

Questions/answers on Sanctification and Holiness

by James Blaine Chapman

James Blaine Chapman explores the complexities of sanctification and holiness, emphasizing their necessity for true fellowship with God.

Topics: "Sanctification", "Holiness"

Description

James Blaine Chapman delves into the concepts of sanctification and the baptism with the Holy Ghost, emphasizing that the baptism with the Holy Ghost is the cause of sanctification. He explains that sanctification destroys the carnal nature but can be lost and regained, drawing parallels to the darkness dispelled by light. Chapman also explores Hebrews 12:14, highlighting the necessity of holiness for fellowship with God and entrance into heaven. He further discusses the idea of being wholly sanctified, the process of sanctification after regeneration, and the internal differences between a justified and sanctified Christian.

Transcript

QUESTION #268 -- What is the difference between sanctification and the baptism with the Holy Ghost?

ANSWER #268 -- The baptism with the Holy Ghost is the efficient cause of our sanctification, so that whoever is baptized with the Holy Ghost is sanctified, and no one is sanctified except he is baptized with the Holy Ghost. I think this is made quite clear by the whole tenor of New Testament scriptures.

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QUESTION #269 -- Does sanctification destroy the carnal nature root and branch? If so, how is it revived when one who has had the blessing loses it and his justification also?

ANSWER #269 -- Sanctification does destroy the carnal nature root and branch; it is revived in one who loses the grace of God out of his life just as it made its first appearance in Adam when he broke fellowship with God. It is like darkness in a room at night You bring in the light and the darkness is dispelled, but when you take the light out darkness returns. The full answer to the question involves the whole question of the nature of evil. I cannot take space to go into that, but I am sure the statements I have made here are consistent with what is found when such a survey is undertaken.

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QUESTION #270 -- Please explain Hebrews 12:14, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." Does this have some general meaning or does it refer to the second work of grace? Does seeing the Lord refer to having fellowship with Him or does it mean that an unsanctified person cannot get to heaven?

ANSWER #270 -- I cannot see much distinction in the language used. The meaning is both general and specific. The biggest factor in the making of heaven is fellowship with God. As I understand the text, no one can come into the fullest fellowship with God in any world without holiness. And no one will get into heaven who is not holy. This does not mean that people who die in a state of regeneration will go to hell. But it does mean that in life or at the time of death they must be purged from all sin by the fire of the Holy Spirit and they must enter heaven holy. So far as I know, no church or authorized teacher of Christian doctrine holds that anyone can get into heaven with sin in him. They all agree that holiness is a prerequisite for heaven. The divergence is on the matter of the time when this holiness can be obtained. Some hold it is done at the time of regeneration. But with this practically the universal Christian testimony disagrees. Some hold that it can take place only at death. Some hold that it takes place in purgatory (a Roman Catholic invention). Some hold that it takes place in the resurrection. But we believe the Scriptures teach that it is done by the Holy Spirit on the basis of the efficacy of the blood of Jesus and that its condition is faith. And believing this, we have come to God on the terms and condition which we understand to be requisite, and it is our joy to say God has not disappointed us. Personally, I am glad to say the blessed Spirit has purged my heart from inbred sin and does now sanctify me wholly. If some get this blessing at death, I shall not object, but I am glad I got it before I died. If the Catholics should prove to be right in positing a purgatory, then, thank God, I shall not need to go there. If some get it in the resurrection, I shall rejoice to welcome them into the company of the blood-washed. Even if what these say is true, I have lost nothing, for the blessing is a heritage of immeasurable value, and I am glad I have it now and that I shall have it when I come to the place where the others expect to get it. But if it should turn out that the others are mistaken-well, I am glad this way works anyhow. The blessing of entire sanctification received by faith subsequent to regeneration measures up to the requirement of Hebrews 12:14.

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QUESTION #271 -- Please explain what is meant by being wholly sanctified. How may one know he has that grace, and what more should be expected of the wholly sanctified than of those who are born again, but not yet sanctified?

ANSWER #271 -- Wholly sanctified is not strictly speaking a scriptural term. But it is an expression necessary to bear the thought contained in I Thessalonians 5:23, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." And the next verse says, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." When one is truly converted or born again he is initially or partially sanctified, for he is cleansed from the guilt of sin. But there yet remains within him that "prone to wander," that "bent to iniquity," that "sin that so easily besets," that "depravity of nature" with which we are all born and which is the root of sin as action, and from which the gospel promises deliverance. If any ask why this was not also cleansed away at the time of conversion, I would answer, for one reason, because the conditions upon which such cleansing is promised cannot be met until one has been born again. But God has provided this full cleansing in the

blood of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 13:12; I John 1:8), its condition is faith, and its executor is the Holy Spirit. And since this blessing is invariably received after regeneration, John Wesley spoke of it as "The second blessing properly so-called." It is sought in prayer, and is to be instantaneously wrought whenever the consecrated Christian believes fully for God to do it The Holy Spirit himself witnesses to it, just as He does to pardon and sonship. "By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is witness to us" (Hebrews 10:14). As to the difference in the life of one who is sanctified and one who is not-but perhaps we had better say the difference in one after he is sanctified and before: the difference is principally subjective or internal. The standard for outward conduct is holiness and righteousness for all, and the justified Christian may be able to approximate this standard, but he does it by virtue of continual suppressions, and counteractions. But the wholly sanctified do it without any inner warfare as between the flesh and the spirit, since the old fleshly nature is eradicated and burned out. Suppression is a good doctrine as applied to the living of a justified Christian, but the Bible teaches something so much better in the experience of entire sanctification where the Christian knows that his old man is crucified and the body of sin destroyed (Romans 6:6). It may not always be possible for an observer to tell the difference between a justified and a sanctified Christian, but the Christian himself knows the difference in himself without fail.

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QUESTION #272 -- If it is possible to be sanctified and to have that high religious experience and life that is recommended by the periodicals and books from the Nazarene Publishing House, why is it that so few people possess such an experience and life?

ANSWER #272 -- From one approach, I admit that this is a great mystery. Full salvation is such a grand and blessed possession that it would seem all who hear of it would immediately sell all they have to possess it. But, on the other hand, we must not forget that there is a mighty personal devil who is supported by myriads of fallen angels to deceive and lead men astray. Then we must not forget that the natural heart of man is depraved and fallen. And we must not forget that there is power in numbers, and that the predominance of numbers favors the worldly life. Perhaps there is no greater mystery here than in many other things. Take alcohol for example: all intelligent people know that alcohol is a poison injurious to the body, mind and morals of those who take it, and yet the country is liquor soaked as it has not been before within the memory of any living. Both these classes of facts testify to the total depravity of man, and exhort us with loud voice to make sure of our own calling and election. But, in the meantime, let us remove the "if." It is possible for sinners to become Christians and it is possible for all Christians to be sanctified here and now. The failures are all human failures. God is able to save to the uttermost and keep until the judgment day. Let us, you and I, make sure we get the fullness of the gospel blessing ourselves, even though the reluctance of others may be a mystery and a trial still.

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