

WHAT A CHOICE TO MAKE

Matthew 27:17

Introduction: From the creation God made everyone free to make the choice between right and wrong. Eve made a choice, Adam made a choice, Cain made a choice, Israel made a choice. In the text Pilate comes to a time of decision. The mob that delivered Jesus to be crucified were given a choice between crucifying Jesus or Barabbas. The mob/crowd reaffirmed their wicked choice by shouting out to "release Barabbas and crucify Jesus." We, too have choices to make and most often Jesus is interwoven in what we are choosing to do or not do.

I. JESUS AND BARABBAS WERE PLACED BEFORE THE PEOPLE

Barabbas, a murderer, was held chained in prison while Jesus was on trial. Barabbas was a hardened criminal and everyone knew about him.

1. It Was Customary to Release a Prisoner of the People's Choice on the Feast Day.

"Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would." Matthew 27:15

- Treason and murder were two of the most enormous crimes and usually punished by the sword of justice. Barabbas had committed both. Pilate, believing the people would choose Jesus, instead of the awful criminal, offered the two men for choice. Barabbas' crime had been so terrible that the people were not unknowing when they made their choice.

2. Barabbas Was Unanimously Accepted by the People.

"But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabas, and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the two will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas." Matthew 27:20-21

- The leaders of the people persuaded the multitude against Jesus. People must not be wrongly persuaded, they must make their own decision, stand on their own feet and do their own thinking. Every person will give an account in judgment for his/her own sins. Your reward there will depend on your decisions here. If you decide with the crowd, as the multitude was persuaded to do, you will also be doomed with the crowd. The biggest crowd is usually on the wrong side.

3. Jesus Was Rejected.

"And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done?"

- The people made a public decision against Jesus, even though the governor wanted to release Him, knowing Jesus was innocent. All who reject Jesus make a public confession against Him by their actions.

4. Every Person is Forced to a Decision Between Jesus and Barabbas.

- Neither Jesus nor Barabbas is before you in person, as they stood before Pilate and the multitude, but that which each represented is before you, every day. That which is good and evil, right and wrong, heaven and hell. Each individual is making his/her choice. Failure to accept Jesus places one on the side of Barabbas.

II. WHAT THEN WILL YOU DO WITH JESUS WAS/IS THE QUESTION

"Pilate said unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all said unto him, Let him be crucified." Matthew 27:22

Barabbas being accepted, left Jesus standing in the judgment hall. Some disposition had to be made of Him. He was on their hands, therefore a decision was forced. Every individual must answer that same question, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?"

1. Both Jew and Gentile Condemned Jesus.

- The Jews arrested Jesus. They accused Him. They asked for His life. They rejected Him. Their final decision was, "Let him be crucified." The Gentiles rejected Him by not accepting Him, by not taking a stand for Him. They also pronounced the death sentence and drove the nails through His hands and feet.

2. Pilate Tried to Shift the Responsibility.

- Washing with water did not cleanse his hands of the blood of the Lord. His declaration of innocence did not justify him. God held him guilty and forced him to a decision. You may find an excuse and lay the blame on another but in judgment you will give an account of the decision you are now making. The responsibility is yours and yours alone.

III. WHAT IS OUR "BARABBAS" TODAY?

Anything that comes between you and Jesus could be referred to as YOUR Barabbas. Most people have found something they care for more than they do Jesus.

1. Self, Ego, Pride are "Barabbas" to Many Today.

- Wanting one's own way, unwilling to be under anyone's authority, wanting to be popular so there is no place for Jesus in such a life.

2. Pleasures of the World Are The "Barabbas" to Multitudes.

- Loving the pleasure of the world more than love for Jesus show one's choice very clearly.
- Whatever one enjoys doing more than loving Jesus is a "Barabbas."

3. Wealth, Worldly Goods and Recognition Can Be Barabbas.'

- Striving for material things to the extent that no time is left for Jesus is choosing Barabbas.

IV. CHOOSING BARABBAS IS FATAL

The curse of God was upon those who accepted Barabbas, but more so because they rejected Jesus.

1. The Jews Asked For It.

"Then answered all the people, and said, 'His blood be on us and on our children.'"

Matthew 27:25

- Those who were present took upon themselves and their children the responsibility of Jesus' blood, and ever since, they have been a people wandering upon the face of the earth.

2. To Accept Barabbas Is Equivalent to Crucifying Jesus All Over Again.

"If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." Hebrews 6:6

- All spite and open shame that you might put upon Christ again affects Him only as far as you are individually concerned. You are the one who will stand before Him for your decisions and actions, not anyone else.

CONCLUSION:

- You are free to make your choice. The decision is yours, alone. Choose Jesus and live. Choose Barabbas and die. Your eternal destination depends upon your choice.
- Every day, many times each day, you choose between Jesus and Barabbas. Anything you choose that would take Jesus' place is a "Barabbas." Give thought to how you choose.