

The Rite Of Water Baptism

As Christians, one of the first rites I believe every born-again believer should observe, either at the moment of being saved in the Lord or sometime shortly thereafter, is to be baptized with water. You can either be baptized with water at the moment you are receiving your gift of eternal salvation from the Lord or you can be baptized with water at a later date.

Jesus is definitely telling us that He wants water baptism to be included as a part of the salvation experience with Him. However, I do not believe that water baptism is an actual "essential" for a true salvation experience to occur with the Lord. In other words, it is not an actual requirement for salvation.

If you are saved at a Billy Graham crusade, but do not go through an actual water baptism at the crusade, you will still go straight to heaven if you should die on the way home before you could have gone through an actual water baptism at a later date.

As you will see in one of the verses listed below, we are saved by grace through our faith in Jesus - not by any type of water baptism. Water baptism is still a rite of "works," and the verse I will give you below will definitely tell us that we are not saved by any type of works, but only by grace through our faith in Jesus.

There are some who believe in what is called "baptismal regeneration." This is a belief that we cannot be saved and regenerated by the Holy Spirit unless we go through an actual water baptism.

However, when you look very closely at the verses I will list below, and exactly what water baptism is really signifying and symbolizing with the Lord, I believe these verses are telling us that water baptism should be included as an actual "part" of the salvation experience with the Lord, but that it is not an actual "essential" or necessary requirement of it.

As you all know, people can receive the Lord's free gift of salvation anywhere and at anytime. If you can be baptized with water at the time you are receiving your salvation in the Lord, that is great and you should always do that if at all possible. However, there will be other times that there will be no water or any means to actually baptize someone with water when someone is being saved in the Lord.

If that should happen, then the person who has just been saved should be baptized with water as soon as he reasonably can at a later date. But if by chance he would die before he could have been baptized with water, he would still go straight to heaven. The fact that he could not be baptized with water will have no bearing or influence on him being able to enter into heaven if he should die before he could have been baptized with water.

If we are only saved by grace through our personal faith in Jesus and not by any type of works we can do, which will include any type of water baptism, then why is Jesus telling us that He still wants us to include water baptism as part of the actual salvation experience with Him?

I believe there are five main reasons as to why Jesus wants us to include water baptism as part of our salvation experience with Him.

1. To Symbolize the Washing Away of Our Sins

When you are being saved through your faith in Jesus, all of your past, present and future sins are now being fully forgiven.

As you will see in the verses below, all of your sins are actually "washed away" by the blood of Jesus. When you are being fully immersed during the rite of water baptism, you are going through a symbolic act of having all of your personal sins completely washed away by the blood of Jesus.

The rite of water baptism perfectly symbolizes the purification and cleansing that we are receiving from the Lord during the salvation experience with Him.

2. To Identify With the Death and Resurrection of Jesus

As you will see in the verses below, water baptism is also identifying and testifying to the death and resurrection of Jesus.

When we are being fully immersed into the water, we are identifying with Jesus' physical death on the cross and His body going fully into the grave. When the pastor raises us up out of the full immersion, this is identifying with the full resurrection of Jesus from that grave.

The rite of water baptism by way of a full immersion is thus a perfect outward symbol act of both the death and resurrection of Jesus.

3. To Symbolize the Death of Our Old Life and Old Man, the Inward Regeneration of the Holy Spirit, and the Resurrection Into a New Life

The Bible tells us that once we are saved, that we have now become new creations in Christ, that our human spirits have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and that our old life and our old man have now died and been done away with.

Being fully immersed in water symbolizes the death of our old life and old man and the inward regeneration of the Holy Spirit - and the pastor raising us up out of the water represents the resurrecting into a brand new life in the Lord.

4. Signifying Our New Inner Union With the Lord

When we receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we immediately receive the Holy Spirit on the inside of our human spirits. As a result of receiving the Holy Spirit on the inside of us, we now have a new direct spiritual union with both God and Jesus on the inside of our beings since the Holy Spirit is the One who divinely connects us to both God and Jesus in heaven.

As you will see in one of the verses below, the Bible tells us that we have been "united together" with the Lord when we accept Him as our personal Savior. This uniting together with the Lord now forms an actual spiritual union with Him.

We are now all part of the same one Spirit, and that one Spirit is the Holy Spirit Himself. Being fully immersed into the water during the rite of water baptism perfectly symbolizes our new inner union with the Lord since water is one of the main symbols of the Holy Spirit in the Bible.

5. Initiation Into the Body of Christ

I believe that going through a proper water baptism is also an actual initiation rite with the Lord. Not only are we being directly joined to the Lord through the Holy Spirit as a result of being saved, but we now also get to become an actual member of the Body of Christ, which is the Church itself.

Definitions

The word "baptism" means "to dip, to immerse." Here are some of the basic definitions from some of the different Bible Dictionaries and Commentaries on what the rite of water baptism is all about and why the Lord wants us to include this as a part our personal salvation experience with Him:

To dip, to immerse, to submerge

Signifying union with Christ

Initiation into the Christian community

Ritual commanded by Christ to be practiced in the church

Identifying with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ

A rite signifying one's cleansing from sin through Christ's sacrifice

Outward sign of inward regeneration by the Holy Spirit

The immersion or dipping of a believer in water symbolizing the complete renewal and change in the believer's life and testifying to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the way of salvation

Though we do not need the rite of water baptism to actually receive the gift of eternal salvation from the Lord, this rite is still very powerful before the Lord and before the world in general, as we are making a public profession of our faith to the Lord by being willing to be fully submerged in a pool of water. As such, every Christian should make it their top priority to be baptized with water as soon as they can after receiving their salvation from the Lord.

About the Author

Article written by Michael Bradley, you can get the complete article on [water baptism](#) and also receive 20% on [Christian books](#).

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