

The Doctrine of Old Testament Sanctification (or Consecration)

Topics		
Definition	Hebrew	Sanctification is the Antithesis of Uncleanness, Defilement and Profaning
The Firstborn are Sanctified	The Sabbath Day and Sanctification	Consecration (or Sanctification) of the Priests
Consecration of the Furniture of the Tent of God	The Failure of Moses: He Did Not Treat God as Sanctified	
Charts and Maps		
	The Abbreviated Doctrine Sanctification in the Old Testament	

Preface: The bulk of information that we get concerning sanctification will come out of the first three books of Moses—Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. I will cover the first three points in the book of Genesis and then the remainder of Scripture up until the book of Samuel in Deut. 29:1.

Bear in mind that sanctification, like all other major doctrines in the Bible, are revealed in time. That is, Moses had a better grasp of sanctification than did Adam; Paul had a much better understanding of sanctification than Moses did. Revelation in Scripture is progressive. We are primarily going to examine Old Testament sanctification, but we will begin with what we know for both Old and New Testaments.

1. Preliminary Definition: Sanctification from the standpoint of man:
 - a. Eternal Sanctification: When we believe in Jesus Christ (or Jehovah of the Old Testament), we are eternally set apart to God.
 - b. Temporal or Progressive Sanctification: After salvation, when we fall out of fellowship, we get back into fellowship by naming our sins to God. As we grow spiritually, we are sanctified in our spiritual growth.
 - c. Ultimate Sanctification: When we receive our resurrection body in the end time.
2. Preliminary Definition: Sanctification from the standpoint of God:
 - a. God sets something aside for Himself.
 - b. We might reasonably say, God sets something aside to be in service to Him or to glorify Him.
3. Hebrew:
 - a. The primary word rendered sanctification is qâdash (קָדַשׁ) [pronounced *kaw-DAHSH*], which means *to be [make] pure [clean, holy, separate, sacred]; to consecrate [sanctify, dedicate, hallow, set apart]*. These are its Qal meanings. It is also spelled qâdêsh (קָדֵשׁ) [pronounced *kaw-DAYSH*]. Strong's #6942 BDB #872.
 - b. In the Hiphil, qâdesh means *to declare something holy, to consecrate [or, set apart to God] [something, e.g., a priest], to regard [something or someone] as holy*.
 - c. The Hithpael imperative of qâdash means *cause yourselves to be cleansed, purify yourselves, cause yourselves to become consecrated*. The idea is that, people or things are set apart for the service of God, and that these things are then forbidden to be used for profane (or common) purposes.

- d. This verb means that something is set apart to God or it is set apart for God; this something takes on the quality of being sacred, holy, different from that which is tied to the earth. Now let's see if its usage jives with the meanings above...
- e. *To sanctify* is nearly always the translation of *qâdash* (the KJV is very consistent in this regard). However, *qâdash* may also be rendered *to consecrate*, *to hallow* (which words can also be used to translate other Hebrew words).
4. Sanctification (or consecration) is definitely tied to being clean, as versus being unclean. When God stated some of the foods that could and could not be eaten, the point was that God is clean, God is holy (the noun cognate for *qâdash*). Therefore, His people should be holy and not eat that which is unclean. Lev. 11:41–45
- a. The word for *making unclean* is *ṭâmê* (טָמֵא) [pronounced *taw-MAY*], which means *to make unclean, to be unclean, to defile*. In the Piel, it generally means *to declare or to pronounce unclean*. Strong's #2930 BDB #379.
- b. *To consecrate*, therefore, is the opposite of *to make unclean, to defile*. See also Lev. 22:3 (the word for *consecrate* may be hidden in there; your translation may have rendered it *to dedicate, to hallow*).
5. Sanctification (or consecration) is presented as being the opposite of defilement and profaning. Lev. 21:1–15
- a. *Defiling* is the same word as *to make unclean* (see the previous point).
- b. *To profane* is the Hebrew word *châlal* (חָלַל) [pronounced *khaw-LAHL*], which means *to pollute, to defile, to profane, to sully, to contaminate*. Its root means *to bore*, by implication meaning *wound, dissolve*. These are not the meanings of the word as used, but the root from which it comes. Strong's #2490 BDB #319, BDB #320.
- i. As a sub-point, *châlal* actually has three separate definitions and listings in BDB. However, I think that we can correlate them. Men killed using swords and arrows, and those who died had been pierced. Because death is so closely associated with defilement and uncleanness, this word also came to mean *defiled, polluted*., as well as *pierce, bore*. It means *pollute, defile, profane*.¹ *Profane* is something properly applied in relationship to God and to that which is holy, such as the Sabbath (see Lev. 20:3 Neh. 13:18 Ezek. 23:39).² Although I personally like the word *defile*, it is on the archaic side for most; however, because of the recent trend of environmentalism, *pollute* has returned to us and its present-day meaning is apt. Another outstanding rendering (when not in reference to God or that which is holy) is the word *corrupt*, with additional synonyms *sully* and *contaminate*. See Gen. 49:4 Ezek. 28:16. Finally, in Deut. 20:6, we have the third usage: the vineyard is, for all intents and purposes, virginal—it has not been used or harvested from. It is in a pristine state. The first harvest makes the vineyard *common, used, no longer in a pristine state*.
- c. Therefore, *to sanctify* (or *to consecrate*) is the opposite of *to profane, to pollute, to defile, to corrupt, to contaminate*. See also Lev. 22:2 (the word *sanctify* may be hidden behind a word like *to dedicate, to hallow* in your translation).³
6. Our passage (Gen. 2:3–4) is the first occurrence of *qâdash*. Here, God sets the Sabbath (Saturday) apart as something special, something different; it will stand as a memorial for all time as a testimony to God's creation. Even the most resolute heathen follow a seven-day work week pattern. Nothing is said about man resting from his work at this point in time, as Adam doesn't work. God provided everything necessary for Adam in six days. In any case, it is interesting to note that, even under perfect environment, apart from sin, the Sabbath was established as *set apart* (or *sanctified*) to God.
7. Interestingly enough, *qâdash* is found nowhere else in the book of Genesis. It will not be until God sets aside a people to Himself where we begin to run into this word again.
8. God killed the firstborn of all the Egyptians—both animals and humans. However, because of the blood splashed on the top and sides of the doorways in the Jewish section of Egypt, He did not take the lives of the Jewish firstborn. However, because God allowed them to live, they were considered to be God's. Here it is clear that sanctification is associated with belonging to God. Ex. 13:2 Lev. 27:26 Num. 3:13 Deut. 15:19

¹ *Châlal* also means *begin* primarily when found in the Hiphil stem (see Gen. 11:6 Deut. 16:9 II Chron. 31:10), and rarely in the Piel (Deut. 20:6 28:30).

² For those who cannot distinguish between profanity, obscenity and the use of expletives, profanity is properly taking God's name in vain, by using in conjunction with expletives or using it in such a way as to trivialize God, as in *oh my God*.

³ All of the passages mentioned contain at least one form of the word *qâdash*.

9. In Israel, God took the Levites as His own, instead of to the firstborn of Israel. This taught the Israelites that there is substitution involved in sanctification. Num. 3:12–13 8:17
10. Moses speaks to God on Mount Sinai and God tells him to consecrate the people. There are two things associated with this consecration—the cleansing of their clothing, which would be a representation of sanctification (Ex. 19:14) and the men were not to go near women for three days, which was a ceremonial representation of sanctification or cleansing (Ex. 19:15).
11. The priests were also to consecrate themselves, although there do not appear to be specific instructions for them different from those given to the people (wash their clothing and stay away from women). Ex. 19:22
12. Apparently Mount Sinai was consecrated, which means that the Israelites could not go up onto the mountain (Ex. 19:23). This is because this is where Moses communed with God. Even though the people were ceremonially clean, they were not truly clean, and could not have direct contact with God (this also foreshadows Jesus Christ, as the only man Who could have direct contact with God the Father).
13. You will recall that the fourth commandment is to remember the Sabbath day and to *keep it holy*. This is the Piel infinitive construct of *qâdash*. In Ex. 20:8–11, God now explains how to sanctify the Sabbath day.
 - a. First of all, they were to continually remember the Sabbath day.
 - b. Secondly, they were to work for six days, just as God worked for six days.
 - c. The seventh day was set aside as a day of no work—not for the master, his servant, his family, his guests or even his cattle.
 - d. This is because God blessed the seventh day and He consecrated it (Piel imperfect of *qâdash* in Ex. 19:11).
 - e. Herein, the Law is tied to the God Who created the heavens and the earth. This is not some local god vying for Israel's allegiance—this is the God Who created the Universe.
 - f. Consecration of the Sabbath is again spoken of in Ex. 31:13–17.
 - i. Observation of the Sabbath would specifically be a sign between God and Israel.
 - ii. Also, God here mentions *Sabbaths*, because there were several types of Sabbaths to be observed by the Jewish people.
 - iii. Profaning the Sabbath is the exact opposite of consecrating the Sabbath. One who profaned the Sabbath was to be put to death.
14. There was also a *Sabbath* year which was to be set aside or sanctified in Israel, also known as the *Year of Jubilee*. Lev. 25:10
15. The next set of things which are consecrated are the holy things—that is, the furniture of the Tent (Tabernacle) of God (Ex. 28:38). God will expand on what this means and the ceremonies pertaining thereto in the following chapter.
16. Consecration (or Sanctification) of the Priests:
 - a. The priests were sanctified by ceremonial sacrifices along with offerings of unleavened bread (Ex. 29:1–3, 10–28 40:13).
 - b. Also, they were washed with water (Ex. 29:4).
 - c. The clothing that God had the priests wear also seemed to be a part of this sanctification (Ex. 29:5–9, 29–30). This clothing is said to be *holy*, which is the noun cognate of *qâdash* (Ex. 29:29).
 - d. Part of the ceremony involved the eating of the ram's meat by the priests (Ex. 29:31–32). The laymen did not participate in this meat, as the meat is holy (i.e., set apart to God and for God). Ex. 29:33
 - e. That which is not eaten was to be burned the next morning, *because* it was holy. Ex. 29:34
 - f. There is consecration simply by association with the altar (specifically, direct contact with the altar). Ex. 29:37 30:29
 - g. All of this is ceremonial, because it is God Who will do the actual consecration of the priests. That touching the altar made one consecrated to God is illustrative of this point. Ex. 29:37, 42–44
 - h. The priests were not to offer up anything to God while unclean, as that profanes God. Lev. 22:2–9 lists a number of ways in which the priest could become unclean (e.g., contact with a dead person, contact with anything deemed unclean, etc.). The uncleanness is essentially ceremonial in the passage given.
 - i. The priest who came in contact with the sin offering or the guilt offering (that is, by eating it) was thereby consecrated. Lev. 6:18–19, 26–27
17. Consecration of the furniture of the Tent of God:
 - a. First of all, it is actually God Who actually consecrates the Tent of Meeting and the altar. Ex. 29:44a

- b. As has been mentioned, whoever comes in direct contact with the altar is automatically consecrated. This illustrates that it is direct contact with God which purifies us and sets us apart to Him. We approach God through His Son Jesus Christ, and it is His death on the cross (illustrated by the animals sacrificed on the altar) that makes us holy. I should stop here momentarily and point out the precision of these Old Testament pronouncements. It is as though they have the epistles of Paul in one hand and are writing down the Old Testament illustrations with the other.
- c. All of the Tabernacle furniture was to be consecrated to God. Much of this is the ceremonial anointing with oil. That means, they had a particular set of uses directly connected to the Tent worship. Ex. 30:23–29 34–37 40:10–12.
- d. The oil itself was holy, mixed in these proportions with specific ingredients, and to be used only in anointing the Tent furniture and tools. It was consecrated because there was to be no secular use of this oil. As you may know, oil generally speaks of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, there is a portion of sanctification performed by God the Holy Spirit. Ex. 30:23–38
- e. Moses was the man who anointed the Tent, the furniture and the priests:
 - i. Only one man anointed the Tent and all of the furniture, thus consecrating it—Moses (Lev. 8:10–11).
 - ii. When Moses slaughtered the bull for the sin offering and, with his finger, spread blood on the altar, this purified the altar (Lev. 8:14–15).
 - iii. Moses also anointed all of the priests and their garments with oil and blood (Lev. 8:12, 30). The parallel, of course, is God consecrating us with the blood of Christ and with the oil of the Holy Spirit.
- f. The actual consecration of the Tent of God occurred in Num. 7:1
- 18. The people of God were to remain consecrated to God.
 - a. This meant that they were not to consort with mediums or spiritists (people who would tell the future or talk to the dead). Lev. 20:7
- 19. God's name was not to be profaned among His people, but it was to be sanctified (or consecrated). Lev. 22:32
- 20. A man's possessions, including his house and land, could be set apart to God. Its value was determined by the priest.⁴ However, the firstborn already belongs to God, so it cannot be again given over to God. Lev. 27.
- 21. Sanctification was certain a part of the Nazarite vows. Num. 6:11
- 22. Prior to being given meat in the desert, the Israelites were to sanctify themselves. Num. 11:18
- 23. The incense burners of the supporters of Korah were considered to be sanctified and were saved out of the burning coals. There were then hammered flat and placed on the altar as a constant reminder of Korah's rebellion. Num. 16:37–38
- 24. The biggest mistake of Moses was striking the rock twice rather than speaking to it, in order to produce water (Num. 20:2–11). God would not allow Moses to go into the land because he did not treat God as sanctified. Num. 20:12 27:14 Deut. 32:51
- 25. When Israel was about to cross the Jordan, Joshua told the people to sanctify themselves the day before. Joshua 3:5
- 26. After being defeated at Ai, Joshua told the Israelites to sanctify themselves. Joshua 7:13
- 27. There were certain areas throughout Israel that were set apart for the innocent manslayer. Joshua 20:7
- 28. Given the debased nature of Israel during the period of the judges, we would expect very few references to sanctification. There is actually only one time that the verb is used—in Judges 17:3—and it is used by an overindulgent mother whose son actually steals silver from her, then returns it and she declares that silver to be sanctified.
- 29. After the fiasco with the Ark, it was taken to Kiriath-jearim and Eleazar ben Abinadab was sanctified or set apart to take care of the Ark. I Sam. 7:1
- 30. Samuel will consecrate (sanctify) Jesse and his sons for the sacrificial offering. I Sam. 16:5
- 31. Much of what David won in war was dedicated or set apart to God. II Sam. 8:11
- 32. The last mention of sanctification in the book of Samuel is II Sam. 11:4 where Bathsheba cleansed herself after committing adultery with David.

⁴ It appears that a man could deed over his property in lieu of taxes to the priesthood, which Israel had to support. The passage named deals with the value of the property and how the property could be redeemed.

This is the Abbreviated Doctrine of Sanctification.

The Abbreviated Doctrine Sanctification in the Old Testament

1. Sanctification from the standpoint of man:
 - a. Eternal Sanctification: When we believe in Jesus Christ (or Jehovah of the Old Testament), we are eternally set apart to God.
 - b. Temporal or Progressive Sanctification: After salvation, when we fall out of fellowship, we get back into fellowship by naming our sins to God. As we grow spiritually, we are sanctified in our spiritual growth.
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3. The primary Hebrew word rendered sanctification is qâdash (קִדַּשׁ) [pronounced *kaw-DAHSH*], which means *consecrate, sanctify, dedicate, hallow, set apart*. These are its Qal meanings. It is also spelled qâdêsh (קִדְּשׁ) [pronounced *kaw-DAYSH*]. Strong's #6942 BDB #872.
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7. In Israel, God took the Levites as His own, instead of to the firstborn of Israel. This taught the Israelites that there is substitution involved in sanctification. Num. 3:12–13 8:17
8. Things which were sanctified in the Old Testament:
 - a. The people of Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai; their clothes were to be clean and they were not to have intimate relations with women. Ex. 19:14–15
 - b. Apparently Mount Sinai was consecrated, which means that the Israelites could not go up onto the mountain (Ex. 19:23). This is because this is where Moses communed with God. Even though the people were ceremonially clean, they were not truly clean, and could not have direct contact with God (this also foreshadows Jesus Christ, as the only man Who could have direct contact with God the Father).
 - c. The Sabbath Day and the Sabbath year were to be consecrated or sanctified. Ex. 20:8–11 31:13–17 Lev. 25:10
 - d. The priests, the Tabernacle and the furniture of the Tabernacle were all sanctified.
 - e. The people of God were sanctified.
9. The biggest mistake of Moses was striking the rock twice rather than speaking to it, in order to produce water (Num. 20:2–11). God would not allow Moses to go into the land because he did not treat God as sanctified. Num. 20:12 27:14 Deut. 32:51
10. When Israel was about to cross the Jordan, Joshua told the people to sanctify themselves the day before. Joshua 3:5
11. In conclusion, sanctification, in the Old Testament, is presented as something which is set apart; something which is different from all else; something which is different from this natural life. Our sanctification identifies us with God, who is separate from this world.

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