

Behold the Man!

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Those who find a way to truly behold the Man find the doorway to life's greatest joys and the balm to life's most demanding despairs.

My beloved brothers and sisters, dear friends, I am grateful to be with you on this wonderful general conference weekend. Harriet and I rejoice with you in sustaining Elders Gong and Soares and the many brothers and sisters who have received significant new callings during this general conference.

Although I miss my dear friend President Thomas S. Monson, I love, sustain, and support our prophet and President, Russell M. Nelson, and his noble counselors.

I am also thankful and honored to once again work more closely with my beloved fellow Brethren of the Quorum of the Twelve.

Most of all, I am deeply humbled and very happy to be a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, where millions of men, women, and children are willing to *lift where they stand*—in whatever capacity or calling—and strive with all their hearts to serve God and His children, building the kingdom of God.

Today is a sacred day. It is Easter Sunday, when we commemorate that glorious morning when our Savior broke the bands of death¹ and emerged triumphant from the tomb.

The Greatest Day in History

Recently I asked the internet, "What day most changed the course of history?"

The responses ranged from surprising and strange to insightful and thought-provoking. Among them, the day when a prehistoric asteroid struck the Yucatán Peninsula; or when in 1440, Johannes Gutenberg finished his printing press; and, of course, the day in 1903 when the Wright brothers showed the world that man really can fly.

If the same question were asked of you, what would you say?

In my mind the answer is clear.

To find the most important day in history, we must go back to that evening almost 2,000 years ago in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus Christ knelt in intense prayer and offered Himself as a ransom for our sins. It was during this great and infinite sacrifice of unparalleled suffering in both body and spirit that Jesus Christ, even God, bled at every pore. Out of perfect love, He gave all that we might receive all. His supernal sacrifice, difficult to

comprehend, to be felt only with all our heart and mind, reminds us of the universal debt of gratitude we owe Christ for His divine gift.

Later that night, Jesus was brought before religious and political authorities who mocked Him, beat Him, and sentenced Him to a shameful death. He hung in agony upon the cross until, finally, “it [was] finished.”² His lifeless body was laid in a borrowed tomb. And then, on the morning of the third day, Jesus Christ, the Son of Almighty God, emerged from the tomb as a glorious, resurrected being of splendor, light, and majesty.

Yes, there are many events throughout history that have profoundly affected the destiny of nations and peoples. But combine them all, and they cannot begin to compare to the importance of what happened on that first Easter morning.

What is it that makes the infinite sacrifice and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ the most important event in history—more influential than world wars, cataclysmic disasters, and life-changing scientific discoveries?

Because of Jesus Christ, We Can Live Again

The answer lies in two great, insurmountable challenges that every one of us faces.

First, we all die. No matter how young, beautiful, healthy, or cautious you are, someday your body will become lifeless. Friends and family will mourn you. But they cannot bring you back.

Nevertheless, because of Jesus Christ, your death will be temporary. Your spirit one day will reunite with your body. This resurrected body will not be subject to death,³ and you will live in the eternities, free from pain and physical suffering.⁴

This will happen because of Jesus the Christ, who laid down His life and took it up again.

He did this for all who believe in Him.

He did this for all who do not believe in Him.

He did this even for those who mock, revile, and curse His name.⁵

Because of Jesus Christ, We Can Live with God

Second, we have all sinned. Our sins would forever keep us from living with God, because “no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom.”⁶

As a result, every man, woman, and child was shut out of His presence—that is, until Jesus Christ, the Lamb without spot, offered His life as a ransom for our sins. Because Jesus owed no debt to justice, He could pay our debt and meet the demands of justice for every soul. And that includes you and me.

Jesus Christ paid the price for our sins.

All of them.

On that most important day in history, Jesus the Christ opened the gates of death and cast aside the barriers that prevented us from passing into the holy and hallowed halls of everlasting life. Because of our Lord and Savior, you and I are granted a most precious and priceless gift—regardless of our past, we can repent and follow the path that leads to celestial light and glory, surrounded by the faithful children of Heavenly Father.

Why We Rejoice

This is what we celebrate on Easter Sunday—we celebrate life!

Because of Jesus Christ, we will rise from the despair of death and embrace those we love, shedding tears of overwhelming joy and overflowing gratitude. Because of Jesus Christ, we will exist as eternal beings, worlds without end.

Because of Jesus the Christ, our sins can not only be erased; they can be forgotten.

We can become purified and exalted.

Holy.

Because of our beloved Savior, we can forever drink from the fountain of water that springs up into eternal life.⁷ We can dwell forever in the mansions of our eternal King, in unimaginable glory and perfect happiness.

Do We “Behold the Man”?

In spite of all this, there are many in the world today who are either not aware of or do not believe in the precious gift Jesus Christ has given us. They may have heard of Jesus Christ and know of Him as a historical figure, but they do not see Him for who He truly is.

When I think of this, I am reminded of the Savior standing before the Roman prefect of Judea, Pontius Pilate, just a few hours before the Savior’s death.

Pilate viewed Jesus from a strictly worldly perspective. Pilate had a job to do, and it involved two major tasks: collecting taxes for Rome and keeping the peace. Now the Jewish Sanhedrin had brought before him a man who they claimed was an obstacle to both.⁸

After interrogating his prisoner, Pilate announced, “I find in him no fault at all.”⁹ But he felt he had to appease Jesus’s accusers, so Pilate called upon a local custom that allowed one prisoner to be released during Passover season. Would they not have him release Jesus instead of the notorious robber and murderer Barabbas?¹⁰

But the tumultuous mob demanded that Pilate release Barabbas and crucify Jesus.

“Why?” Pilate asked. “What evil [has] he done?”

But they only shouted the louder. “Crucify him!”¹¹

In one final effort to satisfy the mob, Pilate ordered his men to scourge Jesus.¹² This they did, leaving Him bloodied and bruised. They mocked Him, placed a crown of thorns on His head,

and clothed Him in a purple robe.¹³

Perhaps Pilate thought this would satisfy the mob's lust for blood. Perhaps they would take pity on the man. "Behold, I bring him forth to you," Pilate said, "that ye may know that I find no fault in him. ... Behold the man!"¹⁴

The Son of God stood in the flesh before the people of Jerusalem.

They could see Jesus, but they did not truly behold Him.

They did not have eyes to see.¹⁵

In a figurative sense, we too are invited to "behold the man." Opinions about Him vary in the world. Ancient and modern prophets testify that He is the Son of God. I do this too. It is significant and important that we each come to know for ourselves. So, when you ponder the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, what do you see?

Those who find a way to truly behold the Man find the doorway to life's greatest joys and the balm to life's most demanding despairs.

So, when you are encompassed by sorrows and grief, behold the Man.

When you feel lost or forgotten, behold the Man.

When you are despairing, deserted, doubting, damaged, or defeated, behold the Man.

He will comfort you.

He will heal you and give meaning to your journey. He will pour out His Spirit and fill your heart with exceeding joy.¹⁶

He gives "power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength."¹⁷

When we truly behold the Man, we learn of Him and seek to align our lives with Him. We repent and strive to refine our natures and daily grow a little closer to Him. We trust Him. We show our love for Him by keeping His commandments and by living up to our sacred covenants.

In other words, we become His disciples.

His refining light saturates our souls. His grace uplifts us. Our burdens are lightened, our peace deepened. When we truly behold the Man, we have the promise of a blessed future that inspires and upholds us through the bends and bumps in life's journey. Looking back, we will recognize that there is a divine pattern, that the dots really connect.¹⁸

As you accept His sacrifice, become His disciple, and finally reach the end of your earthly journey, what will become of the sorrows you have endured in this life?

They will be gone.

The disappointments, betrayals, persecutions you have faced?

Gone.

The suffering, heartache, guilt, shame, and anguish you have passed through?

Gone.

Forgotten.

Is it any wonder that “we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ ... that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins”?
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Is it any wonder that we strive with all our hearts to truly behold the Man?

My beloved brothers and sisters, I testify that the most important day in the history of mankind was the day when Jesus Christ, the living Son of God, won the victory over death and sin for all of God’s children. And the most important day in your life and mine is the day when we learn to “behold the man”; when we see Him for who He truly is; when we partake with all our heart and mind of His atoning power; when with renewed enthusiasm and strength, we commit to follow Him. May that be a day that recurs over and over again throughout our lives.

I leave you my testimony and blessing that as we “behold the man,” we will find meaning, joy, and peace in this earthly life and eternal life in the world to come. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.