

Earthly vs. Heavenly Justice

October 1995

I have just heard the verdict of *not guilty* read against O.J. Simpson. In the post-trial analysis it was noted that the jury was not deciding the actual guilt or innocence of Mr. Simpson but whether the prosecution proved the case against him *beyond reasonable doubt*. In other words, a juror might personally believe a man to be guilty of a crime but must vote for acquittal if he determines that the facts leave open a reasonable doubt.

Also, in the aftermath of this case, many spoke in praise of *the system*. Our justice system attempts to establish guilt or innocence about events which often have taken place without witnesses. Apparently only God and the killer saw the moment in time when Nicole Brown and Ronald Goldman were murdered. Since that moment is beyond our purview, we must consider things like physical evidence, state of mind and opportunity in order to reconstruct a scenario of what actually happened. Also to be considered are the biases, mental faculties and moral views of those who will consider the evidence and render judgment upon it.

This process, as we all realize, is imperfect. Earthly justice has been rendered, and it has declared O.J. Simpson not guilty. While not all agree with this sentence, the system of justice is the best we have.

But there is a higher court in which the fact of guilt has already been established. This court is not limited by time, space, prejudices, lies and other factors which obscure truth. *“For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether it is good or whether it is evil”* (Ecc 12:14). This is the court of heaven over which Jesus Himself will preside (Rom 2:16). In His court, there will be no mistrials, no lingering doubts, no injustice. What a relief to know that all the evils that have plagued righteous men and grieved God will forever be set right and punished.

Further, Jesus *“will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts”* (1 Cor 4:5). We can fool other people, and we can even fool ourselves, but what really lies at the depth of our being will be exposed by God. In view of this let us commit ourselves to the word of God *“which is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”* (Heb 4:12). The Scriptures mirror the soul and reflect imperfections which need correction.

Let us confront ourselves and make changes now, for it will be too late when standing before Jesus in the court of heaven. May we hear *“not guilty by virtue of forgiveness”* in that day.