

Still Choosing Barabbas?

by Kim Josephson

You all know the story. Pilate had examined Jesus and "found no fault in Him", so because it was Passover, in accordance with their customs, Pilate determined to release one of his prisoners to the people. He therefore decided to give them the choice: Jesus or Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a common criminal and Jesus was a just man, and it appears that Pilate thought surely they would choose Jesus, but they chose Barabbas! Matt 27:22-23 says

Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

Can you imagine? This was the same crowd that had sung his praise in the streets a few days before. What had Jesus done? He healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, opened the eyes of the blind, and unstopped deaf ears. He had compassion on them, and pitied them as sheep without a shepherd. He fed the multitude and preached to them the most sublime words ever recorded. What had Jesus done to these people but bless them? He prayed for them and He loved them, **and they hated him.**

True, He cleansed the temple. True, He called them to repentance. True, He told them that they had to deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Him. But what sin did He prohibit that wasn't for their own good? The essence of all His teaching could be summed up in these words,

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. (Luke 10:27)

And yet for this doctrine, **Jesus must die.**

Why? Because the unconverted heart is at war with God. It cannot choose holiness of itself. It takes the grace of God to change a heart. The Word says in Ezekiel 36:26-27:

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

This is what happens when the grace of God changes a life. God breathes His life into your very being and makes you a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things become new! You get a new heart! You get a new life!

So how is it with your heart?

Do you have a new heart that chooses Jesus or does your heart still say "away with this man, give me Barabbas"? Listen, Barabbas represents all that is natural, all that feels good to the flesh, and exalts itself above the Lordship of Jesus. Jesus represents all that is holy and in right relationship to the Father. Which do you choose?

Barabbas has a million different names today. In your life, he might call himself "Bud" or "Jack Daniels" or any one of a hundred different brews that will give you over to drunkenness and other God dishonoring behaviors. Know this, **no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God.** 1 Cor 6:9-10. So who do you choose: Jesus or "Jack Black" Barabbas?

How about in the arena of your lusts? Maybe you call it harmless flirtation and fantasy, but God calls it adultery and fornication. Jesus said "...whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Matt. 5:28. So how is your heart? Are you purifying it or polluting it by

accommodating your lusts? Know this, **no adulterer shall inherit the kingdom of God.** 1 Cor 6:9-10. Who are you choosing: Jesus or Barabbas?

Maybe it's in your business. You feel you just can't be out and out for Jesus. Your business demands that you fudge just a little here and there. You say, "How else can I get ahead?" or worse "after all, everybody else does it." God calls it lying and stealing and warns "... all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone..." Rev. 21:8. O, how is it with your heart?

I'm not saying that if you are born again you won't be tempted. But know this, 1 Cor 10:13 says:

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

In other words, **God intends for us to choose Jesus and overcome the world, the flesh and the devil.** If you are born of God, God expects and equips you to overcome.

Hear me, if you are still choosing Barabbas and trampling over the blood of Jesus to do your own thing and to have your own way, don't even think you are saved. If you are making excuses for your sins, then don't be deceived; you need to be born again. If God has been gracious enough to show you your sin in this matter, then pray He will give you more grace and save your soul! Cry out to God this instant and ask Him to give you a new heart. Surely you know Jesus is your only hope. You must choose Him and Him alone - **SO DO IT NOW!** Away with any Barabbas, any idol, any lust, any thing that would stand between you and the Savior. You can have a new heart today. **Choose Jesus.** I pray you will.

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. (Titus 2:11-12)