

# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM

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

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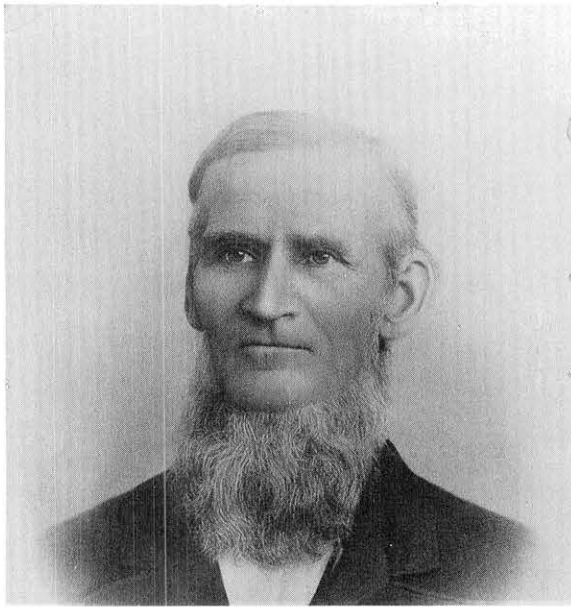
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Richard Ballantyne (1817–1898) was a native of Scotland, where he taught Sunday School in the Presbyterian Church. He began Sunday Sabbath instruction for LDS children in his Salt Lake City home in 1849. He later organized Sunday Schools in other communities where he lived. His success inspired a churchwide movement. Courtesy the Utah State Historical Society.

Ward meetinghouse. When asked why he had been so desirous of organizing a Sunday School, he replied:

I was early called to this work by the voice of the spirit, and I have felt many times that I have been ordained to this work before I was born, for even before I joined the church I was moved upon to work for the young. Surely no more joyful nor profitable labor can be performed by an Elder [Jenson, Vol. 1, p. 705].

In the fall of 1852, Ballantyne was called on a mission to India, and arrived in Calcutta on July 24, 1853. Although the work was very discouraging, he worked hard until his release and return to Utah in September 1855 (see ASIA: SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST).

He married Mary Pierce on November 27, 1855, as a plural wife, and about two years later married Caroline Sanderson. He and his three wives had twenty-two children and more than one hundred grandchildren.

During his life in Utah, Ballantyne managed several businesses, including two railroads, a newspaper, and several merchandising companies.

He was a member of the Weber County Court for fourteen years. At the time of his death, November 8, 1898, he was a senior member of the HIGH COUNCIL of the Ogden Utah Stake.

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## BAPTISM

The fourth ARTICLE OF FAITH of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints declares that “baptism by immersion for the remission of sins” is one of the “first principles and ordinances of the Gospel.” Latter-day Saints believe, as do many Christians, that baptism is an essential initiatory ordinance for all persons who are joining the Church, as it admits them to Christ’s church on earth (John 3:3–5; D&C 20:37, 68–74). It is a primary step in the process, which includes faith, repentance, BAPTISM OF FIRE AND OF THE HOLY GHOST, and enduring to the end, whereby members may receive remission of their sins and gain access to the CELESTIAL KINGDOM and ETERNAL LIFE (e.g., Mark 16:15–16; 2 Ne. 31:13–21; D&C 22:1–4; 84:64, 74; MD, pp. 69–72).

Latter-day Saint baptisms are performed for converts who have been properly instructed, and are at least eight years of age (the age of accountability). Baptism must be performed by one who has proper priesthood AUTHORITY. The major features of the ordinance include the raising of the right hand, the reciting of the prescribed BAPTISMAL PRAYER by the one performing the baptism, and the complete immersion of the candidate (3 Ne. 11:23–26; D&C 20:71–74; 68:27). Baptism symbolizes the covenant by which people promise to come into the fold of God, to take upon themselves the name of Christ, to stand as a witness for God, to keep his commandments, and to bear one another’s burdens, manifesting a determination to serve him to the end, and to prepare to

receive the spirit of Christ for the remission of sins. The Lord, as his part of the covenant, is to pour out his spirit upon them, redeem them from their sins, raise them in the first resurrection, and give them eternal life (Mosiah 18:7–10; D&C 20:37).

The rich symbolism of the ordinance invites candidates and observers to reflect on its meanings. Burial in the water and arising out of the water symbolize the candidate's faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as the future resurrection of all people. It also represents the candidate's new birth to a life in Christ, being BORN OF GOD, thus born again of the water and of the spirit (Rom. 6:3–6; Mosiah 18:13–14; Moses 6:59–60; D&C 128:12–13).

Latter-day Saint scriptures indicate that the history of this ordinance predates the ministry of John the Baptist. Beginning with Adam (Moses 6:64–66), baptism by immersion in water was introduced as standard practice, and has been observed in all subsequent dispensations of the gospel when priesthood authority was on the earth (D&C 20:25–27; 84:27–28). For variants of such precedents, Latter-day Saints trace the baptismal initiations in many pre-Christian religions (see Meslin, 1987). As recorded in the Book of Mormon, LEHI and NEPHI<sup>1</sup> foresaw the baptism of Jesus Christ in vision and taught their people to follow his righteous example (1 Ne. 10:7–10; 11:27; 2 Ne. 31:4–9). Moreover, before the time of Jesus Christ, ALMA<sup>1</sup> initiated converts into the church of God by baptism as a sign of their covenant (Mosiah 18:8–17; Alma 4:4–5).

According to the account of his appearance to the Nephites, Jesus taught the necessity of faith, repentance, baptism, and the GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST, and he authorized twelve disciples to baptize (3 Ne. 11:18–41; 19:11–13; 26:17–21). The Book of Mormon provides adequate instructions for baptism and proper words for the baptismal prayer (3 Ne. 11:23–28; Moro. 6:1–4; cf. D&C 20:73).

In addition to relying on information in the Book of Mormon, Latter-day Saints follow the New Testament teachings on baptism. Jesus taught that baptism is necessary for salvation. He told Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:1–5). He required baptism of those who professed to become his disciples (John 4:1–2). His farewell commission to his apostles was that they should go to all nations, teaching and baptizing



A boy is baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Jesus said, "Ye shall go down and stand in the water, and in my name shall ye baptize them" (3 Ne. 11:23); "and he commandeth all men that they must repent, and be baptized in his name" (2 Ne. 9:23). A person who is baptized covenants with God to serve him and keep his commandments.

(Matt. 28:19), and he declared, "He that believeth *and is baptized* shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16; emphasis added). Paul, after his miraculous vision on the road to Damascus, was taught the gospel by Ananias who told him to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16). To the penitent multitude on the day of Pentecost, Peter proclaimed, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

Latter-day Saints do not accept baptismal practices and teachings that arose among some Christian groups in the centuries after the death of the apostles, including INFANT BAPTISM, baptism by means other than immersion, and the idea that baptism is not necessary for salvation. The Nephite prophet MORMON denounced the practice of infant baptism, which had apparently crept in among his people, and declared that anyone who supposed that little children need baptism would deny the

mercies of Christ, setting at naught the value of his atonement and the power of his redemption (Moro. 8:4–20).

The authority to baptize was restored by John the Baptist to Joseph Smith and Oliver COWDERY on May 15, 1829 (JS—H 1:68–72). From the early days of the restored Church, missionaries have been sent to “declare repentance and faith on the Savior, and remission of sins by baptism” (D&C 19:31; 55:2; 84:27, 74). “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not, and is not baptized, shall be damned” (D&C 112:29). This is the central teaching of the GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST (3 Ne. 11:31–40).

Consequently, persons coming into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at age eight or older are required to submit to baptism, even though they may have been previously baptized in other churches (D&C 22). Likewise, ex-communicants undergo baptism again once they have qualified for readmission into the Church.

The form of the ordinance is prescribed in latter-day revelation, which makes clear that the baptism must be performed by a person who has priesthood authority and that it requires completely immersing the penitent candidate below the water and then bringing the person out of the water (3 Ne. 11:25–26; D&C 20:72–74). Baptism is followed by the LAYING ON OF HANDS for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Contemporary Church practice provides for the candidate to be interviewed and approved by an authorized priesthood official (usually the BISHOP or other officer presiding over the congregation or a MISSION official), who determines whether the applicant meets the qualifying conditions of repentance, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and an understanding of and willingness to obey the laws and ordinances of the gospel. It is also necessary that an official record of each baptism be kept by the Church.

Baptism may be performed in the font provided in many meetinghouses or in any body of water that is suitable for the sacred occasion and deep enough for complete immersion. The candidate and the person performing the ordinance will be dressed in plain and modest white clothing. The ceremony is unpretentious, typically attended by the candidate’s family, close friends, and interested members of the congregation. A speaker or two may offer a few words of instruction and joyous welcome to the candidate.

The earlier practice of rebaptism to manifest repentance and recommitment, or for a restoration of health in time of sickness, is no longer practiced in the Church.

Belief that baptism is necessary for the salvation of all persons who reach the age of accountability (D&C 84:64, 74) does not condemn persons who have died without the opportunity to hear the true gospel of Jesus Christ or to receive baptism from proper priesthood authority. Latter-day Saints believe that proxy BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD should be performed vicariously (1 Cor. 15:29; D&C 124:28–35, 127–128), and that it becomes effective if the deceased beneficiary accepts the gospel while in the spirit world awaiting resurrection (see 1 Pet. 3:18–20; 4:6; cf. D&C 45:54). This vicarious work for the benefit of previous generations, binding the hearts of the children to their fathers (Mal. 4:5–6), is one of the sacred ordinances performed in Latter-day Saint TEMPLES (D&C 128:12–13).

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## BAPTISMAL COVENANT

When a person enters into a Latter-day Saint baptism, he or she makes a covenant with God. Baptism is a “sign . . . that we will do the will of God, and there is no other way beneath the heavens whereby God hath ordained for man to come to Him to be saved” (*TPJS*, p. 198).

Candidates promise to “come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, . . . to bear one another’s burdens, . . . to mourn with those that mourn, and . . . to stand as witnesses of God . . . even until death” (Mosiah 18:8–9). A person must enter this covenant with the proper attitudes of HUMILITY, REPENTANCE, and determination to keep the Lord’s commandments, and serve God to the end (2 Ne. 31:6–17; Moro. 6:2–4; D&C 20:37). In turn, God promises remission of sins, redemption, and cleansing by the Holy Ghost (Acts 22:16; 3 Ne. 30:2). This covenant is made in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.