

LUKE Lesson 64

The Thieves on the Cross (Luke 23:39-45)

13 September 2019

Three truths concerning salvation:

1. The Holy Spirit of God must convict you of sin before you will make a move toward Christ (Rom 2:4, 2 Pet 3:9, Acts 28:25-28).
 2. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, must draw a man to Himself or he won't come on his own (Jn 6:44, 12:32, Mt 22:9-10, 1 Cor 12:3, Rom 3:11).
 3. God must enlighten or illuminate a person so He can reveal truth to that person (1 Cor 2:14, 1 Jn 5:20, 2 Cor 4:4-6, Lk 24:45).
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THE ILLUMINATION OF THE DYING THIEF

1. **He expresses His belief in a future life where retribution would be meted out by a righteous, sin-avenging God (vs 40).** What he believed:
 - a. There is a God.
 - b. God is to be feared.
 - c. He was condemned in the eyes of a holy God.
2. **He had light on his own sinfulness and realized that his condemnation was just (vs 41a).** He now understood that he deserved to die a cruel death and go to Hell. (Rom 3:10, Eccl 7:20, 1 Jn 1:8).
 - a. Don't believe the Devil's lie when he tells you you're not a sinner (Gen 3:4-5, Jn 8:44, 2 Cor 11:3-4).
3. **He bore witness and testimony to the sinlessness of Christ (vs 41b).**
 - a. Jesus Christ knew no sin (2 Cor 5:21).
 - b. He's the innocent blood (Mt 27:4)
 - c. He did no sin (1 Pet 2:22-23)
 - d. He's the just one who died for the unjust (1 Pet 3:18)
 - e. He made His grave with the wicked, but he had done no violence (Isa 53:9).
 - f. He is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb 7:26)
 - g. In Him is no sin (1 Jn 3:5).
4. **He confessed the lordship of Jesus Christ (vs 42).**
 - a. ("Lord" is removed in ASV, NAS, NIV, New World [Mormon], Good News, etc. translations).
 - b. You've got to confess the LORD Jesus to be saved (Rom 10:9).
 - c. The word "Lord" means that you recognize that person as absolute Master and Ruler.
 - d. When you look for the true Savior, God brings you to Jesus Christ and shows you who He is.
5. **He acknowledged Jesus as the Savior (vs 42).**
 - a. He said, "Lord, Remember me." If the Lord remembers you on the day of Judgment, He won't be able to say, "I never knew you: depart from me." (Mt. 7:23, Lk 13:27).
 - b. The Lord "knoweth them that are His" (2 Tim 2:19, Jn 10:14).
6. **He acknowledged Jesus as the King and acknowledged His kingdom (vs 42).**
 - a. He had faith to believe Jesus would be resurrected (Rom 10:9) as Abraham had faith that his son Isaac would be resurrected (Heb 11:19). God revealed it to him.

7. **God showed this man that Jesus would be coming again (vs 42).**

- a. He had no New Testament Scriptures (as we do) revealing the Second Coming, but God gave him faith to believe it.

One man trusted Jesus at his last dying moments. God let's us know that He'll save a person no matter how late in your life you look to Him for salvation. But don't presume that it is safe to wait till the last moments of your life. You may die suddenly and never have a chance to look to Jesus.

People who want to delay their salvation often refer to "*the dying thief*." They figure they'll wait till they're about ready to die and then trust Jesus Christ to save them. —Don't forget there were two thieves that died that day! Only one of them believed.

JESUS' RESPONSE TO THIS MAN'S FAITH

"Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

- 1. **"Verily"** this word adds strong emphasis to the truth.
- 2. **"I"** these words bear the authority of Jesus Christ Himself.
- 3. **"Say unto thee"** "Thee" is singular. Salvation is granted on an individual basis. There is no group or family or universal salvation.
- 4. **COMMA** Separates one part of a sentence from another. (The comma is moved in a Roman Catholic bible to reinforce the false idea of Purgatory).
- 5. **"Today"** You won't have to wait in "Purgatory;" this will happen today. The moment you trust Christ as your Savior, salvation is instant.
- 6. **"Thou shalt be with me"** Being with Jesus Christ is what's important. He's what makes Heaven heavenly.
- 7. **"In Paradise"** Paradise was in the heart of the earth at that time. The repentant thief was in Paradise with Jesus when He was three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Mt 12:40). Resurrection morning Paradise was moved to Heaven.

This man was saved:

Without baptism

Without running the stations of the cross

Without paying tithes

Without reform (changing his ways)

Without restitution (making up for the bad things he did to others).

He was saved by acknowledging and confessing his sin and calling on the Lord Jesus Christ from a believing heart.

To God be the glory; Great things He hath done!
