

Sunday, July 31, 2016—I Corinthians 6:4-8: Is There Not A Wise Man Among You

Introduction

- Over the past 4 weeks we have been seeking to understand Paul’s statement in verse 3, “we shall judge angles.” Last week we finished our consideration of the body of Christ’s two-fold angelic ministry by completing the following outline:
 - *In the Present*—teaching them about the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. 3:9-10).
 - The reason the Godhead wants all men to see the fellowship of the mystery in verse 9 is so that the angelic realm can learn about the manifold wisdom of God in verse 10.
 - *In the Future*—judging or ruling over them in the Ages to Come.
 - The body of Christ has nothing to do with the punitive or retributive judgment of fallen angles for their sin.
 - Our future angelic ministry relates to the Holy Angels in the heavenly places in the Ages to Come. The body of Christ will rule over the angles in a judicial sense just as the context of I Corinthians 6 indicates.
- This morning, I would like to move on through this section and cover verses 4 through 8.

I Corinthians 6:4

- **If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.**
- Verses 1 through 3 establish on the basis of the fact that the Corinthians will judge angels in the future, they ought to be able to “judge the smallest matters” (v. 2) or the “things that pertain to this life” in the present (v. 3).
- Please recall from previous studies that verse 4 is the first statement that Paul makes in this chapter. Verses 1 through 3 are all questions.
- Note that Paul’s statement is in the form of a condition in verse 4. In this verse the condition is subjunctive (maybe it is maybe it isn’t) which means it is subject to the circumstances. The purpose of this verse is not to question whether or not there have been “judgments of things pertaining to this life” in the past. Verses 5-6 make it clear that the Corinthians had not been so judging.
- Rather the function of verse 4 is to instruct the Corinthians how to properly deal with these circumstances in the future should they arise again.
- Instead of running to law before the unjust, Paul instructs them to deal with these matters in house among the saints.

- Paul says that those who are “least esteemed in the church” should judge each case. In the English, the phrase “to judge who are least esteemed” is a translation of single Greek word. According to Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828) the English words “least” and “esteemed” carry the following meanings:
 - *Least*—(adj.) Smallest; little beyond others, either in size or degree; as the *least* insect; the *least* mercy. (adv.) In the smallest or lowest degree; in a degree below all others; as, to reward those who *least* deserve it.
 - *Esteemed*—Valued; estimated; highly valued or prized on account of worth; thought; held in opinion.
- Paul tells the Corinthians to take the person who is “least esteemed” and have that person judge each case.
 - I Corinthians 12:22-25—I believe Paul’s goal in instructing them to follow this course of action in “the things pertaining to this life” is so that there would be no “schism” in the local church.
- I Corinthians 4:8—who do you want deciding these matters within the local church? Those who have the “least” to lose by the outcome.

I Corinthians 6:5-6

- **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.**
- Notice that the first part of verse 5 is once again a statement before Paul goes back to his textbook questioning in the last two statements.
- As I read verse 5, I take the two questions to be further amplification on the nature of the statement. In other words, the nature of their shame is that there isn’t a “wise man” among them who is “able to judge between his brethren.”
- How do we know that no such person existed in Corinth? Because in verse 6, brothers were taking each other the law before unbelievers.
- The verb “goeth to law” is in the present tense. Paul is describing the way the Corinthians were behaving at the time of his writing. Rather than dealing with things according to verse 4, the Corinthians going to law with each other before unbelievers.

I Corinthians 6:7-8

- **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.**

- The first part of verse 7 is a statement once again. According to Noah Webster the English word “fault” carries the following meanings:
 - Properly, an erring or missing; a failing; hence, an error or mistake; a blunder; a defect; a blemish; whatever impairs excellence; applied to things.
 - In morals or deportment, any error or defect; an imperfection; any deviation from propriety; a slight offense; a neglect of duty or propriety, resulting from inattention or want of prudence, rather than from design to injure or offend, but liable to censure or objection.
 - Defect; want; absence.
- Paul finds the Corinthians to be at “fault” morally on the basis of the fact that they are going to law with one another.
- On the heels holding the Corinthians to be morally a “fault,” Paul asks them to very difficult questions.
 - “Why do you not rather take wrong?”
 - “Why do ye not rather suffer (allow) yourselves to be defrauded (i.e., “deprived of property or right by trick, artifice or deception; injured by the withholding of what is due.”)?”
- Romans 12:17-21
- I Thessalonians 4:6—we need to just trust that God is doing to square things in the end.
- I Thessalonians 5:15
- I Corinthians 6:8—is once again a statement. Instead of taking wrong and/or allowing themselves to be defrauded in verse 7, the Corinthians are inflicting the wrong and doing the defrauding in verse 8. To make matters worse, they are doing it to other brethren.
 - Romans 12:3-5—we ought to be willing to extend a lot of grace when dealing with other believers.
- I Corinthians 6:8—the reason the Corinthians were at fault in verse 7 is because they were actively inflicting the wrong upon their brethren in verse 8 by behaving in this manner.
 - Colossians 3:25
 - II Corinthians 5:10