

June 29, 2014

**Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?
And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye
unworthy to judge the smallest matters? (1
Corinthians 6:2)**

Paraphrased, it's as though Paul said "don't you know the saints will judge the world?" Come on and get with the program people. It's like the Geico commercial: Everybody knows that!

Now, from this one verse, we get a flavor of the context. For more, let's review the following verses from 1 Corinthians 6:

¹ Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?

² Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

³ Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

⁴ If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.

⁵ I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?

⁶ But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers.

⁷ Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather *suffer yourselves to be defrauded?*

⁸ Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that *your* brethren.

So, we have here a situation where members of this church at Corinth were suing each other in the local court. This is something so foreign to me that I find it hard to believe, but believe it I do because God is not a liar. Yet let me say – based on 40-plus years of working in and around human courts – this is a terrible plight for these saints to find themselves in and I whole-heartedly agree with Paul that a member of Christ’s church is far better off to “take (a) wrong” than resort to human courts. Such a member would be light years ahead to take his case to the “least esteemed” church member.

But enough about context; let’s get back to the focus of this talk – that is, the saints judging the world. As is true with many passages in the Bible, there is probably more than one meaning, although there is usually a primary meaning. Such is the case here.

Traditionally, most have construed these words to apply to the saints’ future state of happiness in heaven when as part of their glory they will be actively participating in judging the world. I have no desire to detract from that notion – and in fact today hope to address that very rendition of this passage – but would submit there are other blessings to be gleaned from this text.

One meaning – though certainly not a primary meaning – would be that saints, to one degree or another, at times actually participate in ruling or judging the world as part of their vocation. Examples of this would include Joseph (**And Pharoah said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou** – Genesis 41:39-40), Daniel and his three colleagues (**Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach,**

Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king – Daniel 2:48, 49), judges of ancient Israel, and so on. Their jobs actually involved the day-to-day governing and judging of world civilizations or governments.

Another meaning – again perhaps not a primary meaning but a significant one – refers to the saints’ life while in the world. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:15) The true church is an assembly of saints. (Hebrews 10:25) That the church possesses the “truth”, and is in fact the very ground and stronghold of all truth, is not an arrogant bragging but a statement of reality. As a matter of undeniable fact, true saints generally possess and operate holding the truth while they dwell on this earth. What a great blessing.

Ergo, necessarily, the saints in their daily living judge the world. Swimming in an ocean of lies coming from the top of this world’s offices, true saints judge this world every day. That’s what these words tell us. The emphasis then goes on the word “shall” in 1 Corinthians 5:2: The saints SHALL (as a matter of undeniable fact and reality while they are living in this world) judge the world!

And this is what is actually experienced by God’s people as history and as our own lives tell us. God’s enemies see, smell and feel this reality. (**To the one we are the savour of death unto death** – 2 Corinthians 2:16). The ancient Sodomites unwittingly revealed they knew Lot was judging the world when they screamed **This one fellow (Lot) came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge**, Genesis 19:9. And have not our opponents – almost from Day One – accused us of “judging”, insisting that we “judge not”, and so on. How many thousands of times have we heard that?

And what does that daily judging look like? Well, certainly what the honored members of WBC do on a daily and weekly basis qualifies as judging this world. These people I stand before today lay the axe to the root of the tree (Luke 3:9) and hold the plumb line straight (Amos 7:8). I have lost count of the number of times I have seen events or words of dear WBC

members that startle (in a good way) and amaze me for their depth of truth, relevance and effectiveness to events going on around us. Our Tweets, videos, vines, pickets, fliers and so on are chock full of righteous judgment. This ability to correctly judge is divinely installed in each of God's true children.

These actions and efforts of WBC members are the very picture of judgment, when you consider what that word means:

judg·ment

1. an act or instance of judging.
2. the ability to judge, make a decision, or form an opinion objectively, authoritatively, and wisely, especially in matters affecting action; good sense; discretion:
3. the demonstration or exercise of such ability or capacity:
4. the forming of an opinion, estimate, notion, or conclusion, as from circumstances presented to the mind:

Synonyms of judging or judgment –

Determination, discrimination, discernment, perspicacity; sagacity, wisdom, intelligence, prudence.

Daniel 4:17 describes this judging when it declares **This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.**

We know human government is operated by, through and for the basest of men and we apply that truism daily. We don't know the full extent, but we know enough, and we learn more daily. I recently ran across a sample of this:

Franklin's (Delano Roosevelt) grandfather Warren Delano had for years skulked around the Pearl River Delta dealing drugs. Delano had run offices in Canton and Hong Kong. During business hours, Chinese criminals would pay him cash and receive an opium chit. At night, Scrambling Crabs – long, slick, heavily armed crafts – rowed out into the Pearl River Delta to Delano's floating warehouses, where they received their Jesus opium under the cover of darkness. The profits were enormous, and at his death Delano left his daughter Sara a fortune that she lavished on her only son.

The Delanos were not alone. Many of New England's great families made their fortunes dealing drugs in China. The Cabot family of Boston endowed Harvard with opium money, while Yale's famous Skull and Bones society was funded by the biggest American opium dealers of them all – the Russell family. The most famous landmark on the Columbia University campus is the Low Memorial Library, which honors Abiel Low, a New York boy who made it big in the Pearl River Delta and bankrolled the first cable across the Atlantic. Princeton University's first big benefactor, John Green, sold opium in the Pearl River Delta with Warren Delano.

The list goes on and on: Boston's John Murray Forbes's opium profits financed the career of transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson and bankrolled the Bell Telephone Company. Thomas Perkins founded America's first commercial railroad and funded the Boston Athenaeum. These wealthy and powerful drug-dealing families combined to create dynasties. (James Bradley, *The Imperial Cruise*, p. 290).

To place this in the modern era, imagine what's going on behind the scenes with the billionaires of today (Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, et al) and their interactions with human government and politicians like the Clintons, the Bush family, and so on.

So, to wrap it up as to this meaning of 1 Corinthians 6:2, it is simply as though the writer had said, “Don’t you know that it is a matter of undeniable reality that the Lord’s people, as they dwell on this earth, intelligently and rightly judge what is happening day-by-day, as led by their Great Shepherd?”

Now, on to the 3rd and most likely the primary meaning of this passage, the best commentary I could locate comes from Matthew Poole:

[F]or you know that the saints shall judge the world; in the same sense (as some think) as Christ saith the Ninevites and the queen of the south should rise up in judgment against the Jews, and condemn them; but certainly there is something more than that in it; when the apostle said, the saints should judge the world, he intended to say something of them which was not common to some heathens with them. Others therefore think, that the saints in the day of judgment shall judge the world, approving the sentence of Christ pronounced against the world, and as being assessors with Christ, which indeed is what Christ said of the apostles, Matthew 19:28 (And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel) and Luke 22:29 (And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me). Others think, that the phrase only signifieth a great honour and dignity, to which the saints shall be advanced. * * * * The apostle therefore here seemeth * * * to speak of the saints judging the world in the last day, approving the sentence of Christ the Judge of the quick and the dead. . . .

To this end, please also consider Daniel Chapter 7, verses 18 and 27:

18: But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.

27: And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of

the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

Did you catch that phrase “the people of the saints?” This is a very personal, up close kind of thing with the children of God. It applies to their person; the same human bodies that were so maltreated by the enemies of the cross; the same eyes that saw their anger; the same ears that heard their hard speeches; the same voices that cried out – and sometimes even sang along with Big Blue or Big Red, take your pick -- the truths of God. The same frail bodies that hungered, perspired, anguished and tired during the church militant age. Those very “people of the saints” now receive the “greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven.”

I can live with what John Gill has to say on verse 27 of Daniel Chapter 7:

And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High

Not only the dominion that shall be taken away from the little horn or antichrist, and from all the antichristian states, but the dominion of all others throughout all the earth, and under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of God, and the true professors of faith in Christ. The kingdoms of this world will become Christ’s, and Christian princes will be kings of them everywhere; and not only the royal power and authority will be vested with them, but all the grandeur and state belonging to them will be theirs; as well as all the saints in general shall reign in a spiritual manner with Christ, enjoying all ordinances, and all religious liberties, as well as civil, and be free from all persecutions.

Remember, judges are appointed by, authorized by and represent the government that appoints them. Their decisions are backed by the power of that government. Let me assure you, one of these judges sitting down here in the Shawnee County courthouse would be an irrelevant toothless tiger if he or she did not have access to the full political, police and military power of this government.

Similarly, the saints are appointed by their King to be judge and they act with the full authority and power of the “greatness” of His Kingdom that they represent.

I hope these comments have given you a bit more understanding of this encouraging text.

I love you.

Amen!