

# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM

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*The History, Scripture, Doctrine, and Procedure  
of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

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The baptized can renew this covenant at each SACRAMENT MEETING by partaking of the SACRAMENT. This continual willingness to remember Christ and to keep his commandments brings the Lord's promise of his Spirit and produces the "fruits" (Gal. 5:22) and "gifts" (D&C 46) that lead to ETERNAL LIFE.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Tripp, Robert M. *Oaths, Covenants and Promises*, pp. 11–19. Salt Lake City, 1973.

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### BAPTISMAL PRAYER

The wording of the baptismal prayer used in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is prescribed in the earliest compilation of instructions for Church operations (D&C 20). When an individual is baptized, the person with the proper priesthood AUTHORITY goes down into the water with the candidate, raises his right arm to the square, calls the individual by the full legal name, and says, "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," and then immerses the candidate (D&C 20:73). A version of the prayer that differs only slightly from this was given by Jesus Christ to the NEPHITES and is recorded in the Book of Mormon (3 Ne. 11:25).

Earlier in the Book of Mormon there is a somewhat different account of the baptismal prayer that was spoken. When ALMA<sub>1</sub> in the second century B.C. established the Church among the Nephites, he prayed: "O Lord, pour out thy Spirit upon thy servant, that he may do this work with holiness of heart" (Mosiah 18:12). The baptismal prayer that followed emphasized the COVENANT represented in BAPTISM and the need for a subsequent baptism of the Spirit: "I baptize thee, having authority from the Almighty God, as a testimony that ye have entered into a covenant to serve him until you are dead as to the mortal body; and may the Spirit of the Lord be poured out upon you; and may he grant unto you eternal life, through the redemption of Christ, whom he has prepared from the foundation of the world" (Mosiah 18:13; *see* BAPTISM OF FIRE AND OF THE HOLY GHOST).

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

It is informative to compare LDS practice and scriptural accounts with the Christian tradition as reported in E. C. Whitaker, *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy*, London, 1970.

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### BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD

[*This entry consists of two articles:*

LDS Practice  
Ancient Sources

*The first article traces the development of the LDS doctrine of baptizing for the dead. In the second article, the dean of the Harvard School of Theology discusses the practice in ancient times.]*

#### LDS PRACTICE

Baptism for the dead is the proxy performance of the ORDINANCE of baptism for one deceased. Joseph SMITH taught, "If we can baptize a man in the name of the Father [and] of the Son and of the Holy Ghost for the remission of sins it is just as much our privilege to act as an agent and be baptized for the remission of sins for and in behalf of our dead kindred who have not heard the gospel or fulness of it" (Kenney, p. 165).

The first public affirmation of the ordinance of baptism for the dead in the Church was Joseph Smith's funeral sermon for Seymour Brunson in NAUVOO in August 1840. Addressing a widow who had lost a son who had not been baptized, he called the principle "glad tidings of great joy," in contrast to the prevailing tradition that all unbaptized are damned. The first baptisms for the dead in modern times were done in the Mississippi River near Nauvoo.

Revelations clarifying the doctrine and practice have been given from time to time:

1. This was a New Testament practice (1 Cor. 15:29; cf. D&C 128; *see* BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD: ANCIENT SOURCES).
2. The ministry of Christ in the SPIRIT WORLD was for the benefit of those who had died without hearing the gospel or the fulness of it (1 Pet. 4:6; *see* SALVATION FOR THE DEAD).
3. Such baptisms are to be performed in temple fonts dedicated to the purpose (*TPJS*, p. 308; cf. D&C 124:29–35). In November 1841 the font