

Death Sentence Carried Out

Convicted murderer Troy Davis was executed in Georgia Wednesday night, ending an extraordinary legal case that drew hundreds of thousands of pleas for clemency from around the world. Davis was sentenced to death in 1991 for killing an off-duty police officer. Since his trial, seven of nine key witnesses recanted or changed their testimony, some alleging police coercion. Appeals resulted in three stays, one coming within two hours of him being executed. Strapped to a gurney in Georgia's death chamber, Troy Davis lifted his head, speaking directly to relatives of the dead policeman who were seated in the front row of the chamber, and declared his innocence one last time that he did not kill police officer Mark MacPhail.

Davis' execution had been halted three times since 2007. The U.S. Supreme Court even gave Davis an unusual opportunity to prove his innocence in a lower court last year. While the nation's top court didn't hear the case, they did set a tough standard for Davis to exonerate himself, ruling that his attorneys must "clearly establish" Davis' innocence — a higher bar to meet than prosecutors having to prove guilt. After the hearing, a lower court judge ruled in prosecutors' favor, and the justices didn't take up the case. Now prosecutors say that justice has finally been served.

We too have a prosecutor accusing us of crimes worthy of death and setting an impossible standard to prove our innocence. He is the Devil and he is an expert in the law of God and is a master at prosecuting us according to the letter of the law. But we also have an “advocate,” a defense attorney, that stands on Romans 8:1,2: *“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.”*

When we come to Jesus, he represents us by allowing us to “be in him.” He lived a totally blameless and righteous life and paid the death sentence himself. When he requests that the “Supreme Court,” Father God himself, hear the case, the Father agrees. As the trial begins, God doesn't see us standing before him; he sees his own spotless son standing before him. *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.* 2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV) And, when the prosecutor attempts to present the evidence, God says, “what evidence?” It's gone! You see, our sins have been totally removed. *As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.* Psalm 103:12 (NIV) And the Judge declares, “Innocent!”

Still, despite the new conclusive evidence presented by the completed works of Jesus, our “prosecutor,” the Devil, attempts to keep us under “conviction.” *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.* John 10:10 (NIV) Don't live your life under condemnation, it just keeps you in prison, awaiting death, and prevents you from being who God created you to be—free and full of life, glorifying God!

The glory of God is man fully alive! St. Irenaeus