

## Elder David B. Haight

On this glorious Easter morning, I rejoice with you and untold millions of people throughout the world whose hearts are turned to Jesus of Nazareth. To the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well who said, "I know that Messias cometh . . . : when he is come, he will tell us all things" came Christ's declaration, "I that speak unto thee am he" (John 4:25-26).

Many of the heavenly directed events leading up to and following the crucifixion of our Lord have been narrated by the early Apostles and other witnesses.

### Jesus' burial, and guarding the tomb

According to these accounts, Joseph, a rich man from the village of Arimathaea and one of the Sanhedrin, did not openly declare his belief in Jesus, as he feared the Jewish authorities. But now sorrow, as well as indignation, aroused his courage. He asked Pilate if he could take away Jesus' body. Pilate gave permission.

Nicodemus—a noble disciple who had visited Jesus at night lest someone might see them together—assisted Joseph. They wrapped Jesus' body in fine linen, together with spices, according to the Jewish custom of preparing a body for burial. They laid the body reverently in the rocky niche of a tomb in a garden that belonged to Joseph. The tomb had never been used. It was the day before the Jewish Sabbath. (See John 19:38-42.)

The next day Pilate gave permission for the tomb to be carefully guarded until the third day, so the disciples could not steal the body and then tell the people that Jesus had risen from the dead, as had been prophesied. The chief priests and Pharisees made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and leaving a guard on watch. (See Matthew 27:62-66.)

### "He is not here"

Before daylight the next morning, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, having prepared fresh spices and ointments, went to the tomb of Jesus and found that the stone had been rolled away. Looking in and not finding the body, they hurried to find Peter and the Apostles and told them what they had found. Peter and John hastened at once to the tomb. John outran his older companion. Stooping down, he gazed in silent wonder into the empty tomb. Entering, Peter saw the burial clothes lying where the body of Jesus once lay. And then John followed him. And in spite of fear, there dawned upon them the hope, which later would become an absolute knowledge, that Christ had indeed risen, but as yet no one had seen him. The two wondering Apostles returned to their brethren.

Mary stayed at the tomb and was grieving at the entrance when someone approached. Thinking it was the keeper of the garden, she asked where he had laid her Lord. Jesus said to her, "Mary."

Jesus himself was standing before her, but he did not appear as she had known him; he was now risen and glorified. She then recognized our Lord and must have attempted to embrace him, for he said, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

Filled with amazement, she hastened to obey and repeated that glorious message which would give hope through all future ages and to which she added her personal declaration that she had seen the Lord. (See John 20:1-18.)

Later, women carrying spices for the final preparation of the body for burial looked in the tomb and witnessed angels, who said, "Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified. Why seek ye the living among the dead? He

is not here, but is risen" (Mark 16:6; Luke 24:6)

The angels told the women to go and notify the disciples, but the men believed them not. (See Mark 16:7; Luke 24:9-11.)

### On the road to Emmaus

The Gospel according to Luke relates that on that same day two of Jesus' followers were on their way to a village called Emmaus, about eight miles from Jerusalem, and they were discussing with sad and anxious hearts the things that had happened in the past two days.

As they walked and conversed, a stranger joined them and walked along with them. Even though this stranger was indeed the resurrected Christ, they did not recognize him.

Gospel writers indicate their conversation went something like this:

Jesus asked them, "What are you talking about, as you walk along?"

They were surprised and said, "Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem that does not know what has been happening here these last few days?"

"What things?" Jesus asked.

"The things that happened to Jesus of Nazareth. This man was a prophet and was considered by God and by all the people to be powerful in everything he said and did. Our chief priests and rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and he was crucified. We had hoped that he would be the one who was going to set Israel free.

"And besides, today is the third day since it happened. Some of our women went to the tomb," they continued, "but could not find his body. They came to us saying they had seen a vision of angels, who told them that he is risen. So some of us went to the tomb and found it even as the women said, but we did not see him."

Then the stranger said to them, "How foolish you are, to be so slow to believe all that the prophets have said. Was it not necessary for Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?" And Jesus explained, as they

walked, what was said about himself in the scriptures, beginning with Moses and the writings of all of the prophets.

As they came near the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going further, but they persuaded him to stay, saying, "Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent."

So he stayed with them. As he ate the simple meal with them, he took the bread and blessed it; then he broke the bread and gave it to them. As he did this, their eyes were opened, and they recognized the Lord; and then he vanished from their sight.

They said in amazement to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us when he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?"

They hurried back to Jerusalem, where they found ten of the Apostles and other disciples gathered together, with the doors closed for fear of the Jews. (See John 20:19.) They declared, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon."

The two men then explained what had happened on the road and how they had recognized the Lord when he broke the bread.

### Appeared to Apostles

While the two men were telling them this, suddenly the Lord himself stood in the midst of them and said, "Peace be unto you."

They were terrified and supposed that they were seeing a spirit, but he said to them, "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."

He showed them his hands and his feet. They still could not believe as they were so full of joy and wonderment, so he asked them, "Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and . . . honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them."

Then he said to them, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me."

Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures and said to 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 then he reminded them, "Ye are witnesses of these things." (See Luke 24:13-48.)

One of the Twelve, named Thomas, was not with them when Jesus came, so the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." Thomas said to them, "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."

A week later the disciples were again gathered together indoors, and Thomas was with them. The doors were locked, but Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be unto you." Then he said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach thither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing."

I have often pictured in my own mind the skeptical Thomas' depth of remorse that must have been burning within his soul as his doubting heart, now purified, attempted a reply to his Lord.

Thomas' only answer unto him was, "My Lord and my God."

And Jesus said unto him, "Thomas, because thou has seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (See John 20:25-29.)

Perhaps no clearer declaration of fact has ever been made than those which tell of the literal resurrection of Christ. The record of appearances to the Apostles during the forty days following his resurrection—as a group or

separately, to teach them "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3)—leaves no cause for doubt. John informs us that "there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written, . . . even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21:25).

### Appeared on Western Hemisphere

Shortly after Jesus' appearance to the disciples on the Eastern Hemisphere, he appeared to the Nephites on the Western Hemisphere. God himself introduced his Son to the multitude: "Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him" (3 Nephi 11:7).

"The people beheld a Man, clothed in a white robe, who descended and stood among them. He spake, saying: 'Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world; and behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning.' [3 Nephi 11:10-11.] The multitude [kneel] in adoration for they remembered that their prophets had foretold that the Lord would appear among them after His resurrection and ascension.

"As He directed, the people arose, and one by one came to Him, and did see and feel the prints of the nails in His hands and feet and the spear-wound in His side. . . . With one accord they cried: "Hosanna! blessed be the name of the Most High God!" [3 Nephi 11:17.] Then, falling at the feet of Jesus, they worshiped Him" (James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1916], p. 725).

### Appearances in modern day

When Joseph Smith was visited by the Father and the resurrected Christ in 1820, the latter was introduced by the Father, "This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!" (Joseph Smith—History 1:17), thus ushering in the marvelous events of the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our resurrected Lord was seen in a vision by Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon in 1832. Joseph recorded: "The Lord touched the eyes of our understandings, . . .

"And we beheld the glory of the Son, on the right hand of the Father, and received of his fulness;

"And saw the holy angels, and them who are sanctified before his throne, worshipping God, and the Lamb, who worship him forever and ever.

"And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony . . . which we give of him: That he lives!

"For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

"That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God" (D&C 76:19–24).

### "I am the resurrection, and the life"

Now, these fragmentary events which I have briefly portrayed bear record and witness that resurrection and eternal life come to us because of what Christ our Lord did for each of us. He declared, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25–26). To this declaration of truth I bear my solemn witness, in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "I Know That My Redeemer Lives," following which we shall hear from Elder Wm. Grant Bangerter, a member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

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The choir and congregation sang "I Know That My Redeemer Lives."

Elder Wm. Grant Bangerter spoke without further announcement.

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## Elder William Grant Bangerter

The glory of Easter morning fills the souls of those who yearn for eternal life. A similar glory touched the majestic morning when the Father and the Son announced the dawning of the day of salvation in the last days.

To contemplate what happened on those mornings of grandeur stirs the innermost feelings of the members of the Church.

### Spirit of gathering

A mystic, spiritual force, similar to the magnetism of the lodestone, has drawn the Saints to seek the place where their longings can be satisfied. This is the spirit of the gathering, foretold in the scriptures. It is the reason why each one of us is here today, as we have been drawn both literally and spiritually to Zion—an actual, tangible place where the soul's yearning can be