

Absolute Sanctification

The New Testament declares that, at the return of Christ, every believer will be immediately and utterly sanctified, instantaneously and completely changed to be absolutely like the Lord Jesus himself, and to be so for ever:

I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6).

May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints (1 Thess. 3:12-13).

May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it (1 Thess. 5:23-24).

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure (1 John 3:1-3).

Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen (Jude 24-25).

It could not be clearer. The believer will, at the return of Christ, be absolutely free of sin, utterly perfect in every respect, like Christ himself. Note also how, in several of the above passages, the three (or, at least two) sanctifications which refer to the believer's actual experience – positional, progressive and absolute – overlap or are linked. And that leads me to show that this is precisely what Christ has

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accomplished, that this unity in the fivefold sanctification is one of the glories of the new covenant.