

# The <sup>+</sup> Seminarian

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# Judgment and Forgiveness

## IN THE PROPHETIC WRITINGS

*The purpose of this paper is to set the words of the prophets into a context apart from which they cannot be understood. In order to grasp the full import of the prophetic message two factors must be taken seriously: the covenant, and the relationship between Israel and the historical event, in which she is involved. It is attempted here to show that the alternating themes of judgment and forgiveness grow out of a unique and unbroken redeeming relationship of God with Israel that began with the covenant and continues with God's constant verbal and acting address to the children of Abraham. Because this brief study is concerned with the covenant and history as well as the prophetic words themselves, it was found expedient to treat the prophets as a whole rather than to single out any particular writings for intense scrutiny.*

Throughout the prophetic writings of the Old Testament two attitudes, shining through God's activity, seem to compete with each other for supremacy. Now we find forgiving Love reaching out to redeem a stiffnecked people. Now we see holy Wrath meting punishment upon a wayward nation. Now a haughty people are called to repent before the Judge. Now an impoverished and humiliated folk is called to hope in the Savior. The tension between forgiveness and judgment in the prophetic writings has caused many to miss the truth while seeking for a solution for the apparent conflict. The temptation has always been to minimize the one attitude and wrongly emphasize the other. In our day we have not been guilty of attempting to subordinate God's forgiveness to his judgment but we have often made a dangerous effort to subordinate judgment to forgiveness.

It is becoming ever more clear that to de-emphasize one of these two attitudes is actually to enervate both. How can you honestly acknowledge one and wink at the other while reading the prophets? What becomes of God's forgiveness if you fail to take his judgment

seriously? How can judgment have any meaning apart from the possibility or actuality of forgiveness?

Too often it has been overlooked that behind the apparent conflict between God's righteous and terrible judgment and his gracious forgiveness is an underlying unity; a unity, however, which cannot be comprehended in static categories. In order to find any meaning in the prophet's constant oscillation between God's judgment and forgiveness we must understand the significance of the covenant. If we can grasp what it means for God the Creator to enter into a covenant relationship with a people, then his activity in history and his Word spoken through the prophets interpreting that activity will perhaps begin to make sense.

Perhaps the clearest prophetic insight into the meaning of the covenant is found in the 16th chapter of Ezekiel.

Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother a Hittite. And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. None eye

pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born.

And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live.

Here the prophet makes plain that there was nothing initially attractive about Israel that caused God to choose her. It was pure compassion, indeed it was a compassion that had to swallow disgust in order to express itself. For the Holy One to reach down and take to himself this unlovely people was far more remarkable than any humanly conceived demonstration of compassion, but this figure serves to make vivid the miracle that is involved. While Israel was alone, wallowing in her own birth sack so-to-speak, her existence had no meaning. Apart from the responsibility that grows out of relationship there is no such thing as life, at least life as differentiated from the sub-human species. When God took this disgusting mess to himself, he was indeed calling it to life. By entering into relationship with Israel he was in effect addressing her with the omnipotent command: Live!

Gradually the child Israel grew. With age came maturity and understanding.

Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness; yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine.

With Israel's maturity her relationship with God assumed the form of a covenant. Henceforth she recognized that God had a claim

upon her, and as long as she acknowledged that claim, she had a claim upon the loving promise of God. Hence, through God's initiation, Israel was bound to her Creator in an intimate relationship. It is within this relationship that the drama recorded in the Old Testament takes place. It is not a detached and foreign God who now visits wrath upon the people of Israel and now miraculously delivers them from the hand of the oppressor. The God who acts among these Hebrews is the One who first adopted them for his own and entered into relationship with them.

The alternate themes of Judgment and Forgiveness can only be understood in the context of a prior relationship between God and Israel. When we view judgment and forgiveness as acts of God within the covenant relationship, the apparent conflict between them acquires profound meaning. It is this meaning which we propose now to explore.

Why is it that the pre-exilic prophets, many of whom witnessed the nation's relative prosperity, sound a dominant note of doom, while the post-exilic prophets, surrounded by desolation and despair are full of hope? Why does judgment always seem to come when there appears to the nation still to be hope, and forgiveness when there is nothing left but despair? In a time of optimism, Amos declares to Israel these chilling words:

Therefore the flight shall perish from the swift,

And the strong shall not strengthen his force,

Neither shall the mighty deliver himself: Neither shall he stand that handleth the bow;

And he that is swift of foot shall not deliver himself.

Neither shall he that rideth the horse  
deliver himself.  
And he that is courageous among the  
mighty  
Shall flee away naked in that day,  
Saith the Lord. (4:14-16).

To humbled post-exilic Israel that  
had just suffered drought and  
plague Joel brings the comforting  
message:

And it shall come to pass in that day,  
That the mountains shall drop down new  
wine,  
And the hills shall flow with milk,  
And all the rivers of Judah shall flow  
with waters,  
And a fountain shall come forth of the  
house of the Lord  
And shall water the valley of Shittim,  
Egypt shall be a desolation,  
And Edom shall be a desolate wilderness,  
For the violence against the children of  
Judah,  
Because they have shed innocent blood  
in their land.

But Judah shall dwell forever,  
And Jerusalem from generation to  
generation.  
For I will cleanse their blood that I  
have not cleansed:  
For the Lord dwelleth in Zion.

There is more to these prophetic  
addresses than the mere desire to  
draw the people away from exces-  
sive optimism or despair to which  
the respective historical circum-  
stances may have tempted them.  
Though they may seem at first  
glance to ignore the circumstances  
in which the people find them-  
selves, properly understood, the  
words of the prophets harmonize  
with history rather than defy it.

Three factors combine to give  
meaning to Israel's journey  
through history: her covenant with  
her Creator, the particular situa-  
tion in which she finds herself each  
moment, and the word of God that  
constantly addresses her through  
the voices of her prophets. In the  
covenant God has promised salva-

tion to his people, fulfillment of all  
that now is incomplete. The coven-  
ant also involves God's call to  
obedience. God's promise of ful-  
fillment and his call to obedience  
channel Israel's destiny in a cer-  
tain direction. Whenever she moves  
in that direction, his existence has  
point and purpose. Whenever she  
veers away from the path, she  
plunges into the annihilating abyss  
of meaninglessness. Circumstance  
and God's Word conspire to keep  
Israel moving in the right direc-  
tion without destroying her free-  
dom. In this study we are con-  
cerned with the problem of why the  
words of the prophets in whom  
God speaks vacillate so abruptly  
between judgment and forgiveness.  
Since God's Word and his activity  
in history are coordinated to keep  
Israel moving toward the fulfill-  
ment of her destiny, we will best  
understand his alternation between  
judgment and forgiveness if we  
first characterize the disposition of  
Israel's response to the historical  
situations that move in upon her.

Israel, called by God to trust in  
him, finds herself surrounded by  
uncertainty and she is afraid.  
Judah under Ahaz sighting war  
clouds rolling in from Syria and  
Ephraim, anxiously places her  
hope in Assyria in defiance of  
God. The people in their in-  
security turn to gods that seem  
more concrete, engage in practices  
that seem more practical than the  
apparently unrewarding obedience  
to which they have been called  
by the God that brought their fath-  
ers out of the land of Egypt.

Whatever her response, anything  
short of complete obedience to God  
is rebellion, for it is the assertion  
of herself against the sovereign  
will of her Creator. Behind Israel's  
rebellion lurks an insidious pride.

How could she defy God without raising herself to a position in her own esteem that dwarfs God? What appears at first glance to be an excusable panic-response of Israel to the vicissitudes of history, becomes, when viewed in terms of the covenant relationship, a proud defiance of her Creator. The element of rebelliousness taints every response Israel makes to the challenges of history, and it is founded upon a pride that exalts itself above God.

But while history is met by Israel in decisions which invariably tend toward rebellion against God, it nevertheless is itself inclined to collide with Israel's aspirations in such a way as to crush the pride that feeds the rebellion. It is significant that the period during which the prophets were active never saw a substantial heightening of Israel's power or prestige: it consisted only in blow after humiliating blow to the diminishing splendor of a nation that once boasted a David and a Solomon. While history was kind to the humble clan that smarted under Egyptian bondage, it was cruel to the proud nation that defied the hand that gave it life.

We have now dealt briefly with all the factors that played a part in calling forth the prophetic message with which we are concerned: the covenant which brought Israel into a living relationship with her Creator but which also placed upon her the responsibility for obedience; the rebelliously inclined response of Israel to the historical situations in which she finds herself; and the tendency of history to shattered Israel's pride. We are ready to deal with the message itself in terms of these factors.

It has already been pointed out that the covenant stands at the be-

ginning of God's relationship to Israel and that it must consequently be recognized that God's Word is not addressed to strangers but to people who are God's and who know themselves to be God's children. Behind both the words of judgment and forgiveness is a redeeming love that first called them out of darkness and now leads them to the salvation for which they long. What is important is that Israel never forget the covenant. She must never be able to avoid the relationship that gives meaning to her existence. No matter how low she may sink, she must never be able to forget that she is God's people, the bearer of God's justification to the rest of the world. When her pride begins to cast dark shadows over the covenant, God speaks to her in words of judgment and warnings of doom.

Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where  
David dwelt!

Add ye year to year;

Let them kill sacrifices.

Yet I will distress Ariel,

And there shall be heaviness and sorrow;

And it shall be unto me as Ariel.

And I will camp against thee round  
about,

And will lay siege against thee with a  
mount,

And I will raise forts against thee.

And thou shalt be brought down, and  
shalt speak out of the ground,

And thy speech shall be low out of the  
dust.

And thy voice shall be, as of one that  
hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground,

And thy speech shall whisper out of the  
dust (Isaiah 29:1-4)

Judgment always comes to Israel when the kindness of history is taken for granted. Whenever the covenant is forgotten in a doze of complacency, warnings of doom come to Israel like a flash of cold water. Usually it becomes neces-

sary for history to support those judgments before the pride of the rebellious people begins to crumble. The harsh blows of the heathen military and the cruel callousness of their blood brothers have to utterly humiliate God's people before they become willing once again to hear and obey the Word of their covenant God. Only when the judging Word and history have brought Israel to penitent knees can the forgiveness of redeeming love have any meaning for her. It is to a humble Israel that God speaks words of hope.

Lift up your eyes to the heavens,  
And look upon the earth beneath:  
For the heavens shall vanish away like smoke,  
And the earth shall wax old like a garment,  
And they that dwell therein shall die in like manner:  
But my salvation shall be forever,  
And my righteousness shall not be abolished.

I am the Lord thy God,  
That divided the sea, whose waves roared:  
The Lord of hosts is my name.

And I have put my words in thy mouth,  
And I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand,  
That I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth,  
And say unto Zion, Thou art my people.  
(Isaiah 51:6, 15, 16)

Hence we find in the Old Testament prophetic witness the same contradicting of human certainties that is to be found in the New Testament gospel. When Israel is high she is brought low; when she is low, she is raised. "You are saved, you're not; you are, you aren't." Security gives way to insecurity; in insecurity she finds her real security—trust in God. And beneath the struggle between rebellious Israel and the cruel blows of history is Israel's covenant with the God who holds this history in the palm of his omnipotent hand. Behind the alternating, conflicting declarations of judgment and forgiveness moves redeeming Love drawing Israel forward to the destiny which is to be hers by his grace.

RICHARD E. BIEBER.



# Unity?

Undeniably there is an undesirable state among Lutherans in America in this our day. It is that of disunity. What can be done about it? Something, perhaps, if we give serious and careful thought to our every act and the possible effect on the brethren of our communion who do not happen to be a part of the United Lutheran Church in America. Our very numerical strength becomes a threat to the fulfillment of the desire for unity. Most of us tend, seminarians included, to look upon the home fire as the brightest and warmest. Be that as it may, it takes more than a little fire to warm the entire world. Of course, the effects of a larger fire we cannot yet know.

Let us think for a moment about an example. How would you feel if an Orthodox Greek or a Southern Baptist turned to you one day and told you that henceforth you could worship only after his forms and customs? Doubtless, some could find happy or satisfactory place there, but certainly not all of us.

May we move a bit closer? There are many, many disagreements among seminarians, among Lutheran seminarians among Lutheran seminarians attending the same institution, and these disagreements are quite diverse in nature. However, this need not keep us from enjoying the thinking of each other. Seriously, and quite pointedly, it seems that we have a tendency—all of us—to condemn those ideas and intentions of others before we have examined them enough to understand their real meaning even in a meager sort of way. We seminarians are attending our respective

schools for a single purpose, that we might become effective ministers of the gospel, though our ministries may not all be of the same sort. Our labors are not for ourselves but for our Lord.

Martin Luther began his explanation of the third article of the creed "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength . . ." None of us works by his own strength. Couldn't we remember this then, when another says he feels that he cannot subscribe to our Lutheran theology or to our manner of liturgical worship? Couldn't we remember this then, when we know the efforts of our fellows are to God's good purpose? May our criticisms be in a truly Christian spirit!

This lack of Lutheran unity today in our country perhaps may have its grass roots on campuses such as ours, among our very selves. The narrowness—yes, narrowness—among us is carried to other places. Being narrow here in our own front yard extends to important regions beyond, and that is not good! Aren't we defeating our purpose? Our best unity can be obtained in the diversity within our communion, doubtfully ever in any strict conformity.

Admittedly there will be a number who read this who will not agree with everything said here, perhaps even nothing. Be that as it may, your brief indulgence together with an open mind is all that is requested.

Unity? Let's begin at the beginning!

LL●YD E. SHENEMAN.



# Whether of the Twain?

*Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?—Matthew 27:15-17.*

Once upon a time, in the village of Nazareth, a small hamlet in Galilee, there lived two boys who were of about the same age. These two, the one the son of the village carpenter, the other the son of the teacher in the synagogue, were buddies and members of the same boys' gang. And strangely enough, each of the boys was named Jesus.

The one Jesus, the carpenter's son, lived with his parents in a small house, which served not only as a home, but also as a carpenter shop and as a stable for their donkey and for the two goats they kept for milk. Joseph, his father, was a skilled laborer, a young man who had finished his apprenticeship and was now in the business for himself. In his simple shop he made useful articles of furniture, and also did a bit of repair work. Jesus, the oldest of the children, had been born in Bethlehem, a town far to the south, when Joseph and Mary had gone there in obedience to Caesar's decree for the taking of a census. But as a quite young boy he had been brought here to Nazareth, and now he lived a happy, carefree life with his parents and his younger brothers and sisters. And yet, as the oldest, he had certain responsibilities — he fetched water for his mother from the village well; he tended to the feeding of the animals; he helped his father clean up the shop at the close of a day's work. The rest of his time was spent in school and at play.

The other Jesus, the son of the teacher, had a different sort of home life. His father was one of the "pillars of the synagogue," a man of position, a member of the religious aristocracy who was treated with deference and respect by the community. His Jesus was also one of several children, but he was the youngest, the "baby of the family"; and his parents, like all parents in all ages, had a tendency to spoil him. The family lived in a fine house near the synagogue, and there were servants to do the chores. And as a result, all of Jesus' time was spent in school and in play. But in spite of the tendency to indulge his every wish, his parents took care to see that he was well brought up, and that he was thoroughly indoctrinated in the law and history of Israel.

Notwithstanding the difference in background and social status, the two boys were members of the same gang. And because of the confusion caused by their common name, the gang chose other names for them. Joseph was well known in the community, and so his son was known simply as Joseph's son, Barjoseph. But the father of the other Jesus, the teacher in the synagogue, while equally well known, was entitled to more respect, and was never called by his given name; and so his Jesus became the teacher's son, Barabbas.

Not only did these two boys play together constantly, but they were also in the same class at the

synagogue school which they attended every day. Barabbas had a flare for history, and loved the wild and bloody adventures of the ancient heroes. Barjoseph, on the other hand, seemed most attracted by the study and interpretations of the Scriptures; he was fascinated by the constant and continual prophecy of a Messiah who would one day come to free the people.

The gang to which these two belonged, being a typical gang, was always up to something, and occasionally that something was a mean trick or prank, one which caused inconvenience, or even injury, to the victim. Strange to say, it seemed that it was usually Barabbas, the one who should have known better, who first suggested these pranks, and who was the ringleader in carrying them out. And Barjoseph, while he went along with the gang, felt that there was something there which wasn't entirely right, something which should be changed.

Then, when the boys were twelve years old, there came special cause for rejoicing, and the gang was temporarily forgotten. The Pass-over was drawing near, and the boys had been told by their parents that this year, now that they were twelve, they might go to Jerusalem for the feast. And the big day came, and a small caravan from Nazareth set out for Jerusalem. Finally, after a journey of several days, they reached the big city, gaily decorated and thronged with people from all over Palestine. The next few days were exciting ones for both boys. Barabbas spent most of his time walking the streets, "window-shopping"; or going out to the trading center where the Arabs and the Jews traded their fine horses and camels; or watching the constant parades as the Roman

legions marched by. The other Jesus thrilled to these sights, too, but he spent more of his time in the Temple, this building which was the center of their whole religion, this House of God. He became so engrossed in talking with people he met, in observing the ceremonies and sacrifices, that he was oblivious of time. When he finally returned to the lodging where he and his parents were staying, he found that they had left, and not knowing the way, he returned to the Temple to await their coming. And there they found him, talking with the teachers, trying to reconcile the differences between what they said and what he had been taught in the synagogue at Nazareth. And even now, Jesus seemed to realize that this business of religion, of the Temple, of the law and the prophecy, would be his business some day.

And so they returned to Nazareth, and life resumed a more normal pace. The gang was soon back in working order again, and Barabbas thrilled the boys with his tales of the glories of Jerusalem, of the freedom and excitement of the life there, and what fun it must be not to have to go to school or study the Scriptures, but to do whatever you want to do, to be your own boss. Barjoseph told his stories, too, of the thrilling and awesome experiences of the Temple, and of how he had somehow seemed to feel the actual presence of Jehovah there. But the boys weren't interested in that "sissy stuff"—they were more attracted by the "blood and thunder" of Barabbas' tales.

And so it went on. The gang began to try to re-enact some of the deeds of which Barabbas told. And then one time they went too far. Barabbas had told them of the

highwaymen he had seen, men who grew rich on other men's money and goods. One night, under his leadership, they tried it out on an old man of the community. Instead of playing his part right, he resisted, and in the ensuing scuffle, he was seriously injured. When he recovered consciousness, he identified young Barabbas as one of his assailants. And so Barabbas had to leave town—his father disowned him, and the town would have him no longer. He became a vagrant, wandering from town to town and from gang to gang, each a little rougher than the one before. And Barabbas built up quite a reputation throughout Galilee as a good man to stay away from.

Me a n w h i l e , Barjoseph had drifted away from the gang, and was spending more time in the carpenter shop, learning his father's trade, and more time in the synagogue, learning more about this religion which fascinated him so. And since there were no longer two Jesuses in Nazareth, Barjoseph began once again to be called Jesus by the community. "And Jesus increased in wisdom, and stature, and in favor with God and Man."

\* \* \*

Many years later, we find the two together once again. Jesus Barjoseph, now a man of about thirty, has become a rabbi, and is now going about the country as an itinerant preacher and prophet, preaching, teaching, and strangely enough, healing—not with medicines and drugs, but with a touch of the hand and a brief prayer. As a wonder-working prophet, he has attracted great throngs of people, who follow him about; a few eager to hear his words, but most of them anxious lest they miss the next miracle.

Jesus Barabbas also has a great throng following him, for he, impassioned by the tales he had learned in his youth of Hebrew history, had become a Zealot, and was now working for the overthrow of Rome and the establishment of Palestine as an independent nation once again. He has become a revolutionary, an insurrectionist, and is inciting the throng following him to revolt against the Roman rule.

One day, as Barabbas and his noisy mob were moving along one of the otherwise quiet roads of Galilee, they came upon another crowd, the group which followed Barjoseph. Barabbas harshly silenced his mob, that he might hear what the prophet was saying. This is what he heard: "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore, take no thought, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or, 'What shall we drink?' or, 'Wherewithal shall we be clothed?' For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." And then, almost simultaneously, the two leaders recognized each other. And the prophet paused a moment, and then went on, looking straight at Barabbas, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you!"

Barabbas remained motionless for a few seconds, lost in thought, then, slowly, he shook his head, wonderingly, and went off down the road, motioning his crowd to follow him. And the prophet continued his address: "Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." And, more

slowly, thoughtfully, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

\* \* \*

Once again we find ourselves in Jerusalem at the time of the Passover, a couple of years later. Once again there is a throng, this time an angry, noisy, tumultuous mob. And once again the two men from Nazareth meet.

But let us look back for a minute. Since their last meeting, Barabbas has continued as leader of his mob of revolutionaries, and under his leadership the mob has made an attack upon a band of Roman soldiers along the highway. In the brief struggle which followed before the mob was put down, several men on both sides were severely injured, and one of the Romans had been killed. Barabbas, as the recognized leader of the revolt, was taken into Jerusalem, and unceremoniously thrown into prison.

Meanwhile Barjoseph had continued his ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing throughout Palestine, in Galilee, Samaria, and Judea, and had become famous among the people as a wonder-worker, and feared by the Sanhedrin as a man of power,—because Jesus had proclaimed himself to be the long-awaited Messiah, the promised Redeemer of Israel, the Son of God. One bright morning the people had acclaimed him a king, and he had ridden in lowly majesty and in triumph into the city. And now, less than a week later, he too had been arrested as a revolutionary and an insurrectionist.

Now, Jesus of Nazareth, the one which was called Christ, was on trial before the Procurator, Pontius Pilate. Pilate examined him, found him to be innocent of any crime,

and sought to release him; but the people would not have it. Why? Because the leaders of the Jews, the chief priests and scribes, were mingling with the people, persuading them that this man, this friend of men, was dangerous, a heretic, a blasphemer, and a traitor. And so the people demanded that Barjoseph be crucified.

But then Pilate had a "brainstorm." He remembered a custom which had been inaugurated some time before, a custom whereby each year at the Passover the Roman government released to the people one prisoner, whomever they wished, a custom which helped keep the government in the good graces of the people. And Pilate, anxious to release Jesus the Christ, thought of the worst criminal now in the palace prison—without a doubt this was Jesus Barabbas, the insurrectionist, the murderer, the robber. And so he had Barabbas brought to him.

Now we see on the platform before the people three men. In the center is the Procurator, Pontius Pilate, a bit worried at the turn things were taking, and yet certain that he had now found a way out. To his right, Jesus Barjoseph, the man who called himself the Messiah, a man of majestic dignity, yet gentle and kind in appearance, very weak and pale after his long night of agony and trial. And to his left, Jesus Barabbas, the insurrectionist, a virile, manly specimen, with proud, flashing eyes, the hero of the mob.

Pilate, very sure of himself now, turns to the people and says: "Ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the Passover. Whom will ye that I release unto you? Which Jesus will ye have—

Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?"

The two men on trial looked at each other, recognizing that this meeting would be their last, each thinking back, over their boyhood together, their previous meetings. Barabbas held his head high and grinned, as if to say, "See, I told you so!" But the other smiled sadly, and gently shook his head.

Meanwhile, the chief priests were again at work among the people, and the result of their work soon became evident. Pilate repeated his question, "Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you, Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus the

Christ?" And to his surprise, to his amazement, to his dismay, the crowd shouted as one, "Barabbas!"

Pilate argued and pleaded, but to no avail. The crowd had spoken, and that was that. There seemed to be no way out. "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" And the crowd, more angrily than before, cried out, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

And so it was to be. Jesus Barabbas was released, and went his way rejoicing. And Jesus the Christ was led out to be crucified, and to become the Saviour of the World.

RALPH W. BAGGER.

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