

Session 13: The Sanctification of the Spirit

I. Old Testament Sanctification

1. Israel as a Holy Nation

- **Key Scripture:** Exodus 19:6
- God set Israel apart from the outset, making them “a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”
- Sanctification here involved covenant, law, and sacrifice.

2. The Spirit’s External Role

- **Key Scripture:** Nehemiah 9:20
- The Holy Spirit taught and guided Israel via the Law and prophets, typically working through chosen leaders (e.g., Moses, Joshua).
- The people related to this sanctification mainly through outward ordinances and institutions.

3. Prophetic Anticipation of a Fuller Work

- **Key Scriptures:** Ezekiel 36:27; Jeremiah 31:31–34
- Prophets looked beyond external rituals to an era when God would internally transform hearts by His Spirit.
- Promised a new covenant where God’s law would be “inward parts” rather than on stone tablets.

II. Little Flock Sanctification

1. From Pentecost to Future Fulfillment

- **Key Scriptures:** Acts 2; Jeremiah 31:33–34
- In Luke 12:32, Jesus calls a believing remnant His “little flock.”

- The Holy Spirit's outpouring at Pentecost began realizing Jeremiah's new covenant promise in that remnant, though its complete fulfillment awaits Israel's full restoration.

2. God's Faithfulness to Complete the Work

- **Key Scriptures:** 1 Thessalonians 5:23–24; Philippians 1:6
- Paul links this sanctifying process to Christ's second coming—"the day of Jesus Christ."
- Affirms God will finish what He began in the faithful remnant.

III. Body of Christ Sanctification

1. Sanctification as a Finished Work

- **Key Scriptures:** 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 2:10; Titus 3:5
- For the Body of Christ, sanctification is complete: believers are new creations, "complete in Him."
- Salvation and holiness are effected fully "by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

2. The Call to Walk in the Spirit

- **Key Scriptures:** Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 5:8; 4:30
- Though sanctification is a settled fact, believers must *live out* their holiness.
- Instructions to "walk in the Spirit" and "walk as children of light" emphasize practical alignment with their already holy standing.

IV. Reconsidering the Idea of "Progressive Sanctification"

1. Scripture's Emphasis on Completed Sanctification

- **Key Scriptures:** Philippians 3:12; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Hebrews 10:10
- The concept of gradual sanctification originates in theological tradition rather than explicit biblical teaching.

- Paul's mention of not having "already attained" (Phil. 3:12) refers to ministry growth, not insufficient holiness.

2. **Already Sanctified, Washed, and Justified**

- **Key Scriptures:** 1 John 1:7; Revelation 1:5
- Biblical texts show believers fully cleansed by Christ's blood, without any notion of partial sanctification.
- Growth concerns the outworking of completed holiness, not incremental attainment.

V. **Conclusion**

1. **Unified Scriptural Witness**

- Across the Old Testament, the "little flock," and the Body of Christ, sanctification is depicted as God's complete act rather than a progressive process.
- Israel was declared a "holy nation" from the start (Exodus 19:6).
- The remnant at Pentecost experienced a definitive bestowal of the Spirit, prefiguring Israel's eventual heart-level obedience.
- In the Body of Christ, believers are fully sanctified in Christ and called to express that reality in daily life.

2. **No Room for Partial Sanctification**

- Sanctification, in all eras, is rooted in God's immediate work—by covenant for Israel, by the Spirit's baptism for the little flock, and by Christ's finished sacrifice for the Body of Christ.
- Scripture presents no biblical basis for "progressive sanctification"; rather, it describes a singular, completed event coupled with ongoing growth in understanding and practice.