

# CHAPTER FOUR

## LEGAL TERMINOLOGY

The Bible has a lot to say about JUDGES, JUSTICE, etc.  
As we discuss legal terminology, we will discover many spiritual applications.

### A. ADVOCATE



**If any man sin, we have an ADVOCATE with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John 2:1)**  
An Advocate is One who pleads the cause of another -  
One who is called to support –  
One who is a spokesperson and an intercessor



When we sin, confess our sin, and forsake it, then Jesus intercedes for us with the Father. In the heavenly courtroom, my case is brought before the Father. The offence is “(your name) has sinned”. Jesus is my Advocate. He represents me as a defence lawyer would represent a client. He enters his plea before the Father on my behalf. My plea is not one of innocence but one of guilt. I am guilty of sin, and God says the penalty for sin must be paid. God then acknowledges and accepts the substitutionary death of his own son Jesus Christ. Because Jesus has already received the punishment for my sin, I am once again forgiven and allowed to walk free. Now I am restored to proper fellowship with God and permitted to walk in the light with Him.

### B. LEGAL TERMS

- (a) Dictionary meaning of the following: advocate, mediator, petition, propitiation
- (b) How are these words used in a non-theological setting?
- (c) What is the function of a “mediator” when there is a labour strike?
- (d) Some legal terms in the Bible with the number of times mentioned:

2 ACQUIT	1 ADVOCATE	191 JUDGE
3 JUSTIFICATION	7 MEDIATOR	28 JUSTICE
AND IN MATTERS OF LIFE AND DEATH: 450 REFERENCES TO LIFE 372 REFERENCES TO DEATH		

- (e) ACQUIT, EXCULPATE, EXONERATE, CLEAR – to pronounce not guilty of criminal charges - "The suspect was cleared of the murder charges"
- (f) ADJUDICATOR - a person who studies and settles conflicts and disputes
- (g) ADVOCATE – a lawyer who pleads cases in court
- (h) CHIEF JUSTICE - the judge who presides over a supreme court
- (i) CONVICT - find or declare guilty; "The man was convicted of fraud and sentenced"
- (j) JUDGE - a public official authorized to decide questions brought before a court of justice
- (k) JUSTICE OF THE PEACE - a local magistrate with limited powers
- (l) PREJUDGE – to judge beforehand, especially without sufficient evidence.

### C. COURTROOM NOUNS

Court, courtroom, tribunal, bench, bar, dock, lawyer, solicitor, attorney, barrister, advocate, counsel, jurist, notary public, judge, magistrate, justice of the peace, justice, sheriff, jury, judiciary, tribunal, lawsuit, litigation, case, charge, accusation, writ, (court) injunction, interdict, plea, verdict, evidence, testimony, perjury, contempt of court, trial, court-martial, hearing, bail, appeal, prosecution, defence, plaintiff, defendant, accused, witness

What is “blind justice”?

### D. COURTROOM ADJECTIVES:

responsible, guilty, innocent, answerable, liable, accountable, culpable, blameworthy

**E. COURTROOM VERBS:** (Taking someone to court): sue, go to law, take to court, litigate, charge, accuse, try, hear, plead, defend, prosecute, punish, convict, sentence, fine, release, acquit, discharge, pardon, clear, drop, exonerate

### F. “JUDGE” AND DERIVATIVES

judge, judged, judging, judgment, judger, judge advocate, Judges (name of a book in the Old Testament), judgmental, Judgment Day, judicator, judicial separation, judiciary, judicious,

### G. WHAT IS A KANGAROO COURT?



The expression **KANGAROO COURT** has gotten a great deal of attention from word buffs. However, nothing is certain as to its origin. The following explanations may help. The expression **kangaroo court** is first found in the American West in the 1850s; there's no evidence tying it directly to Australia, where kangaroos are from. The original sense is “an unauthorized or irregularly conducted proceeding (such as one in frontier areas or among criminals in prison), especially one where principles of justice are ignored.” The common current sense is “an actual court or legal proceeding that is flagrantly unfair”. “**To kangaroo**” means “to convict in a prisoner's kangaroo court' or “to convict unjustly in an actual court”.

One etymology is that **kangaroo court** alludes to the kangaroo as something eccentric or unusual. There are stories from the mid-19th century of the kangaroo seeming to defy “laws of nature,” so this should be considered at least plausible. Less likely explanations are that a kangaroo court would always result in a conviction. Australia was known as a penal colony where kangaroo courts tried claim jumpers, with the “jump” connection being exploited for a pun; or, least likely of all, that kangaroos, like juries, would sit staring stupidly for long periods of time before jumping to a decision. Generally speaking, **Kangaroo Court** means “an unfair trial in which the rights of the accused and precepts of justice are ignored and the outcome is usually known beforehand.

#### Definition of **CLAIM JUMPER**

Someone who steals someone else's mining claim. One who illegally occupies property to which another has a legal claim.

“Claim jumpers” and thieves lie in wait to appropriate the profits of the venture.

## H. A UNIQUE JAIL

**GUILTY!** So it's off to jail you go. But wait a minute – look at this news item:

In Florida, Governor Jeb Bush told nearly 800 prisoners that religion can help lead them to a better life as he dedicated the nation's first faith-based prison — an institution officials hope will lead to fewer repeat offenders. A little more than a month ago, inmates in this north Florida prison were told that it was going to be converted to a faith-based institution and were given the option to transfer out. At the same time, prisoners elsewhere were told they could transfer in and take part in more intensive religious programs.

(More on this unique jail in APPENDICES)

## I. WIGS AND ROBES

This is partly due to tradition, partly to create a solemn atmosphere, and partly to help preserve the privacy of a judge who is likely to look very different without a wig on! The danger of being the target of an irate criminal can thus be avoided. In England, dress codes vary among courts. In the most formal situations, judges can be required to wear knee breeches, buckled shoes, scarlet or purple robes and fur mantles. In low-level criminal courts and many civil cases, judges wear a simple black gown and short, curled wig; in closed family courts, they wear street clothes. Lawyers generally wear black robes and wigs when arguing a case. Court clerks often do, too. One wig-wearer complained that wigs could be "incredibly uncomfortable when it gets hot". Another court official stated "A barrister without a wig would be like a doctor without a stethoscope; a cook without a spoon... or a middle manager without a flip chart."



## J. A RIGHTEOUS JUDGE

When we feel we have been “weighed in the balances and found wanting” (Daniel 5:27), it is reassuring to know that God is the one who will be a righteous, fair, upright, honorable JUDGE.

Isaiah 33:22 – For the Lord is our Judge. The Lord is our Lawgiver.

Genesis 18:25 Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

Psalms 9:8 – And He shall judge the world in righteousness;  
He shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.

God is the only Judge who will never be bribed,  
He will never be biased in His judgments; He will always be fair and just!

