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QH 2.3 THE MYSTERIOUS Q'DOSHYM

There is a group of beings written of throughout the pages of Scripture who play one of the most central parts in its story, yet whose exact nature remains largely misunderstood and shrouded in mystery. They are called the *Q'doshym*.

In various translations of Scripture, the word *Q'doshym* is rendered as: holy ones, set-apart ones, angels and saints. In fact, in some versions, two or more of these English terms are used for the same Hebrew or Greek word, depending upon context and the translator's own personal doctrines and biases.

Within the wide spectrum of denominations of both Judaism and Christianity, there is little agreement on the exact nature of the *Q'doshym*. Some say they are only angels and "translated" beings. Some say they are only members of the Levitical priesthood. Others say they are only the New Testament saints and followers of Jesus. Still, other groups claim that the *Q'doshym* include all who believe in the Most High. Obviously, all of these groups cannot be correct. As often happens with such disputed and doctrinally-sensitive subjects, people either err in trying to be overly definitive about something Scripture incompletely defines, or else they just simply refuse to see the truth as it is written.

The *Q'doshym* are mentioned in every major segment of Scripture. They are found in the Torah, Prophets and Writings of the TaNaK, as well as in Mattithyahu's account of Yehoshua's life and in the letters of most of his apostles. In each of these books, they play a prominent role.

Let's look at some facts about the *Q'doshym* as they are given in Scripture:

According to the Torah, in Vayyiq'ra 11, it is the children of Yisrael who are told to be *Q'doshym*, and that they should not eat any of the forbidden foods listed there. The reason given for this is, they are to be set-apart as YHWH is set-apart, implying that abstention from such foods will identify them as such.

In chapters 19 & 20, the children of Yisrael are told that the *Q'doshym* must adhere to a number of civil and moral laws. These laws include:

- Fearing one's mother and father
- Guarding the Sabbaths of YHWH
- Not making or worshipping idols
- Making appropriate sacrifices to YHWH
- Not gleaning one's field, but leaving charity for the poor
- Not stealing, lying or deceiving one another
- Not swearing falsely in the name of YHWH
- Not oppressing a neighbor or withholding wages of a hireling
- Not cursing the deaf or obstructing the blind
- Not being partial in judgment to either rich or poor
- Not slandering or gossiping about anyone
- Not hating one's brother, taking revenge or bearing a grudge
- Loving one's neighbor as one's self
- Not letting one's livestock interbreed, or sowing mixed seed in one's field
- Not wearing a garment of mixed fibers
- Not having relations with a betrothed woman
- Observing the regulations for the fruit of trees

- Not eating meat with its blood
- Not practicing witchcraft, spiritism or magic
- Not rounding the hair of the head or marring the beard
- Not making cuts or tattoos on one's self
- Not profaning one's daughter
- Reverencing the Sanctuary of YHWH
- Rising up before the gray-headed and revering the aged
- Not oppressing a sojourner or stranger
- Not cheating in business or measurements
- Not offering one's children to idols
- Not cursing one's mother or father
- Not committing adultery
- Not having relations with near of kin, animals, or men with men
- Not having relations with a menstruating woman
- Not following the religious dictates of foreign nations

Chapter 21 adds to these laws for those *Q'doshym* who are priests, that they should not defile themselves by contact with the dead, except for nearest of kin, that their daughters may not become sexually defiled, and that priests must only marry virgins of their people. A priest who has a physical defect is not to enter the Sanctuary.

In B'midbar 15, the Torah states that the *Q'doshym* must wear tassels – *tzitzith* – on the corners of their garments in order to remember the commandments of YHWH, and in chapter 16, says that all the children of Yisrael are to be *Q'doshym*. Indeed, it can be rightly argued that if all of the children of Yisrael are commanded to be *Q'doshym*, then the entirety of Torah law applies to them.

In the Prophets, a number of statements regarding the future of the *Q'doshym* are made that do much to illuminate who they are and will be.

In Zechariah 14, it says of the end-time battle for Yerushalayim, that YHWH shall come there, bringing the *Q'doshym* with Him.

Dani'el chapters 7 & 8 say that, while at first the forces of evil will begin to win against the *Q'doshym* in such a battle, ultimately the *Q'doshym* of YHWH prevail, ruling and judging His kingdom forever.

In the Writings, or *Kethuvym*, the *Q'doshym* are exalted and praised in song by the psalmist. They are described as “excellent” and fearers of YHWH, those who have knowledge and understanding.

Throughout the TaNaK, the ranks of the *Q'doshym* are limited to those belonging to the children of Yisrael. No gentiles appear to be included with them whatsoever.

This situation apparently changes upon the death of Yehoshua and with the formal establishment by the apostles of the body of believers called “The Way.” Paul of Tarsos claims that this sudden change is due to something called, “The Mystery of Messiah.”

The Mystery of Messiah states that the Jewish people, or possibly just the leaders of their mainstream religious establishment, were guilty of not allowing the gentile populations of the nations to find salvation and join themselves to YHWH and His people. It says that, since this was prophesied to occur, some way had to be provided for the gentiles to do so. This was accomplished by a temporary “hardening” or “blinding” of the Jews to the truth of Yehoshua's Messiahship, which they initially rejected, and would last until all of the gentiles who desired it could be brought in. Once this was completed, the eyes of the Jewish people would be opened, and they would “*look on him whom they pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourns for his only son.*” At that time, fellowship would finally be achieved between the Jews and the gentiles who had joined them under the banner of the “commonwealth of Yisrael”, and the kingdom of YHWH would be fully established on earth.

During these “times of the gentiles,” as they are called, many from the nations would actually come to join the ranks of the *Q'doshym* and be recognized as such by the apostles and leaders of The Way. Yet, most of these men and women never become Jews in so doing. They refrain from circumcision and full conversion, instead becoming known as righteous gentiles, or *gerym tzadakym*, and as brothers and sisters in The Way. This exempts them from certain requirements and laws of Torah, which are binding upon Jews, yet allows them full fellowship in the congregations of The Way.

In the Writings of the apostles, or *Kethuvym Hatalmidym*, the *Q'doshym* are constantly mentioned. In fact, many of the epistles are addressed specifically to them, and they apparently constituted a significant percentage of the membership in every assembly, both at *Yerushalayim*¹ and in the Diaspora, as Jews and gentiles. The congregations of The Way were centered around their members who

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were *Q'doshym*, and it was they who advised, taught, and judged the people in their institutions. It was they who possessed the gifts of the Spirit, the wisdom and power in each assembly. They were emulated and, if necessary, supported in whatever way was required. The assembly at *Yerushalayim* was the original model for others and was the focus of the lion's share of that emulation and support – likely because of the apostles who dwelt there and the enormous amount of oppression dealt them by the mainstream Jewish establishment and the rabbis. Paul himself was the agent who directed much of the charitable efforts from the congregations of the Diaspora toward assisting the *Q'doshym* in *eretz Yisrael*² and at *Yerushalayim*.

It appears that not all members of each assembly were considered to be members of the *Q'doshym*. Whether all aspired to be or were destined to be over time is uncertain, since their lives would have to become entirely set-apart to the service of the Most High, His people, and to prayer. Because of the great charitable efforts directed towards them, it is thought that many were not able to work at typical, paying jobs. Most were married and had families, however members who became *Q'doshym* while unmarried were encouraged to remain so if they were able. Their lives were probably rather insulated in many ways, even beyond that of other members of their assemblies.

What more can we tell you about the *Q'doshym*? Are they now a small and select group, unknown to the world, or do they fill all the pews of modern churches and synagogues? YHWH knows. All we can tell you, brethren, is what is written about them in the pages of Scripture – then you must be the judge of these things for yourselves.

We can tell you that they have been around far longer than Christianity or modern rabbinical Judaism, even for millennia previous. We know that YHWH considers them to be so special that they, and they alone, will be His at His coming in the first resurrection. And we know they are the ones who will rule and judge His kingdom along with Yehoshua for eternity. We can also tell you that the *Q'doshym* walk in orderly fashion, keeping all of the commandments that apply to them in their station, and having the testimony of Yehoshua Hamashiach. They walk as he did, in grace and at peace with all men, insofar as is possible. They are meek and humble, forgiving and charitable toward others. They keep themselves set-apart from the world and unstained by its evils. They are constantly devoted to prayer and excellent deeds towards others. They are persecuted for their steadfastness in belief and their faith in Yehoshua, yet persevere and endure in trials, knowing that they are being refined and proven for the day of his coming. Above all these things, they are known by their great love for one another. Love for YHWH and one another is, more than anything else, the hallmark of the *Q'doshym*. And you can join them.

B'Shalom,

Ovadyah

² Land of Yisrael