

### What The Record Shows About The Thief

#### (consider carefully what the thief said):

{v.40} “But the other [the thief under consideration] answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, ....”

- ✓ This thief feared God.
- ✓ He rebuked the other thief (cp. Ephesians 5:11).

{v.41} “And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man [Jesus] hath done nothing amiss.”

- ✓ **This thief was honest** (cp. Luke 8:15) **enough to:**
  - (1.) Recognize he was receiving a just reward for his deeds.
  - (2.) Recognize the innocence of Jesus.
  - ✓ He therefore defended Jesus.
  - ✓ He confessed his sins (cp. **David** below).

{v.42} “And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.”

- ✓ He had faith (cp. **Abraham** below) and because of his faith:
  - ✓ He sought forgiveness (cp. **David** below).
- ✓ This thief seemed to have greater knowledge of the kingdom than even the apostles did at this time. And shamefully more knowledge than some religious people today.
- ✓ The thief knew that the kingdom of God was not an earthly kingdom, and that it would benefit him even though he would die that day.

{v.43} “And Jesus said unto him, **Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.**” Jesus pronounced salvation upon the penitent thief.

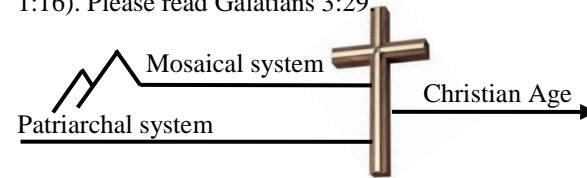
Jesus promised they would be together that very day in “**paradise**” which is the same as “**Abraham’s bosom**” (Luke 16:22). Of course this is speaking of the soul (the essential part of man) of both Jesus and the thief.

#### It Is Crucial To Know That The Thief Lived And Died Before Christ’s Law, The New Testament, Came Into Force

Honestly handling the Word of God, that is rightly dividing the word of truth (Luke 8:15; 2 Tim. 2:15), is essential in order to know the truth and be set free from our sins (John 8:31,32). The **Patriarchal system** (where God spoke to the fathers) was in force from Adam to the cross of Christ. The **Mosaical system** (given only to the Israelites, Deuteronomy 5:1-3) was

in force from Mount Sinai to the cross of Christ. After the death of Christ, **the system of faith** (Law of Christ) superseded both **the Patriarchal system** (which was for all before Mount Sinai and only the Gentiles after Mount Sinai) and **the Mosaical system** for the Jews after Mount Sinai.

**There is only one system now, in this the last Age, and it is for all people.** The Jews and Gentiles (whosoever will) are brought together under the system of Christ (please read **Ephesians 2:11-22**). Note verse 16, “And that he might reconcile both [Jews and Gentiles] unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:” The gospel is for all nations (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16; Romans 1:16). Please read Galatians 3:29.



**Jesus lived and died under the Law of Moses and admonished the people to keep this law while under it** (Luke 10:26; 18:20). The penitent thief lived before Christ’s Law came into force. Therefore, the penitent thief lived either under the Patriarchal or Mosaical system where baptism was not required. **It is perfectly clear that the thief did not live under the Law of Christ – the Christian Age where baptism is required.**

#### Christ’s Law Came Of Force After Christ Died On The Cross

As we all know, a person’s will or testament does not come into force until the person dies. And then there is a probation period. When one law supersedes other laws, as in this case, the superseded law or laws carry over to the point where the newer law becomes effective. Christ died on the cross but it was fifty days later before the gospel was preached on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2.

Please note **Hebrews 9:15-17**, “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first [that is, old] testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. {v.16} For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

{v.17} For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.”

**Jesus was still living on earth when He pronounced salvation upon the penitent thief.** Christ’s Law, which does include baptism, could not have been in force. The thief was not living under the Law of Christ! The thief was living under one of the two Old Testament systems already discussed. Therefore, the thief is not an example of New Testament conversion. We must go to the book of Acts for New Testament examples of conversions.

#### Many Have Been Saved Like The Thief

Many people who lived under either of the Old Testament systems (Patriarchal or Mosaical systems) were saved in the same manner as the thief (cp. Revelation 7:4, etc.), only not having the Savior in person to pronounce salvation. But we know, whether in Heaven or on earth, Jesus has the power to forgive sins (Matthew 9:2,6). All who lived under those Old Testament systems and were saved, were saved in the same manner: They were to keep the laws under the system of which they were accountable (cp. Romans 2:13). Wherein they failed to do so, they were to seek God’s forgiveness according to God’s system for them.

#### The Thief Compared To David

David lived under the **Law of Moses**. David sinned: He committed adultery, murder, and other sins (2 Samuel 11:1ff). Hear David after he had a change of heart: “I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin” (Psalm 32:5). Now let us consider the record: “And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die” (2 Samuel 12:13). Was David saved at this point? Yes.

- Now where is the difference between David and the thief on the cross?
- David sinned; David sought forgiveness; David received forgiveness.
- ✓ The thief sinned; the thief sought forgiveness; the thief received forgiveness.
- ✓ Both David and the thief were already in covenant relationship with God whether the thief was under

the Patriarchal or Mosaical system. Most likely the thief was under the Law of Moses.

- ✓ The only difference was: With the thief the Savior was physically present, whereas with David the Savior was in Heaven.

#### Sacrifices Were Made Under Both Old Testament Systems

Sacrifices were made by man as early as Genesis chapter 4, and no doubt even earlier by Adam, who was under **the Patriarchal system** (cp. Genesis 22). Under **the Mosaical system** God required many sacrifices as seen in the book of Leviticus. But the fact is, those sacrifices could not take away sins, they only looked to Jesus the Perfect Sacrifice (cp. Hebrews 9:15). Please read Hebrews 10:1-4 and note: “For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (v.4 cp. 9:15). Christ is our sacrifice (Ephesians 5:2; 1 Peter 1:18,19).

**Every system of God required(s) the obedience and faithfulness of those who will be saved:** Those who lived under **the Patriarchal system**, those who lived under **the Mosaical system** and we who live under **the New Testament system** in this Age (Hebrews 5:9; Matthew 7:21).

#### The Thief Compared To Abraham

Abraham lived under **the Patriarchal system** before **the Law of Moses**. He stands as the example of the kind of faith that is required of man to please God. Under **the New Testament** we are admonished to: “walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham” (Romans 4:12). The life of Abraham can be summed up by this statement: “Abraham believed God.” Abraham believed God in all things: whether it was a promise (Genesis 15:4-6; Romans 4:20) or a command (Hebrews 11:8,17). To obey the commands is proof of faith: “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? {v.22} Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? {v.23} And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God” (James 2:21-23).

- God made a promise to Abraham and Abraham believed God (above, Genesis 15:4-6; Romans 4:20).
- ✓ Jesus made a promise to the thief and the thief believed Jesus: “And Jesus said unto him, **Verily I**

say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43).

- ✓ This was a promise, not a command. Jesus gave the penitent thief nothing else to do.
- ✓ The thief had already met the requirements of the law under which he lived.
- ✓ The thief turned from his sins and sought forgiveness (cp. Ezekiel 18:21).

Like Abraham believed the promise about Isaac being born, so the thief believed the promise from Jesus. **In both cases there was no command given at that time to obey.** As Abraham lived on he further proved (as he had done before) his faithfulness to God by his **obedience** (Genesis 15:6; Hebrews 11:8-10, 17-19; James 2:21-23).

### Was The Thief Baptized?

The false teachers (1 John 4:1) lead people into a false hope of salvation by “faith only,” and vehemently declare that the thief on the cross was not baptized. This is just another area where the denominational preachers are as silent as the tomb when questioned for proof. No man can prove whether or not the thief was baptized, but **the fact is the thief did not live in the Christian Age where baptism is commanded.** Baptism was not a part of those two Old Testament systems! The thief was not required to be baptized. **But all people under the Law of Christ must be baptized for the remission of sins in order to be saved** (Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6, please study the whole chapter).

Honest people (cp. Luke 8:15) will recognize the fact that multitudes of people were baptized by John the Baptist, Jesus, and their disciples in anticipation of the coming New Covenant and kingdom (Matthew 3:5,6; John 4:1,3, Luke 3:7). They all were preaching about the kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 3:1,2; 4:17,23; 10:5,7; Luke 10:1,11, etc.).

As already noted, the thief knew much about the kingdom. It is very probable that the thief was baptized. **But the bottom line is he lived under a system where he did not have to be baptized!** So it is not relevant to New Testament salvation as to whether or not the thief was baptized.

### What We Do Not Know About The Thief

There is much we do not know about the thief. We must be careful to always use the Word of God correctly and not go beyond what is written (2 Timothy

2:15; 1 Corinthians 4:6; Revelation 22:18,19). It is, however, very certain that the thief was not saved by “faith only” which is a system of man and not of God (James 2:14,26)!

We do not know if this was a one-time act of thievery or whether he had a family, etc. Perhaps it was because of hard times, or personal unavoidable circumstances that caused this man to stoop to base means for sustenance. But none of this really matters. What matters is what the inspired record states. You should read again “**What The Record Shows About The Thief.**”

We do know that the thief had heard about the coming kingdom and understood much about it, and therefore must have been religious.

### It Is Terrible For Any In The Christian Age To Want To Be Saved Like The Thief!

It is terrible because one desiring to be saved like the thief is in fact rejecting the blood of Jesus Christ; His grace; His covenant; His kingdom; and His salvation: “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law [Law of Moses]; ye are fallen from grace” (Galatians 5:4; study the whole book). Remember, both Old Testament systems were without the blood of Christ. It is a serious matter to reject the blood of Christ (**Hebrews 10:29**, read chapters 7-10).

It is a great privilege to be under **the Law of Christ**, the New Testament sealed by Christ’s blood (Matthew 26:28); and to be a member of His blood bought church (Acts 20:28). Why would anyone want to reject the teachings of Christ and not be in His church? The thief never had this great privilege. But anyone living in this Age can be in the Lord’s one true church **IF** he / she will!

It is ironic, but the very thing that drives “faith only” people to the thief, is the very means of contacting the precious blood of Christ by which we can have salvation from our sins (Ephesians 1:7): **Baptism.** Please consider:

- ♥ Jesus shed His **blood** in His **death** (John 19:33,34).
  - **Baptism** is into Jesus and His **death** (Romans 6:3).
  - Man contacts the **blood** of Christ in **baptism**.
- ♥ Jesus’ **blood** was shed for the **remission of sins** (Matthew 26:28).

- **Baptism** is for the **remission of sins** (Acts 2:38).
- The purpose of being **baptized** into the death of Christ is to contact the blood of Christ (above).
- ♥ The saved have had their sins **washed** away by the **blood** of Christ (Revelation 1:5). **Compare:**
  - “... arise, and be **baptized**, and **wash** away thy sins,…” (Acts 22:16).
  - See Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21.

As **David** and the thief had a change of heart and sought forgiveness according to God’s will they lived under, so men and women today, when they have a change of heart will accept the Lord’s will and obey Him in all things. Please read of the monumental occasion when God’s glorious gospel of His dear Son and our dear Savior was first preached and recorded in **Acts chapter 2**. Consider how the people who had honest and good hearts (Luke 8:15) responded to that gospel message: “Then they that **gladly received his word were baptized**: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41).

**Note:** they sought the truth (Acts 2:37); Peter told them the truth – what all people in this Age must do in order to be saved (v.38); those who believed God **gladly obeyed** God in baptism “for the remission of sins” (v.41); the saved were added to the Lord’s glorious church (v.47 cp. Matthew 16:18,19; Romans 16:16). **How about you? What will you do?**

We value your soul greatly. If we may assist you in any way, please let us know. Did you know that every New Testament conversion show that they were baptized? **Please** send for articles and charts on baptism. All of this is **free** of charge.

For more articles on the church you read of in the Bible and the salvation of your soul, see *Words of Life* bulletin at [www.mission-usa.org](http://www.mission-usa.org)

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Compliments of  
“The churches of Christ”  
(Romans 16:16)

## Saved Like The Thief?

### (Are You Relying On This For Your Salvation???)

By Perry Sexton



Many believe it!

But

is that what God would have us to do to be saved???

(Please study all Scriptures and their context, King James Version used.)

In all sincerity many people think they can be saved like the thief on the cross, but is this true? If it is not true, then many people will be lost eternally because of this false doctrine. Now is the time to learn the truth before it is everlastingly too late (compare [cp.] Matthew 7:21-23).

Please read the inspired account of the thief on the cross in a reliable version of the Bible such as the KJV or NKJV: **Luke 23:32-43.**