

Book of Moses Essay #19: The Teachings of Enoch — “By the Spirit Ye Are Justified” (Moses 6:60, 63, 65–66)

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Samuel Anoints David. Dura Europos Synagogue, ca. ad 254^[1] After Samuel anointed David and “the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.”^[2]

In this article, we turn our attention to the second phrase in Moses 6:60: “by the Spirit ye are justified.” Simply put, individuals become “just”—in other words, innocent before God and ready for a covenant relationship with Him—when they demonstrate sufficient repentance to qualify for an “*initial* cleansing from sin”^[3] “by the Spirit,”^[4] thus having had the demands of justice satisfied on their behalf through the Savior’s atoning blood.^[5] The Book of Moses records that after Adam was baptized, having fulfilled the commandment, “the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the Spirit, and became quickened [i.e., made alive] in the inner man.”^[6]



William Blake (1757–1827), Elohim Creating Adam, 1795, ca. 1805^[7]

Divinely Prescribed Symbolic Gestures in the Ordinances

Specific symbolic gestures have been divinely prescribed for the ordinance of confirmation as well as for subsequent ordinances of anointing. While the form of baptism recalls the symbolism of death and resurrection, the laying of hands on the head^[8] that is used in confirmation suggests a retrospective regard toward the scriptural account of the creation of Adam wherein God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.”^[9] In this respect, recall also the account in John 20:22, when Jesus “breathed on [His disciples], and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.”

As Joseph Smith highlighted the importance of the manner in which baptism is performed, describing it as a “sign,” so did he refer to the symbolic evocation of the breath of life in “the laying on of hands,” by which the Holy Ghost is given, ordinations are performed, and the sick are healed, as a “sign.” He said pointedly that if such ordinances were not performed in the way God had appointed they “would fail.”^[10] In this context, we might recall what Jesus said when Peter wanted him to wash his head and hands in addition to his feet: “He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.”^[11] The Lord’s reply to Peter suggests why, in similar fashion, the laying of hands on the head within various ordinances equates to a blessing for the entire body.



*Queen Elizabeth II, Dressed in White Linen, Is
“Screened from the General View” in
Preparation for Her Anointing^[12]*

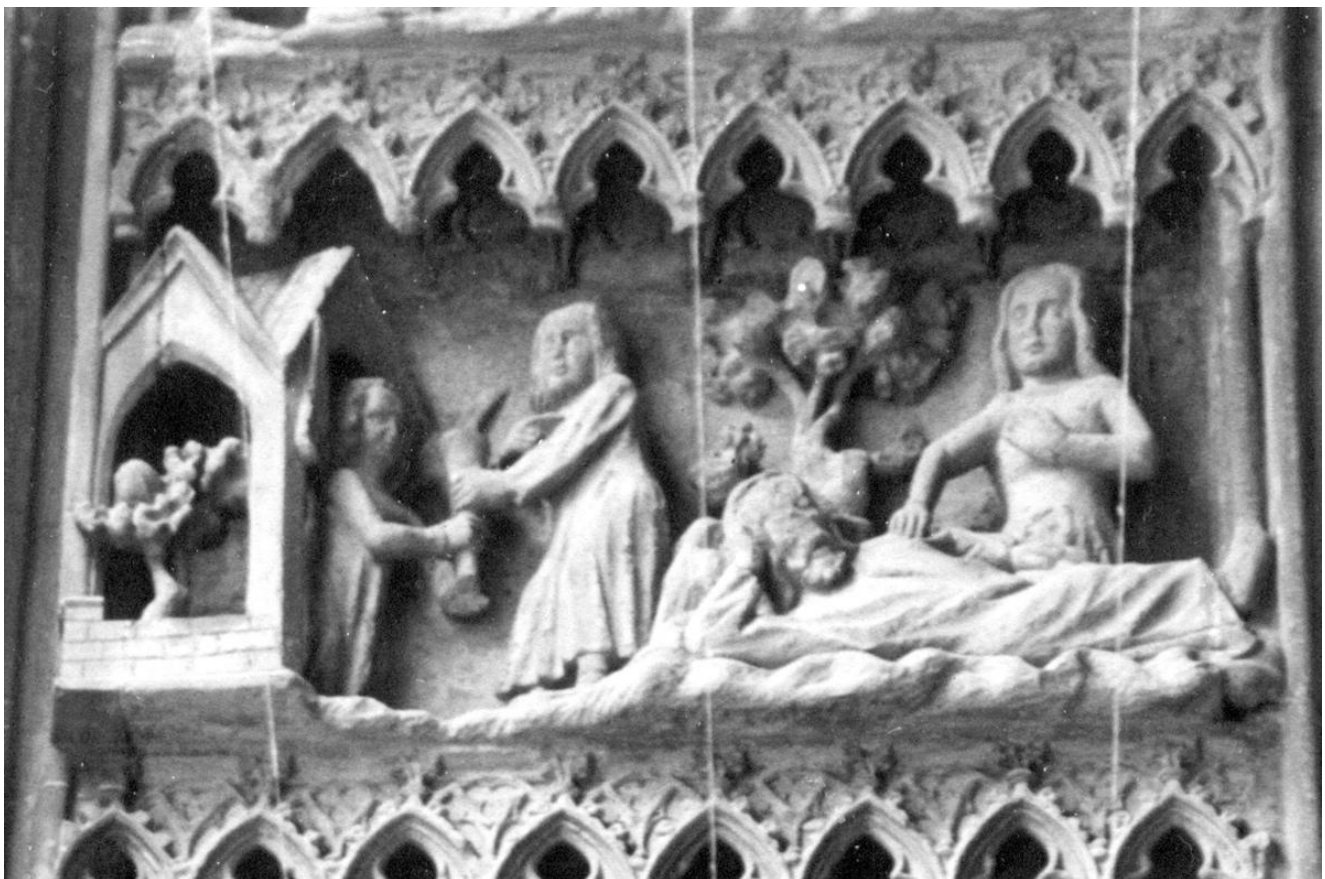
The Receiving of “Divine Breath” Is Associated with Royal Status

With regard to ordinances of anointing that are associated with the sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost, biblical and Egyptian sources associate the receiving of “divine breath” not merely with an infusion of life, but also with royal status.^[13] For example, Isaiah attributes the presence of the Spirit of the Lord to a prior messianic anointing—the anointing oil, like divine breath, being a symbol of new life: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; *because* the Lord hath anointed me.”^[14]

Anointing followed by an outpouring of the Spirit is documented as part of the rites of kingship in ancient Israel, as when Samuel anointed David and “the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.”^[15] Note that in Israelite practice, as witnessed in the examples of David and Solomon, the moment when the individual was made king would not necessarily have been the time of his first anointing. The culminating anointing of David corresponding to his definitive investiture as king was preceded by a prior, princely anointing. LeGrand Baker and Stephen Ricks describe other “incidents in the Old Testament where a prince was first anointed to become king, and later, after he had proven himself, was anointed again—this time as actual king.”^[16]

Modern Latter-day Saints can compare this idea to the conditional promises they receive in association with all priesthood ordinances, promises which are to be realized only through their continued faithfulness. Further emphasizing the anticipatory and conditional nature of even a second, royal anointing, Brigham Young explained that “a person may be anointed king and priest long before he receives his kingdom.”^[17]

In modern times one can still see vestiges of the symbolism of anointing, royal status, and the Holy Spirit brought together. For example, prior to the British ceremonies of coronation, in the holiest rite of that service, the monarch is “divested of ... robes,” clothed in simple white linen, and “screened from the general view” to be “imbued with grace” through the Archbishop’s anointing with holy oil “on hand, breast and forehead.”^[18]



The Quest of Seth for the Oil of Mercy, 1351–1360.

The royal anointing described above recalls the practice in some Christian baptismal traditions of “reversing the blows of death.” This idea was represented in ritual by a special anointing with the “oil of mercy” prior to (or sometimes after) “baptism,” as the candidate was signed upon the brow, the nostrils, the breast, the ears, and so forth.^[20] It was commonly accepted by some Christians that the precedent for such anointings went back to the beginning of time. For instance, in the pseudepigraphal *Life of Adam and Eve*, we can read an incident where Adam, as he lay on his deathbed, requested Eve and Seth to fetch him oil from the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden so that he could be restored to life.^[21]

All Christians Are Meant to Become “Little Christs”

Just as the separate yet interrelated rites of baptism and subsequent washings became blurred in early Christianity, so also the distinctive ordinances of confirmation to prepare one to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost and the separate, priestly anointing have become confused in some religious traditions. For example, the Armenian liturgy includes two anointings—“one with unperfumed oil before the baptism and the other, after it, with the ‘myron’ or perfumed oil.”^[22]

From modern revelation it is clear that just as baptism is the first saving ordinance—administered by the authority of the Aaronic Priesthood with later ordinances of temple washing looking back retrospectively upon it—so confirmation for the gift of the Holy Ghost is the first ordinance administered by the Melchizedek Priesthood. In “interrelated” and “additive”^[23] fashion, temple initiatory ordinances of washing and anointing echo and build upon the ordinances of baptism and confirmation.

Substantiating the idea that priestly anointing ordinances were not meant to be restricted only to a small subset of disciples, Tertullian described how in his day all newly “baptized” Christians were anointed. He stated that this was “a practice derived from the old discipline, wherein on entering the priesthood, men were wont to be anointed with oil from a horn, ever since Aaron was anointed by Moses. Whence Aaron is called ‘christ,’ from the ‘chrism,’ which is the unction [or oil of anointing].”^[24]

The initiatory anointing is not only retrospective but also looks forward in anticipation to subsequent confirmatory anointings and sealing blessings wherein disciples imitate the Christ. Indeed, Pseudo-Clement’s *Recognitions* 1:45:2 defines the Greek title “Christ” (equivalent to the Hebrew “Messiah,” meaning “Anointed One”) with reference to an anointing of oil administered by God Himself: “Although indeed He was the Son of God, and the beginning of all things, He became man; Him first God anointed with oil which was taken from the wood of the Tree of Life: from that anointing therefore He is called Christ.”^[25]

C. S. Lewis succinctly expressed the principle behind the practice of anointing all Christians: “Every Christian is to become a little christ. The whole purpose of becoming a Christian is simply nothing else.”^[26]

The glorious blessing of being anointed as a king, a priest, and a son of God—may be anticipated by all Saints who receive their temple blessings and “endure to the end” in keeping their temple covenants. When Jesus said, “Come ... follow, me”^[27] he meant it literally, as is expressed so beautifully in the hymn of the same name:^[28]

Not only shall we emulate
His course while in this earthly state,
But when we're freed from present cares,
If with our Lord we would be heirs.

For thrones, dominions, kingdoms, pow'rs,
And glory great and bliss are ours,
If we, throughout eternity,
Obey his words, “Come, follow me.”

This article is adapted and expanded from Bradshaw, Jeffrey M., and Matthew L. Bowen. “‘By the Blood Ye Are Sanctified’: The Symbolic, Salvific, Interrelated, Additive, Retrospective, and Anticipatory Nature of the Ordinances of Spiritual Rebirth in John 3 and Moses 6.” In *Sacred Time, Sacred Space, and Sacred Meaning (Proceedings of the Third Interpreter Foundation Matthew B. Brown Memorial Conference, 5 November 2016)*, edited by Stephen D. Ricks and Jeffrey M. Bradshaw. The Temple on Mount Zion 4, 43–237. Orem and Salt Lake City, UT: The Interpreter Foundation and Eborn Books, 2020, pp. 84–92.

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Endnotes

[1] © Brigham Young University Museum of Art. Permission granted with the kind assistance of Clyda Ludlow and Trevor Weight, MOA Registration Department.

[2] 1 Samuel 16:13.

[3] D. A. Bednar, *Always Retain*, p. 61.

[4] Moses 6:60.

[5] See B. C. Hafen, *Broken*, p. 166. Cf. D. A. Bednar, *Clean Hands*. See N. T. Wright, *Justification*, for an insightful non-Latter-day Saint view of justification.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explained justification in terms of D&C 132:7 and D&C 76:53 (B. R. McConkie, *Law of Justification*, pp. 419–420):

In the early 1830's, when the Lord was talking to the Prophet about what is called the new and everlasting covenant—that is, about the fulness of the gospel—he revealed this further

truth relative to this great law of justification, and I think these following words are a perfect one sentence summary of the whole law of the whole gospel. The Lord said (D&C 132:7):

All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, of him who is anointed, both as well for time and for all eternity, and that too most holy, by revelation and commandment through the medium of mine anointed, whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this power ... are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead.

One more expression in the revelations has bearing on this. The Lord said (D&C 76:53):

the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true.

Now, to justify is to seal, or to ratify, or to approve; and it is very evident from these revelations that every act that we do, if it is to have binding and sealing virtue in eternity, must be justified by the Spirit. In other words, it must be ratified by the Holy Ghost; or in other words, it must be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise.

All of us know that we can deceive men. We can deceive our bishops or the other Church agents, unless at the moment their minds are lighted by the spirit of revelation; but we cannot deceive the Lord. We cannot get from him an unearned blessing. There will be an eventual day when all men will get exactly and precisely what they have merited and earned, neither adding to nor subtracting from. You cannot with success lie to the Holy Ghost.

Now let us take a simple illustration. If an individual is to gain an inheritance in the celestial world, he has to enter in at the gate of baptism, that ordinance being performed under the hands of a legal administrator. If he comes forward prepared by worthiness, that is, if he is just and true, and gains baptism under the hands of a legal administrator, he is justified by the Spirit in the act which has been performed; that is, it is ratified by the Holy Ghost, or it is sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise. As a result it is of full force and validity in this life and in the life to come.

If an individual thereafter turns from righteousness and goes off and wallows in the mire of iniquity, then the seal is removed, and so we have this principle which keeps the unworthy from gaining unearned blessings. The Lord has placed a bar which stops the progress of the unrighteous; he has placed a requirement which we must meet. We must gain the approval and receive the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost if eventually and in eternity we are to reap the blessings that we hope to reap.

The same thing that is true of baptism is true of marriage. If a couple comes forward worthily, a couple who is just and true, and they enter into that ordinance under the hands of a legal administrator, a seal of approval is recorded in heaven. Then assuming they do not

thereafter break that seal, assuming they keep the covenant and press forward in steadfastness and in righteousness, they go on in the next world as husband and wife; and in and after the resurrection, that ordinance performed in such a binding manner here has full force, efficacy, and validity.

I think perhaps this doctrine, as almost all other doctrines that we teach in the Church, leads us back to the same central conclusion, which is that it is obligatory upon us to keep the commandments of God if we ever expect to inherit the blessings that he has promised the Saints. We should remind ourselves again and again of these words which he has spoken (D&C 59:23):

he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come.

[6] Moses 6:65. Because “baptism” and “remission of sins” occur together so often in telescoped scripture references, the role of the Spirit as the agent for the process of justification is easily forgotten. However, a survey of scripture will reveal that “remission of sins” is mentioned most frequently in verses that *omit* any mention of baptism. In these and other references, remission of sins is typically coupled with the preparatory principles of faith or repentance rather than with the ordinance of baptism itself.

Although baptism by proper authority is a commandment that must be strictly observed to meet the divine requirement for entrance into the kingdom of God, it is but the necessary, outward sign of one’s willingness to take upon oneself the name of Jesus Christ and keep His commandments. A significant phrase in D&C 20:37 explains with precision that it is not the performance of the baptismal ordinance that cleanses, but rather the individuals’ having “truly manifest[ed] by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto a remission of their sins”—a requirement that, according to this verse, is clearly intended to *precede* water baptism. In other words, strictly speaking, it is not baptism but rather the fact of having “received of the Spirit of Christ” as the result of faith and repentance that is responsible for the mighty “change of state” wherewith individuals are “wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost”—for “by the *Spirit* ye are justified” (Moses 6:60).

In the early days of the Church, a controversy arose between Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery as to the wording of D&C 20:37. Oliver apparently believed that the remission of sins does not *precede* baptism, but *follows* it, and had to be corrected by the Prophet (see J. M. Bradshaw *et al.*, *God’s Image* 2, pp. 444–446). What should be remembered, however, is that justification (the remission of sins) and sanctification (growth in holiness) are complementary, ongoing processes (J. M. Bradshaw *et al.*, *By the Blood Ye Are Sanctified* (TMZ 4), pp. 85–88). Aided by repeated preparation for and participation in the ordinance of the sacrament, we can “*always* retain [a justificatory] remission of our sins”

(D. A. Bednar, *Always Retain*, p. 62. See Mosiah 4:11–12) and we can “*always* have the Spirit of the Lord to be with us” (*ibid.*, pp. 61–62. See D&C 20:77, 79) for the progressive work of sanctification.

[7] <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/blake-elohim-creating-adam-no5055> (October 8, 2016). <https://www.wikiart.org/en/william-blake/and-elohim-created-adam-1795> (January 31, 2017). Public domain.

[8] Acts 8:14–17; Articles of Faith 1:4.

[9] Moses 3:7. In Genesis, two Hebrew words *nishma* (e.g., Genesis 2:7; 7:22) and *ruach* (e.g., Genesis 6:17; 7:15, 22) are associated with the “breath of life.” While *ruach* is applied to God, man, and animals, the use of *nishma* is reserved for God and man alone (V. P. Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17*, p. 159).

[10] J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, Wilford Woodruff Journal, 20 March 1842, p. 108, spelling and punctuation modernized. Cf. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, pp. 198–199. In context, the statement reads:

What is the sign of the healing of the sick? The laying on of hands is the sign or way marked out by James [James 5:14–15] and the custom of ancient saints as ordered by the Lord [Acts 8:18; 1 Timothy 4:14; Hebrews 6:2], and we should not obtain the blessing by pursuing any other course except the way which God has marked out. What if we should attempt to get the Holy Ghost through any other means except the sign or way which God hath appointed. Should we obtain it? Certainly not. All other means would fail. The Lord says do so and so, and I will bless so and so.

There are certain key words and signs belonging to the priesthood which must be observed in order to obtain the blessings. The sign of Peter was to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, with the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost, and in no other way is the gift of the Holy Ghost obtained. ... Had [Cornelius] not taken [these] sign[s or] ordinances upon him ... and received the gift of the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of hands, according to the order of God, he could not have healed the sick or commanded an evil spirit to come out of a man, and it obey him [cf. Moses 1:21: “Moses received strength, and called upon God, saying: In the name of the Only Begotten, depart hence, Satan.”] for the spirits might say unto him, as they did to the sons of Sceva: “Paul we know and Jesus we know, but who are ye?” [see Acts 19:13–15].

[11] John 13:10.

[12] BBC – Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wowuIcGSD8g> (accessed November 19, 2016), at approximately 1:07:53. No known copyright restrictions. This work may be in the public domain in the United States.

[13] E.g., Lamentations 4:20. See V. P. Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17*, pp. 158–159.

[14] Isaiah 61:1, emphasis added. See also Luke 4:17–22.

[15] 1 Samuel 16:13. Further describing the blessing of the spirit of the Lord that is meant to be given in the anointing, Margaret Barker writes (M. Barker, *Lord Is One*):

The holy anointing oil was used only in the temple. Any imitation for personal use was forbidden (Exodus 30:31–33). The meaning of the oil was found only within the teachings of the temple, and any secular use would make no sense. This was because the oil imparted knowledge. The temple understanding of holiness included illumination of the mind. Isaiah said that when the king was anointed, he received the spirit of the Lord, that is, the spirit that transformed him into the Lord. He received the spirit [that is, the angel] of wisdom, of understanding, of counsel, of might, of knowledge and of the reverence due to the Lord [“the fear of the Lord”]. His perfume [not “delight”] would be the reverence due to the Lord (Isaiah 11:2–3). In other words, the anointed one retained the perfume of the oil, and this identified him as the Lord. Paul said that Christians were spreading the perfume of the knowledge of the Anointed One, which did not mean knowing about Jesus; it meant having the knowledge that Jesus had because He was the Anointed One (2 Corinthians 2:14).

[16] L. L. Baker *et al.*, *Who Shall Ascend*, p. 353. See also additional discussion on pp. 354–358 and, e.g., 1 Samuel 10:1, 15:17, 16:23; 2 Samuel 2:4, 5:3; 1 Kings 1:39; 1 Chronicles 29:22. Cf. J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, pp. 519–523.

[17] Quoted in J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 6 August 1843, 5:527. For descriptions of Joseph Smith’s restoration of the ordinance of “second anointing” and the offices of “kings and priests unto the Most High God” in Nauvoo, see J. J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, *Journals*, 1841–1843, p. xxi; J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, *Council of Fifty Minutes*, pp. xxxviii–xxxvix. Joseph Smith Explained that this office had “nothin[g] to do with temporal things but was instead related to the kingdom of God” (*ibid.*, p. xxxviii)

[18] B. Nichols, *Coronation*, pp. 18, 14. For more on ablutions and anointing of kings in other cultures, see S. D. Ricks *et al.*, *King*, pp. 241–44, 254–255. See also J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, Excursus 52: *Washing, Anointing, and Clothing Among Early Christians*, p. 661.

[19] Photograph by Assaf Pinkus. In A. Pinkus, *Impact*, p. 167 and A. Pinkus, *Workshops*, Illustration 63. Original located at the Heiligkreuz minster in Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany, south-east portal. Permission previously granted by the author.

[20] H. W. Nibley, *Message* (2005), p. 174. Cf. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Five*, 21:1–6, 7:149–150.

[21] See G. A. Anderson *et al.*, *Synopsis*, pp. 33–45.

[22] M. E. Stone, *Angelic Prediction*, p. 125.

[23] D. A. Bednar, *Always Retain*, p. 62.

[24] Tertullian, *Baptism*, 7, p. 672. Margaret Barker observes (M. Barker, *Lord Is One*):

All [early] Christians were ... anointed—the name means anointed ones—and so they were heirs to the high priestly role: “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation” (1 Peter 2:9).

[25] Pseudo-Clement, *Recognitions*, p. 89. Cf. F. S. Jones, *Recognitions* (1995), pp. 76–77.

[26] C. S. Lewis, *Mere*, p. 154.

[27] Matthew 19:21. Cf. Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34, 10:21; Luke 9:23, 18:22; John 21:22;

Alma 5:57; D&C 38:22.

[28] Hymns (1985), Hymns (1985), Come, Follow Me, #116, verses 4 and 6.