

Mark 15:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.

Analysis

And there was one named Barabbas (ἦν δὲ ὁ λεγόμενος Βαραββᾶς, ēn de ho legomenos Barabbas)—The name Βαραββᾶς (Barabbas) is Aramaic: ܒܪܥܬܐ (bar-abba), 'son of the father.' Some manuscripts of Matthew 27:16 give his full name as 'Jesus Barabbas,' heightening the choice: Jesus son of the father (the criminal) or Jesus Son of the Father (the Christ). **Which lay bound with them that had made insurrection** (μετὰ τῶν στασιαστῶν δεδεμένος, meta tōn stasiastōn dedemenos)—Barabbas was imprisoned with στασιασταί (stasiastai), insurrectionists or rebels.

Who had committed murder in the insurrection (οἵτινες ἐν τῇ στάσει φόνον πεποιήκεισαν, hoitines en tē stasei phonon pepoiēkeisan)—The noun φόνος (phonos) means murder. Barabbas was guilty of the very crimes Jesus was falsely accused of: sedition (στάσις, stasis) and violence. The substitution is profoundly theological: the guilty goes free, the innocent dies—the gospel in miniature (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Historical Context

First-century Judea seethed with revolutionary movements. Josephus describes numerous insurrections (Jewish War 2.13.2-7). The term στασιασταί likely identifies Barabbas as a sicarii (dagger-men) or zealot. Rome crucified thousands for insurrection—that Barabbas was still alive suggests recent arrest. The

'insurrection' may have occurred during the Passover itself, explaining heightened tensions. Barabbas embodied the violent messiah many Jews wanted; Jesus embodied the suffering servant they rejected.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What is the theological significance of the name 'Barabbas' meaning 'son of the father'?
2. How does Barabbas's guilt for the very crimes Jesus was accused of prefigure substitutionary atonement?
3. Why might the crowd prefer a violent revolutionary over the Prince of Peace?

Interlinear Text

ἦν	δὲ	ὁ	λεγόμενος	Βαραββᾶς	μετὰ	τῶν
there was	And	G3588	one named	Barabbas	with	G3588
G2258	G1161		G3004	G912	G3326	
συστασιαστῶν			δεδεμένος	οἵτινες	ἐν	τῇ
them that had made insurrection with him			which lay bound	who	in	G3588
G4955			G1210	G3748	G1722	
στάσει	φόνον	πεποιήκεισαν				
the insurrection	murder	had committed				
G4714	G5408	G4160				

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 27:16 (Parallel theme): And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas.

Luke 23:25 (Parallel theme): And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

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