

In Gethsemane by Taylor Bunch

AFTER the third season of prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus returned to the three sleeping disciples and said: "The hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray Me." Matthew 26:45, 46. No sooner had Jesus spoken than the darkness began to be dispersed by the lights from the lanterns and torches, and the stillness of the garden retreat was broken by the noise of the approaching mob under the leadership of Judas the betrayer. THE EIGHT DISCIPLES WHO WERE LEFT AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE GARDEN DOUBTLESS FLED AT THE APPROACH OF THE RABBLE.

In answer to the question of Jesus, "Whom seek ye?" the rabble answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus then said, "I have told you that I am He: if therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way." "AND THEY ALL FORSOOK HIM, AND FLED. And there followed Him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: and he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked." John 18:8; Mark 14:50-52. It is believed that the young man mentioned was John Mark, who had come with Jesus and the disciples from the upper room. Mark is the only one who records this incident, and he designates the person as "a certain young man." This was a big event in his young hire, but in the estimation of the other writers was too unimportant to record. PERHAPS THEY DID NOT WITNESS IT, AS THEY, TOO, WERE FLEEING FOR THEIR LIVES. It seems John Mark when things got hard he always had to flee, take an example this instance where he ran naked and then Acts 13:13. The cause of Mark's abandonment of the work is not stated. It's assumed that the going got tough under intense persecution. Whatever it was, it was disapproved by Paul Acts 15:38 It is noteworthy that Mark returned, not to Antioch, whence the missionaries had started, but to Jerusalem, where his mother lived Acts 12:12 At a later period Paul is not only reconciled to Mark, but commends him, and desires the comfort of his society: Col 4:10; 2Ti 4:11. WHATEVER REASON OF OUR LEAVING THE MISSION FIELD, LET US ONE DAY GO FORWARD NEVER TO TURN BACK AND AT LAST RECEIVE COMMENDATION.

As the prostrate rabble began to arise and rally their forces to complete their mission, PETER FELT THAT HIS OPPORTUNITY HAD COME. HE WAS ANXIOUS TO ATONE FOR HAVING GONE TO SLEEP WHILE JESUS WAS PRAYING, AND ALSO TO MAKE GOOD HIS BOAST THAT HE WOULD STAND BY JESUS AND EVEN LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS SAKE. "Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus." John 18:10. No one can question Peter's courage. Single handed he attacked the whole mob, including armed soldiers. HE COULD NOT WASH AND PRAY FOR EVEN ONE HOUR, BUT HE COULD FIGHT A WHOLE MULTITUDE. All alone he courageously faced an angry and determined mob, and then later during the same night retreated ignominiously before the pointing finger of a maid. He was a physical hero and at the same time a spiritual weakling and a moral coward. To this day the braggart who begins with boasting and overconfidence and ends in failure and defer is said to have "PETERED OUT." There are many in the modern church with the characteristics of Peter. But there is hope for them as there was for Peter. Peter's weakest point finally became his strongest.

It seems that John was the bravest of them all, not only that but we are told that he was known by the high priest John 18:15, for what reason was he known by the high priest? I don't know. After his first flight, he returned, went in with Jesus into the palace and remained as close as possible to his Master through the remainder of the night and until His death and burial on the afternoon of the next day while Peter was warming himself outside and denying Christ. No wonder he is designated as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Just before He died on the cross, Jesus committed His mother to the care of John. Friends who remain loyal through a crisis are very few, but, because of their devotion, they are dearly beloved.

A MUST READ - THE SYSTEM THAT CRUCIFIED JESUS by Taylor Bunch

It is believed that at this very time Jesus was being led through the court from Annas to Caiaphas, and that He heard Peter's vehement denial of ever having known Him. "While the degrading oaths were fresh upon Peter's lips, and the shrill crowing of the cock was still ringing in his ears, the Saviour turned from the frowning judges, and looked full upon His poor disciple. At the same time Peter's eyes were drawn to his Master. In that gentle countenance he read deep pity and sorrow, but there was no anger there. The sight of that pale, suffering face, those quivering lips that look of compassion and forgiveness pierced his heart like an arrow.... Unable longer to endure the scene, he rushed, heartbroken, from the hall."—"The Desire of Ages," original text pages 712, 713.

Peter hurried back to the Garden of Gethsemane, where he had so signally faded his Lord, and, finding the very spot where Jesus had poured out His soul in bitter agony in His contest with the powers of darkness, he fell on his face and "wept bitterly." He could now enter more fully into the experience of Jesus, and he longed for the human sympathy he had failed to give his Master. He, too, must pass through the struggle alone. Jesus had said to him, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Luke 22:32. Peter's Gethsemane experience resulted in his complete conversion, and out of the garden there came a new Peter. All boasting had disappeared, and in its place was a faith and a courage that never failed him. On the day of Pentecost it was a sermon by Peter that brought three thousand souls to the foot of the cross. Fearlessly he charged the Jews with the responsibility of murdering the Son of God.

Every Christian today must meet a similar test. In these days when genuine Christianity is being held in contempt and God's law is despised and trampled underfoot, we shall need a warmth of zeal and a firmness of courage that will hold us steadfast. "To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few—this will be our test. At this time we must gather warmth from the coldness of others, courage from their cowardice, and loyalty from their treason."

The membership of the Great Sanhedrin was divided into three groups, or chambers. Originally there were twenty-three in each group, which, with the presiding officer and the vice-president, made up the seventy-one. The first of these groups was known as the Chamber of Priests, or the Chamber of High Priests, and was the first in importance. It was the sacerdotal order, and contained the former high priests, of which there were twelve living at the time of Christ's trial. One of these was Annas. The high priest at the

time of Jesus was elected each year, subject to the approval of the Roman procurator, the office usually going to the highest bidder. Others besides former high priests were members of this order.

The second group was the Chamber of Scribes, sometimes also called the College of Rabbis. It was the literary, or legal, order. Its members were the teachers and wise men, and were therefore called rabbis. It is claimed that Gamaliel belonged to this order, as did also Saul of Tarsus, Barnabas, and Stephen, three of his disciples.

It is said that the term "rabbi" was first applied to Gamaliel. His greatness is indicated by the following statement from the Talmud: "With the death of Rabbi Gamaliel the glory of the law has departed." The following precepts recorded in the Talmud show the reverence demanded by the rabbis, and throw light on some of Christ's scathing rebukes of this order:

"The honor due to a teacher borders on that due to God."

"The sayings of the scribes were weightier than those of the law,"

"If anyone thinks evil of his rabbi, it is as if he thought evil of the Eternal."

"If anyone quarrels with his rabbi, it is as if he contended with the living God."

"If anyone opposes his rabbi, he is guilty in the same degree as if he opposed God Himself."

See Chandler, vol.2, p. 316.

Jesus refused to give the scribes the respect they demanded; therefore they hated and persecuted Him.

THIS SYSTEM OF JEWISH JURISPRUDENCE WAS NOTHING BUT PAPAL NO WONDER CHRIST HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.

The third division of the Great Sanhedrin was the Chamber of Elders. This was the patriarchal order, and represented the popular and democratic element of the nation. To this class belonged Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea, the former being one of the three richest men in Jerusalem. The Talmud declares that "each of whom [the three] could have supported the whole city for ten years."—See Chandler, vol. 2, p. 321.

Doras was another member of this order. He hired men to assassinate the high priest Jonathan in 52 or 53 A. D. The money was furnished by the Roman governor, Felix, because Jonathan had criticized his administration. Josephus and the Talmud give us the names and biographies of more than forty of the members of the Sanhedrin that condemned Jesus. Most of them were haughty, ambitious, overbearing, scheming priests, who believed themselves to be infallible. The three orders that composed the Sanhedrin are often mentioned in the New Testament. See Matthew 26:57, 59; Mark 14:43.

The qualifications for membership in the Great Sanhedrin, if strictly enforced, would make injustice impossible. The following are the most prominent membership requirements as listed in Hebrew literature:

1. To be eligible for membership in the supreme court of the Jews a man must be a Hebrew and a lineal descendant of Hebrew parents. Paul referred to this rule when he said he was "of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews." Philippians 3:5.
2. He must be "learned in the law," both oral and written. He must be well-versed in both the Mishna and the Gemara, which together make up the Talmud.
3. He must have had judicial experience in at least three offices of gradually increasing dignity, beginning with a local court and including two Minor Sanhedrin in Jerusalem.
4. He must have a thorough knowledge of the known sciences of the time, including that of medicine. He must be versed in the principles of chemistry and physiology. It is recorded that Rabbi Ismael and his disciples dissected human bodies in order to become better acquainted with the physical structure of man. Eighty students of the Academy of Hillel are said to have become proficient in every branch of science known.
5. A member of the Sanhedrin must be an accomplished linguist, and be able to speak the languages of the surrounding nations.
6. He must be modest, popular, of good appearance, and free from haughtiness.
7. He must be pious, strong, and courageous.
8. He must have no physical blemishes, because he was a type of the Messiah. The Talmud lists one hundred forty bodily defects, any one of which would disqualify a man for the office. An examination was made to see that the candidate was free from all these blemishes.
9. The candidate for membership must have learned a trade, or occupation. Rabbi Jehuda declared that "he who does not teach his son a trade is much the same as if he taught him to be a thief." See Acts 18:3...
10. Another rule was that he must be a married man, and have children of his own. They "must be married men, and fathers, as being more likely than others to be humane and considerate,"—"The Desire of Ages," original text page 133. This also throws light upon the much discussed question regarding Paul's family status.
11. And, finally, he must be over forty years of age. In Hebrew law a boy reached the years of accountability at twelve, became a man at twenty-five, a priest at thirty, and a counselor at forty.

This was the court, and these were the judges, before whom Jesus of Nazareth was tried and condemned on the charge of blasphemy. It was before this tribunal that He who had departed from evil made Himself a prey, "and the Lord saw it, and it displeased Him that there was no judgment." Isaiah 59:14, 15.

A LOOK INTO THE HEBREW JUSTICE SYSTEM – With this system in place, leave alone Jesus, no one will ever have been condemned unless it was a doing of Satan

Here are views by Taylor Bunch

Speaking Of the size of the Talmud at the present time, a student of Hebrew law says: "Modern editions of the Talmud, including the most important commentaries, consist of about 3,000 folio sheets, or 12,000 folio pages of closely printed matter, generally divided into twelve or twenty volumes. One page of Talmudic Hebrew intelligibly translated into English would cover three pages; the translation of the whole Talmud with its commentaries would accordingly make a library of 400 volumes, each numbering 360 octavo pages."—"The Criminal Jurisprudence of the 46 Ancient Hebrews," Mendelsohn, page 189, note 1. (Chandler.)

So comprehensive is this compilation of the rabbis that Philip Berger Benny calls it "the compendium of their literature, the storehouse of their tradition, the exponent of their faith, the record of their requirements, the handbook of their ceremonials and the summary of their legal code, civil and penal."—"The Criminal Code of the Jews," (Chandler.)

The Talmud is divided into two parts. The first division is known as the Mishna, which means "Repetition." The Mishna is subdivided into six sections. It is a vast mass of tradition, or oral law, which was reduced to writing near the close of the second century of the Christian Era. It is sometimes described as the "text" of the Talmud. The second section of the Talmud is known as the Gemara, or "Commentary." It is the rabbinical exposition of the meaning of the Mishna. The relation between the Mishna and the Gemara may be compared to a bill introduced into a congress or parliament and the debate and discussions that follow.

The Talmud is revered by the Jews as much or even more than are the Scriptures. "The Bible is salt, the Mishna pepper, the Gemara balmy spice," is a rabbinic adage. The Talmud is to the religion of the Jews what the traditions of the Fathers are to the Roman Catholic Church and its doctrines

Hebrew law provided four methods of punishments for capital crimes. These were: beheading, strangling, burning, and stoning. The Pentateuch and the Talmud enumerate thirty-six capital offenses. Two were punished by beheading, six by strangling, ten by burning, and eighteen by stoning. Crucifixion was not a Jewish punishment. Beheading was accomplished by tying the culprit to a post and severing the head from the body with a sword. Strangling was effected by burying the victim to his waist in mud or soil, and then tightening a cord around his neck until he suffocated. Burning had no resemblance to the form of punishment used on "heretics" during the Middle Ages. A pit was dug in which the victim was made to stand, and then soil was thrown in and tamped down until only his head and shoulders remained 47 above ground. A cord was then wrapped around his neck, and two strong men drew on the two ends until suffocation resulted. When the lower jaw dropped because of unconsciousness, a lighted wick was thrown into his mouth.

Stoning was accomplished by taking the criminal to the top of a rock or cliff, stripping him of his clothes, and throwing him with violence to the bottom. If this did not produce death, the witnesses to the crime threw heavy stones onto the body. If life still remained, the bystanders were permitted to cast stones till the victim was dead. "The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you." Deuteronomy 17:7. This is the authority for the rule. This method of stoning throws light on the effort to put Christ to death at Nazareth when He claimed to be the Messiah as recorded in Luke 4:28-30. Stoning was the penalty for blasphemy, and the record indicates an attempt to stone Jesus because of His claim to divinity

Hebrew jurisprudence provided no advocates either to defend or to prosecute. The judges were the defenders, and the witnesses the prosecutors. "The only prosecutors known to Talmudic criminal jurisprudence are the witnesses to the crime. Their duty is to bring the matter to the cognizance of the court, and to bear witness against the criminal. In capital cases, they are the legal executioners also. Of an official accuser or prosecutor there is nowhere any trace in the laws of the ancient Hebrews."—"The Criminal Jurisprudence of the Ancient Hebrews," Mendelsohn, page 110. (Chandler.) The Jews considered paid advocates as barriers to justice. In this opinion the Jews were not alone. Plato considered lawyers the plague of the community; and when King Ferdinand of Spain sent colonists to the West Indies, he gave instruction "that no lawyers should be carried along, lest lawsuits should become ordinary occurrences in the New World."—Id., page 140

In Hebrew law, at least two witnesses were required to bring conviction. The foundation for this rule is found in Deuteronomy 17:6. "At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death." See also Numbers 35:30; Deuteronomy 19:15. The testimony of the witnesses must agree in all essential details, or it was rejected. "If one witness contradicts another, the testimony is not accepted."—Mishna, "Sanhedrin," C. V. 2.

Hebrew law did not permit any circumstantial evidence in a criminal case. "Hearsay evidence was barred equally in civil as in criminal cases, no matter how strongly the witness might believe in what he heard and however worthy and numerous were his informants."—"The Martyrdom of Jesus," Rabbi Isaac M. Wise. In a Hebrew court, witnesses were not required to take oath, because, "whosoever will not tell the truth without an oath, would not scruple to assert falsehood with an oath."—Talmud. This is logical, and is in harmony with the teachings of Jesus. Matthew 5:33-37. (Chandler.)

Under Hebrew law false witnesses were very severely dealt with. Perjury placed a witness in a position as serious as that of the one he testified against. "Hebrew law provided that false witnesses should suffer the penalty provided for the commission of the crime which they sought by their testimony to fix upon the accused."—"The Trial of Jesus," Chandler, vol. 1, p. 140. This rule is based upon 49 Deuteronomy 19:18-21. Such a rule, if strictly enforced, would soon reduce perjury to a minimum. The application of the principle would also close the mouths of gossipers. "Every possible precaution was taken to render impossible the wrongful conviction of an accused person. The student of Hebrew law is at times astonished by the excessive caution inculcated in criminal procedure.... The judges

leaned always to the side of the defendant and gave him the advantage of every possible doubt."—"The Trial of Jesus," Chandler, vol. 1, pp. 153, 154.

And then, more effectively to safeguard justice, a series of maxims was prepared to guide the judges in their work: "A judge should always consider that a sword threatens him from above, and destruction yawns at his feet." "Be cautious and slow in judgment, send forth many disciples, and make a fence around the law." "When a judge decides not according to truth, he makes the majesty of God to depart from Israel. But if he judges according to the truth, were it only for one hour, it is as if he established the whole world, for it is in judgment that the divine presence in Israel has its habitation." These and many others recorded in the Talmud remind judges of their solemn duty and responsibility. Besides these maxims there were four fundamental rules of procedure in criminal cases that safeguarded justice—"strictness in the accusation, publicity in the discussion, full freedom granted to the accused, and assurance against all dangers or errors of testimony."—"Histoire des Institutions de Moise," Salvador. Chandler, quoting this noted Jewish physician and lawyer, calls him "the Jewish Blackstone."

In Hebrew jurisprudence every possible effort was made to save and to protect human life because it belonged to God. The Mishna declares that "the Sanhedrin which so often as once in seven years condemns a man to death, is a slaughterhouse." (Chandler.) Dr. R. Eliezer, to quote Greenleaf, says that the Sanhedrin "deserves this appellation when at pronounces a like sentence once in seventy years." Benny declares that it was a maxim of the Jews that "the Sanhedrin was to save, not to 50 destroy life." (Chandler.) Other maxims recorded in the Mishna are: "Man's life belongs to God, and only according to the law of Cod may it be disposed of." "Whosoever preserves one worthy life is as meritorious as if he had preserved the world." To ensure justice to the accused the arguments must begin in his behalf. Nothing was permitted to be said against him till after at least one of the judges had spoken in his behalf. In case of conviction in a capital trial, sentence could not be pronounced till the afternoon of the second day. After the first conviction, the judges left the hall of hewn stone and gathered in groups of five or six to discuss the case. They then walked home by twos, arm in arm, still seeking for arguments in behalf of the accused.

After sunset they made calls on one another to discuss the case further, and to pray for divine guidance. The next day was supposed to be a day of prayer and fasting, nothing being eaten till the case was disposed of. After the morning sacrifice the judges reassembled and carefully reviewed the evidence. Judges were permitted to change their votes to favor the accused, but not to condemn him. The Sanhedrin deliberated all day till near sunset, when the final vote was taken. If the accused was again pronounced guilty, the witnesses led him forth to the execution while the Sanhedrin remained in session. A man was stationed at the door of the hall with a red banner, and another, mounted on a horse, followed the procession, he also having a red flag. The latter proclaimed to the gazing multitude that if anyone knew of any evidence in favor of the prisoner he should come forth and speak. If any responded with any new evidence, the procession was halted and the banner waved to announce to the guard at the door of the hall that the prisoner was being returned to the Sanhedrin for a new trial. Or if while the prisoner was being taken to the place of execution a person came to the hall and announced that he had fresh

evidence in behalf of the accused, the man at the door waved his banner and the procession was halted, and the witnesses brought back their prisoner for a new hearing. It was before a court with such marvelous maxims and rules to insure justice that a wrongful conviction was impossible, that Jesus, the Innocent One, was unjustly tried and condemned to die, that we who deserve nothing but death might be justified and given eternal life. "Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. 'With His stripes we are healed.'" – "The Desire of Ages," original text page 25

Above written by Taylor Bunch

My note

It is then evident that the Jews plot had nothing to do with its justice system but to conduct what the Devil had always planned to do from the beginning, do away with Christ thinking by doing this he could establish a better kingdom. Jesus was condemned by false witnesses Matthew 26:59-62 and even their witnesses could not agree Mark 14:59, which according to their justice system should have made the case to be dismissed. And as their puppet kingdom was taken away in AD 70, so shall the misused kingdoms of this world and eventually, the kingdom of sin that the Devil thought it would bring freedom but has only caused woes

The burden of showing any information presented to be false and unworthy of credit devolves on the party who makes that objection hence the statement innocent till proved guilty and this is how it should be in all eternity.

"Truth is independent of opinion. By its very definition, Truth is intolerant of error, every aspect petitioning the conscience for acknowledgement. The individual however, holds the key to admission or rejection." - Mark Woodman

The historical existence of Jesus and legitimacy of Christianity has been made authentic not by professors of it but by the objectors of it. It is quite erroneous to suppose that the true Christian is bound to offer any further proof of their genuineness or authenticity. It is for the objector to show that his objection and lifestyle can offer a betterment than once adopted by a believer in Christ. Till that is shown, I will whistle "Rock of Ages" those objections away as I rejoice in full time missionary work

Here are statements regarding the principles of the law of evidence that are of inestimable value to Christians in dealing with their opponents. Many become greatly concerned over the safety of their religion and the foundations of their faith because they are not able to produce all the evidence demanded by some boasting infidel or sneering skeptic. There are many questions in every realm of life and sphere of thought that no person can answer to the satisfaction of the questioner or even of himself. Asking questions is always easier than answering them; and the Christian can ask the skeptic more puzzling questions than the skeptic can ask the Christian. The Christian has the right at least to demand that he ask every other question. But according to the well-established rules of evidence

recognized in every court in the world, the Christian does not need to answer any of the skeptics questions regarding the credibility of the Scriptures, because 56 they would be accepted as reliable testimony, and, if their authority were questioned the burden of proof, would be thrown back upon the objector. It is the duty of the critic to prove his criticism rather than that of the Christian to answer it. If this principle were applied, it would save the church and its ministers a vast amount of time and expense now consumed in answering caviling skeptics, so that their talents and energies could be employed in the more profitable work of proclaiming a positive message of salvation from sin. Jesus said: "If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:31, 32

Truly [A FACT THAT CANNOT BE GAIN-SAYED] this man was a son of God

Mark 15:39: And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, TRULY THIS MAN WAS THE SON OF GOD.

John 20:30: And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31: But these are written, that ye might believe that JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD; and that BELIEVING YE MIGHT HAVE LIFE THROUGH HIS NAME.

Why was Christ Condemned to death?

The only hope of the enemies of Jesus to bring about His condemnation was a change of charges from sedition to blasphemy. The government of the Hebrews was considered a theocracy, with Jehovah as its real king and ruler. For this reason, blasphemy was considered a form of treason, with death by stoning as the penalty. It was one of the most serious offenses known to the Jews. Salvador, the Jewish advocate, said: "The senate declared that Jesus, son of Joseph, born at Bethlehem, had profaned the name of God in usurping it for Himself, a simple citizen. The capital sentence was then pronounced. Jesus admitted the charge that He claimed to be the Son of God, or the Messiah, to be true, and on this confession He was condemned to die

The use of false witnesses was a very grievous infraction of Hebrew law. It not only disqualified a judge, who was supposed to seek for evidence only in behalf of the accused, but it also condemned the false witnesses to suffer the penalty they sought to bring upon the accused. Those who testified falsely against Jesus were therefore themselves deserving of death. For some time before His trial, the Jewish authorities had Jesus constantly shadowed by hired informers, or spies, which was entirely unlawful. "They watched Him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men that they might take hold of His words, that so they might deliver Him unto the power and authority of the governor." Luke 20:20. It was these paid spies who were brought forward to testify against Jesus, and whose testimony was too contradictory to effect a conviction. This failure caused Caiaphas to change the charge to that of blasphemy. "But Jesus held His peace. And the high priest answered and said unto Him, I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the

right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard His blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death." Matthew 26:63 -66.

Think for a second, it was on the objection of the witnesses that Christ is the Son of God and his contrary confession that led to Christ crucifixion. Isn't the crucifixion of Jesus in the belief of begotten theology by saints an ongoing process daily by the opposing of the same and can be categorized as false witness themselves deserving death penalty? And aren't the pastors by censure of the saints renting their clothes as Caiaphas did and hence showing their unworthiness of the Kingdom they are so much zealous to protect as the Jews and Priests were but they found themselves not part of it!

Rabbi Wise said: " If none of the judges defend the culprit, i.e., all pronounce him guilty, having no defender in the court, the verdict of guilty was invalid and the sentence of death **COULD NOT BE EXECUTED.**"—"The Martyrdom of Jesus," page 74. This rule prevailed because Hebrew law did not permit any defense advocates. It was the duty of the judges to defend the accused and to see that he received justice. In order to give the proceedings the proper element of mercy, **THE ACCUSED MUST HAVE AT LEAST ONE FRIEND AMONG THE JUDGES TO SPEAK IN HIS BEHALF.** Regarding this unusual rule, Chandler said: "With the Anglo-Saxon jury a unanimous verdict is necessary to convict, **BUT WITH THE HEBREW SANHEDRIN UNANIMITY WAS FATAL, AND RESULTED IN AN ACQUITTAL** Now if the verdict was unanimous in favor of condemnation it was evident that the **PRISONER HAD HAD NO FRIEND OR DEFENDER IN COURT.** To the Jewish mind this was almost **EQUIVALENT TO MOB VIOLENCE.** It argued conspiracy, at least. The element of mercy, which was required to enter into every Hebrew verdict, was absent in such a case 'But where all suddenly agree on conviction, does it not seem,' asks a modern Jewish writer, 'that the convict is a victim of **CONSPIRACY AND THAT THE VERDICT IS NOT THE RESULT OF SOBER REASON AND CALM DELIBERATION?**' . . . If the accused had one friend in court, the verdict of condemnation would stand, since the element of mercy was present and the spirit of conspiracy or mob violence was absent.—"The Trial of Jesus," vol.1, pp. 280, 281

That Jesus was condemned by a unanimous vote of the Sanhedrin is evident from the scriptural record. As the result of the confession of Jesus that He was the Son of God, Caiaphas told the judges that they had heard His blasphemy He then asked for their verdict. "They answered and said He is guilty of death." "They all condemned Him to be guilty of death." Matthew 26:66; Mark 14:64. Rabbi Wise acknowledges that the sentence against Jesus rested on a unanimous verdict of the judges. That Jesus had no intercessor to defend Him is also evident from prophecy: " He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation unto Him; and His righteousness, it sustained Him." "I have trodden the wine press alone; and of the people there was none with Me." "And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore Mine own arm brought salvation unto Me; and My fury, it upheld Me." Isaiah 59:16; 63:3, 5. Jesus suffered the grossest injustice before the earthly tribunal without an intercessor that we might receive justice in the heavenly tribunal with Him as our intercessor.

To remain silent to the direct question as to whether He was the Messiah would have been to the decided personal advantage of Jesus. He would also have been within His legal rights, as no accused person was compelled to say or to do anything that would be prejudicial to his case. But silence on this occasion would virtually have been a denial of His identity and mission. Likewise, silence on our part under some circumstances is a denial of Christ. An open and verbal denial such as Peter's is not the only way to betray our Lord.

Caiaphas deserved to die not Christ

The rending of his priestly robes not only disqualified Caiaphas to act as a judge; it brought upon his own head the very sentence that he was seeking to impose upon Jesus. The Mosaic code did not permit a high priest to "uncover his head;" and if he should rend his sacred priestly garments, the penalty was death. Leviticus 10:6; 21:10. The official garment of the high-priest was not only symbolic of his sacred office in which he was the type of the Messiah, but his garments also represented the imputed and imparted righteousness of the Son of God. Such an act was also the evidence of a rage that was beneath the dignity of the high priest. In this effort to show his horror and indignation because of the confession of Jesus, Caiaphas pronounced himself guilty of death, and thus wholly disqualified himself to preside over the Sanhedrin. "An ordinary Israelite could, as an emblem of bereavement, tear his garments, but to the high priest it was forbidden, because his vestments, being made after the express orders of God, were figurative of his office."—"Jesus Before the Sanhedrin," Lemann, page 140. (Chandler.)

The balloting that condemned Jesus was also irregular. According to Hebrew law, in a criminal case the judges must vote one at a time, beginning with the youngest. Each in his turn had to arise and cast his vote and then state his reason for his decision. Both the vote and the reasons for it must be recorded by the scribes. That Jesus was condemned by acclamation is evident from Matthew 26:66 and Mark 14:64. An authority on Hebrew law says: "In ordinary cases the judges voted according to seniority, the oldest commencing; in a capital trial, the reverse order was followed. That the younger members of the Sanhedrin should not be influenced by the views or arguments of their more mature, more experienced colleagues, the junior judge was in these cases always the first to pronounce for or against a conviction."—"The Criminal Code of the Jews," Benny, pages 73, 74. (Chandler.)

Jewish writers have also stated this law in such clear terms as to leave no doubt as to what course should have been followed at the trial of Jesus: "Let the judges each in his turn absolve or condemn."—Mishna, "Sanhedrin," XV

The desperate attempt of Judas Iscariot to save Jesus from death-row fails

"The evidence of the guilt of the judges of Jesus was demonstrated when Judas returned the bribe money and publicly confessed that he had "betrayed the innocent blood." Matthew 27:1-6. In Acts 1:19 we are told that this was done so publicly that "it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem." The members of the 75 Sanhedrin could not even deny their guilt. Judas had been a witness to the entire proceedings against Jesus, and the

injustice of His treatment was so manifest and so flagrant that-his—conscience was smitten with guilt. He knew that Jesus was innocent, and the final sentence of death by acclamation was more than he could stand. He would now testify in behalf of Him who had had no "intercessor." "As the trial drew to a close, Judas could endure the torture of his guilty conscience no longer. Suddenly a hoarse voice rang through the hall, sending a thrill of terror to all hearts: he is innocent; spare Him. O Caiaphas! The tall form of Judas was now seen pressing through the startled throng. His face was pale and hazard, and great drops of sweat stood on his forehead. Rushing to the throne of judgment, he threw down before the high priest the pieces of silver that had been the price of his Lord's betrayal. The perfidy of the priests was revealed. It was evident that they had bribed the disciple to betray his Master."—The Desire of Ages," original text pages 721, 722

It is a well-known fact that many of the judges of Jesus were not only degenerate and corrupt in character, but that they had purchased their seats in the council, and were making merchandise of their offices. In fact, several of them had grown rich by this means. This was especially true of the family of the high priest. "Now it is historically true that Annas and Caiaphas and their friends owned and controlled the stalls, booths, and bazaars connected with the temple and from which flowed a most lucrative trade. The profits from the sale of lambs and doves, sold for sacrifice, alone were enormous"—"The Trial of Jesus," Chandler, vol. 1, p. 304. When Jesus denounced these men for making His Father's house "a house of merchandise" and "a den of thieves," and on two different occasions cleansed the temple of its unholy traffic, He not only wounded the pride and dignity of Annas and Caiaphas, but dealt a severe blow at their most lucrative source of income. This was one of the chief reasons for their bitter enmity.

John 19:4: Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. 5: Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! 6: When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. 7: The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. 8: When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;

Joh 19:8 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; While Jesus was accused only as a disturber of the peace of the nation, which accusation Pilate knew to be false, he knew he could deliver him, because the judgment in that case belonged to himself; but when the Jews brought a charge against him of the most capital nature, from their own laws, he then saw that he had every thing to fear, if he did not deliver Jesus to their will. The Sanhedrin must not be offended—the populace must not be irritated: from the former a complaint might be sent against him to Caesar; the latter might revolt, or proceed to some acts of violence, the end of which could not be foreseen. Pilate was certainly to be pitied: he saw what was right, and he wished to do it; but he had not sufficient firmness of mind. He did not attend to that important maxim, *Fiat justitia: ruat caelum*. Let justice be done, though the heavens should be dissolved. He had a vile people to govern, and it was not an easy matter to keep them quiet. Some suppose that Pilate's fear arose from hearing that Jesus had said he was the Son of God; because Pilate, who

was a polytheist, believed that it was possible for the offspring of the gods to visit mortals; and he was afraid to condemn Jesus, for fear of offending some of the supreme deities. The question in the succeeding verse refers to this. 9 And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. He already knew Jesus was from Galilee, this question must be referring to more than his coming from Galilee

Pilate's challenge to the Jews to take the law into their own hands and crucify their own prisoner was met with a revival of the religious charge on which they had sentenced Jesus to die. "The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because HE MADE HIMSELF THE SON OF GOD. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid." John 19:7, 8. The repeated declaration of Pilate that Jesus was innocent of all criminal and political offenses charged against Him caused the Jews in their desperation to revive the indictment of blasphemy, which, according to Hebrew law, was a form of treason meriting the death penalty. This change in the indictment was an acknowledgment that the other charges were false, and that the real issue with them was a religious one. The statement that Jesus ought to die because He claimed to be the Son of God filled Pilate with superstitious dread. It had the opposite effect than was intended by the Jews. In Roman mythology there were many legends of the sons of the gods visiting the earth in human form, and as such they were indistinguishable from mortal beings. To offend or to ill-treat these gods in the guise of men was a very serious offense, bringing down the anger of the gods. In Acts 14:11-15 is an example of this belief. The miracles of Paul and Barnabas convinced the people of Lystra that "the gods are come down to us in the likeness of men."

The dream of Claudia doubtless came back vividly to the mind of Pilate, and he was more convinced than ever that Jesus was all He claimed to be. To quiet his own fears and if possible to obtain a further explanation from Jesus as to His origin and mission, Pilate once again led Jesus back into the praetorium, on the pretense of investigating the new charges brought against Him. Pilate "went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art Thou? But Jesus gave Him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto Him, Speakest Thou not unto me? Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee? Jesus answered, Thou Couldst have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the

greater sin." John 19:9-11. Jesus remained silent to the question of Pilate as to His origin. Pilate knew that Jesus was from Galilee, and had been reared in Nazareth. But this was not the information he was after. He was inquiring as to whether or not His claim of Sonship with God was true. Perhaps Jesus remained silent because an explanation could not have been understood by Pilate, and, anyway, His answer would have nothing to do with the merits of the case. Pilate reminded Jesus that his supreme authority over Him demanded the courtesy of an answer, and that it would be to His advantage to honor him with a reply to his question; otherwise He might be guilty of contempt of court. Jesus then reminded Pilate that his authority was restricted by a higher power, and that all governmental authority was delegated to man from above. He also told him that while he would be held responsible for his share of this travesty on justice, the greatest blame would rest upon the Jews, who delivered Him into his hands and were clamoring for His blood. This has been the judgment of mankind.

With their greater light, the Jews must bear the greater guilt. Pilate greatly appreciated Jesus' statement that the Jews were the principal offenders in the crime being enacted against equity, and he was more determined than ever to release Him. The situation was becoming desperate, for the patience of both Pilate and the mob had reached the breaking point. Something must be done, and done quickly. "From thenceforth Pilate sought to release Him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this Man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha." John 19:12, 13. Pilate was becoming disgusted with both himself and the rabble. He had decided to strip arguing, and to enforce his decree. He would no longer be made a fool of by the Jews, and he was on the verge of ordering them dispersed by the praetorium guards. Realizing what was about to happen, the Jews offered their final argument, which contained a threat of an appeal to Caesar.

The Jews once more shift their tactics, and from the ecclesiastical charge go back to the political, which they now back up by an appeal to Pilate's own political interests. They know their man; it is not a love of justice, but personal feelings which move him to seek to release Jesus; and they will overcome one personal

feeling by another still stronger. Pilate's unexplained interest in Jesus and supercilious contempt for His accusers must give way before a fear for his own position, and possibly even his life.... The Jews perhaps scarcely knew how powerful their weapon was. Pilate's patron Sejanus (executed A. D. 31) was losing his hold over Tiberius, even if he had not already fallen. Pilate had already thrice nearly driven the Jews to revolt, and his character therefore would not stand high with an emperor who justly prided himself on the good government of the provinces. Above all, the terrible Lex Majestatis was by this time worked in such a way that prosecution under it was almost certain death."—The Cambridge Bible.

The threat of the Jews that they would appeal the case to Caesar was not an idle one. They knew that a large delegation to Rome with the complaint that Pilate refused to execute one who claimed to be king, and was thus guilty of treason, would have great weight with suspicious Tiberius. They had appealed to the emperor on two or three previous occasions and got what they demanded, to the embarrassment of Pilate. Pilate knew that such an appeal would cost him his position and probably his life, so the threat had the desired effect on the vacillating governor. He began to waver. The struggle had assumed a different aspect. It was no longer between justice and expediency so much as between justice and position, and position was dearer to Pilate than justice. He was now virtually on trial for his position and perhaps for his life. Either he or Jesus must be sacrificed, and he decided that he would save himself at the expense of the One who had five times been declared guiltless. His respite, however, was short-lived, for a complaint of the Jews a little later brought an order from the governor of Syria that Pilate appear before Tiberius to answer the serious charges against him. He was relieved of his office, and, ¹¹⁸ according to Eusebius, "wearied with his misfortunes," he committed suicide. The oft-repeated saying of Jesus was thus fulfilled: "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it." Matthew 10:39.