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## EDITORIAL

*David M. Morris*

*Editor*

In a year that some have described as the *Mormon Moment*, due to the media exposure of a Mormon standing for the US presidency, Mormon Studies once again enlarges the academic world. One need only look at current releases of university presses, which demonstrate this interest, many of which are reviewed here. In this issue articles are featured on intellectual and historical foci, as well as theological analysis.

We, as always, extend our appreciation to those who took time to blind peer-review articles and review books fairly and formative as possible. As an editorial board we hope you will enjoy the contents of this issue.

If you wish to make a comment or suggestions on its improvement, please feel free to email us at [editorial@ijmsonline.org](mailto:editorial@ijmsonline.org).

## THE HOLY GHOST IN LDS RITUAL EXPERIENCE: PREPARATION FOR EXALTATION

*James D. Holt*

Pneumatology is not a word that is used within Mormon writings, but Mormon theology does elucidate a work of the Holy Ghost that is evident in the world and in the Church that can be explored.<sup>1</sup> In examining a Latter-day Saint pneumatology one is faced with a paucity of specific material; with the exception of a small number of books the Holy Ghost has not been the subject of a systematic analysis.<sup>2</sup> While being critically linked with other areas, the role of the Spirit in individual and institutional practice is an area, which needs exploring in greater depth than, has been done previously. The extent to which the Holy Ghost has been ignored is exemplified in the writings of Davies; he argues that in certain aspects Mormonism can be seen to be distinctly binitarian concluding:

in the starkest and most unqualified of terms, the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit has been of primary historical significance within practical Mormon living but of secondary importance within its technical theology.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Holy Spirit is a term used interchangeably with the Holy Ghost in Latter-day Saint teaching. There is no difference between what is meant. See Douglas J. Davies, "The Holy Spirit in Mormonism", *International Journal of Mormon Studies*, vol. 2:2009, 23–24, (23–41).

<sup>2</sup> Specific works are generally devotional in nature, for example, Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert Millet, *The Holy Ghost* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1989).

<sup>3</sup> Douglas J. Davies, *Joseph Smith, Jesus and Satanic Opposition: Atonement, Evil and the Mormon Vision* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010). In this binitarian discussion Davies goes further than is appropriate in relation to current Latter-day Saint practice, and relies on aspects of *The Lectures of Faith* (Lundwall, nd) and their attendant outworkings. However, the argument does recognize that more thought needs to be given to the work of the Holy Ghost.

This article will explore a small area of pneumatology and leave many areas that will need further exploration elsewhere, . It will seek to place the Holy Ghost as central in the theology of ritual ordinances. It will suggest that while Latter-day Saints believe that outward ordinances are not salvific in themselves they are channels of the Holy Ghost, which is the active medium of the grace of Christ to make sanctification and exaltation possible.

The further role of the Holy Ghost in relation to ritual is the application of the “Holy Spirit of promise”, (D&C 132:7) which has a role in the sealing of all “covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations” (D&C 132:7). This function of the Holy Ghost is ratification of the covenants and ordinances that occur.

The use of these ordinances in uniting the participant with the Holy Ghost (and thus the Godhead) in preparation for exaltation will be explored in the final section of this paper. The crucial role of the Holy Ghost in the exaltation of humanity will be developed with a focus on the united nature of exaltation.

The most obvious manifestation of the Holy Ghost in Latter-day Saint teaching is within a discussion of the gift of the Holy Ghost. The gift of the Holy Ghost is the right to the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost by the recipient throughout their lives (as long as that person remains worthy of it).<sup>4</sup> This reception of the Holy Ghost, through the physical ordinance of confirmation, is a crucial step in joining the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Article of Faith 3).<sup>5</sup> Latter-day Saints believe that the ordinance of baptism by water must be followed by the baptism of the Holy Ghost through confirmation and the laying on of hands. The gift of the Holy Ghost, in Latter-day Saint teaching, can only be received by the laying on of hands “by one having authority” (Article of Faith 5), but there are examples of

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<sup>4</sup> The Holy Spirit is seen by Latter-day Saints to remain with a person while they are worthy of it, or do not sin. When a person sins they withdraw themselves from the Spirit (see Mosiah 2:36). The Holy Spirit cannot abide with that person until repentance is undertaken and the atoning blood of Christ takes effect again in the person’s life.

<sup>5</sup> Latter-day Saints only use the word sacrament when referring to the Eucharist. All “sacraments”, in the mainstream sense of the word, are described as ordinances.

people receiving manifestations of the Holy Ghost prior to the administration of the ordinance in scripture and Latter-day Saint writings. These manifestations should not be confused with the reception of the gift of the Holy Ghost and its associated right of constant companionship. For example:

Cornelius received the Holy Ghost before he was baptized, which was the convincing power of God unto him of the truth of the Gospel, but he could not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost until after he was baptized. Had he not taken this sign or ordinance upon him, the Holy Ghost which convinced him of the truth of God, would have left.<sup>6</sup>

Evidences of the manifestations of the Holy Ghost prior to baptism are prevalent throughout Latter-day Saint teaching and culture: “Joseph Smith did not have the gift of the Holy Ghost at the time of the First Vision, but he was overshadowed by the Holy Ghost; otherwise, he could not have beheld the Father and the Son”.<sup>7</sup> Rector and Rector (1971) collected together a number of conversion stories which highlighted manifestations from the Holy Ghost that converts had experienced prior to being baptized.<sup>8</sup> It is important to note, however, that if the manifestations were not heeded, then the Holy Ghost would withdraw its influence. “Every man (sic) can receive a manifestation of the Holy Ghost, even when he is out of the Church, if he is earnestly seeking for the light and for the truth. The Holy Ghost will come and give the man the testimony he is seeking, and then withdraw; and the man does not have a claim upon another visit or constant visits and manifestations from him”.<sup>9</sup> The teaching of prevenient promptings of the Holy Ghost is more inclusive than could be supposed. Latter-day

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<sup>6</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1938), 199. Cornelius was “probably the first gentile to come into the Church not having previously become a proselyte to Judaism” who received the truth of the Gospel before baptism. The differentiation between the Holy Spirit before and following baptism is echoed in the writings of Pinnock: “In experience the Spirit may be manifested before baptism, as with Cornelius, but water remains the public sign of the Spirit’s coming (Acts 10:44-48)” (1996: 124).

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* (Salt Lake City: Deseretbook, 1999), vol 1: 42-43.

<sup>8</sup> Spencer. J. Palmer, *The Expanding Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseretbook, 1978).

<sup>9</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1999, vol 1: 42.



Saints accept that the Holy Ghost provides manifestations to those outside the Church; they may serve a preparatory role but the Holy Ghost is not limited to the Church. The personal preparation that the Holy Ghost serves could still be used as a hopeful basis for judgement, being partially based on the knowledge a person acquires.

It seems as though Latter-day Saints would suggest that spirit given truths find their fulfilment in these ordinances. Therefore, all other religions and people are, at best, incomplete and awaiting fulfilment by the Holy Ghost. A person can go so far, but must receive the Holy Ghost within the constraints of the ordinances of baptism and confirmation in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

In Latter-day Saint teaching one of the most important roles of the Holy Ghost is that of sanctifier. *The Book of Mormon* specifically identifies this role:

Yea, will ye persist in supposing that ye are better one than another; yea, will ye persist in the persecution of your brethren, who humble themselves and do walk after the holy order of God, wherewith they have been brought into this Church, *having been sanctified by the Holy [Ghost]*, and they do bring forth works which are meet for repentance— (Alma 5:54 emphasis added; see also Alma 13:11–12).

For Latter-day Saints the blessing of sanctification through the Holy Ghost is available to all through the baptism of fire and the ritual of confirmation.<sup>10</sup> Sin and carnality are taken away through the atonement of Christ with the active involvement of the Holy Ghost: “It is ‘by the blood’ (Moses 6:60) – meaning the blood of the Saviour— that we are sanctified. But it is through the cleansing medium of the Holy Ghost that the regenerating powers of that infinite atonement are extended to mortal man”.<sup>11</sup> By the power of the Holy Ghost, Latter-day Saints believe that, iniquity, carnality, sensuality, and every evil thing is burned out of the soul as if by fire; the cleansed person is literally born again of the water and the Spirit.<sup>12</sup> This is impossible without the Holy Ghost:

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<sup>10</sup> The reception of the gift of the Holy Ghost.

<sup>11</sup> McConkie and Millet, *The Holy Ghost*, 110–111.

<sup>12</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1979), 73.

Man's natural powers are unequal to this task; so I believe, all will testify who have made the experiment. Mankind stand in some need of a strength superior to any they possess of themselves, to accomplish this work of rendering pure our fallen nature. Such strength, such power, such a sanctifying grace is conferred on man in being born of the Spirit – in receiving the Holy Ghost. Such, in the main, is its office, its work.<sup>13</sup>

Sanctification, in Latter-day Saint teaching, is a process; it “is an on-going work of the Holy [Ghost], one that deals with the gradual purification of my state”.<sup>14</sup> As a person “endures to the end” (2 Ne. 31:20), they are able to continue further through the sanctification process which “consists in overcoming every sin and bringing all in subjection to the law of Christ”.<sup>15</sup>

This process of sanctification entails the removal of sin and its replacement with Christ-like qualities. The Holy Ghost is not just a passive channel for the atonement. Rather, the Holy Ghost actively

quickens all the intellectual faculties, increases, enlarges, expands, and purifies all the natural passions and affections, and adapts them, by the gift of wisdom, to their lawful use. It inspires, develops, cultivates, and matures all the fine-toned sympathies, joys, tastes, kindred feelings, and affections of our nature. It inspires virtue, kindness, goodness, tenderness, gentleness, and charity. It develops beauty of person, form, and features. It tends to health, vigour, animation, and social feeling. It invigorates all the faculties of the physical and intellectual man. It strengthens and gives tone to the nerves. In short, it is, as it were, marrow to the bone, joy to the heart,

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<sup>13</sup> Brigham H. Roberts, *The Gospel and Man's Relationship to Deity* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966), 170.

<sup>14</sup> Robert L. Millet, “The Process of Salvation”, in R. Keller, & R. L. Millet (eds.), *Salvation in Christ: Comparative Christian Views*, 141–181, (Provo: Religious Studies Centre: BYU, 2005), 158.

<sup>15</sup> Brigham Young, “How and by whom Zion is to be built– Sanctification– General Duties of the Saints”. In G. D. Watt (Ed.), *Journal of Discourses* (vol. 10 (1863) 170–178), (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot), 173.

light to the eyes, music to the ears, and life to the whole being.<sup>16</sup>

Sanctification by the Holy Ghost (through the atonement) takes place initially when a person is baptized and receives the gift of the Holy Ghost. Sanctification through the atonement and the Holy Ghost is renewed each week in the ritual of the sacrament: “The process of cleansing and sanctifying through the baptisms of water and of the Holy Ghost can be continued weekly as we worthily partake of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper”.<sup>17</sup> The importance of an on-going relationship with the Holy Ghost throughout a person’s life is reiterated when discussing sanctification. Latter-day Saints believe that living close to the Holy Ghost, and partaking of the sacrament in the ritual of the sacrament sanctifies a person’s soul, making them prepared to meet God on judgement day with clean hands and a pure heart:

And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end. Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day (3 Ne. 27:19-20).

It is impossible for this sanctification to take place without reception of the gift of the Holy Ghost. This can only be done “by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority” (Article of Faith 5). As such, only baptized members of the Church have the potential to be sanctified, and only those so sanctified can return and live with God and receive exaltation. It is important to note that Latter-day Saints believe that these outward ordinances are not salvific in themselves; they do “not forgive sins or save us... for exaltation is in Christ the Person. Rather, baptism and the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper are

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<sup>16</sup> Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology [1855]* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 61.

<sup>17</sup> D. T. Christofferson, “Justification and Sanctification”, *Ensign*, June 2001: 24).

channels of divine power that help to activate the power of God”.<sup>18</sup> The Holy Ghost is the active medium of the grace of Christ to make sanctification and exaltation possible: “The Holy Ghost is the midwife of exaltation. He is the agent of the new birth, the sacred channel and power by which men and women are changed”.<sup>19</sup>

In Latter-day Saint teaching the Holy Ghost is sometimes referred to as the “Holy Spirit of promise” (D&C 132:7),<sup>20</sup> which has a role in the sealing of all “covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations” (D&C 132:7). This function of the Holy Ghost is ratification of the covenants and ordinances that occur. Smith has explored this further and describes it as a “stamp of approval” promising the blessings of the covenants through a person’s faithfulness. If covenants are broken Latter-day Saints believe that the “Holy [Ghost] withdraws the stamp of approval”.<sup>21</sup> McConkie has used baptism as an example of this seal placed by the Holy Ghost:

An unworthy candidate for baptism might deceive the elders and get the ordinance performed, but no one can lie to the Holy Ghost and get by undetected. Accordingly, the baptism of an unworthy and unrepentant person would not be sealed by the Spirit; it would not be ratified by the Holy Ghost; the unworthy person would not be justified by the Spirit in his actions. If thereafter he became worthy through repentance and obedience, the seal would then be put in force. Similarly, if a worthy person is baptized with the ratifying approval of the Holy Ghost attending the performance, yet the seal may be broken by subsequent sin.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Robert L. Millet, *After All We Can Do: Grace Works* (Salt Lake City: Deseretbook, 2003), 76.

<sup>19</sup> Robert L. Millet, “The Process of Salvation”, 146–147. The use of the word “channel” suggests passivity with regard to the Holy Ghost; this should not be assumed, as the Holy Ghost is an active participant in this process.

<sup>20</sup> Although this thesis, and Latter-day Saints, refers to the Holy Ghost, one exception is the description of his role as the Holy Spirit of promise. For this reason the terminology is retained.

<sup>21</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith, 1999, vol. 1: 45

<sup>22</sup> McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 362.

Latter-day Saints do not just apply this ratifying seal of the Holy Ghost to baptism but to all of the ordinances of the Gospel: baptism; confirmation; ordination to the Priesthood; washing and anointing; endowment; and Temple marriage. If these ordinances (and their attendant covenants) are not sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise then they “are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the Resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead” (D&C 132:7).<sup>23</sup> Latter-day Saints believe this seal is kept in place by a person’s righteousness and can be removed as people withdraw themselves from the Spirit (see Mosiah 2:36). In order to receive eternal life a person must have the Holy Spirit of Promise sealed to their ordinances:

An act that is justified by the Spirit is one that is sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, or in other words, ratified and approved by the Holy Ghost. This law of justification is the provision the Lord has placed in the Gospel to assure that no unrighteous performance will be binding on earth and in heaven, and that no person will add to his position or glory in the hereafter by gaining an unearned blessing.<sup>24</sup>

In Latter-day Saint theology, a further condition for eternal life is to have received the various ordinances; these are efficacious only through the Holy Ghost because of the atoning sacrifice of Christ. The Holy Spirit of Promise (meaning the seal placed on a person’s ritual ordinances and kept there through righteousness) is a prerequisite to exaltation; without it “he cannot obtain it [exaltation]” (D&C 131: 3).

As a sealing force, and other roles of the Holy Ghost including being the impetus for a change of heart suggests that exaltation can only be fully realized within the Church of Jesus of Christ of Latter-day Saints. To hope for exaltation a person must be a new creature, and this is only possible by living a life in close relationship with the Holy Ghost.

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me (John 17:21).

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<sup>23</sup> The immediate context of the passage is marriage (D&C 131 and 132) but it can be applied to all ordinances.

<sup>24</sup> Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1985), 408.

An important understanding of what exaltation is as a unity with the Godhead is possible, as exemplified through the life of Christ. Christ became one with the Father through obedience to his commandments and the aligning of his thoughts and goals to the Father. As joint heirs with Christ, Latter-day Saints believe that to receive the same inheritance of Christ (exaltation), they must strive to develop this unity throughout their lives (and even beyond). Latter-day Saint beliefs about prayer are an example of how this unity is important for the development of a person's relationship with Christ:

As soon as we learn the true relationship in which we stand toward God (namely, God is our Father, and we are his children), then at once prayer becomes natural and instinctive on our part (Matt. 7: 7-11). Many of the so-called difficulties about prayer arise from forgetting this relationship. Prayer is the act by which the will of the Father and the will of the child are brought into correspondence with each other (KJV BD: Prayer).

Latter-day Saints believe that the example Christ set, in terms of his eternal destiny and the way he achieved the unity with the Father, is a crucial outworking of a Christology. To an extent, in this way, Latter-day Saints could be seen to adopt an exemplarist Christology, in that Christ provided the ultimate example. This understanding of exaltation reinforces that if a person is to receive exaltation they must develop a relationship with the Godhead during mortality to hope for a continuation of that relationship beyond the grave (as an aside I would argue the service that is given in Church is a preparation for exaltation as unity is built).

In Latter-day Saint theology the Church functions as a place where an individual's relationship with the Godhead can be similarly worked out and centred. Davies extends his exploration of Latter-day Saint ecclesiology further in suggesting that "the Church framework within which they 'know' him [Christ] is of primary and not secondary importance. In theological terms, ecclesiology is foundational as the setting for Christology".<sup>25</sup> However, perhaps Davies does not go far

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<sup>25</sup> It would have been possible for an ecclesiology to be located in either a discussion of Christology or pneumatology. It is purely arbitrary that it receives its exploration in the chapter on pneumatology and no suggestion of primacy of

enough in stressing the importance of ecclesiology; since ecclesiology is also deeply related to the classical treatment of the Mormon understanding of the Holy Ghost. Latter-day Saint ecclesiology is similarly foundational as the setting to receive the Holy Ghost. The Church's most important function is as a channel for the blessings of the atonement of Christ and the reception of the Holy Ghost.

The President/Prophet of the Church is believed to hold all the priesthood keys. Priesthood keys have been defined as the "right to direct the work of the priesthood".<sup>26</sup> It is only through the exercise of these keys that Latter-day Saints believe the priesthood ordinances can be carried out. The ordinances of the Gospel are essential to exaltation as evidence of faith and also channels for the atonement and the Holy Ghost. The necessity of these ordinances within the boundaries of the Church is exemplified in a revelation given to Joseph Smith who enquired whether people who had previously been baptized required rebaptism: "although a man should be baptized an hundred times it availeth him nothing, for you cannot enter in at the strait gate by the law of Moses, neither by your dead works. For it is because of your dead works that I have caused this last covenant and this Church to be built up unto me, even as in days of old" (D&C 22:2-3).

Latter-day Saints, therefore, believe that God accepts only ordinances carried out within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Ordinances as expressions of faith are only efficacious when that faith is centred on a true understanding of Christ and his work. But, more importantly, for Latter-day Saints, ordinances are necessary for the effects of the atonement and the Holy Ghost (sanctification, guidance, sealing) to be in force, as prerequisites for exaltation.

The Church becomes the body of Christ "created, ordered, and sustained by the Charismatic inspirations of the Breath of the risen

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importance is intended. See Douglas J. Davies, *An Introduction to Mormonism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 242-243.

<sup>26</sup> Russel M. Nelson, *Ensign*, May 2005: 40. All of these keys (right of presidency and authority) are held by the President of the Church; but he delegates aspects of them to leaders throughout the world. For example the Bishop holds the keys for the ward, the Stake President the keys for the stake, and the Temple President the keys for the Temple.

Jesus”.<sup>27</sup> The members of the body of Christ work in conjunction with Christ and the Holy Ghost to “bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:37). This is evidenced through the role of ordinances, the importance of teaching and believing orthodoxy, and of communal service. All of these actions within the Church are important but they are only given full life and efficacy when joined with the atonement of Christ and the influence of the Holy Ghost. The various functions of the Church reinforce both a Christological and pneumatological exclusivism: the communal service nature of the Church serves as a preparation for the unity that is exaltation; therefore, a participation in this service is crucial for exaltation. The hierarchical nature of the Church establishes orthodoxy that is necessary for exaltation; the ordinances that are a focus for the reception of the blessings of the atonement through the Holy Ghost can only be conducted within the structure of the Church.

Thus, the Holy Ghost and the atonement become crucial factors in the ritual ordinances of the Latter-day Saints, and their ultimate exaltation.

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<sup>27</sup> Donald L. Gelpi, “The Theological Challenge of Charismatic Spirituality” *Pneuma*, 14:1-2, 1992, 185-197 (187).