

Be Separate Says The Lord

"Therefore, 'Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty'" (2 Corinthians 6:17-18).

It is clear that we have to be set apart from the world to have a relationship with God. The word "sanctify" means "set apart." There are several forms of the word "sanctify," each of which has a specific meaning. We will now examine these different forms and look at their significance.

Sanctification is the process of being set apart. 1 Peter 1:1-2 says, *"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied."* It is by the Spirit or by the Word of God that we are sanctified (John 17:17). We are sanctified by the word by obeying it as 1 Peter 1:2 says. If we obey, we are sprinkled by the blood of Jesus or, in other words, we have forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 10:22). Paul told the Corinthian brethren in 1 Corinthians 6:11 after listing many different types of sinners, *"And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."* "Washed" no doubt refers to baptism. It is the moment when we are separated from the old man of sin and put on the new man (Romans 6:3-4). Obedience to the gospel in baptism is sanctification!

If we are sanctified, we become a saint, one who is set apart. Paul introduces many of his letters addressing the saints (Ephesians 1:1; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:2). In Romans 1:7 he addresses them and says that they are *"called to be saints."* Paul spoke to the Gentiles saints at Ephesus and spoke of who they were without Christ. He says, *"You were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world"* (Ephesians 2:12). He then says in vs. 19, *"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God."* They had been redeemed, set apart and were now children of God. Being a saint means that we have been parted from that which once separated us from God: sin! Therefore if we call ourselves saints, we need to prove it by the way we live. A person who is set apart from the world will not act like he is part of it! (Romans 6:1-2; 12:2; Colossians 3:9).

Finally, the sanctuary is the place for the saints, those set apart; and the sanctuary is the church. The tabernacle in the Old Testament was an earthly sanctuary (Hebrews 9:1-2). The spiritual sanctuary is now the church (Hebrews 8:1-2). All of those that were saved and set apart were added to the universal church (Acts 2:47). This shows us that as a local church, we need to be careful not let the world in the church, for example, the social gospel. If a local church falls into the error of the social gospel, it cannot be set apart from the world because it has let the world in the church with recreation, entertainment, food etc. This is why we have to make the distinction between the universal and local church when speaking of a sanctuary because some local churches are not set apart; the universal church is! Local churches must make sure to not let the world into the church so that they can be set apart. Paul said in Ephesians 5:25-27, *"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."*

We have looked at three words: sanctification, saint, and sanctuary. Each has a slightly different meaning with one general thought: being set apart. It is not easy being separate, but it is the only way to be a light in this dark world and it is the only way to heaven! *"Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life"* (Revelation 21:25-27).

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