

BAPTISM BY FIRE AND THE HOLY GHOST

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

What is the Holy Spirit? What is the Holy Ghost?

- ◆ “Some very intelligent people hold that all of the Spirit's presence and power we are entitled to in this age is that which is resident in the written Word, and applies itself to our lives as that Word is believed, but gives no tangible evidence of its presence.
Others claim that it is to be enjoyed as a joy-giving agent, making buoyant the spirit, and filling the life with peace, and, in some unseen and perhaps mysterious way operating to make our prayers effective, and to preserve our feet in ways of goodness.
To us it is all this and more. It is the third agency in the Godhead--the power by which all the divine behests are executed in, above, and beneath our sphere; by which prophets wrote, seers saw, miracles were wrought, devils were cast out, sick were healed, and life was given to and preserved within the body of Christ.” Like God and Christ, what It was It is, an unchangeable, impartial, and eternal existence. —The Old Jerusalem Gospel, by Joseph Luff, pg.94-95
- ◆ **The Holy Ghost is –**
 1. The Spirit of truth (John 14:17)
 2. A witness of our adoption (Rom. 8:14,16; Gal. 4:5,6; III Nephi 5:33,34)
 3. The sealing power of our redemption (Eph. 4:30; 1:13,14)
 4. The Light of Life (John 8:12)
 5. An abiding comforter (John 14:16)
 6. God's promise of assurance to those who abide in Christ (John 15:5,6)
—*The Ministry of the Elder* by Dwight DW Davis, Ph.D., pg.65

How does the Holy Ghost function?

- ◆ The functions of the Holy Ghost are...
 1. To “teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance” (John 14:26)
 2. To “guide you into all truth” (John 16:13)
 3. To reveal (I Cor. 2:10)
 4. To unfold the mysteries of God (I Nephi 3:30)
 5. To “enlighten your mind” and “fill your soul with joy” (D&C 10:7)
 6. To make manifest the gifts of the Spirit (I Cor. 12:1,4; 7-1)

7. To develop & bring forth in us the fruits of the Spirit (Moroni 7:4; Gal. 5:22, 23; Phil. 4:8; II Pet. 1:5-7)
8. To bear witness and to testify that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Moroni 7:50; Matt. 16;17, 18; John 15: 26; Acts 5:3; D&C 17:5; 46:5,6)”

—*The Ministry of the Elder* by Dwight DW Davis, Ph.D., pg.63-4

Is There a Distinction between the Holy Spirit & the Gift of the Holy Ghost?

- ◆ “The existence of man is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. To every man is given a measure of the Spirit of God. However, a full measure of the Holy Spirit cannot be given except he turn his attention from self to the God who made him. In this attention he must reconcile himself to his maker as a son to a father. From desire he must move to faith through the adjusting principle of repentance...When a man does this (baptism by water) he is committed to the way of life Christ has designated for man to travel...Men are then born into the Kingdom of God. Then there is the laying on of hands for the promise of the reception of the Holy Spirit. It is presumed that through obedience to preparatory principles in cleansing the body of sin by repentance and faith and baptism by water men are ready to receive the working principles of the blessing of the Holy Spirit.” —*Restoration Beliefs* (1963); Lesson 4-The Holy Spirit pg.14
- ◆ “There is a difference between the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Cornelius received the Holy Ghost before he was baptized, and had he not taken this sign or ordinance upon him, the Holy Ghost which convinced him of the truth of God would have left him until he obeyed those ordinances and received the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, according to the order of God. He could not have healed the sick or commanded an evil spirit to come out of a man and it obey him; for the spirit might say to him as he did to the sons of Sceva, ‘Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?’ —Sermon given by Joseph Smith, Jr., March 20, 1842, Nauvoo, Illinois,—Based on the Wilford Woodruff Journal account in *The Words of Joseph Smith*, pp. 106-109.

Gospel of Jesus Christ

- ◆ **DC 39:2a-b** And verily, verily I say unto thee, He that receiveth my gospel, receiveth me; and he that receiveth not my gospel, receiveth not me. 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-3c*

With this gift, what is it we are given?

- ♦ **Genesis 6:62-65** Even so ye must be born again, into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten; that ye may be **sanctified** [set apart] from all sin; and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come; even immortal glory. For, by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified; and by the blood ye are sanctified. **Therefore it is given to abide in you, the record of heaven, the Comforter, the peaceable things of immortal glory, the truth of all things, that which quickeneth all things which maketh alive all things, that which knoweth all things, and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice and judgment.** And now, behold, I say unto you, **This is the plan of salvation unto all men, through the blood of mine Only Begotten**, who shall come in the meridian of time.

The Ordinance & Gift of the Holy Ghost—God’s Seal of Divine Acceptance

- ♦ The Church of Jesus Christ is the Body of Christ, that body of people who are brought together by the gift of His Spirit, and who share in the community of the Spirit by reason of their rebirth. Being born again comes by the Spirit of God through ordinances, the ordinances of God's house. Those ordinances are designed in their form and in the manner of their performance specifically to bequeath to men a certain spirit. Thus, when a person comes into the Church of Jesus Christ, he acknowledges death to the old way of life that he might rise to a new way of life and in the waters of baptism he seals his covenant with God. **Then he receives through the laying on of hands the gifts of the Spirit, which is the sign and seal of Divine acceptance.** —A. Oakman Lecture 4 – Gifts of the Spirit

The Gate—Baptism by Water is a Prerequisite to Baptism of the Spirit

- ♦ **2 Nephi 13:24** For the gate by which ye should enter is **repentance and baptism by water**; and **then cometh a remission of your sins by fire, and by the Holy Ghost**. See also: *Moroni 6:4; Acts 2:38*.

Water baptism reflects the believers covenant to serve God,
Baptism of the Spirit is God sealing that covenant.

Christ and the baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire

- ♦ **Matthew 3:40** 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**. See also: —*Matthew 3:38*

Christ’s Baptism by Water & Holy Ghost

- ♦ **Matthew 3:44-46** 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. See also: —2Nephi 13:9-10

Christ's ministry began with being baptized, authorized, & empowered.

- ♦ **Acts 10:37-38** That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, **after the baptism** which John preached; **How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power**; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

Christ ended his ministry by directing his apostles to teach and baptize.

- ♦ **Matthew 28:17-19** 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.

Christ on this continent

- ♦ **3 Nephi 5:46** And unto them I have given power, that they may baptize you with water, and after that ye are baptized with water, **behold I will baptize you with fire and with the Holy Ghost**;

What must I do?

- ♦ **John 3:5-7** 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.

New Testament Witnesses

- ♦ Christ's words - 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. (**Matthew 5:4**)
- ♦ John's words - I indeed have baptized you with water; but he shall not only baptize you with water, **but with fire, and the Holy Ghost.** (**Mark 1:6**)

The Comforter – The Holy Spirit of Promise

- ♦ **DC 85:1c-2a** Wherefore I now send upon you another Comforter, even upon you, my friends, that it may abide in your hearts, even **the Holy Spirit of promise**, which other Comforter is the same that I promised unto my disciples, as is recorded in the testimony of John.

This Comforter is the promise which I give unto you of eternal life, even the glory of the celestial kingdom; which glory is that of the church of the Firstborn, even of God, the holiest of all, through Jesus Christ, his Son;

◆ **John's Testimony of the Comforter**

John 14:16-17 And I will pray the Father, and **he shall give you another Comforter**, that he may abide with you forever; **even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.** See also: *John 14:26; John 15:26-27; John 16:7-15*

Is there a distinction between baptism by “fire” and “Holy Ghost”?

◆ **2 Nephi 13:24** ...and then cometh a remission of your sins **by fire, and by the Holy Ghost.**

DC18:4d ...thou shalt declare repentance and faith on the Savior, and remission of sins by baptism and **by fire; yea, even the Holy Ghost.** See also: —Mark 1:6; DC 17:8c; Matthew 5:4

Significance of the Ordinance

◆ **Purposes**

1. It seals the covenant you made to accept & follow the teachings of Christ
2. It binds you with the church as a member with all of the rights, privileges and responsibilities.
3. It bestows upon you the Gift of the Holy Ghost.

—The Ministry of the Elder, Dwight DW Davis, Ph.D., pg.63-4.

Timing of Confirmation

- ◆ **DC 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.

Timing is dependent, to some degree, on the member

- ◆ **DC17:18c** 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.

◆ **Receptions of the Holy Ghost is dependent on:**

1. Faith of new member
2. Quality of his spiritual life
3. Specific preparation made for the ordinance
4. Capacity of the member to receive
5. The need for the manifestation of the Spirit
6. Manifestation of the Holy Ghost is dependent on God's providence – not ours. —The Ministry of the Elder by Dwight DW Davis, Ph.D., pg.64.

- ◆ “The indwelling of the Spirit of God depends upon the quality of righteousness within man. His spirit cannot dwell in unholy bodies. Man’s body is the temple for the indwelling of the Spirit of God. He intends that the spirit of man shall evolve to the point of perfect union with the Spirit of God. The life of Christ is the perfect example of this possibility. Man must arrive at this essential achievement. The purpose of his being is pointed in the direction of perfect union with God. It is the object of God’s creative purpose.” —Restoration Beliefs (1963); Lesson 4-The Holy Spirit pg.14.

Who May Confirm?

DC 17:8b-e An apostle is an elder, and it is his calling to baptize, and to ordain other elders, priests, teachers, and deacons, and to administer bread and wine--the emblems of the flesh and blood of Christ--and to confirm those who are baptized into the church, by the laying on of hands for the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, according to the Scriptures; and to confirm the church by the laying on of the hands, and the giving of the Holy Ghost, *See: DC 68:1f*

How is the bestowal of the Holy Ghost to be conveyed?

- ◆ As in the case of baptism, Jesus had no hesitancy in using a symbolic act which would serve to make the bestowal of power arresting and dramatic and at the same time form an event around which the spiritual preparation of the individual could center. The practice of laying on of hands is such a symbolic act, and the more carefully it is studied, the more fully will it be seen to fulfill the essential requirement of picturing vividly the bestowal of spiritual power. (Oakman, Arthur A., Spiritual Endowment, Radio Program #311A)
- ◆ **Acts 8:14-17** Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John; Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) **Then laid they their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost.** See also: —Acts 19:1-6



Responsibility of the Elder (Not sure of source)

1. To have an ongoing personal relationship with Jesus Christ
2. To have personal experience with the Holy Ghost
3. To study & be able to convey “all things concerning the church of Christ”
4. To prepare specifically for participation in the ordinance
5. To counsel with the candidate if possible, and confirm they have been properly baptized

Planning for the Confirmation Service (Not sure of source)

1. Focus of the service should be on the ordinance
2. Service should be conducted in a main service, preferably in the main sanctuary
3. Avoid having a “production line;” avoid sandwiching; avoid rushing
4. Ensure that candidates have had time to understand the ordinance and what it represents
5. Ensure all participating priesthood are contacted prior to the service and understand their role – encourage proper preparation
6. Ensure that all the mechanics and setup concerns have been addressed
7. Ensure that candidate understand what they need to do and when they will be doing it

The Confirmation Service (Not sure of source)

1. Should be dignified and appropriate
2. Special music and other expressions of worship are appropriate but are secondary
3. Service should be oriented to the candidates
4. Confirmation statement should be focused on the significance of the ordinance and not too long.
5. Statement usually before the ordinance
6. Ordinance should be the primary focus
7. Welcoming the new members during and after the service

The Ordinance (Not sure of source)

1. One or more elders – two preferred – one spokesman – may have more
2. Invite elders to take their place
3. Invite candidate to take their place
4. Announce who is being confirmed
5. Lay hands on head gently but firmly
6. Speak to be heard

The Prayer (Not sure of source)

- ◆ No set form or prayer statement:
 - Subject to the wisdom of the elder as he is prompted by the Spirit
 - Should reflect thought, orderliness, conviction and assurance
 - Not a charge to the candidate
 - Not a patriarchal blessing
 - Should reflect the conveyance of the gift of the Holy Ghost
- ◆ Question about membership in “What Church”
 - The Church of Jesus Christ
 - May reflect rights, privileges, and responsibilities

Once the Gift is Received...

- ◆ "What a man does with his life from the point of receiving the ordinance of the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Spirit is his major problem in life. God does not interfere with agency. He inspires but does not assume complete command and control. He is their to help lead and inspire, but He is not their to give of His power if man has not prepared for the full expression of that power. God and man must work together for the full endowment of the Holy Spirit...The Holy Spirit leads men into the Kingdom of God on earth experience. The Holy Spirit does this through prophetic vision and revelation, and inspiration toward implementation of the will of God in men. It does this in the measure of willingness to go all the way toward God through Christ in the building of Zion." —*Restoration Beliefs* (1963); Lesson 4-The Holy Spirit pg.14-15.
- ◆ Christ is the great example of the Spirit filled life--so true is this that all of his preaching and teaching is directly autobiographical. "In him was the life, and the life was the light of men." "We beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth." The light and truth which was embodied in Jesus shone through all he did, so that thought, word and deed were in full harmony with each other and all were alive with the Divine. —Oakman, Arthur A., *Spiritual Endowment*, Radio Program # 311A.

Some Final Words...

- ◆ **Book of Mormon 3:33** And if it so be that ye believe in Christ, and are baptized, first with water, then with fire and with the Holy Ghost, following the example of our Savior according to that which he hath commanded us, it shall be well with you in the day of judgment. Amen.

2 Nephi 13:16- Wherefore, my beloved brethren, I know that if ye shall follow the Son with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent, repenting of your sins, witnessing unto the Father, that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ, by baptism; yea, by following your Lord and your Savior down into the water, according to his word; behold, then shall ye receive the Holy Ghost; 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...shall be saved.