



Baptisms for the Dead

Overview

Jesus Christ taught that baptism is essential to the salvation of all who have lived on earth (see John 3:5). Many people, however, have died without being baptized. Others were baptized without proper authority. Because God is merciful, He has prepared a way for all people to receive the blessings of baptism. By performing proxy baptisms in behalf of those who have died, Church members offer these blessings to deceased ancestors. Individuals can then choose to accept or reject what has been done in their behalf.

Jesus Christ said, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). Even Jesus Christ Himself was baptized (see Matthew 3:13–17).

Many people have lived on the earth who never heard of the gospel of Jesus Christ and who were not baptized. Others lived without fully understanding the importance of the ordinance of baptism. Still others were baptized, but without proper authority.

Because He is a loving God, the Lord does not damn those people who, through no fault of their own, never had the opportunity for baptism. He has therefore authorized baptisms to be performed by proxy for them. A living person, often a descendant who has become a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is baptized in behalf of a deceased person. This work is done by Church members in temples throughout the world.

Some people have misunderstood that when baptisms for the dead are performed, deceased persons are baptized into the Church against their will. This is not the case. Each individual has agency, or the right to choose. The validity of a baptism

for the dead depends on the deceased person accepting it and choosing to accept and follow the Savior while residing in the spirit world. The names of deceased persons are not added to the membership records of the Church.

The New Testament indicates that baptisms for the dead were done during the time of the Apostle Paul (see 1 Corinthians 15:29). This ordinance was restored with the establishment of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Related Topics

Baptism

Covenant

Ordinances

Proxy Baptism

Temples

Vicarious Work

Scriptures

Scripture References

Malachi 4:5–6

John 5:25

1 Corinthians 15:29

1 Peter 4:6

3 Nephi 25:5–6

Doctrine and Covenants 127

Doctrine and Covenants 128

Scripture Study Resources

Topical Guide, “Baptism for the Dead”

Topical Guide, “Salvation for the Dead”

Guide to the Scriptures, “Baptism, Baptize”

Index to the Triple Combination, “Baptism, Baptize”

Messages from Church Leaders



Why Do We Baptize for the Dead?

Elder D. Todd Christofferson



A Temple-Motivated People

President Howard W. Hunter

Additional Messages

Videos

“Baptism for Dead”

“Glad Tidings: The History of Baptisms for the Dead”

“Change Your Temple Experiences and Your Life”

“What Are Baptisms for the Dead?”

“Baptism for the Dead | Now You Know”

Learning Resources

General Resources

“Family History,” ComeUntoChrist.org

“Letters on Baptism for the Dead,” Church History

“Frequently Asked Questions,” temples.ChurchofJesusChrist.org

“Getting Ready to Go to the Temple,” youth.ChurchofJesusChrist.org

“Baptisms for the dead,” Youth Activities

Church Magazines

“How Family History Changes Our Hearts and Minds,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, February 2015

“The Restoration and Early Christian Teachings,” *Ensign*, April 2013

“Preparing to Do Baptisms for the Dead,” *Friend*, September 2011

“Baptisms for the Dead: What to Know Before You Go,” *New Era*, April 2004

“A Voice of Gladness,” *Ensign*, February 2004

“The Savior’s Visit to the Spirit World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, July 2003

“Comparing LDS Beliefs with First-Century Christianity,” *Ensign*, March 1988

“I Have a Question,” *Ensign*, August 1987

Study Manuals



November 25–December 1: 1 and 2 Peter

Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families: New Testament 2019

Teachings of Presidents of the Church



“Redemption for the Dead”

Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith, chapter 35



“Receiving the Ordinances and Blessings of the Temple”

Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith, chapter 36



“Becoming Saviors on Mount Zion”

Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith, chapter 41



“Temple Work: Becoming Saviors on Mount Zion”

Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff, chapter 18



“Come into the Temples”

Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow, chapter 10



“The Sacred Importance of Temples”

Teachings of Presidents of the Church: David O. McKay, chapter 13



"Priceless Riches of the Holy Temple"

Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee, chapter 11

Teaching Resources

Teaching Outlines



September 2–8: 1 Corinthians 14–16

Come, Follow Me—For Primary: New Testament 2019



"Redemption of the Dead"

Foundations of the Restoration Teacher Material, lesson 19



"Doctrine and Covenants 125–28"

Doctrine and Covenants Teacher Manual, lesson 49

Stories and Activities for Teaching Children

"Baptisms for the Dead," Lesson Helps for Teaching Children