

Baptism: Biblical Necessity & Proper Authority

"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" - John 3:5

PART I: THE BIBLICAL CASE - BAPTISM IS REQUIRED

1. Jesus Commands It

Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

→ Belief ALONE doesn't save. Belief + Baptism = Salvation

Matthew 28:19-20: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

→ Jesus's final command to apostles: teach + baptize

John 3:5: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

→ Two births required: (1) Water (baptism), (2) Spirit (Holy Ghost)

2. The Apostles Taught It's Required

Acts 2:38 (Peter at Pentecost): "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

→ Repent + Baptism = Remission of sins + Holy Ghost

1 Peter 3:21: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us."

→ Peter explicitly says "baptism... save us"

Acts 22:16 (Ananias to Paul): "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

→ Baptism washes away sins

3. Everyone in the NT Was Baptized

Who	Scripture
Jesus Himself	Matthew 3:13-17 (set example)
3,000 converts (Pentecost)	Acts 2:41
Samaritans	Acts 8:12-13
Ethiopian eunuch	Acts 8:36-38
Paul (Saul)	Acts 9:18, Acts 22:16
Cornelius (Gentile)	Acts 10:47-48
Lydia & household	Acts 16:14-15
Philippian jailer & family	Acts 16:31-33
Crispus & Corinthians	Acts 18:8

Pattern: Every single convert was baptized. No exceptions. If "faith alone" saved, why did they ALL get baptized immediately?

4. Baptism Is "For Remission of Sins"

Protestant claim: "Baptism is just an outward symbol of inward faith—it doesn't DO anything."

Biblical answer: Wrong. Scripture says baptism washes away sins.

- **Acts 2:38:** "be baptized... for the remission of sins"
- **Acts 22:16:** "be baptized, and wash away thy sins"
- **1 Peter 3:21:** "baptism doth also now save us"
- **Romans 6:3-4:** "baptized into Jesus Christ... baptized into his death... buried with him by baptism"

Greek "eis": In Acts 2:38, "for" (Greek *eis*) means "unto" or "in order to obtain." Same word used in Matthew 26:28: "blood... shed for (*eis*) remission of sins." If baptism isn't for getting forgiveness, then Jesus's blood isn't either. Both work the same way.

PART II: LDS PERSPECTIVE - WHY BAPTISM MATTERS

1. The Two-Part Requirement: Water + Spirit

John 3:5: "Born of water AND of the Spirit"
This is TWO separate ordinances, not one.

LDS Understanding:

- **Born of water** = Baptism by immersion
- **Born of Spirit** = Receiving the Holy Ghost by laying on of hands

Acts 8:14-17 (Samaritans): "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

Key Point: They were ALREADY baptized but had NOT received the Holy Ghost. Apostles (Peter & John) came and LAID HANDS on them → then they received the Holy Ghost.

Acts 19:5-6 (Ephesus): "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them."

Pattern: Baptism FIRST → Laying on of hands SECOND → Receive Holy Ghost

2. The Authority Problem: Who Can Baptize?

Not just anyone can perform baptism. You need AUTHORITY from God.

Biblical Evidence for Authority:

Hebrews 5:4: "And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron."

→ Aaron called through Moses (priesthood authority passed down)

Acts 8:18-20 (Simon the Sorcerer): Simon saw the Holy Ghost given by apostles' hands and offered money for "this power." Peter rebuked him: "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money."

→ The power to confer the Holy Ghost comes from GOD through authorized priesthood, not from human credentials

John 15:16: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you."

→ Jesus ORDAINED his apostles (gave them authority)

The LDS Answer: Priesthood Authority

Two Priesthoods Restored:

Priesthood	Restored By	Authority
Aaronic	John the Baptist (May 15, 1829)	Baptism, sacrament, temporal affairs
Melchizedek	Peter, James, John (1829)	Laying on of hands (Holy Ghost), temple ordinances, all spiritual blessings

Why This Matters:

- **Baptism without authority = invalid** (like a wedding performed by someone with no legal authority)
- **Laying on of hands requires Melchizedek Priesthood** (Acts 8 shows apostles had this power, not regular members)
- **LDS claim priesthood authority restored** through angelic ministration—direct line from Christ → apostles → Joseph Smith

3. Why Protestants Miss This

Protestant View	Biblical Problem	LDS Answer
"Faith alone saves"	James 2:24: "Not by faith only" Mark 16:16: "believeth AND is baptized"	Faith + baptism + Holy Ghost = complete conversion
"Baptism is symbolic"	Acts 2:38: "for remission of sins" 1 Pet 3:21: "baptism... save us"	Baptism actually washes away sins (ordinance, not symbol)
"Anyone can baptize"	Heb 5:4: "called of God, as was Aaron" Acts 8:18-20: Simon rebuked for seeking power	Must hold priesthood authority (Aaronic for baptism)
"Holy Ghost comes at belief/baptism"	Acts 8:14-17: Baptized but no Holy Ghost until apostles laid hands Acts 19:5-6: Same pattern	Holy Ghost comes by laying on of hands (Melchizedek Priesthood)

THE COMPLETE PATTERN

The Biblical Pattern (LDS follows this exactly):

1. **Faith in Jesus Christ** (Mark 16:16)
2. **Repentance** (Acts 2:38)
3. **Baptism by immersion** by one holding authority (Acts 2:38; Matthew 3:16 - Jesus "went up out of the water")
4. **Laying on of hands** for gift of Holy Ghost by one holding Melchizedek Priesthood (Acts 8:14-17; Acts 19:5-6)
5. **Endure to the end** (Matthew 24:13)

The Question for Non-LDS Christians:

If baptism is just symbolic and anyone can do it, why did:

- Jesus get baptized to "fulfill all righteousness"? (Matt 3:15)
- Peter command "be baptized... FOR remission of sins"? (Acts 2:38)
- The Samaritans need apostles to come lay hands on them even though they were already baptized? (Acts 8:14-17)
- Paul ask, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost?" and then baptize them AND lay hands on them? (Acts 19:1-6)

The LDS Claim:

**Baptism is required for salvation (John 3:5, Mark 16:16)
It must be by proper authority (Heb 5:4)
It must be followed by laying on of hands for the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:14-17)
The LDS Church has this authority through priesthood restoration (D&C 13, D&C 27:12)**