

# For Christ's Sake

After Julius Caesar died in 44BC, Mark Antony considered himself to be his rightful successor, but Octavian, Caesar's 19-year-old nephew, used his family relationship with Caesar to raise a substantial army and gain widespread political support. For a time the two men shared power and worked together, but after a while tensions arose between them and, in 32BC, there was the outbreak of open conflict. The year following, after accusing Antony of treason, Octavian attacked and defeated him at Actium – a singular victory, which eventually enabled him to become Emperor and wield supreme power.

This battle won, Octavian held a council at Salmos to examine the prisoners taken from among Antony's followers; and there was brought before him an old man called Metellus, old in years, in tattered clothes and physically very enfeebled.

The son of this man happened to be one of the judges; and at first, on account of his condition, he did not recognize his father, but on realizing who stood before him, far from being ashamed to own him,

he ran towards him in order to embrace him. Then he turned to the tribunal and said, "Caesar, my father has been your enemy, and I your officer: he deserves to be punished, as I deserve to be rewarded. One favour I desire of you; it is, either to save him on my account, or order me to be put to death with him."

Those present were visibly moved by the affecting scene before them. They looked towards Octavian, wondering how he would respond to the son's emotional and fervent appeal. Impressively, Octavian relented; and in a display of kindness he granted to old Metellus, for the son's sake, both life and liberty.

As enemies of God, we are justly condemned for our sins; but in Jesus Christ we have a Saviour, One who loves us dearly and One who is able, on the basis of His own meritorious work, to plead for us before the God of heaven, securing not only the full pardon of our sins but also admission into the divine favour, with a sure title to eternal life.

