

II. The Position and Practice of a Saint

Ephesians 1-2

A. Introductory Notes

1. Definition..."saint"...the term is from the root of the verb "to make holy" and related to the adjective "holy" and the noun "sanctification." Hence a "saint" is someone who is made holy by God. He has received mercy and grace and in the eyes of the Lord has taken on the special character of holiness. The term occurs three times in the English translations of Ephesians 1-2 (KJV) but the most telling occurrence is in 1:4 where the English has translated it as "holy." The teaching of the text is that everyone who is "in Christ" is properly a "saint."

2. Our limitation is such that we often refer to "St. Matthew", "St. John", etc. This is certainly not incorrect but if it allows us to think that these believers were "saints" and other believers are not, it is a mistaken idea. The observation of saintliness is more pronounced in some lives than in others: it is the result of growth in grace, yieldedness, obedience to the Word, experience in the Lord's testimony, etc., but no one is more of a saint than another. All believers are "saints" as they stand in the role of those who are holy by virtue of the possession of Christ.

3. But many believers do not think of themselves in this way. They do not see themselves as being "holy" before the Lord. Their view is that they have been blessed but there is nothing special about them that marks their lives as being uniquely religious or spiritual. Our concept is not to emphasize superficial or outward things, but to get the individual Christian to see that he (she) is a saint. And to understand that this sainthood is a daily position that should result in a daily practice.