

Born Again in a Fiery Baptism

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Our Savior requires a specific sacrifice to be *redeemed* or saved. In it our sins remitted and we receive a new heart. With it we are given the priceless gift or endowment of the Holy Ghost as our guide or comforter. And with it we become part of Christ's church, not the lesser churches of men. To have these priceless things, we must offer up to God the sacrifice he requires of us. It is *a broken heart and a contrite spirit* (3 Ne. 9:20). It represents our willingness to fully submit to His will and teachings with humility. All pride must be stripped away from us.

Born Again into Christ's Church As we follow God's will we embrace Christ's doctrine, gospel, and church. God's word thus tells us that Christ the Lord does the baptizing into His church by fire. His church is called *the church of the Firstborn*. Men on earth symbolically baptize other men and women into a preparatory church here using water. One is lesser, done symbolically by men on the earth. It utilizes the symbolism of burial (or immersion) in water. The greater baptism is done by God Himself, and with fire or the Spirit. He invites all to be a part of His ways and church. He repeatedly invites us stating, "**repent and come unto me**" (D&C 10:67, see verses 40-70). As we come to Christ in sincere repentance we are **born again** in Him (Alma Mos. 27:24-27; 5:49; 7:14; 36:23-26; John 3:3-6). John the Baptist informs us that we can then *see* and *enter* heaven (John 3:3-6). Nephi tells us that we are not even through *the gate* and onto the path to *eternal life* until we are *born again* in Christ, Jesus (2 Ne. 31:17-18). Christ alone stands at *this gate*! He employs **no servant there**, as it is **He who baptizes us with fire, granting us the Holy Ghost**. This is clearly revealed in the following five scriptures (see 3 Ne. 9:20; 12:1; JST Mat. 3:38; JST John 1:28; D&C 33:15).

Early on, the Lord Jesus said that after He baptizes us with fire first, the Father then provides the Holy Ghost (2 Ne. 31:12; 3 Ne. 11:35; John 15:26). But later in D&C 33:15, Christ said that He bestows the gift or endowment of the Holy Ghost upon us. The change of who gives us the Holy Ghost followed His atonement, when He became the Father of our salvation, and we His adopted sons or daughters through this new and everlasting covenant, first established with Adam and Eve.

There are a number of very useful scriptures tied this important doctrine as presented hereafter. The fiery baptism is step #4 of 5 in the way of *salvation* (p. 5). Alma stated that the Spirit told him to, "Cry unto this people, saying 'Repent ye, and prepare **the way** of the Lord, and walk in *his paths*, which are *straight* . . ." (see also Alma 41:8). Jacob, the younger brother of Nephi added, "enter in at *the strait gate* and continue in **the way** which is narrow, until ye shall obtain *eternal life*" (Jacob 6:11). *Eternal life* is the gift at the end of "**the way**," granted by Christ Himself. He said, "**I am the way**, and *the truth*, and *the life*" (John 14:6).

Six individuals are quoted hereafter to explain the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost. They are, (1) Christ the Lord, (2) Moses, (3) John the Baptist, (4) the Prophet Joseph Smith, (5) Nephi and (6) Alma the Younger. Following their words are two charts. The first details how our *hearts are changed* in this event. The second presents potential *signs* often associated with it. We begin with our Savior.

1. Jesus Christ Speaking to Nicodemus, a learned Rabbi who came to him at night, our Lord said, "except a man be born again he cannot **see** the kingdom of God...Except a man be born *of water*, and *of the Spirit* [fire], *he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*" (John 3:3-6). Nicodemus came in the dark that night and sadly, also left that way.

2. Moses In Joseph's inspired translation of Genesis do we read of Moses's account of Adam's fiery baptism. In it we read two times that it is a *commandment* that we teach these things to our children (vs. 57-58). Sadly few understand this doctrine today and teach it. Not only is it *the doctrine of Christ*, but it is a significant part of *the covenant of the Father*, later called "*the new and everlasting covenant*."

Moses stated, "Wherefore **teach it unto your children**, that *all men, everywhere, must repent*, or they can in nowise inherit *the kingdom of God*, for no unclean thing can dwell there, or dwell in his presence; for, in the

language of Adam, Man of Holiness is his name, and the name of his Only Begotten is the Son of Man, even Jesus Christ, a righteous Judge, who shall come in the meridian of time. Therefore *I give unto you a commandment, to teach these things freely unto your children*, saying: That by reason of transgression cometh the fall, which fall bringeth death, and inasmuch as ye were born into the world by *water*, and *blood*, and the *spirit*, which I have made, and so became of dust a living soul, even so ye must be **born again** into the kingdom of heaven, of *water*, and of the *Spirit*, and be cleansed by *blood*, even the blood of mine Only Begotten; that ye might be *sanctified from all sin*, and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory;

For by the *water* ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified, and by the blood ye are sanctified; Therefore it is given to abide in you; *the record of heaven; the Comforter* [or Holy Ghost]; *the peaceable things of immortal glory; the truth of all things*; that which *quickeneth* all things, which maketh *alive* all things; that which *knoweth* all things, and hath all *power* according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment.

And now, behold, I say unto you: *This is the plan of salvation* unto all men, through the blood of mine Only Begotten, who shall come in the meridian of time. And behold, all things have their likeness, and all things are created and made to bear record of me, both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath: all things bear record of me.

And it came to pass, when the Lord had spoken with Adam, our father, that Adam cried unto the Lord, and he was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, and was carried down into the water, and was laid under the water, and was brought forth out of the water. And thus he was baptized, and the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was **born of the Spirit**, and became *quickened* in the inner man. And he heard a voice out of heaven, saying: Thou art **baptized with fire, and with the Holy Ghost**.

This is the record of the Father, and the Son, from henceforth and forever; And thou art after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity. Behold, thou art one in me, a *son of God*; and thus may all become *my sons*. Amen” (Moses 6:57-68).

3. John the Baptist “I indeed baptize you with *water*, upon your *repentance*; and when he of whom I record cometh, who is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, (or whose place I am not able to fill,) as I said, I indeed baptize you before he cometh, that when he cometh **he may baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire**. And it is he of whom I shall bear record, whose fan shall be in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but in the fullness of his own time will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Thus came John, preaching and baptizing in the river of Jordan; bearing record, that he [Christ] who was coming after him had power to **baptize with the Holy Ghost and fire**” (JST Matthew 3:38-40).

4. Joseph Smith “The baptism of water, without the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost attending it, is of no use . . . *They are necessarily and inseparably connected*. An individual *must* be born of water *and* the spirit in order to **get into the kingdom of God**...*You might as well baptize a bag of sand as a man, if not done in view of the remission of sins and getting of the Holy Ghost. Baptism by water is but half a baptism, and is good for nothing without the other half*—that is, the baptism of [fire and] the Holy Ghost” (HC, 6:316).

In one of the last public sermons of the Prophet Joseph Smith, known as the King Follett discourse (General Conference, April 7, 1844, two months before his murder), Joseph spoke of *the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost*. It is a fiery, spiritual baptism by the God of heaven, that brings a mortal man or woman into the fold of God, the church of Christ, the one He calls the church of the Firstborn. Few become members of this church, though all are invited. In the *King Follet Discourse*, the Prophet Joseph said; “The baptism of water with the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost attending it is necessary and inseparably connected: [quoting Moses 6 he said] ‘by reason of transgression cometh the fall, which fall bringeth death, and inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water, and blood, and the spirit, which I have made, and so became of dust a living soul, even so ye

must be born again into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten; that ye might be sanctified from all sin, and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory; for by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified, and by the blood ye are sanctified' [Moses 6:59-60].

A man must be born of water and the Spirit in order to get into the kingdom of God. In the German Bible is found a text that bears me out the same as the revelations which I have given and taught for fourteen years about baptism. My testimony has been true all that time. You will find it in the declaration of John the Baptism...Here, I can render an even plainer translation: "I Baptize you with water, *upon your repentance*, but when Jesus Christ – of whom I bear record – comes, who has the power and keys, **He will administer the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost.**" (It should be noted that this later amalgamated account of the King Follet Discourse is pieced together from four sources, the scribes William Clayton and Willard Richards, along with Wilford Woodruff and Thomas Bullock. The Prophet Joseph's official re-translation of Matthew 3:38-40 (quoted earlier) was completed in the early 1830's, and is worded differently.)

Continuing with his April 7, General Conference [King Follett] address, Joseph stated, "Now where is all the sectarian world? If this testimony is true, they are all damned a clearly as any anathema ever was. I know the text is true. I call upon all you Germans who know that it is true to say, Aye. (Shouts of "Aye.") Alexander Campbell, how are you going to save people with water alone? For John said his baptism was good for nothing without **the baptism of Jesus Christ, that is, the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost.**

Many talk of any baptism not being essential to salvation, but his would lay the foundation of their damnation. The Apostle [Paul] tells us, "Therefore not leaving the principles of *the doctrine of Christ*, let us go on unto perfection; *not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works*, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And we will go on unto perfection, if God permit" [Heb. 6:1-3]. There is one God, one Father, one Jesus, one hope of our calling, one baptism; that is, *all three baptisms make one*" [of water, Spirit or fire, and of blood, see Moses 6:57-68]. See also JS History 1:73-74.

5. Nephi "...know *the gate* by which ye should enter. For *the gate* by which ye should enter is [1] repentance and [2] baptism by water; and [3] then cometh *a remission of your sins* by fire and by the Holy Ghost. And then are ye in this strait and narrow path *which leads to eternal life*; yea, ye have *entered* in by **the gate**; ye have done according to the commandments of the Father and the Son; and ye have received *the Holy Ghost*, which witnesses of the Father and the Son, unto the fulfilling of the promise which he hath made, that if ye entered in by the way ye should receive...Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a *perfect* brightness of hope, and a **love of God and of all men**. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, *feasting upon the word of Christ*, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: *Ye shall have eternal life*. And now, behold, my beloved brethren, this is **the way**; and *there is none other way nor name* given under heaven whereby man can be *saved* in the kingdom of God. And now, behold, this is **the doctrine of Christ**, and *the only and true doctrine* of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God, without end. Amen" (2 Ne. 31:17-18, 20-21).

"Wherefore...*feast upon the words of Christ*; for behold, **the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do**. Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, if ye cannot understand them it will be because ye ask not, neither do ye knock; wherefore, *ye are not brought into the light, but must perish in the dark*. For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by **the way**, and **receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do**. Behold, this is **the doctrine of Christ...**" (2 Ne. 32:5-6).

6. Alma the Younger "... I have *repented* of my sins, and have been redeemed of the Lord; behold *I am born of the Spirit*. And the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, must be born again; yea, *born of God*, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being **redeemed** of God, becoming his sons and daughters; And thus they become *new creatures*; and unless they do this, they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God (Mos. 27:24-26).

Scripture Charts The first of the two charts hereafter features those scriptures focusing on “*the mighty change*” of heart given in this event, where one has greater charity or love for others and God. The second chart features those scripture tied to useful *signs* from God accompanying those experiencing the fiery baptism. They are “*signs*” following those who believe.

Scriptures tied to being Born Again / Made New / Justified / Made Perfect in Christ

1 Sam. 10:9 / New heart	Christ / “Born of water and the Spirit” / John 3:3-6
Jer. 24:7 / A heart to know me	Joseph Smith / “the remission of sins”
Ezek. 11:19, 18:31, 36:26 / New heart & Spirit	and “getting the Holy Ghost” / HC 6:316
John 3:3 / All men must be born again	Mos. 5:7 / Born of Him, become His sons & daughters
John 5:24 / Those made new have everlasting life	Mos. 27:25 / Must be born again, born of God,
Rom. 12:2 / A renewed mind	“being redeemed of God,” on “the path to
2 Cor. 5:17 / A new creature	eternal life” (2 Ne. 31:17-18)
Eph. 2:15 / A new man	Alma 5:12 / The mighty change of heart
1 Peter 1:3 / God hath begotten us	Alma 5:14 / Have ye spiritually been born of God
1 John 2:29 / The righteous are born of Him	5:1- 16, 26-28, 49; 7:14
1 John 3:9, 5:18 / Born of God not commit sin	Alma 19:33, 36:23, 38:6, 50:28 / Hearts changed
1 John 4:7 / Those who loveth are born of God	Moses 6:59 / Born again into Kingdom of Heaven
Rev.2 1:5 / I make all things new	Moses 6:65 / Born of Spirit, the inner man quickened
Enos 1:8 / Thy faith had made thee whole	D&C 76:69 / Such are just men made perfect
Mosiah 3:19 / Put off natural man, become a Saint	Gal. 3:24 / Such are justified in Christ
Mosiah 4:13 / Have no mind to injure one another	2 Ne. 31:17-18 / Baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost
Mosiah 5:2 / No more desire to do evil	“entered into the gate or the way”

Signs Associated with being “Born Again” in the Book of Mormon

Signs Follow Believers	Hel. 5	2 Ne. 31-32	Alma 5	Alma 18 /19	Alma 36	3 Ne. 17 / 19	Mosiah 5
Faith in Christ	41, 47	13	4-7, 15	41	17, 18	8	8, 10 (4:5, 20)
Repent, Cry for Mercy	29, 32	11	32-34, 49-52	41	18	2	
Heavens Open	48	15		/34, 48	22	24 / 14	
See God				/13	22	25 / 15	
Spirit Sent Down	45	12, 15, 18		/6	24	/13, 20	3
Quickening / HG given						/9,13, 20-21	
Fire Present	44, 45	13, 14		/43-45	24 /14	/13-14	
Angels Minister	39, 48			/34, 48	24 /15	/14	
Joyful Praise	44, 45	13	26	/14, 30, 33	20, 21, 22, 28	17, 18	3
(see also Alma 5:26-34)							
Gift of Tongues	45	13, 14		/30, 45	13, 14	/ 24	3
Fall Down - Submission				42 /15, 16	7, 11		(4:1) 1
Reborn, Sins Remitted	50, 51	17	12-14, 19	/51	5, 23	/ 33	2, 7, 15
Heart purified, gifted with charity (see Mor. 7:48)							

Prophet Joseph Smith’s primary mission was to bring forth more of God’s word. Joseph’s re-translation of the King James Version of the Bible, and the Book of Mormon together, are what the Lord called “*the fulness of my scriptures*” in D&C 42, verses 12, 15, 56 and 59. The humble desire to receive more of God’s precious word. In this fulness “*the doctrine of Christ*” more clearly unfolds. It includes five steps on “*the way*” to **salvation** or **redemption**. Being “*born again*” in Christ is step 4 of 5. Satan, and evil, designing men have removed many *plain* and *precious things* from the gospel of Christ in the Bible for the sake of gain (D&C 93:39). As we have seen in the previous scriptures, the Book of Mormon does a good job of presenting the *simple, sacred* truths tied to being “*born again*” in Christ, Jesus, to go with those of the Bible, presenting a “fulness” of truth.

The five steps of “*the way*” of salvation (or redemption) are:

1. **Faith** in the Lord Jesus Christ
2. **Repentance** (confess one's sin to God and forsake them)
3. **Baptism in water** as an outward earthly sign of your inward commitment, a covenant with God to remember God and keep His commandments. It is a preparatory symbolic, physical, earthly ordinance pointing to a greater spiritual reality in step 4.
4. **Baptism by fire** and the Holy Ghost (first comforter) / *Sins remitted, heart made new, Holy Ghost given.* The fiery baptism is performed by the God of heaven, not man (D&C 33:15; 3 Ne. 9:20; 12:1; 2 Ne. 31:12; 3 Ne. 11:35; JST Mat. 3:38; JST Luke 3:16; JST John 1:28; 15:26). In this purging event, we are sanctified, made clean (our sins remitted), and able to receive “the endowment of **power** from on high,” the gift and power of the Holy Ghost.
5. **Journey to the Tree.** We are to hold on tightly to “*the iron rod*” near “*the way*” that leads to *the Tree of Life* in Lehi's vision (1 Ne. 8 and 11). The iron rod is direct revelation from God, along with revelation through the Holy Ghost, and the Spirit that inspires us as we read scripture. It is only with this *revelation* that God informs us how to finally arrive at the Tree, or enter His holy presence (Second Comforter). There we can *see*, and *feel*, and *know* of His reality, like those of 3 Nephi 11 and Acts 1 and 2. Both groups of believers became sure witnesses of God's reality. They then bore this testimony to the world. Such have “*the testimony of testimony of Jesus*” (Rev. 12:17; see also Rev. 19:10; D&C 46:13-14; 76:51, 101; 88:4, 74-75; Moroni 10:8).

Return to God's Presence Each of the five steps is very important. They are part of being **fully redeemed** from the fall of Adam and Eve, which caused our separation from God. The point of the journey on “the way” is to return to God's presence in this life. The Tree of Life (not the tree of knowledge) is the final destination at the end of the straight and narrow path. It is to know God and receive eternal life at His hands. He invites us to learn of His ways when He said, “**Come follow me**” (2 Ne. 31:12; Luke 9:23, 59; John 10:27, 12:26; D&C 38:22, 100:2). As we follow Him, He then invites us to literally receive Him while here in mortality. It is encapsulated in His simple, five-word summary of His “*doctrine*,” “*gospel*,” and “*church*,” where He said, “**repent and come unto me**” (1 Ne. 10:18-19; 2 Ne. 9:23-24; 28:31-32; Jacob 1:7; Alma 5:33-34; Ether 4:7-19; Mor. 7:34; 3 Ne. 9:14, 22, 51; 11:14; 12:19-20, 23-24; 27:5-21; 30:1-2 D&C D&C 10:67-68, 93:1).

The Bondage of Sin Wise virgins heed the call of the good Shepherd to come to Him. To do so we must sincerely repent, come out of Babylon by removing our idolatry and false beliefs, and traditions. The Lord said, “For they that are *wise* and have received *the truth*, and have taken *the Holy Spirit for their guide* [iron rod, Holy Ghost] and have **not been deceived**—verily I say unto you, **they** shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but shall abide the day” – the day of His coming in judgment (D&C 45:57). It is the “great and dreadful day.”

Our Lord has described who *the righteous* are among us, those who will abide this day, versus those who are wicked, those under **the bondage of sin**. The wicked will be burned with all unproductive fruit trees. These are the trees in the Lord's vineyard that do **not** heed His invitation to **come to Him**. They do not “*bear fruit meet for the fathers kingdom*” (D&C 84:58; Alma 12:15, 13:12-13, 32:40-43). Their fruit is bitter or they have no fruit at all. Such are destined for another lesser kingdom. This is because many are deceived by the craftiness of man (D&C 76:75). They deceive, like Satan, for the sake of gain (1 Ne. 22:23). God stated:

“And by this you may know they are under **the bondage of sin**, because they **come not unto me**. For whoso cometh not unto me is under the bondage of sin. And whoso receiveth not my voice is not acquainted with my voice, and is not of me. And by this you may know the **righteous from the wicked**” (D&C 84:50-53).

“I have **commanded**...*that ye should come unto me, that ye might feel and see*; even so shall ye do unto the world; and whosoever breaketh this commandment suffereth himself to be led into **temptation**” (3 Ne. 18:25).

“For it shall come to pass, saith *the Father*, that at that day *whosoever will* **not repent** and **come unto my Beloved Son**, *them will I cut off* from among **my people**, O house of Israel” (3 Ne. 21:20).

“No man can **come unto me**, *except he doeth the will of my Father who hath sent me*. And this is the will of *him who hath sent me*, that ye **receive the Son**; for the Father beareth record of him; and he who receiveth the testimony, and doeth the will of him who sent me, I will raise up in the resurrection of the just. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that *no man can come unto me, except he doeth the will of my Father who hath sent me*” (JST John 6:44 - 45).

For the humble and repentant, there is hope and deliverance in the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, “He that **cometh to me** shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst” (John 6:35).

The Tree of Life In the sixth verse of the first chapter of the Book of Mormon, we read of Lehi ascending to heaven in an “*ascent vision*.” There He sees God sitting upon His throne in heaven, surrounded by numberless concourses of angels praising Him. Later in chapter 8 we read of another vision, that of the Tree of Life. In it, Lehi first follows a *man dressed in white*, who bids that he follow him (idolatry). Lehi is led by him into darkness. After many hour, Lehi finally calls out to God for His mercy and is delivered, seeing now the Tree of Life. He then makes his way on a path to this Tree. Many prideful ones mock him, pointing their fingers at him from the great and spacious building. Lehi holds tightly to the rod of iron near the path. It safely takes him through the mists of darkness until he finally arrives at the Tree, partaking of its sweet, white fruit. He then desires that his family taste it too. Tasting the fruit is a symbol for the incredible *joy* experienced in God’s presence, that of His majesty and incredible *love*. Three chapters later (1 Nephi 11) we read of his son Nephi. He too desires to understand his father’s vision of the Tree, and because He believed his father’s words, he is also caught up to heaven while he sat pondering. Nephi also had an “*ascent vision*” of God, like so many others in scripture (see the experiences of Enoch, Abraham, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Moses, John the Revelator, Joseph Smith, etc.). Later in Mosiah chapter 5, King Benjamin addresses the “*born again*” experience of his people, where they repent and come unto Christ, taking upon them His name. He explains that those so blessed, are *taken to heaven* and *sealed His*, becoming his sons and daughters.

The *ascent vision* experience is a *revelatory experience* in this life. It is where we see God in the Spirit, and by His power and invitation. He controls the gate to heaven and employs no servant there. While there, many feel the marks of the atonement in the Lord’s body, and thus come to know Him, and the reality of His resurrection. The marks in His body are the real *signs* and *tokens* - of His love for us. Such become sure witnesses of the Lord in this life (see *Receiving Revelation* and *Visions & How to Have Them*).

For more on this topic, see the author’s paper, *Repent and Come unto Me*.