

Salvation—Sanctification (4th)

(As we continue our study of the doctrine sanctification, we will begin considering today judicial sanctification in the redemptive work of Christ.)

In previous podcasts we discussed the origin of sanctification as originating with the Lord before the creation of the world. As noted, many ignore this and teach that sanctification begins during the life of the believer at regeneration. Obviously, experimental sanctification in the life of a child of grace does begin at regeneration, but to ignore that the elect were set apart and consecrated in the eternal counsel of God is, in my opinion, to fall short of a full understanding of the subject. However, by teaching that sanctification begins with regeneration or conversion also disregards a very important and glorious element in the subject. Sanctification of the children of God is included in the Person and work of Christ. In fact, I Corinthians 1:30 plainly declare this: “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” For lack of a better term, I call this *judicial sanctification* because we are made legally holy and righteous in the redemptive work of Christ. I might add that this is vitally connected to sanctification before the world (or as A. W. Pink termed it; *eternal sanctification*). Often when commenting on the various verses relating to either aspect they embrace and complement each other. As quoted in a previous podcast, commenting on I Corinthians 1:30, John Gill said the following:

There is a sanctification also that is more peculiar to Christ the Son of God; not only as he is the representative of his people, and is “holiness to the Lord” for them; which the high priest had upon his forehead, who was a type of him, and the representative of Israel; and as he has the whole stock of grace and holiness in his hands, which is communicated to the saints as is necessary; and as the holiness of his human nature, is, with his active and passive obedience, imputed to their justification, and so makes a part of that; hence he is said to be made to them “sanctification,” I Corinthians 1:30 but as the expiation of their sins is made by his blood and sacrifice; this is called a sanctification of them; “Jesus, that he might sanctify the people with his blood, suffered without the gate,” Hebrews 13:12. *Body of Divinity*, p. 552.

It should be obvious that the redemptive work of Christ does not extend to the entire population of the human race. If so, then the entire human race would be saved, but the Scriptures teach otherwise. “And whosever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire,” Revelation 20:15. This lake of fire is the location of the final destination of the beast, false prophet, the devil, and death and hell (or hades), Revelation 19:20; 20:10, 14-15. Equally, we are told, “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murders, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death,” Revelation 21:8. Obviously, such are not sanctified or made righteous and were not represented in the Person and work of Christ. Yet, Hebrews 13:12 (as mentioned in Gill’s quote above) clearly states that the blood of Christ sanctified some. Commenting on this, we shall quote from Gill again.

[T]hat he might sanctify the people with his own blood: by “the people” are meant the people who are the objects of divine love and favour; a chosen and covenant people; a distinct and peculiar people; Christ’s own special people, by the gift of his Father to him: and the sanctification of them does not design the internal sanctification of them, though this is from Christ, and in consequence of his blood; nor does it so much regard the cleansing of the filth of sin, though Christ’s blood sanctifies, in this sense; but rather the expiation of the guilt of sin,

which Christ has fully took away; complete pardon being procured, and a perfect righteousness brought in: and this by “his own blood”; the priests sanctified, to the purifying of the flesh, with the blood of others, with the blood of bulls and goats; but Christ with his own blood, which he was, really, a partaker of; and his human nature, being in union with his divine person, as the Son of God, it had a virtue in it, to sanctify and cleanse from all sin, and to make full expiation of it; in shedding of which, and sanctifying with it, he has shown great love to his people: and, that he might do this agreeably to the types of him on the day of atonement.

While many of the commentators commented on Christ suffering “without the gate” and we, too, are to do likewise, few, if any, commented on those represented by Christ being sanctified by the redemptive work of Christ. Though a small reference was made regarding sanctification by the redemptive work of Christ, I thought it was interesting that the Arminian, Adam Clark, admittedly said, “That he might sanctify the people — That he might consecrate them to God, and make an atonement for their sins, he suffered without the gate at Jerusalem, as the sin-offering was consumed without the camp when the tabernacle abode in the wilderness.” As stated previous, much honor and glory is robbed from the Lord by ignoring or passing over sanctification before the world (*eternal sanctification*) and sanctification in the redemptive work of Christ (*judicial sanctification*). (A. W. Pink also identified this as “the *objective* side of sanctification.” *The Doctrine of Sanctification*, published by Bible Truth Depot, P. 103.) Agreeably, Pink said, “Many Christians who are quite clear that they must look alone to *Christ* for their justification before God, often fail to view *Him* as their complete sanctification before God. But this ought not to be, for Scripture is just as clear on the one point as on the other; yes, the two are therein inseparably joined together. ‘But of Him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption’ (I Corinthians 1:30). And here we must dissent from the exposition of this verse given by Chas. Hodge (in his commentary) and others of his school, who interpret ‘sanctification’ here as Christ’s Spirit indwelling His people as the Spirit of holiness, transforming them unto His likeness. But this verse is speaking of that sanctification which *Christ is made unto us*, and not that which we are *made by Christ* — the distinction is real and vital, and to ignore or confound it is inexcusable in a theologian.” P. 108. Additionally Pink wrote, “[T]he definition or description of sanctification of the Westminster divines is altogether *inadequate*, for it entirely *omits* the most important aspect and fundamental element in the believer’s sanctification: it says nothing about our sanctification *by Christ* (Hebrews 10:10; 13:12), but confines itself to the work of the Spirit, which is founded upon that of the Son. This is truly a serious loss, and affords another illustration that God has not granted light on all His Word to any one man or body of men.” P. 114. In fact, our Brother Pink had much more to say regarding this that is worthy of mentioning. It is as follows:

It is greatly to be regretted that many theologians have confined their views far too exclusively to the *legal* aspect of the atonement, whereas both the Old Testament types and the New Testament testimony, with equal clearness, exhibit its efficacy in *all* our relations to God. Because we are in Christ, *all* that He is for us must be ours. ... Not only is the believer “*justified* by His blood” (Rom 5:9), but we are “*sanctified* (set apart, consecrated unto God, fitted and adorned for His presence) through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:10). It is *this* blessed aspect of sanctification which the denominational creeds and the writings of the Puritans almost totally ignored.

In the Larger Catechism of the Westminster Assembly the question is asked, “What is sanctification?” To which the following answer is returned: “Sanctification is a work of God’s grace, whereby, they whom God has before the foundation of the world chosen to be holy, are in time through the powerful operation of His Spirit, applying the death and resurrection of Christ unto them, renewed in their whole man after the image of God; having the seeds of repentance

unto life and all other saving graces, put into their hearts, and those graces so stirred up, increased, and strengthened, as that they more and more die unto sin and rise unto newness of life.”

Now far be it from us to sit in judgment upon such an excellent and helpful production as this Catechism, which God has richly blessed to thousands of His people, or that we should make any harsh criticisms against men whose shoes we are certainly not worthy to unloose. Nevertheless, we are assured that were its compilers on earth today, they would be the last of all to lay claim to any infallibility, nor do we believe they would offer any objection against their statements being brought to the bar of Holy Scripture. The best of men are but men at the best, and therefore we must call no man “Father.” A deep veneration for servants of God and a high regard for their spiritual learning must not deter us from complying with “*Prove all things*: hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). The Bereans were commended for testing the teachings even of the apostle Paul, “And searched the Scriptures daily *whether* those things were so” (Acts 17:11). It is in this spirit that we beg to offer two observations on the above quotation. Pp. 113-114.

Regrettably, we must suspend our lengthy quotation by Pink and conclude it in our next podcast because our time is exhausted for today. I apologize for this interruption but I believe the total of what he said worthy of our consideration. I trust this break in the full quotation will not decrease the effectiveness of the overall subject matter. Farewell.