

**MATTHEW 27:15-23 / ROMANS 5:17**  
**BY THE OBEDIENCE OF THE ONE MAN...**  
**He Takes The Place Of The Murderer.**

*In the name + of Jesus.*

**By the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man. (Romans 5:17)** Adam coveted what was forbidden. Adam rebelled against God's commandment. Sin came, and death came with it. Now, if Adam had only corrupted and condemned himself, we might not care too much about it. We might even roll our eyes and say, "Well, he got what he deserved." But Adam's sin did not bring harm just to himself. **By the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man. (Romans 5:17)** By his sin, Adam brought death and damnation upon all of his offspring. The whole world is marked for death because of the trespass of the one man.

While we call Cain the first murderer, that title may fit Adam better. After all, every single man and woman shall die as a result of the sin of the one man. You are all marked with death, not by a smudge, but by sin. For that very reason, God sent a second Adam. Like the first Adam, this second Adam came into this world holy, blameless, and unmarked by sin. Like the first Adam, this second Adam was put in the world to obey God's commands and do God's will. Unlike the first Adam, the second Adam obeyed God's commands. And by the obedience of this man, there is righteousness, life, and salvation for every man and woman on earth. The second Adam has come to rectify the trespass of the first Adam.

He takes the place of the murderer. That was seen most vividly as Jesus stood trial in the court of Pontius Pilate. Jesus had already been condemned by the Jewish Sanhedrin. That condemnation was decided long before Jesus had been arrested. But the Jewish leaders needed to make their scheme appear legal. They did not have authority to execute anyone, so they needed Jesus to be condemned before the Roman court. Jesus was brought to Pontius Pilate, who **knew that it was out of envy that they had handed Jesus over to him. (Matthew 27:18)** So, Pilate attempted to get Jesus released.

**Now it was the governor's custom at the Feast to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. (Matthew 27:15)** Pilate used this custom to stack the deck in his favor. He presented the Jews with two options – Jesus, or **a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" (Matthew 27:16,17)**

It should have been a no-brainer. Barabbas had taken part in an insurrection. He was a murderer. Barabbas was the kind of man you did not want roaming the streets again. While crucifixion was a gruesome and excruciating form of execution, rather than cringe, you would breathe a sigh of relief at the news that Barabbas was going to be crucified. So, it was a set-up question: **"Which one do you want me to release to you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" (Matthew 27:17)**

There is no measuring the hatred that sinners have for Jesus. **The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crown to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor. "Barabbas," they answered. "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called**

**Christ?” Pilate asked. They all answered, “Crucify him!” (Matthew 27:20-22)** And so, he takes the place of the murderer.

The Holy and Righteous One, Jesus Christ, takes the place of the murderer, Barabbas. The second Adam takes the place of the first Adam. The one who is the source of life takes the place of the one who is the source of death. Jesus takes your place, too; for you and I are no different than Adam or Barabbas.

Like Adam, we have sinned against God’s commands. We know better. We understand the consequences. We do it anyway because our hearts are evil. We have brought down God’s curse upon ourselves. We have no one else to blame. We have earned our death.

We are like Barabbas, too. The name Barabbas means “son of the father.” It is impossible to know the motive of his parents when they named him Barabbas, but if his parents had hoped to honor the Lord with this name, it is clear that he did not live up to his name, Barabbas. On the contrary, Barabbas’ true father was the devil. For, this is what the Lord says: **“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him.” (John 8:44)**

You and I are also Barabbas; for, **“He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning.” (1 John 3:8)** So, the devil claims himself to be our father, and the Scriptures concur. We have done the devil’s bidding. We are sinners. And we have earned a place with the devil. What should God do with us? It is a no-brainer. Where sin is, death reigns, and God’s wrath rests.

But now, the true “Bar-Abba,” the true Son of the Father has come, and he takes the place of the murderer. Barabbas is acquitted, and Jesus is condemned. The Righteous One is slain, and the guilty one goes free. The true Son of the Father takes the place of the first son of God’s creation. The first Adam was shown mercy while the second Adam endured the curse.

And now, Jesus has taken your place too. He takes the place of the murderer, the thief, the liar, the adulterer, the drunkard, the cheat, and so on. His hands were pierced for our wicked deeds. His mouth was punched for our careless words. For all the evil that has poured out of our hearts, his heart was run through and poured out blood. He takes your place. He takes your sin and grants you forgiveness. He takes your death and grants you life. He takes your hell and grants you heaven. Like Adam, you are acquitted. Like Barabbas, you are set free.

**“What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?” Pilate asked. They all answered, “Crucify him!” (Matthew 27:22)** Jesus did not protest or complain. He willingly went to the cross. It is why the Father sent Jesus, and the Son obeyed his Father’s will – to die for the sons of Adam and make them sons of God. By the obedience of the one man, sins are paid for. The many are made righteous. The obedience of the second Adam has undone the disobedience of the first Adam. The condemnation of the Son of the Father has brought reprieve to all of us Barabbases. And because the Son of the Father has taken your place, he gives you his place. For **you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:26)**

**In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**