

Barabbas vs Jesus

John 18:39-40

39 "But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"

40 Then they all cried again, saying, "Not this Man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber. NKJV

John 18:40 The scene as depicted in art: -- One of the most striking works of that true spiritual genius, George Tinworth, represents the release of Barabbas and the condemnation of Christ. Pilate is delineated as the centre of the group; he is standing washing his hands, thus emphasizing the innocence of Jesus, who, at his left, is seen bound and in custody, led away to be scourged and crucified. Barabbas is on Pilate's right; he is stooping down, free and light-hearted, to rejoin the people. Barabbas is styled in an inscription below his figure, "The world's choice." The inscription below Jesus is "The Good Shepherd." The levity of the call for Barabbas and the unerring Divine Judgment, are suggested by a reference to Eccl 8:12. "Though a sinner does evil a hundred times, and his days are prolonged, yet I surely know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him." NKJV The general lesson of the composition is one with which historians, moralists, poets have made us familiar --

"Truth for ever on the scaffold, Wrong for ever on the throne --

Yet that scaffold sways the Future, and behind the dim unknown

Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own."

Tinworth's genius appears in the extraordinary vividness with which he has conceived and expressed the fact that Barabbas was personally popular. While Jesus comes forward, sorrowful and solitary, followed by supercilious smiles or cold despite, those who have known Barabbas crowd around him to congratulate him; the very soldiers who have been his jailers clasp his hands, as if they were sorry to lose a boon companion. Intensity of moral purpose, elevation of spiritual thought, are hindrances to popularity; the absence of these is distinctly favourable to a superficial geniality, which may blind even to the heinousness of crime. Christ could never have been "the world's choice." (A. Mackennal, D. D.). (from *The Biblical Illustrator* Copyright © 2002, 2003, 2006 Ages Software, Inc. and Biblesoft, Inc.)

Listen in on the thoughts and the words of Pilate.

He knew that for envy they had delivered him? (Matt. 27:18).

I am innocent of the blood of this just person ?? (Matt. 27:24).

For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy? (Mark 15:10).

Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them? (Luke 23:20).

I have found no cause of death in him ?? (Luke 23:22).

I find in him no fault at all? (John 18:38).

From thenceforth Pilate sought to release him ?? (John 19:12).

Pilate, when he was determined to let him go? (Acts 3:13).

In spite of all this, Pilate did not have the courage to release Him.

McGee, J. Vernon: Thru the Bible Commentary. Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 1997, Jn 18:40

I. Who was Barabbas?

A. John simply tells us that he was a murderer.

1. I think he does this to show the base nature of this person that others, and even some today, would hold out to us as a patriot fighter.
2. He took life and Jesus gave life.
3. He wanted what he wanted and Jesus wanted what His Father wanted.

B. Others tell us that he had lead in a rebellion, a sedition.

1. Mark 15:7 And there was one named Barabbas, who was chained with his fellow rebels; they had committed murder in the rebellion NKJV
2. Luke 23:19 who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder. NKJV
3. BARABBAS “The procurator, in his anxiety to save Jesus, proposed to release him to the people, in accordance with their demand that he should release one prisoner to them at the Passover. As a rebel, he was subject to the punishment laid down by the Roman law for such political offenses, while as a murderer he could not escape death even by the civil code of the Jews. But the latter were so bent on the death of Jesus that, of the two, they preferred pardoning this double criminal (Matt 27:16-26; Mark 15:7-15; Luke 23:18-25; John 18:40), who was accordingly set free (Acts 3:14)” (from McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

C. Son of the father.

1. The name Barabbas is Aramaic, meaning “son of the father.” By a strange irony the pseudo-son of the father was released, but the real Son of the Father was crucified. Clarke; The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, New Testament
2. Does that seem eerie to you that Barabbas mens son of the father and Jesus primary message was that He was the Son of the Father.
3. Never forget that Satan is a great counterfeiter.

4. He has to make it look good for it to sell.

D. Jesus Barabbas

1. BARABBAS; Origen says that in many copies Barabbas was also called *Jesus* (Ἰησοῦν Βαραββᾶν; see the *Darmst. Lit. Bl.* 1843, p. 538). The Armenian Version has the same reading: "Whom will you that I shall deliver unto you, Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus that is called Christ?" Griesbach, in his *Comment.*, considers this as an interpolation, while Fritzsche has adopted it in his text (so also Tischendorf in [Matt 27:16,17](#), but not his last ed.). We can certainly conceive that a name afterward so sacred may have been thrown out of the text by some bigoted transcriber. On the other hand, the contrast in ver. 20, "that they should ask Barabbas and destroy Jesus," seems fatal to its original position in the text. (from *McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2000, 2003, 2005, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.*)
2. Matt 27:15 Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. 16 At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. NRSV

II. Why did the crowd call for Barabbas to be released and Jesus to be crucified?

A. We know that the leaders stirred up the crowd and incited them to do this.

1. Is there a lesson for us here?
2. There should be.
3. We need to think and act for ourselves.
4. The media treat the people as sheep who will blindly follow there slant.
5. Politicians tell us one lie after another, appealing to our emotions.
 - a. Abortion becomes women's health care.
 - b. Killing old people becomes death with dignity.
 - c. In the Netherlands where euthanasia has been legal for decades, about half of those euthanized are killed without their consent. Check it out.
 - d. And how would you describe a society that will spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to keep a new born infant alive and then kill a healthy baby simply because it would be a financial burden on the mother.
 - e. So why did the crowd call of Barabbas' release?

B. If Barabbas was a leader of the rebellion, then it makes perfect sense.

1. Jesus was not going to be the savior (Jesus) that the country wanted.
2. But Barabbas would be.
3. In another 30 years the Jews would be in rebellion against the Romans.
4. They had chosen the sort of savior they wanted.
5. And with devastating results.
 - a. In 70 a.d. the Romans would finally take the city of Jerusalem and kill hundreds of thousands of Jews.
 - b. It has been estimated that there were two million Jesus in Jerusalem at the time of the siege.
 - c. Yes they had chosen their savior, their Jesus and with only death or captivity as a result.

III. People today have the same choices to make.

A. What type of savior will you choose?

1. Will you take the world's choice?
2. Will you say with the world, give us Barabbas and crucify Jesus?
3. Some will say, I don't get involved with these religious discussions.
4. They fail to realize that if you will not speak up for Jesus, they you choose Barabbas by default.