

Understanding the Theological Terms for the Three Stages of a Child of God

by Bert Hartmann 1/31/16

1st - Justification

• When does Justification happen?

Instantaneously through faith in the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ that moves from the head to the heart. “We are born again!”

• Where does it happen? In our **spirit!**

(Paul tells us in **1 Thessalonians 5:23** that we are a tri-unity of “*spirit, soul, and body.*”) We are justified (made righteous in the eyes of God) in our human immortal spirit when we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and placed in (baptized into) Christ becoming new creations.

Jesus paid the penalty for sin by dying on the cross as the perfect (sinless) Lamb of God. This atoning sacrifice satisfied God’s perfect justice and now God sees His adopted children with the same loving eyes He sees His Son with. We are covered with His blood made **pure** and “*whiter than snow*” before Him (**Psalm 51:7**).

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

1 John 1:7

Just like a man and women become “*one flesh*” in marriage (see **Mark 10:7-8**), so too do we become “*a new creation*” when our immortal spirit is joined in union with God’s eternal Spirit—the resurrected life of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

2 Corinthians 5:17

2nd - Sanctification

• When does Sanctification happen?

It is *a continual process* that happens all throughout our earthly lives. When we are born the first time *physically*, the first thing we start to do is die. In this first birth, *spiritually*, we are born already dead in our sins—separated from the presence of our holy God. When we are **born again** spiritually (**John 3:5-7**), God begins to transform our lives—to sanctify us—to make us more holy—separate from sin. This is the process of Sanctification where we learn to daily die to self (the flesh). *You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature [flesh] but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.* **Romans 8:9-10**

• Where does it happen? In our **soul!**

Our *fallen* soul is also a tri-unity composed of our *mind, emotions, and will*. Have you ever had bad *thoughts*, had sinful *emotions*, or made wrong *choices*? We also live in a *fallen* fleshly world ruled by Satan (**Ephesians 2:2, John 12:31, et al.**), and witness the battle between **the Truth** (*Reality*) and **Lies** (*Illusions* one believes) (**John 8:44b**).

*Jesus answered, “I am the way and **the truth** and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”* **John 14:6**

Jesus said: **Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.** **John 17:17**

3rd - Glorification

• When does Glorification happen?

Instantaneously when Jesus comes back to earth again—the Second Coming (see **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**).

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

1 John 3:2

• Where does it happen? In our **body!**

We will have new (*unfallen*) glorified bodies just like Jesus had when he rose from the dead and appeared to many people over 40 days before His ascension to the throne in heaven.

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. **Philippians 3:20-21**

The last three verses of the *real* Lord’s Prayer!

*“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and **that I myself may be in them.**”* **John 17:24-26**