

# The Revolution That Saves the Body: Jesus Versus Barabbas.

The choice presented to the crowd by Pilate wasn't just between a holy man and a rebel--it was between two men both called "son of the father." Jesus Christ, God's son, stood beside Jesus Barabbas (as some ancient manuscripts name him), whose very name "Bar-Abbas" means "son of the father" in Aramaic. This striking parallel wasn't coincidental. The crowd faced two seemingly similar paths to revolution, yet with fundamentally different answers to our biggest human problem: death and our fear of it. Both promised freedom, both promised new life for the people, but in ways so distinct yet deceptively similar that many could hardly tell the difference.

Many Christians today believe we are just souls trapped in bodies, with salvation being a way to escape our physical selves. This view comes from Platonic dualism that infiltrated early Christian thought—a philosophy that divides reality into higher spiritual and lower physical realms. This distortion leaves us in a profound dilemma: our theology directs us toward spiritual salvation while offering little guidance for our bodily existence and safety in this world.

If we are truly bodily beings (as Scripture affirms), then salvation must deal with the real problem of death and physical existence. Without this, our faith only saves us for an unclear, bodiless future while leaving us with no theological framework for our current physical lives. This creates a vacuum that's easily filled by political solutions and revolutionary movements that promise immediate physical protection and liberation.

The story of Jesus and Barabbas brings this issue into sharp focus. These two "sons of the father" both offered revolutions addressing our physical existence—both drawing from Scripture and both believing they were doing God's will. Barabbas wasn't simply a villain but a zealous man who saw immediate political liberation and force as the path to freedom from Roman oppression. Jesus, meanwhile, offered bodily resurrection and eternal physical redemption. Their different approaches to saving the body presented the crowd with a choice that continues to challenge us today: which revolution truly secures our physical existence?

## **Barabbas: A Fighter's Physical Revolution.**

Jesus Barabbas, "son of the father," stood for the passion of Jewish fighters. He wasn't an evil man—far from it. As a zealot, deeply grounded in Scripture and driven by the righteous desire for freedom from Roman rule, Barabbas offered a solution rooted in the physical world. He likely saw himself as following in the tradition of the Maccabees, the judges, or other Biblical heroes who used physical force to liberate God's people. His revolution called for immediate freedom, one that faced the reality of political and material struggle.

His approach was logical and straightforward—oppression required resistance, bondage required breaking chains. When foreign powers trample your land and abuse your people, you fight back. This reasoning wasn't just pragmatic; for many, it was the obvious application of their faith to their present circumstances.

For those who saw the nation as a body that needed protection, Barabbas's way--fighting, force, and the promise of a restored order--offered a method to defend what was earthly, yet God's. People flocked to his banner because his revolution made sense in worldly terms, and because their theology gave them no other framework for addressing their physical suffering under Roman rule.

## **Jesus: The True Son of the Father.**

Jesus Christ, the real "son of the father", did not try to fight in the expected way. He acted with the certainty that his body was secured by the Father's faithful promise.

Unlike Barabbas, who relied on human strength displayed in shining swords, Jesus was sure of an eternal victory—his rising from the dead. His revolution appeared weak and impractical in the moment (who wins by surrendering?), yet aimed at a more complete freedom that addressed the root of all oppression.

His willingness to give up his physical life wasn't defeat but an act of complete trust. If Jesus hadn't been sure of bodily resurrection, he would have fought hard to save his life. Instead, his actions showed a revolutionary truth: salvation isn't about escaping our bodies, but about God transforming them. Only by beating death can the whole person—body and soul—be truly saved and truly free.

## **The Wrong Split in Our Churches.**

Today, many churches have fallen into a way of thinking that separates spiritual salvation from the physical world. This Platonic dualism—which infected Christian thought early on—creates an escape plan for souls without bodies: "Jesus died for us; we're going to heaven." Meanwhile, it relegates the physical body to a mere temporary vessel, a testing ground where we qualify for heaven before discarding it like worn clothing.

This distortion leaves believers in a theological no-man's-land when it comes to their physical safety and wellbeing. If Jesus only saves souls and not bodies, then where do we turn for physical protection and flourishing in this life? When salvation isn't directed toward the physical--despite God designing us as eternal bodily beings--people have no theological framework for feeling physically safe or valued as Humans (physical beings).

The tragic result? When the good news is reduced to a promise of life after death, believers are effectively forced to turn to Barabbas-like solutions for their daily struggles. Political systems, wars, economic policies, and revolutionary movements become the only available means to address physical suffering, as if true freedom depended on human effort alone. We unconsciously choose Barabbas for our everyday bodily problems while claiming to follow Jesus for spiritual matters—a contradiction the Gospel itself never makes.

## **Political Facts and the Eternal Kingdom.**

Our modern world shows us the hard truth that nations themselves—like South Africa during the Border War against Cuban-backed forces, for example—must sometimes be defended with guns, armies, and even bloodshed. The idea of saving a nation, separate from saving its individual citizens, requires a physical revolution. A nation can be kept safe at the cost of high taxes and the sacrifices of its people—a short-term fix that always demands a price.

As Jesus said, if his kingdom were of this world, his followers would have taken up swords. But because his kingdom is not kept by earthly might, it is forever secure. This reveals a profound truth: Jesus didn't use the sword precisely because his Kingdom is not under threat—it is untouchable, eternal, and cannot be ended. When something cannot be lost, it needs no desperate defense.

The Kingdom of God doesn't need protection; it is what protects. This explains Jesus's logic: earthly kingdoms require swords because their leaders' lives need protection—they can truly die and be no more. But Jesus stood before Pilate with the absolute certainty that even death could not threaten his Kingdom or his life. His confidence came from knowing that bodily resurrection was assured—not just a temporary raising, but a rebirth into a physical body that doesn't owe its existence to natural processes but to God alone.

This is the heart of what's at stake: Without the gospel preached to our physical existence, without the promise of bodily resurrection and eternal physical life made crystal clear, we will inevitably see our bodies as needing protection through worldly means. When we don't truly believe or understand that our physical bodies have eternal security through resurrection, we will default to the sword-bearing ways of Barabbas.

Instead, when we embrace the certainty of Jesus' resurrection, we are freed from the worry of worldly conflict—we are not threatened anymore. Our political involvement no longer defines our hope; rather, our trust in the eternal victory of Christ reshapes how we interact with politics. We may still protect our nations, it is a choice each person has to make for himself, but we do so knowing its cost. We make the almost impossible payment, potentially paying with the blood of our children to save a nation, giving their lives to a flag while carrying the unshakable assurance that true salvation has already been won through means that worldly wisdom cannot comprehend.

## **A Call to Embrace the Physical Promise.**

As we stand at this crossroads today, we face the same big choice that faced the crowd in Pilate's courtyard. Before us are two "sons of the father"—Jesus Barabbas, who offers a revolution of physical force and temporary power, and Jesus Christ, who promises a revolution of the body through resurrection.

The irony is clear: those who chose Barabbas sought physical freedom but got only a brief reprieve, while the way of Jesus—seemingly giving up the physical—actually secures the body forever. The crowds could not see past the moment, but we have the benefit of history.

This doesn't mean Christians should withdraw from political engagement or speaking truth to power. Jesus himself stood before Pilate, speaking truth directly to the face of imperial authority. But notice the profound difference: Jesus spoke as one whose security

was already guaranteed by resurrection, not as one desperately fighting to secure physical safety through force. We can engage with political systems, advocate for justice, and speak boldly to authorities—but we do so from a position of freedom, not fear. Our revolution transforms how we approach politics, not by abandoning it, but by engaging from a place of security rather than desperation. We don't need to choose the path of Barabbas to be relevant in the world; rather, we offer an alternative witness that speaks more powerfully precisely because it isn't grasping for control.

When we truly see how this works—that the promise of eternal life through Jesus is aimed at our physical nature, not watered down to just a spiritual existence—we can now make the right choice between these two "sons of the father". The revolution has already begun, not in political uprising but in the empty tomb.

Our loyalty belongs not to temporary kingdoms secured by violence, but to the lasting reality of resurrection that transforms our very bodies. This is not a ghostly salvation that abandons our physical nature; it is instead the ultimate confirmation of our bodily existence, securing what Barabbas could only temporarily protect. In this light, we see that true revolution saves bodies, promising not escape from physicality but its glorious transformation.