

## ANCIENT SOURCES

In his first epistle to the Corinthians Paul wrote: "Otherwise, what shall they do who are being baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are they being baptized for them" (Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* 15:29).

This verse is part of Paul's argumentation against those who denied a future resurrection (cf. 2 Tim. 2:18, Justin, Dial. 80). He refers to a practice of vicarious baptism, a practice for which we have no other evidence in the Pauline or other New Testament or early Christian writings. Interpreters have puzzled over the fact that Paul seems to accept this practice. At least he does not see fit to condemn it as heretical, but Paul clearly refers to a distinct group within the Church, a group that he accuses of inconsistency between ritual and doctrine.

A practice of vicarious baptism for the dead (for example among the Marcionites, A.D. 150) was known and seen as heretical by the ancient commentators. Thus they interpreted Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 15:29 so as not to lend support to such practices or to any theology implicit in it. Through the ages their interpretations have persisted and multiplied (B. M. Foschini reports and evaluates forty distinct explanations of this verse). Most of the Greek fathers understood "the dead" to refer to one's own body; others have interpreted the verse as referring to pagans seeking baptism "for the sake of joining" lost Christian relatives. Still others have suggested different sentence structures: "Otherwise what will they achieve who are being baptized? Something merely for their dead bodies?"

Once the theological pressures from later possible developments of practice and doctrine are felt less constricting, the text seems to speak plainly enough about a practice within the Church of vicarious baptism for the dead. This is the view of most contemporary critical exegetes. Such a practice can be understood in partial analogy with Paul's reference to how the pagan spouses and joint children in mixed marriages are sanctified and cleansed by the Christian partners (1 Cor. 7:14). Reference has often been made to 2 Maccabees 12:39–46, where Judas Maccabeus, "taking account of the resurrection," makes atonement for his dead comrades. (This was the very passage which Dr. Eck used in favor of purgatory in his 1519 Leipzig debate with Martin Luther. So it be-

came part of the reason why Protestant Bibles excluded the Apocrypha or relegated them to an Appendix.)

To this could be added that the next link in Paul's argument for a future resurrection is his own exposure to martyrdom (1 Cor. 15:30–32), a martyrdom that Paul certainly thinks of as having a vicarious effect (Phil. 2:17, Rom. 15:16, cf. Col. 1:24).

Such a connection may be conscious or unconscious. In either case it makes it quite reasonable that Paul's remark refers to a practice of a vicarious baptism for the dead.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Conzelmann, H. *1 Corinthians*. Hermeneia Series. Philadelphia, 1975.
- Foschini, B. "Those Who Are Baptized for the Dead; 1 Cor. 15:29." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 12 (1950):260–76, 378–88; 13 (1951):46–78, 172–98, 276–85.

KRISTER STENDAHL

## BAPTISM OF FIRE AND OF THE HOLY GHOST

Baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost refers to the experience of an individual who receives the ordinance of the LAYING ON OF HANDS for the GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST. It is the second in a two-part sequence following baptism by immersion in water through which a repentant person committed to Christ and his gospel is BORN OF GOD or born again. As Jesus explained to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Commenting on this passage, Joseph Smith remarked, "Baptism by water is but half a baptism, and is good for nothing without . . . the baptism of the Holy Ghost" (*TPJS*, p. 314). The baptism of fire, ministered by the Holy Ghost, is manifested through a set of personal sensations, impressions, and insights that constitute a spiritual witness from deity that one has received a remission of sins (2 Ne. 31:17). The baptism of fire inaugurates the transmission of spiritual gifts to the faithful to assist them throughout life in remaining true to their baptismal COVENANT (1 Cor. 12; Moro. 10:8–23; D&C 46:10–33).

The doctrine of the two baptisms was taught by John the Baptist: “I indeed baptize you with water, . . . but he that cometh after me . . . shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (Matt. 3:11). At Christ’s baptism the Holy Ghost was manifested in the sign of a DOVE (Luke 3:22), and he appeared to the disciples on the day of Pentecost as cloven tongues of fire (Acts 2:3; see JESUS CHRIST). The ordinance of conferring the Holy Ghost initiated early Christian converts into the Church (Acts 8:12–17; 3 Ne. 18; Moro. 2–3; 6), and is a practice (often referred to as CONFIRMATION) restored to the latter-day Church and administered by the MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD (D&C 20:38–41).

As symbols for baptism, both water (used for washing) and fire (used in the smelting of metals, hence a “refiner’s fire,” Mal. 3:2–3) represent agents that cleanse and purify, the former externally, the latter internally, leading to SANCTIFICATION (Alma 13:12; Moro. 6:4). In addition, fire suggests warmth and light, realized in tangible sensations such as a burning in the bosom and an awareness of enlightenment accompanying the reception of the divine spirit (D&C 9:8; 88:49).

For Latter-day Saints, baptism by fire and the Holy Ghost is a real phenomenon in literal fulfillment of God’s covenant to those who repent and are baptized (2 Ne. 31:10–21). Through this experience a person may realize the promises Jesus made with regard to how the Holy Ghost would function as a Comforter, a witness of the ATONEMENT, a teacher, and a guide to truth (John 14:16, 26; 15:26).

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cannon, Elaine, and Ed J. Pinegar. *The Mighty Change*. Salt Lake City, 1978.

WILLIAM S. BRADSHAW

---

## BEATITUDES

The Beatitudes, or promises of blessings in Jesus’ SERMON ON THE MOUNT (Matt. 5:3–12), hold a particular significance for Latter-day Saints because the resurrected Lord gave essentially that same sermon to the Nephites and the Lamanites in the Western Hemisphere, as recorded in 3 Nephi

12–14. The words in the Beatitudes echo Isaiah 61:1–2 and Psalm 107:4–7, 9. Church members cite the setting of the Book of Mormon sermon as well as a few notable verbal differences (such as “Blessed are the poor in spirit *who come unto me*,” and the phrase “for they shall be filled *with the Holy Ghost*”) as examples of how the Book of Mormon complements the Bible, attesting to its message while clarifying and expanding it (cf. 1 Ne. 13 [esp. verses 39–42]; 2 Ne. 27, 29).

In the Book of Mormon, most of the sermon is addressed to baptized members of the Church (cf. 3 Ne. 11 and 12:1–2). Thus, the expectations in the sermon concern those living the law of the gospel as taught by Christ. Other parts of the sermon are directed specifically to leaders.

Some significant differences appear in the wording of the biblical and Book of Mormon versions of the Beatitudes. In the Book of Mormon, two new “beatitudes” precede those in Matthew: baptized members are blessed if they give heed to their leaders and have faith in Christ (3 Ne. 12:1), and “more blessed” are those who receive the testimony of emissaries whom Christ has called (3 Ne. 12:2). These two additional beatitudes are incorporated into the biblical sermon in the JOSEPH SMITH TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE (JST). Matthew 5:3 is elaborated as noted above (cf. D&C 84:49–53). Matthew 5:4 is virtually unchanged at 3 Nephi 12:4 but is somewhat developed at 3 Nephi 12:19 (cf. Morm. 2:11–13). The words “shall be filled with the Holy Ghost” (3 Ne. 12:6) express on a spiritual level (cf. Ps. 17:15, Septuagint) the implicit meaning of cattle feeding upon grass (Matt. 5:6; Greek, *chortasthêsontai*; cf. the grass [*chortos*] where the disciples are miraculously fed at Matt. 14:19 and the verb “filled” at Matt. 15:33, 37). Matthew 5:5 is unchanged, as are Matthew 5:7–9; but Matthew 5:10 reads “which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake,” while 3 Nephi 12:10 has “who are persecuted for my name’s sake,” reflecting the Christ-centered theme throughout the Nephite version of the sermon. For the first two verbs of Matthew 5:12, which the KJV takes as imperatives, 3 Nephi 12:12 has “For ye shall have great joy and be exceeding glad.”

Church leaders often refer to the Beatitudes as the Lord’s promises of blessings and happiness to those who follow him and as the result of obedience or the “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22–23). Those who would be obedient have the individual