

The Hearings of Jesus, Part 1

The Jews have always prided themselves on their sense of fairness and justice – and rightly so. God laid a foundation for leaders in that nation that has benefited the world. It is said that the system of justice that America has can be traced in some of its origins to a Judaic system of justice.

This principle of justice is laid out in Deuteronomy: “Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment. Thou shalt not wrest [distort, twist, or pervert] judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift [bribe]: for a gift [bribe] doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee (Deuteronomy 16:18-20). That is God’s standard for judgment and justice: local judges judging the people with fairness and righteousness, never distorting truth, never being partial, and never taking bribes. Throughout the history of the Jewish people, that standard was the basis of their system of jurisprudence.

According to Jewish history the nation prided itself on three fundamental principles: First, the right to a public trial: There could be no secret trials. Every trial was to be held in public so that no one could be framed and then be penalized or executed. In that way the judges were constantly under the scrutiny of the populace, who were able to attend and know what was going on. All fair courts still maintain the same procedure. Second, the right to self-defense: There was to be a defender - someone who would speak in defense of the accused. Third, the right to hear witnesses: No one could be convicted of anything unless proven guilty by two or three witnesses. Those basic rights were guaranteed to all who appeared before the Sanhedrin. But something severely went wrong when it came to the trials of Jesus. Every single principle was violated by the Sanhedrin plus many more.

Bearing false witness was a serious crime, and swift punishment was to be carried out against false witnesses. Yet, this very court that prided itself on justice bore false witness against Jesus. They sought men to bear false testimony. Something was seriously wrong. In our next few lessons we will note what went wrong.

Scripture: King James Version: Deuteronomy 19:15-21

Jerry W. Arnold
(All Rights Reserved)