

# 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

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**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

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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

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**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	
Πιλάτος	Τίνα	θέλετε	ἀπολύσω	ὑμῖν	Βαραββᾶν	ἢ
Pilate	Whom	will ye	that I release	unto you	Barabbas	or
G4091	G5101	G2309	G630	G5213	G912	G2228
Ἰησοῦν	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.

