

## Who will be God's Judges?

*"The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son."  
"The saints shall judge the world... we shall judge angels!"*

Spotlighting the attention of the press and the public for the past several months is the choosing of the right person to be an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court. The selection has heartened some and divided and dismayed others. The appointed candidate, his character, his background, his values, his philosophy and even his loyalties to Constitution or "natural law" have been rehearsed, questioned and mulled over before confirmation to that respected position.

Simply said, the people of the United States, their Congressional representatives and their "watch dog" media have serious concerns about who will now sit in judgment over them and decide on issues for the next thirty some years.

By contrast to the recent hearings in this confirmation process and its media attention, a process of confirmation of "associate judges" is going on that the nation and even the world knows little or nothing about. More remarkable, this selection has been in progress for almost 2,000 years.

From the Gospel according to John (5:22,23), it is clear God's supreme choice is His Son: "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which sent him." While God does not ask us to pass approval on his appointment, we are asked to join God in honoring His Son!

### God's Supreme Judges

But, Jesus will not judge alone. God has determined to have other judges with Jesus. Who will they be? "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world. Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" I Corinthians 6:2,3

Who are these associate judges who will seemingly have so much power? How can any be trusted to "judge the world," let alone angels? The Apostle Paul himself says he does not even have the capability of judging himself, "Yea, I judge not mine own self." He chides the brethren for judging each other, "Why dost thou judge thy brother?" (Romans 14:10)

Christians for centuries have shamefully judged other Christians. The Papacy through the years has judged and persecuted Protestants. In our own country Protestants have persecuted Catholics. Where has God's hand been?

Back when Israel was an infant nation in the land of Israel, God "raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge." (Judges 2:18) There was no king. This system prevailed for longer than U.S. American history—450 years. The people prospered with their judges. One of their greatest judges was Samuel. However, his sons, who were also judges, abused their authority. Instead of waiting for another appointment of a judge after Samuel, the people in their frustration chose another system. They wanted a king just like all the other nations around them. The new kings over Israel were a mixed blessing.

The question remains, how will the Church whom Paul is addressing, judge the world and angels? Where will these judges come from? What will be their background? Will they

have weaknesses? What will be their "record"? Their qualifications? On what Law will their decisions be based? Then, just what will be their responsibilities?

"Brothers, you see God's way of calling you. There are few among you who are wise as the world counts wisdom; there are few who are influential; there are few of aristocratic birth." (I Corinthians 1:26) Even Jesus, "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor." (II Corinthians 8:9) The background of God's judges is evidently humble. Why is this so? God wants sympathetic judges to represent Him, ones who understand because they have plumbed the depths of human experience. These first-hand experiences with the needs and frustrations of life will make them sympathetic when finally reaching a position of judicial authority. They will not forget.

However, simply being poor and exposed to trials "common to man" (I Corinthians 10:13) will not automatically qualify a person to be a good judge. The Christian who is being prepared to "judge the world" in God's Kingdom is sensitive. He is sensitive because through his life's ordeals he or she has not become bitter or vengeful. These overcoming Christians will be qualified judges because they have fought against their own fallen conditions. They have learned compassion and are effective in their sympathy because they understand human nature.

Will Christians who are to be judges with Christ have a perfect record? If "perfect record" means no mistakes, No! There will be dark corners in their lives, seeming inconsistencies. But in those dark corners and inconsistencies, the struggle against sin will be obvious. There may be failures, but there will be no hypocrisy.

### **Natural Law—Higher Law**

By what Law will these overcoming Christians judge in the future? Will it be their own law—or interpretation of God's Law?

One of the recent concerns aired during the Supreme Court confirmation hearings has been the question of "natural law." The position taken by many has been that a judge should be responsive to the U.S. Constitution and not to his own conception of a higher "natural law." In American judicial history, "natural law" has been cited to justify decisions. "Natural Law" was cited to affirm that slaves confiscated from a pirate ship should be freed—while in another case "natural law" was cited to affirm that a slave, as property, should be returned to his owner! No wonder Senators were concerned about the nominee's comments about "natural law." We should not be surprised that men not governed by God's Laws would be nervous about someone's interpretation of "higher laws."

God's judges will understand His Laws. Their interpretation and application of those Laws will be consistent with God's wisdom, justice, love and power. God's judges will be nurtured on his Law while they walked the earth. "O, how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day. I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me I have sworn and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments." (Psalm 119:97,102,106)

Just what is God's Law? Jesus summarizes the whole Law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul and strength and thy neighbor as thyself." But that Law has been the farthest from man's experience. How to apply it? How to enforce it?

## Sensitive Judgment

How sensitive is God to the suffering of humanity? He is described as the God of the widows, the fatherless, the needy and poor. (Psalms 68:5; 72:4) Yet the widows, the fatherless, the needy and poor have suffered long centuries with barely any justice at all. Indeed, the whole groaning creation waits "for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Romans 8:19,22) They are waiting for God's judges.

They will share authority under Jesus, who is God's "Holy arm." "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad before the LORD for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth. His right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory for he cometh to judge the earth with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity."

(Psalms 96-98) This time has not come yet. Valiant have been the attempts of man to dispense justice and judgment. Sad has been the success.

How will this righteous judgment be established in the earth? Each man deserves dignity and just rights. "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isaiah 2:3) God's judges in heaven will have their visible representatives on earth. Addressing Israel, God says, "And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross and take away all thy tin: 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 1:25,26)

These judges will be Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the worthies of old. They are fathers of faith to the Christian. But they will be children of the Church in the Kingdom: "Instead of thy [the kings daughter's] fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth." (Psalm 45:12-16)

Finally, one of the closing promises of Jesus to his followers will be fulfilled. The Church will be able to render equitable judgment to the groaning creation crying for justice. "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father has appointed unto me, that ye may sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Luke 22:28-30) Then no citizen of the Kingdom need fear an unfair decision when God's judges represent Him.

"And I saw thrones, and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Revelation 20:4