PASSOVER: THE REDEMPTION STORY



WHO WAS BARABBAS?

A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising.

Mark 15:7

40 But they shouted back, "No! Not this man.

We want Barabbas!" (Barabbas was a revolutionary.)

John 18:40

"Barabbas was a Jewish freedom fighter" (The Message)

WHO WAS CRUCIFIED WITH JESUS?

They crucified two rebels with him (NIV)

With him they crucified two revolutionaries (NAB, NLT)

(Mark 15:27)



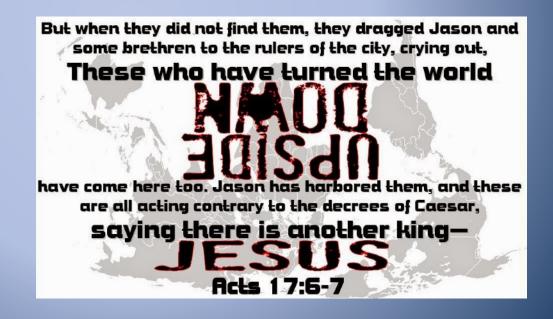
CHRIST OR CAESAR?

"Whose image and inscription is this?" (Matt. 22:20)

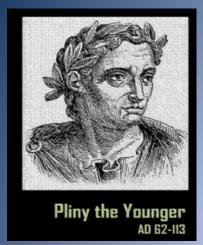


"Tiberius Caesar Son of the Divine Augustus" "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar."

(John 19:12)



KEEPING THE PEACE



from letter to Emperor Trajan, 112 AD

I interrogated these as to whether they were Christians; those who confessed I interrogated a second and a third time, threatening them with punishment; those who persisted I ordered executed. For I had no doubt that, whatever the nature of their creed, stubbornness and inflexible obstinacy surely deserve to be punished.

An anonymous document was published containing the names of many persons. Those who denied that they were or had been Christians, when they invoked the gods in words dictated by me, offered prayer with incense and wine to your image, which I had ordered to be brought for this purpose together with statues of the gods, and moreover cursed Christ--none of which those who are really Christians, it is said, can be forced to do--these I thought should be discharged.

Should be discharged.

Others, whose names were given to me by an informer, declared that the sum total of their guilt or error amounted to no more than this: they had met regularly before dawn on a fixed day to chant verses alternately among themselves in honor of Christ as if to a god, and also to bind themselves by oath, not for any criminal purpose, but to abstain from theft, robbery, and adultery, to commit no breach of trust and not to deny a deposit when called upon to restore it.

After this ceremony it had been their custom to disperse and reassemble later to take food of an ordinary, harmless kind; but they had in fact given up this practice since my edict, issued on your instructions, which banned all political societies. This made me decide it was all the more necessary to extract the truth by torture from two slave-women whom they call deaconesses. I found nothing but a degenerate sort of cult carried to extravagant lengths.