

## Priesthood Study Series

### Study #8 - Baptism by Water

#### Christ's Terms for Salvation

- ◆ “All Christians are agreed on one thing—that man is powerless to save himself, and that salvation is...only in and through the atonement of Jesus Christ.” If this is true, and it is, then we are in no position to dictate the terms of salvation. “Christ, the only person who can save [us], dictates the terms. To try to change them to suit individual fancy...is an expression of the very attitude which sinful man must repent of and discard if he expects the atonement of Christ to be effective for him.” *Source: Evan Fry - “The Restoration Faith”- Pg.78-79*
- ◆ *What are Christ's terms for salvation? And – How do we faithfully administer them?*

**As mentioned above, we must acknowledge that we are powerless to save ourselves – salvation and entrance into the Kingdom only comes through the atonement of Jesus Christ**

- ◆ As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one; There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one...For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; **Romans 3:10-11; 23**

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins; Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him; And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight; **Colossians 1:12-22**

- ◆ But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Romans 6:22-23**

#### Christ Was Obedient Unto Baptism

- ◆ Thus came John, preaching and baptizing in the river of Jordan; bearing record that he who was coming after him had power to baptize with the Holy Ghost and fire. 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? 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. And John went down into the water and baptized him. 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. And lo, he heard a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him. **Matthew 3:40-46**
- ◆ And now, if the Lamb of God, he being holy, should have need to be baptized by water to fulfill all righteousness, O then, how much more need have we, being unholy, to be baptized, yea, even by water. And now, I would ask of you, my beloved brethren, wherein the Lamb of God did fulfill all righteousness in being baptized by water? Know ye not that he was holy?

But notwithstanding he being holy, he sheweth unto the children of men, that according to the flesh, he humbleth himself before the Father, and witnesseth unto the Father that he would be obedient unto him in keeping his commandments; Wherefore, after he was baptized with water, the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove. *2 Nephi 13:7-10*

**Of Note**—Christ started his formal ministry by being baptized and ended his ministry by commanding the apostles to teach and baptize. While this is our understanding and belief, there are those who challenge this belief, particularly as it pertains to our understanding of the great commission. [Source: [www.bebaptized.org](http://www.bebaptized.org)]

### The Message of the Cross and Baptism Are Inseparable

- ◆ Without Christ's willful surrender to the injustice of the cross there would have been no crucifixion, and the power of the crucifixion would have been lost—Without the crucifixion there would have been no death and no resurrection.  
Unlike Christ, we are already dead – in order for us to live we must be resurrected through Christ – Our willful disobedience must be surrendered. We must believe and repent – The old man must die in order for the new to live
- ◆ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, **let him deny himself, (surrender) and take up his cross and follow me.** And now for a man to take up his cross, **is to deny himself all ungodliness, and every worldly lust, and keep my commandments.** Break not my commandments for to save your lives; for whosoever will save his life in this world, shall lose it in the world to come. And whosoever will lose his life in this world, for my sake, shall find it in the world to come. *Matthew 16:25-29*

### So what has this to do with Baptism?

- ◆ Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? **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. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; 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. For he that is dead to sin is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; *Romans 6:3-8*
- ◆ **Compare what Christ suffered on the cross for us: and ask yourselves how what he asks of us compares to His sacrifice. What he asks of us is simple by comparison.**  
And whoso believeth in me, and is baptized, the same shall be saved; and they are they who shall inherit the kingdom of God. And whoso believeth not in me, and is not baptized, shall be damned. Verily, verily I say unto you, that this is my doctrine; and I bear record of it from the Father; and whoso believeth in me, believeth in the Father also; *3 Nephi 5:34-36*

### If Christ Was Obedient Unto Baptism, What About Us? Are We Commanded To Be Baptized?

- ◆ And again: It sheweth unto the children of men the straightness of the path, and the narrowness of the gate, by which they should enter, he having set the example before them. And he said unto the children of men, Follow thou me. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, can we follow Jesus, save we shall be willing to keep the commandments of the Father? And the Father said, Repent ye, repent ye, and be baptized in the name of my beloved Son. And also, the voice of the Son came unto me, saying, He that is baptized in my name, to him will the Father give the Holy Ghost, like unto me; wherefore, follow me, and do the things which ye have seen me do. 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; *2 Nephi 13:11-16*

- ♦ And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, unto the end of the world. Amen. *Matthew 28:17-19*

## What is Baptism?

- ♦ **Baptism is a Principle of the Doctrine of Christ** – "Therefore leaving [not leaving-I. V.] 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" *Hebrews 6: 1, 2*

"Baptism then, as a principle of the doctrine and gospel of the Christ, is a rule of action designed by our Creator for the specific purpose of producing certain good results in the lives of his created that will bring them into oneness with him."

"Baptism symbolizes the entrance of the believer into the communion of Christ's death and resurrection. It is a dramatic, virile experience in the process of regeneration through a spiritual union with Christ. When one is baptized he becomes the recipient of all of the benefits of Christ's death upon the cross and his resurrection. It is a prerequisite to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the receiving of the Holy Ghost as an abiding comforter."

*Ordinances and Sacraments of the Church, Yale, A. & Brockway, C., 1962, pgs. 21-22*

- ♦ **Baptism is a Sacrament** – "Included in this rite is the *immersion* of the believer in water by one duly authorized, following evidence of the desire of the believer to become incorporated in the body of Christ. (Sprinkling or pouring of water does not constitute baptism.) There is a twofold rite involved: that of immersion in water and that of the laying on of hands for the receiving of the Holy Spirit."

"Baptism has all of the elements of a sacrament. We consider it to be a sacrament, therefore:

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|---------------------|---|
| 1. The Symbol       | The water, the minister, the hands  |
| 2. The Ordinance    | Enjoined by God   |
| 3. The Covenant     | "To take upon them the name of Christ"  |
| 4. The Sacrifice    | Dedication of whole life  |
| 5. The Rite         | The baptismal ceremonies: immersion and laying on of hands, the ritualistic declaration, "I baptize you..." |
| 6. The Intermediary | An elder or priest  |
| 7. The Recipient    | Instructed and eligible candidate"  |

*Ordinances and Sacraments of the Church, Yale, A. & Brockway, C., 1962, pgs. 21, 24*

- ♦ **Baptism is a Covenant** –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; *Alma 5:27*

"The fundamental function of the ceremony of baptism in water is to mark the making of a covenant. A valid covenant requires that there be two parties to the agreement. In the act of taking "upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end," those who are baptized are committing themselves to Christ by way of a definite pledge. The Scriptures do not stress the fact of the covenant so much as they emphasize the effects of making that covenant. Nevertheless, the fact of covenant relationship is clearly indicated. At the edge of the waters of Mormon, Alma told his followers, "As ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, . . . what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, that he may pour his Spirit more abundantly upon you?"<sup>3</sup>

The concept of making a covenant is inherent also in the statement of basic law to the restored church concerning the manner of baptism as may be noted in the Scripture quotation at the beginning of the chapter. The rite marks the formal making of the covenant, but the desire to enter into that covenant and to be subject to its provisions has already begun to have an effect on our lives.

The person immersed commits himself to an assumption of the name and ways of Jesus Christ, and signifies his determination to serve Christ to the end of his days. This constitutes a conscious surrender of self-will and command to God. In recognition of this surrender and commitment, the sins of the man are remitted and God bestows upon him a portion of His Spirit. This is the promise which God makes as he enters into covenant relationship with the man. Indeed, the promise the man makes would be vain were it not for the gift of the Holy Spirit, for the man has no power within himself to do that which he has promised to do. It is only by the operation of the power of God that rebirth is possible. This is because rebirth implies a profound change in the whole tone and direction of one's life. Old habits must be replaced by new, attitudes and patterns of thought must be remolded, and the will of the self must be surrendered.” *Source: Ordinances and Sacraments of the Church, Yale, A. & Brockway, C., 1962, pgs. 22-23*

### Three “R’s” of Salvation—

- ◆ **Repentance:** As we repent from dead works and align ourselves with God’s desire, and participate properly in one of the ordinances, something happens which causes us to feel that our sins are remitted and there is no longer anything between us and God.
- ◆ **Remission:** (or forgiveness) removes that which separates us from God (sin) – frees us to see and hear God.
- ◆ **Revelation:** as sins are removed, our way is clear, our eyes are opened so that we can see him.  
“*Whosoever Repenteth*” - Wayne Updike, 1957

### Three “R’s” and Baptism

#### ◆ Repentance and Rebirth

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. *Moroni 8:29*

"To repent effectively we must become different people from what we have been hitherto. Indeed, after careful consideration, we can find no better statement of what must happen than a statement of Jesus to Nicodemus, 'Ye must be born again' (John 3:7). Commenting on this statement, Doctor James Bissett Pratt says: 'In the whole history of ethical discussion there is no saying more full of insight into the nature of the moral life than those words of Jesus, 'Ye must be born again.' *Ordinances and Sacraments of the Church, Yale, A. & Brockway, C., 1962, pg. 23*

...he cometh to redeem those who will be baptized unto repentance, through faith on his name; *Alma 7:41*

#### ◆ Remission of Sins

John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. *Mark 1:3*

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; *Acts 2:37-41*

Yea, blessed are they who shall believe in your words, and come down into the depths of humility, and be baptized; for they shall be visited with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and shall receive a remission of their sins. *3 Nephi 5:49*

...yea, repent and be baptized every one of you, for the remission of your sins; *Doctrine and Covenants 32:2g*

## ◆ Revelation-Eligibility for the Gift of the Holy Ghost

Yea, be baptized even by water, and then cometh the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost. *Doctrine and Covenants 32:2g*

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. *2 Nephi 13:24*

And this is my gospel: repentance and baptism by water, and then cometh the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, even the Comforter, which showeth all things, and teacheth the peaceable things of the kingdom. *Doctrine and Covenants 39:2b*

## Is Baptism Required to Enter Into the Kingdom?

### ◆ Evidence of Requirement

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.** 3:5 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 3:3*

And he commandeth all men that they must repent, and be **baptized** in his name, having perfect faith in the Holy One of Israel, or they can not be saved in the **kingdom** of God. *2 Nephi 6:48*

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; Therefore come and be baptized unto repentance,** *Alma 5:24*

And again I say unto you, Ye must repent, and be **baptized** in my name, and become as a little child, or ye can in nowise inherit the **kingdom** of God. *3 Nephi 5:40*

Verily, verily, I say unto you, They who believe not on your words, and are not **baptized** in water, in my name, for the remission of their sins, that they may receive the Holy Ghost, shall be damned, and shall not come into my Father's **kingdom**, where my Father and I am. *Doctrine & Covenants 83:12a*

- ◆ "You cannot build a new world without new-world builders. Men whose hearts and minds turn to some other homeland can never succeed as pioneers of a new nation. The United States of America was not truly a nation until the founders and patriots ceased to think of themselves as transplanted Englishmen or Germans or Scandinavians, and learned to think of themselves as Americans. It is similarly impossible to build the kingdom of God with men whose interests and affections turn back to the kingdoms of this world. He who would assist in building the kingdom of God must indeed be born again."! Edwards, F. H., *Fundamentals*, 1951 edition, p 134

## Is Baptism necessary for salvation? Are we saved by faith alone?

### ◆ Baptism directly connected with salvation

And brought them out, and said, Sirs, **what must I do to be saved?** And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and **was baptized, he and all his, straightway.** *Acts 16:30-33*

He that **believeth and is baptized, shall be saved;** but he that believeth not, shall be damned. *Mark 16:15*

And whoso believeth in me, and is **baptized**, the same shall be saved; and they are they who shall inherit the **kingdom** of God. *3 Nephi 5:34*

And **he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved,** and he that believeth not shall be damned; *Doctrine and Covenants 68:1g*

The like figure whereunto **even baptism doth also now save us**, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ; *1 Peter 3:21*

Repent, therefore, and enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. *Mat 7:22-23*

**Basic requirements for salvation are:** 1. Faith/Belief 2. Repentance 3. Baptism & 4. Endure to the end

- ◆ There are some who do not see baptism as a necessary part of salvation. They say that salvation comes by faith alone and that baptism represents a work. There is only one scripture in the bible which expresses the phrase “faith alone” — What does this scriptures say?

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith alone without the deeds of the law. *Romans 3:28*

- ◆ This passage is speaking of the law of Moses—The law of Moses cannot save us, only belief and faith in Christ.

We believe this also — but we also believe that if you accept Christ as your Lord and savior—then you will keep His Commandments

And the first-fruits of repentance is baptism; and baptism cometh by faith, unto the fulfilling the commandments; *Moroni 8:29*

**Is baptism a work?**

- ◆ **Yes it is a work – but it is not our work— ITS GOD’S WORK. It is God’s holy work to bring to pass the undeserved everlasting life of man.**

Buried with him (Jesus Christ) in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him **through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead**. *Col 2:12*

- ◆ **Martin Luther and Baptism** [Source: The Large Catechism by Martin Luther, XIII. Part Fourth Of Baptism.]

“For to be baptized in the name of God is to be baptized not by men, but by God Himself. Therefore although it is performed by human hands, **it is nevertheless truly God's own work**.

“...It is true, indeed, that nothing in us is of any avail but faith, as we shall hear still further. **But these blind guides are unwilling to see this, namely, that faith must have something which it believes, that is, of which it takes hold, and upon which it stands and rests.** Thus faith clings to the water, and believes that it is **Baptism, in which there is pure salvation and life; not through the water (as we have sufficiently stated), but through the fact that it is embodied in the Word and institution of God, and the name of God inheres in it...**”

“In short, what God does and works in us He proposes to work through such external ordinances.

Wherever, therefore, He speaks, yea, in whichever direction or by whatever means He speaks, thither faith must look, and to that it must hold. Now here we have the words: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. To what else do they refer than to Baptism, that is, to the water comprehended in God's ordinance? **Hence it follows that whoever rejects Baptism rejects the Word of God, faith, and Christ, who directs us thither and binds us to Baptism...**”

“Still Baptism is itself a work, **and you say works are of no avail for salvation; what then, becomes of faith? Answer: Yes, our works, indeed, avail nothing for salvation; Baptism, however, is not our work, but God's**”

◆ **Another author puts it this way: [Source: [www.bebaptized.org](http://www.bebaptized.org)]**

Submerging beneath the surface of water and getting wet is not a “work”.

The “work” that is done in baptism is done by God, not by man.

- The “work” that is done in baptism is the removal of the stain of sin from a person’s soul for all eternity.
- It is the transference of a sinner from the kingdom of *darkness* to the kingdom of *light*.
- It is God taking a *dead* man and making him *alive*!
- It is God taking the *unrighteous* and declaring them *righteous*.
- It is God clothing the sinner with the righteousness of Jesus.
- It is God uniting together man’s spirit with Christ’s. This could *NEVER, EVER* be accomplished by man!

The miracle that happens in baptism is not anything man does. It is something God Himself does through His Son, Jesus Christ. Again, baptism is not *our* work, it is *His*!

◆ **Two things we cannot do for ourselves:**

1. Learn of the Gospel, it must be revealed or shared with us, and
2. We cannot baptize ourselves-only God or His authorized or commissioned representative can do these things.

**Our Role in Sharing the “Word”– Conversion doesn’t occur until “one hears the word”**

- ◆ But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. *Acts 8:12*
- ◆ And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went; and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth; In his humiliation his judgment was taken away; and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus; and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea. *Acts 8:26-40*
- ◆ he said unto them, Go ye into all 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. *Mark 16:14-15* And
- ◆ 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. *Romans 10:13-16*

- ♦ Verily I say unto you, that whoso repenteth of his sins through your words, and desireth to be baptized in my name, on this wise shall ye baptize them: *3 Nephi 5:24*

### **In many ways baptism is the consequence or result of our fulfilling our calling**

- ♦ Yea, blessed are they who shall believe on your words, and come down into the depth of humility, and be baptized in my name; *Matthew 5:4*
- ♦ And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God.  
Therefore, in the ordinances thereof the power of godliness is manifest; and without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; for without this, no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live. *Doctrine and Covenants 83:3b&c*

### **Symbolisms and imagery associated with baptism offers us, as God's representatives, opportunities to share spiritual meanings to the candidate and the body.**

- ♦ **In the symbolism of the baptism in water we find many spiritual meanings:**
  - a. Cleansing-the washing away of the stain of sin in our lives.
  - b. Burial-burial of the old man who from henceforth is dead to our way of life.
  - c. Resurrection-arising from the water a new creature, new in every sense.
  - d. Obedience-acceptance of a simple rite to have great meaning because *it is* ordained of God.
  - e. Faith-literally trusting physical life in the hands of a man sent of God (priesthood), the candidate shows he has trusted his eternity in the hands of God, believing wholeheartedly that God's way is right.
  - f. Covenant-declaring the old way is to be no more, pledging to accept God's guidance in all things, identifying one's self with God and his people.

*Ordinances and Sacraments of the Church, Yale, A. & Brockway, C., 1962, pg. 24*

### **Scriptures and some thoughts associated with symbols and imagery**

- ♦ **Baptism Symbolizes faith, humility and obedience:**

And he commandeth all men that they must repent, and be baptized in his name, having perfect faith in the Holy One of Israel, or they can not be saved in the kingdom of God. *2 Nephi 6:48*

**Faith** – as the baptismal candidate places him or herself in the hands of God's representatives – it demonstrates faith and trust—symbolic of faith and trust in God

- ♦ **Baptism Symbolizes Cleansing and Rebirth:**

#### Cleansing:

And after they had been received in baptism, and were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost, they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ, *Moroni 6:4*

#### Rebirth:

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. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. *John 3:3-7*



### ◆ **Baptism Symbolizes Death, Burial & Glorious Resurrection**

Know ye not, that so many of us as were **baptized** into Jesus Christ were **baptized** into his death? 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. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; *Romans 6:3-5*

Through Baptism we are united with Christ:

Death – We humble ourselves and surrender the old life

Burial – Baptism in the water represents being buried with Him

Resurrection – Just as Christ was raised so are we

### ◆ **Baptism Symbolizes A Sacred Covenant**

Baptism is the outward expression, testimony, symbolism of a covenant relationship between Us and God

- Through baptism we publicly declare and commit to take upon us the name of Christ, and to follow His ways from that point forward. [and if endure to the end]
- In return, God will bestow upon us the Gift of the Holy Ghost and citizenship within the Kingdom of God for eternity

Now I say unto you, If this be the desire of your hearts, what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you? *Mosiah 9:41*

### ◆ **Baptism Symbolizes the Way we Become Members of Christ's Church**

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body... Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. *1 Corinthians 12:13& 27*

And he that will hear my voice, shall be my sheep; and him shall ye receive into the church; and him will I also receive. For behold, this is my church: whosoever is baptized *Mosiah 11:128-129*

Yea, and as many as he [Alma] did baptize did belong to the church of God; and this because of their belief on the words of Alma. *Mosiah 11:96*

And it came to pass that they did do all things, even as Jesus had commanded them. And they who were baptized in the name of Jesus, were called the church of Christ. *3 Nephi 12:12-13*

### **Who can be baptized?**

- ◆ Those who have reached the age of accountability – eight years old.

You must repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ; for all men must repent and be baptized, and not only men, but women; and children who have arrived to the years of accountability. *Doctrine and Covenants 16:6d*

for this shall be a law unto the inhabitants of Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized; and their children shall be baptized for the remission of their sins when **eight years old**, and receive the laying on of the hands: *Doctrine and Covenants 68:4b*

And I will establish a covenant of circumcision with thee, and it shall be my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations; that thou mayest know forever that children are not accountable before me until they are eight years old. *Genesis 17:11*

Behold I say unto you, that this thing shall ye teach, repentance and baptism unto those who are accountable and capable of committing sin; *Moroni 8:11*

- ♦ **Just, reaching the age of accountability – 8 years – does not qualify the person for baptism any more than reaching the age of 16 years qualifies a young person to drive.**

But, behold, I say unto you, that little children are redeemed from the foundation of the world, through mine Only Begotten; wherefore they can not sin, for power is not given unto Satan to tempt little children, until they begin to become accountable before me; *Doctrine and Covenants 28:13a*

No one can be received into the church of Christ unless he has arrived unto the years of accountability before God, and is capable of repentance. *Doctrine and Covenants 17:20*

## Qualification for Baptism

- ♦ And again by way of commandment to the church concerning the manner of baptism: [Qualifications] All those who <sup>1</sup>**humble themselves** before God and <sup>2</sup>**desire to be baptized**, and <sup>3</sup>**come forth with broken hearts** and **contrite spirits**, and <sup>4</sup>**witness before the church that they have truly repented** of all their sins, and are <sup>5</sup>**willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ**, having a <sup>6</sup>**determination to serve him to the end**, and <sup>7</sup>**truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins**, shall be received by baptism into his church. *Doctrine and Covenants 17:7a-d*

### 1. Those who humble themselves before God

- *Matthew 5:4* 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.
- *Mosiah 1:118-120* But men drink damnation to their own souls, except they humble themselves, and become as little children, and believe that salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and through the atoning blood of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent: For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been, from the fall of Adam, and will be, for ever and ever; But if he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man, and becometh a saint, through the atonement of Christ, the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.

### 2. Must desire to be baptized

- *Mosiah 9:41-42* Now I say unto you, If this be the desire of your hearts, what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord...And now when the people had heard these words, they clapped their hands for joy, and exclaimed, This is the desire of our hearts. *Alma 16:138*...Blessed is he that believeth in the word of God, and is baptized without stubbornness of heart; yea, without being brought to know the word, or even compelled to know, before they will believe.

### 3. Must have a broken heart and contrite spirit

- *3 Nephi 4:49-50* And ye shall offer up unto me no more the shedding of blood; yea, your sacrifices and your burnt offerings shall be done away, for I will accept none of your sacrifices and your burnt offerings; and ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost,
- *Psalms 34:18* The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

- **Psalm 51:17** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart,
  - **3 Nephi 5:66** And behold I have given you the law and the commandments of my Father, that ye shall believe in me, and that ye shall repent of your sins, and come unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit.
  - **Moroni 6:2** ...neither did they receive any unto baptism, save they came forth with a broken heart and a contrite spirit,
4. Witness, before the church, that they have truly repented of all their sins
- **Moroni 6:2** Behold, elders, priests, and teachers were baptized; and they were not baptized, save they brought forth fruit meet that they were worthy of it; neither did they receive any unto baptism, save they came forth with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and witnessed unto the church that they truly repented of all their sins.
  - **Alma 5:26-27** 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; 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. Must be willing to take on the name of Jesus Christ
- **Acts 10:48** And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.
  - **Ether 1:115** Therefore, repent all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me, and believe in my gospel, and be baptized in my name; for he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned; and signs shall follow them that believe in my name.
  - **Doctrine and Covenants 16:4e-g** Take upon you the name of Christ, and speak the truth in soberness; and as many as repent, and are baptized in my name, which is Jesus Christ, and endure to the end, the same shall be saved. Behold, Jesus Christ is the name which is given of the Father, and there is none other name given whereby man can be saved; wherefore, all men must take upon them the name which is given of the Father, for in that name shall they be called at the last day; wherefore, if they know not the name by which they are called, they can not have place in the kingdom of my Father.
6. Must have a determination to serve him to the end
- **Moroni 6:3** And none were received unto baptism, save they took upon them the name of Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end.
7. Must demonstrate by their works that they have received the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins
- **Doctrine and Covenants 17:18c** And the members shall manifest before the church, and also before the elders, by a godly walk and conversation that they are worthy of it, that there may be works and faith agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, walking in holiness before the Lord.

### Qualification verses Urgency of Baptism

#### ♦ Wisdom Admonished

“President Smith also decided that it was not necessary to ask the candidate any questions at the water, the fact of them presenting themselves to be Baptized, is as great a testimony as we can have, that they are truly

penitent; and by that act they covenant with God to serve him. Our questioning them does not make them more penitent, or make the covenant more binding." *The True Latter Day Saints' Herald*, Number 5, Volume 3, November, 1862, page 117.

Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. *Acts 8:35-38*

And they [Paul and Silas] said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. *Acts 16:31-33*

[Ananias to Saul/Paul]...And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. *Acts 22:12*

### What is the Mode or Method of Baptism?

#### ◆ By one having authority

And the Lord said unto him, I give unto you power that ye shall baptize this people, when I am again ascended into heaven. And again the Lord called others, and said unto them likewise; and he gave unto them power to baptize. *3 Nephi 5:21-22*

Go ye into all the world; preach the gospel to every creature, acting in the authority which I have given you, baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; *Doctrine and Covenants 68:1f*

And he said unto them, Go ye into all 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. *Mark 16:14-15*

#### ◆ By immersion

And he said unto them, On this wise shall ye baptize; and there shall be no disputations among you. Verily I say unto you, that 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...And then shall ye immerse them in the water, and come forth again out of the water. And after this manner shall ye baptize in my [Christ's] name. *3 Nephi 5:23, 24, 26 & 27*

#### ◆ By the words contained in the Law

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. *3 Nephi 5:25*

The person who is called of God and **has authority from Jesus Christ to baptize**, shall go down into the water with the person who has presented him or herself for baptism, and shall say, calling him or her by name: Having been **commissioned of Jesus Christ**, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen. *Doctrine & Covenants 21b&c*

#### - General Conference Resolutions 1852-1923

**No. 48** It was decided that whoever administers the ordinance of baptism should use the precise words given in the law,

- **The Law**

**D&C 43:1a** O hearken, ye elders of my church...ye have received a commandment for a law unto my church, through him whom I have appointed unto you, to receive commandments and revelations...

**D&C 42:16a** Thou shalt take the things which thou hast received, which have been given unto thee in my Scriptures for a law, to be my law, to govern my church;

**GCR No. 6.** That the whole law of the Church of Jesus Christ is contained in the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Book of Doctrine and Covenants.

And not substitute our own words in place of the words of God; and with respect to the forms in the Book of Mormon and the Book of Covenants, there is in reality no difference, but it is proper to give the preference to the latter, it having been given expressly to us, but the words *authority* and *commission* are synonymous. [It is not clear from the record whether this is a resolution by the conference or a decision of the President.—Committee.]

- ***The True Latter Day Saints' Herald***

Plano, Ill May 1, 1874 Pages 280-281

"Now and then an Elder gets wise above that which is written, and introduces something new. Such should be admonished."

"The form of words given for the observance of the Elders of the Church, acknowledged by the Conferences and used by all who are obedient and humble, is as follows:

*D&C 17:21 & Book of Mormon, 3 Nephi 5:25 quoted*

Both these forms express the same idea, but in neither is there needed an addition of other words."

Joseph Smith III

## Preparation for Baptism

### ♦ Think About Water Conditions:

- Depth of water
  - Assists with raising the candidate
- Cleanliness of water
  - In ocean or lake face candidate towards shore
- Temperature of water
  - Preparing for Indoor Baptisms
- Bottom of river, pond, etc.
  - Baptistry should be cheerful and uplifting
- Currents and Undertows
  - Check for safety hazards
  - Check on headroom
  - Check on water temperature and depth
  - Face Candidate downstream
  - Keeps water from entering nose
  - Keeps clothing flowing in the right direction

### ♦ Preparing Candidate for Baptism

- Meet with candidate well before the baptism to assure adequate time for questions, concerns and preparations
- Familiarize candidate with baptismal setting, conditions, or font
- Show candidate how you will assist them in and out of the font and the water
- Candidate should be instructed on what is appropriate attire

## The Baptism

### ♦ Minister assumes proper position

- Minister enters water first and assures all is well with the setting
- Minister assists candidate into the water

- Minister assists candidate to assume proper position
  - o Help them face the right way
  - o Make sure they have proper footing
  - o Assure appropriate condition of clothing
- Minister is reassuring
- Speak softly and confidently if needed
- Help them become used to the water
  - o Generally, minister will stand behind and slightly to the right of candidate
  - o Minister makes sure he has proper footing and that there is enough room to safely complete the baptism

## The Baptismal Service is a Sacred Ceremony

### ◆ Presiding over the Baptismal Service

- The Service should not be minimized by other functions
- The length of the service ought to be considered
- God and Heaven have an interest in what is taking place

**D&C 16:3c,e,f** Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God;... And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth. Wherefore you are called to cry repentance unto this people. And if it so be that you should labor all your days, in crying repentance unto this people, and bring save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!

- Preparing an order of worship
  - Appropriate Hymns
  - Appropriate Scriptures
  - Baptismal charge –
    - o Moderate length
    - o Focus spiritual significance of the ordinance
  - Challenge the candidate(s)
  - Address baptismal covenant
  - Baptism
  - Other worship activity
  - Special Music
  - Prayers and Special Prayers

## Post Baptismal Considerations

- ◆ Recording the baptism
- ◆ Period between water baptism and confirmation
- ◆ The elders or priests are to have a sufficient time to expound all things concerning the church of Christ to their understanding, previous to their partaking of the sacrament, and being confirmed by the laying on of the hands of the elders; so that all things may be done in order. *Doctrine & Covenants 17:18b*

## Baptism is the Beginning

- ◆ End of Cottage Meetings/Beginning of Ongoing Ministry
- ◆ “Baptism is a process which goes forward continually. Water baptism is, of course, done “once for all.” But that is only a beginning of the total activity of redemption. Unless it is followed by immersion in the love and purpose of God it is abortive. We have not only to be immersed in water to be saved, we must be baptized “into Christ.” This latter is infinitely more difficult to achieve since it demands progressive adjustment to the continuous revelation of the Infinite.” **Oakman and Weddle – O Worship the King pg. 33**

And now I speak concerning baptism.

Behold, elders, priests, and teachers were baptized; and they were not baptized, save they brought forth fruit meet that they were worthy of it; neither did they receive any unto baptism, save they came forth with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and witnessed unto the church that they truly repented of all their sins.

And none were received unto baptism, save they took upon them the name of Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end.

And after they had been received in baptism, and were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost, they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ.

And their names were taken, that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way, to keep them continually watchful unto prayer, relying alone upon the merits of Christ, who was the author and the finisher of their faith.

And the church did meet together oft, to fast and to pray, and to speak one with another concerning the welfare of their souls; and they did meet together oft to partake of bread and wine, in remembrance of the Lord Jesus;

**Moroni 6:1-6**

### **Christ's Doctrine - His Terms**

And he said unto them, On this wise shall ye baptize;...Verily I say unto you, that 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. 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.

And then shall ye immerse them in the water, and come forth again out of the water. And after this manner shall ye baptize in my name...And according as I have commanded you, thus shall ye baptize. And there shall be no disputations among you, as there hath hitherto been; neither shall there be disputations among you concerning the points of my doctrine, as there hath hitherto been;

**Behold...I will declare unto you my doctrine. And this is my doctrine, and it is the doctrine which the Father hath given unto me; And I bear record of the Father, and the Father beareth record of me, and the Holy Ghost beareth record of the Father and me, and I bear record that the Father commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent and believe in me; And whoso believeth in me, and is baptized, the same shall be saved; and they are they who shall inherit the kingdom of God. And whoso believeth not in me, and is not baptized, shall be damned. Verily, verily I say unto you, that this is my doctrine; 3 Nephi 5:23-36**

I would ask of you... wherein the Lamb of God did fulfill all righteousness in being baptized by water? Know ye not that he was holy? But notwithstanding he being holy, he sheweth unto the children of men, that according to the flesh, he humbleth himself before the Father, and witnesseth unto the Father that he would be obedient unto him in keeping his commandments; Wherefore, after he was baptized with water, the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove. And again: It sheweth unto the children of men the straightness of the path, and the narrowness of the gate, by which they should enter, he having set the example before them. And he said unto the children of men, Follow thou me.

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, can we follow Jesus, save we shall be willing to keep the commandments of the Father? And the Father said, Repent ye, repent ye, and be baptized in the name of my beloved Son. And also, the voice of the Son came unto me, saying, He that is baptized in my name, to him will the Father give the Holy Ghost, like unto me; wherefore, follow me, and do the things which ye have seen me do. 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; 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.

But behold, my beloved brethren, thus came the voice of the Son unto me, saying, After ye have repented of your sins, and witnessed unto the Father that ye are willing to keep my commandments, by the baptism of

water, and have received the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost, and can speak with a new tongue, yea, even with the tongue of angels, and after this, should deny me, it would have been better for you, that ye had not known me.

And I heard a voice from the Father, saying, Yea, the words of my beloved, are true and faithful. He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. And now, my beloved brethren, I know by this, that unless a man shall endure to the end, in following the example of the Son of the living God, he can not be saved; Wherefore, do the things which I have told you I have seen, that your Lord and your Redeemer should do: For, for this cause have they been shewn unto me, that ye might know the gate by which ye should enter. 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. 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; 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.

*And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask, if all is done?* 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; 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. 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. **And now behold, my beloved brethren, this is the way; and there is none other way nor name given under heaven, whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God. And now behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and the only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God, without end. Amen. 2 Nephi 13:8-32**



## Article: Did Jesus Require Baptism?

[Source: <http://www.jesuswordsonly.com/books/197-baptism.html>]

Jesus's ministry included baptizing: "After this, Jesus and his disciples went into the region of Judea, where he spent some time with them **baptizing**." (John 3:22.)

Is submission to baptism important? Could it be a requirement to be saved in John 3:5? I have assumed for a long time that because of the thief on the cross that baptism is quite optional. But I am beginning to think it has more importance than I have assumed for a long time.

In fact, I have been so saturated with Paulinist thinking for so long that even after becoming Jesus-centric, I still believed giving any importance to water baptism for salvation was simply crazy due to Pauline doctrine. However, someone recently challenged me on this, and so I studied more carefully the issue.

First, I realized that it is not as crazy an idea as it at first appears. Lutheranism for a long time has taught water baptism is essential for salvation, and thus "baptism is **ordinarily necessary for salvation**." (*The Lutheran Encyclopedia* (Scribner 1899) at 40.) Luther found a way to insist upon it despite Paul's faith alone gospel. Luther claimed Paul does not exclude baptism as a work for salvation because it is supposedly not our work, but God's work. Luther said: "Yes, it is true that our works are of no use for salvation. Baptism, however, is not our work but God's," and God's works have saving power and are "**necessary for salvation**." (Jack Cottrell, *Baptism: A Biblical Study* (1989) at 140; Luther, *The Larger Catechism* (2008) at 100.)

Baptism in water would be important if Jesus means "baptism" by "water" in John 3:5 which says:

Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God **unless he is born of water** and the Spirit." (NIV)

I have long thought this meant "born of water" at child birth. But could water baptism with repentance have been intended by Jesus to represent the new birth? In other words, did the new birth mean in fact to initiate by water and spirit simultaneously effectuating such a change? Did it mean by "water" in fact "water" and hence baptism? Is this why "the fathers from Justin Martyr downwards and every liturgy of Christendom unhesitatingly apply **these words [in John 3:5] to Baptism**, without allusion to any alternative interpretation" (Sir William Smith, *A Dictionary of the Bible* (1893) at I: 347)?

### The Language of John 3:5 That Points To Water Baptism

In John 3:5, the Greek is "ex" water and spirit. "Ex" means "from," in the sense of either "away" or "source." Here the source-sense is in view. (Jack Cottrell, *Baptism: A Biblical Study* (1989) at 38.) The conjunction of "water and spirit" with a **single verb** signify they "together form a **single means** of that regeneration which is a prerequisite for entrance into the kingdom of God...." (*Id.*)

However, there are many modern authorities who argue, based on John 3:6, that Jesus meant by *water* being born of the flesh, *i.e.*, natural birth. The next verse reads: Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

Hence, this contention claims a parallelism between "born of water" in 3:5 which supposedly parallels "birth to the flesh" in 3:6, just as "born of...the Spirit" in 3:5 parallels "birth to the spirit" in 3:6. But this conclusion relies upon assuming water in 3:5 equates to birth in the flesh in 3:6. There might not be a parallelism at all; verse 5 could mean that the new birth is by water and the spirit, and verse 6 could simply mean flesh gives birth to flesh and spirit to spirit. There may be no clear parallelism except by a presupposition that links "water" to "flesh."

Others claim that "water and spirit" mean simply the spirit. Calvin wrote: "By 'water and Spirit,' therefore I simply understand the Spirit, which is water." (Calvin, *Institutes* 4.16.25 - Vol. 3 at 404.)

But this is silly, as it simply erases the word "water" without any justification. Jesus said the new birth was by "water," as distinct from the "spirit," as well as by the "spirit." Calvin simply affirms how he wishes the passage read, and does not give any rationale to erase the fact that two (not one) operative factors are involved: water and spirit.

Sir William Smith (1813-1893) in *A Dictionary of the Bible* (1893) at I:347 correctly responds to the view that "water" meant "spirit" as Calvin claimed:

This not only *contradicts the unanimous opinion of the Church*, but does violence to the language of Holy Scripture. No one intending to convey the idea that the "water" was figurative would mention it before "the Spirit," and connect the two as parallel elements of birth. The being "born of water and the Spirit" is plainly *one operation*, wrought by two distinct, yet inseparable, means.

### Tradition of Apostles and Early Church

Here is where tradition can help answer the question and help remove doubt. Research suggests that no theologian prior to 1600 ever believed "water" in John 3:5 meant natural child birth. Instead, the early apostles and church writers exclusively thought it meant baptism by water which was salvific when combined with repentance from sins:

Acts 2:38 - Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.

Peter replied, "Repent and be *baptized*, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ *for the forgiveness of your sins*. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Acts 22:16 - Be baptized and wash away your sins.

"And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be *baptized and wash your sins away*, calling on his name."

Peter in 1 Peter 3:21

Corresponding to that, *baptism now saves you*—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

[This demonstrates that water alone does not save you, but it must be conjoined with repentance -- an appeal to God in a good conscience. But Paulinists try to redefine baptism in this verse to mean essentially a change of heart analogous to faith (Hovey: 421). Yet, such a view is not exposition, but a reconstruction of passages to read as one prefers.]

Even Paul had a passage that supports baptismal regeneration when combined with a word of confession:

(25) Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the *washing with water through [Greek en] the word [or command -the Greek 'remati.']* (Eph. 5:25-26.)

Watson Mills in *Acts and Pauline Writings* (Mercer University Press, 1997) at 227 says "literally, this *serves as a text for baptismal regeneration* ...By the word (NRSV), translates *en remati*, literally "in a word." This may imply a baptismal confession of the name of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 6:11)...."

The early commentators all concurred that John 3:5's reference to "water" meant water baptism. Here are the key early quotes:

### Justin Martyr, ca. 165 AD

"I shall now lay before you the manner of our dedicating ourselves to God through Christ on conversion. As many are therefore persuaded and believe that the things taught and said by us our true, and moreover take upon themselves to live accordingly, are taught to pray and ask God with fasting for forgiveness of their former sins, we praying together, and fasting for and with them, and then, *and not till then*, they are *brought to a place of water* and *there regenerated after the same manner as ourselves*, for they are washed...for Christ has said: 'Unless you are *born again*, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.' [Quoting John 3:3, 5.] (Justin, *First Apology* LXXIX at page 73-74.)

### Irenaeus, 190 AD

"'And [Naaman] dipped himself . . . seven times in the Jordan' [2 Kgs. 5:14]. It was not for nothing that Naaman of old, when suffering from leprosy, was purified upon his being baptized, but [this served] as an indication to us. For as we are lepers in sin, we are made clean, by means of *the sacred water* and the invocation of the Lord, from our

old transgressions, being spiritually regenerated as newborn babes, even as the Lord has declared: 'Except *a man be born again through water* and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven'" (*Fragment 34* [A.D. 190]).

### Hippolytus, 217 AD

"[P]erhaps someone will ask, 'What does it conduce unto piety to *be baptized?*' In the first place, that you may do what has seemed good to God; in the next place, being born again by water unto God so that you change your first birth, which was from concupiscence, and are able to attain salvation, which would otherwise be impossible. For thus the [prophet] has sworn to us: 'Amen, I say to you, unless *you are born again with living water*, into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Therefore, fly to the water, for this alone can extinguish the fire. He who will not come to the water still carries around with him the spirit of insanity for the sake of which he will not come to the living water for his own salvation" (*Homilies* 11:26 [A.D. 217]).

### Basil the Great, 375 AD

"This then is what it means to be '*born again of water* and Spirit': Just as our dying is effected *in the water*, our living is wrought through the Spirit. In three *immersions* and an equal number of invocations the great mystery of *baptism* is completed in such a way that the type of death may be shown figuratively, and that by the handing on of divine knowledge the souls of the baptized may be illuminated. If, therefore, there is any grace in the water, it is not from the nature of *water*, but from the Spirit's presence there" (*The Holy Spirit* 15:35 [A.D. 375]).

### Abraham, 387 AD

"The Church was redeemed at the price of Christ's blood. Jew or Greek, it makes no difference; but if he has believed, he must circumcise himself from his sins so that he can be saved . . . for no one ascends into the kingdom of heaven except through the sacrament of baptism. . . . 'Unless a man be *born again of water* and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God'" (*Abraham* 2:11:79–84 [A.D. 387]).

### "This Day I Have Begotten Thee" At A Water Baptism

Jesus's baptism may have been a type for us to follow, further demonstrating the point that water baptism is what regenerates us as children of God, *i.e.*, makes us born again.

First, Jesus's own baptism involved the conjunction of water and the descent of the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 3:16.) Thus, Jesus's reference to "water and spirit" in John 3:5 would naturally draw one's mind to the experience Jesus had. It would be what we would naturally think is the purpose of Jesus water-baptizing in John 3:22 -- mentioned just 17 verses after John 3:5.

Second, in the original version of the baptism account of Jesus by John the Baptist, it involved a new birth --- where the Father said to Jesus "*this day I have begotten thee*." (Jesus was born as the unique Son of God, so His baptism is not completely analogous to our own.)

The baptismal account of Jesus in Luke 3:22 originally and in Matthew had this account that the Father spoke from heaven to Jesus: "*This day I have begotten you*." ([Link](#).)

The original baptism language of "*this day I have begotten thee*" is also quoted in the NT in Hebrews 1:5 and 5:5. Moreover, this original version of Christ's baptismal account -- where the Father says "this day I have begotten thee" -- was quoted pre-325 AD also by Clement, Methodius, Lactantius, in the Acts of Peter and Paul, and by Origen and Justin. See our full discussion at this [link](#).

Epiphanius in the early 300s quotes the original version of Matthew in Hebrew as similarly saying:

And as Jesus came up from the water, Heaven was opened, and He saw the Holy Spirit descend in the form of a dove and enter into Him. And a voice from Heaven said, 'You are my beloved Son; with You I am well pleased.' And again, '*Today I have begotten You*.' "Immediately a great light shone around the place; and John, seeing it, said to Him, 'Who are you, Lord? And again a voice from Heaven said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.' Then John, falling down before Him, said, 'I beseech You, Lord, baptize me!' But He forbade him

saying, 'Let it be so; for thus it is fitting that all things be fulfilled.'" (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30.13.7, quoting the Hebrew Matthew.) [Wikipedia]

It was only post 325 A.D. that the standard texts of Matthew and Luke were revised to omit "today I have begotten thee" from Jesus's baptism by John-the-Baptist. You will **not** find it any longer in the KJV, ASV, NIV, etc. This was because of the controversy with Arius in 306 A.D. who claimed the 'begotten' passages meant Jesus was not the "Eternal Son of God." However, the Roman Catholic church by 325 A.D. felt it was imperative to assert this about Jesus even though no verse in the NT ever calls Jesus the '**eternal** Son of God.' For background, see Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic theology: an introduction to biblical doctrine* (Zondervan, 1994) at 243. Hence, words from the original account were let slip in reproductions, to the point we do not any longer see them in our NT.

Hence, at Jesus's water baptism, God-the-Father gave Jesus a new birth as Son of God (a unique status), declaring from heaven "This day I have begotten thee." This was an example of how baptism would have similar effects on ourselves although obviously we would not become Divine as Jesus uniquely was indwelt by the Father/Word. (John 1:1, 14:10.)

### Typical Paulinist Disagreement That Baptism Is Needed

Of course, Jesus said baptism was a work of righteousness (Matt. 3:13-15). If one accepts Paul as valid, such an act of righteousness never could be necessary for salvation -- as Paul is generally interpreted to affirm. (Eph. 2:8-9.)

Baptism might be a fruit of faith, but Paul would never tolerate it as a conditional requirement for salvation, so Paul is understood to say. For example, Paul speaks apparently specifically to that point in Titus:

Not by **works of righteousness** which we have done, but according to his mercy he **saved us**, by the **washing of regeneration**, and renewing of **the Holy Ghost**...Titus 3:5

Here Paulinists say Paul believes the only washing necessary for rebirth is of the Holy Spirit to save us. No act of righteousness can do so - an allusion to baptism which Jesus called an act of "righteousness" to John the Baptist when Jesus submitted to baptism (Matt: 3:13-15).

However, and very ironically, Hovey, a Pauline thinker, confesses Paul likely means in Titus 3:5 by "saved...by washing of regeneration" that we are saved by water baptism, as Paul's Greek actually means the 'washing of the **laver/water basin** of regeneration.' But Hovey escapes that literal meaning by interpreting Paul to have meant that water baptism is figurative/symbolic, and not causative. Hovey: 422.

Putting aside whether Titus 3:5 is yet another verse proving the importance of water baptism, Walvoord claims any view that "born of water" in John 3:5 signifies baptism (as a concurrent means of the 'new birth') would contradict Paul and thus cannot be true:

"[One view of 3:5 is] the water refers to baptism as an essential part of regeneration. This view **contradicts other Bible verses** that make it clear salvation is by **faith alone**....Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5." (John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament* (1983) at 281.)

Hence, the standard refrain from modern Paulinists is that water baptism is a mere ceremony and is insignificant for salvation. For example:

But for now, the reason **baptism is not necessary for salvation** is because we are justified by faith (Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:8), not by faith and a ceremony (Rom. 4:1-11). You see, a religious ceremony is a set of activities or forms performed by someone. In the Bible circumcision was a ceremony where one person performed a religious rite on another person. Likewise, baptism is also a ceremony where one person performs a religious rite on another person. But, we are saved by faith alone and **anything else we do, including ceremonies, will not help**. (Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry.)

Even modern Baptists say baptism is not essential for salvation based upon Pauline principles:

To apply **baptism for salvation**, therefore, is making a **false saviour** of the ordinance. (*The Baptist Manual* (1849) at 64.) Another Baptist publication stated in reliance on Pauline doctrine that baptism is not important for salvation: [Scripture] cannot possibly imply that baptism is essential to salvation. Were this the case, then it would **not always**

*be necessarily true that faith is salvation.* Were this true, it would imply that *an external work performed by man is necessary to salvation.* (Alexander Carson, *Baptism in its mode and subjects* (American Baptist Publication Society, 1860) at 477.)

But if Jesus means by "water" in John 3:5 the notion of baptism, then Jesus contradicts Paul (unless Titus 3:5 is in accord with Jesus). If so, an act of righteousness -- baptism -- does in part play a crucial role in salvation when baptism is physically possible for you to submit to.

### **Luther Said Baptism Was Crucial**

Incidentally, as mentioned previously, Luther taught baptism was essential for salvation, and thus official Lutheranism still maintains that "baptism is *ordinarily necessary for salvation.*" (*The Lutheran Encyclopedia* (Scribner 1899) at 40.) Luther himself said baptism is ordinarily "*necessary for salvation.*" (Jack Cottrell, *Baptism: A Biblical Study* (1989) at 140; Luther, *The Larger Catechism* (2008) at 100.)

### **First Divergence from Luther**

The surprisingly universal consensus since inception of Christianity that baptism was essential to salvation (whether right or wrong) was first abandoned by Zwingli. This was the same pastor who removed every book from the New Testament but Paul's epistles and the book of Hebrews. (See our [link](#) on that issue.) Zwingli was an extreme Paulinist. In 1523-1525 A.D. Zwingli "*single-handedly created a new view of baptism that separated it from salvation.*" (William R. Baker, *Evangelicalism and the Stone-Campbell movement* (Intervarsity Press, 2002) Volume 1 at 84.) Now most modern Protestants agree with Zwingli (and not with Luther) that baptism is completely optional, and failure to be baptized has utterly no impact on your salvation.

### **My Advice**

Because John the Baptist, Jesus and the early apostles baptized those coming forward in repentance, it appears to imply a duty to submit to this process by those who call on Jesus for salvation. If Jesus made it a requirement in John 3:5, then of course we must obey.

Can one be saved without baptism in water? It appears the thief on the cross had no baptism after his conversion, yet Jesus promises that day he will be in paradise with Jesus. This would imply sometimes salvation is not dependent on baptism. However, some who insist baptism is always necessary claim this example is inconclusive for one cannot be sure the thief was not previously baptized. (See this [link](#).)

However, I would conclude that if one comes to repentance and faith just before death, God has power to save anyway as obedience to baptism was not time-wise possible. However, if it is time-wise possible, we *should* submit to this command. *Deliberate disobedience* to baptism apparently would risk one's salvation.

## **INFANT BAPTISM**

### **Infant-Baptism: Calvinists like Catholics Treat Infant Baptism as Magic Unto Salvation in Reliance Upon Paul.**

The truth is children are spiritually safe until they reach the age of accountability, and sin.

Long ago, the prophet Ezekiel stated unequivocally, after contrasting the behavior of a father with his son, that there is no inherited sin (from Adam or anyone else): "The soul who sins shall die. *The son shall not bear the guilt of the father*, nor the father bear the guilt of the son" (18:20; cf. vss. 2-19). (This is why the Eastern Orthodox for centuries rejected Paul's doctrine of inherited sin.) You start pure and at some point you sin: "You were *perfect in your ways from the day you were created*, till iniquity was found in you" (Ezekiel 28:15).

Jesus, Himself, demonstrated the spiritually safe condition of children when He stated: "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and *become as little children*, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). Adults must become like children if they wish to be saved! Children hardly can be spiritually depraved! Christ followed up this declaration with a comparable observation: "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for *of such is the kingdom of heaven*" (Matthew 19:14).

Jesus wants us to become all like children so we are spiritually safe. It logically follows children are spiritually safe. However, in reliance primarily upon Paul's statement that children are sanctified through their parents (1 Cor. 7:14), the early Calvinist position was that infant baptism saves (or is a sign of salvation of being born to Christian parents). This is the identical view of Catholicism -- that a permanent seal of salvation and justification happens upon water baptism as an infant.

This is another example of why it is erroneous to rely upon Paul. Baptism becomes a magical right similar to pagan belief and practice. It is no different than indulgences -- a work by someone other than yourself that imparts salvation.

However, under the Jewish understanding of the Bible, children are not of age to be judged for sin, and thus are not hell-bound until they sin after becoming accountable. No fixed date is given in the Bible. Each parent should be able to discern when *their child's sin is consciously done as an adult, and no longer as an innocent child*.

Here are snippets of the Calvinist view from this [link](#) -- so akin to the Roman Catholic view -- citing primarily Paul in 1 Cor. 7:14. The fact Paul is the sole proof for this practice should be proof alone not to baptize your children until they are mature enough to be an adult who can pledge their faith and obedience to Christ. (I think age 15 is when I was capable of making adult decisions. It may vary depending upon the mental capacity of your child). So these snippets are:

### **John Knox**

"The conviction of the writers of that Book of Common Order, was thus the Biblical perception that the children of believers are Christians already, before being baptized in their infancy."

Genevan Book of Church Order, still describing covenant children, the Preface then continues: "They be contained under the name of God's people.... Remission of sins in the blood of Christ Jesus doth appertain unto them by God's promise.... *Paul...pronounceth the children begotten and born (either of the parents being faithful) to be clean and holy. First Corinthians 7*.... "The Holy Ghost assure us that infants be of the number of God's people and that remission of sins doth also appertain to them in Christ....

### **Belgic Confession**

"This signifies to us that as water washes away the filth of the body when poured upon it, and is seen on the body of the baptized when sprinkled upon him, so does the blood of Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost internally sprinkle the soul...by the sprinkling of the precious blood of the Son.... First Corinthians 6:11; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 9:14; First John 1:7; Revelation 1:6."

### **Dr. G. de Bries (1608)**

"One should note...to whom the sign of baptism applies. Holy Scripture clearly teaches us that it applies to the entire household of God; to the whole body of His congregation; that is, to all of those who are His people, both small and large.... Little children...have the sproutings of faith.... ....The little children are renewed by God's Spirit according to the measure and comprehension of their age. And this divine power, which is hidden within them, grows and gradually increases....they are redeemed, sanctified and regenerated from perdition — even though natural corruption still remains in them. For they possess such regeneration not through their own goodness, but through the sole goodness and mercy of God in Jesus Christ."

G. de Bries, The Radical Origin and Foundation of the Anabaptists, ed. 1608, Bk. III. Ib. f. 290a.

### **Dr. Casper Oliveanus**

"Thus, our children are holy — by way of the covenant of grace.... See *First Corinthians 7:14* and Ezra 9:2.... The promise of the Gospel has been made expressly to our children, Deuteronomy 30:6.... God consummated internally that which He promises externally. Titus 3:3-8 ?Everlasting life is sealed by the testimony of the Holy Spirit and imparted by the Holy Spirit." Casper Oliveanus, *The Essence of the Covenant of Grace*. (Copinga's translation, Groningen, 1739) at 497f.

## The Second Helvetic Confession

“We condemn the Anabaptists, who deny that new-born infants of the faithful are to be baptized. For, according to evangelical teaching, of such is the Kingdom of God (Luke 18:16) — and they are written in the covenant of God (Acts 3:25)... Why, then, should the sign of God’s covenant not be given to them? Why should those who belong to God...and are in God’s Church — not be initiated by holy baptism? We condemn the Anabaptists.” 2nd Helv. Conf. chs. 11,19-22,30. “Damnamus Anabaptistas” (twice, in arts. 22 & 30). 83) Op. cit. p. 206. 84) Creeds I p. 644.

### Dr. Theodore Beza

“The Anabaptists greatly err by opposing the baptism of infants.... Although they may not have faith with its effects such as those who are of age — they may, however, have the seed and germ of it; seeing that the Lord has sanctified them from the mother’s womb (*First Corinthians 7:14*).... We presuppose in general that they are children of God — who are born of a believing father and mother, or when one of the two is a believer (Genesis 17:7).” Further, “as regards children born in the Church, one should presume the election of all of them, without limitation.” Dr. Theodore Beza, *The Christian Faith* (1558)

### Decrees of Dordt I:17.

Second. such elect ones also include many babies. For Dordt insisted that “the children of believers are holy not by nature but by virtue of the covenant of grace in which they, together with the parents, are comprehended. Godly parents have no reason to doubt the election and salvation of those their children whom it pleases God to call out of this life in their infancy. *First Corinthians 7:14*; Genesis 17:7; Isaiah 59:21; Acts 2:39.”

Vander Waal’s, p. 53. Comp. too Gravemeijer: III:20:22 p. 139.

### Dr. John Calvin

“Let him (Heshusius) then accuse Paul of blasphemy — for saying that Christ is formed in us like the foetus in the womb. His well-known words to the Galatians are: ‘My little children, for whom I again travail, as in birth — until Christ Jesus be formed in you.’ *Galatians 4:9*....” “God therefore calls those who were thus slain — ‘His sons.’ Just as if a husband should reproach his wife with depriving him of their common children.... Children are more precious than all goods.... A father is more grievously injured, if children are taken away.... God here pronounces... ‘you have born them — unto Me.’”

“The Jews were naturally accursed, through being Adam’s seed. But by supernatural and singular privilege, they were exempt and free from the curse — since circumcision was a testimony of the adoption by which God had consecrated them to Himself. Hence, they were holy.... As to their being impure, it could not...abolish God’s covenant.... And so *Paul says that the children of the faithful are holy — since baptism does not lose its efficacy, and the adoption of God remains fixed. First Corinthians 7:14.*”

Calvin’s True Partaking of the Flesh and Blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, in his Tracts & Treat. II pp. 497f. 306) Ib. pp. 534f.

### Dutch Calvinist Cornelius Poudroyen

Believers’ children “have the Holy Spirit and the redemption from sin — just as the adults do.” “*First Corinthians 7:14* — ‘Otherwise your children would be unclean; but now, they are holy.’” “‘one cannot be holy, without the Holy Spirit.... Children have faith.”

### Dr. Herman Bavinck

“Calvin says...that the children of believers are already holy even before baptism through a supranatural grace (Institutes IV:16:31)[paraphrase from 1 Cor. 7:14]; that the seed of faith and conversion hides within them through a secret operation of the Spirit (IV:16:20); that they partake of the grace of regeneration by virtue of the promise; and that baptism follows by way of sign.... Men had this feeling that the regeneration of children took place before baptism....” Herman Bavinck: Reformed Dogmatics I p. 29 & n. 1, and III pp. 266f (as cited in Wielenga’s op. cit. pp. 241f).