

Upon looking over the sacred pages of the Bible, searching into the prophets and sayings of the apostles, we find no subject so nearly connected with salvation as that of *baptism*. In the first place, however, let us understand that the word baptize is derived from the Greek verb *baptizo*, and means to immerse or overwhelm; and that *sprinkle* is from the Greek verb *rantizo*, and means to scatter on by particles. Then we can treat the subject as one inseparably connected with our eternal welfare, and always bear in mind that it is one of the only methods by which we can obtain a remission of sins in this world, and be prepared to enter into the joys of our Lord in the world to come.

As it is well known that various opinions govern a large portion of the sectarian world as to this important ordinance of the gospel, it may not be amiss to introduce the commissions and commands of Jesus Himself on the subject. He said to the twelve, or rather eleven at the time: "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." Thus it is recorded by Matthew (28:18–19).

In Mark 16:14–15 we have these important words: "Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the gospel to every *creature*. He that believeth and is *baptized*, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be *damned*." And to show how the believers are to be known from the *unbelievers*, He continues and says: "And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:16–19).

And in Luke 24:45–47 we find the finishing clause like this—that it was necessary that Christ should die and rise the third day—that "remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. *And ye are witnesses of these things*."

We will now examine the witnesses. As it will be recollected, they were to wait at Jerusalem till they were endowed with power from on high, and then go and teach all nations whatsoever the Lord had commanded them. As Peter held the keys of the Kingdom, we will examine him first.

Now on the day of Pentecost, when there was a marvelous display of the gifts, according to the promise in Mark, many were pricked in the heart and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren what shall we do?" Peter said unto them: "Repent, and be *baptized* every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). Here one of the witnesses says in so many words, repent and be *baptized*. And we are of the opinion that Peter, having been taught by the Lord, and commissioned by the Lord, and endowed by the Lord, would be about as correct a counselor, or ambassador as we or they could inquire of to know the *right way* to enter into the Kingdom.

Again, Luke in his record of the Acts of the Apostles, says: And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And

when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied" (Acts 19:1–6).

From the above witnesses we are informed that *baptism* was the essential point on which they could receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. It seems from the reasoning above that some sectarian *Jew* had been baptizing *like* John, but had forgotten to inform them that there was one to follow by the name of Jesus Christ, to baptize with fire and the Holy Ghost—which showed these converts that their first *baptism* was illegal. When they heard this they were gladly baptized, and after hands were laid on them, they received the gifts according to promise and spake with *tongues and prophesied*.

We do not calculate in this short dissertation to bring in the immense reasoning and quotations that might be adduced to show that the ancients, who were actually the fathers of the Church in the different ages (when the Church flourished on the earth according to the pattern of having apostles and prophets, and for the work of the ministry and the perfecting of the saints) were initiated into the Kingdom by baptism, for it is self-evident in the Scripture—God changes not.

The Apostle [Paul] says the gospel is the power of God unto salvation unto them that believe; and also informs us that "life and immortality" were brought "to light through the gospel" (2 Timothy 1:8–10); that the scripture, as Paul said to the Galatians 3:8, "Foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the *gospel* unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."

Now taking it for granted that the Scriptures say what they mean and mean what they say, we have sufficient grounds to go on and prove from the Bible that the gospel has always been the same; the ordinances to fulfill its requirements the same; and the officers to officiate, the same; and the *signs* and *fruits* resulting from the promises, the same. Therefore, as Noah was a *preacher* of righteousness, he must have been *baptized* and ordained to the priesthood by the laying on of hands. For "No man taketh this honor upon himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron" (Hebrews 5:4). Aaron was baptized in the cloud and in the sea, together with all Israel, as is related by the Apostle in 1 Corinthians 10:2. This position or fact is witnessed in this manner: the covenant of circumcision made with Abraham and practiced steadily up to the departing of Israel out of Egypt, was abandoned in the wilderness, forty years—and renewed by Joshua after he passed over Jordan and encamped at Gilgal, where he made sharp knives and circumcised the whole male portion of the Church.

Circumcision was merely a sign of the priesthood, given to Abraham, according to the words of Jesus to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. The same "came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said to him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:2–5).

This strong and positive answer of Jesus as to water baptism, settles the question. If God is the "same yesterday, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8), it is no wonder He is so positive in the great declaration: "He that believeth and is *baptized*, shall be *saved*; but he that believeth not, shall be damned" (Mark 16:15). There was no other name given under heaven, nor no

other ordinance admitted, whereby men could be saved (Acts 4:12). No wonder the apostle said, being "*buried with him by baptism*," ye shall rise from the dead (Romans 6:4)! No wonder Paul had to arise and be baptized and wash away his sins. No wonder the angel told good old Cornelius that he must send for Peter to learn how to be saved (Acts 10:1–6). Peter could baptize and angels could not, so long as there were legal officers in the flesh holding the keys of the Kingdom, or the authority of the priesthood.

There is one evidence still further on this point, and that is that Jesus Himself when He appeared to Paul on his way to Damascus, did not inform him how he could be saved (Acts 22:10). He had set in the Church firstly apostles and secondly prophets, for the work of the ministry, [and for the] perfecting of the saints, as the grand rule of heaven was that nothing should ever be done on earth without revealing the secret to His servants the prophets, agreeable to Amos 3:7. So Paul could not learn so much from the Lord relative to his duty in the common salvation of man, as he could from one of Christ's ambassadors called with the same heavenly calling of the Lord, and endowed with the same power from on high—so that what they loosed on earth should be loosed in heaven, and what they bound on earth should be bound in heaven (Matthew 18:18). He, the Lord, being a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec, and the anointed Son of God from "before the foundation of the world" (Genesis 5:43–45), and they the begotten sons of Jesus through the gospel, to "teach all nations. . . and, lo, I am with you always, unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:18–19)—that is—by the Other Comforter which the world cannot receive—for ye are the witnesses—having testimony of Jesus which is the spirit of prophecy.

From what has already been introduced as testimony to prove that no man can be saved without baptism, it will be seen and acknowledged that if there was sin among men, repentance was as necessary at one time or age of the world as another—and that other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. If then Abel were a righteous man, he had to become so by keeping the commandments. If Enoch were righteous enough to come into the presence of God and walk with Him, he must have become so by keeping His commandments. And so of every righteous person, whether it was Noah, a preacher of righteousness; Abraham, the father of the faithful; Jacob, the prevailer with God; Moses, the man who wrote of Christ and brought forth the law by commandment, as a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ; or whether it was Jesus Christ Himself, who had no need of repentance, having done no sin; according to His solemn declaration to John—*now let me be baptized*—for no man can enter the Kingdom without obeying this ordinance. "For thus it becometh us to fulfill *all righteousness*" (Matthew 3:43). *Surely then, if it became John and Jesus Christ the Savior, to fulfill all righteousness to be baptized*—so surely, then, it will become every other person who seeks the Kingdom of heaven to go and do likewise. For He is the door, and if any person climbs up any "other way, the same is a thief and a robber" (John 10:1)!

In the former ages of the world, before the Savior came in the flesh, "the saints" were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ to come, because there never was any other name whereby men could be saved; And after He came in the flesh and was crucified, then *the saints* were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, crucified, risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven—that they might be buried in baptism like Him, and be raised in glory like Him, that as there was but "*One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all*" (Ephesians 4:5–6), even so there was but *one* door to the mansions of bliss. *Amen*.

***Baptism By Joseph Smith, Jr.
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