

A Fool for a Client

“Every man who is his own lawyer has a fool for a client.” Henry Kett, 1814

In 2012, Adam Mueller was accused of illegal wiretapping for posting a video on the Internet of a police officer arresting a student at the Manchester, NH high school. The police and prosecutors said that because he did not have the permission of the police officer, the High School Principal, or the Principal's assistant (3 class B felonies), he should go to jail.

Mueller did not deny that he had taped the people without their permission. In fact, he fully admitted that the incident occurred. Instead Mueller wanted the case to be decided by “Jury nullification.”

Per the University of Missouri School of Law, “Jury nullification occurs when a jury returns a verdict of "Not Guilty" despite its belief that the defendant is guilty of the violation charged. The jury in effect nullifies a law that it believes is either immoral or wrongly applied to the defendant whose fate they are charged with deciding.” In effect, the jury says, “Yes, this person did that which they are accused, but the law itself is wrong.”

Jury Nullification has been used at various times to overturn or protest laws that the people found distasteful. Under President Alexander Hamilton there was a law called the “Alien and Sedition Act” which made it illegal to criticize those in the Government. Several state juries used nullification to overturn the law.

Likewise, before the Civil War there were laws that stated that someone must return runaway slaves to their masters. Juries use nullification to overturn those laws as well. The Juries said, “Yes, these people violated the law by not returning the slaves, but the law that requires them to be returned is morally wrong.”

As you can probably guess, Jury Nullification is not popular with Prosecutors and Judges. In fact, many judges give instructions to juries that they must find a verdict based on the facts in the case despite what their personal convictions about the law. Most judges forbid attorneys from telling juries about Nullification, especially during closing arguments. Judges have been known to remove jurors from cases if they become aware that the juror is even discussing the word

Nullification in the jurors' chambers. (If you want to get out of jury duty, casually mention to the judge that you are a big fan of Jury Nullification.)

Judges argue that Jury Nullification can lead to chaos in the courtroom and the law. You see while Jury Nullification has been used to free people accused of harboring runaway slaves, it has also been used by juries to release people accused of murdering civil rights workers in the South in the 1960's.

For Adam Mueller, he wanted the jury to Nullify the law that accused him of illegal wiretapping. He claimed that it should not be illegal to video public workers in the course of performing their public duties. He argued that since they work for the public, that it was proper that the public should be aware of their activities.

As you can imagine, no Judge or Attorney wanted to go into court and make such an argument. So, Adam Mueller decided to represent himself in the case. He attempted to file a motion to have the charges dismissed with prejudice so they could not be brought back. The judge denied his motion because it was not filed within the required seven days.

Adam Mueller had a fool for a client. You see the law isn't about what the law says, the law is about procedure. The law is about that happens and when. Who can do what, when they can do it, and when they must stop doing it. Being a lawyer is less about knowing the law and more about having an army of assistants who can stand in line at the courthouse to file paperwork on time. When I was in school, I took a course in Business Law. Things you think would be easy like negotiating a price are defined by law. When is an offer valid? When is a counter-offer valid? If an offer is accepted, when does the acceptance become binding? Who is in control of the offer at any point in time?

The Law is about the apparent meaning of the words within the Law, but it is also about precedent and procedure. Hiring a lawyer ensures that you have someone who is skilled that the procedure of the law. Someone who can act dispassionately about the case on your behalf. Even Lawyers hire other Lawyers to act on their behalf because none of them wants to have a fool for a client.

Court is in Session

Leviticus 23:23-25 (KJV)

23 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, **24** Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. **25** Ye shall do no servile work therein: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord.

These verses deal with the Jewish New Year, also known as “Rosh Hashanah” or “The Feast of Trumpets.” The blowing of the ram’s horn (Shofar) signals the beginning of the new year. This occurs on October 2, 2016 at sundown. The blowing of the trumpet at sundown signals the beginning of the Jewish new year. In this case, the year 5777.

Leviticus 23:26-28 (KJV)

26 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, **27** Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord. **28** And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God.

Ten days later there is another feast, the Day of Atonement. This day begins at sundown on October 11 and ends at sundown on October 12. The Day of Atonement ends with a 25 hour fast where Jews eat neither food nor water. The day is spent in repentance and appealing to God.

The ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are known as the “High Holy Days” or the Days of Awe and are the holiest in the entire Jewish calendar.

Although it does not say so in these scriptures in Leviticus, “tradition” (I will explain the quotes later) holds that the Days of Awe are a time when God holds court in heaven and judges all the earth.

The Days of Awe begins with the blasting of the trumpet. Like the beginning of court here on earth, court begins with a formality. Remember that I said that the Law isn’t about what the law says, it is about formality and procedure. In this case, court begins by being called into session with the blasting of the trumpet. Everyone rises, and the judge, God, enters into the room and takes his place.

The “tradition further holds that God has before him 3 books. In the first book are the names of everyone on the earth. God goes through the book and makes a judgement of everyone’s life. If your life is deemed righteous, then your name is transferred to a second book, the Book of Life. If your life is not righteous, your name is transferred into a third book, the Book of Death.

Some people have the names transferred into one book or the other immediately. Some people are deemed righteous right at the start, while others are deemed unrighteous and their names are immediately written into the Book of Death. For everyone else, their lives are up for debate. Every name must be transferred to either the Book of Life or the Book of Death by the end of day 10, but some people will have their lives argued over in trial during the 10 Days of Awe.

Here is the real kicker: this trial takes place in heaven, but the people being judged are on earth so they have no idea which book they are in on any given day.

That is why the Jews even today spend the entire 10 Days of Awe in prayer and repentance. Because they don’t know whether their name has already been written in the Book of Life, or if their life is being debated in heaven. That is why the last day, Yom Kippur or “Day of Atonement” is so important. It is also why observant Jews even today will take off work to spend the entire day fasting and in prayer to try to ensure that the judgement taking place in heaven results in their name being written in the Book of Life.

Job’s Day in Court

This idea that the 10 Days of Awe represent a court session is also emphasized in the Book of Job. The book of Job takes place over the course of 10 days: 2 days where calamity destroys everything that Job knows and loves, 7 days where nothing happens, and then the remainder of the book takes place on day 10 where Job and his friends argue over whether Job is guilty of some sin. But many Jewish Bible scholars agree that the 10 days of Job are not just any 10 days; they take place during the 10 days of Awe. The book of Job takes place during a time when court is in session in Heaven and Job (along with the rest of humanity) is being judged. Let’s look at Job briefly considering that understanding:

Job 1:6 (KJV) Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.

This would be Feast of Trumpets, Rosh Hashanah. The Shofar is blown and court is in session. God is sitting on the throne as the judge.

“and Satan came also among them.”

Now the word Satan here comes to us untranslated from the Hebrew phrase ‘Ha Satan’ which is usually translated as something like “The Adversary.” The problem with that translation is that it misses the legal overtones of the original Hebrew.

He is not just an Adversary; he is a legal adversary. Specifically, he is the one assigned the job of making accusations. Satan isn’t a name; it is a title. In modern terms, it might be better to translate the phrase ‘Ha Satan’ into “The Prosecutor.”

In local courts, the Prosecutor is given the job of bringing charges against people in a court of law. It is not his job to help you find innocence; the Prosecutor’s job is get you convicted.

In most courts cases, the Prosecutor is someone from the District Attorney’s office. For ordinary cases, it will be an Assistant District Attorney. The head District Attorney is much too busy to be bothered with ordinary cases, so an assistant DA will handle most cases. If the case is high profile enough, the main District Attorney himself/herself will act as the Prosecutor in a case.

In the case of Job, we have Ha Satan, The Prosecutor, the Lead District Attorney himself there to oversee the case. He is there to make sure that as many people are convicted of their sins as possible. To make sure he is successful in his prosecution, he has gone through the earth gathering evidence against everyone to make his case:

Job 1:7 (KJV) And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

So, Satan has come to court prepared. He has a manila folder on the sins of every person on earth. Every time they actively disobeyed God, every time they passively failed to keep a commandment. If the Law is about procedure, the Satan come to court prepared. He has all his paperwork filled out and ready to file. So, the court begins it's session of sorting through the people of earth to determine who is righteous and who is not:

Job 1:8 (KJV) And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

I have heard many preachers get up and wonder why God mentions Job at all? It is not surprising if you view this book as a description of a court case. Job's name came up simply because it was his turn on the court docket. In fact, his name may have come up first because they were going in the order of most righteous to least righteous. God mentions Job in order to make a judgement on his life.

But I want you to understand all of the characters in this scene. There is God who is the judge and Satan who is the Prosecution. But there is no Job. Job is on the earth while his fate is being decided in court. Not only that, but Job has no Defense attorney to plead his case. Job has no one to make sure that his paperwork gets filed on time.

In fact, in chapter 27, Job begins to make a case against God. He makes an accusation that, because he is sinless yet still must suffer, that the Universe itself must be flawed. Job demands that God appear before him and give him an explanation as to why he is being made to suffer. Per the law, someone who is accused of a sin has the right to face his accuser. So, Job demands that God, whom he sees as his accuser, face him.

Job is acting as his own defense attorney. And like everyone who acts as their own attorney, Job has a fool for a client.

That's why in Chapter 38 God finally does appear. But God does not answer Job's accusation. Instead, God argues that Job doesn't have the right to even bring his case. You see to receive restitution; you first must prove that you were wronged in some way. But then you further must provide evidence that the wrong has

occurred. Since Job argues that he is being harmed by a flawed universe, God points out that Job cannot even bring such a case, because he wasn't there at Creation, therefore he is not a witness to the alleged crime, therefore he has no evidence to present. Without evidence, God (as judge) dismissed Job's case.

Like Adam Mueller, whom I mentioned at the beginning, Job has his case thwarted because he failed to follow proper court procedure. He failed to follow procedure, in part, because he is acting as his own attorney. Job has a fool for a client.

Those Books Again?

Remember the 3 books I mentioned earlier? The Book of Life, the Book of Death, and the Book of Maybe? I said that Jewish tradition held that God and Satan go through the Book of Maybe and make judgements on the life of every person on earth. I also mentioned that the books are tradition because they are never actually mentioned in the Bible.

Until Revelation 20.

Revelation 20:11 (KJV) And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

Wait, you mean those books are real?

We found out in Revelation that the Books are real. That God will sit in judgement of the earth. He will go through everyone's life and judge their works. If the Book of Job is any indication, God will sit in judgement while Satan will act as prosecutor. Just like they did at the beginning of the book of Job, God and Satan begin the court proceedings with a blast of the trumpet.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 (KJV) For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

That trumpet will signify that “court is in session.” But those Days of Awe will not be like an ordinary Days of Awe. On that day, those who already have their names written in the Book of Life will be rise and go the Heaven. After that, God and Satan will begin to go through the names in the book one by one. When they are done, final judgement will be passed.

Revelation 20:15 (KJV) And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Many people think that they will be able to go to this last and final court appearance and argue their case before God. They feel that they are basically good people and they can make their case before a righteous God.

But those people forget the prosecutor. They forget Ha Satan who has been going through the earth gathering evidence. They forget that the prosecutor’s job is to present evidence. He is a lawyer; he knows how the judge works. He knows how to file the paperwork against you.

Do you know how to file the paperwork for your case? Have you spent your whole life gathering evidence to support your claim that you are a good person? Do you even know where to get the forms you need to fill out for that court date? Do you know what their filing deadlines are?

In other words, are you planning to act as your own attorney at the trial that determines whether your name is written in the Book of Life or you are cast into the Lake of Fire?

If you are then you have a fool for a client.

Gideon’s Trumpet

On August 4, 1961, Clarence Earl Gideon was accused of stealing \$5 in change from a place call the Pool Room. Gideon had asked the judge for an attorney, but was told that he could only be provided one if this were a capital case. Since this was simple robbery, Gideon had to serve as his own attorney. Gideon was given 5 years in State Penitentiary.

Gideon wrote an appeal the US Supreme Court in a landmark case that is known today as Gideon v. Wainright. In that case, the US Supreme Court determined that everyone is entitled to an attorney. Gideon was granted a new trial, this time with a competent defense attorney. Gideon was acquitted.

Remember Adam Mueller, the man who was convicted in part because he failed to file his paperwork on time? He eventually hired an attorney too. His defense attorney argued that the judge in his case used the phrase “purposely,” when the statute specifically identifies “willfully” as the term. His attorney was able to get him a new trial based on the mistake in a single word used by the judge in his instructions to the jury.

Because sometimes the procedures of the Law are more important than the words.

A Docket with Your Name on It

Someday there will be a court docket with your name on it. In that day, the Judge and the Prosecutor are going to evaluate your life. Make no mistake, the prosecutor Satan is going to have a huge manila folder full of evidence against you. If you go into that court date with a plan to be your own defense attorney, you have a fool for a client.

Fortunately, we have an advocate who is ready and willing to act on your behalf: Jesus Christ.

1 John 2:1 (KJV) My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

One of the differences between Rich and Poor is that the Rich usually have an attorney on retainer. They have someone that they know and trust who can act on their behalf. Need someone to write a will? Call the attorney, he will take care of it. Need someone to look over a contract before you sign it, call the attorney. Get a speeding ticket? Call the attorney, he will take care of it.

When it comes to your eternal soul, you have the opportunity to get a competent defense attorney on retainer for you as well. When you give your life to Jesus Christ in the waters of baptism and infilling of the Holy Ghost, you gain an advocate.

The word 'Advocate' in 1 John 2:1 means, "one who pleads another's cause before a judge, a counsel for defense, an attorney." We have an attorney who is willing and able to plead our case before the judge. Forget to tithe? Call the attorney, he will take care of it. Experience lust in your heart? Call the attorney, he will take care of it. Need some legal advice? Call the attorney.

Call the Attorney

If you have not spoken to your advocate Jesus Christ recently, come down to the altar and confess your sins to Him so that he can have them expunged from our records.

On the other hand, if you have not been baptized in Jesus Name, I beg you to come to the altar. Jesus is waiting to take on your case; to become your defense attorney.