

I. Unity over Ethics (5-7)

A. Ethical Conduct in the House of God Pt. 2 (1 Cor 6:1-11)

1. Lawsuits (vv. 1-8)

- a. The Historical Situation: Ancient society was just as litigious as modern society is (more on this below). The church in Corinth was birthed within a culture that hailed being civilized. Rome was the glorious beacon of order. Greek culture was believed to be the wisest of all. But the justice system in this Greco-Roman milieu was said to have been extremely corrupt. Roman society, at large, was a highly stratified society. People were known for their social rankings. Within this culture, Romans of high class were afforded more privileges. If a person came from a good family, with wealth, and showed civic/religious strength, that person was highly ranked. But people of lower status were also known and excluded from social privileges. In Corinth, Roman legal code may have disallowed people of lower ranking from suing people of higher ranking. And, on the other side of the matter, people of higher ranking could sue people of lower ranking. If the person of higher rank sued the lower ranked person, and since that person came with more money, more influence, etc., it may be that the courts would always work in that person's favor. Paul may have been trying to address the problem of rich people using the courts to steal from poor people within the congregation.
- b. Paul opens this portion of the discussion with the phrase "how dare anyone of you" because he sees the world system being run by "wicked" people.
- c. The saints of the most high will judge "angels."
- d. The saints will judge the entire world.
- e. Solution: Since believers *will* judge all things as part of the coming of the Lord Jesus, we who have been given the Spirit of God *should* be able to judge matters among us. Paul suggests setting those least esteemed, or those who don't have anything to gain, to arbitrate.
- f. To sue or not to sue?
 - i. Church Matters?
 - ii. Believers?
 - iii. Unbelievers?

2. The Vice List (vv.9-11)

- a. Paul reminds the church that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. Here are the list of unrighteous people. Sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, homosexual practicing men (see below), thieves, greedy, drunkards, violent, and robbers.
 - i. Paul speaks of malakoi and arsenakoites. The malakoi "effeminate" are men who are in the submissive position in sexual relationships with other men. Arsenakoites (lit. "men who lay") are the dominant men in sexual relationships with other men. Gender dynamics were in play in the ancient world as they are today. It was understood in the Greco-Roman world that some men wanted to sleep with other men. Some men even had long term relationships with them. But it was almost never the case that marriage was understood to be between two people of the same gender.
- b. By faith and practice, members of the church **were** wicked but not anymore.