

Bribery - The Spirit of Truth

Foundation

Bible passage : 1 Sam 8.1-3 & Jn 15.26

Bribery

Samuel was a prophet and one of the Judges of Israel. At that time when there were disputes between people which could not be resolved by clan and tribal leaders the matters might be taken before the priests or a Judge. The Book of Judges shows us other people who judged Israel in this way before they had kings. Samuel had been called to this work by God. But he was getting old and he had made his sons, Joel and Abijah judges so that they could take over from him.

But Samuel's sons were not like their father and did not judge impartially. Instead, they took bribes and would make a judgement in favour of the person who paid them best.

“a bribe corrupts the heart”

We see other examples of this in the Bible. Haman in the book of Esther bribed the king in order to have the Jews destroyed and the guards in Matthew 28 were bribed to say that Jesus' body had been stolen. When the Apostle Paul was on trial before the Governor Felix, we are told that Felix had been hoping for bribe (Acts 24.26). Presumably if Paul had been willing to pay the bribe he would have been set free.

We also see examples of this in the world today and there are many scandals where politicians or judges are accused of taking bribes



Protest against corruption in Haiti, 2018.

to pervert justice. There are regular reports about such such injustice and protests against bribery and corruption in countries all over the world. We also hear of sports men and women who have been found guilty of taking money in order to throw the result of events.

There are a lot of Bible verses which condemn this sort of behaviour in strong terms because it goes against the character of God.

And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of those who are in the right. (Exodus 23.8)

For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. (Deut. 10:17)

The Spirit of Truth

Jesus called the Holy Spirit the Spirit of Truth. Jesus said that when we believe and trust in Him then he will send the Holy Spirit to help us. But we also see in the Bible that we should try to “keep in step with the spirit” (Galatians 5.25). This might be a picture of soldiers marching in step. But it means that Christians should be living as the Spirit wants us to live, and since He is the Spirit of Truth, that means being truthful.



Bribery ruins lives and societies today. But God is impartial, takes no bribe and expects us to walk in His way.