

Christ the Creator

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It is truly a great pleasure, my brothers and sisters, to be with you here today, to feel the power of your influence and your presence, and to hear this most beautiful music. It is in the spirit of Christmas, the spirit of testimony, that I come to you here today. I wish to bear testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave us Christmas.

Nearly all of you are Latter-day Saints and you know the meaning of testimony. Most of you have borne your testimonies from time to time, and I have borne mine in many parts of the world. We are a people of testimony, just as we are a people of covenants. As Latter-day Saints we have a responsibility to bear a particular kind of testimony—all of us. And what is that testimony?

First of all, that God lives, that he is truly our Eternal Father and we are his literal spirit offspring. Second, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the Savior of the World, and that he has a modern ministry as well as an ancient one, and that you and I—all of us—are involved in that modern ministry. Third, that Joseph Smith was raised up in these last days and especially chosen as an instrument through whom the Lord would introduce his modern ministry to the world. And fourth, that following Joseph Smith there has been an unbroken line of

prophets who have carried on his work and will continue to do so. These are the mighty facts of which we may bear testimony.

But we are also a people of covenants. The Jews are spoken of as the covenant race, and in a sense they are, inasmuch as they were descended from Abraham. But we, the Latter-day Saints, are doubly so, not only because we also are descendants of the Tribes of Israel, but because we personally have made many covenants with God.

What are the covenants that we ourselves have made? The first, of course, was in baptism, wherein we took upon ourselves the name of Christ and there pledge that we would serve him and keep his commandments. Then we accepted the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and therein we bore testimony once again to the existence of God and our belief in him, and we pledged always to remember the Savior and to keep his commandments which he has given unto us. The brethren enter into a

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covenant with God as they receive the holy priesthood, for under that ordination they agree—we all agree—that we will live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. And then we have other ordinances, and each one of them has a covenant attached.

Altogether, in every sense, we are the covenant people of God, pledged to serve him and to help establish his kingdom here on the earth. But what do we do with these covenants? Are we prone to set them aside in our busy lives and forget them? Or do we actually take them seriously, and put God first in our lives? Each day we must choose whom we will serve, whether we will preserve our allegiance to God or whether we will drift away.

I often ask myself why so many people go the worldly way. Why do so few, relatively speaking, join the ranks of Christ? As I have studied the records of people who have become inactive in the Church, I have become convinced that, for the most part, they are inactive because they know little or nothing about the Lord Jesus Christ or his gospel. Therefore, they have never learned to love him, nor to appreciate his pattern of success in life, not to comprehend in any measure his great power.

Who is Jesus Christ that we should be concerned about him? Is he related in any way to our life here on earth? Why are we alive anyway? What is the reason for our existence? What is its purpose? How does Christ fit into it all? These questions come down to the basic concepts over which both scientists and religionists have struggled for years. But we Latter-day Saints need not struggle over them, for we have received the answers by revelation. It is this that separates us from the world. Revelation makes us different and gives us special status.

We need not be disturbed by the hypothetical teachings of men, brilliant and scholarly though they may be. Although they search diligently, these men admit that they have no final

answers to the basic questions of life. They seek earnestly, gathering a few data here and there, making their deductions, revising them from time to time, and hoping that in the end they may arrive at the truth. But we who have revelation already know the facts about our existence, and they all relate to God.

What does revelation say? It tells us that Almighty God was the Creator, and that he has revealed the truth about the origin of life and all else in creation. He himself says, “And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten” (Moses 1:33). Then it was through Christ that the Creation came to be. No true believer will reject these words, for they are revelation.

Note that the Almighty here declares that he had a purpose in creation: “And I also created them for mine own purpose.” How often have the scientists debated the question of whether or not there is any evidence of purpose in creation! Some doubt, but many agree that there is. Having seen obvious purpose in creation, and to some extent seeing its significance, they ask: Could the uniformity we note in all nature, the mathematical precision which characterizes the movements of stars and planets, and the distinct evidence of planning as seen throughout the universe be the result of an accident? Could all this possibly exist without some great purpose?

These scholars have said that inasmuch as there is manifest purpose in creation, there must be, of necessity, what they call a *Purposer*; and since there is not purpose without personality, then, they say further that the complexity of nature proclaims the existence of an infinite mathematical mind, and this mind they call God (see Alfred G. Fisk, *The Search for Life's Meaning*, pp. 89–98).

Others, as you know, refuse to believe, and see nothing in the cosmos but the result of accident or coincidence. But as the great Albert

Einstein said: “. . . The harmony of natural law . . . reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection” (Albert Einstein, *The World As I See It*, pp. 267–68). Dr. Oscar Leo Brauer, physicist at San Jose State, said:

*Science can establish that a creative act at some time must have taken place, implying the existence of . . . a Divine Power. Science can also establish that none but a Divine Intelligence could have been the Author of the tremendous, involved and intricate system of laws in the universe. [John Clover Monsma, ed., *The Evidence of God in an Expanding Universe*, p. 84]*

There was a creation. There was a divine Creator, and that Creator was Jesus Christ. God’s purpose in creation, of course, was to make a suitable dwelling place for us, his children, where we might begin our development toward becoming like him; for we can become like him, and are so commanded. As God spoke to Moses he declared that it was through his Son, Jesus Christ, that creation came about. And the Bible, of course, agrees with that.

The King James translation says that “all things were made by him [that is, by Jesus Christ]; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3). The more modern American Translation by Smith and Goodspeed reads like this for the first part of the gospel of John: “In the beginning the Word existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was *Divine*” (John 1:1, italics added). The New World Translation has it read: “In (the) beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word *was a god*” (John 1:1; italics added).

To continue with the Smith and Goodspeed translation, we have:

In the beginning the Word existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was divine.

It was he that was with God in the beginning. Everything came into existence through him, and apart from him nothing came to be.

It was by him that life came into existence . . . [John 1:1–4]

Note again what it says about the Savior as the Creator: “Everything came into existence through him, and apart from him nothing came to be.” These are amazing declarations. So the scriptures teach that everything came into existence through Jesus Christ and it came about with full *advance* planning and purpose. The purpose was that this was a first step in our becoming like God.

Now note what the scripture says about the origin of life, which so many believe was but a spontaneous chemical reaction from inanimate objects. It is important to keep this scripture in mind, for under no circumstance did life ever spring from nonlife—not ever from any inanimate substance. Zero plus zero equals zero; no life plus no life equals no life.

The origin of life was planned in advance and with a clear purpose by Almighty God himself. Note again the words of the scriptures: “It was by him that life came into existence.” Ponder those words. What I read is from a modern translation of the sacred scriptures, put in present-day understandable English, teaching clearly that it was by Jesus Christ that life came into existence. So you see that the creation of life was a premeditated act of God.

May I make this crystal clear: Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Savior, created all things under the direction of his Father, including life, and he did so according to a preconceived plan. He was the Creator of heaven and earth. This is the position we Latter-day Saints must take with respect to Jesus Christ. If we truly believe in him, we must believe his doctrine, and this is the doctrine of Christ. Are we willing to believe it? Are we willing to be Christians within the framework of this definition? I testify to you humbly as a servant of

Christ—but also as one of his special witnesses—that these things are true.

How do we further identify Jesus? The scripture says that “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Jesus was born in Bethlehem on that first Christmas, and the heavens rejoiced at his birth. Isaiah had predicted his coming by saying:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. [Isaiah 9:6]

Note this identification given us by Isaiah: Jesus, though now a mortal child, was still the mighty God. He had achieved divinity in his preexistence, and it was not taken from him in his mortal birth.

And what did Matthew call him? “Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matthew 1:23). Significant, isn’t it? And what did Luke call him? “The Son of the Highest, . . . the Son of God” (Luke 1:32, 35). And how did the angels speak of him? As “a Savior, . . . Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11).

As Savior, he gives us the gospel, through which we may be saved by his blood shed on the cross. As Redeemer he gives us immortality through the Resurrection. He overcame death and the grave. Only a God could do that, and he was “the mighty God,” as Isaiah so clearly said.

No power known to science can bring about the resurrection of the dead. And yet the Resurrection to us is a demonstrated fact. The fact of immortality in and of itself is vital proof that God lives, that he is the Creator, and that all life originated with him.

Our knowledge of immortality is indisputable. Our indisputable knowledge of immortality gives us equally indisputable

proof of the divine genesis of all things mortal. It testifies that there was no accident involved in the origin of life.

No inanimate substance can produce life, as we have seen. Try as the scientists have to prove it otherwise, all of their experiments have established that inanimate substances remain inanimate and cannot produce mortal life even in microscopic form. Then neither can inanimate substances bring forth immortal life. Inanimate substances are as powerless to produce immortal life as they are to produce mortal life. If they could make mortal life, they would have to be given credit for making immortal life also, for life is life, whether mortal or immortal, and both are well known to us. Every portion of life comes from God, whether it be preexistent life, mortal life, the life of the departed spirit, of resurrected life. All life comes from God.

This is something our men of learning are prone to forget or to reject as they reject religion altogether. Immortality, however, is something that they must deal with. They cannot ignore it, nor can they disprove it. It is here and it is real. But immortality is proof positive of the correct status of creation and establishes that it is of divine origin.

How do we know there is immortality? For us, as I say, it is a demonstrated fact, for men have come back from the dead to us to prove it. Our whole religion is based on the principle of men coming back from the grave and ministering to us here on earth. Some may ask, were these visitations from the other world but mystic illusions? Were they the product of someone’s overactive imagination? Or were they truly in genuine physical reality?

When Moroni came to the Prophet Joseph Smith, did he not hold the gold plates of the Book of Mormon in his flesh-and-bone hands? Could a spirit or an apparition of any kind hold a set of gold plates that were afterward handled by mortal men? Those plates were heavy. It took physical hands to hold them and

to turn over the pages. But Moroni did just that. He was a physical, literal being of flesh and bones come back from the dead. He came here proving the fact of everlasting life. Moroni was a real physical being who came to the earth in 1823 and annually for four more years thereafter, although he had lived in mortality and passed away some fourteen hundred years previously. Then did he not come back from the dead?

Consider the Book of Mormon. That book as now published is itself physical proof of immortality because it was only through an immortal visitation that we obtained it. But it is a physical product which anyone may hold in his hands and read. The plates from which it was translated were equally real; the three witnesses and the eight witnesses to the Book of Mormon give testimony of that. Did not eight honest men say that

as many of the leaves as the said Smith has translated we did handle with our hands. . . . And this we bear record with words of soberness, that the said Smith has shown unto us, for we have seen and hefted, and know of a surety that the said Smith has got the plates of which we have spoken. [Book of Mormon, "The Testimony of Eight Witnesses"]

But these plates came from Moroni, and Moroni was immortal and came from the other world. Then the existence of the Book of Mormon becomes physical evidence of the fact of immortality.

When John the Baptist came to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, what happened? He placed his flesh-and-bone, resurrected hands on the heads of those two young men as he ordained them to the Aaronic Priesthood. They felt the pressure and the weight of those hands upon their heads, as they themselves declared, the resurrected hands of flesh and bone—the hands of John the Baptist come back from the dead. Could those young men feel the hands of an apparition? Could anyone? But

they did feel the resurrected hands of John the Baptist. Does not this further establish the fact of immortality?

Peter, James, and John came back from the other world and delivered the keys of the holy apostleship. It was another contact between the visible and the invisible worlds. They were therefore physical witnesses of immortality. But more than that: they came as special witnesses, as the ancient apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore their appearance bore a personal testimony on their part to the existence of the Lord himself and the Lord's physical reality. Their coming to Joseph Smith was evidence also of the truthfulness of the teachings of the Savior, and of his work. And of what work? Why, the Creation, of course—the creation of all things. For Christ was the Creator.

Inasmuch as the coming of these original apostles bore testimony of Christ as the Creator, it also bore testimony of the teaching that life originated with the Savior and not with some combination of amino acids and other inanimate things. One of them—John—recorded it as a part of his Gospel. Do you see, then, how our evidence of immortality establishes our position with respect to the origin of life and the creation of the universe?

Elijah and Moses came back, physically, giving further testimony of the truth of all these teachings. May we mention Moses in particular: he came to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland temple and bestowed upon them the keys of the gathering of Israel, but his presence in that temple bore testimony also of the truthfulness of the work that Moses accomplished while he was living in mortality. Part of that work was the writing of the scriptures which gave the account of the Creation, identifying Almighty God as the origin of all life and the giver of all other good things. Moses received this knowledge, so that he could write about it, by divine revelation. God gave it to him; and therefore it was true.

Moses was the author of Genesis; he was also the author of the Book of Moses as revealed to Joseph Smith, and this was a modern revelation of Moses' work. Combined with the Book of Genesis it declares the truth of these writings unmistakably. Moses' appearance to Joseph Smith placed the seal of approval on all his writings, the seal of Almighty God who gave Moses the information so he could write it. And he gave the same information by revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith. God sent Moses to Joseph Smith; would he have sent Moses as a special messenger if Moses were a fraud and his writings all myths? Is God inconsistent? Is he devious or deceitful?

Jesus Christ himself came to the Kirtland Temple, just as he had appeared previously with his Father in the grove near Palmyra, New York. His appearance, combined with the visitations of his servants, proves the truthfulness of the work of Christ, the truthfulness of the account of Jesus as written by Moses, and the fact that we are the children of God and not the offspring of lower forms of life.

It all declares, as if from the housetops, that we have divinity within us, with the full capability of sometime becoming like Almighty God himself, who is our Father. Do you not see that the appearance of angelic messengers to Joseph Smith solves many of the questions that have troubled our minds with regard to our identity and our origin? These messengers truly and literally came to the Prophet Joseph Smith. To this I bear you my solemn testimony.

Just as surely as our great scientists sent men to the moon and brought them back safely, just as surely as they sent a landing craft to the planet Mars that is still there performing miraculous experiments at a distance of some fifty million miles—just that surely did Moroni come from outer space and bring to Joseph Smith the plates of the Book of Mormon. Our scientific space experiments are dealing with outer space, are they not? So did Moroni's

work. He did come to us from outer space and returned there after performing his work.

And just as surely as men went to the moon, John the Baptist, Peter, James, John, Moses, and Elijah all came from behind the veil, adequately proving the fact of immortality with all of its significant implications.

And just that surely did Jesus come to the grove near Palmyra, New York, with his Father, in the year 1820, again proving by a physical visitation the existence and reality of both God and Christ. And did not their coming to the Prophet Joseph Smith further establish the fact of the Creation? For there before him stood the two Almighty Beings who had accomplished the Creation and told him by revelation that they had accomplished it.

So when we testify of Christ, what do we mean? We testify of him as the divine Son of God. We testify of him as the Savior who died on Calvary. We testify of him as the Redeemer who broke the bands of death, giving to each of us a literal, physical resurrection. But is that all? What of his position as Creator? Do we not also testify of him in this important role?

Look into the sky on any clear night and study the stars. Can you count them? Read your books on astronomy. Are you not amazed at the multiplicity and the intricacy of the galaxies that reach farther into the heavens than the strongest telescopes can trace? In our own Milky Way galaxy, we are told, there are four hundred billion suns or stars as bright as our sun, and they all have their own satellites as our sun has its planets and moons.

Realize that our galaxy is but a part of a larger system made up of nineteen such galaxies as our Milky Way; and realize, too, that the astronomers tell us that the heavens themselves are so great that even this larger system, made up of nineteen organizations like our Milky Way, is just tucked away in one corner of the heavens.

And realize how vast, then, creation is, and know that it was all made by Jesus Christ, who

died on the cross, who was raised in resurrection on the third day, who came to the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1820, who reestablished his Church on the earth in 1830, and who now in 1977 asks you and me to believe in him and accept him.

That is the way in which we Latter-day Saints must regard Jesus Christ—not alone as the Babe of Bethlehem, not alone as the great Sacrificial Lamb who wrought out the Atonement on the cross, but also as Creator of heaven and earth. Think of the debt we owe to him. At this Christmas time will we truly remember him and worship him? Will we determine more than ever to be loyal to him and his Church, and to his teachings?

I testify to you—as one of his humble servants, but as one of his chosen Twelve, as one of his special witnesses—that he lives and that we too can live gloriously if we will but serve him and keep his commandments. Like Job of old, I, too,

know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth;

And though after my skin worms [or any other form of dissolution or decay] destroy this body, yet in my flesh [my resurrected flesh] shall I see God:

Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another. [Job 19:25–27]

And this may be your testimony likewise.

This is the testimony all Latter-day Saints should bear. This is the truth we all should live. At this Christmastime, are you willing to give to your own self the greatest gift, the gift of complete faith in and devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ, that you may live with him eternally? That you may is my humble prayer for you in the sacred name of Jesus Christ. Amen.