

**Luke 23:42** And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

a. He calls Jesus Lord which is the name of God demonstrating his faith in the deity of Christ. (Deut. 6:4, Isa. 42:8, Romans 10:9) *no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.*

b. He pleads for God's mercy and forgiveness and believes Jesus is able to grant this. Christ, being God has the ability to forgive sins and give eternal life. (John 10:27) *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:*

(John 10:28) *And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

c. He believes that both he and Jesus will be resurrected. (1 Cor. 15:1-4)

d. He believes the sign. Jesus is the King of the Jews and that Jesus has an eternal kingdom (Rev. 17:14)

**Luke 23:43** And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

a. Jesus gives him an immediate response and exercises His ability to forgive sins. (Mark 2:5-7) All of his sins would be forgiven, there would be no condemnation. (Rom 8:1) *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

b. This repentant thief would immediately go to Heaven. No purgatory, soul sleep, annihilation

c. He went to Heaven without any works such as baptism, communion, church membership, last rites.

d. He was one of God's elect (Eph. 1:4) His name was written in the Book of Life. (Rev. 3:5)

### Conclusions

a..."repentance and faith are gifts of God and are not in man's own power, and that if anyone flatters himself that he can repent at his own time, choose his own season, seek the Lord when he pleases, and like the penitent thief be saved at the very last- he may find at length he is greatly deceived: Holiness-Ryle .. *behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*

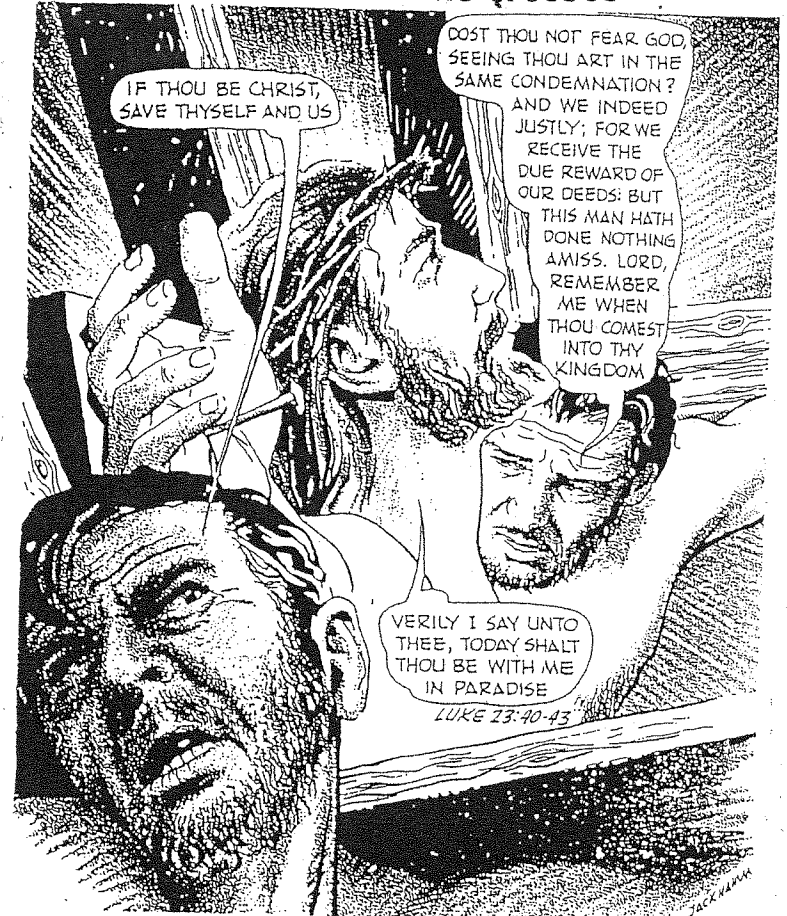
"The repentant thief's salvation in the last hours of his life does not give encouragement to any to put off their repentance to their death-bed, or to hope that then they will find mercy. It is certain that true repentance is never to late, it is as certain that late repentance is seldom true. Hearts become hardened over many years of refusing Christ's offer to salvation. Genuine deathbed conversions are rare. Few people as ever saved in the hour of death."

"This is a remarkable example of the grace of God in salvation. This thief, contrary to his nature, lays aside his fierce cruelty and proud contempt of God and immediately repents. He is subdued by the hand of God for all scripture shows repentance is God's work. This grace goes beyond everyone's expectation. In the very throes of death this robber becomes a devout worshiper of God and a distinguished teacher of faith to the whole world. He gives proof of his repentance by severely reprovng and restraining the wicked forwardness of his companion on the cross, he openly confesses his sins and crimes, he declares Jesus innocent and he shows astonishing faith by committing himself and his salvation to the protection of Christ whom he sees hanging on the cross and near death."

# THE CORNERSTONE

BIBLICAL ANSWERS TO CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

## The Three On The Crosses



Cornerstone Booklets

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## Two thieves

1. This account is found in Luke 23:32-43, Matt. 27:38-44, Mark 15:27,28

### Scenario

According to God's eternal plan of redemption, the time had come for God the Father to allow His Son Jesus to die for the sins of all mankind who would believe in Him and repent of their sins. ( Acts 2:23 ) *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:*

Judas, one of Jesus' 12 disciples had gone to the chief priests, scribes and Pharisees and had agreed to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver (prophecy-Zech.11:12) They sent a detachment of soldiers to arrest Jesus without a charge. (Matt. 26:50), His disciples had deserted Him (Matt. 26:56) Peter had denied Him (Matt. 26:69) The Jewish supreme court finds Jesus guilty of claiming to be the Messiah, the Son of God. The leading spiritual leaders falsely declared Him a liar, deceiver, guilty of blasphemy and worthy of death. (Matt. 26:65) Jesus was turned over to the Roman government (Mark 15:1) and they found Him innocent (Matt. 27:23,24) however the spiritual leaders coerced the Romans to crucify Jesus as the worst of criminals. They brutally scourged (whipped) Jesus almost beyond human recognition (prophecy Isa. 50:6) Jesus is now taken to be crucified between two thieves (prophecy-Isa. 53:12) Over Jesus' head they placed a sign THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.

The two thieves represent the whole world of mankind. One repents and believes on Christ and goes to Heaven. The other rejects Christ in unbelief and goes to eternal Hell,

**Mat 27:38** *Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.*

a. These were not ordinary thieves. They were very evil. Jesus was crucified between them indicating that He was the worst of them., This shows us that Jesus was willing to die for the sins of the worst of sinners.

**Mat 27:44** *The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.*

a. The chief priests, scribes, elders, and the thieves mocked Jesus saying, *He saved others: himself he cannot save. If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.* ( Matt. 27:42,43)

b. These were false religious leaders who would deceive the people and cause them to call for the death of their Messiah.

**Mark 15:28** *And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.*

a. Isa 53:9 *And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.* Isaiah wrote this 742 years previous to Christ's crucifixion. There are more than 456 prophecies pertaining to the Messiah (Christ). Jesus fulfilled every one that

had to do with His first coming. Without any doubt, Jesus was the prophesied Messiah.

**Luke 23:39** *And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.*

a. This unrepentant thief doubting Jesus was the Christ demands that Jesus physically save him from death.

b. He is only interested in his physical condition and not the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

c. If Jesus had done what this thief requested He would not have died for our sins and there would be no hope of eternal life. (1 Cor. 15:1-22) Jesus gives no response to the unrepentant thief's demands.

c. Upon death his soul and spirit would immediately go to Hell to await the resurrection and judgment. After judgment he would be cast alive in the eternal lake of fire to be tormented day and night forever. ( Revelation 20:14,15)

d. Christ's mission was to die a substitutionary death for the salvation of all who would believe. (Rom 5:6) *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

**Luke 23:40** *But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?*

a. This repentant thief admits his sins and fear of God (Heb. 10:31) He has concern for his eternal soul.

b. God the Father has drawn him to Christ ( John 6:44 ) *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.* He has instantly been born again., *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* (John 3:3) ( Ezek 36:26) *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.*

(Ezek 36:27) *And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*

c. The repentant thief implies that it was the fear of God which restrained him from following the others in the evil of mocking Christ. Many people have no fear of God before their eyes (Romans 3:18)

d. He tells the unrepentant thief that being that he is a dying man and he should have great concern for his soul and where he will spend eternity.

**Luke 23:41** *And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.*

a. The repentant thief admits he deserves his punishment. He realized that he would experience the wrath of God and get exactly what he deserves. God has recorded every sinful thought, word, deed and intent and He will judge us by the 10 Commandments. He realized his only hope is the mercy of God.

b. The Holy Spirit had revealed to him that Jesus was innocent. Jesus was sinless as He is God and Saviour. (Isaiah 53:9) Jesus' friends and enemies alike declared Him sinless.

c. In Jesus' last dark hours before His death, this thief was the only one to stand up and defend the Lord against the injustices thrust upon Him by humanity. His testimony was used of God to bring many to salvation beginning with the soldiers at the foot of the cross. (Matt. 27:54, Mark 15:39, Luke 23:47)

d. Our sins are placed on Jesus account and He paid the debt in full. ( 2 Cor 5:21) *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*