

This means that the man knew that Jesus' purpose was **NOT DONE** at the Cross... he knew Jesus was going to enter into His Kingdom!

He Saw Jesus' Saving Grace

*“And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, **Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.**” (Luke 23:43)*

After asking Jesus to “remember” him, the dying thief was met with a promise of salvation. Jesus promised that this thief would be with Him in **Paradise** that very day!

This is a wonderful ending to the historical account of Jesus and the two criminals. - **“Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.”**

Overview Of What This Criminal Saw

- * Initially he saw Jesus as Someone to mock
 - * He saw Jesus as Someone worthy of defending
 - * He saw Jesus as God
 - * He saw himself as a guilty sinner
 - * He saw himself getting what he deserved
 - * He saw Jesus as not guilty and JUST
 - * He saw Jesus as wrongly punished
 - * He saw Jesus as LORD
 - * He saw Jesus as God to receive his repentance
 - * He saw Jesus as The King
 - * He saw that the Cross wasn't the end for Jesus
 - * He saw the Saving Grace of God from Jesus
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Conclusion:

It is amazing what God revealed to this man while he was **DYING!**

How do we see Jesus?

Let's pray that we see Him in all these ways like this repentant criminal... and more!

We still have life... let's tell anyone who will listen, the same message the thief proclaimed to those who were listening, that...

Jesus is King, Lord, and God!

*“Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and **he was numbered with the transgressors;** and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” (Isaiah 53:12)*

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



By: Robert Dallmann

With only minimal references to the thieves that were crucified with Jesus, we often skim over what is said about them, especially the repentant thief. There is actually very rich teaching to be gleaned from the interactions between the criminals and Jesus.

In this message, we will take a closer look at what the repentant thief on the cross saw...

He Saw Jesus As Worthy Of Mockery

*“He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ (44) **And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.**” (Matthew 27:43-44)*

This is a great example of why we need the entire Bible. This passage in Matthew teaches us that **both** thieves were initially mockers. **Both** were unrepentant blasphemers.

This makes it clear that the one thief was converted while he hung dying on the cross. If we only had Luke's Gospel, we might think that the one was already a believer and the other was not.

This is extremely important. When we consider what the repentant thief said in the context of

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Transformed Living Messages by Pastor Marr
ChristLife
PO Box 1033, Niagara Falls, NY 14304
Ph: (716) 622-7320
E-mail: Christlife@Christ-like.net
Visit us at www.Christ-like.net

THE THIEF ON THE CROSS...WHAT DID HE SEE?

being a new convert dying on a cross, it is even more profound.

He Saw Jesus As Worthy Of Being Defended

*“One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, “Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!” (40) But **the other answered, and rebuking him said, “Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?”** (Luke 23:39-40)*

The Bible does not tell us exactly when it happened, but at some point between Matthew 27:44 and Luke 23:40, the one criminal repented.

Compare the two thieves. The first one blasphemed and mocked Jesus and asked Jesus to save him. The second one **rebuked** the other one and **defended Jesus!**

He Saw Jesus As God

In the passage quoted above (see Luke 23:40 quoted above), this thief identifies **Jesus as God!** We see this in the part of the rebuke of the other thief which includes **“fearing God”** and the fact that they were both under the same condemnation as **God** (i.e. Jesus!)

Very few in the crowd of onlookers knew that **Jesus was God! But this thief did!**

He Saw Himself As Guilty... ...And Properly Punished

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

Amazing! This criminal **admitted** to being **guilty**... AND said that he was getting what was appropriate punishment for his crimes!

If one is involved with prison ministries you may occasionally hear someone admit to being guilty. That would be quite rare, but even more scarce would be an inmate telling you that they **are guilty and that their punishment is befitting the crime.**

This thief was suffering the **DEATH PENALTY** and he said it was the just reward for his deeds!

WOW!

He Saw Jesus As Just And Without Guilt... ...Improperly Punished

In the same way that this criminal decisively admitted his own guilt, he likewise definitively saw **Jesus’** innocence. (See verse 41 quoted above).

He knew he was **unjust** and getting what he deserved. He also knew that Jesus was **JUST** and was being punished although He had done nothing wrong.

Could it be that this thief understood the following...

*“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, **the JUST for the UNJUST,** that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:” (1 Peter 3:18)*

He Saw Jesus As The Lord To Repent To

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

This man saw that Jesus was **LORD**. He knew Jesus was the **Messiah** and **God** and **LORD!**

He was receiving the Gospel as it was happening!

Furthermore, this reflects the culmination of his repentance. Earlier, he had rebuked the other thief for mocking and blaspheming Jesus. He had confessed his own guilt and acknowledged that he was receiving justice. In this verse, he repentantly asked Jesus to **“remember him”** when Jesus was to come into His Kingdom.

He Saw Jesus As The King

As we can see from verse 42 (quoted above), this dying thief saw that Jesus was **the KING!**

How do we know this? He knew that Jesus had a **Kingdom... kings have kingdoms.**

Thus, this repentant thief knew Jesus as **The King!**

He Saw That The Cross Was Not Jesus’ End

Continuing with these thoughts from verse 42 (quoted above), we clearly understand that this criminal knew that the **Cross** was **NOT THE END** for Jesus.

This man asked Jesus to **“remember him when Jesus entered into His Kingdom”**.