

## Why “solomonbarabbas”

Solomon was a king of Israel, succeeding his father David. We are told that through the sincerity of his faith, Solomon was granted a request from the Lord. He asked not for riches or long life but wisdom to govern God’s people correctly.[1] The following years of his reign demonstrated that he showed this wisdom in the setting up of his administration and the governing of his household and followers. He followed the Lord well initially, but later on in his life, he became bitter and frustrated with life and its seeming meaninglessness.[2]

Solomon started out his life as the product of a loving relationship between his father and mother. We are told that it was after the son of David and Bathsheba died that David comforted his wife and brought forth Solomon, who was loved by the Lord.[3] I am lead to believe that Solomon’s life was one of luxury and indulgence, or, at least freedom from war. The Lord said to David that his son shall be a man of rest and that he shall be the one who would build God a house[4], in spite of David’s desire to honor the Lord for his mercy, love and forgiveness.

Unfortunately, as time passed, Solomon felt prey to his desires[5] developing an attitude of jaundice and bitterness in spite of “having it all” to start out with. This is evidenced throughout the entire book of Ecclesiastes. Were he alive today, Solomon very likely would have been thought of as “a child of the sixties”.

Barabbas was a notorious criminal who was released in place of Jesus, who was crucified in his stead[6]. Following this, solomonbarabbas is a victim of his own lusts, passions and sins....set free from the prison of death by the gospel of Jesus Christ. I believe this puts me not in any unique category, but rather in one where I, like all of mankind, have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.[7]I realize that by law I should be given the sentence of death; but I have been set free from this sentence by the saving blood of Jesus Christ.[8]

Solomon was a sinner. He, like all sinners before him, made a concerted effort to cover this up by seeking out those things which did not satisfy in the truest sense of the word. Failing to find true satisfaction in a secular search, he did what I did in a similar situation; he yielded to the feeling of fatalistic resignation.

Fortunately, he seemed to begin to grasp the meaning to the perplexing and enigmatic “blows” life deals us in the last 2 chapters in the book of Ecclesiastes. This culminates in his realization that what matters is to “fear God and keep His commandments”. [9] As a “college kid” I began slowly coming to this realization after my dad was killed in a traffic accident while I was in grad school. I still fight the battles of finding secular solutions to what, like Solomon’s quest, was a spiritual problem. Like him, I am forced to acquiesce to God’s Magnanimous and Forgiving, Loving, Fatherly guidance through life.

Barabbas, too, was a sinner. He was under sentence for his crimes[10]. When Pilate inquired of the crowd who should be released for the feast between Jesus and Barabbas, the crowd asked that Barabbas be released in place of Jesus[11].

I, too, am under sentence for my crime of sin[12]. I have been set free from the law of sin and death[13]. While Barabbas did not consciously seek out being set free, he did I am sure, capitalize on his freedom once it was granted. He was in the right place at the right time. I purposefully went forward at an early age (therein the analogy breaks down) and was baptized. The result to both me and Barabbas was the same, regardless of motive on either part....set free by Jesus Christ.

Solomonbarabbas is an inquisitive, soul searching man, a victim of sorts, of his good fortune and his curious mind. He was in the right place at the right time to hear the gospel preached, and had the good fortune to have a mother who wished to see her husband and son set free from sin and spiritual death. Solomonbarabbas is thus related to both his chosen names: one by internal selfish nature, the other by good fortune.

After my dad was killed in a traffic accident in 1971, I had cause to regret the disagreements he and I had. I don’t ever remember a father/son hug, but I do know he was proud of me being in grad school and that was radiated in a “non tactile” manner. I knew he loved me and he wished that I could find my niche in the world. I suppose what

bothered me most was that that was the only place we could agree on....That being hoping I could find my niche. Paradoxically enough, my mother never lived to see me find my niche either. That has always bothered me; that neither parent ever lived to see me find a place where my unique jigsaw puzzle piece would fit like a glove.

Perhaps a part of my existential quest is that I continue the expedition throughout life searching for something which I suspect is an item which is mutating as fast as I exuberantly pursue it. Perhaps my niche is a theosophical cancer which changes as fast as my spiritual defenses can make “antibodies” to protect my psyche from being consumed by an ideological non-existent entity such as “finding my niche”. Perhaps “my niche” is the continuation of my quest to find it. More than the actual attainment of the goal, the struggle itself is wherein lay “my niche”. If that is true, then I in fact found “my niche” at age 5 when I realized I was missing something I could not describe. If that is true, then I could have saved myself 50 years of frustration if I could have realized that when my dad said one of his favorite quotes, “A man’s reach must exceed his grasp, else what is Heaven for”, he was telling me that my niche is the pursuit, not the attainment. Once I accept the fact that I am a perennial square peg in a round hole and will never belong anywhere, I have, in a kind of reverse sense, arrived at the starting point on the circular merry-go-round of life. By not belonging, I do in fact, belong. That is because all this forces me into a spot where I am resigned to admit that “all is vanity”[14] and that all the secular “niches of life” are vanity and “striving after the wind”[15].

Following this argument, if you can, you should come to the same conclusion that ½ of my E-mail namesake did....Fear God and keep his commandments[16] (I love the book of Ecclesiastes). We ride the arrow of time through uncharted territory with some control over our destination, and total responsibility for our “fate”. We are forced to choose how we deal with people and life in general. Christianity gives us a co-pilot through life. We are free to reject this co-pilot if we choose, but, we none the less, must decide on a minute-by-minute basis if we will live as our co-pilot suggests....By Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-control....or the antithesis thereof.

This brings us to the book of Galatians where we discover the deeds of the flesh vs. the fruit of the spirit[17]. We choose to live for self much of the time. Barabbas (the other ½ of my E-mail namesake) did this and was sentenced for his choice. Both Solomon and Barabbas made existential choices throughout the course of their lives. In this, they shared a commonality to all mankind. My life is no exception, and thus, I must admit to being an existentialist, but, with a twist. I am also a Christian. I have decided to follow Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. He is thus, the unaccredited 3rd ½ of my E-mail namesake. I guess this would make me an oxymoron....a Christian Existentialist. Given that, I choose to live for Christ.

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[1] 1 Kings 3: 2-15

[2] Ecclesiastes 1 & 2

[3] 2 Sam 12: 1-24

[4] 1 Chronicles 17: 11-14; 22: 9-10; 2 Sam 7:12-16;

[5] 1 Kings 11: 1-9

[6] Matt 27: 16-21; Mk 15: 7-15; Lk 23: 17-21; Jn 18: 40

[7] Rom 3: 23

[8] Rom 6: 23

[9] Ecclesiastes 12: 13

[10] Matt 27: 16

[11] Matt 27 15-18

[12] Rom 3:23, 6:23

[13] Rom 8:1-2

[14] Ecclesiastes 1:2

[15] Ecclesiastes 5:16

[16] Ecclesiastes 12:13

[17] Gal 5:19-23