

WHY WAS RENAISSANCE SCIENCE OPPOSED BY THE CHURCH

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In 1616, the Italian astronomer/mathematician **Galileo**, was placed on trial on orders of Pope Urban III. Found guilty, he was sentenced to house arrest and died there 26 years later. In 1991, 359 years later, the Vatican, under the direction of Pope John Paul II, officially admitted that they had made a mistake.

**Judge Judy:** (Bangs his gavel) This court will come to order. Will the defendant please rise? You are being charged with deliberately disobeying the Church and teaching the public horrible lies. How do you plead?

Galileo: Not guilty, your honor.

**Judge Judy:** Mr. Prosecutor, you may begin.

Hesa Guilty: Ladies and gentleman of the jury, I intend to prove to you that the defendant has committed a terrible crime against the Church and against God. He has publicly stated that the Bible is not correct. Instead he claims that he, rather than the Bible is correct. This dangerous criminal must be stopped and punished. I call my first witness, Bishop Almonte.

**Judge Judy:** (To Bishop Almonte) Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you God?

Bishop Almonte: I do.

Hesa Guilty: Your Eminence, please tell the court what occurred last month.

Bishop Almonte: Well, I picked up a copy of Galileo’s book on astronomy. I was horrified and shocked to learn that he wrote the following – “The Sun does NOT revolve around the Earth but rather the Earth revolves around the Sun.”

Hesa Guilty: For the benefit of the court, could you explain why this is so shocking?

Bishop Almonte: Certainly. The Bible tells us in Psalm 104, “The Lord God laid the foundations of the Earth, that should not be moved forever.” That Galileo creep is directly contradicting the Bible! We warned him not to print this junk but he did it anyway.

Hesa Guilty: No further questions. You may step down.

**Judge Judy:** Will the defense please call their witness.

Nogotta Proof:I call Galileo to the stand. Mr. Galileo, did you I fact write what you have been accused of?

Galileo: Yes and I stand by every word that I have written.

Nogotta Proof: How can you be so sure that you are correct in your writings?

Galileo: Because I rely on science and the scientific method. I have studied astronomy for many years. I have conducted many experiments concerning the sun and the earth over the years. Other astronomers agree with my work but are afraid to say so publicly. My only defense for what I am being accused of is that science and the facts are with me. I'm sorry, Bishop Almonte, but I can prove my theories. Can you?

**Judge Judy:** That's enough. This trial is over. Ladies and Gentlemen of the jury, make your decision.

The prosecutor was \_\_\_\_\_

The defense attorney was \_\_\_\_\_

The judge was \_\_\_\_\_

The witness was \_\_\_\_\_

The defendant was \_\_\_\_\_

1. Why is Galileo being tried in criminal court?
2. What two pieces of evidence does the witness bring against the defendant?
3. How does Galileo defend himself against the charges?
4. Why would the Church want to stop Galileo from spreading his ideas?
5. Galileo knew that he would probably go to jail for spreading his ideas. Was he a hero or a fool? Why?
6. As a member of the jury, what would your decision have been? Why?