

Studies in Daniel #9 – The “Saints of the Most High”

The overall theme of Daniel is: **God’s kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.** Dan. 4:3, 4:34, 6:26, 7:14, 7:27, Ps. 145:13

In the first three lessons, we looked at who God is: the source of true wisdom and knowledge and the revealer of secrets, that he is absolutely sovereign, and that he has an eternal kingdom. Concerning man, we saw the need for complete loyalty and obedience to God, for humility vs. pride, and for repentance. Then we studied the one called the “Son of God” and the “Son of man”, and the “Antichrist”.

Theme #8: The “Saints of the Most High”

One thing we see repeatedly in the latter part of Daniel are references to the “saints of the most High”. See 7:18-27, 8:13, 11:32-35, 12:1-3, and 12:10.

There are two words that the KJV translates as “saint” in the OT. The first is “**chasid**”, which means the godly, or pious ones – people who by their lives show godliness, as reverential attitude and consistent service to God, and kindness, fairness, and love to men. This term is used frequently in the Psalms. The other term is “**kadosh**” (**Hebrew**) or “**kadish**” (**Aramaic**), which means holy, set apart, sanctified ones, and this is what is used in Daniel.

Being a saint in the Biblical sense means, first, that a person has been called and set apart to God, and secondly, that we live godly and righteous lives. We are first saints by calling and consecration, and as a result we are saints by love and godly service to God and man.

In the NT there is only one Greek word that is translated as saint, and it is “**hagios**”, which corresponds to the Hebrew kadosh. The NT uses the word often however, simply as a word to describe a Christian believer. For example, Eph. 1:1 says “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.” That is, if you are a Christian, you are a saint. This is different from the Roman Catholic concept of sainthood as describing a few dead “super-Christians” who receive prayers and worship, and dispense favors in this life.

Although the NT does not distinguish between a chasid and a kadosh like the Hebrew, the distinction is still valid. If you are not living as a chasid (pious, godly person), perhaps you should question whether you are really a kadosh (a person set apart, holy, and consecrated to God). If you aren’t bearing the fruit of a Christian life, can you be confident that you possess the reality?

So who are these saints that Daniel speaks of? In the OT context of Daniel, it is obvious that they are the Jews who will be living faithfully to God at the time of the “little horn’s” power. From our viewpoint in the NT, we can see that God’s saints also include Gentile believers. The saints are Christian believers, whether Jewish or Gentile.

What does Daniel tell us about these saints?

1. In the interpretation of the **dream/vision of chapter 7 (four beasts and the little horn)**; God’s throne of judgment; the coming of one like the Son of man, to whom is given dominion over the kingdom of God)
 - a. 7:18 – The saints will take the kingdom and possess it for ever and ever
 - b. 7:21 – The little horn (Antichrist) will make war with the saints and prevail against them
 - c. 7:22 – This will only continue until the judgment by the Ancient of Days, at which time the saints will possess the kingdom
 - d. 7:25 – The little horn will “wear out the saints of the most High”, and they shall be given into his hands for “a time and times and the dividing of time”. By comparing multiple references in Daniel and Revelation, this can be shown to be 3 ½ years (1 + 2 + ½).
 - e. 7:26-27 – The little horn will be judged and his dominion taken away, after which the dominion and kingdom will be given to the people of the saints of the most High.

In summary, 7:18-27 shows that the Antichrist will successfully persecute the saints for 3 ½ years (the last half of the Tribulation), but he will be destroyed at the coming of Christ, and then the everlasting kingdom will be given over to the saints (the survivors as well as the resurrected saints).

2. In chapter 8 and **the vision of the ram and the he-goat**, the great horn, and the little horn that takes away the daily sacrifice and casts down the place of the sanctuary.

In 8:13-14, it mentions a question and answer between two saints. It seems apparent that in this context, “saints” refers, not to men, but to angels. This should not be too surprising, because angels are also holy, sanctified, and set apart unto God.

3. Chapter 11 is also a prophecy of the Antichrist, who takes away the daily sacrifice and places the abomination of desolation in the temple. See 11:30-45.

11:32-35 says he will corrupt many people by flatteries, but “the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits”; that they who understand shall instruct many, and so will fall by the sword, flame, captivity, and spoil for a time. Even though they will receive a little help, some of them will fall (to the Antichrist), to try them, purge them, and make them white.

4. Chapter 12 gives more details about this Tribulation period

12:1-3 says it will be a time of trouble like the world has never seen, but God’s people will be helped by Michael (the “great prince”, or archangel), and all that are written in God’s book will be delivered.

Ultimately there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the righteous and the wicked. The wise and those who turn many to righteousness will shine like stars with God’s glory, for ever.

12:10 says that many of the saints will be “purified, and made white, and tried” (i.e., martyred), and they will understand what is happening, but that the wicked will not understand (they will see the saints’ sufferings as utter defeat).

So again, the summary of what Daniel reveals about the “saints” is that they will be faithful believers in God at the time of the Tribulation, that they will be horribly persecuted, and multitudes martyred by the Antichrist, but that at the end of the Tribulation will be the Second Coming of Christ to defeat and destroy the Antichrist, to resurrect the saints, and to bring in his everlasting kingdom.

What can we know about the saints who live and die during this period? Rev. 6 and 7 give us at least part of the answer.

6:9-11 – The fifth seal of divine judgment was of great numbers of martyrs. “... I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”

7:1-8 describes 144,000 believing Jews who are sealed by God and so are protected from the judgments next to fall on the earth, sea, and trees (the seven “trumpet judgments”, mainly in Rev. 8 and 9).

7:9-17 then describes an innumerable multitude from all nations (not just Jews), standing before the throne and the Lamb, clothed in white robes, giving praise to the Lamb. 7:14-17 – “These are they which came out of [the] great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

This brings up another issue often asked, if we are to believe in a pre-Tribulation rapture, **will there be Christians present in the Tribulation?** The short answer is yes; the long answer requires explanation, which must wait for another time.