

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 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. 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 I 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 I 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)

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)

I suspect that Pastor Ricky uses the term "Hebrew kingdom saints" to describe those Jews who believed that Jesus was their Messiah yet still trusted in the law for righteousness (such as James and his multitude, Acts 21). These Jews were in the same predicament as the Gentile believers addressed by Paul in his letter to the Galatians. They were "zealous of the law" (Acts 21:20) - as was Paul PRIOR to his conversion (see Philipians 3:4-8 above). If they are to be counted as saved members of Christ's body then they must have received the Holy Spirit at some point but later returned to the bondage of the law.

"For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children." (Galatians 4:25 AV)

They did not understand Paul's teaching that we who are in Christ are dead to the law (Romans 7:4) and instead believed exaggerated, distorted versions of what Paul was teaching.

"And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all **zealous of the law**: And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs." (Acts 21:20-21 AV)

Though they believed that James' half brother was Israel's Messiah they remained in bondage to the law and resisted the total upheaval that acceptance of the Lord's revelations to Paul would have brought about.

"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)

I believe that Paul had intended to try and wean James and his followers away from the works of the law - in similar fashion to the way he had dealt with those who were reintroducing the works of the law in the Galatian churches. It was his strategy to become as a Jew when he was among Jews and to become as "under the law" when he was among those who were under the law.

"And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;" (1 Corinthians 9:20 AV)

So he went along with James' suggestion that he show the Jerusalem Jews that he "keepeth the law".

"Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law." (Acts 21:24 AV)

But Paul never got the chance to explain his doctrine further to the Jerusalem church. There was an uproar and he was imprisoned after being saved from certain death by the Roman garrison at Jerusalem.

These so called "Hebrew kingdom saints" are spoken of by many dispensationalists as though they are in a valid but different category to members of the church, the body of Christ. The main difference seems to be that they were to remain "zealous of the law" whereas members of the body of Christ become "dead to the law".

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Romans 7:4 AV)

It is my understanding that Paul's doctrine of saved believers becoming "dead to the law" is not optional. One either walks "after the Spirit" or "after the flesh".

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:1 AV)

In this present dispensation there are only three categories of people that one might meet – the Jews, the Gentiles and the church of God.

"Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:" (1 Corinthians 10:32 AV)

The first two groups are citizens of earth and the church are citizens of heaven. Once a person becomes a member of the church of God he or she is not seen by fellow members of the church as a Jew or a Gentile any more.

"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)

If the Spirit of God dwells in you then you are making his presence REDUNDANT if you walk after the flesh by trying to establish your own righteousness by the works of the law. If you walk after the Spirit you become dead to the law. If you walk after the flesh you become dead to the Spirit.

So it is my understanding that these "Hebrew kingdom saints" were not a separate and valid category of believers but were merely believers who had received the Spirit but who had, through ignorance and a desire to "blend in" with unbelieving Israel, remained zealous of the law and become dead to the Spirit.