

# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MORMONISM

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

Macmillan Publishing Company  
New York

Maxwell Macmillan Canada  
Toronto

Maxwell Macmillan International  
New York Oxford Singapore Sydney



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While tradition locates Gethsemane on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives, the exact spot remains unknown. Luke associates it with the Mount of Olives (Luke 22:39), and John notes that it lay across the Kidron brook (John 18:1), which flows from the north along Jerusalem's east side. The particular use of "place" (Greek *topos*) to describe the spot in the gospels of Luke and John suggests that the location was bound up with Jesus' destiny and consequently possesses a sacred character (Luke 22:40; John 18:2). It was a spot that Jesus and his disciples customarily visited (Luke 22:39), which allowed Judas and the others to find him on the night of his arrest (John 18:2).

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## GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST

The gift of the HOLY GHOST is the right or privilege of receiving divine manifestations, spiritual gifts, and direction from the Holy Ghost. This gift is conferred upon members of the Church by the LAYING ON OF HANDS following BAPTISM. It is considered one of the essential ORDINANCES of the GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST and an absolute prerequisite of SALVATION.

The Holy Ghost is the third member of the GODHEAD, while the gift of the Holy Ghost consists of the privilege to receive inspiration, manifestations, and other spiritual gifts and blessings from that member of the Godhead (*TPJS*, p. 199). Among the most important spiritual blessings associated with the gift of the Holy Ghost is the sanctifying or cleansing power of the Holy Ghost, whereby men and women are BORN OF GOD. Through this BAPTISM OF FIRE AND OF THE HOLY GHOST, individual hearts and desires are cleansed and spirits made pure as the culmination of the process of repentance and baptism (2 Ne. 31:13, 17; 3 Ne. 27:20). Other important manifestations of the Holy Ghost include bearing witness of Jesus Christ and of divine truths, providing spiritual

guidance and warning as appropriate, and enabling discernment of right and wrong.

The gift of the Holy Ghost is understood to be the key to all of the "spiritual gifts" found in the Church, including the gifts of PROPHECY and REVELATION, of healing, of speaking in tongues, and of the translation and interpretation of tongues. These distinctive GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT normally are manifested only among those who have received the gift of the Holy Ghost and who qualify by their needs and their worthiness for such divine assistance, even as the original apostles of Christ received these gifts only after the Holy Ghost came upon them on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1–17).

In LDS practice, the gift of the Holy Ghost is given by the laying-on of hands as indicated in the New Testament (see Acts 8:17–18; 19:2–6; 2 Tim. 1:6; Heb. 6:2), normally immediately following or within a few days of the baptism by water. A bearer of the Melchizedek Priesthood (usually joined by a few others holding the same priesthood) lays his hands upon the head of the newly baptized member, calls the person by name, confirms him or her a member of the Church, and says, "Receive the Holy Ghost." The exact wording of this ordinance is not prescribed, but it always involves the CONFIRMATION OF MEMBERSHIP, the bestowal of the gift of the Holy Ghost, and a reference to the priesthood authority by which the ordinance is performed. These basic components of the ordinance often are followed by a verbal BLESSING that offers counsel and direction to the new member. In proxy TEMPLE ORDINANCE work for deceased persons, the same basic confirmation follows the ordinance of baptism for the dead.

The New Testament account of how the Saints in Samaria received the gift of the Holy Ghost makes clear that bestowal of this gift requires a higher AUTHORITY than is needed for performing baptisms (see Acts 8:14–17).

When Jesus Christ visited the Nephites, he first gave authority to baptize (3 Ne. 11:22), and in a subsequent visit he gave authority to bestow the Holy Ghost, as he touched and spoke to each of the twelve disciples individually (3 Ne. 18:36–37). Whereas baptisms can be performed by priests in the Aaronic Priesthood, the Holy Ghost can be conferred only by bearers of the higher or Melchizedek Priesthood (Moro. 2:2; JS—H 1:70). JOHN THE BAPTIST referred to this fundamental distinction between the two priesthoods: "I indeed

baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I . . . he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (Matt. 3:11).

The gift of the Holy Ghost is formally bestowed upon an individual only once, but the spiritual benefits associated with this gift can and should be continuous during a lifetime. Latter-day Saints are taught to strive to live so as to have the Holy Ghost as a “constant companion” to strengthen them and help them choose the right (D&C 121:46). The granting of the gift alone, however, does not insure these inspirations. The actual reception of the Holy Ghost is conditional upon the humility, faith, and worthiness of the individual who has had the gift bestowed on him or her. President Joseph F. SMITH taught that the gift of the Holy Ghost confers upon worthy and desirous members “the right to receive . . . the power and light of truth of the Holy Ghost, although [they] may often be left to [their] own spirit and judgment” (GD, pp. 60–61).

The gift of the Holy Ghost is referred to by the Prophet Joseph SMITH as one of the basic principles and ordinances of the gospel, being integrally linked to faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, and baptism by immersion for the REMISSION OF SINS (see FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE GOSPEL; A of F 4). Together these four constitute the “first principles” of the gospel of Jesus Christ (see GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST; 3 Ne. 27:19–21) and the only means whereby men and women can be cleansed of all sin—to become pure and spotless and worthy to enter the presence of God.

The Holy Ghost continues to aid in the process of spiritual purification through “the baptism by fire,” which has been described in these words: “By the power of the Holy Ghost—who is the Sanctifier (3 Ne. 27:19–21)—dross, iniquity, carnality, sensuality, and every evil thing is burned out of the repentant soul as if by fire; the cleansed person becomes literally a new creature of the Holy Ghost. . . . He is born again” (MD, p. 73). The Savior referred to this spiritual rebirth when he told Nicodemus, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

A single experience of being “born again” does not alone insure salvation. It is also necessary for a person to “endure to the end,” an essential element of the gospel of Christ (2 Ne. 31:20; 3 Ne. 27:16–17). The prophet Nephi<sub>1</sub> taught that

ENDURING TO THE END requires that one “feast upon the words of Christ,” following the guidance of the Holy Ghost in “all things what ye should do” (2 Ne. 32:3–5). The gift of the Holy Ghost thus ensures that divine guidance and spiritual renewal take place throughout one’s life, provided that the requisite repentance and humility are manifested.

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## GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

The seventh Article of Faith of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints reads: “We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth.” All such heavenly endowments come as gifts of the Spirit—that is, through the grace of God and the operation and power of the HOLY GHOST. As prerequisites to obtaining such gifts, a person must receive the ordinances of baptism and the bestowal of the GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST from an authorized priesthood holder, must earnestly seek to obtain the gift or gifts, and must make sincere efforts to keep the Lord’s COMMANDMENTS.

Clearly the Spirit can grant any gift that would fill a particular need; hence, no exhaustive list is possible, but many gifts have been promised the Church. Through the New Testament, readers are familiar with the six specified above: the two related to the gifts of tongues and their interpretation, or the power to speak in a language not previously learned and the ability to interpret such speech; the gift of prophecy, exhibited sometimes in the predictive sense but more often in the sense that “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. 19:10); revelation, or the heaven-inspired receipt of knowledge, wisdom, or direction; visions, or visual spiritual manifestations such as PROPHETS have received in all ages and as Joel predicted for many others in the latter days (Joel 2:28–29); healing, or the power to “lay hands on the sick” that they may recover (Mark 16:18).