

God Told Us to Be Baptized

Jesus Christ set an example of being baptized by someone with God's authority.



While we don't have a lot of details about the personal life of Jesus Christ, we do know that He was baptized when He was about 30 years old (see Luke 3:23). Here are some things we learn about baptism from His example.

For Every Person

If we are old enough and mature enough to tell the difference between right and wrong, Heavenly Father wants us to be baptized (see Doctrine and Covenants 18:42). Jesus was perfect, but He still chose to be baptized to follow God's commandments (see Matthew 3:13–17; 2 Nephi 31:7). Even those who already died can accept baptism. We offer it to them by being baptized for them in temples. (See Doctrine and Covenants 128:15–18.)

Done by Authority

Jesus didn't get baptized by just anyone. He specifically went to His cousin John, who had priesthood authority from God. After Jesus died and His disciples were killed, that priesthood authority was lost from the earth. Then, in 1829, John the Baptist appeared to Joseph Smith and gave him authority to baptize in God's name. Because of that restoration, we can be baptized with that same authority today.

A Two-Way Promise

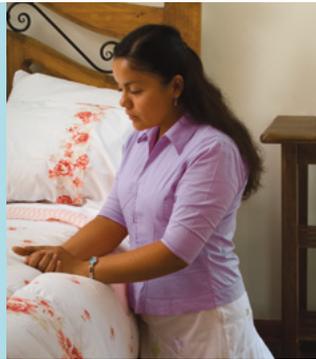
Baptism includes a two-way promise, or *covenant*, between us and God. We promise:

1. To take upon ourselves the name of Christ.
2. To always remember Him.
3. To keep His commandments.

In return, God promises that His Spirit will always be with us. The words of the sacrament prayers remind us of this covenant each week. (See Doctrine and Covenants 20:77, 79.)

HELPS FOR PARENTS

If you are helping a child get ready to be baptized, see the article on page 22.



Receiving the Holy Ghost Is an Important Part of Baptism

After Jesus was baptized, the Holy Ghost appeared in the form of a dove (see 2 Nephi 31:8). Today, after people are baptized, they are *confirmed*. This means they receive a special blessing in which they are invited to receive the spiritually cleansing gift of the Holy Ghost (see 2 Nephi 31:17). The Holy Ghost can warn us of danger, comfort us, guide us to make good decisions, and help us feel God's love (see Doctrine and Covenants 39:6).

We Can Always Repent

God knew that we would make mistakes every day. Despite our best efforts, we would sin and fall short of living up to our baptism promises. So He gives each of us the chance to repent. (See Doctrine and Covenants 18:13.) Every day we can do our best to apologize and right any wrongs. We can pray and ask for God's forgiveness. Then, when we take the sacrament with a humble heart, we can have the Holy Ghost with us (see 3 Nephi 18:11).

What Do Scriptures Say about Baptism?

Parents should help their children prepare for baptism (see Doctrine and Covenants 68:25).

Those younger than eight years old don't need to be baptized (see Moroni 8).

When we are baptized, we promise 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). ■

WORDS TO REMEMBER

We hope you've enjoyed learning about *baptism*. Here are other gospel words from this issue:

Repentance: When we turn away from sin and choose to follow God instead. (See pages 8, 10.)

Calling: Through inspiration, Church leaders ask members to help with an ongoing assignment. (See page 25.)

Three Witnesses: Three people who heard the voice of God and saw the gold plates that Joseph Smith was translating into the Book of Mormon. (See page 28.)