

“Attested” Choices

In Acts 2, when Peter and the rest of the apostles sought to convince the audience on Pentecost that Jesus was “*both Lord and Christ- this Jesus whom you crucified*” (v.36), they began by saying that He was “**attested**,” v.22.

“Attested” is an interesting word. It is translated from a compound Greek word, *apodieknumi*, which is derived from *apo* (apart), and *deiknuo* (to show or give evidence). Thus, it basically means, “to point out.” It is being used here to indicate that Jesus had been **demonstrated** or **proven**. How? Notice the rest of v.22, “*a man attested to you by God with miracles, and wonders, and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know...*”

For the purposes of this article, I’m not as interested in *how* Jesus was shown to be divine as much as that He *was shown* to be divine. The *miracles* (power), *wonders* (awe-producing), and *signs* (evidence of supernatural cause) **attested** (proved/demonstrated) that Jesus was both **Lord** (Master) and **Christ** (Savior).

The *attesting* power of Jesus’ miracles was even admitted by the Jewish leaders after He healed the man born blind (John 9), and raised Lazarus (John 11), “*What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs,*” John 11:47. They could not deny the power of Jesus; therefore they sought to get rid of Him. “*So from that day on they planned together to kill Him,*” v.53. Eventually, they succeeded in getting the Romans to crucify Him despite their own admission of His **divine** power. However, let’s take this a bit further.

In the process of the Jewish leadership procuring the death of Jesus at the hands of the Roman government, Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, sought to dissuade their desires by instead offering them a “*notorious prisoner, Barabbas*” (Matthew 27:16). It was customary for the ruling governor to release any prisoner his subjects desired at the time of the Feast (cf. Matthew 27:15). Think about this. Barabbas is said to be “*notorious*”- which means that he was *notably infamous*. He was a well-known insurrectionist and murderer, Mark 15:7, and as such deserved to die. Apparently, Pilate thought that given the choice between such a **notable** murderer and menace to society, and one **known** to have performed miraculous acts of healing, they would surely choose Jesus. But he was wrong. They instead shouted, “*Away with this man, and release for us Barabbas!*” (Luke 23:18).

Here’s the point: **Both Barabbas and Jesus were attested!** Both had been *demonstrated* and *proven*- one to be a murderer, and One who “*went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him,*” Acts 10:38b. And yet, as Peter would later point out to the Jews in Acts 3:14-15, “*you disowned the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted you, but put to death the Prince of life...*” One took life, and one gave life- even by raising the dead to life, *physically* and *spiritually*. But alas, the evil was chosen over the good, despite the fact that both were well known, and their true natures were well *attested!*

This really shouldn’t surprise us, nor should we be too condemning of their choice. After all, do not we do the same thing when we *knowingly* choose evil over good in our lives? The differences between the two are well attested, “*Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil...*” 1John 3:7-8. In v.10, John adds that the distinctions between the two are “*obvious*.” And yet, we, like those who chose Barabbas over Jesus despite their *attested* natures, often love “*the darkness rather than the light*” (John 3:19) and choose *sin*. At least I do.

Many if not most of the spiritual choices we make in life are pretty clear-cut. They're decisions between "good" and "evil" or "*righteousness*" and "*sin*." Both the short-term and long-term consequences of these selections are well "attested," just like the one between Jesus and Barabbas was for the Jews of A.D. 33. So the next time you're faced with a spiritual choice, take a moment to remember Jesus and Barabbas. The differences between them were stark and well attested, and yet the wrong choice was made. Which will you choose: *righteousness and life*, or *sin and death*? It really is that simple. (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org; email to mrpcstrong@hotmail.com)