

# BAPTISM BY WATER

The purpose of this outline is to provide you, the minister, with some basic information and understanding concerning the ordinance of baptism by water. It is the hope that with this foundation you will be able to share this information and understanding with the members of the church, so they too will gain an understanding and appreciation of the importance of the ordinance of baptism.

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## 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." —*The Restoration Faith*, Evan Fry, pg.78-79

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, and our acceptance and acknowledgement of that. See: —*Romans 3:10-11; 22-23; Colossians 1:12-22*.

## Christ, who is our example in all things, was obedient unto being Baptized

- ♦ Christ started his formal ministry by being baptized and ended his ministry by commanding apostles to teach and baptize.

**Matthew 3:40-46** ...And then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan, unto John, to be baptized of him...Suffer me to be baptized of thee, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.

**2 Nephi 13:7-9** 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...

## 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. 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.

**Matthew 16:25-29** 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...**

**So, what has this to do with Baptism?**

**Romans 6:3-8** 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...

- ♦ 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. *See: —3 Nephi 5:34-36.*

**If Christ Was Obedient unto Baptism, What About Us? Are We Commanded to Be Baptized?**

**2 Nephi 13:11-15** 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? *See also: —Matthew 28:17-19.*

**What is Baptism?**

- ♦ **Baptism is a Principle of the Doctrine of Christ —(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.” —*Ordinances & Sacraments of the Church, Yale, A. & Brockway, C., 1962, pg. 21*

- ♦ **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...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:

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

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

- ◆ **Baptism is a Covenant** —*Alma 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;

"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."

—*Ordinances & Sacraments of the Church, Yale, A. & Brockway, C., 1962, pgs. 22-23*

### Three "R's" of Salvation—

1. **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.
2. **Remission:** (or forgiveness) removes that which separates us from God (sin) — frees us to see and hear God.
3. **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

1. **Repentance and Rebirth - *Moroni 8:29*:** And the first-fruits of repentance is baptism; & *Alma 3:86* Yea, to preach unto all...that they must repent and be born again;
2. **Remission of Sins - *Mark 1:3*** John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. See also: —*Acts 2:37-41; 3 Nephi 5:49; DC 32:2g.*
3. **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.

**DC 39:2b** 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. See also: *DC 32:2g; 2 Nephi 13:24.*

### Is Baptism Required to Enter into the Kingdom?

- ♦ **John 3:3-5** 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.** See also: —*2 Nephi 6:48; Alma 5:24; 3 Nephi 5:40; DC 83:12a.*

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

- ♦ **Baptism directly connected with salvation**

**Acts 16:30-33** *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...*

**Mark 16:15** He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned. See also:—*Acts 16:30-33; 3 Nephi 5:34; DC 68:1g; 1 Peter 3:21; Mat 7:22-23.*

- ♦ **Basic requirements for salvation are:**

1. Faith/Belief 2. Repentance 3. Baptism and 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 scripture say?

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

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.

**James 2:17-18** Even so faith, if it have not works is dead, being alone. Therefore wilt thou know, **O vain man**, that faith without works is dead and cannot save you?

Why is this man vain? Moroni 8:29 provides an answer:

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

### Is baptism a work?

- ♦ **Yes, it is a work—but it is not our work— It is God’s work. It is God’s holy work to bring to pass the undeserved, everlasting life of man.**

**Col 2:12** 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.**

**Martin Luther speaks to this question of, *Baptism and Works*:**

*"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"*

—The Large Catechism by Martin Luther, XIII. Part Fourth of Baptism.

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

1. Learn of the Gospel, and
2. Baptize ourselves

**Only God, or His authorized representative, can do these things.**

- ◆ **Our Role is Sharing the "Word"— Conversion does not occur until "one hears the word" – Baptism is the response to believing the word.**

**Romans 10:13-16** 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? See also: *Mark 16:14-15; 3 Nephi 5:24; Matthew 5:4.*

**Acts 8:12** But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and in the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

**Acts 8:26-40** 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.

**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:**

**2 Nephi 6:48** 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.

**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:**

**Moroni 6:4** 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,

**John 3:3-7** 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. 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.

- **Baptism Symbolizes Death, Burial & Glorious Resurrection**

**Romans 6:3-5** 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;

Through Baptism we are joined 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, 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
- In return, God will bestow upon us the Gift of the Holy Ghost and citizenship within the Kingdom of God for eternity

**Mosiah 9:41** 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?

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

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

**Mosiah 11:128-129** 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. *See also: —Mosiah 11:96; 3 Nephi 12:12-13*

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

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

**DC 16:6d** 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.

**DC 68:4b** 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. *See also: — Genesis 17:11* ...children are not accountable before me until they are eight years old.; **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.**

**DC 17:20** 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**. *See also: DC 28:13a*

### Qualification for Baptism

- ♦ **DC 17:7a-d** And again by way of commandment to the church concerning the manner of baptism: [Qualifications] All those who **humble themselves** before God and **desire to be baptized**, and **come forth with broken hearts** and **contrite spirits**, and **witness before the church that they have truly repented** of all their sins, and are **willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ**, having a **determination to serve him to the end**, and **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.
  1. Those who humble themselves before God — **Matthew 5:4; Mosiah 1:118-120.**
  2. Must desire to be baptized — **Mosiah 9:41-42.**
  3. Must have a broken heart and contrite spirit — **3 Nephi 4:49-50; Psalms 34:18; Psalm 51:17; 3 Nephi 5:66; Moroni 6:2.**
  4. Witness, before the church, that they have truly repented of all their sins — **Moroni 6:2; Alma 5:26-27.**
  5. Must be willing to take on the name of Jesus Christ — **Acts 10:48; Ether 1:115; DC 16:4e-g.**
  6. Must have a determination to serve him to the end — **Moroni 6:3.**
  7. Must demonstrate by their works that they have received the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins. — **DC 17:18c.**

### Qualification and Urgency of Baptism

- ♦ **Acts 16:31-33** 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 22:12** [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.

- ♦ **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.

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

- ♦ **By one having authority** — **3 Nephi 5:21-22** 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. See also: —**DC 68:1f; Mark 16:14-15.**
- ♦ **By immersion** — **3 Nephi 5:23, 24, 26 & 27** 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
- ♦ **By the words contained in the Law** — **3 Nephi 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.

**D&C 21b&c** 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.

**Baptism and the Law** — *It was decided that whoever administers the ordinance of baptism should use the precise words given in the law* —General Conference Resolutions (GCR) 1852-1923 No. 48

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

—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.]

—“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 — *The True Latter Day Saints' Herald* Plano, Ill May 1, 1874, Pgs. 280-281

## **Preparation for Baptism**

### ◆ **Think About Water Conditions:**

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

### ◆ **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 help them in & out of the font & 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
  - Help them face the right way
  - Make sure they have proper footing

- Assure appropriate condition of clothing
- Minister is reassuring
- Speak softly and confidently if needed
- Help them become used to the water
- Usually, minister will stand behind & slightly to the right of candidate
- 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

**DC 16:3c,e,f** Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God;

- Preparing an order of worship
  - Select appropriate Hymns and Scriptures
  - Baptismal charge –
    - Moderate length
    - Focus on spiritual significance of the ordinance
    - Challenge to the candidate(s)
    - Speak about the baptismal covenant
- The Baptism (see detail above)
- Other worship activity such as, special Music, prayers, and special prayers

## **Post Baptismal Considerations**

- ◆ Recording the baptism
- ◆ Period between water baptism and confirmation

**D&C 17:18b** 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.

## **Baptism is the Gate – Walk now on the straight & narrow path (2N 13:24-25)**

### ◆ **End of Cottage Meetings/Beginning of Ongoing Home 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.” – *O Worship the King, Oakman and Weddle, pg. 33*

**Moroni 6:1-6** 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;

### **In Summary – It's Christ's Doctrine – It's His Terms**

**3 Nephi 5:23-36** 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: ***Read the rest of the scripture...***

**2 Nephi 13:8-32** *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; ***Read the rest of the scripture...***