

COMPARISONS

Progressive sanctification: Some church bodies today teach that sanctification, God's process whereby He effectively makes us holy, is progressive. The Lutheran Church teaches that sanctification may vary at different times in a person's life (see Romans 7:14-19; Galatians 2:11; 5:17; 1 John 1:8).

Possibility of sanctification: Lutheran Christians, along with Presbyterians and some Evangelicals, teach that perfect sanctification in this life, due to the persistent effects of the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh, is impossible, and that Christians claiming to be sinless have, under the influence of Satan, deceived themselves (see 1 John 1:8, 10; John 8:44). Other church bodies, particularly the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches, teach that perfect sanctification is difficult to obtain, but it can be done—the saints, for example. Still others, particularly from the Wesleyan family of church bodies, including the Methodists, Pentecostals, and Holiness groups, teach that perfect sanctification is attainable in this life by any Christian earnestly seeking it.

Requirement of sanctification: Correlative with their doctrine of purgatory, the Roman Catholic Church insists that perfect sanctification is required before enjoying the beatific vision of God. Upon death, the saints, due to their achievement of perfect holiness, enter immediately into heaven. Those not achieving full sanctification in this life are “purged” (hence, “purgatory”) of their sins after death for an indeterminate time until they are able to enter God's presence.