

# The Truth about Mormonism

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The Gospel of Jesus Christ Part 2

# Preach My Gospel – The Gospel of Jesus Christ

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The first section in this chapter is the baptismal invitation. The rest of the chapter consists of the following four lessons:

**The Message of the Restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ**

**Heavenly Father's Plan of Salvation**

**The Gospel of Jesus Christ**

The Divine Mission of Jesus Christ

Faith in Jesus Christ

Repentance

**Baptism: Our First Covenant with God**

**The Gift of the Holy Ghost**

Endure to the End

The Gospel of Jesus Christ Blesses All of God's Children

**Becoming Lifelong Disciples of Jesus Christ**

# Baptism: Our First Covenant with God

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Faith in Jesus Christ and repentance prepare us for the ordinances of baptism and confirmation. Baptism is the first saving ordinance of the gospel of Jesus Christ. As we receive this joyous ordinance of hope, we make our first covenant with God.

An ordinance is a sacred act or ceremony performed by the authority of the priesthood. Some ordinances, like baptism, are essential to our salvation.

Through ordinances, we make covenants with God. These covenants are sacred promises between us and God. He promises to bless us as we keep our promises with Him. We should have a strong commitment to keep our promises with God.

God has provided ordinances and covenants to help us come unto Him and have eternal life. As we receive priesthood ordinances and keep the associated covenants, we can experience “the power of godliness” in our lives (Doctrine and Covenants 84:20).

# The Baptismal Covenant

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The Savior taught that baptism is necessary for us to enter the kingdom of heaven (see John 3:5). It is also necessary for us to become members of the Church of Jesus Christ. Our Savior set the example by being baptized (see Matthew 3:13–17).

When we are baptized and keep our covenant, God promises to forgive our sins (see Acts 22:16; 3 Nephi 12:1–2). This great blessing is made possible through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who “loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Revelation 1:5).

God also promises to bless us with the companionship of the Holy Ghost so we can be sanctified, guided, and comforted.

In our part of the baptismal covenant, we witness that we are willing to take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ. We also promise to always remember Him and keep His commandments. We promise to love and serve others, “to mourn with those that mourn; . . . comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places” (Mosiah 18:9; see verses 8–10, 13). We express a determination to serve Jesus Christ to the end of our lives (see Doctrine and Covenants 20:37; Mosiah 2:17).

Our covenant commitments associated with baptism are a great responsibility. They are also inspiring and joyful. They create a special relationship between us and Heavenly Father through which He perpetually extends His love.

# Baptism by Immersion

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Jesus taught that we need to be baptized by immersion for a remission of our sins (see Doctrine and Covenants 20:72–74). Baptism by immersion is symbolic of the death, burial, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ (see Romans 6:3–6).

Baptism by immersion also has powerful symbolism for us personally. It represents the death of our old life, the burial of that life, and our emergence in spiritual rebirth. When we are baptized, we begin the process of being born again and becoming spiritual sons and daughters of Christ (see Mosiah 5:7–8; Romans 8:14–17).

# Children

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Children are not baptized until they reach the age of accountability, which is eight years of age (see Doctrine and Covenants 68:27). Children who die before that age are redeemed through the Atonement of Jesus Christ (see Moroni 8:4–24; Doctrine and Covenants 137:10). Before children are baptized, they should be taught the gospel so they will be prepared for this important step in their lives to make a covenant with God.

# The Sacrament

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Our Heavenly Father wants us to be faithful to the covenants we make with Him. To help us do this, He has commanded us to meet often to partake of the sacrament. The sacrament is a priesthood ordinance that Jesus introduced to His Apostles just before His Atonement.

Partaking of the sacrament is the central purpose of sacrament meeting each week. Bread and water are blessed and passed to the congregation. The bread represents the Savior's sacrifice of His body for us. The water represents His blood, which He shed for us.

We partake of these emblems in remembrance of the Savior's sacrifice and to renew our covenants with God. We receive anew the promise that the Spirit will be with us.

# Before Baptism

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Before those you teach are baptized, they should have developed faith in Christ, repented, and made sufficient changes in their lives to qualify for baptism as indicated in Doctrine and Covenants 20:37. They should also commit to keep the commandments and live the gospel of Jesus Christ. If you have set a baptismal date but a person needs additional preparation, postpone the baptism until he or she is ready. See chapter 12.

Before baptism, each person should:

- Receive all the missionary lessons.
- Meet the elders quorum president, Relief Society president, and bishop.
- Attend several sacrament meetings.

# Authority to Baptize

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Some people who have been baptized in another church might wonder why they need to be baptized again. Baptism and confirmation need to be performed by priesthood holders who have been ordained to perform those ordinances (see Articles of Faith 1:5; Acts 19:1–6; Hebrews 5:4).

# Scripture Support

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## **Christ's Example**

2 Nephi 31:4–18

Matthew 3:13–17

## **The Baptismal Covenant**

2 Nephi 31:13

Mosiah 18:8–10, 13

Alma 7:15–16

Doctrine and Covenants 20:37

## **Qualifications for Baptism**

2 Nephi 9:23

Mosiah 18:8–10

Alma 7:14–15

3 Nephi 11:23

Moroni 6:1–3

Doctrine and Covenants 20:37

Acts 2:37–39

## **Promised Blessings of Baptism**

Mosiah 4:11–12

Moroni 8:25–26

Luke 22:15–20

## **Necessity for Authority**

Doctrine and Covenants 22

Matthew 28:19–20

Hebrews 5:4

## **Jesus Instituted the Sacrament**

3 Nephi 18:1–18

## **The Sacrament Prayers**

Moroni 4 and 5

Doctrine and Covenants 20:75–79

## **Partaking of the Sacrament**

Doctrine and Covenants 27:2

1 Corinthians 11:23–29

# Receiving the Gift of the Holy Ghost

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Baptism has two parts. Jesus taught that we need to be “born of water *and* of the Spirit” to enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5; emphasis added). Joseph Smith taught, “Baptism by water is but half a baptism, and is good for nothing without the other half—that is, the baptism of the Holy Ghost” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 95).

Baptism by water must be followed by baptism of the Spirit to be complete. When we receive both baptisms, we are cleansed of our sins and are spiritually reborn. We then begin a new spiritual life as disciples of Christ.

We receive the baptism of the Spirit through an ordinance called confirmation. This ordinance is performed by one or more priesthood holders who lay their hands upon our head. First they confirm us a member of the Church, and then they confer the gift of the Holy Ghost upon us. This is the same ordinance that is referenced in the New Testament and the Book of Mormon (see Acts 8:14–17; 3 Nephi 18:36–37).

The Holy Ghost is the third member of the Godhead. He works in unity with Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. When we receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, we can have His companionship throughout our lives as we are faithful.

# How the Holy Ghost Blesses Us

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The gift of the Holy Ghost is one of Heavenly Father's greatest gifts. The Holy Ghost cleanses and sanctifies us, making us more holy, more complete, more like God (see 3 Nephi 27:20). He helps us change and grow spiritually as we seek to follow God's precepts.

The Holy Ghost helps us learn and recognize truth (see Moroni 10:5). He also confirms truth to our hearts and minds. Additionally, the Holy Ghost helps us teach truth (see Doctrine and Covenants 42:14). When we learn and teach truth by the power of the Holy Ghost, He carries it unto our hearts (see 2 Nephi 33:1).

As we humbly seek direction from the Holy Ghost, He will guide us (see 2 Nephi 32:5). This includes prompting us in how we can serve others.

The Holy Ghost provides spiritual strength to help us overcome weakness. He helps us resist temptation. He can warn us of spiritual and physical danger.

The Holy Ghost will help us through the challenges of life. He will comfort us during times of trial or sorrow, filling us with hope (see Moroni 8:26). Through the Holy Ghost, we can feel God's love for us.

# Guidance from the Holy Ghost

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The people you are teaching have likely felt the influence of the Holy Ghost as you have met with them and as they have studied and prayed. Explain that to continue to experience these good feelings, they should read the Book of Mormon, pray, attend sacrament meeting, and obey the commandments.

Explain that being baptized and confirmed provides the blessing of having the continued guidance of the Holy Ghost.

As needed, teach the person how to pray. See “Pray to Know the Truth through the Holy Ghost” in lesson 1 and “Pray Often” in lesson 4 for guidance about helping someone learn to pray.

# Scripture Support

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## **Nature of the Holy Ghost**

Doctrine and Covenants 8:2–3; 130:22–23

Luke 24:31–32

John 3:5–8

Galatians 5:22–23

## **Blessings and Influence from the Holy Ghost**

2 Nephi 32:1–5; 33:1–2

3 Nephi 27:13–22 (verse 20)

Moses 6:61

John 14:26

## **Importance of the Gift of the Holy Ghost**

2 Nephi 31:11–12, 18, 21

3 Nephi 18:36–37; 19:13; 27:19–20

Doctrine and Covenants 19:31; 20:38, 41; 33:15

Acts 19:1–6

# Washing/Bathing/Baptism?

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The washing of feet was an ancient Hebrew custom of hospitality and is mentioned many times in the Bible

Washing was introduced as part of what many refer to as the “Law of Moses” when referring to the cultic rituals for the Levites in particular the priests of the order of Aaron. There are mentions of them being commanded to wash with some instances detailing the washing of feet and hands in others bathing the entire body. Washing of clothing was likewise commanded.

Certain cleansing rituals to restore cultic cleanliness included bathing in water and washing of clothes.

# Baptism?

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Baptism is not found directly until the Gospel accounts, but as we just covered washing and bathing were part of cultic ritual cleanliness

While the Tabernacle in the wilderness did not contain a brazen sea it did contain a laver, but these were small and mostly accommodated the washing of the feet and hands

When Solomon built the temple and later renovations it included a brazen sea that was large enough for bathing by full immersion

Of course, John the Baptist performed baptism by full immersion in the Jordan River

As you likely are aware Yeshua (Jesus) was baptized by John the Baptist (likely about age 30)

The Apostles also continued this practice after the ascension of the Savior

# Baptism Vs. Circumcision

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There are interesting parallels between Circumcision and Baptism. Let me briefly outline them for your consideration. For those of you that might not be familiar with the command to be circumcised let's begin here:

**Genesis 17:10-14** This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. 11 You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be **a sign of the covenant between me and you.** 12 He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, 13 both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. 14 Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”

# What does Circumcision do for you?

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It showed that you and your family (as all males associated with the family were to be circumcised, including servants and permanent residents) were part of this covenant.

At this point it appears that salvation was a community idea and the male leaders had great responsibility to teach the women and children so they would live righteous lives.

It signified your membership in the Kingdom of Yahweh (Israel is the Earth shadow later in the scriptures) but at this time the community of believers in Yahweh.

It permitted your participation in certain rites and ordinances within the community. E.g. partaking of the Passover and other temple rites and rituals.

It gives you access to the oracles of Yahweh and the Torah of Yahweh.

It serves to separate you from the common or profane, you have the opportunity to become sanctified.

In connection with this separation, it was prohibited to marry outside of this exclusive community.

# What does Circumcision **NOT** do for you?

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Even a cursory reading of the TANAK will show clearly that circumcision does not make one righteous, in fact the vast majority of Hebrews apostatized and were regularly punished by exile from their promised lands.

It is also clear that circumcision does not ensure salvation. In fact, many of those circumcised did not make the choice themselves, but rather their parents did within mere days of birth.

# What does Baptism do for you?

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Baptism is again a reflection of being associated with the Kingdom of Yahweh. This would hold true regardless if you believe in infant baptism or adult baptism. It is the same idea as circumcision. The only difference is that women are also included in this group and in certain belief systems children also.

With adults, like with circumcision, the individual takes a stand and chooses to become part of the Kingdom of Yahweh.

Depending upon your denominational beliefs baptism may open the door to participation in certain rites and ordinances such as participation in receiving the Lord's Supper.

Baptism likewise gives you access to the oracles and Torah of Yahweh.

Baptism appears to play a role in sanctification. Many verses talk of the concepts of washing away sin and indicating the individual is set apart from the world.

Many denominations prohibit marriage outside their denomination to maintain the purity of the community.

# What does baptism **NOT** do for us?

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Baptism does not make one righteous, in fact many baptized individuals apostatize just as we saw with the circumcised Hebrews.

It is also clear that baptism does not ensure salvation. As with circumcision denominations that practice infant baptism the child did not make the choice themselves, but rather their parents did so for them.

# Sacrament

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Should we be partaking of the Lord's Supper (Sacrament) on a weekly basis or only at Passover?

This depends upon your definition of what "this" means.

**Luke 22:19-20** And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

Breaking of bread and drinking of wine was an ancient hospitality custom dating back at least as far as Abraham.

Old Testament connection with Priest eating the Purification Offering and the Blood upon the Alter.

# John 6:51-61

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51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh." 52 The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" 53 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. 54 Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. 55 For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. 56 Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever." 59 Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum. 60 When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" 61 But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, "Do you take offense at this?"

# Receiving the Holy Spirit

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We see the Holy Spirit active throughout the Bible

Reception of the Holy Spirit is not contingent upon Baptism or the laying on of hands (Acts Chapters 2 and 10)

Acts Chapter 8 recounts the Apostles bestowing the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands (see also Acts Chapter 19)

A close study of the Word reflects that Yeshua/Yahweh actually baptize you with the Holy Spirit

No connection with joining a “church”

# 1 John 4:1-3

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1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.

## Acts 8:18-20

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Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! (ESV)

# Preach My Gospel – The Gospel of Jesus Christ

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The first section in this chapter is the baptismal invitation. The rest of the chapter consists of the following four lessons:

**The Message of the Restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ**

**Heavenly Father's Plan of Salvation**

**The Gospel of Jesus Christ**

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