



# GOOD NEWS

## for the unsaved WORLD!

(#169)  
Are you a "saint"?

## Are you a SAINT?



NO WAY! I'M NOT PERFECT!

MY HALO IS BROKEN!

I DON'T WANT TO BE A MARTYR!

AND I DON'T KNOW HOW TO PERFORM MIRACLES!

ONLY WHEN I WEAR MY MASK!

THE REST OF THE TIME I'M A DEVIL!

## Are you a SAINT?



MOST PEOPLE'S IDEA OF A "SAINT" DOES *NOT* COME FROM THE BIBLE.

I THINK I'M BECOMING A SAINT!

YOU DON'T NEED TO DRESS WEIRD, WEAR A HALO OR WINGS, OR EVEN BE A STATUE!

IF YOU ACCEPT WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS, YOU'LL DISCOVER THAT YOU *DON'T* EVEN NEED TO BE PERFECT!

## Are you a SAINT?

Depending on your background, this may sound like a strange question.

People use the word "SAINT" in so many ways ... but rarely do they consider what the Bible says. (*This is going to be our focus.*)

FIRST, WE NEED TO LOOK AT A TRANSLATION ISSUE.

SORRY! WE VOTED ON YOUR "SAINTHOOD" AND YOU LOST BY ½ OF A PERCENT!

WELL, AT LEAST I DON'T HAVE TO GET A BUILDING NAMED AFTER ME!

<b>O.T. HEBREW word group</b> קדש קדש קדש קדוש מקדש	+	<b>N.T. GREEK word group</b> ἅγιος, ἀγιάζω, ἁγιασμός, ἀγιότης, ἁγιασύνη
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These Hebrew/Greek word groups are translated by **3 English word groups!**

<b>ENGLISH</b> holiness, holy, hallowed, etc. <i>(Old English/German origin.)</i>	<b>ENGLISH</b> [saint] sanctify, sanctuary, sanctification, etc. <i>(Latin origin.)</i>
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[occasionally] → **ENGLISH**  
consecrate, consecration, etc.  
*(Middle English/Latin origin.)*

**WHAT ALL THIS MEANS**

### What all this means.

The people making the translation decide which word to use!

In this case, they will choose between the words "saint" and "holy."

**EXAMPLE: From 1 Corinthians 1:2**  
 God's people ... "... called to be **holy**." = "... called to be **saints**."

The word choice is a matter of **translator's preference**.

We will be focusing on what Scripture says about "**holy** ones" – which is translated as "**saints**," in some translations.

There are a few instances (mostly Old Testament) in which a different word is translated as "saint" in some translations. These are referring to a *godly* or *faithful* person. These are not our focus.

## Holy One(s) or Saint(s) in the Old Testament.

### 1. HOLY ONE or SAINT (singular form).

- The singular form of the word occurs nearly 50 times in the Old Testament.
- Almost all** of them refer to God – and most of these are in the book of Isaiah. (The word "saint" is *never* used for these.)
- Twice**, "holy one" is used of a heavenly messenger sent to King Nebuchadnezzar in a dream, in Daniel 4:13, 23.

"As I was lying in my bed, I also saw in the visions of my mind a watcher, a **holy one**, coming down from heaven."

Daniel 4:13 (CSB)

(Daniel repeats this description in v. 23, when he interprets the dream.)

7

### [HOLY ONE or SAINT, singular form (continued).]

- Once**, it is used of a human: Aaron the priest is described as the "holy one" (or "saint"), in Psalm 106:16.
- This refers back to Korah's rebellion (Numbers 16), where they were claiming that *everyone* was holy, and qualified to do Aaron's job. (In reality, Aaron was the *only* one who was *set apart* – "made holy" – for this task.)

#### IN NUMBERS 16:

The man the Lord chooses will be the one who is **holy**.

Numbers 16:7b (NIV)

#### IN PSALM 106:

In the camp they were envious of Moses and of Aaron, the LORD's **holy one**.  
The earth opened up and swallowed Dathan; it covered the assembly of Abiram.  
Fire blazed throughout their assembly; flames consumed the wicked.

Psalm 106:16-18 (CSB)

8

### 2. HOLY ONES or SAINTS (plural form).

- The plural form of the word occurs about 20 times in the Old Testament.
- NONE** of them refer to God.
- About half** of them refer to the inhabitants of heaven; and most translations use the phrase "holy ones." (Very few use the word "saints.")

Most are references to angelic beings. But based on what we know from the New Testament, it's possible that one or two instances might include resurrected saved people, when Jesus returns.

Then the LORD my God will come and all the **holy ones** with him.

Zechariah 14:5b (CSB)

9

### [HOLY ONES or SAINTS, plural form (continued).]

- About half** of them refer to people on earth. The term used ("holy ones" or "saints") is strictly the translator's preference.
- Some passages may refer to what we (from a New Testament perspective) would call "saved people."
- Most of the verses in this group are probably a reference to the Jewish people as a nation – which would include both saved and unsaved Jews. (Because of promises made to their ancestors, God "set them apart" as *his* people.) The following prophecy is about a ruler who will oppress the Jewish people:

He will speak words against the Most High and oppress the **holy ones** of the Most High. He will intend to change religious festivals and laws, and the **holy ones** will be handed over to him for a time, times, and half a time.

Daniel 7:25 (CSB)

10

## Holy One(s) or Saint(s) in the New Testament.

### 1. HOLY ONE or SAINT (singular form).

- The singular form of the word occurs just a few times in the New Testament.
- All but one** of them refer to God (normally Jesus). (The word "saint" is never used.)
- One time** it refers to people. In this instance, it is being addressed to the group (not singling out any individual), and the emphasis is on "each of them." Here, translations tend to use the word "saint," or use a paraphrase, such as "believers" or "God's people."

Greet every **saint** in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:21a (CSB)

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Greet all **God's people** in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:21a (NIV)

11

### 2. HOLY ONES or SAINTS (plural form).

- The plural form of the word occurs about 60 times in the New Testament.
- NONE** of them refer to God.
- One** of them refers to heavenly beings. The term is undefined, and could refer to angels and/or resurrected saved people. Most translations use the phrase "holy ones." (A few use the word "saints.")

[Enoch] prophesied: "Look! The Lord comes with tens of thousands of his **holy ones** to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly concerning all the ungodly acts that they have done in an ungodly way, and concerning all the harsh things ungodly sinners have said against him."

Jude 1:14b-15 (CSB)

12

[HOLY ONES or SAINTS, plural form (continued).]

- **About 3 dozen times**, the word "saints" or "holy ones" refers to followers of Jesus.
  - ✓ These followers are *living*, not dead; *on earth*, not in heaven.
  - ✓ They are referred to *as a group* (whether locally or worldwide), not as individuals.
  - ✓ These groups are *not sinless*, though they pursue it.
  - ✓ *No individual is singled-out* as being a "saint," who is *more "special"* than the other Christians; although *groups* of "saints" may be commended for something they have done. On the other hand, Paul describes himself as being *less "special"*:

Though I am the *least deserving* of all **God's people**, he graciously gave me the privilege of telling the Gentiles about the endless treasures available to them in Christ.

Ephesians 3:8 (NLT)

13

[HOLY ONES or SAINTS, plural form (continued).]

- **About a dozen times**, it refers to Jews who are saved (or who *claim* to be saved). There are three different focuses:
  - ✓ *Saved Jews living in Israel*: Many of these verses focus on helping those who were needy.
  - ✓ *Saved Jews as "God's People"*: Paul tells the Gentiles that God has removed the barrier between them and "God's people" (referring to Jews). Gentiles can now be saved! (Most translators use the word "saints"; a few, "God's holy people.")

So, then, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with the **saints**, and members of God's household, ...  
Ephesians 2:19 (CSB)

A person needs to know the context (perhaps beginning in verse 11), in order to realize that this reference is to saved Jews.

14

(Referring to Jews, continued.)

- ✓ *"Old Testament Jews"* (i.e., saved before Jesus died on the cross). These are called "saints" in Matthew 27.

When Jesus died, there was an earthquake. One of the events that occurred was this:

The tombs were also opened and many bodies of the **saints** who had fallen asleep were raised. And they came out of the tombs after his resurrection, entered the holy city, and appeared to many.

Matthew 27:52-53 (CSB)

- **About 15 times**, the book of Revelation mentions "saints" or "holy ones." *All uses of this word are consistent with our other observations.* (One's interpretation of this book will influence his understanding of who a specific reference is about; so we have not placed these verses in the other categories.)

15

**SUMMARY: How the Bible uses the word "saint(s)" / "holy one(s)."**

(The primary associations are highlighted in red.)

Category	OLD Testament	NEW Testament
Singular form (saint or holy one)	(~50 times) <b>God</b> : Almost all times. <b>Heavenly beings</b> : Twice. <b>People</b> : Once, referring to a person chosen for a specific task.	(a few times) <b>God</b> : Almost all times. <b>Heavenly beings</b> : None. <b>People</b> : Once, in the sense of "each of them."
	(~20 times) <b>God</b> : Never. <b>Heavenly beings</b> : About ½ of the verses. <b>People</b> : About ½ of the verses, mostly about the Jews as a nation.	(~60 times) <b>God</b> : Never. <b>Heavenly beings</b> : Once. <b>People</b> : Almost all of the verses (some ⇒ saved Jews; the majority ⇒ all followers of Jesus).

16

**A common feature seen in ALL these Scripture passages:**

- **The term can refer to God, heavenly beings, or people.**
- **When it refers to God:**
  - ✓ It *always* occurs in the singular form.
  - ✓ The term "holy one" is used – not "saint."
- **When it refers to heavenly beings or people:**
  - ✓ It *almost always* occurs in the plural form.
  - ✓ The choice of the word "saints" vs. "holy ones" (or even a phrase, such as "God's people") is strictly *a matter of the translator's preference*.

17

**How should we respond to all this?**

- ✓ **Where are we going to get our definition?**  
If we choose to define this concept the way the *Bible* defines it, we may have to completely revise our views.
- ✓ **Regarding human "saints" (or "holy ones"):**  
In the Bible, there is *no such thing* as a "saint" (or "holy one") that is different from "the rest of us" who follow Jesus!

In fact, "the rest of us" followers of Jesus *are* the saints (or holy ones)!  
**The Bible never separates the two!**

18

## Consider this:

The New Testament teaches "saints" how to be "saints"!

*Are WE willing to learn?*

- Much of the New Testament was written to "new-born" Christians, who didn't understand all that it means to "follow Jesus"... *but they were willing to learn.*
- When Paul (and others) explained what it meant to "follow Jesus," those who were genuine "saints" would be willing to learn; but the fakes would eventually fall away (or at least remain unchanged).

(Next time, we plan to focus on *how we should live as saints.*)

19

## A worthy **MISSION** this week!

We may feel that we don't "deserve" to be called a "saint."

In reality, it is *true* that we don't deserve it – just like we don't deserve anything else God has done for us!

**BUT GOD IS CHANGING US!** Therefore...

We can make it our goal to rejoice in what God has done for us!  
We can accept it, and learn how to respond properly!

(Next time, we plan to focus on this response.)

20

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21