

# Matthew 27:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?

## Analysis

**Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?** (Βαραββᾶν ἢ Ἰησοῦν τὸν λεγόμενον Χριστόν;)—Pilate forced the choice into stark relief: the rebel or the Christ (Christos, Messiah/Anointed One). Some manuscripts read 'Jesus Barabbas,' making the choice between two men named Jesus—'son of the father' versus Son of the Father.

This was Pilate's attempt at reductio ad absurdum—surely they wouldn't choose a murderer over their supposed Messiah. But sin's logic is absurd: humanity consistently chooses rebellion over redemption, violence over peace, darkness over Light.

## Historical Context

The gathered crowd likely included chief priests' supporters, not the masses who welcomed Jesus on Palm Sunday (Matthew 21:9). Religious leaders manipulated public opinion, showing how mob dynamics can quickly turn from 'Hosanna' to 'Crucify.'

## Related Passages

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

## Study Questions

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1. In what ways do you still choose 'Barabbas'—rebellion, self-will, sin—over submitting to Christ's lordship?
2. How does the crowd's fickleness warn against following popular opinion rather than truth?

## Interlinear Text

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συνηγμένων	οὖν	αὐτοῖς	εἶπεν	αὐτοῖς	τὸν
when they were gathered together	Therefore	unto them	said	unto them	which
G4863	G3767	G846	G2036	G846	G3588
Πιλᾶτος	Τίνα	θέλετε	ἀπολύσω	ὑμῖν	Βαραββᾶν
Pilate	Whom	will ye	that I release	unto you	Barabbas
G4091	G5101	G2309	G630	G5213	G912
ἢ					G2228
'Ιησοῦν	τὸν	λεγόμενον	Χριστόν		
Jesus	which	is called	Christ		
G2424	G3588	G3004	G5547		

## Additional Cross-References

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**John 19:15** (Parallel theme): But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

**Joshua 24:15** (Parallel theme): And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

**1 Kings 18:21** (Parallel theme): And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

