

How does Jesus sanctify human beings? A Series on What is Sanctification: Part 3

The Greek verb "hagiazō" means to "make holy, consecrate", or "sanctify." It is the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew term "qâdash." Throughout the Bible, in regard to Believers, "qâdash" and "hagiazō" are used with essentially two meanings:

"Sanctify" as in to purify, make holy and free one from the guilt of sin.

"Sanctify" as in to separate from the profane, devote and dedicate (or consecrate) one to God.

A. With the incarnation of Jesus Christ, "hagiazō" takes on an emphasis towards the meaning of "**sanctify as in purify, make holy and free one from the guilt of sin.**" This does not suggest that Jesus the Son is working independent of the will and purpose of God the Father. Jesus Himself asserts that His work is to do the will of the Father (John 4:34; 5:19, 30; 8:28; 12:50; 15:10), and sanctify His people so that the Holy God can dwell among them (Ex 29:44-46; Lev 26:11-12).

It is with the trusting belief in Jesus that fellowship with the Holy God can be obtained, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me." (John 14:6)

The apostle Paul believed in this as well and elaborates, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time." (1 Tim 2:5-6)

Through two covenants that God made with human beings, Jesus works to sanctify His people:

The Mosaic Law was concerned with sin and justice. Jesus fulfilled the Law (Matt 5:17; Luke 24:44-49) by providing the blood (Heb 9:11-14), as the sacrificial lamb, for the expiation of sin, and became the place of propitiation (Rom 3:25), as the kapporet, to satisfy the judgment of God.

The New Covenant, as the result of Jesus' sacrifice, enabled Believers to be forgiven of their sins (Eph 1:7; 4:32; Col 1:14) and be regenerated (Tit 3:5) with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19; 2 Cor 3:3).

With the New Covenant partially fulfilled with His work of atonement, Jesus' mediation of the covenant (Heb 7:18-8:15) serves several important functions of sanctifying Believers.

1. Forgiveness of sins which makes one holy before God.

Hebrews 10:12-14 compares the work of Jesus with the Levitical priest who stand, because they must perform their religious duty day after day. In contrast, Jesus is seated because the work is done forever, and He is seated on the right hand of God.

2. Adoption as a privileged child of God and regeneration which provides a new origin of birth and establishes a new spiritual relationship.

Galatians 4:1-7 presents a contrast in growing up in the first century from a legal and religious perspective. Whether under Jewish, Greek or Roman law, when a son passed from adolescence to manhood, he passed from the care of his father or guardian to the care of the state. Under Roman law, when this transition occurs, the son is adopted by his father and formally acknowledged as his son and heir. Because of this, in the eyes of the law, minors are no different than slaves. Paul presents this analogy to illustrate how Jesus provides sonship; as a son knows his Father, the Father recognizes His adopted son.

How does Jesus sanctify human beings?
A Series on What is Sanctification: Part 3 (page 2)

With the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as a consequence of the New Covenant, Believers were provided another means of sanctification: a spiritual union with Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 5:17; Col 1:26-29). Believers are “in” Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ is “in” Believers. It implies an intimate relationship with God and with it an opportunity to learn a new moral standard, discernment and how to live a sanctified life (Eph 3:17-19; 1 Cor 2:14-16; Philip 4:4-7; 1 Thess 1:3).

Although the disciples did not understand, Believers today understand Jesus’ first century promise, “After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.” (John 14:19-20)

This spiritual union indicates a two way relationship and reveals that Jesus sanctifies progressively from the inside – out: “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

Jesus Christ provides the power for the Believer to live a sanctified life (Gal 2:19-20; Rom 8:10-11; 2 Cor 13:5), and this dependence should not be forgotten.

For through the Law I died to the Law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. (Gal 2:19-20)

B. Jesus spoke of “hagiazō” as directed towards Himself in the context of being sanctified by God (John 10:36) and being sanctified by Himself (John 17:19). Already sinless and holy (Luke 1:35), Jesus was speaking of Himself with the meaning of “**sanctify as in to separate from the profane, devote and dedicate (or consecrate) one to God.**”

Just as Jesus was sanctified by God, Believers were sanctified by Jesus; thus, as sanctified people of God, “hagiazō” takes on this latter meaning, of being set apart, devoted and dedicated to God. Sharing a spiritual union with Jesus Christ implies that Believers share in the work of God; namely, to show other human beings that Jesus Christ is the means of sanctification so that God can dwell among His people (Matt 28:16-20).

Paul understands the union in Jesus Christ to include imitating Him in all behavior (1 Cor 11:1; 1 John 2:3-6; Rom 15:7; Eph 5:25; Col 3:13; 1 John 3:16; 1 Pet 2:21-24; Philip 3:10). And this imitation serves the purpose of developing Believers in becoming more like Jesus in holiness (Eph 4:13-15; Rom 8:29).

Corporately, this spiritual union with Jesus Christ unites a Believer with other Believers (Matt 18:20; Rom 12:5) serving each other and serving God (Rom 12:9-13).

In ministering to each other, Believers help each other in the process of sanctification and encourage each other in their devotion and dedication to God (Eph 4:11-15). Believers are in part responsible for each other in the work of God (Philip 1:20-26).

How does Jesus sanctify human beings?
A Series on What is Sanctification: Part 3 (page 3)

Summary:

	God the Father	God the Son	God the Spirit
Legal means	Mosaic Covenant New Covenant	Fulfills the Mosaic Covenant Mediates the New Covenant	
How does He work on Non-Believers?	Provides the possibility and means for sanctification Demonstrates the historical reality that Jesus is the Son of God	Provides the possibility and means for sanctification	
How does He work on Believers?	Forgives sin Regenerates Teaches what sin is Provides an example of what it means to be holy Works through His word the Bible Motives Believers to be children without fault and pleasing to His sight Disciplines by rebuking and educating the Believer what holy behavior is	Spiritual union with Jesus Provides the power for the Believer to live a sanctified life Provides an example of what it means to be holy and a goal for full development Provides a community of Believers who could encourage and help in the process of sanctification and be responsible for each other	

References:

1. Brown C, ed., *The New International Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol 2, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, (1971).
2. Brand C, Draper C and England A, eds., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, (1998).
3. Youngblood RF, Bruce FF and Harrison, RK, eds., *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers (1996).
4. Gaebelien FE, ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vols. 8, 9, 10, 12, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, (1976).
5. Swindoll CR, Zuck RB, eds., *Understanding Christian Theology*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, (2003).
6. Grudem W, *Systematic Theology*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, (1994).