

QUESTION 32

WHAT DO JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION MEAN?

JUSTIFICATION MEANS OUR DECLARED RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE GOD.

SANCTIFICATION MEANS OUR GRADUAL, GROWING RIGHTEOUSNESS.

READ 1 PETER 1:1-2.

Peter is trying to encourage his readers by reminding them that they are very special to God. He refers to three works of God in the salvation of each believer:

1. Election
2. Justification
3. Sanctification

Look at the two verses to see if you can identify what God the Father does, what God the Son does, and what God the Holy Spirit does.

1. Election: God the Father
2. Justification: God the Son
3. Sanctification: God the Holy Spirit

God chose which people he would justify and sanctify. That is what Peter is referring to when he addresses the exiled Christians as the “elect.” They are the ones that God chose to be his holy people. Peter is comforting the Christians who are being rejected for their faith by reminding them that they have been elected—chosen—by God!

In verse 2, Peter highlights the fact that the exiled Christians have been justified by God through the blood of Jesus. (Romans 5:9) Christians are those who have been declared righteous once and for all. Their sin is fully dealt with. Jesus the Redeemer pays the price for sin, and God declares the repentant sinner not guilty. The righteousness of Christ is given to the repentant sinner in exchange for his or her sin.

Peter also tells the exiled Christians that they are being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Sanctification means our gradual, growing righteousness. It is the Holy Spirit who works in the hearts of Christians to make them more like Jesus. Sanctification is a lifelong process! You won't suddenly wake up one morning and be fully like Jesus. The Holy Spirit will be at work in the heart of Christians until the day they go to be with Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE

“To those who are elect exiles . . . according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.”(1Pet.1:1-2)