



THE LIFE OF MESSIAH FROM A JEWISH PERSPECTIVE

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Based on A. T. Robertson's *A Harmony of the Gospels*

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LAWS OF THE SANHEDRIN REGARDING TRIALS

by Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum

1. There was to be no arrest by religious authorities that was effected by a bribe. Exodus 23:8
2. There were to be no steps of criminal proceedings after sunset.
3. Judges or Sanhedrin members were not allowed to participate in the arrest.
4. There were to be no trials before the morning sacrifice.
5. There were to be no secret trials, only public.
6. Sanhedrin trials could only be conducted in the Hall of Judgment of the Temple Compound.
7. The procedure was to be first the defense and then the accusation.
8. All may argue in favor of acquittal, but all may not argue in favor of conviction.
9. There were to be two or three witnesses and their testimony had to agree in every detail. Deuteronomy 19:15
10. There was to be no allowance for the accused to testify against himself.
11. The High Priest was forbidden to rent his garments. Leviticus 21:10
12. Charges could not originate with the judges, they could only investigate charges brought to them.
13. The accusation of blasphemy was only valid if the name of God itself was pronounced.
14. A person could not be condemned on the basis of his own words alone.
15. The verdict could not be announced at night, only in the daytime.
16. In cases of capital punishment, the trial and guilty verdict could not occur at the same time but must be separated by at least 24 hours.
17. Voting for the death penalty had to be done by individual count beginning with the youngest so the young would not be influenced by the elders.
18. A unanimous decision for guilt shows innocence since it is impossible for 23-71 men to agree without plotting.
19. The sentence could only be pronounced three days after the guilty verdict.
20. Judges were to be humane and kind.
21. A person condemned to death was not to be scourged or beaten beforehand.
22. No trials are allowed on the eve of the Sabbath or on a feast day.