

## *Accomplished Sanctification*

The New Testament teaches us that Christ came into the world to fulfil the will of God. A vital part of that will – indeed, in the context, the climax of that will – was to sanctify his elect by his death:

When Christ came into the world, he said: ‘Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said: “Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book”’. When he said above: ‘You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings’ (these are offered according to the law), then he added: ‘Behold, I have come to do your will’. He does away with the first in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified (Heb. 10:5-14).

Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:25-27).

Just as Christ accomplished his people’s justification by his death and resurrection (Rom. 4:25; 5:19), so he accomplished their sanctification:

You are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30).

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When Christ cried out: ‘It is finished’ (John 19:30), it was a cry of triumph. The elect were sanctified in the Father’s decree and the Son’s accomplishment. Of course, this decreed and accomplished sanctification would have to be applied by the Spirit in bringing the elect to believe in Christ and so to receive their positional sanctification through union with their Saviour. Nevertheless, Christ accomplished the sanctification of the elect.