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Author's Response

John C. Robison

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Author Reponse

John C. Robison

I very much appreciate Dr. Chadwick's response to my article. I found his comments both well founded and insightful. In light of a few of his points I thought it might be helpful for me to respond so as to detail some of my thought processes as I wrote the paper which might then explain why I wrote what I did.

New Testament scholars look at the accounts of Christ's life quite a bit differently than we do as Latter-day Saints (a point with which Dr. Chadwick is very familiar. This is more for the benefit of readers not familiar with New Testament scholarship). Scholars look at the Gospel accounts, not as a testimony written by a disciple/prophet of Jesus, but rather as a compilation of oral traditions and sayings of Jesus that circulated among the faithful for decades before they were ever written down.

The accounts that we deal with concerning the crucifixion of Jesus are of two sorts (in their eyes). The first is the historical account of the actual crucifixion, this is presented in each gospel in essentially the same manor; that is, the editor of the account in speaking of the crucifixion states in a subordinate clause, "and they crucified him" (Matt. 27:35), "And when they had crucified him" (Mark 15:24), "there they crucified him" (Luke 23:33), and "where they crucified him," "When they had crucified him" (John 19:18, 23). And then there are the other accounts that speak of Jesus returning to His apostles as a resurrected being and having them feel the marks of the nails. Most likely because these events

are seen as outside the explanation of science (i.e. the resurrection) scholars tend to dismiss these later accounts as being more in the category of folk tales/miracle stories that have very little historical value. Thus, they dismiss the accounts even though they make perfect sense to us, indeed they are one of the basic tenets of our beliefs. It is for this reason then that so many scholars say that we don't know how Jesus was crucified and thus they can advance their theories of Jesus being tied to the cross (see the position, among others, of Dr. Zias and Charlesworth, both in my article and in Dr. Chadwick's letter).

As I went through and studied primary accounts of crucifixion it quickly became apparent that nailing was much better represented in ancient texts. My intent then in writing the article was to demonstrate that the events spoken of in the scriptures were not mere folk tales but also based on historical reality. I sought to do this by basing my research on the tools that these very same scholars had used to defend a position of tying.

Finally, I have one admission to make. I am very thankful to Dr. Chadwick for pointing out my lack of references to the crucifixion in the New Testament. I had no intention of such an omission—indeed, that was the very thing that I had hoped to defend. I hope this helps clarify my position.

Sincerely,

John C. Robison