

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XI

March 3, 2002

No. 9

Christians will judge angels

By: Jerry Fite

Does not the New Testament make it clear that there is ONE lawgiver and JUDGE (James 4:12)? Has not the Father given ALL JUDGMENT to His Son—Jesus Christ (John 5:22)? While these passages are clear, Paul reminds the saints in Corinth, “know ye not that we shall judge angels?” (I Corinthians 6:3). Does the New Testament contradict itself? If not, what does Paul mean by saints judging angels?

The Greek word translated “judge” is KRINO which denotes someone “determining, or choosing so as to pronounce judgment”. Members of the church in Corinth were instigating lawsuits against one another, and going before the unbelievers of the world for judgment. (I Corinthians 6:1,6). To shame them in their actions, Paul points to a fact that the Corinthians should know: “we shall judge angels”. The point is clear. If Christians will be judging angels, who are higher than man, surely, they have the ability to judge matters between their fellow man.

Whatever is involved in judging angels, the same point applies to the world, for Paul re-

minds the brethren that they should know, “the saints shall judge the world” (I Corinthians 6: 2).

This judging will be in the future and distinguished from this life. The judging of the world and angels is indicated as “shall judge”, pointing to sometime in the future. Knowing Christians will judge angels, Paul concludes, “how much more, things that pertain to this life” (I Corinthians 6:3). Paul is pointing to the final judgment, when the affairs of this life are over.

Passages make it clear that angels are being reserved for the final judgment. God has not spared angels but “...has cast the down to hell (Tartarus), and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved for judgment...” (2 Peter 3:4). The angels who have discarded their proper habitation before God are being kept “in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6).

One way that God’s people could judge the world and angels without usurping the authority of the ONE JUDGE—JESUS CHRIST, is that the Christian’s decision to follow the Lord’s stan-

dard of righteousness passes judgment upon the unrighteous decisions of the world and angels. Noah’s faith made perfect through his total obedience in preparing the ark had the effect of condemning the world: “through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith” (Hebrews 11:7). The word “condemn” is an intensified form of KRINO, the word Paul uses in regards to judging the world and angels. As people make choices to live righteously according to God’s law, they distinguish themselves from the unrighteous of this world. They truly live as “Saints”. Jesus will point out the differences of character between the righteous and the unrighteous, making this distinction on the Judgment Day (Matthew 25:31-46).

Think about it. The righteous choices you make and live out in this life not only prepare you for heaven, but the same determined choices will stand in judgment against the unrighteous choices of man and angels on the Judgment day. There is therefore no higher or future standard of righteousness in the universe than that of Christ.