

# Earth- Truly a Miracle

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## **Truly a Miracle** (An Article From Church News June 15, 1996)

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?. When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?—Job 38: 4, 7

The first photographs of Earth as seen from the moon stunned the world. There above the gray, dead moonscape hung the home of mankind, its blue oceans and white clouds vivid against the black backdrop of space, the only sign of life in the starry night scape.

It was our home, seen for the first time as only the earth's Creators had seen it before, and the realization of this had a profound impact on the fragile astronauts in their high-tech space suits. No longer would they—and we—see our planet in the same casual light. They had seen the work of the Creator from a new viewpoint.

Years ago a scientist named A. Cressy Morrison tried to dispel the notion that the earth was created by pure chance. In his book, *Man Does Not Stand Alone*, he itemized a number of factors that, had they been different, would have made life impossible on the world. If the earth's crust were 10 feet thicker, there would be no oxygen, or if the oceans had been a few feet deeper, oxygen and carbon monoxide would have been absorbed. If it were not tilted at 23 degrees we would have had no seasons and water vapor would have moved to the poles. If the moon were closer, tides would have been so enormous that lowlands would be submerged. The planet's atmosphere is just thick enough to let in the solar rays needed for vegetation, but not enough to kill life. Essential elements exist in just the right proportions for life, he wrote, citing many other factors that argue against a haphazard creation.

Since then we've seen photographs of other planets in our solar system, great gaseous giants and sister planets with acid-blown deserts blasted by howling winds twice as ferocious as earthly hurricanes. With each visit from our robot spacecraft, we appreciate more and more how narrow are the limits of life and how blessed we are with the home Deity created.

Moroni had the same thoughts more than 1,500 years ago, when he wrote, "Who can comprehend the marvelous works of God? Who shall say that it was not a miracle that by his word the heaven and the earth should be; and by the power of his word man was created of the dust of the earth; and by the power of his word have miracles been wrought?" (Morm. 9:16,17)

For the truth is that God created man and the earth to be together forever, as part of His grand design to bring immortality and eternal life to His offspring. Brigham Young taught, "The whole object of the creation of this world is to exalt the intelligences that are placed upon it, that they may live, endure, and increase for ever and ever. We are not here to quarrel and contend about the things of this world, but we are here to subdue it and beautify it. Let every man and woman worship their God with all their heart." (Discourses of Brigham Young, p. 57.)

The destinies of both the earth and its inhabitants are thus linked forever. The scriptures tell us that the world was created by the word of God's power. They also tell us that without the presence of mankind, learning its crucial lessons of the need for opposition in all things, of uniting in marriage to produce children, or of those children turning their hearts back to their fathers, then the earth would have had no purpose nor would it have answered the end of its creation, and it would have been utterly wasted. (See 2 Ne. 2:12; D&C 49:16; D&C 2:3.)

The earth is truly a miracle. In many ways, it also serves as an appropriate metaphor for the gospel with which it is so closely linked in God's eyes. Like the gospel, it is our ultimate source of life. Both are creations of God. Both demand obedience to their laws, with severe penalties for those who disregard either the law of nature or the law of God. On the other hand, both also offer great riches and rewards. Both offer

their greatest satisfaction when they are shared with others and both still guard knowledge that is available only after diligent study and research.

And finally, both will endure forever. We believe that the earth has its own life, and that, like us, it will one day be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory. (See Articles of Faith, 10 ) This is our earth, created for us and entrusted to us to fulfill the purposes of God. We are a part of that earthshine that falls upon the moon.