

Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith

## Jesus Christ Redeems All Mankind from Temporal Death

“Chapter 10: Jesus Christ Redeems All Mankind from Temporal Death,” *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith*, 86

*The Atonement of Jesus Christ unconditionally overcomes temporal death and gives to all people the gift of resurrection and immortality.*

### From the Life of Joseph F. Smith

As a missionary and throughout his life, Joseph F. Smith shared the message of the restored gospel of salvation with those who would listen. He taught that the Atonement of Jesus Christ is the central and most significant act of all human history.

The Atonement of our Savior unconditionally overcomes temporal death and provides all people with the gift of resurrection and immortality. In addition, the Atonement of Jesus Christ overcomes spiritual death by redeeming us from our sins and making possible our exaltation if we repent and keep the commandments. The unconditional aspects of the Atonement are addressed in this chapter; the conditional aspects are addressed in the following chapter.

At the death of his 19-year-old daughter Alice, his “Darling Alibo,” on 29 April 1901, Joseph F. Smith conveyed his faith in the Atonement in a letter to his son: “Our hearts are still bowed down in the earth where the remains of our Sweet girl and those of her little Brothers and Sisters repose in dust. ... But we will do the best we can, by the help of the Lord, and from our hearts we feel that our Sleeping treasures are all in His holy keeping and will soon awake from the dust to immortality and eternal life. But for the precious assurance and glorious hope in the Gospel of Christ, life would not only *not* be worth the living, but it would be an infamous and damning *farce!* But, ‘O, what joy this sentence gives, I *know* that *my Redeemer lives!*’ Thank God.” [1](#)

### Teachings of Joseph F. Smith

#### Jesus Christ wrought the glorious redemption for the salvation of mankind.

We believe in the Lord Jesus and in his divine, saving mission into the world, and in the redemption, the marvelous, glorious redemption, that he wrought for the salvation of men. [2](#)

Jesus had not finished his work when his body was slain, neither did he finish it after his resurrection from the dead; although he had accomplished the purpose for which he then came to the earth, he had not fulfilled all his work. And when will he? Not until he has redeemed and saved every son and daughter of our father Adam that have been or ever will be born upon this earth to the end of time, except the sons of perdition. That is his mission. [3](#)

Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, is the true standard for all men to follow, the example for all men. He was not a sinner; He was not wicked. In Him there was not any wickedness, nor unbelief, nor folly whatever. He was thoroughly endowed with the wisdom of God from the cradle to the tomb, and after His resurrection He became possessed of the glory of the Father, and became like God himself, possessed of power as God possesses power, for He declared that all power had been given unto Him, and He sits upon the right hand of the Almighty, and is our Mediator, our Elder Brother, and we must follow Him and nobody else. [4](#)

No other name under heaven is given but that of Jesus Christ, by which you can be saved or exalted in the kingdom of God. [5](#)

There are some great truths in the plan of redemption that are fundamental. They cannot be ignored; none others can be placed before them. The fatherhood of God, the efficacy of the atonement of our Lord and Savior, the restoration of the gospel in these latter days, must be accepted with our whole hearts. [6](#)

#### Adam’s Fall brought death into the world.

Death is not an unmixed horror. With it are associated some of the profoundest and most important truths of human life. Although painful in the extreme to those who must suffer the departure of dear ones, death is one of

the grandest blessings in divine economy.

We are born that we may put on mortality, that is, that we may clothe our spirits with a body. Such a blessing is the first step toward an immortal body, and the second step is death. Death lies along the road of eternal progress; and though hard to bear, no one who believes in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and especially in the resurrection, would have it otherwise. ... Death is really a necessity as well as a blessing, and ... we would not and could not be satisfied and supremely happy without it. [7](#)

When man [Adam] transgressed that heavenly law, which forbade that he should partake of the elements of this earth, whereby he should become of the earth, earthy, then he brought upon himself temporal death, just as God declared he would do, if he should partake of the “forbidden fruit.” [8](#)

For death was the penalty of the law transgressed, which man was powerless to avert, that fiat of God being, “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,” [[Moses 3:17](#)] and this penalty was to follow upon all flesh, all being as helpless and dependent as he was in this matter. [9](#)

We are called mortal beings because in us are seeds of death, but in reality we are immortal beings, because there is also within us the germ of eternal life. Man is a dual being, composed of the spirit which gives life, force, intelligence and capacity to man, and the body which is the tenement of the spirit and is suited to its form, adapted to its necessities, and acts in harmony with it, and to its utmost capacity yields obedience to the will of the spirit. The two combined constitute the soul. The body is dependent upon the spirit, and the spirit during its natural occupancy of the body is subject to the laws which apply to and govern it in the mortal state. In this natural body are the seeds of weakness and decay, which, when fully ripened or untimely plucked up, in the language of scripture, is called “the temporal death.” [10](#)

Every man born into the world will die. It matters not who he is, nor where he is, whether his birth be among the rich and the noble, or among the lowly and poor in the world, his days are numbered with the Lord, and in due time he will reach the end. We should think of this. Not that we should go about with heavy hearts or with downcast countenances; not at all. I rejoice that I am born to live, to die, and to live again. I thank God for this intelligence. It gives me joy and peace that the world cannot give, neither can the world take it away. God has revealed this to me, in the gospel of Jesus Christ. I know it to be true. Therefore, I have nothing to be sad over, nothing to make me sorrowful.

All that I have to do with in the world is calculated to buoy me up, to give me joy and peace, hope and consolation in this present life, and a glorious hope of salvation and exaltation in the presence of my God in the world to come. I have no reason to mourn, not even at death. It is true, I am weak enough to weep at the death of my friends and kindred. I may shed tears when I see the grief of others.

I have sympathy in my soul for the children of men. I can weep with them when they weep; I can rejoice with them when they rejoice; but I have no cause to mourn, nor to be sad because death comes into the world. I am speaking now of the temporal death, the death of the body. ... [[Latter-day Saints](#)] know that as death came upon them by the transgression of Adam, so by the righteousness of Jesus Christ shall life come unto them, and though they die, they shall live again. [11](#)

## **The Atonement of Jesus Christ overcomes temporal death through the resurrection of all people.**

Death came upon us without the exercise of our agency; we had no hand in bringing it originally upon ourselves; it came because of the transgression of our first parents. Therefore, man, who had no hand in bringing death upon himself, shall have no hand in bringing again life unto himself; for as he dies in consequence of the sin of Adam, so shall he live again, whether he will or not, by the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and the power of his resurrection. Every man that dies shall live again. [12](#)

Jesus Christ ... is the first fruits of the resurrection from the dead, as he was raised up, so will he raise up all the children of his Father upon whom the curse of Adam came. For as by one man came temporal death upon all men, so by the righteousness of Christ all shall come to life, through the resurrection from the dead upon all men; whether they be good or whether they be evil, whether they be black or white, learned or unlearned, or whether they be young or old, it matters not [see [1 Corinthians 15:21–22](#); [Alma 11:44](#)]. The death that came by the fall of our first parents is eradicated by the resurrection of the Son of God, and you and I cannot help it. [13](#)

We all know that [the Son of God] was lifted upon the cross; that he was pierced in the side, and that his life blood flowed from the body; and that he groaned upon the cross and gave up the spirit; that his body was taken

from the cross ... and wrapped in clean linen and laid in a new sepulchre wherein the body of no man had ever been laid. [14](#)

Christ himself burst the barriers of the tomb, conquered death and the grave and came forth “the first fruits of them that slept.” [[1 Corinthians 15:20.](#)] [15](#)

He came into the world ... clothed with double power—power to die, which He derived from His mother; and power to resist death, if He had so willed it, which He had inherited from His Father. Thus He had power both to live forever and also power to pass through the ordeal of death, that He might suffer it for all men, and come forth out of the grave to a newness of life—a resurrected being, to be clothed with immortality and eternal life, that all men might come forth out of the grave unto life eternal, if they will obey Him. They will come forth anyhow, either as vessels of honor or as vessels of dishonor. They will come forth from the grave whether they will or not. They can't help themselves. We could not help the curse of mortal death coming upon us, neither shall we be able to avoid or to prevent the resurrection of this body from that grave; for as God raised from the dead, so will all mankind. [16](#)

We distinctly believe that Jesus Christ himself is the true, and only true type of the resurrection of men from death unto life. We believe there is no other form of resurrection from death to life; that as he rose, and as he preserved his identity, even to the scars of the wounds in his hands and feet and side, that he could prove himself to those that were skeptical of the possibility of rising from the dead, that he was indeed himself, the Lord crucified, buried in the tomb, and raised again from death to life, so it will be with you and with every son and daughter of Adam, born into the world. [17](#)

We [will] come forth out of the grave, when the trump shall sound, and these our bodies shall rise and our spirits shall enter into them again, and they shall become living souls, no more to be dissolved or separated, but to become inseparable, immortal, eternal. [18](#)

The elements which compose this temporal body will not perish, will not cease to exist, but in the day of the resurrection these elements will come together again, bone to bone, and flesh to flesh. The body will come forth as it is laid to rest, for there is no growth or development in the grave. As it is laid down, so will it arise, and changes to perfection will come by the law of restitution. But the spirit will continue to expand and develop, and the body, after the resurrection will develop to the full stature of man. [19](#)

The spirit and the body will be reunited. We shall see each other in the flesh, in the same tabernacles that we have here while in mortality. Our tabernacles will be brought forth as they are laid down, although there will be a restoration effected; every organ, every limb that has been maimed, every deformity caused by accident or in any other way, will be restored and put right. Every limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame. We will know each other and enjoy each other's society throughout the endless ages of eternity, if we keep the law of God. [20](#)

What a glorious thought it is, to me at least, and it must be to all who have conceived of the truth or received it in their hearts, that those from whom we have to part here, we will meet again and see as they are. We will meet the same identical being that we associated with here in the flesh—not some other soul, some other being, or the same being in some other form, but the same identity and the same form and likeness, the same person we knew and were associated with in our mortal existence, even to the wounds in the flesh. Not that a person will always be marred by scars, wounds, deformities, defects or infirmities, for these will be removed in their course, in their proper time, according to the merciful providence of God. Deformity will be removed; defects will be eliminated, and men and women shall attain to the perfection of their spirits, to the perfection that God designed in the beginning. It is his purpose that men and women, his children, born to become heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, shall be made perfect, physically as well as spiritually, through obedience to the law by which he has provided the means that perfection shall come to all his children. [21](#)

So far as the stages of eternal progression and attainment have been made known through divine revelation, we are to understand that only resurrected and glorified beings can become parents of spirit offspring. Only such exalted souls have reached maturity in the appointed course of eternal life; and the spirits born to them in the eternal worlds will pass in due sequence through the several stages or estates by which the glorified parents have attained exaltation. [22](#)

I cannot conceive of any more desirable thing than is vouchsafed to us in the gospel of Jesus Christ—that though we die, yet we shall live again, and though we die and dissolve into the native elements of which our tabernacles are composed, yet these elements will again be restored to each other and be re-organized, and we will become again living souls just as the Savior did before us; and his having done so has made it possible for all the rest of us. [23](#)

## Suggestions for Study

- What is the “divine, saving mission” of Jesus Christ in the plan of redemption?
  - Why must the reality and power of the Atonement “be accepted with our whole hearts”? What blessings come to those who do this?
  - How is man a “dual being”? (See also [D&C 88:15–16](#).) What blessings come to us because we know this?
  - What is temporal death? How does it help you to know that “death lies along the road of eternal progress”?
  - What doctrines help us to remove the fear of temporal death from our lives? Why can we rejoice that we are “born to live, to die, and to live again”?
  - In what way was Jesus Christ “clothed with double power”?
  - What does it mean to be resurrected? In what form will our bodies appear when we are resurrected?
  - How do you feel when you realize that Jesus Christ has made it possible for you to be resurrected and live forever? How does this realization help you keep the covenants you have made with God?
  - Why is it important to remember that one day we really will die and be resurrected?
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## Notes

1. Joseph F. Smith to Jos. R. Smith, 14 May 1901, Historical Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
2. *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. (1939), 138.
3. *Gospel Doctrine*, 442.
4. In Brian H. Stuy, comp, *Collected Discourses Delivered by President Wilford Woodruff, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others*, 5 vols. (1987–92), 5:54.
5. *Gospel Doctrine*, 39.
6. *Gospel Doctrine*, 117.
7. *Gospel Doctrine*, 296–97.
8. “Latter-day Saints Follow Teachings of the Savior,” *Scrap Book of Mormon Literature*, 2 vols. (n.d.), 2:555.
9. *Gospel Doctrine*, 202.
10. *Gospel Doctrine*, 14.
11. *Gospel Doctrine*, 428; paragraphing added.
12. *Gospel Doctrine*, 69.
13. *Gospel Doctrine*, 469.
14. *Gospel Doctrine*, 463.
15. *Gospel Doctrine*, 444.
16. “Latter-day Saints Follow Teachings of the Savior,” 2:558.
17. *Gospel Doctrine*, 435.
18. *Gospel Doctrine*, 450–51.
19. “Editor’s Table: On the Resurrection,” *Improvement Era*, June 1904, 623–24.
20. *Gospel Doctrine*, 447.

21. *Gospel Doctrine*, 23.

22. *Gospel Doctrine*, 69–70.

23. *Gospel Doctrine*, 458.

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