

The Saints Shall Judge the World

In the wake of a recent exchange of emails with Pastor Ricky Kurth of the Berean Bible Society, I have given a lot of thought to this declaration by Paul in 1 Corinthians. (Note that Pastor Ricky has expressed that he does not necessarily represent the views of the society as a whole.)

"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 AV)

My understanding is that this verse involves the saints of this present age with the coming millennial kingdom. This scripture is Paul's only clear indication that we grace age saints will be heavenly judges of the world during the millennial kingdom.

Pastor Ricky's explanation

His words:

"I think you would probably agree that the kingdom of heaven on earth was Israel's hope, but it sounds like you believe we will be involved somehow in the kingdom of heaven on earth, due to what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:2, where he says that "the saints shall judge the world." But here I would suggest that Paul speaks of Hebrew kingdom saints. Here's why:

You'll notice that Paul goes on to say that "*the saints* shall judge the world, and if the world shall be judged by *you*..." Here we see by the pronoun "you" that Paul is speaking to a group of people of whom he is not a part, which can only be the Hebrew kingdom saints.

Then notice that in the next verse he says, "know ye not that we shall judge angels?" Here obviously with the pronoun "we" he is including himself in the group that will be raptured to the kingdom of heaven in heaven to rule the angels, while Israel remains here on earth to judge the nations.

If it be asked why Paul was addressing kingdom saints in 1 Corinthians 6:2, the answer is that there were kingdom saints present in the church. You'll remember that the Corinthian church "joined hard" to the synagogue (Acts 18:7). Eventually the believers in the synagogue realized they had more in common with the Gentile believers next door than they had in common with the Jewish unbelievers in their synagogue, and many "defected" to the grace church. You can see evidence of this sprinkled throughout the Corinthian epistles, including the difference I mentioned in 1 Corinthians 6.

I do believe that after the millennial kingdom, we will be gathered together with Hebrew kingdom saints in the New Jerusalem (Ephesians 1:10), but I personally believe

that we will not have anything to do with the earthly millennial reign of Christ previous to that. I know of no Scriptures that suggest this."

Why Pastor Ricky's explanation is wrong

Here is the problem:

"Here we see by the pronoun "you" that Paul is speaking to a group of people of whom he is not a part, which can only be the Hebrew kingdom saints"

Yes. By the pronoun "you" Paul is speaking to a group of people of whom he is not part, but to arrive at the conclusion that he must be speaking specifically to "Hebrew kingdom saints" is quite a bizarre interpretation.

The "you" are OBVIOUSLY the same "you" that he is speaking to in verse 6:1 - the Corinthian church of God, the Corinthian saints. The whole epistle is written to this "you" in an effort to get them back on track in several areas.

*"Dare any of **you**, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?" (1 Corinthians 6:1 AV)*

He keeps using the pronouns "you" and "ye" in verse 6:2 because the verse includes a further 'telling off' of the Corinthian saints - "are **ye** unworthy to judge the smallest matters?"

*"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 AV)*

Paul switches to the pronoun "we" and includes himself in verse 6:3 because he is not telling the Corinthians off in this verse. He is just making a general declaration about the destiny of the saints.

*"Know ye not that **we** shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" (1 Corinthians 6:3 AV)*

Likewise, "the saints" in verse 6:2 are OBVIOUSLY the same "the saints" as in verse 6:1.

*"Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before **the saints**? 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 6:1-2 AV)*

Paul could have been speaking of the "Hebrew kingdom saints" if it was standard practice in the early church to take disputes to so-called 'Hebrew kingdom saints',

(whoever they are - James maybe?). Pastor Ricky's explanation could have held water except for that little pronoun "you".

"and if the world shall be judged by YOU".

YOU = THE SAINTS. Because of Paul's linking the pronoun "you" with "the saints", any person reasonably familiar with the English language knows that 1 Corinthians 6:2 could have read thus:

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

THE SAINTS WHO SHALL JUDGE THE WORLD INCLUDE THE BUNCH OF CARNAL, CORINTHIAN SAINTS THAT PAUL IS TELLING OFF THROUGHOUT THIS EPISTLE.

ITS OFFICIAL FOLKS.

**THE SAINTS SHALL JUDGE THE WORLD AND THE ANGELS!
WE SHALL JUDGE THE WORLD AND THE ANGELS!**

How are the saints going to judge the world from heaven?

If you agree with me that we grace age saints are destined to judge the world then your next question may well be just how are we going to do this from heaven?

Well, would you agree that Satan and his angels are currently in heaven yet also have enormous influence over affairs on earth? In this scripture it is clear that Satan has direct access to God in heaven yet also roams the earth.

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." (Job 1:6-7 AV)

Is not Satan transformed into an angel of light and the god of this present evil world?

"And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." (2 Corinthians 11:14 AV)

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Corinthians 4:4 AV)

"Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:" (Galatians 1:4 AV)

I do not understand the relationship between earth and heaven but when the Lord gave the keys of the kingdom to Peter he implied a very close connection between events on earth and events in heaven.

“And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matthew 16:19 AV)

I am not alone in believing that once Satan and his angels are cast out of heaven there will be a great many vacant principalities from which Satan and his angels have been operating very effectively for thousands of years.

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” (Revelation 12:7-9 AV)

The church (that's us) is already involved in wrestling in heavenly places and it is by the church that the principalities and powers know the manifold wisdom of God.

“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:” (Ephesians 3:9-11 AV)

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.” (Ephesians 6:12 AV)

Satan and his angels have a tried and tested track record of maintaining a very effective grip over the kingdoms of this world.

“And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.” (Luke 4:5-6 AV)

Whatever these principalities are, whoever occupies them will be in a great position to influence events on the earth, or even to JUDGE THE WORLD. The glorified saints will have similar bodies and powers to the angels and it seems a strong possibility that our role during the millennial kingdom will be to judge the world from the principalities vacated by Satan and his angels.

This is not to say that we will remain invisible to the people of earth throughout the millennial kingdom. The Lord and his angels (and Satan and his angels) have quite often manifested as flesh and bone humans on the earth (e.g. Genesis 6:2-4, 18:2; Judges 6:22, 13:16; Zechariah 1:10-11; John 20:26-27; Hebrews 13:2).

Supporting scriptures

As Pastor Ricky has since pointed out to me, it seems risky to base such a massive shift in dispensational understanding on just one scripture. He is right. If this were the only scripture in the Bible which declared that the saints shall judge the world then I would be looking for a way of disproving it myself.

Apart from the Lord himself, Paul had the best understanding of how God's revelation of the mystery related to the Old Testament scriptures. Paul was "an Hebrew of the Hebrews" (Philippians 3:5), a Pharisee trained by Gamaliel (Acts 22:3) - perhaps the most respected teacher of the Jewish scriptures (our Old Testament) in Paul's time. We can get the best understanding by seeing Paul's understanding. If we get just a glimpse of Paul's "big picture" of the scriptures then many false doctrines and dogmas will simply be dissolved.

Paul gives us a glimpse of his broad understanding with his declaration to Gentile saints of this present grace dispensation that they shall judge the world. Other scriptures can now be understood correctly and the full implications of our entry into the "household of God" can be seen.

*"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but **fellowcitizens with the saints**, and of **the household of God**;" (Ephesians 2:19 AV)*

If we are to be among the saints that shall judge the world then Paul must have seen us as fellowcitizens with not only the Jewish New Testament saints (Peter, John, Stephen, Philip, Barnabas etc.) but also the Gentile and Jewish Old Testament saints (Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Deborah, Gideon, David, Elijah, Jeremiah etc. etc.) Paul knew that the saints shall judge the world because he was an expert in the Jewish prophetic scriptures. There are many references to the saints judging the world in our Old Testament. Here is a selection of them.

*"Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them **the judgment** written: this honour have **all his saints**. Praise ye the LORD." (Psalms 149:5-9 AV)*

*"And I will **restore thy judges** as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city." (Isaiah 1:26 AV)*

“But **the saints of the most High** shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.” (Daniel 7:18 AV)

“Until the Ancient of days came, and **judgment was given to the saints of the most High**; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.” (Daniel 7:22 AV)

“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.” (Daniel 7:27 AV)

The judges of the world will have similar legal powers to Judge Dredd (police, judge, jury and executioner) combined with the supernatural powers of angels. I for one feel greatly honoured and filled with hope and anticipation at this prospect. Because we will be “as the angels in heaven” during this judgment period (Mark 12:25), then we may manifest on earth in a similar way to the angels that visited with Abraham and Lot and then delivered judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah. They had supernatural powers but they seemed like men.

“And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,” (Genesis 18:1-2 AV)

“And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.” (Genesis 18:22 AV)

“But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. And they smote the men that *were* at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.” (Genesis 19:10-11 AV)

“For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.” (Genesis 19:13 AV)

By the way, who are these “Hebrew kingdom saints”?

*“.....due to what Paul says in I Corinthians 6:2, where he says that "the saints shall judge the world." But here I would suggest that Paul speaks of **Hebrew kingdom saints**.”*

“ You'll remember that the Corinthian church "joined hard" to the synagogue (Acts 18:7). Eventually the believers in the synagogue realized they had more in common

with the Gentile believers next door than they had in common with the Jewish unbelievers in their synagogue, and many "defected" to the grace church."

This whole concept of the way things were is wrong. This is the wrong way to view Jews who "defected" to the grace church. What a believer is "after the flesh" is of no importance.

"Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." (2 Corinthians 5:16 AV)

Jews who 'defected' from the synagogue would only have had more in common with the Christian believers next door if they, like Paul, had come to count their Jewish confidence in the flesh, their "righteousness which is in the law" as but DUNG.

"Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ," (Philippians 3:4-8 AV)

The grace church, the church the body of Christ, is not defined by the flesh at all. It is a spiritual, heavenly church in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile. Our "manner of living" remains Jewish or Gentile, Russian or Brazilian. We will surely continue as unique individuals for eternity. But the ONENESS of all individual members with Christ shines through our individuality.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28 AV)

Jews who PROFESSED belief that Jesus was their Messiah, yet still trusted in the law for righteousness (such as James and his multitude, Acts 21), were not members of the body of Christ. They were "zealous of the law" (Acts 21:20) - as was Paul prior to his conversion. So they remained Jews and never became Christians.

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (Romans 10:1-4 AV)

{Pastor Ricky quite rightly pointed out to me that the James that Paul encountered in Acts 21 wrote a book of the Bible and therefore must have been saved. All of the Jewish saints who wrote books of the Bible since the time of Moses (including Moses himself) also trusted in the law for righteousness. It was all they had at the time. Paul also trusted in the law for righteousness until his salvation by grace alone. God introduced the new dispensation of his grace with and through Paul. It is clear to me that James never got on board with the power of God unto salvation as revealed to Paul – the preaching of the cross. His epistle makes no mention of the power of the preaching of the cross or the power of Christ’s shed blood. James’ epistle was probably written prior to the Jerusalem Council (c. A.D.49) and fits well doctrinally with pre-Calvary doctrine like that in the book of Matthew.

But surely God has the final say on who is saved – regardless of their degree of ignorance or blindness? Believing Jews of David’s time trusted in the law for righteousness but were saved by God on the basis of Christ’s future atonement – although they were ignorant of it in their lifetimes. Who are we to tell God who is saved and who is not saved? But for the sake of doctrinal clarity we must exclude James as a member of the grace church on earth – the church the body of Christ.}

This whole business of DIVIDING CHRIST into “Gentile grace saints” and “Hebrew kingdom saints” is ridiculous nonsense which is totally unsupported by the scriptures. Whatever criteria made James a so-called “Hebrew kingdom saint” would also make Peter one. Yet Paul never saw Peter as a member of a different church.

“Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of **Cephas**; and I of Christ. **Is Christ divided?** was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” (1 Corinthians 1:12-13 AV)

Paul saw the “certain came from James” (that caused the hypocritical separation of Peter and Barnabas from the Gentile believers at Antioch) as being UNWORTHY OF REBUKE. But he rebuked Peter. Paul saw the “certain came from James” as OUTSIDERS. They were not in Christ under some other arrangement. They were NOT IN CHRIST AT ALL.

“But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.” (Galatians 2:11-13 AV)

Christ is not divided on earth or in heaven. The Gentile and Jewish saints of old “saw his day and were glad”. They are now IN CHRIST in heaven although they were never members of his body on earth. James was not a member of his body on earth but, like Abraham, he rejoiced and saw his day in heaven, AFTER HE HAD DIED on earth.

"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad." (John 8:56 AV)

We who have believed Paul's gospel are baptized into Christ's death; i.e. we HAVE DIED with him and are privileged to become members of his body while we still walk the earth.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. **For ye are dead**, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Colossians 3:1-3 AV)

We are now fellowcitizens with the saints of old who no longer walk the earth but are in Christ in heaven. If you are in Christ you are in God's spiritual, heavenly church – the Spirit of Christ dwells in you.

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Romans 8:9 AV)

If you are not in Christ you are in the world. Full stop.