

His Blood On Us

Valley Center Seventh-day Adventist Church
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The chill of the words was matched by the early morning temperature of that spring day 2000 years ago. Jesus had been arrested late Thursday night, had been dragged from the court of Annas and his son-in-law Caiphus to Pilate. Luke adds that Pilate, upon hearing that He had come from Galilee, sent Him to Herod, who happened to be in Jerusalem at that time. Herod sent Him back to Pilate sometime early Friday morning and now Pilate was faced with something he dreaded doing; making a decision.

He knew deep in his heart that Jesus was innocent of any capital crime, but the crowd was so intent on His conviction that he feared the repercussions a verdict against their wishes might bring. Also, Pilate's wife had sent him a message informing her husband that she had suffered many things in a dream because of Him, and that he ought to release Jesus.

An idea came to Pilate's mind. As a gesture of good will, at the time of the Passover, a criminal might be pardoned. Pilate would give the people an opportunity to choose whom they might have released. With strategic design, the governor set before the mob one whose criminal past was long and sordid, the infamous Barabbas. According to some manuscripts, his full name was Jesus Barabbas. His reputation was well known among the people. John tells us he was a robber; Luke adds that he was a murderer. A cross was being prepared to administer the just results of his wickedness.

Pilate gambled. He threw the psychological dice, thinking that it would be inconceivable that the people would choose to unleash such a notorious criminal back into their midst, in comparison with the mild miracle Worker Jesus. It's a dangerous

thing to gamble with the devil. No matter how the odds might be stacked in your favor, it's far better not to play his game. Pilate might have endured some pain in the disappointment expressed by the crowd if he had released Jesus, but he would have had a clear conscience. But he was sure they would choose to have Jesus unshackled, rather than the murderer Barabbas.

It must have shocked Pilate to hear the fever pitched screams insisting Barabbas be turned loose and Jesus be crucified. In an effort to demonstrate his reluctance to go through with their demand, he called for a basin of water and washed his hands, declaring his innocence. The Jews had a ready answer for his posture and cried out with words whose chill matched the early morning air, "His blood be on us and on our children." Matthew 27:25.

What an awful statement was this! Did they know what they were saying? Did they realize that they were placing upon themselves the guilt for killing the Son of God? Was it possible that sinful mortals could utter such language? Jesus later prayed, "Father forgive them, for *they know not* what they do." Paul argues "*Had they known*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." I Corinthians 2:8. And yet, they were responsible, because they could have known the truth about Jesus. The evidence was clearly before them, in fulfilled prophecy and in living portrayal.

The cry, "His blood be on us" was a *statement of guilt*. Like a murderer caught in the police spotlight with blood on his hands, (hence the phrase "caught red-handed") those Jewish leaders placed themselves on the side of blame. "His blood be on us" was a statement of rejection of Christ. Bearing the guilt for His blood and bearing the responsibility for rejecting Him are things not to be desired. These are things that bear the fruitage of eternal death and damnation.

It is so convenient to look back through the binoculars of history and judge the ones who cried for His conviction, and yet a

closer look will reveal that you and I also played a part in that trial. The honest in heart will confess that there have been times when we have chosen "Barabbas" instead of Jesus. There have been times when we've rejected Him in thought, word or action. There have been times when we've "crucified Him afresh" by our choices.

Scottish preacher Alexander Whyte woke up suddenly in the middle of the night. His wife noticed that he was shaking and covered in sweat, and asked what the matter was. "Oh," he said, "I just had the most awful dream. I was in Pilate's judgment hall. I saw Jesus. I saw the governor. I saw the soldiers. They were mistreating Him, mocking Him, beating Him. There was one brute of a fellow that keep on mercilessly flogging Him. I cried out for him to stop, that it was enough, but he wouldn't listen. He just kept on whipping Him. I rushed over to make him quit and when I put my hand on his shoulder, he turned around. It was me!" Yes, each of us had a part in that drama.

But through the miracle of grace, what was a declaration of guilt and rejection can also become a *confession of faith and acceptance*. If you take those very words, "His blood be on us," from the lips of the angry mob they may become the humble plea of repentant sinners. Instead of the blood of guilt, through God's grace it becomes the blood of absolution and acceptance.

Before Mt. Sinai all Israel gathered. They had been brought forth by His mighty hand of deliverance from Egyptian bondage and now they were about to enter into a special relationship with God. They were to be joined in a covenant, in which He would accept them as His people; they would accept Him as their God. To commemorate this special union, Moses built an altar and offered a sacrifice. Part of the blood of the sacrifice he put in basins. "Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, 'All that t he LORD has said we will do, and be obedient.' And Moses took the blood, *sprinkled it on the people*, and said, 'Behold the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words.'"

Exodus 24:7-8. We see in this act the token of His forgiveness and acceptance.

Today we can be in covenant relationship with Him, and have the sprinkling of the blood of His sacrifice on us. Today "His blood be on us" can be your acceptance of His death in your behalf, giving you redemption from guilt. "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." Hebrews 10:22.

"His blood on us" is also the *commission for service and holy living*. Separating Aaron and his descendants for the priesthood, Moses killed a ram, and placed some of its blood on the tip of Aarons right ear, the thumb of his right hand and the big toe of his right foot, signifying that in what he would listen to, what he would do, and where he would walk; that is to say, in all aspects of his living, the blood of sacrifice would guide and guard. You and I may not be descendants of Aaron, but in language of the New Testament, we are all priests. We are called to holy living and profitable service. "His blood on us" is the commission for our calling. In all aspects of our lives, in whatever we do or wherever we go, the blood of the sacrifice should dictate our choices.

We then have a decision to make. Will it be Jesus called Barabbas or Jesus called the Christ? Will it be "His blood be on us" in the sense of rejection and guilt, or "His blood on us" in the sense of acceptance, forgiveness, holy living and service?