

Salvation—Sanctification (3rd)

(We are continuing our study of the doctrine sanctification and that it began in eternity before the foundation of the world.)

In our previous podcast we confirmed from the Scriptures that sanctification originated with God in eternity by giving some passages from the Scriptures and supplied some comment by various authors. Today we are continuing this with additional information to support this truth that is too often overlooked or neglected.

Jude 1 testifies to our sanctification originating in eternity: “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, *and called.*” While John Calvin thinks this refers to the effectual call, he admits that this is “sometimes taken for” eternal election in the following comment: “But as calling is nothing else but the effect of eternal election, it is sometimes taken for it. In this place it makes but little difference in which way you take it; for he, no doubt, commends the grace of God, by which he has been pleased to choose them as his peculiar treasure. And he intimates that men do not anticipate God, and that they never come to him until he draws them.” J. C. Philpot is more definitive in his comments on this verse. He said, “What a mercy it is for God’s people that before they have a vital union with Christ, before they are grafted into him experimentally—they have an eternal, immanent union with him before all worlds. It is this eternal union that brings them into time existence. It is by virtue of this eternal union that they come into the world at such a time, at such a place, from such parents, under such circumstances, as God has appointed. It is by virtue of this eternal union that the circumstances of their time-state are ordained. By virtue of this eternal union they are preserved in Christ before they are called; they cannot die until God has brought about a vital union with Christ.” Equally, Robert Hawker agrees that this is referring to the election or setting apart the sheep before the foundation of the world. (Hawker is using the English word “church” to refer to the whole election of grace.) He wrote the following:

In this blessed verse Jude ascribes to God the Father the sanctification of the Church. *To them that are sanctified by God the Father.* And, without all doubt, God the Father hath chosen the Church in Christ before the foundation of the world, that it should be *holy and without blame before him in love.* {Ephesians 1:4} Nevertheless, the word translated in this verse sanctified; might have been rendered, (as is well known to the learned,) beloved in and of God the Father; which, in its meaning, more particularly refers to the electing love of God the Father. Similar to the sense of the same word, in relation to Christ, the glorious Head of the Church. Say ye of Him (said Jesus to the Jews) whom the Father hath sanctified?, {John 10:30} that is, whom the Father hath chosen? And this title of elect and chosen, as applied to Christ, is the greatest and most endeared in all the Bible, if we may judge by the manner of expression, in which God himself useth it. *Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth!* {Isaiah 42:1} Hence by the Church, whom Jude here calls sanctified by God the Father, is meant, the chosen by God the Father, whom Peter calls a chosen generation {I Peter 2:9} and whom Moses, under the Holy Ghost, stiles a peculiar treasure to the Lord above all people. {Exodus 19:5}. (This and all the other quotes are copied from the computer Bible program *Sword Searcher.*)

Agreeably, John Gill commented as follows:

[T]o them that are sanctified by God the Father; which is to be understood not of internal sanctification, which is usually ascribed to the Spirit of God, but of the act of eternal election,

which is peculiar to God the Father; in which sense Christ is said to be sanctified by the Father, and men ordained and appointed to an office, and vessels are set apart the owner's use; John 10:36; Jeremiah 1:5; the language is taken from the ceremonial law, by which persons and things were sanctified, or set apart for sacred use and service; see Exodus 13:2; and so the elect of God are by God the Father sanctified and set apart in the act of election, which is expressed by this word; partly because of its separating nature, men being by it separated from the rest of the world, to the use and service of God, and for his glory, so that they are a distinct and peculiar people; and partly because such are chosen through sanctification of the Spirit, and unto holiness both in this world and that which is to come; so that the doctrine of election is no licentious doctrine; for though holiness is not the cause of it, yet is a means fixed in it, and is certain by it, and an evidence of it; the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, read, "to them that are loved by God the Father": election is the fruit and effect of love; those that are sanctified or set apart by the Father in election, are loved by him. The Ethiopic version renders it quite otherwise, "to them that love God the Father"; which flows from the Father's love to them.

The comments of A. W. Pink are well worth our consideration at this point. They are as follows:

Reverting to Jude 1, we would note particularly *the order* of its statements: the "sanctified by God the Father" *comes before* "preserved in Jesus Christ, called." This initial aspect of our sanctification antedates our regeneration or effectual call from darkness to light, and therefore takes us back to the eternal counsels of God. There are three things in our verse: taking them in their inverse order, there is first, our "calling," when we were brought from death unto life; that was preceded by our being "preserved in Jesus Christ," that is, preserved from physical death in the womb, in the days of our infancy, during the recklessness of youth; and that also preceded by our being "sanctified" by the Father, that is, our names being enrolled in the Lamb's book of life, we are given to Christ to be loved by Him with an everlasting love and made joint-heirs with Him forever and ever.

Our sanctification by the Father was *His eternal election of us*, with all that that term connotes and involves. Election was far more than a bare choice of persons. It included our being predestined unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself (Ephesians 1:5). It included our being made "vessels unto honor" and being "afore prepared to glory" (Romans 9:21, 22). It included being "appointed to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:9). It included our being separated for God's pleasure, God's use, and "that we should be to the praise of His glory" (Ephesians 1:12). It included our being made "holy and without blame before him" (Ephesians 1:4). This eternal sanctification by God the Father is also mentioned in 2 Timothy 1:9, "Who has saved us, and called us with a *holy calling*, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus *before the world began.*"

As we pointed out in the last paragraph of the preceding chapter, "Sanctification is, first, a *position of honor* to which God has appointed His people." That position of honor was their being "chosen *in Christ* before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4), when they were constituted members of His mystical Body by the eternal purpose of God. O what an amazing honor was that! a place in glory higher than that of the angels being granted them. Our poor minds are staggered before such wondrous grace. Here, then, is the link of connection between John 10:36 and Jude 1: Christ was not alone in the mind of the Father when He "sanctified" Him: by the Divine decree, Christ was separated and consecrated as the Head of a sanctified people. In the sanctification of Christ, all who are "called saints" were, in Him, eternally set apart, to be

partakers of His own holy standing before the Father! This was an act of pure sovereignty on the Father's part. *The Doctrine of Sanctification*, pp. 100-101.

I realize that this quote is somewhat lengthy, but I believe his comments to be beneficial to the overall concept of the beginning or origin of sanctification. Additionally, because this glorious truth, which Pink identified as *eternal sanctification*, is so often overlooked by theologians, commentators, and preachers, it needs to be addressed at some length. With this in mind, I will close by supplying another selection from Pink.

As we have shown in previous chapters, to “sanctify” signifies to consecrate or set apart for a sacred use, to cleanse or purify, to adorn or beautify. Which of these meanings has the term in Jude 1? We believe the words “sanctified by God the Father” include all three of those definitions. First, in that eternal purpose of His, the elect were *separated* from all other creatures, and predestined unto the adoption of sons. Second, in God's foreviews of His elect falling in Adam, the corrupting of their natures, and the defilement which their personal acts of sin would entail, He ordained that the Mediator should make a full atonement for them, and by His blood *cleanse* them from all sin. Third, by choosing them in Christ, the elect were *united* to Him and so made one with Him that all *His* worthiness and perfection becomes theirs too; and thus they were *adorned*. God never views them apart for Christ. *Ibid*, pp. 101-102.

Our time is up for today. Farewell.