

THE SIX TRIALS OF CHRIST

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Chapter 13

THE MAN NAMED BARABBAS

After washing his hands and the people responded to take the guilt of it to themselves and their children, Pilate issues two orders to his soldier: the release of Barabbas and the scourging of JESUS.

"Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified" (Matthew 27:26). "And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. 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" (Luke 23:24-25).

We want to follow both of these orders, for, in the providence of GOD, we have the meeting of type and prophecy, antitype and fulfillment.

Through the Old Testament there are two separate threads of proof of the divine inspiration of all Scripture. This is a book that man could not write even if he wanted to. The one line of proof is that of type with its counterpart of antitype in the New Testament. The antitype is the fulfillment of the truth of which the type was merely a propicture.

The other line of proof is specific, detailed prophecies predicted years before it could have been known which have been fulfilled in exact detail. Only GOD could give either and cause them to be fulfilled. The major theme of both type and prophecy is the person and work of the Lord JESUS CHRIST.

I have made a list of 59 different Old Testament prophecies which I have so far found that were fulfilled this very day of 24 hours of human history. These prophecies are in addition to the predictions CHRIST made Himself which we gave at the very beginning of this study.

There never was a day like this before in human history, and there will never be another to equal it. All history is moving toward it, and all history moves from it. It stands as the very center of history. History is actually HIS-story. As JESUS CHRIST is sent to be scourged, Psalm 129:3, **"The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their**

furrows," is being fulfilled as well as many other passages.

But something else is occurring at this very same time. It is in no way by accident that a man by the name of Barabbas is at this very time being released and set free. He stands in the providence of GOD as a picture of the sinner set free because another, who was innocent, is taking his stripes and will die on his cross in his place.

This theme of Scripture that ends with Barabbas started in the Garden of Eden. There innocent animals were sacrificed by GOD in order to provide for Adam and Eve an acceptable covering before GOD.

It is seen in every animal sacrifice made in the Old Testament, each one portraying a different aspect of the one infinite sacrifice of GOD's perfect LAMB.

Nor should we think merely that this typology extends only to animal sacrifices. Sometimes one animal was sacrificed while another went free. This was true of the two goats on the day of atonement, and of the two birds of Leviticus 14.

Moreover, sometimes there were no animals involved at all. The ROCK that was smitten was CHRIST we are told by Paul in I Corinthians 10. The Lord JESUS CHRIST Himself likens the brazen serpent as a divine illustration of the believer's personal appropriation of the sacrifice of CHRIST to himself.

Sometimes typology has used the life or the death of men as an example of CHRIST's sacrifice. The death of the High Priest in Israel freed all those in the cities of refuge, and in this the High Priest stands as a picture of CHRIST our Great HIGH PRIEST. The Kinsman-Redeemer portrayed in Ruth is a type of our Great KINSMAN-REDEEMER, the Lord JESUS CHRIST.

With CHRIST and Barabbas, type and antitype meet. CHRIST is the antitype of all the types, pictures, figures, symbols and illustrations that foretold of Him. But Barabbas is a picture, a divine picture, a picture planned and arranged in the providence of GOD of you and of me. Barabbas is the type and we are the antitype. It is not by mere chance that Barabbas was available this day of all days to be traded for JESUS CHRIST. He was there in prison under the sentence of death by crucifixion that the Gospel message to my heart and yours might be a personal relationship with JESUS CHRIST. Here is the story.

1. Barabbas stood under the righteous condemnation of the law.

Justice demanded his punishment. This is acknowledged even by one of the lesser personages in this threesome who admitted to his own fellow as he hung on a cross: **"But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss"** (Luke 23:40-41).

If Barabbas had received justice, he would have died on the center cross. It had been prepared for him. He was to have the center cross because he was the ringleader and

the most notorious of those being crucified this day. He was a sinner that had knowingly broken the law, and knew that the demands of that broken law must be met. He was to die justly.

2. Barabbas knew the One who was to take his cross and take his place was innocent.

Pilate had so declared Him to be over and over again. The one member of the trio testifies that he knew it: "**but this man hath done nothing amiss.**" He rebukes his fellow because he also knew it and yet was mocking. If both of these knew it, we can know that Barabbas knew it also.

3. Barabbas knew that JESUS CHRIST was for him a true substitute.

There was in truth One dying in his place and stead. Pilate had given the people of Israel their choice; it was Barabbas or JESUS. If one was freed, the other suffered. If JESUS had been freed, Barabbas would suffer justly. If Barabbas is freed, JESUS must suffer unjustly -- the just for the unjust.

4. Barabbas knew that he had done nothing to merit going free while another took his place.

There were no good works or deeds of righteousness to which he could cling as a hope to merit salvation. He had no worthiness; he stood with no merit; he could claim no righteousness. He was saved by the divine act of mercy and grace. None other than GOD Himself was working to have JESUS crucified and Barabbas freed. GOD was working in the one as much as the other, yet the people themselves were doing just what they wanted to do and were totally responsible for their actions.

"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23).

"The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses" (Acts 3:13-15).

5. Barabbas knew CHRIST's death was for him perfectly efficacious.

He was forever free from the law that condemned him, because another died in his place. *Non bis in idem*, no man shall be put twice in jeopardy is a maxim which has come down to us from the Romans. The law could never touch Barabbas again.

Krummacher has penned it well: "Observe now the result of the decision. Barabbas and JESUS changing places. The murderer's bonds, curse, disgrace, and mortal agony are transferred to the righteous JESUS; while the liberty, innocence, safety, and well-being of the immaculate Nazarene become the lot of the murderer. Barabbas is installed in all the rights and privileges of JESUS CHRIST; while the latter enters upon all the infamy

and horror of the rebel's position. Both mutually inherit each other's situation and what they possess: The delinquent's guilt and cross become the lot of the Just One, and all the civil rights and immunities of the latter are the property of the delinquent."

When JESUS CHRIST died He died for Barabbas -- no, He died for me and He died for you. Had he been only an innocent man among men, He could have died for only one man -- Barabbas. Had He been GOD and not man, He could have died for no man, for GOD cannot die. Since He was the sinless God-Man He could taste death in a point in time for every man.

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-8). "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (I Corinthians 15:3). "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead" (II Corinthians 5:14). "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Galatians 1:4). "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Galatians 3:13). "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1).

Time will not permit us to even begin to exhaust this theme.

We were sinners, have broken the law and so under the curse: **"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them"** (Galatians 3:10).

We were legally dead in trespasses and sins: **"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others"** (Ephesians 2:1-3).

But GOD through mercy and grace and for His great love wherein He loved us did something we couldn't do for ourselves: **"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come**

he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:4-7).

He did it all through JESUS CHRIST, and not because of any works or merit wherein we could boast: **"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).**

He took all the crimes against us: **"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Colossians 2:14).**

This picture is vivid. When a man was in prison under Roman law, his crimes were written out and nailed to his cell door. When a prisoner was set free, he would be handed this indictment having it cancelled by writing that it was fulfilled. He would then nail this to his own front door showing his right to be free. When a criminal was executed, this indictment was taken from his cell door and was nailed to the cross.

JESUS CHRIST took that which was against us and paid its price, nailing it to His Cross: **"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Colossians 2:14).** He had no crimes, so He died for mine.

He **"died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him" (I Thessalonians 5:10).** **"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (I Timothy 1:15).**

Barabbas was one sinner; Paul was -- he says he is chief -- I am one; you are one. CHRIST died for you too.

Where can we stop in this wonderful theme, for there is just no stopping place. The Scriptures about that this is the Gospel. **"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).** **"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (I Timothy 2:5-6).**

Then there is **"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. 2:11-14).** **"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Tit.**

3:5-7). **"If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account"** (Philemon 18). **"For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation"** (Hebrews 9:26-28). **"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified"** (Hebrews 10:10-14). **"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls . . . For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit"** (I Peter 2:24-25; 3:18). **"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world . . . In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins"** (I John 2:2; 4:9-10). **"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood . . . And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation"** (Revelation 1:5; 5:9). And others.

And still there is more. **"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"** (Luke 19:10). **"And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance"** (Luke 5:31-32).

Only until you realize your terrible state under condemnation and death, with no way out but JESUS CHRIST, is there any hope for you to be saved. If you have any hope of making it any other way, then JESUS CHRIST died in vain as far as you are concerned: **"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain"** (Galatians 2:21).

But He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in Him (II Corinthians 5:21). Our part is to believe in Him. We must believe the good news as it comes to us just as we are -- in our sin. It isn't a matter of cleaning up our lives first; it isn't a matter of self-reformation. JESUS CHRIST is dying in our place just as we are.

Could you imagine Barabbas saying: "I don't believe it," or "I won't accept it"? Not on your life. This was good news; he accepted it and was delivered, forever free. Would a Barabbas today refuse such an offer? It is not very likely in the legal realm that a man would, but there have been some.

What if a Pardon is Refused?

Martin Dalton died March 23, 1960 at the age of 91. He had been 63 years behind the bars of Rhode Island State Prison. He murdered a New York business man in East Providence, Rhode Island in 1897, was found guilty and sentenced at the age of 28. In 1930 his case was reviewed. He was granted a full pardon and could go free being 61 years old. But he refused. He chose to remain in prison. Could he refuse a pardon? Yes. According to a decision made by the Supreme Court of the United States in 1830: "A pardon is a paper, the value of which depends upon the acceptance by the person implicated. It is hardly to be supposed that one under sentence of death would refuse to accept pardon, but if it is refused, it is no pardon. George Wilson died in prison."

While few today may refuse this pardon in the legal realm, this same offer in the spiritual realm is being refused by one Barabbas after another. Why? It is because **"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them"** (II Corinthians 4:4).

May, by the grace of GOD and the working of the SPIRIT of GOD, your eyes be opened to see your personal Saviour who loved you and gave Himself for you. May you not spurn the Lord's pardon.

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9).

JESUS CHRIST had died for you. He can do nothing more than what He has done. **"It is finished!"** The decision is yours. What will you do with Him?

Leaving Barabbas we follow JESUS.

~ end of chapter 13 ~
