

## Baptized unto Repentance & Re-Baptism

Brinkerhoff, Quinn & Rich / 13 pages

Baptism is an outward symbolic rite centered in Christ, where the old person is laid in a watery grave, and a new person is to come forth, *reborn* in Christ. He is the author of our salvation through His atonement. In baptism we make a covenant to remember our Lord, keep His commandments, stand as a witness for Him in all places and at all times (even unto death), and bear the burdens of others (see Mos. 18:8-10). The Lord said that we must be “baptized in *my name*” (3 Ne. 12:37-38). Alma and others in the Book of Mormon use the phrase “*baptized unto repentance*” to signify the real change true converts to Christ have demonstrated *prior to* their baptism. Their real *repentance* is tied to a *broken heart* and *contrite spirit*, the sacrifice the Lord requires to be “*reborn*” in Him (2 Ne. 2:7; 3 Ne. 9:20; Ether 4:15; Mor. 6:1-4; D&C 59:8, 97:8; Psalm 34:18 & 51:17). This is the “*fruit*” addressed in Moroni 6:1-2. It is the fruit *members of the church* in Alma’s day demonstrated (“elders, priests, and teachers”) who were baptized again – or a second time. They were “*baptized unto repentance*” (see Mos. 26:22; Alma 5:62; Hel. 5:17, 19; 3 Ne. 1:23; 7:25-26).

Too many are baptized *into various* Christian churches without sufficient faith in Christ and real repentance. Faith is the *first* principle of the gospel of Christ, as expressed in the Latter-day Saints Article of Faith #1. It is followed by sincere *repentance* and change in **behavior**, in connection with a *broken heart*, and child-like submission in a *contrite heart*. They are part of *crying* out to God for His mercy and forgiveness. This is what Alma did in Alma 36:18, before he was also baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost.

Some churches baptize infants or young children. The child has no choice in the matter and certainly does not express faith in Christ, or *repentance* of sins prior to baptism. Their baptism is not a free-will offering wherein a covenant with the Lord is made with Him – to remember Him, stand for Him in all places and at all times, keep His commandments, and bear one another’s burdens (see Mos. 18:8-10). Young children are not capable of sin in the first place. They have no reason to repent. Many Latter-day Saints are baptized at eight years old, and like infants, many at this age do not demonstrate the fruits of faith and repentance needed to make an effective covenant with the Lord, one sufficient to bring forth a new person from the symbolic, watery grave. Too often baptism today is the result of pressure from well-meaning parents, leaders, or others. “*Baptism unto repentance*” or John’s baptism (Acts 19:3-4), on the other hand, is one where we are baptized in what the Lord calls, “*my name*.” It is part of a sincere desire to **come to Christ**, with belief, faith, and trust **in Him**, followed by heartfelt repentance, and a covenant with Him, all *prior* to being buried in the water. Without these things, a new person, fully committed to Christ their Redeemer, does not come forth from the water.

***The Doctrine of Re-Baptism*** Being baptized more than once for this and other reasons was a fairly common practice in the the New Testament (Acts 19:1-6), in the Book of Mormon (Mos. 26:22-32; 27:24-30; Alma 5:26, 49, 62; Moroni 6:1, 8:10), and in early LDS Church history. It is to be made by one who is fully accountable (or of age) and as a free-will offering to the LORD. Too many baptisms are done to admit one as a member of a formal church organization. This is typically done for two purposes; 1. “gain” (money via tithing), and 2. numbers, for reporting purposes. Instead, baptism should represent one’s inner, personal commitment to God. It should *follow faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*, and *real heartfelt repentance*, along with full understanding to the **covenant one is making** with God (what it entails).

There were seven different reasons for re-baptism in early LDS Church history. They included:

1. **Remission of sins** (1832)
2. **Personal rededication, recommittment, and renewal of covenants** (April 6, 1830 in New York; 1843-44 in Nauvoo; 1947-1922 in Utah)
3. **Group reformation and renewal** (1856-57)
4. **As a precursor to other ordinances** such as the Temple Endowment, sealing ordinances (1847 onwards), including preparation for some at Nauvoo for plural marriage (Quinn, 1843)
5. As a **proxy ordinance for dead ancestors** (1841 on)
6. To **increase health** (1838 onwards; 1841 in the Nauvoo Temple font [Nov. 8, 1841]). Joseph re-baptised Emma in the Nauvoo Temple font for this purpose (Nov. 1, 1842), as well as 2 times earlier in the

Mississippi river (Oct. 5, 1842)

7. For the sake of **official church membership** (April 6, 1830) and/or **re-organization**, or out of necessity because of **lost records**

Two additional types of re-baptism are of note today.

8. “**Baptism unto repentance**” is a phrase found at least seven times in the Book of Mormon (Mos. 26:22; Alma 5:62, 7:14; Hel. 5:17, 19; 3 Ne. 1:23; 7:25-26). It ties the important rite of baptism to real *faith in Christ*, sincere heartfelt *repentance*, and *covenant-making* with the Lord. They are to precede immersion in water by one having authority to perform this baptism. This kind of baptism leads one into God’s fold – “the church of Christ” (Mos. 26:22; Mor. 6:1-4), rather than the churches of men (1 Ne. 22:23). Many do this today believing that their original baptism was made at an early age without real commitment to the LORD, or that their commitment was made to an organization they have outgrown or no longer feel committed to.
9. **Entering personally** (individually) into a **new, higher covenant** with the LORD. LDS church history reveals that there were different names the LORD gave the church in connection with different levels of belief and commitment among the people in Joseph Smith’s day (see endnote 34). The names include “the church of Christ” and “the church of God” (the Father, church of the Firstborn), along with “the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” and “the church of the Latter-day Saints” (seen on the exterior of the Kirtland, Ohio Temple). The different churches existed at the same time among different individuals both then and today. In general, the churches are thought to reflect the three orders of priesthood Joseph Smith spoke of (1) the Aaronic or Levitical; (2) Melchizedek (the Son); And (3) Patriarchal orders.

As stated earlier, re-baptism in connection with #8 above (real repentance – “**baptism unto repentance**”) is found in the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, and church history. It was preached by both Alma the elder and Alma the younger as part of a great *reformation* movement among their people – baptized church members. Today re-baptism may follow self-discovery that one was not “*baptized unto repentance*” in their first baptism, typically at a young age without full understanding of the doctrine of Christ. Many Latter-day Saints are baptized at eight years old without first coming to Christ - *without faith and trust in Him, without a fully repentant heart, and without making a covenant with the Lord* - to stand as a witness for Him in all places and all times. A new person thus does not come forth from the waters of baptism. They have not exhibited “*faith unto repentance*” (Alma 34:15-17), and have not been “*baptized unto repentance*.”

*Church Membership* Rather than real conversion to Christ, there is often pressure from parents or leaders to join a church. Faith in Christ should be the first requirement leading to baptism. In Alma 36:18 we read about Alma the younger *crying* unto the Lord for *mercy* and *forgiveness* for his many sins (see also Alma 34:18-27). Like his father, when he was converted to Christ, Alma the younger desired to be made clean through the **redeeming** power of Christ’s atonement. He realized this was only possible with heartfelt **repentance**, *repentance* that was for him - “*nigh unto death*” (Mos. 27:28). He was later baptized in water, and by fire and the Holy Ghost (see Alma 36). With the fiery baptism, He and his father were then **redeemed** of God (see Mos. 27:24-30 for Alma the elder, and Alma 5:14-62 & 36:5-30 for Alma the younger). Note that the LORD used the term “**Blessed**” 7 times in addressing Alma and what he had done to bring himself and others to Him in Mosiah 26:15-20. There Alma is also given the promise of “*eternal life*” by the LORD. He added:

“For behold, this is my church; whosoever is baptized shall be **baptized unto repentance**” (Mosiah 26:22; this phrase is found 7 total times in the book (see also Alma 5:62, 7:14; Hel. 5:17, 19; 3 Ne. 1:23; 7:25-26).

Christ the LORD was baptized at age 30, just prior to starting His mission. He was fully aware of what He was doing. Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were also adults when they baptized each other. This was before there was an “official” church to be part of. In Joseph Smith’s history we learn that their private baptism in the Susquehanna River was accompanied by a great outpouring of the Holy Ghost (see JSH 1:73-74). There is no report of a similar outpouring of the Spirit when they and seven others were all *re-baptized* on April 6<sup>th</sup> of 1830 - into a formal church organization. History reveals that their second baptism - into an organization - was useful in granting them licenses for official preaching in New York State - *according to the laws of men* in that State. The

more spiritual side of the baptism of Joseph and Oliver occurred earlier - because of their faith in Christ, their sincere repentance, and the covenants they made with the Lord. They were “**baptized unto repentance.**”

### **Scriptural Proofs for the Doctrine of Re-Baptism** (the doctrine of Christ)

#### *New Testament*

Speaking to Saints at Ephesus in the meridian of time, who were in need of *recommitment* to the Lord, the Apostle John stated, “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because *thou hast left thy first love*. Remember therefore from whence thou art *fallen*, and *repent*, and **do the first works**; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou *repent*” (Rev. 2:4-5). These verses address the later years of the Gospel of Christ before complete apostasy took over. John the Beloved (also known as the Revelator) was addressing the remaining churches in the meridian of time. In these two verses he addressed the church at Ephesus. Its members were in need of re-committing themselves to the Lord, doing so via the “**first works**,” which are - *faith in Christ, with sincere repentance following, then baptism*. They had left their “*first love*,” Jesus Christ and His ways. He was their light or “candlestick.”

Paul also directed some to be re-baptized at Ephesus. In Acts 19:1-6 we read, “...Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples [members], He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto **John's baptism** [or “**baptism unto repentance**,” Alma 5:62; Mos. 26:22]. Then said Paul, “John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 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; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.” Paul had them re-baptized “*in the name of the Lord Jesus*.” Its greater effectiveness is evident in that “*the Holy Ghost came on them*,” and the fact that they also spoke in *tongues* thereafter (see 2 Nephi 31 and 32).

#### *Book of Mormon*

After the great destructions and cleansing of the land and its peoples in 3 Nephi, we read of Nephi's re-baptism and that of others, including the Twelve at Bountiful, all under the direction of the Lord Himself (see 3 Ne. 12:1; 19:8-23). It was a time of *renewal* and *re-commitment* (see 3 Nephi 7:26; 19:11, 13). That is was a re-baptism is more clear in the words of Alma the younger, High Priest over the church and his people at Zarahemla. Many church members had become caught up in the vain things of the world. There was need for repentance and re-baptism. “Alma saw **the wickedness of the church**, and he saw also that the example of the church began to lead those who were unbelievers on from one piece of iniquity to another, thus bringing on the destruction of the people” (Alma 4:11). After preaching the necessity of being *born again*, Alma gave the following command to members of the church.

“I speak by **way of command unto you that belong to the church**; and unto those who do **not** belong to the church I speak by way of *invitation*, saying: *Come and be baptized unto repentance*, that ye also may be partakers of the fruit of the tree of life” (Alma 5:62).

Alma's command was that members of the church be re-baptized, whereas he spoke by way of invitation to non-members that they might enter the sheepfold of Christ. Those members of the church who refused to repent and come to the Lord in this manner had their names blotted out of the church records (Alma 5:58; 6:1-4).

This “*setting in order*” or “*establishing the affairs of the church of God*” was necessary for the welfare of the people and the church generally. The foundation or “*rock*” of God's house is centered upon *faith in Christ*, followed by *repentance* and then baptism by water *and fire* (Mos. 26:22-24). When a body of believers moves away from this rock, the Book of Mormon reveals it is necessary to set things again *in order*. A *reformation* or *renewal of commitment* must take place. Alma's command to church members to repent and be baptized again

was part of this setting “*in order the house of God*” (D&C 85:7). Mormon and Moroni placed it in the Book of Mormon for our instruction.

Alma the younger later went to the church in the land of Gideon to “establish *the church*” again there too (Alma 6:8). He perceived that the church in Gideon was not in the same “*awful dilemma*” as the church in Zarahemla (Alma 7:3; 19). The people of the Gideon church were in “*the paths of righteousness*” (see Alma 6:8). Alma told the church of Gideon that many of the church in Zarahemla had repented and were now “*...established again in the way of righteousness*” (Alma 7:4). After preaching about Christ and His Atonement for mankind (Alma 7:7-13), Alma then extended the same command to the church of Gideon. “Now I say unto you that ye must repent, and be *born again*; for the Spirit saith if ye are not *born again* ye cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven; **therefore come and be baptized unto repentance**, that ye may be *washed from your sins*, that ye may have faith on the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, *who is mighty to save* and to cleanse from all unrighteousness. Yea, I say unto you come and fear not, and lay aside every sin, which easily doth beset you, which doth bind you down to destruction, yea, come and go forth, and *show unto your God* that ye are willing to *repent of your sins* and enter *into a covenant with him* to keep his commandments, and witness it unto him this day by going into **the waters of baptism**. And whosoever doeth this, and keepeth the commandments of God from thenceforth, the same will remember that I say unto him . . . *he shall have eternal life*, according to the testimony of the Holy Spirit, which testifieth in me” (Alma 7:14-16).

It is readily apparent that those he spoke too at Gideon were also church members (Alma 6:8). Alma was calling for both groups to be *baptized again*. After preaching his sermon to them, we read, “And now it came to pass that Alma returned from the land of Gideon, after having taught the people of Gideon many things which cannot be written, **having established the order of the church**, according as he had before done in the land of Zarahemla...” (Alma 8:1). Alma’s had established “*the order of the church*” once again in Zarahemla (Mos. 25:19; 26:17, Alma 6:4). Alma made the same “regulations” (Alma 6:7) for the church in the land of Gideon as he did at Zarahemla (Alma 6:8; 7:14-17; 8:1). These chapters reveal that when the church begins to dwindle in unbelief and wickedness, the Lord “sets his church in order” through repentance, re-baptism, and then the outpouring of the spirit (Alma 6:62). The names of the wicked are removed and not kept in remembrance (Alma 5:57; 6:3), whereas the names of the righteous who repent, have their name written down so that the church might be nourished by the word of God and kept in the right way (Alma 5:58, see also Mor. 6:4).

Note also chapter 18 of Mosiah, verse 14. There Alma the elder was also re-baptized along with Helam and others at the Waters of Mormon. This older Alma was *formerly a leader* along with other *priests* under King Noah. The King had replaced righteous priests with those of his own choosing (Mos. 11:1-7; 12:25-27). Converted by the powerful words of the Prophet Abinadi, Alma escaped into the wilderness near the Waters of Mormon. Alma’s re-baptism there was a witness of his new and more informed choice to follow the Lord, after he had been born of the Spirit. His re-baptism and that of others at the Waters of Mormon was an enlightened re-commitment to the Lord. Another reformation in the church, where it was set in order, occurred with his son Alma the younger in Alma chapters 3 through 7. He had become High Priest over the entire church in the land.

Both Alma’s understood that there must be a full conversion to Christ prior to repentance, covenant renewal, and baptism. He saw that there was need for a *reformation* and *restoration* of truths among his people (see Alma 5:14, 26 & 62). They had either drifted away from their commitment to the Lord, or they never had it in the first place.

In Alma chapter 5, Alma the younger addressed the necessity of *the baptism of fire* experience or being “*born again*” **in Christ** after the watery baptism. He had experienced this spiritual rebirth himself and taught it to his people to bring them also to Christ (see Alma chapters 4 - 7 and 36). The Twelve Disciples of Christ in 3 Nephi 19:9-21 experienced the watery baptism first, and then the baptism of fire immediately afterwards – because they were “**baptized unto repentance.**” The whole multitude witnessed the fiery baptism of those who would lead them. The same occurred for Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in their first baptism in water (see JSH 1:73-74). Mormon and Moroni placed Alma’s words in the Book of Mormon because they saw our day in vision. They knew we would have similar problems confronting us, and a similar need to come fully to Christ and be saved (3 Ne. 12:20). The Book of Mormon teaches us that there is *no other way* (Alma 38:9; Mos. 3:17).

Alma the younger's *born again* sermon was given to *church members* in Alma chapter 5 because so many had not experienced this transformational event. Too many were caught up in the vain things of the world. Full conversion to Christ was needed. He is the rock all Christian churches must be founded upon. Noah, the priests (including his father), and others had deceived the people. Unbelief, idolatry, and priestcraft had risen up among them. Alma saw wickedness in *the church* (Alma 4:11). He had been part of it with the sons of Mosiah.

His father Alma the elder, a former priest in King Noah's employ conducted a similar *reformation* of the church in his day. We read the words of the Lord during this time in Mosiah 26:22. There the Lord said:

“For behold, this **my church**; whosoever is baptized shall be **baptized unto repentance**. And whomsoever ye receive shall *believe in my name*; and him will I freely forgive” (see also Mor. 6:1-4).

We see in this instruction that we must first have *child-like* belief, faith, and trust in God, followed by sincere repentance - and then participate in the covenant of baptism (see 3 Ne. 11:37-38). Later Alma the younger spoke of this kind of *faith* in Christ, stating that we must have “**faith unto repentance**” three times in Alma 34, verses 15-17. He then instructs us to “*call upon his holy name, that he would have mercy upon you*” (v. 17). In verses 18-25 Alma uses the word “**cry**” eight times, that our “*hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually*” (v. 27). In verse 32 he states that, “*this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors.*” In verse 36 he tells us that the Lord cannot dwell in unholy temples – our unclean state. Finally in verses 37-38, Alma adds, “*ye should work out your salvation with fear before God...that ye humble yourselves even to the dust, and worship God, in whatsoever place ye may be in, in spirit and in truth...*”

The doctrine of re-baptism is also addressed in the Book of Mormon by Moroni, who also addresses the Baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost which follow it, admitting one into membership into “**the church of Christ.**”

“And now I speak concerning baptism. Behold, **elders, priests, and teachers were baptized**; and they were not baptized save they brought forth *fruit meet* that they were worthy of it. Neither did they receive any unto baptism save they came forth with *a broken heart and a contrite spirit*, and witnessed unto the church that they truly *repented* of all their sins. And none were received unto baptism save they took upon them **the name of Christ**, *having a determination to serve him to the end*. And after they had been received unto baptism, and *were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost*, they were numbered among the people of **the church of Christ** and their names were taken, that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way, to keep them continually watchful unto prayer, relying alone upon the merits of **Christ**, who was *the author and the finisher of their faith*” (Mor. 6:1-4, see also *Repent and Come unto Me*, by the author).

How is one an elder, priest, or teacher, save they were already baptized. Verses 2-4 reveal the fruits “*meat*” for real *repentance* – “*a broken heart and a contrite spirit.*” This is the sacrifice our Lord requires to be “*born again*” in Him or to receive the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost (see 2 Nephi 31 and 32, and Alma 36). Later Moroni adds that parents are to be humble “*as*” their children and be re-baptized “*with*” them. “Behold I say unto you that this thing shall ye teach—repentance and baptism unto *those who are accountable and capable of committing sin*; yea, *teach parents that they must repent and be baptized, and humble themselves as their little children, and they shall all be saved with their little children*” (Mor. 8:10).

## Re-Baptism in Early LDS Church History

*The Re-Baptism of 9 on April 6, 1830* Clear evidence of other forms of re-baptism are found in early Church records and the statements of its leaders. These include the re-baptisms of Joseph and Emma Smith, many of the Saints in good standing in Nauvoo, and the very first members of the church at its organization on April 6 of 1830. History reveals that this continued in Utah territory. There the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve, and the entire membership of the Church coming from Nauvoo to the Great Basin were also re-baptized. The first known re-baptisms in this last dispensation may have occurred on April 6 of 1830, the official organization date of the Church. Nine people were present, according to historian B.H. Roberts (D.H.C 1:77).

All of them were re-baptized as a *sign* to the Lord of their *re-commitment* to Him on this special day. We read in the Deseret News in 1935, "...Joseph Smith and those who have been baptized prior to April 6, 1830, were **again baptized** on the day of the organization of the Church" (Deseret News, March 30, 1935, p. 6). In addition to *re-commitment*, the new baptism allowed members to preach openly according to the laws of New York State.

*Covenant Renewal after Weakness* Many members of the Church were re-baptized following a period of weakened faith, like in the day of Alma. Historian B.H. Roberts states, "...The proposition was joyfully and very generally accepted by the saints. This procedure, however, must not be regarded as casting any doubt upon the validity of their original baptisms, or repudiation of it as a sacrament. It was only make more solemn *the renewal of covenants with God*" (D.H.C., B. H. Roberts, 2:286-87). Frederick G. Williams, for example, was re-baptized on August 5<sup>th</sup> of 1838 after he lost confidence in the Church and its leaders (part of a period of apostasy in 1837, see D.H.C. 3:55). These re-baptisms were a *sign* before the Lord of various individuals' *re-commitment* to the Lord, a *renewal* of their faith and their *covenants*, after *remittance* of their sins in their re-baptisms (the primary purpose of baptism by water is remittance of sin).

There were other reasons for re-baptism by church members, including *healing*, *baptism for the dead*, and *recommitment to the Lord prior to missions, marriage, and even the temple endowment* for some. *Healings* and *baptism for the dead* were to be done in the completed Nauvoo Temple baptismal font, whereas new members coming into the Church and those re-baptized could be immersed in the Mississippi river (see History of the Church, 4:586). Note the separation of appropriate "*places*" for these different forms of re-baptism.

Hereafter, the writings of D. Michael Quinn (noted historian) and Russell Rich (BYU Church History Professor) are included for historical support of this once popular doctrine.

### **The Practice of Rebaptism at Nauvoo**

*D. Michael Quinn*

Until recently, on the rare occasions when rebaptism has been mentioned in LDS histories, the central incident has been the rebaptism of Brigham Young and his fellow apostles in the Salt Lake Valley on 6 August 1847. All chroniclers of that event have left the impression that this was the first occasion in Mormonism where rebaptism for renewal of covenants was practiced.<sup>1</sup> The one author who acknowledges that the practice of rebaptism existed during the lifetime of Joseph Smith, also limited that practice to two functions: (1) those who were baptized for remission of sins prior to 1830 and who were rebaptized as members of the Church once it was organized on 6 April 1830, and (2) "some members of the Church who were in transgression were again baptized, without first having lost their membership by excommunication."<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, a recent scholarly history of the LDS Church has noted: For many years [in the nineteenth century] it had been common for members to *rededicate themselves* to building up the Kingdom through *rebaptism*. This practice was not considered essential to salvation but was *a symbol of rededication*. On other occasions the Saints were rebaptized as a symbolic gesture related to blessings for *their health, entry into the United Order, preparation for marriage* and even for *going to the temple* if they had not been there for some time.<sup>3</sup>

As we study the records and journals we find this latter statement an accurate general description of rebaptism among the Latter-day Saints. Rebaptism was manifest during the lifetime of Joseph Smith, Jr. It was particularly prominent during the Nauvoo years and served many functions.

### **Rebaptism for Entering a New Ecclesiastical Relationship**

The earliest suggestion of rebaptism in LDS history was in the 1830 Book of Mormon description of *the righteous Nephites being rebaptized at the command of the resurrected Christ when he visited them*.<sup>4</sup> Then, although Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had baptized themselves and others for remission of sins for nearly a year prior to the organization of the Church in 1830, *the previously baptized followers of Joseph Smith were again baptized* as members of the newly organized Church of Christ.<sup>5</sup> These two examples have been described as necessary ordinances to introduce gospel followers into a new Church organization.<sup>6</sup>

Although the documents are fragmentary, there is evidence that during the Nauvoo period of the Church, previously baptized Latter-day Saints *were baptized again when they moved from a distant branch of the Church to the Nauvoo area*. Between 1841 and 1843, for example, ten members of the Church who moved to the Nashville, Iowa Branch were added to the branch *by being rebaptized*.<sup>7</sup> The specific reason for this rebaptism is not indicated. It might have been an absence of records proving their prior baptism, or it might have been that the newly arrived Saints *wished to demonstrate their rededication* after making a long journey to the new branch.

### **Rebaptism for Reformation and Remission of Sins**

The earliest known case in which a person was rebaptized because he felt that he had faltered in his original baptismal commitments was on 7 May 1832. On that date David Johnson requested and received rebaptism because he “had lived unworthy of the communion of the Sacrament,” and also because the man who had baptized him had been subsequently excommunicated. A year later in Kirtland, John Murdock’s diary notes that he “rebaptized Benjamin Bragg.”<sup>8</sup> These may have been isolated cases in the 1830s, but during the Nauvoo years *rebaptism for reformation and remission of sins* was general among the Latter-day Saints. William Clayton’s journal indicated that rebaptism for remission of sins was practiced at Nauvoo after Joseph Smith had remarked on the subject at April 1841 conference.<sup>9</sup> However, the beginning of a general Nauvoo Reformation can be dated from the remarks of Hyrum Smith to the Nauvoo High Council on 18 January 1842, that “there was a general want of action in the Church that he wanted *every one to start anew*.”<sup>10</sup>

During the afternoon meeting on Sunday, 1 May 1842, the authorities at Nauvoo expanded this into a call *for a reformation* within the Church.<sup>11</sup> By that time the Church at Nauvoo had become embroiled in rumors and disclosures about unauthorized sexual activities wherein men like John C. Bennett, Chauncey and Francis Higbee, William Smith, and others had exploited numerous women under the guise of “spiritual wifery.”<sup>12</sup> Although Bennett and others were disfellow-shipped or excommunicated for this unauthorized conduct, the effect of the situation was such that *many were urged to be rebaptized*, as indicated when dissident Church member Oliver H. Olney wrote on 27 July 1842, “That when they do wrong They get rebaptized They then stand fair in the sight of God Altho they have done ever so bad This is the theme amongst those That are a wallowing in the mire.”<sup>13</sup> Most of the Latter-day Saints who were rebaptized for remission of sins during the Nauvoo period were not receiving this ordinance for what was regarded as gross misconduct, but instead *for a personal reformation and remission of those sins* which the ancient apostle John said were part of the human condition.<sup>14</sup> Surviving certificates of baptism from Nauvoo indicate that from 1843 to 1844 many members of the Church *in good standing* were rebaptized “*for Remission of Sins*.”<sup>15</sup> The general nature of this Nauvoo reformation is indicated in the enthusiastic letter of Jacob Scott from Nauvoo on 28 February 1843: “Nearly *All* the Church have been *Baptized again*, for the Remission of their *Sins*, since they joined the Church, I have also, by the hands of Br. Joseph (as he himself has been,) & I would advise Jan and you Mary, to attend to it as soon as you can have the opportunity of an Elder or Priest of the Church to administer it.”<sup>16</sup>

### **Renewal of Covenants through Baptism for the Dead**

Although *baptism for the dead* has traditionally been regarded as distinct from rebaptism, baptism for the dead at Nauvoo was also *another form of rebaptism*. Since 1840 sermons and revelations had provided authorization for already baptized members of the LDS Church to be baptized in behalf of their deceased friends and relatives.<sup>17</sup> Among instances of this practice within the Joseph Smith family were Emma Smith being baptized for her father, Isaac Hale; Hyrum Smith for his brother Alvin; Lucy Mack Smith for her brother, uncle, and aunts; Don Carlos Smith for his “Friend” General George Washington; and Joseph Smith performing baptisms for the dead as late as 5 July 1843.<sup>18</sup> Because each living proxy had already been baptized, *the ordinance thus provided a rebaptism for the living proxy as well as a first baptism for the deceased*, as indicated in a certificate dated 4 July 1841: “Catharine Fory renewed her covenant with the Lord, and was baptised in behalf of . . . .”<sup>19</sup> Therefore, each person who was baptized in behalf of another person was *simultaneously renewing his own or her own original covenants of baptism*.

## Re-baptism for Health

The frequent use of rebaptism at Nauvoo as a means of *healing sickness* may have derived from evidences of healing that occurred upon original baptism. For example, Rhoda Richards (sister of Apostle Willard Richards and subsequently a plural wife of Joseph Smith) recorded in her journal that when she was baptized a member of the LDS Church on 2 June 1838: “In obeying the commands of the Lord I found great good. *Health was improved*, poison disappeared, the cake of ice was melted from my stomach. I found no need of Thomsonian medicine.”<sup>20</sup> The first instructions concerning baptism for health were given by Joseph Smith when he dedicated the baptismal font of the Nauvoo Temple on 8 November 1841, as recorded in a journal of William Clayton: Brother Samuel Rolfe being present, and being seriously afflicted...on one hand, president Joseph instructed him to wash in the font, and told him he would be healed, although the doctors had told him it would not be well before spring, and advised him to have it cut. He washed his hands in the font and in one week afterwards his hand was perfectly healed. After this time baptism was continued in the font, and many realized great blessings both spiritually and bodily.<sup>21</sup>

Word of this use of the temple font was widely circulated and within a few months a Mormon in a distant branch of the Church wrote to the Prophet: “I have confidence that if I can be Baptized in the font I shall be healed of a hereditary disease I am, and ever have been laboring under what is known by the name of sick head ache. I hope to be with the Saints soon.”<sup>22</sup> In time, baptisms for health were extended to the outlying branches of the Church, as indicated by the baptisms for health performed in October 1843 at Philadelphia by Jedediah M. Grant.<sup>23</sup>

Although some were baptized for health purposes in the Nauvoo Temple font, still others resorted to the Mississippi River for this ordinance. The most notable example occurred when *Joseph Smith baptized his wife Emma twice in the Mississippi River on 5 October 1842 because of her serious ill health*, and then went with her on 1 November 1842, “*to the temple [the font being the only part completed] for the benefit of her health.*”<sup>24</sup> The Prophet’s anxiety for his wife to receive baptism for health was such that a non-Mormon businessman reported that Joseph Smith had interrupted a business interview because “Mrs Smith lay Dangerously ill at the time and they ware about to administer the Rights of Baptism to her.”<sup>25</sup> Apostle Willard Richards *also baptized his wife frequently for her health.*<sup>26</sup> Certainly one of the most extraordinary examples of baptism for health at Nauvoo occurred in December 1842, when Horace S. Eldredge cut holes in the frozen river *seven mornings in a row* for the purpose of baptizing John Bills for rheumatism and bleeding lungs.<sup>27</sup> For the Mormons of Nauvoo, *baptism for health was both a priesthood ordinance and a dramatic demonstration of personal faith.*

## Rebaptism in Connection with Plural Marriage

Although the evidence is not as clear as with other forms of *rebaptism* at Nauvoo, it appears that members of the Church were also rebaptized *as a preparation for, or a confirmation of, entering into plural marriage*. Brigham Young recorded in his daily journal on 30 October 1843 that he baptized Sister Cobb and Harriet Cook, but the next entry for 1 November 1843 was obliterated in his journal.<sup>28</sup> Although it is regrettable historically, the obliteration may have been regarded as necessary during the troubled times of Nauvoo, for other records indicate that on this occasion Augusta Adams Cobb and Harriet Cook were sealed as plural wives to Brigham Young by Joseph Smith.<sup>29</sup> The association of rebaptism and plural marriage may also explain the following entry in the journal of Joseph Smith on 11 May 1843: “6 A.M. baptized [blank spaces] Sisters Snow, Louisa Bemen, Sarah Alley &c.”<sup>30</sup> According to later affidavits, Eliza R. Snow had become Joseph Smith’s plural wife on 29 June 1842, Louisa Beaman had become his plural wife on 5 April 1841, and Sarah Alley had been sealed as a plural wifeto Joseph B. Noble on 5 April 1843.<sup>31</sup> The blank space and “&c” of this 11 May 1843 entry in the Prophet’s journal may be explained by the affirmations of Emily and Eliza Partridge that they were sealed to Joseph Smith as plural wives on this date in the presence of his wife Emma.<sup>32</sup> These incidents may demonstrate that the frequent use of rebaptism in Utah during the nineteenth century *as a preparation for endowment and sealing ordinances* had its origin in Nauvoo practices.



## The Heritage of Nauvoo Rebaptism

As with nearly every public and private practice of Nauvoo during the lifetime of Joseph Smith, rebaptism was institutionalized by Brigham Young as he built the Kingdom of God throughout the Great Basin of the American West. A history of those practices of rebaptism after the departure of the majority of the Saints from Nauvoo is beyond the scope of this article, but as indicated by Allen and Leonard earlier, *the practice of rebaptism for rededication, renewal, reformation, health, and preparation for temple ordinances continued throughout the nineteenth century*. Although some rebaptism ordinances, such as those for health and rededication, continued to be performed *as late as 1913 in the temples*, the LDS Presidency decided during the administration of Joseph F. Smith that since rebaptism ordinances had always been supplementary to such principles and ordinances as individual repentance, partaking of the Sacrament, and priesthood blessing of the sick, it would be wise to discontinue a practice that might tend to diminish the importance of the primary principles and ordinances upon which rebaptism was predicated. Elder Bruce R. McConkie noted this change in his day, stating, that in Mormon Doctrine of his time, “There is no need for and no ordinance of rebaptism in the Church.”<sup>33</sup>

**Russell R. Rich** (BYU Church History Prof.), *“I Have a Question,” Ensign, Feb. 1975, p. 45*

Baptism is a necessary ordinance of the gospel that was originally given to Adam by the Lord. It provides for the remission of sins [through repentance] and opens the door to membership in the kingdom of God. It signifies one’s willingness to live a life of righteousness and to accept Christ as the Savior of mankind.

Early Church leaders also used baptism for other purposes, always in a way whereby man was expressing his devotion to his creator and his willingness to better serve his fellowman.

The purpose of rebaptism was to bring the Saints closer to God. Oftentimes a rebaptism was for renewing a person’s religious obligations. But whatever the reason for the ordinance, there was no baptism performed if the individual was not contrite and repentant.

When the Latter-day Saint pioneers entered the Salt Lake Valley, they felt they were finally free from their enemies and they desired to express their gratitude to God by renewing their covenants and promising to obey his commandments from that time forward. They chose baptism as the symbol, which was not only an outward sign to their Father in heaven but also to each other. It was not meant to replace their original baptism, as ordinarily one baptism by water for the remission of sins is sufficient. Baptism signifies one’s faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is because of Christ’s atonement that salvation is possible.

During the so-called “Reformation of 1856–57” the Saints used baptism as a symbol of their repentance and as a pledge to live better lives in the future than they had in the past. Later, beginning in 1874, the Saints rebaptized in some areas to signify membership in the United Order. It was also used by couples just prior to entering the sacred ordinance of marriage.

Throughout the history of the Church rebaptism has also been used when membership records have been lost and for repentant excommunicated members who were returning to the Church. It is still used today in such instances.

Because the Lord has given us the ordinance of sacrament for renewing our covenants, and because the purpose of baptism began to be somewhat confused in the minds of some members of the Church, the Lord directed Church leaders *to discourage* the use of baptism for other than the sacred purpose of the remission of sins and for gaining membership in the Church.

In Nauvoo repeat baptism of church members became common. While in Utah, rebaptism occurred upon emigration to the Great Basin, as a prerequisite to the temple rituals, before joining a united order, and after Church discipline (among others), in Nauvoo it appears to have been **a practice of generally piety** and recommitment. Additionally in late 1841, along with Baptism for the Dead, Joseph Smith revealed a new healing

ritual – *Baptism for Health*. He preached at the following spring General Conference: “*baptisms for the dead, and for the healing of the body must be in the [temple] font, those coming into the Church, and those re-baptized may be baptized in the river.*”

<http://mormonmessenger.org/398/rebaptism-ancient-scriptural/>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rebaptism\\_\(Mormonism\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rebaptism_(Mormonism))

### **Endnotes**

1. William E. Berrett, *The Restored Church: A Brief History of the Origin, Growth and Doctrines of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1936), p. 381; Matthias F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1909), p. 319; Carter E. Grant, *The Kingdom of God Restored* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1955), p. 434; Preston Nibley, *Brigham Young: The Man and His Work* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1936), pp. 102–03; Russell F. Ralston, *Fundamental Differences Rebaptism at Nauvoo between the Reorganized Church and the Church in Utah* (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1963), pp. 64–65; B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Century 1*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1930), 3:286–87; Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History*, 27th ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974), p. 375; Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons, 1892–1904), 1:348–49; Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Kimball Family, 1888), p. 380.
2. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–56), 2:332–37.
3. James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), pp. 425–26.
4. See 3 Nephi 12:1 and 3 Nephi 19:10–13.
5. Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973), 1:76, note (hereafter cited as *HC*).
6. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957–1966), 3:205–06.
7. Records of Nashville, Iowa Branch, after page 84 of Seventies Record A, AR3/3, Archives Division of the Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. One of the 1843 entries for rebaptism was “Mary Willson colored woman.”
8. *Journal of Jared Carter*, 1831–1833, pp. 66, 7 May 1832, Church Archives; *Diary of John Murdock*, p. 25, 24 March 1833, Church Archives.
9. James B. Allen and Thomas G. Alexander, eds., *Manchester Mormons: The Journal of William Clayton, 1840–1842* (Salt Lake City and Santa Barbara: Peregrine Smith, 1974), pp. 209, 212.
10. Nauvoo High Council 1840–1842 Record, p. 35, 18 January 1842, Church Archives.
11. Oliver H. Olney Papers, 1 May 1842, *Western Americana*, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.
12. *Affidavits and Certificates, Disproving the Statements and Affidavits Contained in John C. Bennett’s Letters* (Nauvoo, Ill.: n.p., 31 August 1842); *Nauvoo Neighbor*, 15 May and 19 June 1844; *Latter-day Saints’ Millennial Star* 23 (12 October 1861):657– 59; *HC*, 5:71–82 and 6:407; *Times and Seasons* 3 (1 August 1842):868–74 and 5 (15 March 1844):537–41; Danel W. Bachman, “A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage Before the Death of Joseph Smith,” (Master’s thesis, Purdue University, 1975), pp. 223–60. In the original affidavits before the Nauvoo High Council, William Smith and others were identified whose names were eliminated from the published affidavits.
13. *Olney Papers*, 27 July 1842.
14. See 1 John 1:8–10.
15. *Records of Baptisms at Nauvoo*, CR 342/1, LDS Archives; *Records of Nauvoo Baptisms for the Dead*, Book C, p. 2, Book D, 23 April 1844, Genealogical Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.
16. Jacob Scott to Mary Scott Warnock, 28 February 1843, Research Library and Archives of The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the Auditorium, Independence, Missouri.

17. *HC*, 4:231, 558, 568–69, 595; D&C 124, 128.
18. *Records of Baptisms at Nauvoo*, CR 342/1; *Records of Baptism for Dead at Nauvoo*, LDS Genealogical Society. 6 *BYU Studies*
19. Certificate in CR 342/1.
20. *Journal of Rhoda Richards*, 2 June 1838, Church Archives. Punctuation added.
21. *Journal of William Clayton*, 1840–1845, p. 21, 8 November 1841, Church Archives.
22. Alphonso Young to Joseph Smith, 6 May 1842, *Newell K. Whitney Family Papers*, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.
23. Philadelphia Branch Record, p. 99, RLDS Research Library.
24. *HC*, 5:167–68, 182.
25. John D. Gillett to Smith Tuttle, 5 November 1842, *Gillett and Whittle Papers*, Manuscript Section, Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield, Illinois.
26. *Journal of Willard Richards*, 15 April, 16 April, 27 April, 7 July 1843, Church Archives.
27. *Journal of Horace S. Eldredge*, December 1842, Church Archives.
28. *Journal of Brigham Young*, 1840–1844, 30 October, 1 November 1843, Church Archives.
29. Affidavit of Augusta Adams Young on 12 July 1869 and affidavit of Harriet Cook Young on 4 March 1870 in *Plural Marriage Affidavit Books*, Church Archives. They gave the date of the marriage as 2 November 1843.
30. *Journal of Joseph Smith, Jr.*, 11 May 1843, Church Archives; *HC*, 5:385.
31. Affidavit of Eliza R. Snow on 7 June 1869 and affidavit of Joseph B. Noble on 26 June 1869 in *Plural Marriage Affidavit Books*; Hazel Noble Boyack, *A Nobleman in Israel: A Biographical Sketch of Joseph Bates Noble, Pioneer to Utah in 1847* (Cheyenne, Wyo.: Pioneer Printing Co., 1962), p. 69.
32. Affidavit of Emily D. Young on 1 May 1869 and affidavit of Eliza Partridge Lyman on 1 July 1869 in *Plural Marriage Affidavit Book*, in *Deseret Evening News*, 18 October 1879, and in “Plural Marriage,” *The Historical Record*, ed. Andrew Jensen, 6 (May 1887):233.
33. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), s.v. “Baptism,” p. 71.
34. *Names Reflecting the Status of the Church* Names and titles in the Bible typically reflect character and acts performed. This is also true of four consecutive name changes for the LDS church presented hereafter. They coincide with events from 1831 – 41, reflecting the character of the Saints and the church at that point in time. It should be noted that in times when the church was cursed with the lesser priesthood and lesser law, there have been individuals who lived higher ways among them. Those today that receive the first and second comforters (via the baptism of fire and the Second Comforter experiences) may become part of the church of the Firstborn. This celestial church has not been put in place officially upon the earth as of yet, but will be in the LORD’s way and timing.
1. *The church of Christ* The LORD’s church is named by Him in a revelation in D&C 20, where the name “the Church of Christ” is mentioned by the LORD 6 times. It may have lasted only two years (Mar. 1829 – June 1831), a time when **47** revelations were received. This church came out of the wilderness of darkness on the Earth. A foundation was laid for the future church of God and its Zion via the coming forth of the Book of Mormon (Zion is the pure in heart). Those in “*the church of Christ*” attempted to live the higher Law of the Celestial Kingdom (place of the Father) via living the higher Law of Consecration. It was at this time that missionary work was first implemented and sent to the Book of Mormon remnant – to Native Americans on this land. Historically, the “*Church of Christ*” name shows up in modern revelation at the very beginning of the formal establishment of the church. “It shall be the duty of the several churches, composing “*the church of Christ...*” (D&C 20:81). This revelation was given in April of 1830, and features the first formal name of the church in the D&C. It is also the first formal name given the church in the Book of Mormon.
2. *The Church of God (also called the church of the Firstborn)* This is the church of God the Father, representing a “*Fullness*” that is restored to administer the Gospel of Christ. It may have lasted 3.5 years (June 1831- Dec. 1834) during which time there were **58** revelations received (the most of the four name-related periods). It was at this time that “*the Fullness*” of the higher Melchizedek Priesthood was *offered* to those gathered at the Morley Farm Conference, where the first high priests in the church were ordained (ordinations are invitations by men to receive the real thing, coming only from God). They were part of a church called “the Church of God” (a church within a church). The Father and the Son were both seen by some at this time, so too the “man of sin.” The Saints had five years to redeem Zion in “the stronghold” that was Kirtland (from Sept. 11, 1831 to Sept. 11, 1836, see D&C 64:21-22). Their strength was to come in this higher priesthood power, *sufficient to defeat all enemies*. This “*Fullness*” of priesthood was to become a hedge of protection (D&C 38), but only if righteousness was present. The right to have it was later removed (D&C 124:28). Other names tied to this particular “church” include “the church of the Firstborn” (D&C 76:54, 101; 88:5; 107:80) and the “church of Zion.”

Historically, the “Church of God” name begins to show up in modern revelation shortly after the Melchizedek priesthood opportunity is restored at the Morley Farm in June of 1831, resulting in the High Priests retroactively becoming the leading administrative body of the church. They had administrative authority in the Church of Christ over the “presiding elders” who were not High Priests (few if any actually obtained this power from God, however, though it did come with some via their prior preparation, see Alma 13). Most assume that this name is another name for the church of Christ, but a careful reading of the historical timeline - in context - reveals that it refers to those called to live the higher Law of Consecration, as well as practice a higher priesthood. Thus they and the name are tied to a higher church. Those faithful in this higher “church of God” were and are part of what is also called “the church of the Firstborn. D&C 107:80 refers to these higher administrative privileges generally, stating, “And after this decision it shall be had in remembrance no more before the LORD; for this is the highest council of the church of God, and a final decision upon controversies in spiritual matters.” This higher law, priesthood, and church is reflected in D&C 84:17, where we read, “Which priesthood continueth in the church of God in all generations, and is without beginning of days or end of years.”

Note also D&C 70:5, “Wherefore, I have appointed unto them, and this is their business in the church of God, to manage the concerns thereof, yea, the benefits thereof...” Note also verse 10, “And behold, none are exempt from this law who belong to the church of the living God...” They “are they who are the church of the Firstborn” (D&C 76:54). In Section 88, verse 5, we read, “Which glory is that of the church of the Firstborn, even of God, the holiest of all, through Jesus Christ his Son.” Verse 22 of D&C 93 states, “And all those who are begotten through me are partakers of the glory of the same, and are the church of the Firstborn. Power in the priesthood is directly related to the level of our relationship with God.

3. *The church of the Latter-day Saints* Note that **the LORD’s name was removed from the church at this time**. This new name appears to have lasted two years (Dec. 1834 – Sept. 1836), wherein 6 revelations were received (the lowest). God’s hedge of protection in “*the Fullness*” was apparently rejected and removed from among the Saints for not living the higher law (see 3 Ne. 16:10; D&C 14:10; 124:28). Christ’s name was removed and condemnation pronounced on the Saints, remaining on us today. All name changes for the church are well documented in the seven-volume history of the church, wherein a church conference was called in 1834. There, by unanimous vote, the name of the church was changed. “During a conference held on May 3, 1834, with Joseph Smith acting as moderator, “a motion was made by Sidney Rigdon, and seconded by Newel K. Whitney, that this Church be known hereafter by the name of ‘The Church of the Latter-day Saints.’ Remarks were made by the members, after which the motion passed by unanimous vote” (HC, vol. 2, pps. 62-63, 73). Shortly thereafter, the LORD informed the Saints that they were under condemnation and must have a reformation in all things. This new name for the church, without “Christ” in it, is documented on **the face of the Kirtland house of the LORD** in Ohio, and in the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. Some accused Joseph of apostasy for making this change.

4. *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* The Saints appear to have renamed the church in 1836, **re-inserting Christ’s name back into its title, and without God’s permission** (Sept. 1836 – Jan. 1841). There were 11 revelations received by Joseph at this time (second lowest). The name reflects a continued rejection of “*the Fullness*” by the Saints, as seen via **the** whoredom of unlawful polygamy practices and in the Nauvoo house of the LORD never being completed. These and other sins led to the rejection described by God in D&C 124:32 and 3 Nephi 16:10.

In the dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland house of the LORD (D&C 109, April 1836), the Prophet Joseph Smith - on behalf of the Saints, appears to be petitioning the LORD to once again put his name back upon the condemned church (1832, D&C 84:58). In verse 79 we read, “And also this church, **to put upon it thy name**. And help us by the power of thy Spirit, that we may mingle our voices with those bright, shining seraphs around thy throne, with acclamations of praise, singing Hosanna to God and the Lamb!” The very first time “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” shows up in modern revelation is section 115 in 1838. Historians use section 115 as the scriptural justification for using the current church name.

The Saints may have already re-inserted the name of Christ back into the name of the Church years before this particular revelation was given, however, perhaps demonstrating that Section 115 is not so much a directive from the LORD to re-insert Christ’s name into the church again, but rather a prophesy by the LORD that the Saints *would do so of their own accord*. After the Gentile church rejected the higher Law of Consecration, and the Fullness of the priesthood, sometime around 1834, Joseph was instrumental in renaming and establishing the Church of the Latter-day Saints (without Christ’s name in it). This name was later changed, perhaps by a misinterpretation of section 115, to our current name - the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints, the later name referring to the saints who are then in a scattered and unconsecrated condition, presided over by an elder or elders. How much priesthood remained, if any (because of the abomination of polygamy) is unclear.

Note that the LORD said that the Saints “shall [future tense] be called” by this name. Verses 3-5 of D&C 115 state, “And also unto my faithful servants who are of the high council of my church in Zion, for thus it shall be called, and unto all the elders and people of my Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, scattered abroad in all the world; For thus shall my church be called in the last days, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Verily I say unto you all: Arise and shine forth, that thy light may be a standard for the nations.” Today the official name of the incorporated LDS church is, “The Corporation of the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. See also Assumption #9, chap. 6.

**Scattering the Church 7 Ways** The succession crisis of who would lead the church after the murder of the three Smith brothers led to the scattering of the Saints in some seven directions early on, perhaps in fulfillment of Deut. 28:25. More divisions resulted later. Like the scattered Israelites of old, the Prophet Joseph prophesied that before the kingdom would be established among the Saints, they would first be scattered, driven, gathered again, and then *re-established*. Joseph stated, “I prophecy that the day will come when you will say Oh that we had given heed... the people will not hearken nor hear and bondage, death and destruction are close at our heels. The kingdom will not be broken up but we shall be scattered and driven, gathered again and then dispersed, reestablished & driven abroad and so on until the Ancient of days shall sit and the kingdom and power thereof shall be given to the Saints and they shall possess it forever and ever...” (Words of Joseph Smith, p. 67).

Many other divisions have been identified (perhaps 20 up to 1844 and another 20 thereafter). Most who followed Brigham and his polygamy westward were new converts (unaware of his secretive polygamy, my relatives included). They were from the British Isles where a controlling king oversaw the land. Many of the older, more seasoned Saints at Nauvoo (free of the monarchy in England) rejected Young, polygamy, and the new temple doctrines. Note the seven *original* factions arising from Young’s “new order of things,” which included polygamy and his strong hand of leadership:

1. The Church of Jesus Christ - William Bickerton
2. The Rigdonites - Sidney Rigdon
3. The Church of Christ (Temple Lot) - Granville Hedrick
4. A. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Strangite) - James Strang. Many from this movement latter became part of the RLDS movement (now the Community of Christ).  
B. The Reorganized Church of the Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (RLDS), now the Community of Christ; the bloodline of the Prophet Joseph was passed on to some in it through Joseph Smith III, Alexander Hale Smith, and David Hyrum Smith. In 1984, changes were introduced allowing women into the priesthood, resulting in further subdivisions, including as many as twenty "independent branches of the restoration" from the RLDS movement. They are seeking to restore original truths tied to the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith, as do many who have or are departing from the LDS church headquartered in Utah.
5. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints - Lyman Wight (Texas)
6. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints - Brigham Young (Utah)
7. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints - fundamentalist polygamists (mostly west and south)

Much of the information in this particular endnote was obtained from "The Watcher" (see <https://onewhoiswatching.wordpress.com>) and his blog posts. Pray to determine the truth in what has been presented here.