

THE THIEF

A CRIMINAL
GOES TO HEAVEN



The Bible tells us that Jesus was crucified between two thieves. One of them said to the other, *“Don’t you even fear God, since you are undergoing the same punishment?”* (Luke 23.40 CSB).

The purpose of this writing is not to make us think we are better than some people, or that only the wicked—those who constitute a threat to society—are the only ones who deserve eternal punishment. On one occasion, Jesus said to a certain man, *“Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God”* (Mark 10.18 NKJV). So, if there is only one good person, what are the rest of us? The Bible is clear, *“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3.23 NKJV).

Let us consider some things that the thief discovered just before he died.

His Condemnation

Very close to death, this man reflected on the judgment that lies ahead for those who die in their sins: *“it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment”* (Hebrews 9.27 NKJV).

His Condition

“We are punished justly, because we’re getting back what we deserve for the

things we did" (Luke 23.41 CSB). He recognized that he was a sinner; he was a thief. One day, he took a wrong path, and justice caught up with him. *"And be sure your sin will find you out"* (Numbers 32.23 KJV).

Christ

"But this man has done nothing wrong" (Luke 23.41 CSB). The criminal was not the only one who recognized Christ's innocence. Pilate's wife said, *"Have nothing to do with that just Man"* (Matthew 27.19 NKJV), and Pilate spoke to the crowd about *"the blood of this just Person"* (Matthew 27.24 NKJV). Scripture says that Christ *"committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"* (1 Peter 2.22 NKJV), *"knew no sin"* (2 Corinthians 5.21 NKJV), *"and in Him there is no sin"* (1 John 3.5 NKJV). He *"was in all points tempted... yet without sin"* (Hebrews 4.15 NKJV). Therefore, *"the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin"* (1 John 1.7 NKJV).

His Confidence

The thief recognized that the only one who could save him was dying at his side for his sins and those of the whole world. *"Then he said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your*

kingdom’” (Luke 23.42 NKJV). He understood that Christ was going to die, but He was also going to be resurrected and then come to reign. The dying thief wouldn’t be able to repay those he had robbed, he could never be baptized, nor do any type of good works, or begin any other process for his salvation. He only could trust in the person and work of Christ to be saved.

His Certainty

The guarantee of his salvation was the word spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ: *“Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise”* (Luke 23.43 NKJV). The greatest gain of his life was to be with Christ eternally. When the thief died, he opened his eyes in Paradise, Heaven, to be with Christ forever.

Dear reader, where will you be in eternity?

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