

The Bible Says Series #1:

Would You Like To Be A Saint?

What the Bible Says about Sainthood

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What makes a person a saint? Is it being a professional football player playing in New Orleans? Is it being someone who smiles in the midst of suffering? Is it being someone who does good deeds for other people? Is it being someone who exhibits a combination of factors and receives an official declaration by a church body?

What does the Bible, God's Word, say? What is the biblical path to sainthood? Can anyone, *even you*, become a saint? Can you know *now* that you are a saint or can you only know after death?

What Does Saint Mean?

In the New Testament, the word *saint* always translates the Greek word *hagios*. *Hagios* comes from a group of words that mean holy, holiness, sanctify, sanctification, set-apart, dedicated to God. The verb *hagiazō* means “to sanctify, to set-apart or separate from the profane unto God, to purify.” The noun, *hagiasmos* (*sanctification*) is the process and the noun, *hagios*, the result of the process “one set-apart or separate, a saint.”

Therefore, a saint is one who has been set apart unto God by sanctification.

This process of setting apart from sin, of purifying, or separating UNTO God is vitally important. Tragically, every person is born separated FROM God. Romans 3:23 says that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” Ephesians 2:1 adds that everyone is dead in their trespasses and sins. Everyone enters this world dead spiritually. James 2:26 defines death as separation. We are dead spiritually since we are separated from God from conception.

This is not surprising. Each one of us bears the guilt of Adam's sin. Each one of us has a sin nature inherited from Adam. Each one of us wastes very little time proving that we are sinners. As Solomon says “there is no man which sinneth not” (2 Chronicles 6:36). It is little wonder that a holy God must separate from us.

Thankfully God has established a means whereby we may change from being separated FROM God to being separated UNTO God! We can become a saint!!

Who Were Saints In The Bible?

The Bible yields the following insights about saints:

First, they were abundant. Paul wrote to the saints at Rome (Romans 1:7), at Corinth (I Corinthians 1:2), at Ephesus (Ephesians 1:1), at Colosse (Colossians 1:2), and at Philippi (Philippians 1:1).

Second, the saints were not just the elite of the church. When Paul wrote to the Philippians, he wrote to “to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.” (Philippians 1:1). If we consider the bishops (pastors) and deacons to be the church's elite, then the saints refers to the rank and file of the church. They were the born-again believers who comprised the membership of the church at Philippi. Such is clearly the case at Colosse where the saints are also the “faithful brethren” (Colossians 1:2), i.e. those who are part of the family of God. Similarly at Rome, they are the “called” which is clearly another name for those who have been born again (cp. Romans 8:29-30).

Third, they were not necessarily super spiritual people. The churches at Rome, Ephesus, Colosse, and Philippi were commended by Paul. They had their problems, but these epistles sought to train growing Christians to serve the Lord better.

Corinth, however, was a completely different story. They had a number of major problems within the church. Paul wrote a letter not of commendation, but of condemnation. Rather than noting their spirituality, he writes,

“For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (1 Corinthians 3:3). They were not doing commendable things. They were not living an exemplary spiritual life but nevertheless were called saints by the Apostle Paul.

In summary, the Bible teaches that saints were found in all the churches, were apparently the members of the church, and were called saints for reasons not based on their works or spiritual life. Interestingly a writer from the church body noted in the first paragraph of this brochure, a body that declares people to be saints, admits, “In the Apostolic Church all Christians were called saints”¹ He is right! If that is the biblical pattern, then it must be the pattern for all time, not just the time of the Apostolic Church. To practice something different today is to disregard Scripture and place some other authority above the Word of God. We must never, never do that.

Would YOU Like To Be A Saint?

The road to sainthood is often called the Romans Road. The first stop on that road is to admit the you are a sinner—you have disobeyed God. The Bible says so. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23. Paul elaborates, “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” (Romans 3:10-12). No one does good in the sight of God, including you.

The second stop on the road is to agree that God has justly condemned you, first with physical death “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” (Romans 5:12), and then eternal death in hell, “For the wages of sin is death [eternal]; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 6:23).

The third stop is to recognize that you can do nothing about your sinful state and just sentence, but that the Lord Jesus Christ did everything by coming in flesh (thus was fully God and fully man) to die for your sins, “But God commendeth [demonstrated/proved] his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8). The Lord Jesus Christ paid for your sins and offers to you now a free gift of salvation (See Romans 6:23 earlier).

The last stop on the Romans Road is receiving that gift of eternal life (Romans 6:23), “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus [agree that Jesus is the Lord God], and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” (Romans 10:9) Salvation comes when you declare your belief that Jesus is Lord and is living.

When the Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas what he needed to do to be saved, i.e. to become a saint, they replied, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved . . .” (Acts 16:31). Are you willing to repent (turn from) your sin and your ways of getting to heaven (good works, good life, religious works), and turn to God’s way, trusting in what Jesus did on the cross for you? John puts it this way, “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God [the saints], even to them that believe on his name.” (John 1:12) Are you ready to receive Jesus as your Savior and Lord? Are you ready to become a saint?

¹ Nevins, M.M., Albert J. 1990. *Answering A Fundamentalist*. Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc. p. 106.

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