

BARABBAS

*By Verna Kwiatkowski. Based on stories in
Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, and John 18 –
plus my imagination. A Sky View poem.*

The purpose of Barabbas, as far as I can see,
Is to help each of us say, "Jesus died for me."

Barabbas was a notorious prisoner when Jesus was on trial.
Guilty of insurrection and murder, he pondered his fate a while –
At least in my mind that's what he did! How did he end up in jail?
No one to blame but himself! His choices set him up to fail.
Execution was now his doom. Capital crimes are hard to reprieve.
Meanwhile at the trial of Jesus came a twist that's hard to believe!

Pilate, the governor, came to a conclusion that had him satisfied:
Jesus was innocent! Then how did he end up flogged and crucified?
Pilate knew the chief priests envied Jesus and wished him dead,
So he used an annual Passover custom to get him freed instead.
"If I offer them a choice of Jesus or Barabbas," Pilate was thinking,
"Surely they'll choose Jesus!" But soon Pilate's spirits were sinking.

He had badly underestimated the power of the chief priests that day.
They had mingled with the crowd, persuading the people to say:
"Barabbas! We want Barabbas!" when they were given a choice.
"And Jesus?" Pilate asked. "Crucify him!" they said with unison voice.
"For what crime?" he demanded. "Crucify him!" was their only reply.
So Pilate washed his hands of the matter, turning Jesus over to die.

I enjoy imagining a stunned Barabbas when told that he was free!
Surely he wondered about the man more deserving of death than he!
I picture him next at the cross, reading the trilingual sign for a clue.
"Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews," it said. That's not a crime, true,
And the implications are staggering! That is truly a powerful name!
Introduced to my Savior by the cross, I will never again be the same!

Make no mistake – the death of Jesus was part of God's eternal plan,
For God so loved the world he died for each woman, child, and man:
Even Barabbas, even you, even me!

Thank you, Lord!