

San Juan Church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About...

His Holy Saints - Part 2

In last week's article we discussed the six steps the Catholic Church uses to canonize "saints." The apostle Paul began most of his letters with a salutation and greeting to the saints who were living in various churches that he addressed. "To those who have been [past tense] sanctified [through baptism into Christ], saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:2). "To the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia" (2 Cor. 1:1). "To the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 1:1). "To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi..." (Phil. 1:1). "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colossae..." (Col. 1:2). As we can see through these scriptures, the saints who Paul was addressing were living members of the Lord's body [church] who were added to the church when they were obedient through baptism (Acts 2:41, 47).

According to the Catholic Church saints are canonized after their death when a second miracle is attributed to them, which is defined as a "sign" and a "wonder." There is no scripture in the Bible that speaks to the canonization of saints. The apostle John wrote "Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son" (2 John 9).

When the Jews did not believe in the miracles of Jesus, they wanted more proof that He was from heaven. Jesus replied to them "An evil and unfaithful generation seeks a sign but no sign will be given it except the sign of Jonah the prophet" (Matt. 12:39). This refers to Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. Before we had the complete written word of God, the apostles were able to perform great "miracles" and "wonders" and "signs" (Acts 2:43) just as God performed them through Jesus during His ministry (Acts 2:22). Only through the hands of the apostles were signs and wonders taking place among the people (Acts 5:12). Other believers would not be able to perform signs and wonders without the apostles coming in their presence so that they could lay their hands on them to receive this power (Acts 6:5-6, 8:14-18).

Paul knew by revelation from God that these miracles, wonders, and signs would be done away with when the complete [perfect] word of God was written, which was sometime toward the end of the first century (1 Cor. 13:8-12). The miracles, wonders, and signs were given by Jesus to the apostles to confirm the word, which had not been fully written. "How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it [salvation] WAS [past tense] at the first spoken through the Lord, it WAS [past tense] confirmed to us by those who heard, God also testifying with them [apostles and those who they laid hands on], both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit" (Heb. 2:3-4).

It is unnecessary to have signs and wonders today because ALL revelation was given to the apostles who wrote this revelation to us (Eph. 2:19-21). Jesus' half-brother, Jude, wrote "contend earnestly for the faith which was ONCE for ALL [no new revelations, folks] handed down to the saints" (Jude 3). Jude also wrote that Enoch prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones [prophets, apostles, and saints who have died in the Lord]" (Jude 14). Paul wrote that God will bring back with Him (Jesus) those who have fallen asleep in Jesus (1 Thess. 4:13-14). These two verses are the only reference to the saints who have died and are in heaven with the Lord.

Paul reminded Christians in the second letter to the Thessalonians that "the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth" the lawless one ["who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes a seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God"] who is coming in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders...For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so they will believe what is false, so that they may all be judged who did not believe the truth but took pleasure in wickedness" (2 Thess. 2:3-4, 8-12).

Send any comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:
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