

Baptism

Entering into the Kingdom of God

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Baptism: Entering into the Kingdom of God

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus said unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

John 3:1-5

Baptism is perhaps one of the most divisive subjects among the Christian churches today. Many churches state that baptism is crucial in God's plan of salvation, whereas other churches state that although baptism is important, it is not required for salvation. Not only do churches discuss whether baptism is necessary or not, but they argue over the manner in which baptisms are performed. There are some who believe in the pouring or sprinkling of water, while others practice full submersion. Further, there are also churches which perform the baptism of infants.

Unfortunately, these debates and differences in opinion create confusion and doubt for many individuals who are seeking to make a covenant with God, or are simply desiring to learn more about Him. With so many different beliefs, this naturally stirs up questions such as, "Where should I be baptized," "What does God say about baptism," and alternatively, "What happens to the billions of people throughout history, who were not baptized and never heard the word of God?"

We will address each of these questions in the following chapter. However, rather than enter into a lengthy debate with our own opinions and feelings, we will answer the above questions by only utilizing what God has revealed to mankind through the Scriptures. [For more information on why we use Scripture, please read **Chapter Nineteen**]. The point of this work is not to offend, but to inform the reader concerning the precepts of baptism as taught by the word of God and Jesus Christ.

Is Baptism Necessary

Is baptism necessary for salvation is perhaps the foremost question concerning baptism today, and it is also one of the primary controversies between the different Christian faiths. There are generally three different ideologies regarding this question. The first states that baptism is not required in order to be saved, but it is a way to express one's outward desire and commitment to God. Principally, the first ideology believes that baptism is only a demonstration of the love that an individual has for the Lord.

Conversely, the second alternative believes that one must be baptized in order to be saved. This view concludes that not only is baptism an expression of their commitment to follow after God, but that God has commanded them to do so.

The third and final thought is that not only is baptism necessary to keep the commandments of the Lord, but that we must do so in order to be spiritually born of God. In particular, the third creed believes that baptism is entering into a sacred covenant with the Heavenly Father in order to become a son or daughter of God and to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, this third ideology believes that we must endure to the end in order to enter into the Kingdom of God.

In order to be consistent with our objective, namely to answer the previously stated questions with Scripture, we must first travel back to the very foundation of the world and prior to Adam's transgression in the garden. In the third chapter of Genesis, we read concerning the fall of Lucifer, who attempted to take God's power but instead was cast down and became Satan "even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive, and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my [God's] voice,¹" because he rebelled against God and sought to destroy the agency of man.

After his fall, we read the Satan went and tempted Eve through the mouth of a serpent, beguiling her to partake of the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which God had commanded Adam and Eve² not to eat. Following the temptation we find that the tree became pleasant in Eve's eyes and "she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat."³ By partaking of the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve transgressed the commandment of God and were no longer able to abide in God's presence, as the Scriptures state, "For no unclean thing can dwell there [the Kingdom of God], or dwell in his presence...for the Lord can not look upon sin with the *least degree of allowance*.⁴" Thus Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden because of sin.

In Genesis, chapter six, God spoke to the prophet Enoch who explained that because "Adam fell, we are; and by his fall came *death*, and we are made partakers of misery and woe. Behold, Satan hath come among the children of men, and tempteth them to worship him; and men have become carnal, sensual, and devilish, and are *shut out from the presence of God*.⁵" Wherefore, because of Adam's transgression, all mankind was both physical and spiritually separated from God. It is important to understand however that this was a part of God's merciful plan, for we could not be agents unto ourselves if we did not experience opposition, and we are born into this life in part so that we experience opposition [read more about our agency in **Chapters Thirteen and Twenty**].

It is critical to learn that God's single greatest desire is that we should choose Him and come back into His presence. Thus if by transgression mankind was separated from God, there must needs be a way for

¹ Genesis 3:5

² It is important to note that God commanded Adam directly before Eve was made, thus we can surmise that Eve received the commandment from Adam

³ Genesis 3:11

⁴ Genesis 6:60 and Alma 21:18

⁵ Genesis 6:49-50

the children of men to be cleansed and to return to Him. Please read the following passage of Scripture from Genesis 6:51-64 and learn of God's plan of salvation for mankind:

6:51 But God hath made known unto our fathers, that all men must repent. **6:52** And he called upon our father Adam, by his own voice, saying, I am God; I made the world, and men before they were in the flesh. **6:53** And he also said unto him, If thou wilt, turn unto me and hearken unto my voice, and believe, and repent of all thy transgressions, and **be baptized**, even in water, in the name of mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth, which is Jesus Christ, the only name which shall be given under heaven, whereby salvation shall come unto the children of men; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, asking all things in his name, and whatsoever ye shall ask it shall be given you.

6:54 And our father Adam spake unto the Lord, and said, Why is it that men must repent, and be baptized in water? **6:55** And the Lord said unto Adam, Behold, I have forgiven thee thy transgression in the garden of Eden. **6:56** Hence came the saying abroad among the people, that the Son of God hath **atoned for original guilt**, wherein the sins of the parents cannot be answered upon the heads of the children, **for they are whole** from the foundation of the world.

6:57 And the Lord spake unto Adam, saying, Inasmuch as thy children are conceived in sin [meaning born into the world and separated from God], even so, when they begin to grow up sin conceiveth in their hearts, and they taste the bitter, that they may know to prize the good. **6:58** And it is given unto them to know good from evil; wherefore, they are **agents unto themselves**. **6:59** And I have given unto you another law and commandment; wherefore teach it unto your children, that all men, everywhere, must repent, or they can **in no wise inherit** the kingdom of God. **6:60** For **no unclean** thing can dwell there, or dwell in his presence; for, in the language of Adam, Man of Holiness is his name; and the name of his Only Begotten is the son of Man, even Jesus Christ, a righteous judge, who shall come in the meridian of time.

6:61 Therefore I give unto you a commandment, to teach these things freely unto your children, saying, that by reason of transgression cometh the fall, which fall bringeth death; and inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water and blood, and the spirit, which I have made, and so become of dust a living soul; **6:62** Even so ye must be **born again**, into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be **cleansed** by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten; that ye may be sanctified from all sin; and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come; even immortal glory. **6:63** For, **by the water** ye keep the commandment; **by the Spirit** ye are justified; and **by the blood** ye are sanctified. **6:64** Therefore it is given to **abide in you**, the record of heaven, the Comforter, the peaceable things of immortal glory, the truth of all things, that which quickeneth all things which maketh alive all things, that which knoweth all things, and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice and judgment. **6:65** And now, behold, I say unto you, This is the **plan of salvation unto all men**, through the blood of mine Only Begotten, who shall come in the meridian of time.

From this Scripture passage, we see that because of Adam's transgression, mankind was separated from God's presence in the Garden of Eden and was cast out, which was a spiritual death, and because of this spiritual separation, Adam's children were born into a world where they could experience temptations, thereby sin began to enter into their hearts. However, God said that no unclean thing can dwell with Him, thus He provided the way in which mankind might enter back into His presence through baptism, or in other words by being born again by the water, the Spirit, and the blood, which represents the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The Lord therefore commanded Adam to teach his children to repent and to be baptized in order for them to be born into the Kingdom of God, which is the same blueprint we must follow so that we might also have place in the Kingdom. God told Israel in the third chapter of Malachi, "For I am the Lord, I change not.⁶" Thus, we know that what was true from the foundation of the world is also true for us today. "And now, behold, I say unto you, This is the plan of salvation unto all men...And what I say unto *one*, I say unto all men.⁷"

Jesus Christ, who Himself was baptized in order to "fulfill all righteousness," said to His apostles, "Go ye into the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.⁸" Notice that Jesus did not tell the apostles to go into just some parts of the world or to preach to just some people concerning the Gospel and baptism, but to all the world and to every person. We would ask the reader, "If baptism was not important nor necessary in order to receive salvation into the Kingdom of Heaven, then why did God command the first man on the earth to be baptized and to teach the doctrine of baptism to his children thereafter. Why did Jesus, the Son of God, command the apostles to preach baptism to all the world?"

We asked previously, is baptism necessary for salvation, and God has given us His answer through the Holy Scriptures. Specifically, God said that baptism is necessary in order to receive a remission of sins and to dwell with Him, as Jesus Christ said, "Yea, blessed are they who shall believe on your words, and come down into the depth of humility, and be baptized in my name; for they shall be visited with fire and the Holy Ghost, and *shall receive a remission of their sins*.⁹"

Are We Saved by Grace

The reader might ask at this moment, "If baptism is necessary to receive a remission of sins, and a remission of sins is necessary for salvation, are we then not saved by grace?" While Paul did write "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; but it is the gift of God...Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us,¹⁰" there is more Scripture which needs to be applied so that we can gather a more clear understanding of grace. Please read the following from Romans 3:23-26:

⁶ Malachi 3:6

⁷ Genesis 6:65 and Mark 13:52

⁸ Mark 16:14-15

⁹ Matthew 5:4

¹⁰ Ephesians 2:8 and Titus 3:5

3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; **3:24** Therefore being justified only by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; **3:25** Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation¹¹ **through faith in his blood**, to declare his righteousness for the **remission of sins that are past**, through the forbearance of God; **3:26** To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the **justifier of him which believeth in Jesus**.

It is true that we are all sinners and that we all have been given the grace, or in other words the gift, of Jesus Christ. Paul stated however that in order for that grace to be justified, we must believe in Jesus Christ. How can we proclaim to believe in Jesus Christ and not keep His commandments, for Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."¹² The answer is that we cannot, "for by grace ye are saved **through** faith," which is more than just "the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,"¹³ but also how we live our life. Remember that Jesus told the apostles that "he that believeth **and** is baptized, shall be saved." A profession of belief is not enough, as we read from James 2:14-17 and 25:

2:14 What profit is it, my brethren, for a man to say he hath faith, and hath not works? **can faith save him?** **2:15** Yea, a man may say, I will show thee I have faith without works; but I say, show me thy faith without works, and I will show thee my faith ***by my works***. **2:16** For if a brother or sister be naked and destitute, and one of you say, Depart in peace, be warmed and filled; notwithstanding he give not those things which are needful to the body; **what profit is your faith unto such?** **2:17** Even so faith, if it have not works is dead, being **alone**. **2:25** For, as the body without the spirit is dead, so **faith without works is dead**.

If we say that we believe in Jesus Christ, but we do not keep His commandments, do we truly believe in Him? Jesus asked, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"¹⁴ He also told the disciples that "For the day soon cometh, that men shall come before me to judgment, to be judged ***according*** to their works."¹⁵ According to the Webster's Dictionary, the word work means "to exert one's self for a purpose; to put forth effort for the attainment of an object; to labor; to be engaged in the performance of a task, a duty, or the like," or in other words, a work is simply a commandment as we must put forth some form of effort in order to keep it. For example, we are commanded to love God with all our heart, mind, and soul, but how do we accomplish this task without first choosing to exercise our love through living by every word that proceeds forth from the mouth of God.

It is important to understand both that God cannot dwell in unholy temples and that our body is meant to be a temple for the Holy Ghost. While Paul was writing to the baptized members of the Church at Corinth, he said, "What! know ye not that *your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost* which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are **bought with a price**; therefore glorify God in

¹¹ Propitiation is another word for atonement

¹² John 14:15

¹³ Hebrews 11:1

¹⁴ Luke 6:46

¹⁵ Matthew 7:31

your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.¹⁶ If we are all sinners, how then can we be made clean so that we can receive eternal life with God and Jesus Christ? The answer is found through the word of God, which explains that we must be made clean through the blood of Jesus in the baptism of the water and of the Spirit for a remission of sins.

While baptism is necessary for salvation, we know that just as “ye cannot have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, and yet have respect to persons,¹⁷” “there is no respect of persons with God¹⁸” either, which means that every person whoever was, is, or will be, has been extended the grace of Jesus Christ in that He died for all mankind. Below are three Scriptures that talk about the gift of the Messiah, please remember that God is not a respecter of persons:

Reference	Scripture
John 3:15-17	That whosoever <i>believeth</i> on him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the <i>world</i> , that he gave his Only Begotten Son, that whosoever <i>believeth</i> on him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to <i>condemn</i> the world; but that the world through him <i>might be saved</i> .
1 John 2:1-2	My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. But if any man sin and repent, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; And he is the propitiation for our sins; and <i>not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world</i>
1 John 4:10	Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation <i>for our sins</i> .

It is imperative to realize when considering the grace of God that Jesus Christ does not save us **IN** our sins, but He saves us **FROM** our sins, as we read in Matthew, “And she [Mary] shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people ***from*** their sins.¹⁹” Because of what Jesus did, everyone will stand before God to be judged according to their works, however, as we discussed earlier, we are not justified unless we believe in the Son of God, which requires us to keep His commandments. Baptism is therefore not an outward manifestation of an inward grace, but it is a commandment. Again, Jesus said, “He that ***believeth*** and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.²⁰” Read the following from Ezekiel 33:12-16:

33:12 Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous ***shall not*** deliver him in the **day of his transgression**; as for the wickedness of the wicked, he ***shall not fall*** thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness ***in the day that he sinneth***. **33:13** When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness ***shall not be remembered***; but for his iniquity that he hath

¹⁶ 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

¹⁷ James 2:1

¹⁸ Romans 2:11

¹⁹ Matthew 2:4

²⁰ Mark 16:15

committed, **he shall die for it**. **33:14** Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; **33:15** If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; **he shall surely live**, he shall not die. **33:16** **None** of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him; he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.

We have all been given the most precious gift of Jesus Christ, which we can never deserve because of our sins and disobedience, but yet God has given us the way that we might be washed clean from sin through faith in His Only Begotten Son by the baptism of water and of the Spirit. However, if we return to that old man of sin after we make this covenant with God, for baptism is a covenant, then that grace of God through Jesus Christ will not save us, but instead it will condemn us, for we have sinned against His grace, or in other words His love.

Those Who Are Not Baptized

Naturally, the reader might ask, “If all mankind needs to be baptized in order to receive a remission of sins and obtain eternal life, what happens to those who have never had the opportunity to learn about Jesus Christ?” It is yet again vital to remember that God is not a respecter of persons, but instead He is a just and merciful God. God does not judge an individual by what they do not know, but rather by what they do know. Please read from Romans 2:11-16:

2:11 For there is no respect of persons with God. **2:12** For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be **judged by the law**; **2:13** (For **not** the hearers of the law are just before God, but the **doers** of the law shall be justified. **2:14** For when the Gentiles, which **have not** the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are **a law unto themselves**; **2:15** Which show the work of the law **written in their hearts**, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another;) **2:16** In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ **according to the gospel**.

The ancient American record, the Book of Mormon, helps to give further insight into this question, as we read, “Yea, and he looketh down upon all the children of men: and he knows *all the thoughts and intents of the heart*: for by his hand were they all created from the beginning.”²¹ [For more information regarding why we use the Book of Mormon, please refer to the **Chapter Twenty**]. In first Chronicles, chapter twenty-eight, David counseled his son Solomon by saying, “Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts; if thou seek him, he will be found of thee.”²²

The children of men have too often forgotten that it is God and not man that searches and understands all the thoughts and intents of the heart. In His sermon on the mount, Jesus “taught his disciples that they should say unto the people. Judge not unrighteously, that ye be not judged, but judge righteous

²¹ Alma 12:110

²² 1 Chronicles 28:9

judgment.²³ While it is true that we must judge the actions of individuals, we are not to judge the eternal salvation of other people. For example, it is not wise for a parent to allow their children to be around a habitual drug user as this is a dangerous and unrighteous influence. Thus, while it is important to judge the actions of this individual, it is not our place to judge the eternal worth of their soul in the Kingdom of Heaven for we do not know the thoughts or intents of their heart.

The same is true for the millions of people who have not heard of the good news of the Gospel. Jesus said in the twelfth chapter of John, “And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to *judge* the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the *same shall judge him* in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.”²⁴ Even the Son of God did not judge men during His ministry on the earth, instead the Master explained that it would be the light and truth of His word which would judge those who heard the good news of the Gospel.

In Romans we read that God would “judge the secrets of men by *Jesus Christ* according to the gospel.” In other words, the children of men are judged both by what they know and how well they kept the commandments of God. Paul explained in Hebrews, chapter four, that the Gospel, also called the word of God, “is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of body and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”²⁵ When an individual stands before the judgment bar of God we know that it is the Lord Jesus Christ²⁶ that will judge them, and He will know all of their works, along with the thoughts and intents of their heart, for He said “I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.”²⁷

The Book of Mormon testifies harmoniously with the New Testament that the blood of Jesus Christ covers and atones for those who have not received His Gospel, saying, “And he [Jesus Christ] shall rise the third day from the dead; and behold, he standeth to judge the world. And behold, all these things are done, that a righteous judgment might come upon the children of men. For behold, and also his blood atoneth for the sins of those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam, who have died, not knowing the will of God concerning them, or who have ignorantly sinned. But wo, wo unto him who knoweth that he rebelleth against God; for salvation cometh to none such, except it be through repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ.”²⁸ Jesus taught the same message to the disciples in Luke, chapter twelve, “And that servant who knew his Lord's will, and prepared not for his Lord's coming, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not his Lord's will, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with *few*. For unto whomsoever

²³ Matthew 7:1-2

²⁴ John 12:47-49

²⁵ Hebrews 4:12

²⁶ John 5:22

²⁷ Revelation 2:23

²⁸ Mosiah 1:105-108

much is given, of him *shall much be required*; and to whom the Lord has committed much, of him will men ask the more.²⁹ Please read the following from the Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 6:51-55:

6:51 Wherefore he hath given a law; and where there is no law given ***there is no punishment***; **6:52** And where there is no punishment, ***there is no condemnation***; **6:53** And where there is no condemnation, the **mercies of the Holy One of Israel have claim upon them**, because of the atonement: **6:54** For they are delivered by the power of him: for the atonement satisfieth the demands of his justice upon all those who have not the law given to them, that they are delivered from that awful monster, death and hell, and the devil, and the lake of fire and brimstone, which is endless torment. **6:55** And they are restored to that God who gave them breath, which is the Holy One of Israel.

For those without the law, or in other words, for those who have never known the truth about baptism, they will not be judged by the law, but have become a law unto themselves by the things written in their hearts. Where there is no law given, there can be no punishment, and if there is no punishment, there can be no condemnation. Because of this, the atonement of Jesus Christ will have claim upon those who did not know the law or never had the opportunity to hear it. “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have *not heard*? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! So then faith *cometh by hearing*, and hearing by the word of God.³⁰”

If Jesus did not atone for those who have never had the opportunity to hear the Gospel, can the reader imagine the trillions of people from the fall of Adam until the end of the earth shall come, that would be separated from God’s presence and would be forced to suffer death and hell? We would ask the reader to search their heart and their own understanding of God. Would God, who is a God of Justice, be capable of turning His back on the countless number of souls who have never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Does the reader think that the love of God is so small, that He would condemn those who have not heard the good news of the Gospel to endless torment? That is not the great God spoken of in the Scriptures.

Instead, we read through the Scriptures that the precious blood of our Lord and Savior atoned for those who have not received the Gospel, as Jesus simply explained of the Pharisees and Sadducees, “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin,³¹” and this because they received the truth and still decided to rebel against God, which is every man’s choice to make. However, the mercy and justice of God does not stop here as we learn from Peter that every good man or woman who has not had the opportunity to learn, will receive of that truth in either this life or the one to come. “For Christ also once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, that he might bring us to God. For which cause also, he went

²⁹ Luke 12:56-57

³⁰ Romans 10:13-16

³¹ John 15:22

and *preached unto the spirits in prison*; Some of whom were disobedient in the days of Noah, while the long-suffering of God waited, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water...Because of this, is the *gospel preached to them who are dead*, that they might be judged according to men *in the flesh*, but live in the spirit according to the will of God.³²

Infant Baptism

There are many churches today that believe if a baby is not baptized at birth that they will be damned to Hell. However, how could this be true and God still be a just and merciful God, as well as no respecter of persons? It is important to remember that baptism is for the remission of sins as the Master said in Matthew, chapter five. We read previously in the sixth chapter of Genesis that the Only Begotten Son atoned for the transgression of Adam and Eve in the garden. “Hence came the saying abroad among the people, that the Son of God hath atoned for original guilt, wherein the sins of the parents cannot be answered upon the heads of the children, for they are whole from the foundation of the world.” We would ask the reader, what has a baby who has just come from the realms of heaven done to commit sin? Jesus does not judge those for what they do not know. How then can mankind so quickly condemn a child to Hell for not being baptized when they have no concept or understanding between right and wrong? Please read from Matthew 18:10-11, Matthew 19:13-15, and from Moroni 8:11-29:

18:10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I [Jesus] say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven. **18:11** For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost, and to call sinners to repentance; but these little ones **have no need** of repentance, and I will save them.

19:13 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them and pray. And the disciples rebuked them, saying, **There is no need**, for Jesus hath said, Such shall be saved. **19:14** But Jesus said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. **19:15** And **he laid hands on them**, and departed thence.

8:11 Behold I say unto you, that this thing shall ye teach, repentance and baptism unto those who are **accountable and capable** of committing sin; yea, teach parents that they must repent and be baptized, and humble themselves as their little children, and they shall all be saved with their little children: and their little children **need no repentance, neither baptism**. **8:12** Behold, baptism is unto **repentance** to the fulfilling the commandments unto the remission of sins. **8:13** But little children are alive in Christ, even from the foundation of the world; if not so, God is a partial God, and also a changeable God, and a respecter to persons; for how many little children have died without baptism. **8:14** Wherefore, if little children could not be saved without baptism, these must have gone to an endless hell.

8:15 Behold I say unto you, that he that supposeth that little children need baptism, is in the **gall of bitterness**, and in the bonds of iniquity; for he hath neither faith, hope, nor charity; wherefore, should he be cut off while in the thought, he must go down to hell. **8:16** For awful is the wickedness to suppose that God saveth one child because of baptism, and the other must

³² 1 Peter 3:18-20 and 1 Peter 4:6

perish because he hath no baptism. **8:17** Wo be unto him that shall pervert the ways of the Lord after this manner, for they shall perish, except they repent.

8:18 Behold, I speak with boldness, having authority from God; and I fear not what man can do; for perfect love casteth out all fear; and I am filled with charity, which is everlasting love; wherefore all children are alike unto me; wherefore I love little children with a perfect love; and they are all alike, and **partakers of salvation**. **8:19** For I know that God is **not a partial God, neither a changeable being**; but he is unchangeable from all eternity to all eternity.

8:20 Little children **can not** repent; wherefore it is awful wickedness to deny the **pure mercies of God** unto them, for they are all alive in him because of his mercy. **8:21** And he that saith that little children need baptism, denieth the mercies of Christ, and setteth at naught the atonement of him and the power of his redemption. **8:22** Wo unto such, for they are in danger of death, hell, and an endless torment.

8:23 I speak it boldly, God hath commanded me. **8:24** Listen unto them and give heed, or they stand against you at the judgment seat of Christ. **8:25** For behold that all little children are alive in Christ, and also all they that are without the law. **8:26** For the power of redemption cometh on all they that have no law; wherefore, he that is not condemned, or he that is under no condemnation, can not repent; and unto such baptism availeth nothing. **8:27** But is mockery before God, denying the mercies of Christ, and the power of his Holy Spirit, and putting trust in dead works.

8:28 Behold, my son, this thing ought not to be; for repentance is **unto them that are under condemnation**, and under the curse of a broken law. **8:29** And the first-fruits of repentance is baptism; and baptism cometh by faith, unto the fulfilling the commandments; and the fulfilling the commandments bringeth remission of sins; and the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart, cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God.

God taught Adam that children are not condemned by the sins of their parents for this would destroy the mercies of Christ. God also told the Old Testament prophet, Ezekiel, that if a righteous man who walked in the statutes of the Lord were to beget a son who lived in sin and disobedience, then the son would not receive eternal life because of the righteousness of his father, but instead he would die because his own sins. In addition, the Lord told Ezekiel, “When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.”³³ Hence, little children do not need to be baptized, instead, the Lord Jesus Christ gave mankind the example to follow, for

³³ Ezekiel 18:26-28

He was not baptized as a child but was blessed by a man having *authority* from God. Please read from Luke 2:25-33:

2:25 And behold, there was a man at Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the ***Holy Ghost was upon him.***
2:26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. **2:27** And **he came by the Spirit** into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child, even Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, **2:28** Then **took he him up in his arms, and blessed God**, and said, **2:29** Lord, now lettest thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; **2:30** For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, **2:31** Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; **2:32** A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. **2:33** And Joseph, and Mary, marveled at those things which were spoken of the child.

How Should Baptism be Performed

We hope that the reader has learned through the Scriptures that baptism is necessary for both the remission of our sins and for salvation for those who have received the Gospel of Jesus Christ. However, now that we have this knowledge, how is someone supposed to be baptized? In order to answer this question it is important to look to the Son of God, who not only showed mankind the example of baptism we are to follow, but taught baptism as well.

In the very nature of the Master's teachings was "do as I do, and do as I teach." Recall when Jesus washed the disciples' feet in John, chapter thirteen, Jesus said, "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done." Peter, one of Christ's apostles, who was with the Son from the beginning of His ministry also said, "For even here unto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.³⁴" We are commanded therefore to live as Christ lived, and walk as He walked. Jesus told the disciples, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also.³⁵"

The Scriptures plainly testify of the works which Jesus did, which were the works of His Father, and through them we have been given the example to follow. In the third chapters of Matthew and Luke, and the first chapters of Mark and John, we read that Jesus, the Son of God, humbly entered into the waters of baptism in order to fulfill all righteousness and to show us the path to follow. "And then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan, unto John, to be baptized of him; But John refused him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and why comest thou to me?³⁶" In this statement, John recognized both that Jesus was the Son of God and that Jesus was innocent, or in other words, that He had no sin. "And Jesus, answering, said unto him, Suffer me to be baptized of thee, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him.³⁷" If Jesus, who knew no sin and was the Only Begotten Son,

³⁴ 1 Peter 2:21

³⁵ John 14:12

³⁶ Matthew 3:41-42

³⁷ Matthew 3:43

needed to be baptized in order to fulfill all righteousness, how much more do we need to follow in His footsteps? Please read the following Scripture from Matthew 3:44-46:

3:44 And John went down into the water and baptized him. **3:45** And Jesus when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and John saw, and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Jesus. **3:46** And lo, he heard a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.
Hear ye him.

By Water

In the previous Scripture passage, the Master demonstrated in particular that there are two parts to baptism. First, He was baptized with water, and second, He was baptized with the Holy Ghost, which came upon Him in the form of a dove, and as Jesus told Nicodemus, both are necessary to enter into the Kingdom. Paul also confirmed this truth while he explained the principles of the doctrine of Christ, saying, “Therefore not leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; *not laying again* the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God. Of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And we will go on unto perfection if God permit.³⁸” It is important to notice the plural form of the word “baptisms” in this verse, for this indicates more than one. Paul did not mean that we needed to be baptized repeatedly, for he said “not laying again the foundation...of the doctrine of baptisms.” When building a house, do we lay the foundation more than once? Of course not, instead, by the word “baptisms,” Paul was referring to the baptisms of the water and of the Spirit.

In fact, John the Baptist, who was prophesized to come before the Son of God in order to prepare the way, taught the people “There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with water; but he shall not only baptize you with water, but with fire, and the Holy Ghost.³⁹” In this statement, John recognized that he only had the authority from God⁴⁰ to baptize by water, but another, who was Jesus, had the authority to baptize by the Spirit of God, which is the Holy Ghost [read more about the Holy Ghost in **Chapter Three**]. It is critical for the reader to understand that Jesus did not just look for any random person to baptize Him by water, but rather He traveled approximately 60 miles from Galilee to the river Jordan seeking John, who had authority given from God. Please read Zacharias’s prophecy while filled with the Holy Ghost over his son, John, from Luke 1:75-77, as well as from John 1:29-33, Matthew 11:7-10, and Matthew 21:21-25:

1:75 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways, **1:76** To give **knowledge of salvation** unto his people, **by baptism for the remission of their sins**, **1:77** Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us, **1:78** To give light to them who sit in darkness and the

³⁸ Hebrews 6:1-3

³⁹ Mark 1:5-6

⁴⁰ Luke 1:41-79

shadow of death; to guide our feet into the way of peace. **1:79** And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts until the day of his showing unto Israel.

1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and said; Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world! **1:30** And John bare record of him unto the people, saying, This is he of whom I said; After me cometh a man who is preferred before me; for he was before me, and I knew him, and that he should be made manifest to Israel; therefore am I come **baptizing with water**. **1:31** And John bare record, saying; When he was baptized of me, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. **1:32** And I knew him; for he [God] who sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me; Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and **remaining on him**, the same is he who baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. **1:33** And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

11:7 And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? Was it a reed shaken with the wind? And they answered him, No. **11:8** And he said, But what went ye out for to see? Was it a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold they that wear soft raiment are in king's houses. **11:9** But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. **11:10** For this **is the one** of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

21:21 And when he [Jesus] was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, by what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority? **21:22** And Jesus answered and said unto them. I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I, likewise, will tell you by what authority I do these things. **21:23** The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven, or of men? **21:24** And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people, For all people held John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus and said, We cannot tell. **21:25** And he said, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

The reader might ask, "If we are to be baptized by both the water and the Spirit, is there a part that we need to do first?" The short answer to this question is yes. As Jesus demonstrated by His example, the first part of any baptism is the baptism of water. The reader also might ask why this is so, and interestingly enough, Adam also asked God this question in Genesis, chapter six, "And our father Adam spake unto the Lord, and said, Why is it that men must repent, and be baptized in water?" In response, God told Adam that because sin would enter into the hearts of the children of men, they would need to be cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ, "or they can in no wise inherit the kingdom of God. For no unclean thing can dwell there, or dwell in his presence...For, by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified; and by the blood ye are sanctified." Apostle Paul expounded further in Romans 6:1-11 on why we are to be baptized by water first:

6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? **6:2** God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? **6:3** Know ye not, that so many of us

as were baptized into Jesus Christ were **baptized into his death?** **6:4** Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should **walk in newness of life.** **6:5** For if we have been planted together in the **likeness** of his death, we shall be also in the **likeness** of his resurrection; **6:6** Knowing this, **that our old man is crucified with him**, that the body of sin might be **destroyed**, that henceforth we should not serve sin. **6:7 For he that is dead to sin is freed from sin.** **6:8** Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also **live with him**; **6:9** Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. **6:10** For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. **6:11** Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to **be dead indeed unto sin**, but **alive** unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The baptism of water is a cleansing of our bodies from all sin, which we must do first in order to fulfill the commandments and receive the precious gift of the Holy Ghost. It is important to understand that the baptism of water is spiritually symbolic, meaning that when a person is baptized by the water, they are putting to death and burying that old man of sin, just as Jesus was crucified for the sins of the world. Then, as the person is raised up from out of the water, they are resurrected into a newness of life, just as the Son of God was resurrected from the dead, in order to free all mankind from sin. In so doing, not only is the body of sin is destroyed, which thing is necessary in order to receive the baptism of the Spirit for a remission of sins, but we are also given a testimony of the resurrection.

The Scripture passage from Romans also helps to explain why full submersion is necessary for baptism, for we put to death that whole man of sin by burying him completely in the water, just as we might bury a person in a grave. Jesus Christ also gave mankind the example to follow by going “down into the water” to be baptized and then “went straightway up out of the water.” In Genesis, Adam followed this same example and was “laid under the water, and was brought forth out of the water; and thus he was baptized.”⁴¹ From reading the word of God, we know then that a sprinkling of water is not enough to fulfill the commandment nor does it satisfy the example which was given by Christ, and if perhaps the Scriptures are not convincing enough, we can also look at the word itself. Chet Reynolds, an elder in the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, gives the following explanation of the word “baptize.”

By looking at the etymology, or the study of the history of words, we find that the word baptize comes from the Greek baptizo, which means to totally immerse. Another Greek word is bapto – for dipping. The clearest example that shows the meaning of baptizo is a text from the Greek poet and physician Nicander, who lived about 200 B.C. It is a recipe for making pickles and is helpful because it uses both words. Nicander says that in order to make a pickle, the vegetable should first be 'dipped' (bapto) into boiling water and then 'baptised' (baptizo) in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution. But the first is temporary. The second, the act of baptizing the vegetable, produces a permanent change (as baptism does for us).

⁴¹ Genesis 6:67

By Spirit

Jesus told Nicodemus that a man must be born of the water and of the Spirit or he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. At this point, the reader may be asking, “How is someone born of the Spirit? How do we receive the Holy Ghost?” This can be a difficult question because with the example of Jesus, there was no man on the earth at that time who had the authority from God to baptize by the Spirit. Although John the Baptist had the authority from God to baptize by the water, he could not baptize by the Holy Spirit. “I [John] indeed have baptized you with water; but he [speaking of Christ] shall not only baptize you with water, but with fire, and the Holy Ghost.”⁴²

The same situation was found with Adam of course as he was the first man on the earth. In both instances, it was the Spirit of God Himself who baptized them with Holy Ghost.⁴³ Once that authority was then established on the earth, Adam and Jesus were able to go forth and baptize with the Spirit. It is important to realize that this authority did not come from themselves, but from God, as we read in Hebrews, chapter five, “For every high priest taken from among men is ordained *for* men in things pertaining to God... And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest; but he [God] that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee.”⁴⁴ Thus, even Jesus, the Only Begotten Son, was given the authority of priesthood from the Father. Please from Luke 4:17-21 following Jesus’s baptism by John and the beginning of His ministry:

4:17 And there was delivered unto him [Jesus], the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written [Isaiah 61:1-2], **4:18** The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the broken- hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and the recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised; **4:19** To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. **4:20** And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and he sat down. **4:21** And the eyes of all those who were in the synagogue, were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.

If Jesus, who committed no sin, needed to be baptized to fulfill all righteousness by one having authority, and He Himself was called and anointed of God to receive the authority to baptize with the Holy Ghost, how much more do we need to follow the same example? For it is this same example which the apostles and the early Church followed after Jesus had ascended into heaven. [Please read more about the Church of God and an authoritative priesthood in **Chapter Seven**].

After His resurrection, Jesus first appeared to the eleven disciples in the twentieth chapter of John and promised them that He would send them out into the world as His Father had sent Him, “and when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.”⁴⁵ While the apostles and the seventy had previously received authority to preach that the Kingdom of Heaven was

⁴² Mark 1:5-6

⁴³ Genesis 6:67-71

⁴⁴ Hebrews 5:1 and 4-5

⁴⁵ John 20:22

at hand, as well as to heal the sick, to raise the dead, and to cast out devils [read Matthew 10:3-7], there is no Scripture which mentions that they received the gift of the Holy Ghost to abide within them until after Jesus's resurrection. The reason simply being that while Christ was on the earth He was still under the authority of the law of Moses until after His crucifixion and resurrection. Once the "new" covenant was restored again on the earth, the glory of God was then able to be fully manifested through the power of the Holy Ghost. Jesus said, "I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."⁴⁶

Although the apostles received the gift of the Spirit of God in the upper room, the Lord commanded them to wait for a greater out pouring, or in other words an endowment, of His Spirit before they were to begin their ministry and to establish God's Church. We read in the first chapter of Acts, that Jesus remained with the disciples for forty days after His resurrection, teaching them of all things pertaining to the Kingdom of God and commanding "them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have *heard of me*. For John truly baptized with water; but *ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost* not many days hence. But ye shall *receive power*, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."⁴⁷

Once again, we have an example where there was no man on earth with the authority to baptize with the Holy Ghost, thus the apostles had to wait until God endowed them with the power of the Holy Spirit. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they [the apostles] were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it rested upon each of them. And they were all *filled with the Holy Ghost*."⁴⁸

Immediately after the apostles were filled with the power of the Spirit of God, they began to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the people in Jerusalem. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, *Repent, and be baptized* every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the *gift of the Holy Ghost*. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call...Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."⁴⁹

The apostles had not only received the Holy Ghost themselves, but they also received the authority to baptize with the Spirit and to bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost in the pattern set forth by God. In Acts, chapter eight, Philip, who was one of the seven men whom were ordained by the apostles to the office of priest by the laying on of hands,⁵⁰ went down to Samaria and began to preach the word of God, and

⁴⁶ John 16:7

⁴⁷ Acts 1:4-5, and 8

⁴⁸ Acts 2:1-4

⁴⁹ Acts 2:37-39 and 41

⁵⁰ Acts 6:5-7

while he was there, he baptized many. Nonetheless, we can surmise from Philip's work in the eighth chapter of Acts, including his encounter with the eunuch from Ethiopia, that although he had the authority to baptize with water, just as John the Baptist did, he did not have the authority to baptize with the Holy Ghost.

When the apostles at Jerusalem therefore received word of Philip in Samaria, they sent Peter and John to help. Once they arrived there, Peter and John prayed for the people that they would receive the Spirit of the Lord as they had only been baptized by water as yet. "Then laid they their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost.⁵¹" It is important to notice that just as Philip received the authority of priesthood by the laying on of hands [as did Paul and Barnabas, as well as Moses, who was ordained a prophet by the hands of angels], the people at Samaria also received the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands.

Interestingly, there was one man in the city of Samaria named Simon, who was a sorcerer, who "saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God *may be purchased with money*.⁵²" It is important for the reader to know that the authority of priesthood can only be given by God. Again, "no man taketh this honor [meaning priesthood] unto himself, but he that is *called of God*, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest; but he [God] that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee.⁵³" Not only is authority important, as this is a part of the spiritual symbolism, but also the method in which it is given. In particular, the pattern that God established was demonstrated by the acts of the apostles, who gave both the authority of priesthood and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. Priesthood authority is essentially the power to represent Jesus Christ on the earth just as Jesus represented His Father while on the earth.

The final Scripture that we wish to bring to the attention of the reader on receiving the Holy Ghost comes from the Book of Mormon. While reading the following passages of Scripture, we would ask the reader to not only pray about the truth of the Book of Mormon, but also to study the verse from the tenth chapter of John, which says, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."⁵⁴ In the Scriptures below, Jesus Christ visited the people in America after His death and resurrection, and taught them concerning the doctrine of baptism, including the authority to baptize and how baptism is to be performed. Please read 3 Nephi 5:23-25 and Moroni 2:1-3:

5:21 And the Lord said unto him, I give unto you power that ye shall baptize this people, when I am again ascended into heaven. **5:22** And again the Lord called others, and said unto them likewise; and he gave unto them power to baptize. **5:23** And he said unto them, On this wise shall ye baptize; and there shall be **no disputations** among you. **5:24** Verily I say unto you, that

⁵¹ Acts 8:17

⁵² Acts 8:18-20

⁵³ Hebrews 5:4-5

⁵⁴ John 10:16

whoso repenteth of his sins through your words, and desireth to be ***baptized in my name***, on this wise shall ye baptize them: Behold, ye shall go down and stand in the water, and in my name shall ye baptize them. **5:25** And now behold, these are the words which ye shall say, calling them by name, saying: Having ***authority*** given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

2:1 The words of Christ, which he spake unto his disciples, the twelve whom he had chosen, as **he laid his hands upon them**. **2:2** And he called them by name, saying, Ye shall call on the Father in my name, in mighty prayer; and after ye have done this, ye shall have power that on him whom **ye shall lay your hands, ye shall give the Holy Ghost**; and **in my name** shall ye give it, for thus do mine apostles. **2:3** Now Christ spake these words unto them at the time of his first appearing; and the multitude heard it not, but the disciples heard it, and on as many as they laid their hands, ***fell the Holy Ghost***.

Those Who Are Not Baptized by One Having Authority

The reader has learned by the word of God that a person must repent and be baptized in order to dwell with God, that a person must be baptized by the water and the Spirit, and that a person must receive the gift of the Holy Ghost to abide within them by one having authority from God. At this time, a natural question might be “If I was not baptized by someone having authority, will I not be saved?” It is important to remember that those who die without ever having the opportunity to hear the Gospel of Christ become a law unto themselves, “Which show the work of the law *written in their hearts*, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another... For behold that all little children are *alive in Christ*, and also all they that are *without the law*. For the power of redemption cometh on all they that have no law; wherefore, he that is not condemned, or he that is under no condemnation, *can not repent*; and unto such baptism *availeth nothing*. But is *mockery* before God, denying the mercies of Christ, and the power of his Holy Spirit, and putting trust in dead works.”⁵⁵ It is the tender mercies of our Lord Jesus Christ that atones for those who have not received the Gospel.

The reader might ask, “If I was not baptized by someone having authority, can I be baptized again?” The short answer is yes. In Acts, chapter nineteen, apostle Paul entered into the city of Ephesus where he found a small group of disciples who had been baptized by the water, but not by the Spirit. Please read the following excerpt from Acts 19:2-6:

19:2 He said unto them, have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. **19:3** And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. [John baptized with water] **19:4** Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. **19:5** When they heard this, they were baptized ***in the name*** of the Lord Jesus. **19:6** And

⁵⁵ Romans 2:15 and Moroni 8:25-27

when Paul had *laid his hands* upon them, the *Holy Ghost came on them*; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

Similar to the group of saints in Samaria, the disciples in Ephesus had already been baptized with water, but not with the Spirit. However, the difference in this situation is in who did the baptizing, for in Samaria, Philip, who had been ordained by the hands of the apostles, baptized the saints. We can surmise from both Scripture and historical context that the disciples in Ephesus were not baptized by John the Baptist himself, but rather they were baptized in the *manner* of John's baptism, which was by water for repentance. This is why Paul baptized them *in the name* of Jesus first according to the authority that he had received from God in the thirteenth chapter of Acts, and then "when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them."

Nevertheless, it is almost impossible to declare with absolute certainty that the saints in Ephesus were not truly baptized by John, which of course would mean that they were baptized by one having authority. Regardless of which situation it was, there was more light and truth that was revealed unto them, and after hearing the truth, they desired to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost from one who had authority to give it. Thus, they built their foundation upon the Rock and Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Covenant

The Scriptures have explained that baptism is indeed a commandment from God. However, baptism is not only a commandment, but it is also a covenant that we establish with God. The Webster's Dictionary defines a covenant as "a mutual consent or agreement of two or more persons, to do or to forbear some act or thing." The Scriptural definition of a covenant however is found in the ninth chapter of Hebrews, which explains that Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant because of His death. "For where a covenant is, there must also of necessity be *the death of the victim*. For a covenant is of force after the victim is dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the victim liveth."⁵⁶ This Scripture applies to all covenants, including that of baptism. The victim that we are putting to death in the ordinance of baptism is our old man of sin as we read previously read in Romans, chapter six. In so doing, we are taking upon us the name of the Son of God, and are becoming His sons and His daughters.

As John the Beloved testified of Jesus, "But as many as received him [Jesus], to them gave he power to become the sons of God; only to them who believe on his name."⁵⁷ Jesus told the disciples in Luke, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Wherefore, Jesus said, "Yea, blessed are they who shall believe on your words, and come down into the depth of humility, and be baptized in my name; for they shall be visited with fire and the Holy Ghost, and shall receive a remission of their sins." In order for mankind to truly believe in Jesus Christ, we must keep the commandments of God, and we have been commanded to be baptized by the water and by the Spirit. In this manner, we are given power to become the sons and daughters of God just as Adam did. Please read from Genesis 6:

6:67 And it came to pass, when the Lord had spoken with Adam our father, that Adam cried unto the Lord, and he was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, and was carried down into the water,

⁵⁶ Hebrews 9:16-17

⁵⁷ John 1:12

and was laid under the water, and was brought forth out of the water; and thus he was baptized. **6:68** And the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the Spirit, and became quickened in the inner man.

6:69 And he heard a voice out of heaven, saying, Thou art baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost; this is the record of the Father and the Son, from henceforth and forever; **6:70** And thou art after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity. **6:71** Behold, thou art one in me, **a son of God**; and thus **may all become my sons**. Amen.

It is through the covenant of baptism that we take upon us the name of Christ, and as we read in Acts, chapter four, “Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.⁵⁸” It is important to remember nonetheless that the covenant “is of no strength at all while the victim liveth,” meaning that if we desire for the covenant to have power we must put off that old man of sin and endure to the end, for if we do not, then we have no promise. Remember also “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him *shall much be required*; and to whom the Lord has committed much, of him will men ask the more.” Please read more about the covenant of baptism through Book of Mormon, Mosiah 11:187-188, Alma 5:23-28, Mosiah 3:8-12, and 2 Nephi 13:16-17; 24-30:

11:187 And the Lord said unto me, Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men, and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, **must be born again**; **11:188** Yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming **his sons and daughters**; and thus they become **new creatures**; and unless they do this, they can in no wise inherit the kingdom of God

5:23 Now the Spirit knoweth all things; nevertheless the Son of God suffereth according to the flesh, that he might **take upon him the sins of his people**, that he might blot out their transgressions, according to the power of his deliverance; and now behold, this is the testimony which is in me. **5:24** Now I say unto you, that ye must repent, and be born again: for the Spirit saith, If ye are not born again, ye can not inherit the kingdom of heaven; **5:25** Therefore come and be **baptized unto repentance**, that ye may be **washed** from your sins, that ye may have faith on the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, who is **mighty to save and to cleanse from all unrighteousness**; **5:26** Yea, I say unto you, Come and fear not, and lay aside every sin, which easily doth beset you, which doth bind you down to destruction; **5:27** Yea, come and go forth, and shew unto your God that ye are willing to repent of your sins, and enter into a covenant with him to keep his commandments, and witness it unto him this day, by going into the waters of baptism; **5:28** And whosoever doeth this, and **keepeth** the commandments of God from thenceforth, the same will remember that I say unto him, yea, he will remember that I have said unto him, he **shall** have eternal life, according to the testimony of the Holy Spirit, which testifieth in me.

⁵⁸ Acts 4:12

3:8 And now, because of the covenant which ye have made, ***ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters***: **3:9** For behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him, and have become his sons and his daughters. **3:10** And under this head ye are made free; and there is no other head whereby ye can be made free. **3:11** There is no other name given, whereby salvation cometh, therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God, that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives. **3:12** And it shall come to pass that whosoever doeth this, shall be found at the right hand of God, for he shall know the name by which he is called; for he shall be called ***by the name of Christ***.

13:16 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, I know that if ye shall follow the Son with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent, repenting of your sins, witnessing unto the Father, that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ, by baptism; yea, by following your Lord and your Savior down into the water, according to his word; behold, then shall ye receive the Holy Ghost; **13:17** Yea, then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost; and then can ye speak with the tongue of angels, and shout praises unto the Holy One of Israel. **13:24** For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water: and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire, and by the Holy Ghost. **13:25** And then are ye in this strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life; yea, ye have entered in by the gate; ye have done according to the commandments of the Father and the Son; **13:26** And ye have received the Holy Ghost, which witnesses of the Father and the Son, unto the fulfilling of the promise which he hath made, that if ye enter in by the way, ye should receive.

13:27 And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask, if all is done? **13:28** Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for ye have not come thus far, save it were by the word of Christ, with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save; **13:29** Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. **13:30** Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: ***Ye shall have eternal life***.

Baptism is not only our covenant with God that we will be His people, but it is also His covenant that He will be our God. “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine; And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.⁵⁹” [For more information on “peculiar treasure” please read **Chapter Twelve**]. God has promised in His covenant toward us that He will hear the cries of the faithful, He will bind up the brokenhearted, He will fill our soul with joy, He will give us entrance into the Kingdom of God, and He will give us the most precious gift of eternal life if we will feast on the words of His Son.

⁵⁹ Exodus 19:5-6

God's promises however are predicated on whether we will keep His commandments and endure to the end. For as we read in Ezekiel, "When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth *in them*; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die." In addition, Lord has commanded, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."⁶⁰ In baptism, we take upon us the name of Jesus Christ, wherefore, if we do not keep the commandments and remain faithful, we are taking the name of the Lord in vain.

Conclusion

As the reader has examined this work, it is our prayer and hope that you have come away with a true knowledge of baptism as taught through the word of God by the examples of Jesus Christ and Adam, through the exploits of the apostles, and through the testimony of Christ's teachings in the Book of Mormon. We hope that this work has not only brought knowledge, but also a comfort and peace to the reader. For "behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the *sons of God*...Beloved, now are we the *sons of God*, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."⁶¹

In Genesis, the reader learned that God commanded Adam to teach all of his children to repent and to be baptized, and this is because the fall of Adam had separated man from God and forced mankind to be conceived into a sinful world. Thereby, we have an idea of God's plan of salvation, and that baptism is necessary for the remission of sins. In fact, without baptism, we are not able to inherit the Kingdom of God. However, those that have never had the opportunity to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ will not be condemned for where this is no law given, there is no punishment. Instead, the atonement of Jesus Christ will have claim over them, which is a powerful example of God's justice and love. It is important to understand that God desires every soul to come back into His presence.

The reader has learned how baptism is performed through the examples of Jesus Christ, Adam, and the apostles. The examples demonstrated that a person must be baptized by water and by the Spirit. The baptism of water is a symbolism of burying that old man of sin, which is a covenant that we make with the Lord, and rising again in a newness of life which is freed from sin. The baptism of the Spirit is a gift from God and is essential for mankind to receive a remission of sins [the subject of the Holy Ghost will be further expounded in **Chapter Three**].

⁶⁰ Exodus 20:7

⁶¹ 1 John 3:1-3