



WORLDVIEW MADE PRACTICAL
Volume 20 Number 2
January 8, 2025

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Baptism for the Dead
By Tal Davis

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Baptism for the Dead

Recently the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (formerly LDS or Mormon church) had an open house for its new temple in Tallahassee, Florida. Non-members of the LDS were invited to tour the new facility and see first hand the rooms where the various “sacred” rituals are performed for worthy LDS members. Inside that beautiful building, they go to learn how to progress after death to the Celestial Kingdom, the highest level (out of three) of heavenly glory, to live with the Heavenly Father God. One of those rituals is called Baptism for the Dead. Their belief is that LDS members can go to a temple and be baptized by proxy for dead people who never had the chance to join the LDS church – “the only true church on the face of the earth.” Well meaning Latter-day Saints will go to the temple whenever they can, change into special clothes, be given the name of a deceased individual, and then be baptized on their behalf. Note that baptisms for young members and new converts to the church are not done in temples, but usually in local church buildings called “wards.” Only Baptisms for the Dead are performed in the temples.

Many visitors to the Tallahassee Temple open house probably saw the elaborate baptismal pool used specifically for those post-mortem immersions. They are usually round-tanks or half-tanks lined around with twelve oxen, or six reflected in a mirror to appear as twelve. Specially appointed volunteer church priests perform the baptisms taking the proxies one by one. The baptizer uses these words to perform the ceremony, “Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, Sister Jane, on behalf of Mary Jones who is dead, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.”

Many Christians may ask, “Why does the LDS put such emphasis on baptizing dead people?” To answer that

question, we need to understand the LDS view salvation. The LDS teaches that Jesus provided limited salvation for all people regardless of their faith. That is, everyone will be raised from the dead at the end time because of Jesus’ death and resurrection which restored the immortality lost in Adam’s fall. However, full salvation involves engaging in a series of necessary works attached to the LDS church. The first of these is to formally join the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the only true church on earth. Membership is consummated by the ordinance of baptism. The official LDS church manual describes it this way:

We Must Be Baptized for the Remission of Our Sins

When we place our faith in Jesus Christ, repent, and are baptized, our sins are forgiven through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. From the scriptures we learn that John the Baptist “*did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*” (Mark 1:4). The Apostle Peter taught, “*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins*” (Acts 2:38). Following Paul’s conversion, Ananias said to him, “*Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins*” (Acts 22:16).

We Must Be Baptized to Become Members of the Church of Jesus Christ (i.e.: LDS)

“All those who humble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized ... that ... have truly repented of all their sins ... shall be received by baptism into his church” (D&C 20:37).

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, even in water, in the name of mine Only Begotten Son, ... ye shall receive the gift of the

Permission to Reprint

If you wish to reprint this article in your own print or electronic newsletter, please include the following text:

*Reprinted from **Worldview Made Practical**; a free e-zine produced by **MarketFaith Ministries** featuring practical teaching and life tools to help Christians become more effective in their faith life. Discover **MarketFaith Ministries** at www.marketfaith.org.*

Speaking Schedule

If you are interested in having Freddy Davis or Tal Davis present one of our **Worldview Seminars** or to share about worldview and its practical implications at your church or organization, please contact **MarketFaith Ministries** to schedule your event. All contact information is at the bottom of this e-zine.

Worldview Resources

It is one of the primary purposes of **MarketFaith Ministries** to provide resources to help Christians understand the practical implications of worldview. You can find many free resources that will help you in your quest at <http://www.marketfaith.org>.

Holy Ghost” (Pearl of Great Price - Moses 6:52).

We Must Be Baptized to Show Obedience

Jesus Christ was without sin, yet He was baptized. He said His baptism was necessary “to fulfil all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15). The prophet Nephi explained that the Lord told him, “Follow me, and do the things which ye have seen me do ... with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent, repenting of your sins, witnessing unto the Father that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ, by baptism” (Book of Mormon - 2 Nephi 31:12-13).

We Must Be Baptized to Enter the Celestial Kingdom

Jesus said, “Whoso believeth in me, and is baptized ... shall inherit the kingdom of God. And whoso believeth not in me, and is not baptized, shall be damned” (3 Nephi 11:33-34). Baptism is the gateway through which we enter the path to the celestial kingdom (see Book of Mormon - 2 Nephi 31:17-18).

Baptism Gives Us a New Beginning

With baptism we begin a new way of life. That is why we call it a rebirth. Jesus said that unless we are born of the water and of the Spirit, we cannot enter the kingdom of God (see John 3:3-5). This principle was explained clearly to Adam: “Inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water, and blood, and the spirit, which I have made, and so became of dust a living soul, even so ye must be born again into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten” (Pearl of Great Price - Moses 6:59).

(Gospel Principles [online] © 1978, 2009, 2011 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc. Chapter 20, pp. 114-119)

In other words, the LDS believes that baptism by immersion by one of their Aaronic Priests is a necessary ingredient for full salvation. Notice the LDS writers refer to a couple of New Testament verses to buttress their belief about baptism: Acts 2:38 and John 3:3-5 (both are quoted from the King James Version - the only official LDS translation). However, *neither* of those passages teaches that baptism is necessary for salvation. John 3:3-5 does not even mention it.

However, most of the scriptural support the LDS writers cite is not from the Bible at all. The other verses quoted are from extra-biblical LDS Scriptures written by Joseph Smith, Jr.: D & C 20:37; Moses 6:52; 2 Nephi 31:12-13; 31:17-18; and Moses 6:59. Those are references from three LDS canonical scriptures: *The Book of Mormon*; *The Doctrine and Covenants* (D&C); and the *Pearl of Great Price*. The validity of those LDS scriptures is nil. We will not explore that issue here, but for an evaluation of LDS scriptures click here: <http://www.marketfaith.org/the-book-of-mormon-is-it-another-testament-of-jesus-christ/>

Here is another LDS Scripture referenced in *Gospel Principles* chapter 20 that further explains how LDS baptisms are to be performed:

How to perform a baptism

21 And the Lord said unto him: I give unto you power that ye shall baptize this people when I am again ascended into heaven. 22 And again the Lord called others, and said unto them likewise; and he gave unto them power to baptize. And he said unto them: On this wise shall ye baptize; and there shall be no disputations among you. 23 Verily I say unto you, that whoso repenteth of his sins through your words, and desireth to be baptized in my name, on this wise shall ye baptize them - Behold, ye shall

Subscription Information SUBSCRIPTION NOTICE:

A subscription to **Worldview Made Practical** is complementary for anyone interested in receiving it. If you received this email as a forward from a family member or a friend and wish to subscribe for yourself, you may do so at www.marketfaith.org. If you wish to unsubscribe from this newsletter, simply follow the instructions found at the bottom of each edition.

Contact Information

If you wish to contact us directly, you may do so by the following methods:

321 Anton Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312

E-mail:
info@marketfaith.org
Phone: 850-383-9756

You can order our products and examine our services at
<http://www.marketfaith.org>.

This issue of **Worldview Made Practical** is a production of **MarketFaith Ministries**, © 2025. All rights reserved.

go down and stand in the water, and in my name shall ye baptize them. 24 And now behold, these are the words which ye shall say, calling them by name, saying: 25 Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. 26 And then shall ye immerse them in the water, and come forth again out of the water. 27 And after this manner shall ye baptize in my name; for behold, verily I say unto you, that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one; and I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one. (*Book of Mormon* - 3 Nephi 11:21-27)

But, you ask, “What has that got to do with dead people?” *Gospel Principles* states (my clarifications in parentheses):

“Many of our ancestors are among those who died without hearing about the (Mormon) gospel while on the earth. They now live in the spirit world. There they are taught the gospel of Jesus Christ. Those who have accepted the gospel are waiting for the temple ordinances (especially baptism) to be performed for them. As we perform these ordinances in the temple for our ancestors, we can share their joy.” (*Gospel Principles*, Chapter 40 - Temple Work and Family History, pp. 233-239)

So the LDS teaches that all people can be saved and join the LDS church after they have died *if* a good living church member will go to a LDS temple and is baptized on their behalf. So, we ask, on what bases does the LDS assert that baptism, or the other temple ordinances, can be done for dead people?

The only verse in the Bible they can actually use as a proof-text is 1 Corinthians 15:29. (Sometimes they

quote Malachi 4:5-6 and 1 Peter 4:6, both used completely out of their contexts.)

Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? (1 Corinthians 15:29 KJV)

To quote this verse to justify baptism for the dead is a major hermeneutical leap. This is a rather obscure passage that many biblical scholars wonder what Paul was talking about. Who and what exactly he was referring to is unsaid. However, the context of chapter 15 concerns the reality and nature of the resurrection of Christ and of his followers. Paul simply mentions, in what is a rhetorical question, that someone or group in that time was baptizing for the dead. Note, he refers to them in the third person plural pronoun (they), not in the first person (we). Paul does not say he is participating in the practice or that he endorses it, only that someone, he does not say who, is doing it. He does not even say they were Christians. His point was that, if they did not believe in a bodily resurrection of the dead, then why would they bother to be baptized for them?

For the LDS to use 1 Corinthians 15:29 as a biblical justification for their baptisms for the dead completely misses the point of Paul’s writing chapter fifteen.

The real basis comes from their extra-biblical scriptures written by Joseph Smith, Jr., none of which have historical or theological credibility. The point is, the LDS practice of Baptism for the Dead is completely unbiblical and unnecessary. Total salvation comes from repenting of one’s sins, trusting in Jesus Christ as one’s Savior and Lord, and nothing else. There is no second chance after death. “*And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.*” (Hebrews 9:27 NASB)

So, were you one of the perplexed people who visited the Tallahassee

LDS Temple open house? Did you wonder about why that church baptizes for the dead? Did you see that big baptismal font with the oxen around it? If so, as Paul Harvey (some of you remember him) used to say, “Now you know the rest of the story!”

Would You Consider Supporting Us?

Would you consider financial support for **MarketFaith Ministries**? I feel confident that what we are doing is consistent with your beliefs about spreading the gospel and equipping the saints for ministry. Would you let us be one element of your hands and feet in this process? **MarketFaith Ministries** is a 501 (c) (3) not for profit corporation, so your contributions are tax deductible. If you would consider this we would be very grateful. Also, if you would like to know more about the ministry, it would be my pleasure to share with you personally what we are working on and how you can plug in. I can be reached at 850-383-9756 or by e-mail at Freddy@marketfaith.org. As for any donations, they may be sent directly to **MarketFaith Ministries** at 321 Anton Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312, or you can contribute through our secure website at www.marketfaith.org. Simply click on the “Donate” button at the bottom of the homepage. We are deeply grateful for your support of this ministry.

And, as always, if you have any thoughts, opinions or suggestions about how **MarketFaith Ministries** can help you, please feel free, at any time, to call (850-383-9756) or e-mail (info@marketfaith.org). We are here to serve you.