



GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS FOR INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

Baptism



THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Baptism

The Commandment to Be Baptized

As in the days of Jesus, today there are certain principles and ordinances of the gospel that we must learn and obey. A gospel *principle* is a true belief or teaching. An *ordinance* is a rite or a ceremony. The first two principles of the gospel are faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and repentance. The first ordinance of the gospel is baptism. Before the Savior finished His earthly ministry, He instructed His Apostles: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19, page 1241).

Why We Must Be Baptized

Baptism is the ordinance the Lord has provided for us to witness to our Heavenly Father that we will be obedient and keep His commandments (see 2 Nephi 31:7, page 113).

"All those who humble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized . . . shall be received by baptism into his church" (D&C 20:37, pages 36–37).

We must be baptized before we can receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Lord said, "If thou wilt turn unto me, . . . and repent of all thy transgressions [sins], and be baptized, . . . ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Moses 6:52, page 18).

The Correct Way to Be Baptized

There is only one correct way to be baptized. Jesus revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith that a man having the proper priesthood authority to baptize "shall go down into the water with the person who has presented himself or herself for baptism. . . . Then shall he immerse him or her in the water, and come forth again out of the water" (D&C 20:73–74, page 39). Immersion, which is going all the way under the water, is a necessary part of baptism and symbolizes the death, burial, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. After baptism we start a new life as a follower of the Savior.

Every person who has reached eight years of age and is accountable (or responsible) for his or her actions should be baptized. Some churches teach that little children must be baptized, but this is not what the Savior has taught.





We Make Covenants When We Are Baptized

The prophet Alma taught that faith and repentance are steps that prepare us for baptism. He also taught that we make a covenant (or promise) with the Lord when we are baptized. We promise to do certain things, and God promises to bless us in return. Heavenly Father sets the terms of our covenants with Him.

Alma taught that when we are baptized we make covenants with the Lord to:

1. Join the church of God.
2. Bear one another's burdens.
3. Stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all places.
4. Serve God and keep His commandments.

When we are baptized and keep the covenants of baptism, the Lord promises to:

1. Forgive our sins.
2. Pour out His Spirit more abundantly upon us.
3. Give us daily guidance and the help of the Holy Ghost.
4. Give us eternal life.

Additional Scriptures

- **Acts 2:38–39, page 1369** (be baptized for the remission of sins)
- **2 Nephi 31:4–7, page 113** (purpose and necessity of baptism)
- **Alma 7:14–16, page 225** (baptism cleanses us and allows us to receive eternal life)
- **Moroni 8:8–12, pages 525–26** (baptism is not required of little children)
- **D&C 20:71–74, pages 38–39** (how to perform a baptism)

LOOK
THEM
UP



“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Romans 6:4, page 1423

Personal Experience

I was baptized when I was eight, and I never thought I would be excommunicated or end up in prison. But at age 32, I made some bad choices and spent the next 15 years in and out of correctional facilities.

During my disciplinary council, a member of the stake presidency said, "This isn't the end. It's an invitation to come back." He explained that if I would live the commandments, I could have all my blessings restored. Later a bishop challenged me to live a temple-worthy life. I had no idea how hard it would be to live without the Holy Ghost. I had to work twice as hard to invite the Spirit to be with me.

I thought I would be ready for baptism when I got out, but I still had a lot of guilt. I was afraid I couldn't be forgiven. Then I read a quote by President Brigham Young: "Will the water of itself wash them away? No; but keeping the commandments of God will cleanse away the stain of sin" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 64).

I know that the Atonement is for me and you and that baptism will truly wash away the stain of our sins. I am more grateful for baptism than I have ever been.

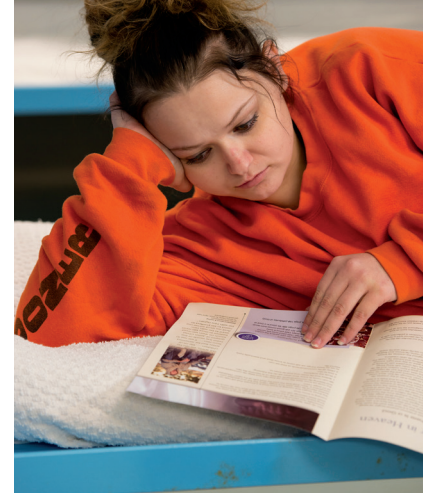
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Baptism

RESPONSE FORM

Why do we need to be baptized?



What is the correct way to be baptized?

Why should we be baptized in the way the Lord has taught?

What is the covenant you make at baptism, and what does the Lord promise you in return?



What can you do now to prepare to keep the covenants you make at baptism?

Why is it important for you to prepare now to experience the blessings of baptism?

Think about your experiences with incarceration. What lessons about baptism and covenants have you learned through these experiences? What have you learned from your disciplinary council (if you had one)?

Is there anything else that you have learned from this lesson that you would like to share?

Name _____ Offender # _____