

Is the Roman Catholic belief of baptismal regeneration biblical?

Although Roman Catholics are not the only ones to teach the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, they are probably the most well known group that directly teaches such a necessary link between water baptism and spiritual regeneration.

1. Where does the doctrine of baptismal regeneration come from?

John **3:5**

Titus **3:5**

Mark **16:16**

Those who teach on the doctrine of baptismal regeneration use these verses as the beginning branch points for the doctrine. In John 3:5, the teaching holds that a man that is “born of water” is clearly identifying a man that has been baptized in water. It then follows that without water baptism that it is impossible for a man to be redeemed to God and to receive a regenerated or new spirit. Titus 3:5 is interpreted that the phrase “the washing” specifically means water baptism and that this washing results in a regenerated or new spirit. Mark 16:16 is interpreted as stating that faith (believes) and baptism (water) are necessary ingredients for salvation. In general the doctrine communicates that apart from water baptism that there can be no salvation and that through the act of water baptism is the spirit of the individual regenerated.

2. Does being washed mean water baptism?

Ephesians **5:25-27**

Isaiah **4:3-4**

1 Corinthians **6:9-11**

Revelation **1:5-6**

The washing that regenerates has nothing to do with water baptism but the presence of God that transforms and makes a person new and alive in Christ. It is God's word that cleanses us and makes us Holy and acceptable. This has nothing to do with water baptism.

3. What is the purpose of water baptism?

Matthew **3:11-15**

Mark **1:5-8**

Romans **6:3-5**

Matthew **28:19-20**

Water baptism is a ritual that provides for a simple way to explain what happens when a person is saved. The submersion of the individual into the water is used to demonstrate that at the point of salvation the individual is cleansed from all sin and is understood to be clean before God. It is a pictorial representation that publicly identifies the individual as considering himself to be dead to sin (baptized into his death) and alive to Christ. It is done because Christ called his followers to baptize all disciples into “the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost” and it is done in order to “fulfill all righteousness”. This means we baptized and baptize others because the Lord Jesus Christ told us to baptize.

4. Is water baptism required for salvation?

Acts **1:5; 10:44-48; 16:30-31**

1 Peter **3:21**

John **4:1-2**

1 Corinthians **1:17**

The relationship between baptism and salvation can be seen in the many passages that deal with either. Note that the gentiles received the Holy Spirit (mark of salvation) prior to being baptized.

Neither Jesus nor Paul specifically viewed water baptism as having any significance that is on par with salvation. John specifically states that Jesus did not baptize and Paul states that he was not sent to baptize but to preach the gospel. These concepts create great weight to the argument that salvation is not accomplished either through nor along side water baptism. When Paul is asked about what needed to be done in order to be saved, Paul identifies that the only thing to do is to believe. Several passages separate the act of water baptism from the reality of salvation as being two distinct events.

5. How is a person regenerated?

Matthew 19:28

John 3:3-5, **7-8**

2 Corinthians **5:17-18**

Ezekiel **36:24-27**

Titus 3:5

Acts **16:30-31**

Galatians 6:15

The word for regeneration means to be reborn. Although it only exists in two verses, the concept exists in multiple places. A person is regenerated when he is “born of the Spirit”. This means it is a spiritual entity. It is accomplished by having faith in Jesus Christ. To be reborn is to become a new creation and to have a new imputed heart from God on behalf of Christ. Regeneration is process that results in a new set of goals and desires. It is accomplished through faith in Christ.