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## Nephite Baptisms and the Gift of the Holy Ghost

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**Abstract:** This article discusses how the gift of the Holy Ghost may not be received without the laying on of hands. Book of Mormon prophets had the authority to bestow that gift. The Lord did not overlook any necessary ordinances for the Nephites when he visited with them following his resurrection.

**NEPHITE BAPTISMS  
AND THE GIFT OF  
THE HOLY GHOST**

**QUESTION:** "Jesus said to the Nephites that he would baptize with fire and the Holy Ghost, but the statement seems to indicate that such baptism was done without the laying on of hands. In the Book of Mormon it indicates that Jesus baptized the Lamanites in a similar way, and administered to them, but

**ANSWER:** It is true that the Lord gave the commandment to Joseph Smith that those who are baptized for the remission of sins shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, and this is the practice in the Church. This does not prove, however, that the gift of the Holy Ghost may not be received without the laying on of the hands, although we assume that this was the general custom of the Church in ancient days. When certain disciples were brought to Paul at Corinth who claimed that they had been baptized, he asked them the question: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Their answer was: "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." Paul then asked: "Unto what then were ye baptized?" they answered, "Unto John's baptism." Paul realized from this answer that there was something wrong, therefore he had them baptized again, after which he laid his hands upon them and conferred the Holy Ghost. (See Acts 19:2-6.) This, however, may not have been the universal custom through the ages. When Jesus was with his disciples, he said to them, shortly before his crucifixion:

"If ye love me, keep my commandments.

"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." (John 14:15-17.)

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall

**YOUR  
QUES-  
TION**

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ANSWERED BY  
**JOSEPH  
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SMITH**  
PRESIDENT OF  
THE COUNCIL  
OF THE TWELVE

*still the practice of laying on of hands for the bestowal of the Holy Ghost is not mentioned. We always lay on hands for the bestowal of the Holy Ghost, and in spite of the rule the Savior said to Nephi: 'I will baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost.' Will you kindly give an explanation of this?"*

he speak: and he will shew you things to come." (*Ibid.*, 16:13.)

In these words the Savior promised his disciples that they would be blessed with the gift of the Holy Ghost when he departed from them, and before he took his departure, the record states that he ". . . breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." (*Ibid.*, 20:22.) Evidently this was just as efficient as if he had laid his hands upon them.

We discover in the reading of the scriptures that the Lord conferred authority on some of his chosen servants and gave them exceptional powers without the laying on of hands, but merely by his spoken edict. In this manner Elijah obtained the keys of power in the priesthood to raise the dead, heal the sick, close the heavens that it did not rain only by his word, and for more than three years there was no rain, and moreover he had the power to call down fire from heaven to destroy the enemies of the Church. Speaking of this, James has said: "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months." (James 5:17.)

The Lord gave similar authority to Nephi, son of Helaman who likewise had authority to close the heavens and perform other mighty works, simply by his faith and the commandment from the Lord. (Helaman 10:7.) This wonderful power has been bestowed on but a few of the servants of the Lord.

We may correctly believe that the Lord may bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost by other means than by the laying on of hands if occasion requires it. While it

is the practice to lay on hands, there are many incidents recorded in the scriptures where divine authority has been bestowed by the divine edict to the prophets. In the case of the assembled multitude near the temple at the time of the appearing of the Lord, we also read that angels descended and encircled the little ones and ministered to them.

Now a careful reading of the first chapters in 3 Nephi reveal to us that Nephi, grandson of Helaman, with other faithful brethren, labored diligently among the people before the crucifixion of the Lord. They baptized all who humbled themselves and repented of their sins. They had power to confirm, to heal, and even to raise the dead, but after the crucifixion of the Savior there came a new order of things. The law of Moses came to an end, and with it, sacrifice of animals ceased, and the fulness of the gospel was ushered in. Therefore in this new order it became necessary for all those who had been previously baptized to be baptized again. Nephi and his fellow servants had been, no doubt, baptized and confirmed, otherwise they could not have given service in the authority of the priesthood, and they could not have performed the miracles that had been accomplished. The condition among the Nephites and Lamanites was exactly the same as that which existed just before the organization of the Church in April 1830. Quite a number of brethren and sisters had been baptized, including of course Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, who were baptized at the direction and commandment of John the Baptist before there was a Church. Baptism is also then entrance into the Church as well as for the remission of sins. Therefore in the new order, Jesus commanded Nephi to be baptized and also the other brethren of the twelve. Following this all of the people were baptized. The conferring of the gift of the Holy Ghost would naturally follow, except in the case of those who had been previously baptized and confirmed.

We may be sure that Jesus did not overlook any ordinance that was necessary when he visited the children of Lehi after his resurrection. His visitation to these people was a glorious occasion, and we learn from what is written that these people of that generation remained faithful and true all the days of their lives, walking in the spirit of faith and humility and guided by the blessings coming through the gift of the Holy Ghost.

## TEACHER

BY GENEVA HALLADAY

*I nurture a garden  
filled with children,  
blossom faces raised to Christ.  
May I root deep each heart  
in the good, rich soil of Faith,  
water well with the Word of God,  
warm in the sunshine of Christian Love.  
Then, watch them grow  
beyond the bounds of earth  
into Eternal Life.*

## FAITH

BY ROWENA JENSEN BILLS

*Oh, leave tomorrow's needs to Him who knows  
Our deepest longings, sacred dreams; who shields  
The smallest sparrow's wing and calmly yields  
Four seasons for all nature's growth; whose rows  
Of patterned spruce and fir emit the glows  
A sunset brings; who gently nurtures fields  
And beast; who calms the wind that wildly yields  
Its blast; who warms the snow, that water flows.  
His wisdom knows no bounds, his grace no length.  
His love envelops all within his strength.  
Infinite glory shines in holiness—  
Extends its rays through all he does possess.  
His crown he shares, his palaces he gives  
To those who know with no restraint, he lives!*

## SUMMER PAINTER

BY GEORGIA MOORE EBERLING

*When Summer paints,  
she flings the colors  
on her canvas,  
mauve mountains,  
ice-blue cliffs,  
and jasper hills  
loom large against  
a pale, translucent sky.*

*Puff clouds are white,  
so white they must reflect the light  
that never yet was seen  
on land or sea.*

*She limns the prairies  
and the closed-in fields  
in emerald and aquamarine,  
then splashes gold and russet,  
tawny cream, with buff and citron  
where the wild flowers bloom.  
Shadows chiaroscuro and dove-gray are contrast. . . .  
Shadows can be lovely, too,  
when Summer paints.*