

# What does it mean to be a saint?

## Consecrated to God for God (*saints*, v1)

- a. *Hagios* means “holy one”
  - i. Used substantively mostly of impersonal things, although a few times of people and often of God’s name
    - 1. Temple and Tabernacle are holy (Lev 16:20,33; 1 Ch 29:3; Ps 5:7)
    - 2. The altar is holy (Ex 29:37;
    - 3. The ground is holy (Ex 3:5)
  - ii. Used adjectively of predominantly persons
    - 1. God’s character (Ps 22:3; 99:9; Is 6:3; Rev 4:8)
    - 2. Angels (Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; Rev 14:10)
    - 3. Humans (Ezra 8:28; Ps 16:3; 34:9; Rom 1:7)
  - iii. The basic idea refers to the quality possessed by things or persons that could approach a divinity.
    - 1. Used in the NT of John the Baptist (Mark 6:20)
    - 2. prophets (Luke 1:70; 2 Pet 3:2)
    - 3. apostles (Eph 3:5)
    - 4. children (1 Cor 7:14)
  - iv. When this term is used of persons, it does not connote an *inherent* or *intrinsic* holiness or uniqueness, for the word is also used of pagan cult prostitutes, whether they are male or female.
    - 1. Though this letter is addressed to “saints” Paul makes it a point to show that they should live as holy ones, not live in sin. They were instructed to be holy, for they may have been practicing unholy things.
    - 2. So, in the NT, all believers are saints, not that they can possess or claim divinity, but that they have appropriated Jesus Christ’s work of His holiness into their lives by faith.
- b. In Christ - have his righteousness, blameless
  - i. not inherent, but imputed (1 Cor 6:11; Titus 3:3-7)
  - ii. union with Christ (our life for His, His life for ours...grace)
    - 1. Keep an eye out for these phrases: “in Him” or “through Him” or “by Him” or “in Christ” etc.
    - 2. It is our union with Jesus Christ, not some gifting of our own or an inherent position of power that makes us holy ones
  - iii. all are equally blameless, righteous
    - 1. There is no distinction between more holy ones and less holy ones in Christ
    - 2. Eph 2:3-10
- c. Access to the Father through the Son
  - i. -given ability to enter His presence
    - 1. seated in the heavens with Christ (Col 3:1-4; Eph 2:6)
    - 2. We can enter within the veil (Heb 6:19-20)
    - 3. We can draw near to God b/c of Christ (James 4:8; Heb 10:22)
  - ii. set apart to be in His presence
  - iii. only through the Son

1. Heb 10:19ff
  2. Heb 7:19
  3. we are saints “in Christ Jesus” alone
- d. Gifted to serve Him and build His Kingdom
    - i. set apart to serve
    - ii. given spiritual gifts to serve Him
    - iii. instructed on how to live like a saint
  - e. Distinctive by God’s grace
    - i. Different, unique
    - ii. Not by our inherent distinction, but by God’s gracious choice
    - iii. All in Christ

## A believer in Jesus Christ (*believers*, v1)

- a. Paul is using saints and believers epexegetically, or to explain each other
  - i. Explain from other letters
    1. Not addressed to “churches” like in 1 Cor, Gal, Thess, but rather to “saints”
    2. Used also in Phil and Col
  - ii. Explain grammatically
    1. translated “kai” as “and” and it appears that there are two groups addressed: saints and faithful
      - a. The other greetings of Paul do not support this idea
      - b. Rom 1:7 denotes the called church as saints; 1 Cor 1:2 all the church are called saints
      - c. Should be translated, “that is” or “namely”
    2. The word, “believe,” could be translated actively or passively
      - a. Passively: one who is faithful, trustworthy
      - b. Actively: one who trusts, believes
      - c. The active sense fits in with the context better, namely that it is defining saints as opposed to mentioning a separate group (which would be a strange departure for Paul).
        - i. Furthermore, the “faithful” would not need the exhortation of this letter nearly as much as the “unfaithful” would need it.
    3. Paul is not contrasting “faithful” vs. “unfaithful”, but is instead describing the saints as those who believe in Jesus Christ
      - a. The opposite of “πιστις” is “απιστις” which in the NT does not mean “unfaithful” but rather “unbeliever”
      - b. John 20:27; 2 Cor 6:15, where both words are used
- b. To believe is not just to assent to Jesus, but rather to trust His person and His work to fulfill God's righteous requirements.
  - i. Do not trust your own goodness or works
  - ii. Trust only in Jesus Christ’s goodness and works

### Conclusion:

Paul is writing this letter to all believers in Jesus Christ. Those who have believed, that is trusted in Jesus’s sacrifice in their place and in His gracious gift of forgiveness and righteousness and do not trust their

own works, are declared by God to be holy. They are set apart for God, to know Him, love Him, worship Him, serve Him, and glorify Him. If you have put your trust in Christ, then this is who you are: Holy ones. You are righteous because of Jesus; you are gifted because of Jesus; you are in God's family because of Jesus. Dwell on these thoughts: in Jesus I am free to worship God without fear; in Jesus I am loved more deeply than I have ever dared to hope; in Jesus I am not rejected by God when I make mistakes; in Jesus I find freedom to be what God created me to be and I find forgiveness in abundance when I fail miserably. In Jesus, I find joy and rest. What do you think about Jesus now?

#### QUESTIONS:

1. When you think or hear of the word, "saint," what comes to mind? How have you come to define "saint" in this manner? How does this definition line up with Truth (Scripture)?
2. Given the teaching above, how does God define a "saint?" What must one do in order to become a saint? Is this really a "work?" Why or why not?
3. Is anything or anyone inherently "holy?" What is it that makes something or someone "holy?" How are these things made holy?
4. Since God makes all those in Christ holy, how does this make you view yourself (see vs. 3-14)? Have you done anything of your own to claim this holiness? Why did God do such a strange thing?
5. How does this biblical view of sainthood impact your view of others? If sainthood is all by the gracious gift of God, how do we treat those "better" than us, or "worse" than us (using these terms relatively and loosely)?
6. Who is it that makes you distinctively different and able to approach God? How has He accomplished such a wonder? Take a few minutes and reflect upon this Truth. Let it lead you to worship the One who has holified you by His own gracious will.