

Consecration

The words consecrate, consecrated, and consecration are not too often found in Christian discussion as their primary usage in the Bible is in the writings of Moses relating to the priesthood of the Jewish Tabernacle arrangement. But, as Paul explains (Hebrews 10:1), the shadows of the Jewish Law pointed forward to the realities of the Christian Age.

The word consecration is closely allied to the subjects of baptism, justification, and sanctification. (Please see entries under those three topics.) However, there are subtle differences between these doctrines:

—**JUSTIFICATION** is God's acceptance of our faith in order for us to establish a relationship with Him.

—**SANCTIFICATION** is the process by which the Holy Spirit works with a consecrated Christian to set him aside from the world and its ways for Divine service.

—**BAPTISM** has two meanings for a Christian. First, it is simply an outward symbol or acknowledgement that one has committed himself totally as a servant-disciple of Christ. It is also, however, the experiences which come from being immersed in the doing of God's will. Jesus used the word that way in Matthew 20:22 and Luke 12:50.

—**CONSECRATION** is the act of committing oneself formally and officially to a life of uncompromising dedication to God. Baptism in its two definitions symbolizes this act and the life that follows it.

It is common in the Christian world for some of these distinctions to become blurred because in a society dominated (at least nominally) by Christian belief, the standard of the masses becomes the standard by which things are measured. Jesus, however, made it plain in his Wheat and Tares parable (Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43) that the masses of professing Christians are "tares"—not dedicated Christians at all, but merely people adhering to the general standards of their dominant society. Some among these masses have a true faith resulting in a commitment to righteousness in their lives—but this is not true consecration; it is not what baptism symbolizes. Among those faithful few dedicated to righteousness are fewer yet who consecrate themselves to spiritual pursuits above and beyond and superior to their earthly interests. These are they who are called "saints" in the New Testament. These are those who are genuinely and Scripturally disciples, "wheat." It is to these that the New Testament Scriptures are written. From among these will come the 144,000 individuals who will constitute the mystical "body of Christ." (Revelation 14:1) It is these who will reign with Christ over the earth. (Revelation 5:10) Others in this

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“saint” class will receive a lesser, but honorable, reward, not having attained what the Apostle John calls “a full reward.” (II John 8) These, according to Revelation 7:15, will be honored to serve God in His temple with Jesus dwelling among them.

A life of consecration poses difficulties. Jesus promised that. But all lives have difficulties—unfortunately, without rewards for them! Those who entered the “narrow way” of consecrated, self-sacrifice all will testify that their blessings outweigh their difficulties; and their joys are too numerous and wonderful for words.