



April 10, 2022

"We are Barabbas"

[Luke 22 and 23](#)

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What exactly was Jesus charged with that led to his crucifixion? What was his crime? There were two – BLASPHEMY and SEDITION. The charges were not legitimate – but they were trumped up by his adversaries. The Jews demanded that Pontius Pilate release Barabbas and crucify Jesus instead. There is an irony in that exchange that Pastor Gary explained in his teaching entitled "We are Barabbas."

1. Jesus charged as a criminal
 - a. [Luke 22:66-71](#) – *"As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council, saying, 'If You are the Christ, tell us.' But He said to them, 'If I tell you, you will by no means believe. And if I also ask you, you will by no means answer Me or let Me go. Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God.' Then they all said, 'Are You then the Son of God?' So He said to them, 'You rightly say that I am.' And they said, 'What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth.'"*
 - b. [Luke 23:1-5, 13-25, 32-38](#) – *"Then the whole multitude of them arose and led Him to Pilate. And they began to accuse Him, saying, 'We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.' Then Pilate asked Him, saying, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' He answered him and said, 'It is as you say.' So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, 'I find no fault in this Man.' But they were the more fierce, saying, 'He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place.'... Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, said to them, 'You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; no, neither did Herod, for I sent you*

back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him. I will therefore chastise Him and release Him' (for it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast). And they all cried out at once, saying, 'Away with this Man, and release to us Barabbas' – who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder. Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus, again called out to them. But they shouted, saying, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him!' Then he said to them the third time, 'Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go.' But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed. So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. And he released to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will. ... There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.' And they divided His garments and cast lots. And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, 'He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.' The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and saying, 'If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.' And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS."

2. The charges against Jesus

a. Blasphemy

- i. Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, and the Jewish leaders didn't believe him.

1. He referred to himself as the "Son of Man."

- a. [Luke 22:69](#) – [Jesus said], *"Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God."*

- i. "Son of Man" is a messianic title first used by the prophet Daniel and then by Jesus over eighty times in the Gospels.

1. [Daniel 7:13a](#) – *"I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven!"*

- b. Other examples

- i. [John 10:27-30](#) – *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who*

has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one."

ii. [John 14:7](#) - *"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."*

iii. [John 14:9b](#) - *"He who has seen Me has seen the Father..."*

2. The Jewish leaders immediately understood that Jesus was declaring himself to be God.

a. [Matthew 26:65-66](#) - *"Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, 'He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?' They answered and said, 'He is deserving of death.'"*

b. Seditious

i. In AD 30, the Roman government banned the Jewish people from carrying out executions based solely on Jewish law, so the Jewish ruling council had to come up with a charge punishable by death according to Roman law.

ii. They stated that Jesus was guilty of sedition against the Roman government for claiming to be a king.

1. [Luke 23:2](#) - *"And they began to accuse Him, saying, 'We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.'"*

a. This was a lie, as Jesus had previously said "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's." (Mark 12:17)

2. [John 19:15](#) - *"But they cried out, 'Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!' Pilate said to them, 'Shall I crucify your King?' The chief priests answered, 'We have no king but Caesar!'"*

a. They denied God as king, they denied Jesus as king, and they said Caesar was their king, all to get Jesus executed.

iii. The Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, did not think Jesus' actions were serious enough to warrant a charge of sedition.

1. Pilate was at risk of losing his governorship from Rome for killing too many people, so he was reluctant to kill Jesus.

3. An alternative

a. Every year at the Feast of Passover, in effort to ingratiate themselves with the Jews, the Roman government would allow one Jewish prisoner to be set free.

- b. The Jews asked Pilate to release the criminal Barabbas and then take Jesus and crucify him.
 - c. [Luke 23:18-19](#) - *“And they all cried out at once, saying, ‘Away with this Man, and release to us Barabbas’ - who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder.”*
 - d. Pilate agreed to their proposal and Jesus was crucified.
4. We are Barabbas
- a. Barabbas in Hebrew is “Bar Abba.” It means “Son of the Father.”
 - b. The righteous Son of the Father died so that the unrighteous son of the Father could be set free.
 - c. We are all Barabbas. He is a picture of each of us.
 - i. [2 Corinthians 5:21](#) - *“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”* (1984 NIV)
 - ii. [John 8:36](#) - *“Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”*
 - d. Jesus died to set us free.

Discussion Questions

1. Read [Luke 22:66-71](#) and [Luke 23:1-5, 13-25, and 32-38](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. What was the first charge brought against Jesus? (See #2a above)
3. Did Jesus claim to be God? How do we know? (See #2a-i- above)
4. How did the Jewish leaders respond to Jesus’ claim of being the Messiah? (See #2a-i-2 above)
5. What was the second charge brought against Jesus? (See #2b above)
6. How did the Jewish leaders attempt to support this second charge? Explain why this charge was not legitimate. (See #2b-ii-1-a above)
7. Did Pilate agree with the charge of sedition? (See #2b-iii above)
8. What alternative did the Jewish leaders develop? Did Pilate agree with this proposal? (See #3 above)
9. What is the significance of Barabbas’ name? (See #4a and #4b above)

10. Read [2 Corinthians 5:21](#) and [John 8:36](#). How does Barabbas represent all of us? What did Jesus die for? (See #4c and #4d above)

11. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)