
Illustrating the Problem | 1 Corinthians 6:1-8

- Verse 1 –
 - **Dare** is to *show boldness*. The past tense is used several times in the KJV, *durst* (see Acts 7:32).
 - The fact that Jewish people commonly went before religious courts (and only used Roman courts for criminal matters) is further indication that the Corinthians were Messianic Jews. A gentile congregation would not have scruples about going before a court of law.
 - The fact that Paul speaks of going before **the saints** is another piece of evidence supporting a Messianic Jewish congregation, since **saints** (literally, *the holy ones*) is a term referring to believing Jews of the First Century.
 - It is important to recognize that Paul is using an *illustration* in vv. 1-8 and not necessarily a command for the church today. Having given his own verdict in the incest case of v. 5, he is appalled that it would be (for that Messianic Jewish culture) daring to go to court with a fellow believer. Yet the Corinthian church is willing to do just that (v. 6) but will not make judgments within their own house. In effect, Paul says, "something is not right in Denmark."
- Verse 2 – There are several key areas in this verse:
 - **The saints shall judge the world** - This is given as *common knowledge*. Being such, where did the knowledge come from? Paul had said nothing about such future role of saints. The Hebrew prophecies, however, had spoken of such, and this role was confirmed by Jesus.
 - Daniel 7:18 & 22 is the clearest passage in the Old Testament showing the reigning/ruling role of the saints (and such rule being limited to the Jewish believers).
 - Psalm 145:5-9 is also a clear praise for the future day when saints will judge.
 - Matthew 19:28 (and Luke 22:30), Jesus affirmed that the Apostles would sit in judgment.
 - Jude 1:14-15 says that Enoch prophesied of the day in which **ten thousands of his saints will execute judgment upon all**.
 - Revelation 2:26 promises **authority over the nations** to the overcomers.
 - Several non-canonical references exist to the ruling of the saints: Wisdom of Solomon 3:8, Sirach 4:15. These sources are not Biblical, but support the contention that the information is *common knowledge*.
 - Note: due to a misinterpretation of saints (and the influence of replacement theology), it has become common teaching that Christians will rule and reign with Christ and judge the world. This contention cannot be fully supported by New Testament texts. Interpreters are making a passage say more than it actually says.
 - Paul defines the Corinthians as **saints** when he says **if the world shall be judged by you**. Therefore, if my argument that saints are First Century believing Jews is proven false, then the common teaching that Christians will judge the nations would be necessarily true.
 - Paul's emphasis continues to relate to the issue of chapter 5, over which the Corinthian believers were not willing to pass judgment.
- Verse 3 –
 - Paul continues with a second **know ye not** assumption.
 - The *common knowledge* of the Jewish people was that they would **judge angels**. Paul is arguing from the *greater* to the *lesser*. (If you can run a mile, you can certainly run half a mile).
 - The common knowledge concerning judgment of angels is more difficult to trace in the Old Testament. 2 Peter 2:4 speaks of angels being **reserved for judgment** and

Jude 1:6 speaks of angels being held **for the judgment of the last day**, but neither passage speaks of *who* will do the judgment.

- The greater point, for the Corinthians, is that the judgment of **things that pertain to this life** is a "piece of cake" compared to the judgment of angels.
- Verse 4 –
 - Should this be taken as a literal commandment for the church? I do not think so. Even those who believe that these verses speak of the church do not take the *despised* (a literal translation of **least esteemed**) and **set them to judge**.
 - In this instance, *the plain sense doesn't make common sense*. But, in light of these verses being an illustration to prod the Corinthian believers to make a judgment on the incestuous relationship, these verses make sense as an exaggerated reminder that says, *you can do this!*
- Verse 5 – Ensuring that the reader understands verse 4 to be hyperbole, Paul now instructs the church to look for the **wise man among you**. Surely, he says, somebody is in the Corinthian church who can make a judgment.
- Verse 6 - The identity of this situation is unclear, but apparently something different than that in chapter 5.
- Verse 7 –
 - Paul speaks of this **fault among you**, which is *that ye have judgments with one another* (YLT).
 - The KJV translates as **go to law** which is more interpretation (as in v. 6) than translation.
 - The issue is that they are willing to judge one another for some financial fraud (it seems), and not simply **be defrauded**, yet in the big matter of chapter 5, they are silent.
 - It is a stretch to interpret these verses to say that lawsuits among believers are prohibited (though not a stretch to say they are unwise.)
 - It is equally a stretch to interpret these verses to say that believers should be willing to be defrauded by other believers. There is the very real possibility that Paul is asking the question rhetorically, saying, *if you are willing to let weighty matters of morality be ignored, why are you not willing to let small matters of finances be ignored?*
- Verse 8 - The chastisement of pressing for financial judgments and not taking care of moral judgments is given as the illustrative background to bring about Paul's summary: when you **defraud...your brethren** then **ye do wrong**. Defrauding them may be in a financial sense or it may be in a moral sense.