



Why We Do BAPTISMS FOR THE DEAD

A lot more goes on during baptisms for the dead than we see.

If you've done baptisms for the dead before, you've probably felt some of the blessings of temple worship: you feel less stressed, more focused, and more filled with peace and faith.

The blessings you can receive from going to the temple are incredible, but temple worship is about more than just the blessings *you* receive. Sometimes it's hard to remember the other person involved in your temple worship, but he or she is more than a name on a blue or pink slip of paper. When you are baptized

or confirmed by proxy for (in behalf of) someone, you are helping a real person.

So what do you know about these people who have died? And why is it so important for you to be baptized and confirmed for them? The scriptures give lots of information about the postmortal life.



TEMPLE WORK: NO GREATER BLESSING

"What a marvelous thing that is that you, an ordinary boy or girl, can stand in the place of some great man or woman who at one time lived upon the earth but who is now powerless to move forward without the blessing that you can give to him or her. . . . There is no greater blessing. . . . And it will be your privilege and your opportunity and your responsibility to live worthy to go to the temple of the Lord and there be baptized in behalf of someone else."

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910-2008), "Inspirational Thoughts," *Ensign*, Apr. 2002, 4.

1 **Physical Death**
Because of the Fall of Adam, everyone born on earth experiences death (see Moses 6:48). At death, a person's spirit is separated from the body, and their spirit goes to the spirit world to await resurrection.

2. The Spirit World: Paradise and Spirit Prison

The spirit world is divided into paradise and spirit prison. The people who were baptized and stayed faithful in their mortal life go to paradise. This is a place of rest, peace, and joy. Jesus Christ visited and taught the spirits in paradise between His death and Resurrection (see D&C 138:18–27).

Good people who died without gospel knowledge go to spirit prison. This is also where those who were disobedient or wicked in their mortal lives go. Righteous spirits teach the gospel to these people, and they then have the chance to accept the gospel and repent (see D&C 138:28–37). Without a body, though, they can't get baptized or participate in the other ordinances necessary to receive eternal life. (See Alma 40:14.)



3. Proxy Ordinances

Fortunately, Heavenly Father is merciful, loving, and just, so He provides a way for all His children to be saved. This is where you can help. When you perform proxy ordinances for people, they have the chance to accept these ordinances. You can do for them what they can't do for themselves on their path to eternal life. These repentant souls can "be redeemed, through obedience to the ordinances of the house of God" (D&C 138:58; see also verse 59). And you can experience the great joy that comes from helping someone in spirit prison receive these essential ordinances.



4. Resurrection

Through Jesus Christ's Resurrection, everyone born on earth will overcome physical death and be resurrected (see 1 Corinthians 15:22). Jesus taught, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19). During the Resurrection, everyone's spirits will be reunited with their bodies. This means everyone—those who lived wickedly, those who lived righteously, and those who repented and received ordinances by proxy after death.



5. Judgment

Once everyone has been resurrected, each person will meet with God and be judged "according to their works" (3 Nephi 27:15), including their acceptance of ordinances (see 3 Nephi 27:16–20). Only those who have received the gospel ordinances (whether in person or through temple work) and kept the covenants that go with those ordinances will have eternal life.

Because you are a living mortal and a worthy holder of a temple recommend, you have the incredible opportunity and responsibility to help your fellow children of God on their path to eternal life. *You* are a central part of God's plan. ■