

Making a Difference in Governments: 1 Corinthians 6:2

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“Do you not know that the saints are to be judging the world?¹ So if the world is to be judged by you, are you not competent to judge the smallest matters?” The question, “Do you not know?” indicates that if the person addressed does not know, he should, and his ignorance is culpable. For Paul to write in this way, his addressees had to have had a reasonable opportunity of knowing, or it would be an unfair gambit on Paul’s part. On such a topic, the information should be available in God’s written revelation, and I believe it is. Consider Psalm 149:5-9.

5 “Let the saints exult in glory; let them sing for joy on their beds.

6 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand,

7 to execute vengeance upon the nations, and punishments upon the peoples;

8 to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron;

9 to execute upon them the written judgment. This honor is for all His saints.”

Interpreting the Text:

- 1) We are looking at instructions, not options. We are supposed to be doing this.
- 2) Note that the saints are in their beds! So the activity that is described in the following verses must take place in the spiritual realm.
- 3) The warfare is allied to praise, and the praise comes first (see 2 Chronicles 20:21-22).
- 4) The “honor”, that is a consequence of the positive results of obeying the instructions, is for “all His saints”. It follows that if you are one of those saints, obeying those instructions is up to you, it is within your competence (and you will have to give an account).
- 5) Since the activity takes place in the spiritual realm, I assume that the ‘kings’ and ‘nobles’ includes both the people who occupy positions of authority and the fallen angels (demons) that are behind them and work through them. Really, to produce the desired effect, our activity must include both. It seems clear to me that the intent of the Text is that we be doing this right now, in this life.
- 6) The instructions refer to whole nations, to entire peoples; we may apply this to any geographic or political entity that has a ruler.
- 7) Since the warfare is allied to praising God, the ‘vengeance’ and ‘punishment’ should be in accord with His character. It is where the Creator’s norms and values are being

¹ The only difference between present and future tense for ‘judge’ is the accent, and since the earliest Greek manuscripts generally do not have accents, in them the verb is ambiguous as to tense. Most, but not all, later manuscripts accent the verb as future and every version that I have seen follows suit. But if Paul is thinking of Psalm 149, then the present tense is correct—in fact, the immediately following passive form of the verb is present tense. I take Paul’s point to be: if we are supposed to be judging the world, how can we possibly ask the world to judge us? To do so is illogical.

deliberately and perversely rejected that we should concentrate our action: the Creator's norms and values, not our favorite ideas.

- 8) Since we are operating in the spiritual realm, the authorities that we bind may not wind up in prison, literally, but they should be removed from power.
- 9) There is no lack of 'written judgments' to be imposed: Zechariah 5:2-4, against thieves and liars; Proverbs 20:10, against those who use diverse weights and measures; Isaiah 10:1-2, against those who make unjust laws; Romans 1:26-32, against those who practice anal sex and a variety of others (note that verse 32 says that "those who practice such things are deserving of death", 'are' not 'were'—since Romans was written after Pentecost, within the Age of Grace and of the Church, this judgment still applies). See also 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Revelation 21:8 and 22:15.

God's moral character cannot change; Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and into the ages". Psalm 34:16 says: "The face of Jehovah is against those who do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth." Presumably before wiping out the remembrance He will have to cut off the evil people themselves.

Isaiah 28:6 says: Jehovah will be "for a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgement, and for strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate". The battle is already at the gate!

Deuteronomy 7:10 says: Jehovah "repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face." The followers of certain ideologies hate God and work aggressively against His values.

Joel 3:4 says: "Indeed, what have you to do with Me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Philistia? Will you retaliate against Me? But if you retaliate against Me, swiftly and speedily I will return your retaliation upon your own head." To retaliate against the values of the Creator is part of the declared agenda of certain ideologies.

In Luke 10:19 Sovereign Jesus said: "Take note, I am giving you the authority to trample on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy".²

Dear brothers, the time has come to **act!** We can make a difference.

² Instead of 'am giving', perhaps 2.5% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have 'have given' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.)—a serious error. Jesus said this perhaps five months before His death and resurrection, addressing the seventy (not just the twelve). The Lord was talking about the future, not the past; a future that includes us! For an explanation of the 'snakes', please see the footnotes at Mark 16:18 and Luke 10:19 in my translation.