

Saint: One Appointed to Rule in the Future Kingdom

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Christians sometimes spend so much time bemoaning their inadequacy and lack of spirituality that they forget why they are Christians in the first place. Followers of Jesus Christ are called “saints.” The title “saint” in the New Testament applies to every true believer. True believers are those who obey Jesus (Heb. 5:9; Jn. 3:36, 12:44-48; Luke 8:12; Acts 8:12). The word “saint” is not reserved for a special class of Christians who demonstrate a holiness superior to the run-of-the-mill disciple. Biblical saints are those bought by Jesus “from every tribe, language, people and nation. He has made them a line of kings and priests for God to rule the world” (Rev. 5:9-10).

In fact, there cannot really be any run-of-the-mill believers, because a saint is one appointed to the royal family of Israel. A saint is one selected by God to rule the world with Jesus. A saint is one invited to royalty and kingship. Christianity is the call to kingship in the Kingdom of God. The saints are to be God’s choice people. They are in training to manage the world (1 Cor. 6:2).

The great truths of the Christian faith are rooted in the Hebrew Scriptures. The notion of the saint and his role in God’s plan is found there too — and in a chapter of Daniel which all Christians should practically have memorized. This critically important section of the Old Testament contains a veritable blueprint for the Abrahamic/Davidic/Jesuanic faith revealed in Christ (cp. Gen. 12, 13, 15, 17; 2 Sam. 7; Gal. 3:29).

Daniel 7:13-14 describes an investiture with royal office. The recipient of this authority to rule is the “Son of Man,” a figure who, in the interpretation given by the angel (7:18, 22, 27), signifies the saints of the Most High. “Son of Man” is the favorite self-designation of Jesus. He is *The Human Person*, and he has others with him. Naturally so, for he reckoned himself, as Messiah the King, to be the chief of the body of saints. The saints are the ones appointed to rule in the future Kingdom. This is made clear throughout the seventh chapter of Daniel. Jesus is the new Adam reversing the failure of the first Adam to rule for God. Christians are destined to carry out the royal role originally assigned to national Israel. Salvation is “of the Jews” and the true Israel of the new covenant is the international true church.

The point to be noted is this: The saints will receive the Kingdom, possess the Kingdom, and all nations will serve and obey **them** (Dan. 7:27). Some translations are shy of the shocking (as they think) notion that human beings, Christians, should be destined to rule as kings. To some that sounds regrettably “political,” and so the whole promise to the saints that they are to rule the world with Jesus is often toned down, sentimentalized and obscured. To use the very popular false idea: the biblical hope has been “spiritualized,” that is, rendered so vague as to be meaningless. It is much more palatable to think that “souls go to heaven” when they die, where they cannot make much of an impact on the earth! The dead are very falsely said to have “passed on” or “passed away,” a concept which implies they really did not die but continued to exist in heaven, fully alive but disembodied.

Daniel knew of no such evasions of plain truth. The saints are to possess the Kingdom “under the whole heaven” and to rule in it forever. All nations are to be subject to them as immortal kings (Dan. 7:14, 18, 22, 27). See also Rev. 1:6; 2:26; 3:21; 5:10; 20:1-6; Isa. 32:1.

What a world it will be! Isaiah 14:7: “The whole world is at rest and calm. They break forth with shouts of joy!” How very far removed this is from present world conditions!

How will this huge change of world affairs come about? “But the court will sit for judgment and his [the Antichrist’s] dominion will be taken away forever. Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the Kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the saints of the Most High. **Their** Kingdom will be an everlasting Kingdom, and all dominions will serve and obey **them**” (Dan. 7:26-27, CEB, CJB, GNT, and Jewish Publication Society Translation).

This is the heart and core of the saving Gospel of the Kingdom as preached by Jesus and Paul. Paul used the prospect of royal office and destiny as a spur to his converts to conduct themselves worthy of royalty. 1 Thessalonians 2:12 is a miniature statement (just like Ps. 110:1) of the whole NT: “You should behave in a way worthy of the God who is calling you into His own Kingdom and glory.” In other words, act now as befits a king in training. Reflect daily on the amazing honor that God desires to bestow on you by inviting you to share royalty with Jesus. Could any destiny be calculated to stir within us the determination to do our best for the Messiah and for his Kingdom? Not to mention that this destiny includes living forever, being indestructible, incapable of death.

If the prospect of royal office seems to be remote from reality, then study and meditate on the books of Samuel and Kings, Judges and Chronicles, and observe the reverence which is due to the king or governor. He is God’s agent in the theocratic Kingdom. 1 Samuel 16 has to do with the choosing of an ideal king, in this case David. God looks on the heart, the personality (1 Sam. 16:7), as he selects the one who will rule for Him. Watch the trials and tests of David, as God prepares him to shepherd His people Israel. This is the model and pattern of NT Christianity.

Note that the Proverbs are really ruling principles, a manual of wisdom to those who desire to be found fit to be king. Solomon’s failure to measure up to the divine standard, his missing the mark in regard to God’s appointment of him to be king, is recorded as a stark warning for us.

In the NT Jesus sows the seed of the Kingdom Gospel message through Jesus (Matt. 13:19: “the word about the Kingdom”) and invites candidates for royal office to leave their previous wicked lifestyle and come forward for training. Jesus promises that the New Covenant ratified and sealed in his blood is the promise of future rulership in the Kingdom. “You are the ones who have stood by me in my trials, and just as my Father has **covenanted** to me a Kingdom, I now **covenant** with you that you may eat and drink in my Kingdom. You will sit on twelve thrones to administer the twelve [regathered] tribes of Israel” (Luke 22:28-30).

The reward offered and promised to the Church by Paul is patterned after Jesus’ promise to all his followers: “Don’t you understand that the saints are going to manage the world?” (1 Cor. 6:2, Moffat). “*If we endure, we will rule as kings with him*” (2 Tim 2:12).

Paul used a powerful irony to try to persuade erring believers to understand the awful error of imagining that believers are now already ruling as kings. With tongue in cheek, Paul said, “You already have everything; you are rich already; you have come into your Kingdom, without any help from us! Well, I wish you really were kings so that we could be ruling as kings with you!” (1 Cor. 4:8).

To “inherit the Kingdom” (1 Cor. 6:9-10) is the Bible’s way of describing the destiny and future of true believers. Had not Jesus promised the believers that they would “inherit the earth/land”? (Matt. 5:5, see the same truth repeated five times in Ps. 37).

This primary royal Bible theme is developed further in Revelation 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10 (not KJV); 20:1-6. In each of these verses, and many more, we see God’s plan to establish justice on earth, through an inspired government — the first ever — led by Messiah and his companions. God has “subjected the inhabited earth of the future” to Christ and his faithful saints (Heb. 2:5).

To inherit or possess the Kingdom (see Ps. 37) means much more than simply being *in* the Kingdom. The word “Kingdom” has a dynamic sense. It means the reign of God through Jesus, or God ruling. That rule will be conducted by the saints, of whom Jesus is the pioneer and example. He has already been resurrected from death and exalted to glory (Ps. 110:1). The Christians are on the same path and will be resurrected to immortality in the Kingdom when Jesus comes back, at his Parousia, Second Coming (1 Cor. 15:23; Luke 14:14; Rev 11:15-18).

I wish that believers everywhere could come to see that the whole genius of the Christian faith is concentrated in the word “Kingdom.” “Kingdom,” however, does not mean a vague sense of the lordship of Jesus in the heart. It means the challenge and invitation to sainthood, the call to kingship, to function as a royal executive with Messiah. We are to enter the service of the Christ now. He is the King of Israel and he will be King of the whole world. We are also to share now in the colossal task of making known his intention to return to the earth to inaugurate his Kingdom worldwide. That is the basis of the Gospel of the Kingdom which we are commanded (not just an option!) to believe by repenting of our unbelief! (Mark 1:14-15).

Have you grasped that Mark 1:1 tells us that this is the “beginning of the Gospel”? That is where the Gospel *starts*. It does not start with the death of Jesus. It starts with the teaching and preaching of Jesus. Let Jesus define the Gospel! Hebrews 2:3 says that salvation had its **beginning** in the preaching of Jesus, i.e. what he preached as Gospel. You may perhaps have taken in the very false idea that Paul and not Jesus is the originator of the Gospel.

At the same time we are now to conduct ourselves as the royal family of spiritual, international Israel (Gal. 6:16; Phil. 3:3), the spiritual children of Abraham, to whom rulership of the world in the future Kingdom has been promised (Rom. 4:13). “If you belong to Christ, then you count as Abraham’s descendants and are heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:29). Heirship and inheritance refer always to the future worldwide government of God and of the Messiah.

Daniel 7 is key to all good preaching of the Gospel. It deserves the widest press as compulsory background reading to the Christianity of the New Testament. In that chapter, however, you will find that the saints will have to suffer in order to gain their crowns (cp. Acts 14:22: “through much suffering we are destined to enter the Kingdom”). The future antichrist, the “little horn,” struggles to wear down the saints of the Most High (v. 25). He actually appears to defeat them, because as Satan’s tool he is determined to put an end to their Gospel Message (cp. Luke 8:12). But that is not the end of the drama. The saints (the holy ones) reappear as inheritors and possessors of the coming Kingdom. “The Ancient of Days came and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived for the saints to take possession of the Kingdom (Dan. 7:22).

All this is the essential substance of the New Testament faith in the Gospel as Jesus preached it (Mark 1:14-15). Jesus spoke constantly about giving up life now, in order to gain the Life of royal office in the Kingdom in the coming age. It is called “the life of the age to come,” poorly and vaguely translated as “eternal life” (Dan. 12:2: “the Life of the Age” to come).

How could the loss of life now be compared with the possible loss of the saints’ destiny? That future life is worth sacrifice now. “What does a man gain if he loses out on that future life?” Jesus said. “Gaining the whole world now would be pointless if one loses out on immortality” (see Luke 9:25).

A saint is one appointed to rule in the Kingdom when Jesus comes back. He or she is now an heir. Then he or she will be an inheritor and possessor (cp. Matt. 5:5; Jer. 27:5). “Flesh and blood [human beings as presently constituted] cannot inherit the Kingdom” (1 Cor. 15:50).

However, equipped with a new “spiritual body,” a body driven by spirit, a body suitable for Life in the Age to Come of the Kingdom, the saints will be competent to reign and rule as kings and queens with Messiah on the renewed earth (Rev. 5:10; 20:1-6).

The millennium, when Satan will have been arrested, imprisoned and thrown into the abyss (Rev 20:1-6) will be the first stage of the Kingdom of God of the future. Some mortals will survive to form the new society of many nations (Isa. 19). There will be a great depopulation of the world at the Second Coming, as at the flood (see Isa. 24). Remaining mortal people dying at 100 years old in that future time will be considered as having had a short life span (Isa. 65:20).

One important caution: Don’t try to implement your kingship over the world in advance of the coming of Jesus. That was the great mistake of some of the over-enthusiastic 16th-century Anabaptists, who falsely thought that the Kingdom could be established with the sword, *prior to* the arrival of Jesus. The same error has led some to believe that the theocratic Kingdom, the government of God, can be achieved through the American political system. This will not happen. The governments of the present nation-states will be replaced by the Kingdom of God and of His Messiah *only* at the future 7th trumpet, which marks the resurrection of all the faithful dead (Rev. 11:15-18). Until then Christians must “walk worthy of the God who is inviting you into His Kingdom and glory” (1 Thess. 2:12).

Whenever you read about the saints (holy ones) in the New Testament, remember that the saints are those appointed to rule and reign according to Daniel 7:14, 18, 22, 27. All nations will serve and obey **them**.

“We shall dwell in these glorified bodies **on the glorified earth**. This is one of the great Christian doctrines that has been **almost entirely forgotten and ignored**. Unfortunately the Christian Church — I speak generally — **does not believe this**, and therefore does not teach it. **It has lost its hope**, and this explains why it spends most of its time in trying to improve life in this world, in preaching politics...

“But something...remarkable is going to be true of us according to the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:1-3: ‘Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will govern or rule the world?...’ We are destined to rule, with Christ, over the world...”

“This is Christianity. This is the truth by which the New Testament Christians lived. It was because of this that they were not afraid of their persecutors...They knew that this glory was coming. This was the secret of their endurance, their patience, and their triumphing over everything that was set against them.”

— Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: Final Perseverance of the Saints*, p. 72, 75, 76

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Also my books *The Coming Kingdom of the Messiah*, *Our Fathers who Aren’t in Heaven*, and *The Amazing Aims and Claims of Jesus*,