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Barabbas, What We Know, and What We Do Not Know

Matthew 27:16, “And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas.”

When reading through the four Gospel accounts of the events leading up to the crucifixion of the Lord and Savior, we read about a man named Barabbas. Much has been said about this man, and there are many things we know by the truth of scripture. (1) Barabbas was a sinner! (a) Barabbas was in prison for insurrection against the Roman government (Mark 15:7); (b) Barabbas was in prison for murder that he committed during the insurrection (Luke 23:25); and (c) Barabbas was a known robber (John 18:40). In these three, Barabbas manifested that he was a sinner, a son of Adam. The name Barabbas means the son of a father, and he showed himself to be the son of Adam by his actions. We all, every one of us, are also the descendants of Adam, conceived after his fallen image (Genesis 5:3; Psalms 51:5). (2) Barabbas was a man that stood condemned, waiting on the day when the consequence of his guilt would meet execution. (3) Barabbas was a man who was set free because One more righteous than he died instead of him.

The question that now arises in the minds of many Bible students is, “What did Barabbas do after he was set free?” Did Barabbas go away from the scene of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ looking over his shoulder thinking, someone made a big mistake today, they will be coming to get me any minute now? Did Barabbas leave that day to return to a life of rebellion, murder and robbery? Did Barabbas depart that day to start a changed life of obedience to the Lord? The truth is,

nobody really knows. It's not recorded in scripture what Barabbas did after he was set free. The gospel of Jesus Christ does not call on us to guess what Barabbas did, but calls on the born again child of God to answer for himself/herself. Every elect child of God by nature is as guilty as Barabbas, and more so, before the throne of the God of heaven and earth. It is the Lord Jesus Christ who died in the elect's room and stead on the Cross of Calvary. Jesus died to save His people from the condemnation which they brought on themselves by their own works.

Now the question is, what shall we do? Will we live our days in fear of the eternal consequence of sin, or will we trust in His finished work of Jesus Christ enjoying a sweet rest in Him? Will we depart from the knowledge of this salvation to live our lives in the paths of the world and our own carnal nature? Or will we make a change in our lives laboring to thank the Lord for the precious gift of eternal life? What is our answer and response? Will we be as the nine lepers who went away from the Lord, or will we be as the one who returned to give "glory to God" (Luke 17:11-19)? In this context, dear child of grace, you have a choice to make every day. I love to read about blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:50) who cast all that he had aside and followed Jesus, "glorifying God" (Luke 18:43). Thanks and praise be to the Lord, for children of God like blind Bartimaeus. Amen!