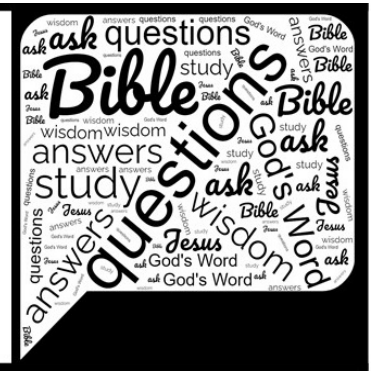


Questions & Answers From the Bible

Is a Second Cleansing Required to Be Saved? What Is Sanctification?



First John 1:7 declares that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." All agree on this point, but the question arises, how many applications of the blood are required? The Hebrew writer told us if the old ceremonial sacrifices could cleanse man from a conscience of sins, "that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins" (Hebrews 10:2). Hebrews 9:14 tells us that "the blood of Christ [is able to], . . . purge your conscience." Since there is only one type of sin, it only requires one blood cleansing. Even if there was more than one type of sin, "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from ALL sin."

If sin remains in the heart subsequent to salvation, think of the questions it raises. If one is saved and yet has sin in his heart, what happens if he should die? If one is saved and there is yet sin in his heart, when does he enter the kingdom or become a member of the church? If he becomes a part of the church when he was saved, is there sin in the church? Or does he not become a member until he is sanctified? If so, what about Acts 2:47, which states, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved"? Also, Ephesians 5:27 tells us that the church is "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." It is obvious from these Scriptures that when one is saved, he is cleansed "from all sin," he is "holy and without blemish," and he is "added to the church."

Concerning the Holy Spirit, we must recognize that in an initial experience of salvation, two things take place: (1) the blood of Christ cleanseth us of all sin, and (2) immediately after we are cleansed, the Holy Spirit moves in to make us a new creature so that we have the power to live free from sin. The Holy Spirit does not do any cleansing. He is the power of new life ("the Spirit is life"; Romans 8:10).

It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to "walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). This life begins when we are "born of the Spirit" (John 3:6). This life begins with a birth. Notice the wording of this verse closely: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Just as one

who is "born of the flesh" has *flesh*, so one who is "born of the Spirit" has the *Spirit*. Without the Spirit, we would not have new life or the power to live it!

Jesus expressly taught us the Spirit of God is a person. In John 16:13 Jesus referred to "the Spirit of truth" ("the Comforter"; John 15:26, "the Holy Ghost"; John 14:26) with the personal pronoun "he" or "himself" twelve times in these verses (John 16:8-15). Since "he" is a person, you cannot have part of a person. Either His presence is there, or it is not. A person does not come in portions. John 3:34 reads (when you omit the italicized words the translators added), "God giveth not the Spirit by measure." When an individual is saved, born again, he is born of the Spirit and has the Spirit of God.

The word *sanctification* literally means "set apart." John 17:17 tells us how we are sanctified: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." As we sit under the Gospel, hear the Word preached, and read its precepts, we become enlightened. As we become enlightened, we learn more about how to set oneself apart, how to yield to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and how to incorporate more truth into our lives. As we do this, we become more sanctified.

Sanctification is a continual and progressive truth. The Apostle John said, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him" (1 John 3:2). How does this occur? Second Corinthians 3:18 says, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass [or mirror, a symbol of the Word of God; James 1:22-24] the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." When the Word is held before us and we see truth and we see Christ, the Spirit of God enlightens us and enables us to take hold of the truth and put it on to wear. We are "changed into the same image." This is our progressive sanctification that continues to progress as we gain light and understanding and become more and more set apart until we are ushered into the eternal realm.

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