

## **Lesson 45: D&C 125-128, "A Voice of Gladness for the Living and the Dead"**

### Overview

The principle of baptism for the dead was of great interest to the Saints at this time. Joseph Smith talked about it at the October, 1840 conference and wrote several letters to the Saints on the subject.

After the conference Vilate M. Kimball wrote a letter to her husband, Heber, about the speech:

“We had the largest and most interesting conference that ever has been since the Church was organized.... President [Joseph] Smith has opened a new and glorious subject.... That is, being baptized for the dead. Paul speaks of it, in First Corinthians 15th chapter 29th verse. Joseph has received a more full explanation of it by revelation. He says it is the privilege of [members of] this Church to be baptized for all their kinsfolk that have died before this gospel came forth.... By so doing, we act as agents for them, and give them the privilege of coming forth in the First Resurrection. He says they will have the gospel preached to them in prison....

“I want to be baptized for my mother.... Is not this a glorious doctrine?” (Vilate M. Kimball letters, Oct. 11, 1840)

Sections 127 and 128 are letters from Joseph Smith to the Saints on this subject. He wrote them letters because, at the time, he was avoiding being arrested and taken back to Missouri

#### D&C 127:10

10 I will say to all the saints, that I desired, with exceedingly great desire, to have addressed them from the stand on the subject of baptism for the dead, on the following Sabbath. But inasmuch as it is out of my power to do so, I will write the word of the Lord from time to time, on that subject, and send it to you by mail, as well as many other things.

### Baptism for the Dead – Witnessing and Recording

Joseph Smith tells us that the Lord is “about to restore many things... pertaining to the priesthood”

#### D&C 127:5-8

5 And again, I give unto you a word in relation to the baptism for your dead.  
6 Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you concerning your dead: When any of you are baptized for your dead, let there be a recorder, and let him be eye-witness of your baptisms; let him hear with his ears, that he may testify of a truth, saith the Lord;  
7 That in all your recordings it may be recorded in heaven; whatsoever you bind on earth, may be bound in heaven; whatsoever you loose on earth, may be loosed in heaven;

8 For I am about to restore many things to the earth, pertaining to the priesthood, saith the Lord of Hosts.

What actions must be accompanied by the by the baptisms?

(When any of you are baptized for your dead, let there be a recorder, and let him be eye-witness of your baptisms)

Why?

(That in all your recordings it may be recorded in heaven)

What keys were delivered by Elijah that made it possible to perform this ordinance?

(whatsoever you bind on earth, may be bound in heaven; whatsoever you loose on earth, may be loosed in heaven)

A. Theodore Tuttle

"Elijah has returned! Thanks be to God! He bestowed his keys! Work could now commence in the temples to weld eternal links between husbands and wives, between parents and children, through the sealing power of God.

It is essential to obtain the sealing power of the holy priesthood so that whatsoever an authorized officiator shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven....

"The order of performing baptism for the dead was revealed. Also the Lord required that witnesses verify the performance of ordinances, 'that in all your recordings it may be recorded in heaven.'" (CR, April 1982)

In the next Section we get more detail about the importance of witnessing and recording each baptism

Verses 3 and 4 go into minute detail on witnessing and recording ordinance

D&C 128:2,5

2 I wrote a few words of revelation to you concerning a recorder. I have had a few additional views in relation to this matter, which I now certify. That is, it was declared in my former letter that there should be a recorder, who should be eye-witness, and also to hear with his ears, that he might make a record of a truth before the Lord.

5 You may think this order of things to be very particular; but let me tell you that it is only to answer the will of God, by conforming to the ordinance and preparation that the Lord ordained and prepared before the foundation of the world, for the salvation of the dead who should die without a knowledge of the gospel.

Why is the Lord “very particular” about the “order of things”?

(conforming to the ordinance and preparation that the Lord ordained and prepared before the foundation of the world, for the salvation of the dead)

Charles C. Rich

"These were the principles ordained for that purpose before the world was. It is not a new feature in the Gospel, something started a few years ago. From what I have read, we find they are eternal principles; that they existed and were ordained for our salvation before the foundation of the world, and cannot be changed. We must comply with the principles of the eternal law, in order to obtain eternal blessings. I want to impress these principles upon your minds, for there is no 'think so' and 'guess so' about these things, for the Lord himself has decreed them." (JD 19:249)

Regarding the dead, we are told what the ordinance of baptism symbolizes

D&C 128:12-13

12 Herein is glory and honor, and immortality and eternal life—The ordinance of baptism by water, to be immersed therein in order to answer to the likeness of the dead, that one principle might accord with the other; to be immersed in the water and come forth out of the water is in the likeness of the resurrection of the dead in coming forth out of their graves; hence, this ordinance was instituted to form a relationship with the ordinance of baptism for the dead, being in likeness of the dead. 13 Consequently, the baptismal font was instituted as a similitude of the grave, and was commanded to be in a place underneath where the living are wont to assemble, to show forth the living and the dead, and that all things may have their likeness, and that they may accord one with another—that which is earthly conforming to that which is heavenly, as Paul hath declared, 1 Corinthians 15:46, 47, and 48:

We often think of baptism as symbolizing being born.

In what way does baptism symbolize being resurrected?

(to be immersed therein in order to answer to the likeness of the dead come forth out of the water is in the likeness of the resurrection of the dead)

Why are baptismal fonts below the ground level in temples?

(as a similitude of the grave, and was commanded to be in a place underneath where the living are wont to assemble)

But that’s not always the case. If it’s out of our control then the Lord allows for exceptions. Example: the Manhattan Temple)

Baptisms for the Dead – The Welding Link

He quotes the passage in Malachi that states that the Lord will send Elijah to turn the hearts of the father to the children and the children to their fathers otherwise the earth will be cursed at His coming. Then he says:

D&C 128:18

18 I might have rendered a plainer translation to this, but it is sufficiently plain to suit my purpose as it stands. It is sufficient to know, in this case, that the earth will be smitten with a curse unless there is a welding link of some kind or other between the fathers and the children, upon some subject or other—and behold what is that subject? It is the baptism for the dead. For we without them cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect. Neither can they nor we be made perfect without those who have died in the gospel also; for it is necessary in the ushering in of the dispensation of the fulness of times, which dispensation is now beginning to usher in, that a whole and complete and perfect union, and welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories should take place, and be revealed from the days of Adam even to the present time. And not only this, but those things which never have been revealed from the foundation of the world, but have been kept hid from the wise and prudent, shall be revealed unto babes and sucklings in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times.

Joseph Smith states that the earth needs a “welding link between generations to prevent the earth from being cursed  
What does he state is that “welding link”?

(It is the baptism for the dead)

Russell M. Nelson

"The Lord revealed that 'the ordinance of baptizing for the dead... was instituted from before the foundation of the world.' Salvation was thus made available for those 'who should die without a knowledge of the gospel.' A welding link between generations was provided, that a whole, complete, and perfect union of dispensations, keys, powers, and glories should take place." (CR, April 2002)

Russell M. Nelson

“Jesus... wants us as bonding blacksmiths—creating celestial welding links—to curb the curse of family fragmentation. The earth was created and temples provided so that families can be together forever. Many, if not most, of us could repent and be converted to more temple and family history work for our ancestors.” (CR, April 2007)

What does he say must exist during the dispensation of the fullness of times?

(welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories should take place, and be revealed)

Russell M. Nelson

"Priesthood authority has existed in many dispensations, such as those of Adam, Noah, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, the meridian of time, the Jaredites, the Nephites, and others. All previous dispensations were limited in time, as each ended in apostasy. They were also limited to small segments of planet Earth. In contrast, our dispensation—the dispensation of the fulness of times—will not be limited in time or place. Globally, it will host a whole, complete, and perfect union, welding together dispensations, keys, powers, and glories from the days of Adam even to the present time." (CR, Oct. 2003)

D&C 128:22

22 Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory! Let your hearts rejoice, and be exceedingly glad. Let the earth break forth into singing. Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained, before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoners shall go free.

How will the dead be blessed if members of the church press forward in this great work of welding ancestors together?

(that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoners shall go free)

D. Todd Christofferson

"We are anxiously about the task of searching out our fathers and mothers of generations past and binding them to us and us to them....

"In the scriptures, the spirits of the dead are sometimes referred to as being in darkness or in prison. Even the righteous spirits are spoken of as faithful 'captives' awaiting deliverance from the bands of death. Contemplating God's glorious plan for the redemption of these, His children, the Prophet Joseph Smith penned this psalm: 'Let your hearts rejoice, and be exceedingly glad. Let the earth break forth into singing. Let the dead speak forth anthems of eternal praise to the King Immanuel, who hath ordained, before the world was, that which would enable us to redeem them out of their prison; for the prisoners shall go free.'

"Our charge extends as far and as deep as the love of God to encompass His children of every time and place. Our efforts on behalf of the dead bear eloquent witness that Jesus Christ is the divine Redeemer of all mankind. His grace and promises reach even those who in life do not find Him. Because of Him, the prisoners shall indeed go free." (CR, Oct. 2000)

D&C 128:24

24 Behold, the great day of the Lord is at hand; and who can abide the day of his

coming, and who can stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Let us, therefore, as a church and a people, and as Latter-day Saints, offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; and let us present in his holy temple, when it is finished, a book containing the records of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptance.

What does he want us to create and present that verifies the holy work we've performed in the temples?

(let us present in his holy temple, when it is finished, a book containing the records of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptance)

Allan F. Packer

"Not long ago, Sister Packer and I traveled to several foreign countries. We prepared our passports and other documents. We obtained the shots, medical exams, visas, and stamps. As we arrived, our documents were inspected, and when all the requirements were met, we were allowed to enter.

"Qualifying for exaltation is like entering another country. We must each obtain our spiritual passport. We do not set the requirements, but, individually, we must meet all of them....

"From the Doctrine and Covenants we read: 'let us present in his holy temple,... a book containing the records of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptance.' This 'book' will be prepared using the records of names and ordinances in the Church's FamilyTree database. I am checking and adding records to this database because I want the names of all those I love to be in the book. Don't you?" (CR, Oct. 2014)