

THE EDITOR

Church of God (Seventh Day) Australia

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Practice of Slavery in New Testament Times

The Old & New Covenant

Forgiveness

Jesus Arrested!

A magazine dedicated to uplifting
and transforming peoples' lives
through the uncompromised Word of God

THE EDIFIER



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From the Editor

Essential for followers of Jesus today is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, imparting to the believer an unequalled clarity, courage and conviction.

Throughout the biblical narrative, amidst the rise and fall of empires, we see all kinds of people, old and young, men and women, Hebrews and Gentiles establish their legacy and testimony for yet another generation. The book of Hebrews, chapter eleven, lists many of those faithful heroes; some perished as martyrs and others lived to retell their story.

We read where the men of Issachar understood the times in which they lived and knew what to do. (1 Chronicles 12:32) Can we say that of ourselves today? Do we possess that same clarity and conviction? Do we understand the times in which we live, or are we myopically blinded by prosperity, the busyness of life or the torrent of entertainment? Moreover, are we awake to Jesus' coming? The call for all of us is to, "Come out of her my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues." (Revelation 18:4)

Across the broad panorama of history are the epitaphs of faithful men and women who should encourage us on our journey today. There's the faithfulness, for example, of the prophet Jeremiah in times of great opposition and calamity. Helping him was Ebed-melech, the Ethiopian eunuch who displayed courage and bravery in rescuing Jeremiah, for which God promised him deliverance.

Then there's the Persian king's order of genocide for all Jews from Susa (where Iran is today), across 127 provinces ranging from India to Ethiopia. Esther and Mordecai exhibited extraordinary bravery and faith in the perniciously dangerous times in which they lived.

Daniel and his three friends also lived through perilous times, trusting in God's providence and redemption.

May we take to heart the Psalmist's reflection of the divine reality afforded to all faithful people: "The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them." (Psalms 34:7 ESV)

May we never be afraid, disempowered, or lose sight of our Saviour Jesus. May we be the courageous and righteous people of our day, trusting in God's favour, providence and grace from moment to moment in the call for courage, clarity and conviction. □

John Klassek
Western Australia





Practice of Slavery In New Testament Times

Exploring Biblical historical and cultural context

Despite what might be thought as diametrically opposite to the teachings of Jesus based on liberty, love and freedom, the Church in the New Testament didn't condemn slavery. Jesus didn't advocate for or against it but rather used the well-known institution as an example of how He thought of Himself to others, as He expects of His disciples – to be “as the one who serves” (Luke 22:26-27 ESV).

As for the Apostles, Peter and Paul taught, for converts who were slaves to obey their masters, exhorted masters to treat their slaves with kindness & consideration. Also teaching that spiritually in the body of Christ “there is neither slave or free” (Galatians 3:28 ESV) – that social ranks were now removed.

The practice of slavery in New Testament times within the church was challenged by the light of the gospel as households came to faith in Jesus, permanent foreign slaves (as permissible under mosaic law) now became brothers in Christ.

The practice of slavery in New Testament Times in the Roman world differed greatly from the already higher standard of welfare and care the Jews were obligated to provide for both foreign and Israelite alike from antiquity.

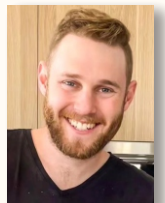
The Roman slavery system had no regard for skin colour or ethnic/racial origins and rarely was a slave distinct in clothing or appearance of that of a free born, yet they were none-the-less

considered as property not people. One would find themselves in such a position by reason of capture in war, by birth, sale by impoverished parents or self-sale reasons, where their master would have total control over their slaves' bodies – often with brutal misuse.

Despite a slave's position in the empire with status universally despised with no honour, the socioeconomic pyramid left space for one group lower, the impoverished free person, who had to seek work as day labourers with no guarantee of being hired nor their next meal. The position of a slave being seen desirous in these cases where one's food, shelter and clothing were always provided for under a master's “care” with living conditions subjectively better.

Interestingly a large number of slaves could anticipate being set free often by the age of thirty. They would be released as a reward for good and faithful work or having earned a small allowance to ransom themselves, with the majority freed because it served their owner's direct personal, financial, and legal interest. □

*Joshua Anderson
Western Australia*



This article was originally submitted as one of the recent assignments for our church's Emmaus Equipping College Bible Classes. Like what you read? We invite you to also consider enrolling. More information at <https://emmaus.cog7.au>

The Old & New Covenant

God chose Abram when he was 75 years old, and called him to leave Haran on the Chaldean border to move to the land of Canaan.

The Lord promised to make him the father of a great nation, and to give to his descendants the land to which He'd sent him. God promised that all the families of the earth would be blessed through him. (Genesis 12:1-9)

The Lord God later repeated the promise and reminded Abram that He could be trusted and relied on for everything, including an heir, through whom the promise would be fulfilled. His heir and resulting descendants would live as pilgrims and strangers in a land not theirs for 400 years, and later be afflicted and enslaved. They would be delivered by the Lord Himself, and brought into the promised land.

We are told that Abram believed God; that God was trustworthy and would be true to His word. Abram had a trusting relationship with Him. Because of this, uncircumcised Abram was accounted righteous by God. At Abram's request, the Lord God confirmed the promise by a covenant (Genesis 15).

Years later when Abram was 99 years old, the Lord God visited him again, telling him that the promised heir would be born to Sarai, now 90 years old, who, when she heard it, laughed at the idea. Isaac's name means "laughter."

At this time, God made a covenant with Abram, changing his name to Abraham (meaning a "father of many nations,") and Sarai's name to Sarah (meaning "princess"). They would be blessed and multiply and be given the promised land. The covenant was with Abraham and all his descendants, and the sign of it was physical circumcision. Any uncircumcised male would be cut off from this covenant (Genesis 17).

Fast forward 400 years from the birth of Isaac, and the Lord fulfilled the promise He had made to Abraham. He brought all the descendants that had come from Isaac out of slavery, demonstrating His power over the Egyptian gods – demonic forces that had been given power over the Egyptian nation. The descendants of Israel, Isaac's progeny, had been spiritually snared and enslaved into worshipping these gods, and this had resulted in their being chastised by physical enslavement. (Ezekiel 20:5-9)

They were delivered miraculously by God under Moses' direction in great haste. They ate unleavened bread because they did not have time to allow the dough to ferment. God used this as symbolism that they were to leave the false ideas, philosophies and worship of the Egyptian gods behind them (philosophies and false ideas and teachings which spread like leaven in dough).

God fed them miraculously, revealing to them the Sabbath (given to all mankind from the beginning) by withholding manna on that day.

God Himself taught and instructed them in the wilderness. He fed them miraculously. He revealed the Sabbath (given to all mankind from the beginning) by withholding the manna on that day (Exodus 16:22-26). With Moses as the mediator, they agreed that they would comply with all that God would tell them. Later the Lord God spoke loud and clear from the top of Mt Sinai or Horeb, in Midian, Ten Statements or "Words" – called "the Ten Commandments" – that they were to keep.

The people were so terrified they asked that God should not speak to them directly again. They asked that the Lord would give His instructions for them through Moses. With God's counsel, Moses wrote down all the further instructions He had for them in a book. They were to keep all this in the new land He was giving them. It was called "the book of the law", all based on the Ten Commandments. This was read out to the people, who agreed to keep it. Sacrificial blood was

sprinkled on them and the book, and the “Old” Covenant was made (Exodus 24). From its inception, Moses administered it and was the mediator. It contained a sacrificial system that was added to provide the hope of grace and forgiveness for transgressions. These foreshadowed the only sacrifice by which sins can be forgiven – the Lamb of God, Jesus, who would take away the sins of the world!

Following this, Moses went up the mountain and received two tablets of stone on which God Himself had inscribed the Ten Statements that He had spoken. While he was away, the people reverted to worshipping the gods they had known in Egypt. They had not been given a heart and mind to comprehend what God was teaching them (Deuteronomy 29:4). “They went astray in their hearts,” which went back to Egypt. It seems they could not help themselves. With a few chosen exceptions, they had “carnal minds” and “uncircumcised hearts” which were incapable of spiritual comprehension. The reason for this was a long-term purpose. (Romans 8:7, 11:32, 1 Corinthians 2:14).

Moses came down the mountain with the two tablets of stone, engraved by God Himself with the very words from God. When he saw the Israelites revelling in an idolatrous party, Moses threw down the tablets, smashing them to bits. He had to cut two more and go up the mountain to have God inscribe them again.

When he came down with them this time, unknown to him, his face was radiating bright light. It so shocked those who saw him that they drew back, and kept their distance. Moses told them not to be afraid: “It’s only me!” He told them to come near and hear what he had to tell them from the Lord God. After he’d finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face, which not only hid the bright light but also prevented anyone noticing that it faded. When he went back into the tent of meeting to communicate directly with the Lord, he removed the veil. Then he would come out with radiance renewed and told the people what he had been instructed to tell them, with the sign of a glowing face. The veil would go back on when he’d done teaching. (Exodus 34:29- 35, 2 Corinthians 3:7-18)

The light fading from Moses’ face was a hidden sign that this covenanted agreement, administered by Moses, was a temporary arrangement that would fade and come to an end as the light faded from Moses’ face. Because of the veil the sign was unnoticed by the Israelites.

The “administration of death” would be replaced by an administration that would lead to life as foretold by Jeremiah: “But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” (Jeremiah 31:33)

As the writer of Hebrews comments, quoting this Scripture, that even from that time – in that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away (Hebrews 8:13). The old covenant ended when Jesus died on the cross.

God’s desire for them from the first was simple obedience to His ways. (Jeremiah 7:22-23) The sacrificial system was added because of their disobedience and need for grace.

Much earlier, the prophet Micah had told the Israelites that this is what God desires: “He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8)

It was not sacrifice, however impressive, that pleased Him. Jesus is the same, “yesterday, today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). His ways do not change.

But what is justice? How do we understand it? In Nehemiah chapters 8 and 9 we have a record of national repentance. The Levites made confession on behalf of the nation by acknowledging sins and their collective failures in being faithful to God and the covenant.

That “old covenant” was based on keeping all the words of the law, and if they did that, it would be their righteousness (Deuteronomy 6:25). They were to love God with their all and the words

were to be in their hearts, so that they would live by them (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). This was later described by Paul as “serving in the letter,” and it is a way of being right and just by oneself, in thought, word and deed.

Achieving righteousness this way is not possible by natural human beings because the hearts and minds of men and women are innately hostile to God and His ways. There has to be a new creation – a spiritual mind and heart. The natural heart has to be “circumcised” where God has to open hearts and minds by His Spirit before spiritual comprehension of His laws and ways are possible.

Under the old covenant there were a lot of rules and regulations for people to observe. These were designed to help those without spiritual understanding from going too far off track. Some of them were specific to the nation and economy in the land that God had given them, others were more general (Deuteronomy 4:40).

The way of the new covenant is called “serving in the spirit” – that is from the heart and trusting in God’s mercy to forgive transgression. He, through Jesus, paid the price of the law’s curse, and delivered us so we can live a life in alignment with God’s ways. Paul quotes from Deuteronomy 30:14: “But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.” (Romans 10:5-13). That is the Word of faith in what Christ has done.

It is a righteousness achievable only by Christ living in us as His new creation, by the faith He gives (Ephesians 3:16- 21, Colossians 1:27).

Thanks be to God that we can live the new covenant life in the manner and spirit He always intended. □

*Michael Evans
New South Wales*



Some hard facts about an unborn baby.



After only five weeks the baby has a beating heart. At just 12 weeks most organs have formed. By 14 weeks the baby’s gender is known. Movement may be felt by the mother between 16-20 weeks and at 20 weeks the baby has a chance of survival outside of the uterus.

Despite these facts, the pre-born baby is not legally considered a human being in New Zealand until birth and is vulnerable to being aborted at any stage of the pregnancy.

Contrast this though with the Te Urewera Forest, the Whanganui River and, more recently, Mount Taranaki in New Zealand which have been granted personhood at law along with the rights and responsibilities of human beings.

If someone abuses or harms Mount Taranaki it is counted as harming the tribe who consider it to be their ancestor and Whanau. However, five-week-old babies with beating hearts, and even fully formed babies about to be born, may legally be terminated. They have no legal redress. Neither do their fathers wishing to protect them.

God says of the prophet Jeremiah, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet.”

The Bible talks of John the Baptist being filled with the Holy Spirit from the womb. God clearly gives recognition to the pre-born.

If forests, rivers and mountains can be granted personhood and meaningful legal rights then surely our law can grant pre-born children the same? □

*David Kidd
New Zealand*





On 1 February 2020, the lives of the Abdallah family were tragically turned upside down. Three of their children were lost to the reckless driving of Samuel Davidson, who was intoxicated and under the influence of illicit substances.

We would expect grief-stricken parents, Leila and Danny, to become angry, vengeful, and filled with resentment for this man. But three days later, Leila told the world that she and her family chose to forgive.

7NEWS Spotlight featured this story on Sunday, 17 August. I felt encouraged to see a story like this covered on mainstream media because it forces us to wrestle with uncomfortable questions: Are we truly willing to forgive? Or do we only forgive when it's easy or convenient? Or when we are ready?

Danny's Desire for Obedience

Danny and Leila Abdallah didn't have time to be ready. They never got to say goodbye to their children. Yet, in the midst of their pain and suffering, they forgave the man who took the lives of their three children.

That's incredibly powerful. It is only Christ-like love that can empower that readiness to forgive.

As Danny shared at the 2023 National Prayer Breakfast: "The reason I forgave was I wanted to be obedient to our Lord and Saviour and honour Him at whatever cost".

"I Want to Be Like Danny."

On 30 August 2023, Danny chose to visit Samuel in prison.

Samuel recalls what it was like to have Danny forgive him: "I've now got a second chance at life here. He's forgiven me, so that's massive. I look at him like a godfather, I want to do everything to be like him."

Danny has since visited Samuel several times, sharing Scripture and chapel time together. He has also reached out to Samuel's parents. As Danny shares with the 7NEWS reporter, "What [Samuel's parents] have been through isn't easy. They're grieving as well."

This instalment of Spotlight mentions that Danny and Samuel are participating in the New South Wales Correctional Services' Restorative Justice Program. Through this program, victims have the opportunity to meet with the offender, where the perpetrator can "confront the consequences of his crime, provide an apology and show remorse."

But we can see that Danny's heart for Samuel goes far beyond his participation in this program. From a Christian perspective, we understand it as a powerful form of prison ministry.

You Visited Me in Prison

In Matthew 25, Jesus speaks of the Final Judgement Day when He will return in glory to separate “the sheep from the goats”. Many of us have read well-known parts of this passage, such as “I was hungry and you fed me, I was naked and you clothed me” (Matthew 25:35). Jesus says the sheep will “inherit the kingdom prepared for you” (Matthew 25:34).

But it’s easy to miss these words: “I was in prison, and you visited me” (Matthew 25:36).

I must admit, when I’ve read this verse in the past, I’d never really thought about what it meant to visit someone in prison.

Yes, I’d heard of those who did prison ministry, sharing the gospel with strangers in jail, including ex-gang members. But it had never occurred to me that prison ministry could involve deeply loving and caring for someone like Samuel.



What if God calls me to do the same for someone who had wronged me? Would I have the strength and compassion to go and share the hope of the gospel with a criminal? And not just any criminal, but an individual who had taken the life of someone I loved, treasured and cared for?

Why should this person not be nothing to me? Dead to me? Someone to resent and curse? How could I not harbour hate against someone who has caused me such grief, who has made me numb, and left me with a part of my life I would rather block out of my mind?

Forgiven So We Can Forgive

As Christians, we are compelled to live out a different narrative because “God showed his love in this, that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8). How can we hold onto hate and refuse

to forgive when God stopped at nothing to forgive us and to redeem us as His own?

Peter writes in 1 Peter 5:8, “Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.” And as a natural consequence of part of that process – of giving our pain and suffering over to God – God transforms our hearts to be more like His heart for us. A heart that forgives and loves, because God is love.

This kind of love is not formed by feelings but by a selfless motivation to act. This selflessness comes from this radical action: God stepped into our world in the person of Jesus, to be spat upon, ridiculed, and ultimately endure the shame and suffering of the cross so that we might have a restored relationship with Him.

Only a radical Christ-like love could compel Danny to visit and nurture a relationship with Samuel, to teach his surviving children to pray for Samuel and to call Samuel a part of the same circle of family. It is only God’s power that can bring about that restoration and healing. It is only God’s power that can “work all things for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).

You can see the hope in Samuel’s eyes when he talks about how the Abdallah family have forgiven him:

“He’s given me forgiveness, he’s welcomed me into his family, he’s gone above and beyond. I’d have no hope if I couldn’t have that [forgiveness].”

Out of tragedy, Samuel’s eyes have been opened to a better way to live.

It is incredibly awe-inspiring to witness the good work being done in the lives of Samuel and the Abdallah family. May their testimony, through the power of the Holy Spirit, convict and embolden us to embrace God’s forgiveness “as we forgive those who have trespassed against us” (Matthew 6:12). □

*Louisa Tedesco
South Australia*



Article as published online at <https://dailydeclaration.org.au/2025/08/19/danny-abdallah-forgive-davidson/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzc9VAKfCbl> (Screen captured images)

This story cites names, photos and video as they also appeared on commercial Australian television, YouTube as well as on the Daily Declaration website.



Growing Our Youth In Christ

Retelling a Bible story using painted boxes, foam bricks and cardboard trumpets! (Can you guess the story?)

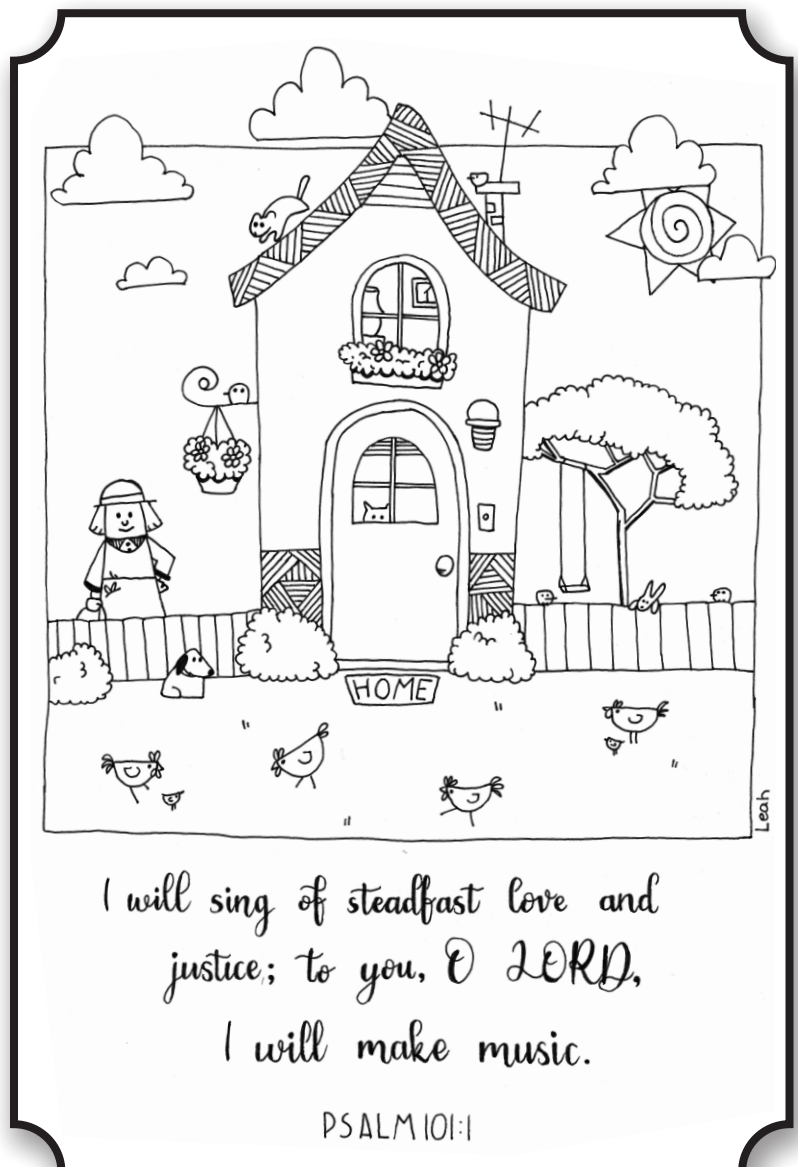
The stewardship of daily sharing the gospel with our youth is one of the most rewarding and important ministries we can embrace and be involved with.

In a world of distraction, deception and false narrative, as a church family we must help and come alongside parents in the discipling process.

Storytelling is part of the great commission. Through Bible reading, parables, immersive play, dinner time conversation, and most of all our example, our youth learn to lean and trust in their Saviour and Friend, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Many of us have come to faith because, many years ago, someone took the time to encourage us, teach us, and lift us in prayer.

Thank you to all who each week dedicate time in planning, preparation and prayer, so that another generation is blessed! May God also protect, encourage and inspire yet another generation of faithful disciples of Jesus!



Original Artwork by Leah Anderson, Western Australia



We have read many times of the illegal trial of Jesus, but it is not until you really analyse what took place that you have new-found admiration for Jesus as the innocent lamb of God.

An illegal arrest

Jesus' arrest was done in secret, by night with no formal charges being made of any crime having been committed. Absent were the charge documents, a statement of what he was alleged to have done. In total there was no warrant for his arrest. Jewish law declared that "The testimony of an accomplice is not admissible by Rabbinic law, ... and no man's life, nor his liberty, nor his reputation, can be endangered by the malice of one who has confessed himself a criminal" (*Criminal Jurisprudence of the Ancient Hebrews*; p. 120). Judas had taken a bribe from the judges and was therefore guilty of a criminal offence. Furthermore, we see that it is his very judges that make the arrest: "Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him, 'Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs?'" (Luke 22:52).

A private night proceeding

The first step in Jesus' trial was a preliminary examination that took place at night in private before a former high priest, Annais (Father-in-law to Caiaphas, the current High priest). "No session of the Court [was] to take place before the offering of the morning sacrifice." No night meetings were permitted; – the law allowed investigation only upon daylight. "Criminal cases can be acted upon by the various courts during day time only, (*Criminal Jurisprudence of the Ancient Hebrews*, p. 112).

The preliminary investigation before Annais found no evidence of wrong doing. Instead of dismissing the case, the preliminary questioning switches to a trial. The trial of Jesus begun at night without any witnesses to defend Him. Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness. (Deuteronomy 17:6)

A capital offence trialed before a holy day

"No court of justice in Israel was permitted to hold sessions on the Sabbath or any of the seven Biblical holidays. In cases of capital crime, no trial could be commenced on Friday or the day previous to any holiday, because it was not lawful either to adjourn such cases longer than overnight, or to continue them on the Sabbath or holiday" (Martydom of Jesus).

Concluded in one day

Jewish law states "if a sentence of death is to be pronounced, it cannot be concluded before the following day" (Mishnah, IV, 1). This was to allow sufficient opportunity for any witnesses in support of the accused to come forward. At the time of Jesus, criminal trials and procedures took weeks, even months. In the case of Jesus: Within nine hours of His arrest!

False and unproven indictments

The court pronounced sentence with no real supporting evidence. The only evidence presented was by false witnesses. Two false witnesses testified that Jesus said, "I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands" (Mark 14:58). But Jesus did not say "that is made with hands." (John 2:19, 21). However, this was immaterial for the court condemned Him on another matter altogether.

The high priest demanded, “Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!” Jesus said to him, “It is as you said.” “Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, ‘He has spoken blasphemy! He is deserving of death’” (Matthew 26:63).

Jesus merely said, “the Son of Man.” The court did not seek to prove who the “Son of Man” was. They believed that Jesus meant Himself. Yet during His ministry, the religious leaders had asked Him who He was. “‘How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.’ Jesus answered them, ‘I told you, and you do not believe’” (John 10:24-25). But as soon as Jesus gave an indirect statement at the trial, they did not doubt whom He meant by “Son of Man,” On this testimony Jesus was condemned. Those who might have voted against His condemnation were not present. “And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.” (Mark 14:64)

It was unanimous by all those gathered. There was no investigation, no examination to see if He did or did not blaspheme. They just used His testimony against Him without further investigation. Their decision was immediate and simultaneous. The law required at least one of the council to serve as a defence counsel, but no one did. Furthermore, the high priest tore his clothes at the trial (Mark 14:63). The high priest was forbidden to tear his clothes: “He who is the high priest among his brethren, on whose head the anointing oil was poured and who is consecrated to wear the garments, shall not uncover his head nor tear his clothes” (Leviticus 21:10; 10:6). It seems the high priest tore his outer garment to stir up emotion – to prejudice others. He should have remained calm so that no mistake in judgement would be made. The book *Martyrdom of Jesus*, explains the law on this point, “If none of the judges defend the culprit, the verdict of guilty was invalid and the sentence of death could not be executed” (pp. 74-75). Jesus was condemned contrary to their law.

Which members of the Sanhedrin were missing during the trial? After Jesus was crucified, we read, “Now behold, there was a man named Joseph, a council member [of the Sanhedrin], a good and just man. He had not consented to their decision and deed” (Luke 23:50). Since the consensus to condemn Jesus was unanimous, Joseph couldn’t have been present. Neither is there a record that Nicodemus agreed with the decision.

The sentence was pronounced in a place forbidden by law. Jesus was brought into the house of Caiaphas, the high priest. The trial of Jesus wasn’t even held in a court of law! (Luke 22:54). A sentence of death could be passed only in a legal court, not in a private home. The court building wasn’t legally to be opened until after sunrise. Most Sanhedrin members were legally disqualified to try Jesus. From the Jewish historian Josephus, we have the names of most of the men who were on the Sanhedrin: recipients of bribes and appointed by members of the family. They had bought their office. Here were twelve ex-high priests living at this time, and ALL were part of the Sanhedrin. The Bible expressly requires a man serving as high priest to remain in that office until his death, at which time another (single) took his place.

Another reason for their disqualification was: “Nor must there be on the judicial bench either a relation, or a particular friend, or an enemy of either the accused, or of the accuser,” (*Criminal Jurisprudence*, p. 108). Most if not all the judges were Jesus’ enemies! They had collectively paid the bribe money to have Him betrayed.

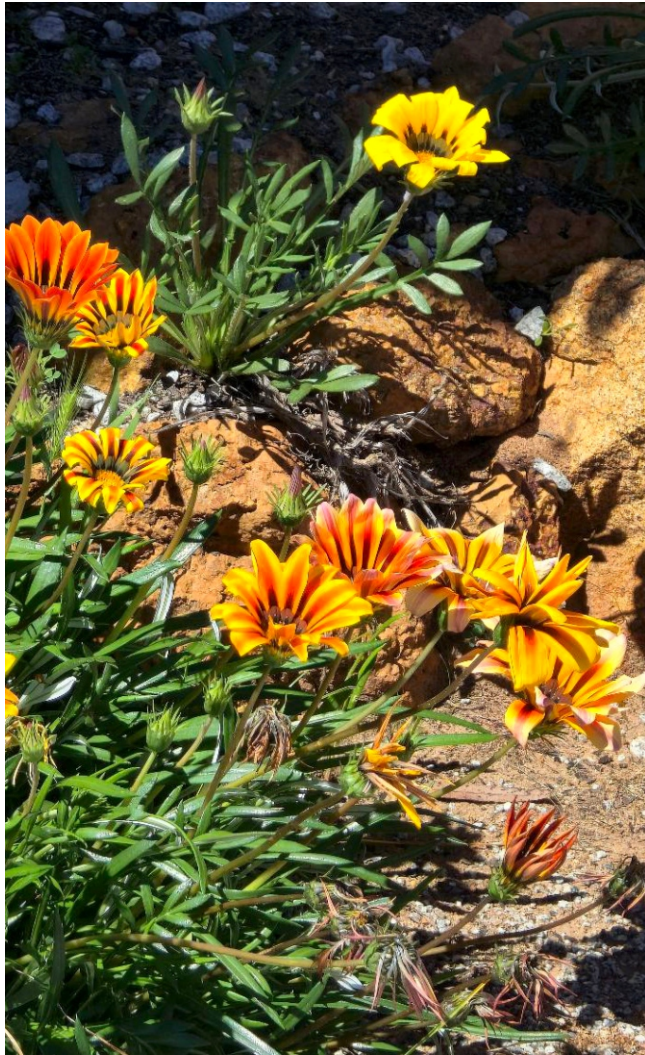
Switched charges from blasphemy to treason

To make the trial look legal, as soon as it was day they led Jesus into their council for a mock (faux) trial. Instead of taking Jesus out to be stoned for blasphemy, they switched the charges and took Jesus to Pilate. Pilate said: “You take Him and judge Him according to your law” (John 18:28-31).

The enemies of Jesus replied, “It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death.” This was a lie as the stoning of Stephen proved, as was their intent with the women caught in adultery. The only case the Jewish authorities could not try involved sedition or treason. The religious leaders were afraid of their own people. They reasoned they would not be responsible for His death so they sought to put him to death under Roman law. “We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar.” (Luke 23:2).

Given all that Jesus went through, His personal loss, reputation and very life, it would seem such a small thing by comparison to have His followers forgive one another. □

*Richard Todd
South Australia*



And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the flowers of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

If God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

(Matthew 6:28-30)

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