

# 1 Corinthians 6:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

## Analysis

**Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?** Paul grounds church discipline in eschatology. *Krinō* (κρίνω, 'judge') appears throughout verses 1-6—the saints' future role as co-judges with Christ (Matthew 19:28, Revelation 20:4) makes present incompetence absurd. If believers will adjudicate cosmic matters, are they really **unworthy to judge the smallest matters** (*kritērion elachistōn*, κριτήριον ἐλαχίστων)?

The logic is a *a fortiori*: greater authority assumes lesser competence. Jewish apocalyptic tradition envisioned the righteous judging nations (Wisdom 3:8, Daniel 7:22); Paul applies this to church disputes. The Corinthians' failure reveals not lack of wisdom but refusal to embrace their identity—they're playing citizens of Corinth when they're already citizens of heaven.

## Historical Context

Jewish courts (*beth din*) handled internal disputes to avoid Roman entanglement. Paul assumes the church should function similarly as a distinct *polis* (political community) with its own jurisprudence. The Corinthians' reliance on secular courts showed they valued Roman citizenship over kingdom citizenship—ironic in a church obsessed with spiritual status (4:8: 'already you reign as kings!').

## Related Passages

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**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. How does your future role in Christ's kingdom (judging the world and angels) reshape your view of present conflicts?
2. What 'smallest matters' do you escalate because you've forgotten your eternal identity and authority?
3. How can church leaders cultivate discernment so believers trust internal resolution over external litigation?

## Interlinear Text

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οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι οἱ ἄγιοι τὸν κόσμος κρίνεται καὶ  
not Do ye that G3588 the saints G3588 the world shall be judged and  
G3756 G1492 G3754 G40 G2889 G2919 G2532

εἰ ἐν ὑμῖν κρίνεται ὁ κόσμος ἀνάξιοί ἐστε  
if by you shall be judged G3588 the world unworthy are ye  
G1487 G1722 G5213 G2919 G2889 G370 G2075

κριτηρίων ἐλαχίστων;  
to judge the smallest matters  
G2922 G1646

## Additional Cross-References

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**Matthew 19:28** (Parallel theme): And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

**Luke 22:30** (Parallel theme): That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

**Daniel 7:22** (Judgment): Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

**Revelation 20:4** (Judgment): And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

**Revelation 3:21** (Parallel theme): To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

**Daniel 7:18** (Holy): But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.

**Psalms 49:14** (Parallel theme): Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.

**1 Corinthians 6:4** (Judgment): If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.

**2 Corinthians 4:18** (Parallel theme): While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

**Zechariah 14:5** (Holy): And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.