

Christ Descended Below All Things

D&C 88:6-7

He that ascended up on high, as also he descended below all things, in that he comprehended all things, that he might be in all and through all things, the light of truth; which truth shineth.

D&C 122

1 The ends of the earth shall inquire after thy name, and fools shall have thee in derision, and hell shall rage against thee;

2 While the pure in heart, and the wise, and the noble, and the virtuous, shall seek counsel, and authority, and blessings constantly from under thy hand.

3 And thy people shall never be turned against thee by the testimony of traitors.

4 And although their influence shall cast thee into trouble, and into bars and walls, thou shalt be had in honor; and but for a small moment and thy voice shall be more terrible in the midst of thine enemies than the fierce lion, because of thy righteousness; and thy God shall stand by thee forever and ever.

5 If thou art called to pass through tribulation; if thou art in perils among false brethren; if thou art in perils among robbers; if thou art in perils by land or by sea;

6 If thou art accused with all manner of false accusations; if thine enemies fall upon thee; if they tear thee from the society of thy father and mother and brethren and sisters; and if with a drawn sword thine enemies tear thee from the bosom of thy wife, and of thine offspring, and thine elder son, although but six years of age, shall cling to thy garments, and shall say, My father, my father, why can't you stay with us? O, my father, what are the men going to do with you? and if then he shall be thrust from thee by the sword, and thou be dragged to prison, and thine enemies prowl around thee like wolves for the blood of the lamb;

7 And if thou shouldst be cast into the pit, or into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death passed upon thee; if thou be cast into the deep; if the billowing surge conspire against thee; if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall

gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.

8 The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?

Brigham Young,

It is written of the Saviour that he descended below all things. If he did he descended in capacity. I will merely tell you what I believe on this point. I believe that there never was a child born on this earth with any less capacity than dwelt in the child that was born in a manger of his mother Mary. I believe, according to the natural ability which he received from his mother and from his supposed father Joseph, that there never was a child that descended lower in capacity, or that knew less. Yet, according to the history given of him, his power of mind developed with such wonderful rapidity that when he was but a few years old he propounded questions to the learned doctors of his day which they could not answer, and answered questions propounded to him which the querists could not answer. He increased in wisdom and knowledge, and came into communication with his Father. The Being whom we call Father was the Father of the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he was also his Father pertaining to the flesh. Infidels and Christians, make all you can of this statement. The Bible, which all Christians profess to believe, reveals that fact, and it reveals the truth upon that point, and I am a witness of its truth. The Apostles who were personally acquainted with Jesus Christ did know and understand what they wrote, and they wrote the truth. (*Journal of Discourses*, 7:286)

John Taylor

The object of man's taking a body is, that through the redemption of Jesus Christ, both soul and body may be exalted in the eternal world, when the earth shall be celestial, and to obtain a higher exaltation than he would be capable of doing without a body. For when man was first made, he was made "a little lower than the angels," Heb. 2:7; but through the atonement and resurrection of Jesus Christ, he is placed in a position to obtain an exaltation higher than that of angels. Says the Apostle, "Know ye not

that we shall judge angels?" 1 Cor. 6:3. "Jesus descended below all things, that he might be raised above all things." He took upon him a body, that he might die as a man, and "that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil." Heb. 2:14. Having conquered Death, then, in his own dominions, burst the barriers of the tomb, and ascended with his body triumphant to the right hand of God, he has accomplished a purpose which God had decreed from before the foundation of the world, "and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers." Hence man, through obedience to the Gospel, is placed in a position to be an adopted son of God, and have a legitimate right to his Father's blessings, and to possess the gift of the Holy Ghost. And the Apostle says, that "If the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Rom. 8:11. Thus, as Jesus vanquished death, so may we; as he overcame, so may we; and, if faithful, sit with him upon his throne, as he has overcome, and sat down upon his Father's throne. Rev. 3:21. Thus, an will not only be raised from degradation, but will also be exalted to a seat among the intelligence which surround the throne of God. This is one great object of our coming here and taking bodies. (*The Government of God*, Ch.5)

Groaning beneath this concentrated load, this intense, incomprehensible pressure, this terrible exaction of Divine justice, from which feeble humanity shrank, and through the agony thus experienced sweating great drops of blood, He was led to exclaim, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." He had wrestled with the superincumbent load in the wilderness, He had struggled against the powers of darkness that had been let loose upon him there; placed below all things, His mind surcharged with agony and pain, lonely and apparently helpless and forsaken, in his agony and the blood oozed from His pores. Thus rejected by His own, attacked by the powers of darkness, and seemingly forsaken by His God, on the cross He bowed beneath the accumulated load, and cried out in anguish, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" When death approached to relieve Him from His horrible position, a ray of hope appeared through the abyss of darkness with which He had been surrounded, and in a spasm of relief,

seeing the bright future beyond, He said, "It is finished! Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." As a God, He descended below all things, and made Himself subject to man in man's fallen condition; as a man, He grappled with all the circumstances incident to His sufferings in the world. Anointed, indeed, with the oil of gladness above His fellows, He struggled with and overcame the powers of men and devils, of earth and hell combined; and aided by this superior power of the Godhead, He vanquished death, hell and the grave, and arose triumphant as the Son of God, the very eternal Father, the Messiah, the Prince of peace, the Redeemer, the Savior of the world; having finished and completed the work pertaining to the atonement, which His Father had given Him to do as the Son of God and the Son of man. As the Son of Man, He endured all that it was possible for flesh and blood to endure, as the Son of God He triumphed over all, and forever ascended to the right hand of God, to further carry out the designs of Jehovah pertaining to the world and to the human family. (*Mediation and Atonement*, Ch.21)

Wilford Woodruff

The Lord has said concerning Jesus, that he descended below all things that he might rise above all things, and comprehend all things. No man descended lower than the Savior of the world. Born in a stable, cradled in a manger, he traveled from there to the cross through suffering, mingled with blood, to a throne of grace; and in all his life there was nothing of an earthly nature that seemed to be worth possessing. His whole life was passed in poverty, suffering, pain, affliction, labor, prayer, mourning and sorrow, until he gave up the ghost on the cross. Still he was God's firstborn son and the Redeemer of the world. The question might be asked why the Lord suffered his Son to come here and to live and die as he did. When we get into the spirit world, and the vail is withdrawn, we shall then perhaps understand the whys and wherefore of all these things. In the dispensations and providences of God to man it seems that we are born to suffer pain, affliction, sorrows and trials; this is what God has decreed that the human family shall pass through; and if we make a right use of this probation, the experience it brings will eventually prove a great blessing to us, and when we receive immortality and eternal life, exaltation, kingdoms, thrones,

principalities and powers with all the blessings of the fulness of the Gospel of Christ, we shall understand and comprehend why we are called to pass through a continual warfare during the few years we spent in the flesh. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol.18, p.33)

Then let us be careful. Let us realize our condition. Let us realize we are here upon a mission. Let us realize that we will be held responsible for the manner in which we will it. We should be willing to sacrifice everything for the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God. Any man who will seek to save his life and desert the principles of the Gospel, is not worthy of eternal life. How many have laid down their lives since the creation of the world for the sake of the truth? Jesus Himself descended below all things. He descended, I believe, lower than any other man will be called to descend. Are we greater than Jesus? If we are called upon to-day to lay down our lives, what of it? Is it not as well to die for the Gospel's sake as to die for anything else? A million of men, a few years ago, sacrificed their lives for the honor of this nation. No matter what we may be called to pass through, let us maintain our integrity to God. Where is the man whose mind has been lit up by the inspiration of God to comprehend the celestial kingdom, or the celestial law, or the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who can bear the idea of pursuing a course whereby he will be cut off from inheriting the blessings for which he has hoped in the future? No, I would rather die a thousand deaths than be deprived of these blessings. We have a long time to live when we get through here. There is all eternity before us. It will pay you, it will pay me--no matter what comes, no matter what this nation may do to oppress us--to be true and faithful to our covenants, to our wives and children, to our God and to our country; it will pay us to be faithful to the end. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol.25, p.12)

Joseph F. Smith (First Presidency Statement - Dec. 1904)

We celebrate an anniversary of the birth of the world's Redeemer and Who, we believe, will be its Lord and King. His entrance into the world was the signal for the songs of angels and the rejoicings of the heavenly host. He descended below all things

that He might rise above all things, and in that experience comprehend and obtain power over all things. (*Messages of the First Presidency*, Vol.4, pp.92-93)

Ezra Taft Benson

It was in Gethsemane that Jesus took on Himself the sins of the world, in Gethsemane that His pain was equivalent to the cumulative burden of all men, in Gethsemane that He descended below all things so that all could repent and come to Him. The mortal mind fails to fathom, the tongue cannot express, the pen of man cannot describe the breadth, the depth, the height of the suffering of our Lord – nor His infinite love for us. (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p.14)

Now let me describe to you what faith in Jesus Christ means. Faith in Him is more than mere acknowledgment that He lives. It is more than professing belief. Faith in Jesus Christ consists of complete reliance on Him. As God, He has infinite power, intelligence, and love. There is no human problem beyond His capacity to solve. Because He descended below all things, He knows how to help us rise above our daily difficulties. (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p.66)

Bruce R. McConkie

Crucifixion was the form of death chosen from the beginning for Christ, that in his death, having descended below all things, he might in his resurrection ascend above all things. (*Mormon Doctrine*, p.174)

Neal A. Maxwell

President Brigham Young spoke of what evoked the “why” from Jesus, saying that during the axis of agony which was Gethsemane and Calvary, the Father at some point withdrew both His presence and His Spirit from Jesus (see *Journal of Discourses* 3:205–6). Thereby Jesus’ personal triumph was complete and His empathy perfected. Having “descended below all things,” He comprehends, perfectly and personally, the full range of human suffering! (D&C 88:6; see D&C 122:8). A spiritual sung in yesteryear has an especially moving and insightful line: “Nobody knows the troubles I’ve seen, nobody knows but Jesus” (see also Alma 7:11–12). Truly, Jesus was exquisitely “acquainted

with grief,” as no one else (Isa. 53:3). [“Apply the Atoning Blood of Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, p. 23]