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Jesus the Christ, the Resurrected Son of God

J. Reuben Clark, Jr.

Nineteen and a half centuries ago this morning, as men have counted it, a lone woman, love-driven, moved hurriedly, but carefully, over the rough cobblestones of the streets leading to Golgotha and the newly hewed tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea in the garden, where they had laid the Master. In the deep stillness of the morning air, listening, she might have heard the priests in the Temple court calling to the lookout, peering southward from the topmost pinnacle of the Temple wall: “Is the sky lit up as far as Hebron?” for then the morning sacrifice began. But the lookout would not answer back, for it was still dark.

Reaching the tomb and finding the great sealing stone rolled back and the guard of the high priests gone, Mary Magdalene, for she it was, ran back to Peter and John, telling them the body was gone; she knew not where it was laid. Hastening to the tomb, John outrunning Peter, they found the tomb empty, the burial clothes lying about. They returned, Peter wondering and John seeing and believing (John 20:1–10).

Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils, stood weeping without the sepulchre. Stooping down and looking in, she saw two angels sitting, one at the head, the other at the feet of where Jesus had lain. “Why weepst thou?” said they, and she answering, said, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him” (John 20:11–13).

And there stood a man beside her, who asked, “Why weepst thou? Whom seekest thou?” Thinking it was the gardener, she answered, “Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.” Then Jesus, for it was he, saith unto her, “Mary,” and she, recognizing him, overwhelmed with emotion, turned and saith unto him, “Rabboni,” Master. As she would have touched him he, gently, affectionately, forbade her, saying: “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.” Returning, she told the disciples all that had happened, but they believed not (John 20:14–18).

Mary saw, talked with, and would have touched, but that she was withheld, the resurrected Christ.

At sunrise, Mary, the Mother of James, and Salome, and other women came to the tomb with spices to prepare the body for final burial, wondering who would roll back the heavy stone sealing the tomb that they might enter. But the tomb was open. Two men stood before them in shining garments, declaring: “Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth. Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen. Tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you” (Luke 24:1–6; Mark 16:6–7).

As they quickly fled from the sepulchre, with fear and great joy, to tell 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” (Matthew 28:9–10).

So telling no man on the way, they, with Mary Magdalene, returned and told all “unto the eleven, and to all the rest. . . . And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not” (Luke 24:9–11).

The Marys and Salome and the other women saw and talked with and touched the risen Christ.

As this first day grew older, Jesus lingered about, seemingly loath to leave the scenes of his mortal ministry and his beloved disciples, he knowing how much they needed his help, being bereft of his presence.

So as Cleopas and another sadly journeyed to Emmaus, Jesus drew near and went with them. But their “eyes were holden that they should not know him.” He asked of what they talked. They told him of Jesus and of their trust “that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel”; they told him of the death, the burial, the empty tomb, of the angels who had been seen by the women. And Jesus, trying to teach them to walk in the strength of the spirit, said to them, “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.” He then explained to them, beginning at Moses, the teachings of the prophets about the Christ. Journeying on towards the village, he made as though he would go on, but they asked him to tarry with them, for the day was far spent. So he went in and sat down with them at meat. He took bread and blessed and brake it, and gave to them; then their eyes were opened; they knew him; and he vanished from their sight (Luke 24:13–31).

“They said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?” (Luke 24:32).

They sensed it not, but they had the testimony of the spirit before there came to them the witness of the eyes.

Returning to Jerusalem they found gathered together in a chamber the disciples, who told them, “The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.” They told the disciples of how they themselves had walked and talked and sat at meat with Jesus (Luke 24:33–35).

And even as they spoke one with another, Jesus suddenly stood amongst them in the chamber. Terrified and affrighted they “supposed that they had seen a spirit.” Asking why they were troubled, why thoughts arose in their hearts, he said: “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” (Luke 24:36–40).

While “they yet believed not for joy, and wondered,” he asked for food; they gave him a piece of fish and honeycomb, and he ate before them (Luke 24:41–43). The Christ, the creator of all things whatsoever that were made, the second member of the Godhead, himself created in the express image of the Father, now returning to sit on the right hand of God, his Father, was a tangible person in human form, that talked and walked and ate, doing what he had seen his Father do. Then he taught them as he taught the two on the way to Emmaus, and they were glad. He saith to them, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost” and the power to remit and retain sins (John 20:22–23).

These all talked and touched and ate with the risen Lord.

But Thomas was not with them. When told of Jesus’ visit he believed not, saying he, too, must see, and adding, unless I “put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe” (John 20:24–25).

At the end of the week they were all again gathered together in a chamber; the doors were shut. Suddenly Jesus stood amongst them, asking Thomas to touch him, saying, “be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (John 20:26–29).

Once more the disciples had talked with the resurrected Christ, and touched his body.

But the disciples yet knew not their calling and their work. Peter said to Thomas, and Nathanael, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others, “I go a fishing.” And they said, “We also go with thee.” Hieing themselves to the Sea of Tiberias, they went fishing, the work from which he had called them into his service. They fished the night through; they caught nothing. In the early morning, drawing near the shore, they saw standing there a man who,

calling to them, asked if they had any meat. They answering no, he called back, “Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find,” and doing so, they filled their net (John 21:1–6). This was the sign which, three years before, Jesus had given to Simon Peter, and Andrew and James and John, when he called them to his service, saying: “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19).

This memory must have surged into the mind of John, for he said to Peter: “It is the Lord,” and Peter, girding his fisher’s coat about him, for he was naked and would not so come unto the Lord, cast himself into the sea, and went to the Master. Then, again in mild reproof, this time because they had so soon left his service, going back to the old ways, he, “when they had dined,” thrice questioned, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?”; thrice Peter answered, “Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee”; and thrice the Christ instructed, “Feed my sheep” (John 21:7–17).

Again they talked, sat at meat, and were instructed by the risen Lord.

Thereafter Jesus was seen of James, of above five hundred brethren at once, and of Paul, “as of one born out of due time” (1 Corinthians 15:6–8).

He shewed himself again to his Apostles, on the mount in Galilee to which he had called them, and while they worshipped him, some yet doubted. Declaring all power was given unto him in heaven and earth, he gave them their charge and commission to teach all nations, baptizing, and instructing in the principles he had taught them (Matthew 28:16–20).

Finally, having instructed them to tarry in Jerusalem “until ye be endued with power from on high,” he lifted up his hands and blessed them (Luke 24:49–51), then “he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight,” heaven-bound to sit on the right hand of God (Acts 1:4, 8–9).

As the disciples stood gazing after him, two men in white apparel stood by them, 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” (Acts 1:10–11).

Thus for forty days after the morning Mary had first seen him at the tomb’s mouth, Jesus had moved among his disciples. They saw him, heard him, walked with him, talked with him, sat at meat with him, touched him—they fearing him as a spirit, he said to them, “a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have” (Luke 24:39). He was risen indeed, a resurrected being of flesh and bone, and man made in the express image of the Father, a perfect soul, the first fruits of the resurrection, the only Begotten of the Father, the second member of the Godhead.

The Christ came also to this hemisphere, to the other sheep of whom he spoke to the Jews in Jerusalem (John 10:16; 3 Nephi 15:11–24), and

ministered among their multitudes for three glorious days. With these other sheep he talked, he blessed their little children, he fed them, he administered the Sacrament to them, he called other disciples to whom also he gave divine commissions (3 Nephi 11–28).

Yet while Jesus still moved and ministered in mortality in Palestine, there came two great occasions when he was called the Christ.

The first came as he and the disciples paused in their great Galilean Mission for a needed momentary respite from their labors. They were in the coasts of Caesarea Philippi. As they rested Jesus asked, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” They answered, some say John the Baptist, some Elias, some Jeremias, or one of the prophets. Then plumbing their own knowledge and testimony, Jesus asked, “Whom say ye that I am?” And Simon Peter answered: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Saith the Savior, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 16:13–17). So Peter for an instant glimpsed the full truth.

So also the humble Martha, gently chiding Jesus:

If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. . . .

Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Jesus said unto her, 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. Believest thou this?

She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world (John 11:21, 23–27).

Thus while he lived amongst them, there came to the humblest of them—Peter, the fisherman, and Martha, the good housewife “cumbered about much serving” (Luke 10:40)—the testimony for which men since have devoutly lived and gloriously died—that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God.

At the beginning and ushering-in of this Last Dispensation, the Father and Son appeared in person, in the form in which Jesus returned to the Father, to the boy Joseph in the woods, in the most glorious vision vouched to man in all time (Joseph Smith—History 1:17–20).

And thereafter, Joseph and Sidney together declared:

And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all 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 76:22–24).

And now may I, of the lowliest of the lowly who seek to serve him, and fully acknowledging my own weaknesses and imperfections, bear in deep humility my own testimony, born of the Spirit, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, the Only Begotten in the flesh, chosen before the foundations of the earth were laid to be the Redeemer of the World, the First Fruits of the Resurrection, through and by whom the spirits and bodies of all men will, in the due time of the Lord, be reunited and resurrected from the grave, “they who have done good, in the resurrection of the just; and they who have done evil, in the resurrection of the unjust” (D&C 76:17).

May I be preserved in this testimony till I lay down my body in my last sleep, I pray, in the Lord’s name. Amen.

This Easter radio broadcast was given over KSL in Salt Lake City, Utah on March 28, 1948. Reprinted with permission from On the Way to Immortality and Eternal Life (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1950), 69–78.

J. Reuben Clark, Jr. (1871–1961) received his LL.B. from Columbia University in 1906, served as editor of the Columbia Law Review, Assistant Solicitor and then Solicitor for the U.S. Department of State 1906–13, author of Memorandum on the Monroe Doctrine 1928, and U.S. Ambassador to Mexico 1930–33. He served as a counselor in the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 1933–61.