifies a pleasant place, or a place of restful enjoyment. (See *The Articles of Faith*, xxi, note 5). By many the terms "hades" and "sheol" are understood to designate the place of departed spirits, comprising both paradise and the prison realm; by others the terms are applied only to the latter, the place of the wicked, which is apart from paradise, the abode of the just.

The assumption that the gracious assurance given by Christ to the penitent sinner on the cross was a remission of the man's sins, and a passport into heaven, is wholly contrary to both the letter and spirit of scripture, reason, and justice. Confidence in the efficacy of death-bed professions and confessions on the basis of this incident is of the most insecure foundation. The crucified malefactor manifested both faith and repentance; his promised blessing was that he should that day hear the gospel preached in paradise; in the acceptance or rejection of the word of life he would be an agent unto himself. The requirement of obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel as an essential to salvation was not waived, suspended, or superseded in his case.

**2. The Scripture Relating to Christ Among the Spirits in Prison**—The revised version of 1 Peter 3:18-20 reads: "**Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit; in which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which aforetime were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls were saved through water.**" This is regarded by scholars as a closer approach to accuracy in translation than the common version. Certain important differences between the two versions will appear to the studious reader. The common version of the latter part of verse 18 and the whole of verse 19 reads: "**being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.**" The revised text expresses the true thought that Christ was quickened, that is to say, was active, in His own spirit state, although His body was

inert and in reality dead at the time; and that *in* that disembodied state He went and preached to the disobedient spirits. The later reading fixes the time of our Lord's ministry among the departed as the interval between His death and resurrection.

## FOOTNOTES

[1339] Chapters 2 and 3 herein.

[1340] See chapter 35 herein.

[1341] Note 1, end of chapter.

[1342] Note the distinction made by Paul 2 Cor. 12:2-4.

[1343] B. of M., Alma 40:11-14.

[1344] 1 Peter 3:18-20; see Note 2, end of chapter.

[1345] 1 Peter 4:5, 6. See Note 2, end of chapter.

[1346] John 5:25-29; see also chapter 15 herein.

[1347] Isa. 24:21, 22.

[1348] Isa. 42:5-7.

[1349] Psalm 16:9-11.

[1350] See chapter 10 herein; also "The Articles of Faith," vii:18-33; and "The House of the Lord," pages 63-93.

[1351] 1 Cor. 15:29; see also "House of the Lord," p. 92.

[1352] Acts 10:42; 2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Peter 4:5.

[1353] Rom. 14:9.

[1354] Luke 20:36, 38; "The Articles of Faith," vii:18.

# 37

## THE RESURRECTION AND THE ASCENSION CHRIST IS RISEN

Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, had passed, and the night preceding the dawn of the most memorable Sunday in history was well nigh spent, while the Roman guard kept watch over the sealed sepulchre wherein lay the body of the Lord Jesus. While it was yet dark, the earth began to quake; an angel of the Lord descended in glory, rolled back the massive stone from the portal of the tomb, and sat upon it. His countenance was brilliant as the lightning, and his raiment was as the driven snow for whiteness. The soldiers, paralyzed with fear, fell to the earth as dead men. When they had partially recovered from their fright, they fled from the place in terror. Even the rigor of Roman discipline, which decreed summary death to every soldier who deserted his post, could not deter them. Moreover, there was nothing left for them to guard; the seal of authority had been broken, the sepulchre was open, and empty.[1355]

At the earliest indication of dawn, the devoted Mary Magdalene and other faithful women set out for the tomb, bearing spices and ointments which they had prepared for the further anointing of the body of Jesus. Some of them had been witnesses of the burial, and were conscious of the necessary haste with which the corpse had been wrapped with spicery and laid away by Joseph and Nicodemus, just before the beginning of the Sabbath; and now these adoring women came early to render loving service in a more thorough anointing and external embalmment of the body. On the way as they sorrowfully conversed, they seemingly for the first time thought of the difficulty of entering the tomb. **"Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?"** they asked one of another. Evidently they knew nothing of the seal and the guard of soldiery. At the tomb they saw the angel, and were afraid; but he said unto them: "Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you."[1356]

The women, though favored by angelic visitation and assurance, left the place amazed and frightened. Mary Magdalene appears to have been the first to carry word to the disciples concerning the empty tomb. She had failed to comprehend the gladsome meaning of the angel's proclamation "He is risen, as he said"; in her agony of love and grief she remembered only the words "He is not here," the truth of which had been so forcefully impressed by her own hasty glance at the open and tenantless tomb. "Then

**she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him."**

Peter, and "that other disciple" who, doubtless, was John, set forth in haste, running together toward the sepulchre. John outran his companion, and on reaching the tomb stooped to look in, and so caught a glimpse of the linen cerements lying on the floor; but the bold and impetuous Peter rushed into the sepulchre, and was followed by the younger apostle. The two observed the linen grave-clothes, and lying by itself, the napkin that had been placed about the head of the corpse. John frankly affirms that having seen these things, he believed, and explains in behalf of himself and his fellow apostles, "**For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.**"[1357]

The sorrowful Magdalene had followed the two apostles back to the garden of the burial. No thought of the Lord's restoration to life appears to have found place in her grief-stricken heart; she knew only that the body of her beloved Master had disappeared. While Peter and John were within the sepulchre, she had stood without, weeping. After the men had left she stooped and looked into the rock-hewn cavern. There she saw two personages, angels in white; one sat "at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain." In accents of tenderness they asked of her: "Woman, why weepest thou?" In reply she could but voice anew her overwhelming sorrow: "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." The absence of the body, which she thought to be all that was left on earth of Him whom she loved so deeply, was a personal bereavement. There is a volume of pathos and affection in her words, "They have taken away my Lord."

Turning from the vault, which, though at that moment illumined by angelic presence, was to her void and desolate, she became aware of another Personage, standing near. She heard His sympathizing inquiry: "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" Scarcely lifting her tearful countenance to look at the Questioner, but vaguely supposing that He was the caretaker of the garden, and that He might have knowledge of what had been done with the body of her Lord, she exclaimed: "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." She knew that Jesus had been interred in a borrowed tomb; and if the body had been dispossessed of that resting place, she was prepared to provide another. "Tell me where thou hast laid him," she pleaded.

It was Jesus to whom she spake, her beloved Lord, though she knew it not. One word from His living lips changed her agonized grief into ecstatic joy. "Jesus saith unto her, Mary." The voice, the tone, the tender accent she had heard and loved in the earlier days lifted her from the despairing depths into which she had sunk. She turned, and saw the Lord. In a transport of joy she reached out her arms to embrace Him, uttering



only the endearing and worshipful word, "Rabboni," meaning My beloved Master. Jesus, restrained her impulsive manifestation of reverent love, saying, "Touch me not[1358] for I am not yet ascended to my Father," and adding, "but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."[1359]

To a woman, to Mary of Magdala, was given the honor of being the first among mortals to behold a resurrected Soul, and that Soul, the Lord Jesus.[1360] To other favored women did the risen Lord next manifest Himself, including Mary the mother of Joses, Joanna, and Salome the mother of the apostles James and John. These and the other women with them had been affrighted by the presence of the angel at the tomb, and had departed with mingled fear and joy. They were not present when Peter and John entered the vault, nor afterward when the Lord made Himself known to Mary Magdalene. They may have returned later, for some of them appear to have entered the sepulchre, and to have seen that the Lord's body was not there. As they stood wondering in perplexity and astonishment, they became aware of the presence of two men in shining garments, and as the women "bowed down their faces to the earth" the angels said unto them: "**Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words.**"[1361] As they were returning to the city to deliver the message to the disciples, "**Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.**"[1362]

One may wonder why Jesus had forbidden Mary Magdalene to touch Him, and then, so soon after, had permitted other women to hold Him by the feet as they bowed in reverence. We may assume that Mary's emotional approach had been prompted more by a feeling of personal yet holy affection than by an impulse of devotional worship such as the other women evinced. Though the resurrected Christ manifested the same friendly and intimate regard as He had shown in the mortal state toward those with whom He had been closely associated, He was no longer one of them in the literal sense. There was about Him a divine dignity that forbade close personal familiarity. To Mary Magdalene Christ had said: "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father." If the second clause was spoken in explanation of the first, we have to infer that no human hand was to be permitted to touch the Lord's resurrected and immortalized body until after He had presented Himself to the Father. It appears reasonable and probable that between Mary's impulsive attempt to touch the Lord, and the action of the other women who held Him by the feet as they bowed in worshipful reverence, Christ did ascend to the Father, and that later He returned to earth to continue His ministry in the resurrected state.

Mary Magdalene and the other women told the wonderful story of their several experiences to the disciples, but the brethren could not credit their words, which "seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not."[1363] After all that Christ had taught concerning His rising from the dead on that third day,[1364] the apostles were unable to accept the actuality of the occurrence; to their minds the resurrection was some mysterious and remote event, not a present possibility. There was neither precedent nor analogy for the stories these women told – of a dead person returning to life, with a body of flesh and bones, such as could be seen and felt – except the instances of the young man of Nain, the daughter of Jairus, and the beloved Lazarus of Bethany, between whose cases of restoration to a renewal of mortal life and the reported resurrection of Jesus they recognized essential differences. The grief and the sense of irreparable loss which had characterized the yesterday Sabbath, were replaced by profound perplexity and contending doubts on this first day of the week. But while the apostles hesitated to believe that Christ had actually risen, the women, less skeptical, more trustful, knew, for they had both seen Him and heard His voice, and some of them had touched His feet.

#### **A PRIESTLY CONSPIRACY OF FALSEHOOD [1365]**

When the Roman guardsmen had sufficiently recovered from fright to make their precipitate departure from the sepulchre, they went to the chief priests, under whose orders they had been placed by Pilate,[1366] and reported the supernatural occurrences they had witnessed. The chief priests were Sadducees, of which sect or party a distinguishing feature was the denial of the possibility of resurrection from the dead. A session of the Sanhedrin was called, and the disturbing report of the guard was considered. In the spirit in which these deceiving hierarchs had tried to kill Lazarus for the purpose of quelling popular interest in the miracle of his restoration to life, they now conspired to discredit the truth of Christ's resurrection by bribing the soldiers to lie. These were told to say "**His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept**"; and for the falsehood they were offered large sums of money. The soldiers accepted the tempting bribe, and did as they were instructed; for this course appeared to them the best way out of a critical situation. If they were found guilty of sleeping at their posts, immediate death would be their doom;[1367] but the Jews encouraged them by the promise: "If this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him and secure you." It must be remembered that the soldiers had been put at the disposal of the chief priests, and presumably therefore were not required to report the details of their doings to the Roman authorities.

The recorder adds that until the day of his writing, the falsehood of Christ's body having been stolen from the tomb by the disciples was current among the Jews. The utter untenability of the false report is apparent. If all the soldiers were asleep – a most unlikely occurrence inasmuch as such neglect was a capital offense – how could they possibly know that anyone had approached the tomb? And, more particularly, how

could they substantiate their statement even if it were true, that the body was stolen and that the disciples were the grave-robbers?[1368] The mendacious fiction was framed by the chief priests and elders of the people. Not all the priestly circle were parties to it however. Some, who perhaps had been among the secret disciples of Jesus before His death, were not afraid to openly ally themselves with the Church, when, through the evidence of the Lord's resurrection, they had become thoroughly converted. We read that but a few months later "a **great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.**"[1369]

## CHRIST WALKS AND TALKS WITH TWO OF THE DISCIPLES [1370]

During the afternoon of that same Sunday, two disciples, not of the apostles, left the little band of believers in Jerusalem and set out for Emmaus, a village between seven and eight miles from the city. There could be but one topic of conversation between them, and on this they communed as they walked, citing incidents in the Lord's life, dwelling particularly upon the fact of His death through which their hopes of a Messianic reign had been so sadly blighted, and marveling deeply over the incomprehensible testimony of the women concerning His reappearance as a living Soul. As they went, engrossed in sorrowful and profound discourse, another Wayfarer joined them; it was the Lord Jesus, "but their eyes were holden that they should not know him." In courteous interest, He asked: "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?" One of the disciples, Cleopas by name, replied with surprise tinged with commiseration for the Stranger's seeming ignorance: "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?" Intent on drawing from the men a full statement of the matter by which they were so plainly agitated, the unrecognized Christ asked, "What things?" They could not be reticent. "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth" they explained, "which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him." In sorrowful mood they went on to tell how they had trusted that the now crucified Jesus would have proved to be the Messiah sent to redeem Israel; but alas! this was the third day since He had been slain. Then, with brightening countenances, yet still perplexed, they told of certain women of their company who had astonished them that morning by saying that they had visited the sepulchre early and had discovered that the Lord's body was not there, but, "that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive." Moreover, others beside the women had gone to the tomb, and had verified the absence of the body but had not seen the Lord.

Then Jesus, gently chiding His fellow travelers as foolish men and slow of heart in their hesitating acceptance of what the prophets had spoken, asked impressively, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" Beginning with the inspired predictions of Moses, He expounded to them the scriptures, touching upon all

the prophetic utterances concerning the Savior's mission. Having continued with the two men to their destination Jesus "made as though he would have gone further," but they urged Him to tarry with them, for the day was already far spent. He so far acceded to their hospitable entreaty as to enter the house, and, as soon as their simple meal was prepared, to seat Himself with them at the table. As the Guest of honor, He took the loaf, **"blessed it and brake, and gave to them."** There may have been something in the fervency of the blessing, or in the manner of breaking and distributing the bread, that revived memories of former days; or, possibly, they caught sight of the pierced hands; but, whatever the immediate cause, they looked intently upon their Guest, "and their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight." In a fullness of joyful wonderment they rose from the table, surprised at themselves for not having recognized Him sooner. One said to the other, **"Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"** Straightway they started to retrace their steps and hastened back to Jerusalem to confirm by their witness what, before, the brethren had been slow to believe.

## **RISEN LORD APPEARS TO THE DISCIPLES IN JERUSALEM AND EATS IN THEIR PRESENCE [1371]**

When Cleopas and his companion reached Jerusalem that night, they found the apostles and other devoted believers assembled in solemn and worshipful discourse within closed doors. Precautions of secrecy had been taken "for fear of the Jews." Even the apostles had been scattered by the arrest, arraignment, and judicial murder of their Master; but they and the disciples in general rallied anew at the word of His resurrection, as the nucleus of an army soon to sweep the world. The two returning disciples were received with the joyous announcement, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." This is the sole mention made by the Gospel-writers of Christ's personal appearance to Simon Peter on that day. The interview between the Lord and His once recreant but now repentant apostle must have been affecting in the extreme. Peter's remorseful penitence over his denial of Christ in the palace of the high priest was deep and pitiful; he may have doubted that ever again would the Master call him His servant; but hope must have been engendered through the message from the tomb brought by the women, in which the Lord sent greetings to the apostles, whom for the first time He designated as His brethren,[1372] and from this honorable and affectionate characterization Peter had not been excluded; moreover, the angel's commission to the women had given prominence to Peter by particular mention.[1373] To the repentant Peter came the Lord, doubtless with forgiveness and loving assurance. The apostle himself maintains a reverent silence respecting the visitation, but the fact thereof is attested by Paul as one of the definite proofs of the Lord's resurrection.[1374]

Following the jubilant testimony of the assembled believers, Cleopas and his fellow traveler told of the Lord's companionship with them on the Emmaus road, of the things He had taught them, and of the manner in which He had become known unto them in

the breaking of bread. As the little company communed together, "Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." They were affrighted, supposing with superstitious dread that a ghost had intruded amongst them. But the Lord comforted them, saying "Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." Then He showed them the wounds in His hands and feet and side. "They yet believed not for joy," which is to say, they thought the reality, to which they all were witnesses, too good, too glorious, to be true. To further assure them that He was no shadowy form, no immaterial being of tenuous substance, but a living Personage with bodily organs internal as well as outward, He asked "Have ye here any meat?" They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and other food,[1375] which He took "and did eat before them."

These unquestionable evidences of their Visitant's corporeity calmed and made rational the minds of the disciples; and now that they were composed and receptive the Lord reminded them that all things that had happened to Him were in accordance with what He had told them while He had lived amongst them. In His divine presence their understanding was quickened and enlarged so that they comprehended as never before the scriptures – the Law of Moses, the books of the prophets and the psalms – concerning Him. That His now accomplished death was a necessity, He attested as fully as He had predicted and affirmed the same aforetime. Then He said unto them: "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things." Then were the disciples glad. As He was about to depart the Lord gave them His blessing, saying "Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." This specification of men sent by authority points directly to the apostles; "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained,"[1376]

## DOUBTING THOMAS [1377]

When the Lord Jesus appeared in the midst of the disciples on the evening of the Resurrection Sunday, one of the apostles, Thomas, was absent. He was informed of what the others had witnessed, but was unconvinced; even their solemn testimony, "We have seen the Lord," failed to awaken an echo of faith in his heart. In his state of mental skepticism he exclaimed: "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." Caution and charity must attend our judgment in any conclusion as to the incredulous attitude of this man. He could scarcely have doubted the well attested circumstance of the empty sepulchre, nor the veracity of Mary Magdalene and the other women as to the presence of angels and the Lord's appearing, nor Peter's testimony nor

that of the assembled company; but he may have regarded the reported manifestations as a series of subjective visions; and the absence of the Lord's body may have been vaguely considered as a result of Christ's supernatural restoration to life followed by a bodily and final departure from earth. It was the corporeal manifestation of the risen Lord, the exhibition of the wounds incident to crucifixion, the invitation to touch and feel the resurrected body of flesh and bones, to which Thomas demurred. He had no such definite conception of the resurrection as would accord with a literal acceptance of the testimony of his brethren and sisters who had seen, heard, and felt.

A week later, for so the Jewish designation, "**after eight days**," is to be understood, therefore on the next Sunday, which day of the week afterward came to be known to the Church as the "Lord's Day" and to be observed as the Sabbath in place of Saturday, the Mosaic Sabbath,[1378] the disciples were again assembled, and Thomas was with them. The meeting was held within closed and, presumably, guarded doors, for there was danger of interference by the Jewish officers. "**Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.**"

The skeptical mind of Thomas was instantly cleansed, his doubting heart was purified; and a conviction of the glorious truth flooded his soul. In contrite reverence he bowed before his Savior, the while exclaiming in worshipful acknowledgment of Christ's Deity: "**My Lord and my God.**" His adoration was accepted, and the Savior said: "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

#### AT THE SEA OF GALILEE [1379]

The angel at the sepulchre and the risen Christ Himself had severally sent word to the apostles to go into Galilee, where the Lord would meet them as He had said before His death.[1380] They deferred their departure until after the week following the resurrection, and then once again in their native province, they awaited further developments. In the afternoon of one of those days of waiting, Peter said to six of his fellow apostles, "I go a fishing"; and the others replied, "We also go with thee." Without delay they embarked on a fishing boat; and though they toiled through the night, the net had been drawn in empty after every cast. As morning approached they drew near the land, disappointed and disheartened. In the early dawn they were hailed from the shore by One who asked: "Children, have ye any meat?"[1381] They answered "No." It was Jesus who made the inquiry, though none in the boat recognized Him. He called to them again, saying: "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes." They did as directed and the result was so surprising as to appear to them miraculous; it must have aroused memories of that other remarkable draught of fishes,

in the taking of which their fishermen's skill had been superseded; and at least three witnesses of the earlier miracle were now in the boat.[1382]

John, quick to discern, said to Peter, "It is the Lord"; and Peter, impulsive as ever, hastily girt his fisher's coat about him and sprang into the sea, the sooner to reach land and prostrate himself at his Master's feet. The others left the vessel and entered a small boat in which they rowed to shore, towing the heavily laden net. On the land they saw a fire of coals, with fish broiling thereon, and alongside a supply of bread. Jesus told them to bring of the fish they had just caught, to which instruction the stalwart Peter responded by dashing into the shallows and dragging the net to shore. When counted, the haul was found to consist of a hundred and fifty-three great fishes; and the narrator is careful to note that "for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken."

*When Peter saw the Lord, he didn't think. He jumped into the water to swim to meet His Saviour. Sometimes we need to just jump in too.*

Then Jesus said "Come and dine"; and as the Host at the meal, He divided and distributed the bread and fish. We are not told that He ate with His guests. Everyone knew that it was the Lord who so hospitably served; yet on this, as on all other occasions of His appearing in the resurrected state, there was about Him an awe-inspiring and restraining demeanor. They would have liked to question Him, but durst not. John tells us that this was the "third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead"; by which we understand the occasion to have been the third on which Christ had manifested Himself to the apostles, in complete or partial assembly; for, including also the appearing to Mary Magdalene, to the other women, to Peter, and to the two disciples on the country road, this was the seventh recorded appearance of the risen Lord.

When the meal was finished, "Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" The question, however tenderly put, must have wrung Peter's heart, coupled as it was with the reminder of his bold but undependable protestation, "**Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended**", [1383] followed by his denial that he had ever known the Man. [1384] To the Lord's inquiry Peter answered humbly, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." Then said Jesus, "**Feed my lambs.**" The question was repeated; and Peter replied in identical words, to which the Lord responded, "**Feed my sheep.**" And yet the third time Jesus asked, "**Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?**" Peter was pained and grieved at this reiteration, thinking perhaps that the Lord mistrusted him; but as the man had three times denied, so now was he given opportunity for a triple confession. To the thrice repeated question, Peter answered: "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him. Feed my sheep."

The commission "**Feed my sheep**" was an assurance of the Lord's confidence, and of the reality of Peter's presidency among the apostles. He had emphatically announced his readiness to follow his Master even to prison and death. Now, the Lord who had died said unto him: "**Verily, verily; I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not.**" John informs us that the Lord so spake signifying the death by which Peter should find a place among the martyrs; the analogy points to crucifixion, and traditional history is without contradiction as to this being the death by which Peter sealed his testimony of the Christ.

*The Lord told Peter that he would also die by crucifixion and be a martyr.*

Then said the Lord to Peter, "**Follow me.**" The command had both immediate and future significance. The man followed as Jesus drew apart from the others on the shore; yet a few years and Peter would follow his Lord to the cross. Without doubt Peter comprehended the reference to his martyrdom, as his writings, years later, indicate.[1385] As Christ and Peter walked together, the latter, looking backward, saw that John was following, and inquired: "Lord, and what shall this man do?" Peter wished to peer into the future as to his companion's fate – was John also to die for the faith? The Lord replied: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me." It was an admonition to Peter to look to his own course of duty, and to follow the Master, wherever the road should lead.

Concerning himself, John adds: "Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" That John still lives in the embodied state, and shall remain in the flesh until the Lord's yet future advent, is attested by later revelation.[1386] In company with his martyred and resurrected companions, Peter and James, the "disciple whom Jesus loved" has officiated in the restoration of the Holy Apostleship in this the dispensation of the fullness of times.

## **OTHER MANIFESTATIONS OF THE RISEN LORD IN GALILEE [1387]**

Jesus had designated a mountain in Galilee whereon He would meet the apostles; and thither the Eleven went. When they saw Him at the appointed place, they worshiped Him. The record adds "but some doubted," by which may be implied that others beside the apostles were present, among whom were some who were unconvinced of the actual corporeity of the resurrected Christ. This occasion may have been that of which Paul wrote a quarter of a century later, concerning which he affirms that Christ "was seen of above five hundred brethren at once," of whom, though some had died, the majority remained at the time of Paul's writing, living witnesses to his testimony.[1388]



To those assembled on the mount Jesus declared: "**All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.**" This could be understood as nothing less than an affirmation of His absolute Godship. His authority was supreme, and those who were commissioned of Him were to minister in His name, and by a power such as no man could give or take away.

## FINAL COMMISSION AND THE ASCENSION

Throughout the forty days following His resurrection, the Lord manifested Himself at intervals to the apostles, to some individually and to all as a body,[1389] and instructed them in "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."[1390] The record is not always specific and definite as to time and place of particular events; but as to the purport of the Lord's instructions during this period there exists no cause for doubt. Much that He said and did is not written,[1391] but such things as are of record, John assures his readers, "**are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.**"[1392]

As the time of His ascension drew nigh, the Lord said unto the eleven apostles: "**Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.**"[1393] In contrast with their earlier commission, under which they were sent only "**to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,**"[1394] they were now to go to Jew and Gentile, bond and free, to mankind at large, of whatever nation, country, or tongue. Salvation, through faith in Jesus the Christ, followed by repentance and baptism, was to be freely offered to all; the rejection of the offer thenceforth would bring condemnation. Signs and miracles were promised to "follow them that believe," thus confirming their faith in the power divine; but no intimation was given that such manifestations were to precede belief, as baits to catch the credulous wonder-seeker.

*One must believe first, then the miracles follow.*

Assuring the apostles anew that the promise of the Father would be realized in the coming of the Holy Ghost, the Lord instructed them to remain in Jerusalem, whither they had now returned from Galilee, until they would be "**endued with power from on high**";[1395] and He added: "**For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.**"[1396]

In that last solemn interview, probably as the risen Savior led the mortal Eleven away from the city toward the old familiar resort on the Mount of Olives, the brethren, still imbued with their conception of the kingdom of God as an earthly establishment of

power and dominion, asked of Him, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus answered, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."<sup>[1397]</sup> Their duty was thus defined and emphasized: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."<sup>[1398]</sup>

When Christ and the disciples had gone "as far as to Bethany," the Lord lifted up His hands, and blessed them; and while yet He spake, He rose from their midst, and they looked upon Him as He ascended until a cloud received Him out of their sight. While the apostles stood gazing steadfastly upward, two personages, clothed in white apparel, appeared by them; these spake unto the Eleven, saying: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? 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."<sup>[1399]</sup>

Worshipfully and with great joy the apostles returned to Jerusalem, there to await the coming of the Comforter. The Lord's ascension was accomplished; it was as truly a literal departure of a material Being as His resurrection had been an actual return of His spirit to His own corporeal body, theretofore dead. With the world abode and yet abides the glorious promise, that Jesus the Christ, the same Being who ascended from Olivet in His immortalized body of flesh and bones, shall return, descending from the heavens, in similarly material form and substance.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 37

**1. Precise Time and Manner of Christ's Emergence from the Tomb Not Known**—Our Lord definitely predicted His resurrection from the dead on the third day, (Matt. 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; Mark 9:31; 10:34; Luke 9:22; 13:32; 18:33), and the angels at the tomb (Luke 24:7), and the risen Lord in Person (Luke 24:46) verified the fulfillment of the prophecies; and apostles so testified in later years (Acts 10:40; 1 Cor. 15:4). This specification of the third day must not be understood as meaning after three full days. The Jews began their counting of the daily hours with sunset; therefore the hour before sunset and the hour following belonged to different days. Jesus died and was interred during Friday afternoon. His body lay in the tomb, dead, during part of Friday (first day), throughout Saturday, or as we divide the days, from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday, (second day), and part of Sunday (third day). We know not at what hour between Saturday sunset and Sunday dawn He rose.

The fact that an earthquake occurred, and that the angel of the Lord descended and rolled the stone from the portal of the tomb in the early dawn of Sunday – for so we infer from Matt. 28:1, 2 – does not prove that Christ had not already risen. The great stone was rolled back and the inside of the sepulchre exposed to view, so that those who came could see for themselves that the Lord's body was no longer there; it was not necessary to open the portal in order to afford an exit to the resurrected Christ. In His immortalized state He appeared in and disappeared from closed rooms. A resurrected body, though of tangible substance, and possessing all the organs of the mortal tabernacle, is not bound to earth by gravitation, nor can it be hindered in its movements by material barriers. To us who conceive of motion only in the directions incident to the three dimensions of space, the passing of a solid, such as a living body of flesh and bones, through stone walls, is necessarily incomprehensible. But that resurrected beings move in accordance with laws making such passage possible and to them natural, is evidenced not only by the instance of the risen Christ, but by the movements of other resurrected personages. Thus, in September, 1823, Moroni, the Nephite prophet who had died about 400 A.D., appeared to Joseph Smith in his chamber, three times during one night, coming and going without hindrance incident to walls or roof, (see P. of G.P., Joseph Smith 2:43; also *The Articles of Faith*, i:15-17). That Moroni was a resurrected man is shown by his corporeity manifested in his handling of the metallic plates on which was inscribed the record known to us as the Book of Mormon. So also resurrected beings possess the power of rendering themselves visible or invisible to the physical vision of mortals.

**2. Attempts to Discredit the Resurrection Through Falsehood** – The inconsistent assertion that Christ had not risen but that His body had been stolen from the tomb by the disciples, has been sufficiently treated in the text. The falsehood is its own refutation. Unbelievers of later date, recognizing the palpable absurdity of this gross attempt at misrepresentation, have not hesitated to suggest other hypotheses, each of which is conclusively untenable. Thus, the theory based upon the impossible assumption that Christ was not dead when taken from the cross, but was in a state of coma or swoon, and that He was afterward resuscitated, disproves itself when considered in connection with recorded facts. The spear-thrust of the Roman soldier would have been fatal, even if death had not already occurred. The body was taken down, handled, wrapped and buried by members of the Jewish council, who cannot be thought of as actors in the burial of a living man; and so far as subsequent resuscitation is concerned, Edersheim (vol. 2, p. 626) trenchantly remarks: "Not to speak of the many absurdities which this theory involves, it really shifts – if we acquit the disciples of complicity – the fraud upon Christ Himself." A crucified person, removed from the cross before death and subsequently revived, could not have walked with pierced and mangled feet on the very day of his resuscitation, as Jesus did on the road to Emmaus. Another theory that has had its day is that of unconscious deception on the part of those who claimed to have seen the resurrected Christ, such persons having been victims of subjective but unreal visions conjured up by their own excited and imaginative

condition. The independence and marked individuality of the several recorded appearances of the Lord disprove the vision theory. Such subjective visual illusions as are predicated by this hypothesis, presuppose a state of expectancy on the part of those who think they see; but all the incidents connected with the manifestations of Jesus after His resurrection were directly opposed to the expectations of those who were made witnesses of His resurrected state.

The foregoing instances of false and untenable theories regarding the resurrection of our Lord are cited as examples of the numerous abortive attempts to explain away the greatest miracle and the most glorious fact of history. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is attested by evidence more conclusive than that upon which rests our acceptance of historical events in general. Yet the testimony of our Lord's rising from the dead is not founded on written pages. To him who seeks in faith and sincerity shall be given an individual conviction which shall enable him to reverently confess as exclaimed the enlightened apostle of old: "**Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.**" Jesus, who is God the Son, is not dead. "**I know that my Redeemer liveth.**" (Job 19:25.)

### **3. Recorded Appearances of Christ Between Resurrection and Ascension —**

1. To Mary Magdalene, near the sepulchre (Mark 16:9, 10; John 20:14).
2. To other women, somewhere between the sepulchre and Jerusalem (Matt. 28:9).
3. To two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Mark 16:12; Luke 24:13).
4. To Peter, in or near Jerusalem (Luke 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5).
5. To ten of the apostles and others at Jerusalem (Luke 24:36; John 20:19).
6. To the eleven apostles at Jerusalem (Mark 16:14; John 20:26).
7. To the apostles at the Sea of Tiberias, Galilee, (John 21).
8. To the eleven apostles on a mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28:16).
9. To five hundred brethren at once (1 Cor. 15:6); locality not specified, but probably in Galilee.
10. To James (1 Cor. 15:7). Note that no record of this manifestation is made by the Gospel-writers.

11. To the eleven apostles at the time of the ascension, Mount of Olives, near Bethany (Mark 16:19; Luke 24:50, 51).

The Lord's manifestations of Himself to men subsequent to the ascension will be considered later.

## FOOTNOTES

- [1355] Matt. 28:1-4, see also verse 11.
- [1356] Matt. 28:5-7; compare Mark 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-8; John 20:1-2.
- [1357] John 20:1-10.
- [1358] Revised version, "Take not hold on me" (margin).
- [1359] John 20:11-17.
- [1360] Mark 16:9.
- [1361] Luke 24:3-8.
- [1362] Matt. 28:9, 10.
- [1363] Luke 24:9-11; compare Mark 16:9-13.
- [1364] Note 1, end of chapter.
- [1365] Matt. 28:11-15.
- [1366] Matt. 27:65, 66; See chapter 35 herein.
- [1367] Compare Acts 12:19.
- [1368] Note 2, end of chapter.
- [1369] Acts 6:7; compare John 12:42.
- [1370] Luke 24:13-32; compare Mark 16:12.
- [1371] Luke 24:33-48; John 20:19-23.
- [1372] Matt. 28:10; John 20:17.
- [1373] Mark 16:7.
- [1374] 1 Cor. 15:5.
- [1375] The words "and of an honeycomb" (Luke 24:42) are omitted from the revised version, and by many authorities are declared to be a spurious addition to the original text.
- [1376] John 20:21-23.
- [1377] John 20:24-29; compare Mark 16:14.
- [1378] Rev. 1:10; compare Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2.
- [1379] John 21:1-23.
- [1380] Matt 28:10; Mark 16:7; compare Matt. 26:32, Mark 14:28.
- [1381] The noun of address, "Children" is equivalent to our modern use of "Sirs," "Men" or "Lads." It was quite in harmony with the vernacular.
- [1382] Luke 5:4-10; also see chapter 14 herein.
- [1383] Matt. 26:33; Mark 14:29; compare Luke 22:33; John 13:37; See chapter 33 herein.
- [1384] Matt. 26:70, 72, 74; also see chapter 34 herein.
- [1385] Peter 1:14.
- [1386] Doc. and Cov. Sec. 7; compare B. of M., 3 Nephi 28:1-12.
- [1387] Matt. 28:16-18.
- [1388] 1 Cor. 15:6.
- [1389] Note 3, end of chapter.
- [1390] Acts 1:3.
- [1391] John 20:30; compare 21:25 remembering that the latter passage may have reference to occurrences both before and after the Lord's death.
- [1392] John 20:31.
- [1393] Mark 16:15-18.
- [1394] Matt. 10:5, 6.
- [1395] "Clothed with power from on high" according to revised version, Luke 24:49.
- [1396] Acts 1:5; see also Luke 24:49; and compare John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:7, 13.
- [1397] Acts 1:7, 8; compare Matt. 24:36; Mark 13:32.
- [1398] Matt. 28:19, 20.
- [1399] Acts 1:9-11; see also Luke 24:50, 51.

# 38

## THE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY

### MATTHIAS ORDAINED TO THE APOSTLESHIP [1400]

After witnessing the Lord's ascension from Olivet, the eleven apostles returned to Jerusalem filled with joy and thoroughly suffused with the spirit of adoring worship. Both in the temple and in a certain upper room, which was their usual place of meeting, they continued in prayer and supplication, often in association with other disciples, including Mary the mother of the Lord, some of her sons, and the little sisterhood of faithful women who had ministered to Jesus in Galilee and had followed Him thence to Jerusalem and to Calvary.[1401] The disciples, most of whom had been dispersed by the tragic events of that last and fateful Passover, had gathered again, with renewed and fortified faith, about the great fact of the Lord's resurrection. Christ had become "the firstfruits of them that slept," "the first begotten of the dead," and "the firstborn" of the race to rise from death to immortality.[1402] They knew that not only had the grave been compelled to give up the body of their Lord, but that a way had been provided for the striking of the fetters of death from every soul. Immediately following the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, many righteous ones who had slept in the tomb had been resurrected, and had appeared in Jerusalem, revealing themselves unto many.[1403] The universality of the resurrection of the dead was soon to become a prominent feature of apostolic teaching.

The first official act undertaken by the apostles was the filling of the vacancy in the council of the Twelve, occasioned by the apostasy and suicide of Judas Iscariot. Sometime between the ascension of Christ and the feast of Pentecost, when the Eleven and other disciples, in all about a hundred and twenty, were together "**with one accord in prayer and supplication,**" Peter laid the matter before the assembled Church, pointing out that the fall of Judas had been foreseen,[1404] and citing the psalmist's invocation: "**Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take,**"[1405] Peter affirmed the necessity of completing the apostolic quorum; and he thus set forth the qualifications essential in the one who should be ordained to the Holy Apostleship: "**Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.**" Two faithful disciples were nominated by the Eleven, Joseph Barsabas and Matthias. In earnest supplication the assembly besought the Lord to indicate whether either of these men,

and if so which, was to be chosen for the exalted office; then, "**they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.**"

The proceeding throughout is deeply significant and instructive. The Eleven fully realized that on them lay the responsibility, and in them was vested the authority, to organize and develop the Church of Christ; that the council or quorum of the apostles was limited to a membership of twelve; and that the new apostle, like themselves, must be competent to testify in special and personal witness concerning the earthly ministry, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The selection of Matthias was accomplished in a general assembly of the Primitive Church; and while the nominations were made by the apostles, all present appear by implication to have had a voice in the matter of installation. The principle of authoritative administration through common consent of the membership, so impressively exemplified in the choosing of Matthias, was followed, a few weeks later, by the selection of "seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom," who having been sustained by the vote of the Church, were set apart to a special ministry by the laying-on of the apostles' hands.[1406]

## THE BESTOWAL OF THE HOLY GHOST [1407]

At the time of Pentecost, which fell on the fiftieth day after the Passover,[1408] and therefore, at this particular recurrence, about nine days after Christ's ascension, the apostles "were all with one accord in one place," engaged in their customary devotions, and waiting, as instructed, until they would be endowed with a particular bestowal of power from on high.[1409] The promised baptism by fire and the Holy Ghost befell them on that day. "**Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.**"

The "**sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind**" was heard abroad;[1410] and a multitude gathered about the place. The visible manifestation of "cloven tongues like as of fire," by which each of the Twelve was invested, was seen by those within the house, but apparently not by the gathering crowds. The apostles spoke to the multitude, and a great miracle was wrought, by which "every man heard them speak in his own language"; for the apostles, now richly gifted, spake in many tongues, as the Holy Ghost, by whom they had been endowed, gave them utterance. There were present men from many lands and of many nations, and their languages were diverse. In amazement some of them said: "Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" While many were impressed by the preternatural ability of the brethren, others in mocking tones said the men were drunken. This instance of Satanic prompting to inconsiderate speech is



especially illustrative of inconsistency and rash ineptitude. Strong drink gives to no man wisdom; it steals away his senses and makes of him a fool.

Then Peter, as the president of the Twelve, stood up and proclaimed in behalf of himself and his brethren: "**Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: for these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.**" It was the Jewish custom, particularly on festival days, to abstain from food and drink until after the morning service in synagog, which was held about the third hour, or nine o'clock in the forenoon. The apostle cited ancient prophecy embodying the promise of Jehovah that He would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh, so that wonders would be wrought, even as those there present witnessed.[1411] Then boldly did Peter testify of Jesus of Nazareth, whom he characterized as "**a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know;**" and, reminding them, in accusing earnestness, of the awful crime to which they had been in some degree parties, he continued: "**Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.**" Citing the inspired outburst of the psalmist, who had sung in jubilant measure of the soul that should not be left in hell, and of the flesh that should not see corruption, he showed the application of these scriptures to the Christ; and fearlessly affirmed: "**This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.**" With increasing fervency, fearing neither derision nor violence, and driving home to the hearts of his enthralled listeners the fearful fact of their guilt, Peter proclaimed as in voice of thunder: "**Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.**"

The power of the Holy Ghost could not be resisted; to every earnest soul it carried conviction. They that heard were pricked in their hearts, and in contrition cried out to the apostles: "**Men and brethren, what shall we do?**" Now that they were prepared for the message of salvation, it was given without reserve. "**Repent,**" answered Peter, "**and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.**"

To the apostles' testimony, to the exhortation and warning, the people responded with profession of faith and repentance. Their joy was comparable to that of the spirits in prison, to whom the disembodied Christ had borne the authoritative word of redemption and salvation. Those who repented and confessed their belief in Christ at

that memorable Pentecost were received into the Church by baptism, to the number of about three thousand. That their conversion was genuine and not the effect of a passing enthusiasm, that they were literally born again through baptism into a newness of life, is evidenced by the fact that they endured in the faith— **"and they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."** So devoted were these early converts, so richly blessed with the outpouring of the Holy Ghost was the Church in those days, that the members voluntarily disposed of their individual possessions and had all things in common. To them faith in the Lord Jesus Christ was of greater worth than the wealth of earth.[1412] Among them, there was nothing called "mine" or "thine," but all things were theirs in the Lord.[1413] Signs and wonders followed the apostles, **"and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."**

Through the bestowal of the Holy Ghost the apostles had become changed men. As made clear to them by the Spirit of Truth, the scriptures constituted a record of preparation for the events to which they were special and ordained witnesses. Peter, who but a few weeks earlier had quailed before a serving-maid, now spoke openly, fearing none. Seeing once a lame beggar at the Gate Beautiful which led into the temple court, he took the afflicted one by the hand, saying: **"Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk."**[1414] The man was healed and leaped in the exuberance of his newly found strength; then he went with Peter and John into the temple, praising God aloud. An amazed crowd, which grew to include about five thousand men, gathered around the apostles in Solomon's Porch; and Peter, observing their wonderment, seized on the occasion to preach to them Jesus the Crucified. He ascribed all praise for the miracle to the Christ whom the Jews had delivered up to be slain, and in unambiguous accusation declared: **"The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses."** In merciful recognition of the ignorance in which they had sinned, he exhorted them to expiatory penitence, crying: **"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."** There was no encouragement to a belief that their sins could be annulled by wordy profession; a due season of repentance was their privilege, if so be they would believe.

As Peter and John thus testified, the priests and the captain of the temple, together with the ruling Sadducees, came upon them toward evening, and put them in prison to await the action of the judges next day.[1415] On the morrow they were arraigned before

Annas, Caiaphas, and other officials, who demanded of them by what power or in whose name they had healed the lame man. Peter, impelled by the power of the Holy Ghost, answered: "**Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.**"[1416]

The hierarchy learned to their consternation that the work they had sought to destroy through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ was spreading now as it had never spread before. In desperation they commanded the apostles, "**Not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.**" But Peter and John answered boldly: "**Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.**" This rejoinder of righteous defiance the priestly rulers dared not openly resent; they had to content themselves with threats.

The Church grew with surprising rapidity; "**believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.**" So abundantly was the gift of healing manifest through the ministrations of the apostles that as formerly to Christ, now to them, the people flocked, bringing their sick folk and those possessed of evil spirits; and all were healed. So great was the faith of the believers that they laid their afflicted ones on couches in the streets, "**that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.**"[1417]

The high priest and his haughty Sadducean associates caused the apostles to be again arrested and thrown into the common prison. But that night the angel of the Lord opened the dungeon doors and brought the prisoners forth, telling them to go into the temple and further proclaim their testimony of the Christ. This the apostles did, and were so engaged when the Sanhedrin assembled to put them on trial. The officers who were sent to bring the prisoners to the judgment hall returned, saying: "**The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors; but when we had opened, we found no man within.**" As the judges sat in impotent consternation, an informer appeared with the word that the men they wanted were at that moment preaching in the courts. The captain and his guard arrested the apostles a third time, and brought them in, but without violence, for they feared the people. The high priest accused the prisoners by question and affirmation: "**Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.**" Yet, how recently had those same rulers led the rabble in the awful imprecation, "**His blood be on us, and on our children.**"[1418]

*This is an amazing story – those high priests must have been shaking with fear.*

Peter and the other apostles, undaunted by the august presence, and undeterred by threatening words or actions, answered with the direct counter-charge that they who sat there to judge were the slayers of the Son of God. Ponder well the solemn affirmation: "**We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.**"

Closing, locking, bolting their hearts against the testimony of the Lord's own, the chief priests, scribes, and elders of the people counseled together as to how they could put these men to death. There was at least one honorable exception among the murderously inclined councilors. Gamaliel, who was a Pharisee and a noted doctor of the law, the teacher of Saul of Tarsus afterward known through conversion, works, and divine commission, as Paul the apostle,[1419] rose in the council, and having directed that the apostles be removed from the hall, warned his colleagues against the injustice they had in mind. He cited the cases of men falsely claiming to have been sent of God, everyone of whom had come to grief with utter and most ignominious failure of his seditious plans; so would these men come to nought if the work they professed proved to be of men; "But," added the dispassionate and learned doctor, "**if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.**"[1420] Gamaliel's advice prevailed for the time being, to the extent of causing the apostles' lives to be spared; but the council, in contravention of justice and propriety, had the prisoners beaten. Then the brethren were discharged with the renewed injunction that they speak not in the name of Jesus. They went out rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer stripes and humiliation in defense of the Lord's name; and daily, both in the temple, and by house to house visitation, they valiantly taught and preached Jesus the Christ. Converts to the Church were not confined to the laity; a great company of the priests swelled the number of the disciples, who multiplied greatly in Jerusalem.[1421]

### **STEPHEN THE MARTYR; HIS VISION OF THE LORD [1422]**

First among the "**seven men of honest report**" who were set apart under the hands of the apostles to administer the common store of the Church community, was Stephen, a man eminent in faith and good works, through whom the Lord wrought many miracles. He was zealous in service, aggressive in doctrine, and fearless as a minister of Christ. Some of the foreign Jews, who maintained a synagog in Jerusalem, engaged Stephen in disputation, and being unable "**to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake,**" conspired to have him charged with heresy and blasphemy. He was brought before the council on the word of men suborned to witness against him; and these averred that they had "**heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.**" The perjured accusers further testified that he had repeatedly spoken

blasphemously against the temple, and the law, and had even declared that Jesus of Nazareth would someday destroy the temple, and change the Mosaic ceremonies. The charge was utterly false in spirit and fact, though possibly in a sense partly true in form; for, judging by what we have of record concerning Stephen's character and works, he was a zealous preacher of the word as a world religion, through which the exclusiveness and alleged sanctity of Jerusalem as the holy city and of the now desecrated temple as the earthly abiding-place of Jehovah, would be abrogated; furthermore he seems to have realized that the law of Moses had been fulfilled in the mission of the Messiah.

When the Sanhedrists looked upon him, his face was illumined, and they saw it "as it had been the face of an angel." In answer to the charge, he delivered an address, which on critical analysis appears to have been extemporaneous, nevertheless it is strikingly logical and impressive in argument. The delivery was abruptly terminated, however, by a murderous assault.[1423] In effective epitome Stephen traced the history of the covenant people from the time of Abraham down, showing that the patriarchs, and in turn Moses and the prophets, had lived and ministered in progressive preparation for the development of which those present were witnesses. He pointed out that Moses had foretold the coming of a Prophet, who was none other than Jehovah, whom their fathers had worshipped in the wilderness, before the tabernacle, and later in the temple; but, he affirmed, **"the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands,"** the most gorgeous of which could be but small to Him who said: **"Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool."**[1424]

It is plain to be seen that Stephen's speech was not one of vindication, and far from a plea in his own defense; it was a proclamation of the word and purposes of God by a devoted servant who had no thought for personal consequences. In forceful arraignment he thus addressed his judges: **"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers."** Maddened at this direct accusation, the Sanhedrists "gnashed on him with their teeth." He knew that they thirsted for his blood; but, energized by the Holy Ghost, he looked steadfastly upward, and exclaimed in rapture: **"Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."**[1425] This is the first New Testament record of a manifestation of Christ to mortal eyes by vision or otherwise, subsequent to His ascension. The priestly rulers cried aloud, and stopped their ears to what they chose to regard as blasphemous utterances; and, rushing upon the prisoner with one accord, they hurried him outside the city walls and stoned him to death. True to his Master, he prayed: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit"; and then, crushed to earth, he cried with a loud voice: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

So died the first martyr for the testimony of the risen Christ. He was slain by a mob comprising chief priests, scribes, and elders of the people. What cared they that no sentence had been pronounced against him, or that they were acting in reckless defiance of Roman law? Devout men bore the mangled body to its burial; and all the disciples lamented greatly. Persecution increased, and members of the Church were scattered through many lands, wherein they preached the gospel and won many to the Lord. The blood of Stephen the martyr proved to be rich and virile seed, from which sprang a great harvest of souls.[1426]

## **CHRIST MANIFESTS HIMSELF TO SAUL OF TARSUS, LATER KNOWN AS PAUL, THE APOSTLE**

Among the disputants who, when defeated in discussion, conspired against Stephen and brought about his death, were Jews from Cilicia.[1427] Associated with them was a young man named Saul, a native of the Cilician city of Tarsus. This man was an able scholar, a forceful controversialist, an ardent defender of what he regarded as the right, and a vigorous assailant of what to him was wrong. Though born in Tarsus he had been brought to Jerusalem in early youth and had there grown up a strict Pharisee and an aggressive supporter of Judaism. He was a student of the law under the tutelage of Gamaliel, one of the most eminent masters of the time[1428] and had the confidence of the high priest.[1429] His father, or perhaps an earlier progenitor, had acquired the rank of Roman citizenship, and Saul was a born heir to that distinction. Saul was a violent opponent of the apostles and the Church, and had made himself a party to the death of Stephen by openly consenting thereunto and by holding in personal custody the garments of the false witnesses while they stoned the martyr.

He wrought havoc in the Church by entering private houses and haling thence men and women suspected of belief in the Christ, and these he caused to be cast into prison.[1430] The persecution in which he took so prominent a part caused a scattering of the disciples throughout Judea, Samaria, and other lands; though the apostles remained and continued their ministry in Jerusalem.[1431] Not content with local activity against the Church, **"Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem."**[1432]

As Saul and his attendants neared Damascus they were halted by an occurrence of awe-inspiring grandeur.[1433] At noontide there suddenly appeared a light far exceeding the brightness of the sun, and in this dazzling splendor the whole party was enveloped, so that they fell to the ground in terror. In the midst of the unearthly glory, a sound was heard, which to Saul alone was intelligible as an articulate voice; he heard and understood the reproving question spoken in the Hebrew tongue: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" In trepidation he inquired: "Who art thou, Lord?" The reply

sounded the heart of Saul to its depths: **"I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest"**; and continued, as in sympathetic consideration of the persecutor's situation and the renunciation that would be required of him: **"It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."**[1434] The enormity of his hostility and enmity against the Lord and His people filled the man's soul with horror, and in trembling contrition he asked: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The reply was: "Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." The brilliancy of the heavenly light had blinded Saul. His companions led him into Damascus, where, at the house of Judas, in the street called Straight, he sat in darkness for three days, during which period he neither ate nor drank.

There lived in that city a faithful disciple named Ananias, to whom the Lord spake, instructing him to visit Saul and minister unto him that he might be healed of his blindness. Ananias was astonished at the commission, and ventured to remind the Lord that Saul was a notorious persecutor of the saints, and had come at that time to Damascus to arrest and put in bonds all believers. But the Lord answered: "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." Ananias went to Saul, laid his hands upon the penitent sufferer, saying: "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." The physical obstruction to vision was removed; scaly particles fell from the eyes of Saul, and his sight was restored. Without delay or hesitation, he was baptized. When strengthened by food he communed with the disciples at Damascus and straightway began to preach in the synagogues, declaring Jesus to be the Son of God.[1435]

When Saul returned to Jerusalem, the disciples were doubtful of his sincerity, they having known of him as a violent persecutor; but Barnabas, a trusted disciple, brought him to the apostles, told of his miraculous conversion and testified of his valiant service in preaching the word of God. He was received into fellowship, and afterward was ordained under the hands of the apostles.[1436] His Hebrew name, Saul, was in time substituted by the Latin Paulus, or as to us, Paul.[1437] In view of his commission to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles, the use of his Roman name may have been of advantage, and particularly so as he was a Roman citizen and therefore could claim the rights and exemptions attaching to the status of citizenship.[1438]

It is no part of our present purpose to follow even in outline the labors of the man thus peremptorily and miraculously called into the ministry; the fact of Christ's personal manifestations to him is the sole subject of present consideration. While in Jerusalem Paul was blessed with a visual manifestation of the Lord Jesus, accompanied by the giving of specific instructions. His own testimony is to this effect: "While I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; and saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee

quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me." In explanation of his rejection by the people, Paul confessed his evil past, saying, "Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: and when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him." To this the Lord replied: "Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles."[1439] Once again, as he lay a prisoner in the Roman castle, the Lord stood by him in the night, and said: "Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."[1440]

Paul's personal witness that he had seen the resurrected Christ is explicit and emphatic. With his enumeration of some of the risen Lord's appearances he associates his own testimony, as addressed to the Corinthian saints, in this wise: "**For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the Twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.**"[1441]

## **CLOSE OF THE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY – THE REVELATION THROUGH JOHN**

The period of apostolic ministry continued until near the close of the first century of our era, approximately sixty to seventy years from the time of the Lord's ascension. In the course of that epoch the Church experienced both prosperity and vicissitude. At first the organized body increased in membership and influence in a manner regarded as phenomenal, if not miraculous.[1442] The apostles and the many other ministers who labored under their direction in graded positions of authority strove so effectively to spread the word of God, that Paul writing approximately thirty years after the ascension affirmed that the gospel had already been carried to every nation, or, to use his words, "preached to every creature under heaven."[1443] Through the agency of the Holy Ghost Christ continued to direct the affairs of His Church on the earth; and His mortal representatives, the apostles, traveled and taught, healed the afflicted, rebuked evil spirits, and raised the dead to a renewal of life.[1444]

We are without record of any direct or personal appearance of Christ to mortals between the manifestations to Paul and the revelation to John on the isle of Patmos. Tradition confirms John's implication that he had been banished thither "for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."[1445] He avers that what he wrote, now known as the book of Revelation, is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave



**unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.**"[1446] The apostle gives a vivid description of the glorified Christ as seen by him: and of the Lord's words he made record as follows: "**Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.**"[1447] John was commanded to write to each of the seven churches, or branches of the Church of Christ, then existing in Asia, administering reproof, admonition and encouragement, as the condition of each required.

The final ministry of John marked the close of the apostolic administration in the Primitive Church. His fellow apostles had gone to their rest, most of them having entered through the gates of martyrdom, and although it was his special privilege to tarry in the flesh until the Lord's advent in glory,[1448] he was not to continue his service as an acknowledged minister, known to and accepted by the Church. Even while many of the apostles lived and labored, the seed of apostasy had taken root in the Church and had grown with the rankness of pernicious weeds. This condition had been predicted, both by Old Testament prophets[1449] and by the Lord Jesus.[1450] The apostles also spake in plain prediction of the growth of the apostasy all too grievously apparent to them as then in progress.[1451] Personal manifestations of the Lord Jesus to mortals appear to have ceased with the passing of the apostles of old, and were not again witnessed until the dawn of the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 38

**1. Presiding Authority and Common Consent** – "Another instance of official action in choosing and setting apart men to special office in the Church arose soon after the ordination of Matthias. It appears that one feature of the Church organization in early apostolic days was a common ownership of material things, distribution being made according to need. As the members increased, it was found impracticable for the apostles to devote the necessary attention and time to these temporal matters, so they called upon the members to select seven men of honest report, whom the apostles would appoint to take special charge of these affairs. These men were set apart by prayer and by the laying on of hands. The instance is instructive as showing that the apostles realized their possession of authority to direct in the affairs of the Church, and that they observed with strictness the principle of common consent in the administration of their high office. They exercised their priestly powers in the spirit of love, and with due regard to the rights of the people over whom they were placed to preside." – The author, *The Great Apostasy*, 1:19.

**2. Pentecost** – The name means "fiftieth" and was applied to the Jewish feast that was celebrated fifty days after the second day of unleavened bread, or the Passover day. It is also known as "**the feast of weeks**" (Exo. 34:22; Deut. 16:10), because according to the

Hebrew style, it fell seven weeks, or a week of weeks, after the Passover; as "**the feast of harvest**" (Exo. 23:16); and as "**the day of the first-fruits**" (Numb. 28:26). Pentecost was one of the great feasts in Israel, and was of mandatory observance. Special sacrifices were appointed for the day, as was also an offering suitable to the harvest season, comprising two leavened loaves made of the new wheat; these were to be waved before the altar and then given to the priests (Lev. 23:15-20). Because of the unprecedented events that characterized the first Pentecost after our Lord's ascension, the name has become current in Christian literature as expressive of any great spiritual awakening or unusual manifestation of divine grace.

**3. Having All Things in Common**—No condition recorded of the early apostolic ministry expresses more forcefully the unity and devotion of the Church in those days than does the fact of the members establishing a system of common ownership of property (Acts 2:44, 46; 4:32-37; 6:1-4). One result of this community of interest in temporal things was a marked unity in spiritual matters; they "**were of one heart and of one soul.**" Lacking nothing, they lived in contentment and godliness. Over thirty centuries earlier the people of Enoch had rejoiced in a similar condition of oneness, and their attainments in spiritual excellence were so effective that "**the Lord came and dwelt with his people ... And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them.**" (P. of G.P., Moses 7:16-18.) The Nephite disciples grew in holiness, as "**they had all things common among them, every man dealing justly, one with another.**" (B. of M., 3 Nephi 26:19; see also 4 Nephi 1:2-3.) A system of unity in material affairs has been revealed to the Church in this current dispensation, (Doc. and Cov. 82:17, 18; 51:10-13, 18; 104:70-77), to the blessings of which the people may attain as they learn to replace selfish concern by altruism, and individual advantage by devotion to the general welfare.—See *The Articles of Faith*, xxiv:13-15.

**4. Saul's Conversion**—The sudden change of heart by which an ardent persecutor of the saints was so transformed as to become a true disciple, is to the average mind a miracle. Saul of Tarsus was a devoted student and observer of the law, a strict Pharisee. We find no intimation that he ever met or saw Jesus during the Lord's life in the flesh; and his contact with the Christian movement appears to have been brought about through disputation with Stephen. In determining what he would call right and what wrong the young enthusiast was guided too much by mind and too little by heart. His learning, which should have been his servant, was instead his master. He was a leading spirit in the cruel persecution of the first converts to Christianity; yet none can doubt his belief that even in such he was rendering service to Jehovah (compare John 16:2). His unusual energy and superb ability were misdirected. As soon as he realized the error of his course, he turned about, without counting risk, cost, or the certainty of persecution and probable martyrdom. His repentance was as genuine as had been his persecuting zeal. All through his ministry he was tortured by the past (Acts 22:4, 19, 20; 1 Cor. 15:9; 2 Cor. 12:7; Gal. 1:13); yet he found a measure of relief in the knowledge that he had

acted in good conscience (Acts 26:9-11). It was "hard for him to kick against the pricks" (revised version "goad," Acts 9:5; 26:14) of tradition, training, and education; yet he hesitated not. He was a chosen instrument for the work of the Lord (Acts 9:15); and promptly he responded to the Master's will. Whatever of error Saul of Tarsus had committed through youthful zeal, Paul the apostle gave his all – his time, talent, and life – to expiate. He was preeminently the Lord's apostle to the Gentiles; and this opening of the doors to others than Jews was the main contention between himself and Stephen. In accordance with the divine and fateful purpose, Paul was called to do the work, in opposition to which he had been a participant in the martyrdom of Stephen. At the Lord's word of direction Paul was ready to preach Christ to the Gentiles; only by a miracle could the Jewish exclusiveness of Peter and the Church generally be overcome (Acts 10; and 11:1-18).

**5. Rapid Growth of the Primitive Church** – Eusebius, who wrote in the early part of the fourth century, speaking of the first decade after the Savior's ascension, says: "Thus, then, under a celestial influence and cooperation, the doctrine of the Savior, like the rays of the sun, quickly irradiated the whole world. Presently, in accordance with divine prophecy, the sound of His inspired evangelists and apostles had gone throughout all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world. Throughout every city and village, like a replenished barn floor, churches were rapidly abounding and filled with members from every people. Those who, in consequence of the delusions that had descended to them from their ancestors, had been fettered by the ancient disease of idolatrous superstition, were now liberated by the power of Christ, through the teachings and miracles of His messengers." – (Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.*, Book I, ch. 3.)

**6. Patmos** – A small island in the Icarian section of the Aegean Sea. Dr. John R. Sterret writes of it in the *Standard Bible Dictionary* as follows: "A volcanic island of the Sporades group, now nearly treeless. It is characterized by an indented coast and has a safe harbor. By the Romans it was made a place of exile for the lower class of criminals. John, the author of 'Revelation' was banished thither by Domitian, 94 A.D. According to tradition he lived there at hard labor for eighteen months."

**7. The Holy Ghost Given** – In answer to a question as to whether the Holy Ghost was received by the apostles at or before Pentecost, a statement was published by the First Presidency of the Church on February 5, 1916 (see *Deseret News* of that date), from which statement the following excerpts are taken: "The answer to this question depends upon what is meant by 'receiving' the Holy Ghost. If reference is made to the promise of Jesus to His apostles about the endowment or gift of the Holy Ghost by the presence and ministration of the 'personage of Spirit,' called the Holy Ghost by revelation (Doc. and Cov. 130:22), then the answer is, it was not until the day of Pentecost that the promise was fulfilled. But the divine essence called the Spirit of God, or Holy Spirit, or Holy Ghost, by which God created or organized all things, and by which the prophets wrote and spoke, was bestowed in former ages, and inspired the apostles in their

ministry long before the day of Pentecost.... We read that Jesus, after His resurrection, breathed upon His disciples and said, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' But we also read that He said, 'Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high' (John 20:22; Luke 24:49). We read further: 'For the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.' (John 7:39.) Thus the promise was made, but the fulfillment came after, so that the Holy Ghost sent by Jesus from the Father did not come in person until the day of Pentecost, and the cloven tongues of fire were the sign of His coming."

## FOOTNOTES

[1400] Acts 1:15-26.

[1401] Luke 24:52,53; Acts 1:12-14.

[1402] 1 Cor. 15:20; Rev. 1:5; Colos. 1:18.

[1403] Matt. 27:52, 53.

[1404] Acts 1:16; compare Psalm 41:9; see also John 13:18.

[1405] Acts 1:20. The revised version substitutes on a preponderance of authority "office" or, (marginal reading), "oversiership," for the erroneous rendering "bishopruck" in the common version. Compare Psalm 109:8.

[1406] Acts 6:1-6; Note 1, end of chapter.

[1407] Acts 2:1-41. Note 7, end of chapter.

[1408] Note 2, end of chapter.

[1409] Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 5, 8.

[1410] Acts 2:6, in a better rendering than that of the common text (see revised version) reads: "And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together."

[1411] Joel 2:28, 29; compare Zech. 12:10.

[1412] Note 3, end of chapter.

[1413] Acts 2:44-46; 4:32-37; 6:1-4.

[1414] Acts 3:6; read the entire chapter.

[1415] Acts 4:1-22.

[1416] Acts 4:8-12; compare Psalm 118:22; Isa. 28:16; Matt. 21:42.

[1417] Acts 5:12-17.

[1418] Matt. 27:25; compare 23:35; see chapter 34 herein.

[1419] Acts 22:3.

[1420] Acts 5:33-40.

[1421] Acts 6:7.

[1422] Acts 6:8-15; and 7.

[1423] Acts 7:1-53.

[1424] Isa. 66:1, 2; see also Matt. 5:34, 35; 23:22.

[1425] Acts 7:56. Note this exceptional application of the title, Son of Man, to Christ by anyone other than Himself. See chapter 11 herein.

[1426] Acts 8:4; 11:19.

[1427] Acts 6:9.

[1428] Acts 22:3; compare 5:34; see chapter 38 herein.

[1429] In view of Saul's social status and recognized ability, many believe him to have been a member of the Sanhedrin; but for this assumption we find no definite warrant in scripture.

[1430] Acts 7:58; 8:1-3.

[1431] Acts 8:1.

[1432] Acts 9:1, 2. Observe that "way" here used for the first time to connote the gospel or religion of Christ, occurs frequently in Acts (16:17; 18:25, 26; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22).

[1433] Three versions of this manifestation and its immediate results appear in Acts (9:3-29; 22:6-16; and 26:12-18): the first is the historian's narrative, while the others are given as reports of Saul's own words.

[1434] Note 4, end of chapter.

[1435] Note 4, end of chapter.

[1436] Acts 9:26-28; 13:2, 3.

[1437] Acts 13:9.

[1438] Acts 16:37-40; 22:25-28; 23:27; 25:11; 26:32; 28:19.

[1439] Acts 22:17-21.

[1440] Acts 23:11.

[1441] 1 Cor. 15:3-9.

[1442] Note 5, end of chapter.

[1443] Col. 1:23; see verse 6; also "The Great Apostasy," 1:20, 21.

[1444] Acts 9:36-43.

[1445] Rev. 1:9; see Note 6, end of chapter.

[1446] Rev. 1:1; read the whole chapter.

[1447] Rev. 1:10-20.

[1448] See chapter 37 herein.

[1449] Isa. 24:1-6; Amos. 8:11, 12.

[1450] Matt. 24:4, 5, 10-13, 23-26.

[1451] Acts 20:17-31, particularly 29, 30; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 4:1-4; 2 Thess. 2:3, 4, 7, 8; 2 Peter 2:1-3, read the entire chapter and observe its application to conditions in the world today; Jude 3, 4, 17-19; Rev. 13:4, 6-9; 14:6, 7. See "The Great Apostasy," chapter 2.