

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: [Luke 23:39-43](#).
- B. This is the first in a series on the sayings of Jesus while on the cross. Jesus said seven very important things while being crucified and they deserve our study.
- C. This series will continue for the next several Sunday nights.
- D. The seven sayings are:
 - 1. "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Lk. 23:34).
 - 2. "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise" (Lk. 23:43).
 - 3. "Woman, behold, your son!" **27** Then He said[^] to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" (Jn. 19:26-27)
 - 4. "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?" (Mt. 27:46).
 - 5. "I am thirsty" (Jn. 19:28).
 - 6. "It is finished!" (Jn. 19:30).
 - 7. "Father, INTO THY HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT" (Lk. 23:46).
- E. Tonight's lesson comes from Lk. 23:39-43; "...Today, you shall be with Me in Paradise."

I. JESUS CHRIST FORGAVE SINS WHILE ON EARTH.

- A. Some may not understand Jesus' statement due to the fact that Jesus was forgiving the man's sins, before He shed His blood. Indeed, Heb. 9:22 says that w/o the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness, but JC while on earth, He could forgive sins.
- B. God forgave the sin of David against Bathsheba immediately. God did not wait until the cross to do it (2Sam. 12:13).
[Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die.](#)
- C. Jesus, while in Capernaum, showed the crowd that He truly could forgive sins by healing the paralytic (Mk. 2:10-11).
["But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"-- He said[^] to the paralytic-- **11** "I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home."](#)
- D. Jesus also went to the house of Zaccheus and said that ["...salvation has come to his house..."](#) (Lk. 19:9). Is this not the forgiving of Zaccheus' sins?
- E. Therefore, for Jesus to tell the thief hanging on the cross at Calvary, that he would be with Jesus in Paradise means that X could forgive the thief's sins before He shed His blood.

II. THE THIEF WAS NOT BAPTIZED, BUT WAS SAVED.

- A. Many have tried and failed to use the case of the thief to show that baptism is not essential to salvation. Such arguments show a lack of Bible knowledge as it refers to the two covenants (Mosaic and Christian) and when they were in force.
- B. The thief did not need to be baptized to be saved. He lived and died under the Mosaic covenant and we live and die under the new covenant in Christ (Col. 2:14).
[...having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.](#)
- C. The thief did not need to be baptized for the following reasons:
 - 1. He lived under the OC which did not command baptism.
 - 2. JC pronounced his sins forgiven by promising him a home in Paradise.
 - 3. How could the thief be buried with X in baptism, before X himself was buried in the tomb?
 - 4. The command for all to be baptized to be saved came 50 days after the death of X and after the death of the thief.

- D. The thief obviously believed in X. He made a great confession while on his own cross:
 - 1. It was great because it was given during a time when X's own disciples denied Him.
 - 2. It was great because he gave the confession when others around him were reviling X.
 - 3. It was great because he made it in the midst of agony, nakedness, suffering and humiliation. (A far cry from our confession which is usually made in the presence of faithful Xians, while dressed in our "Sunday best".)
- E. We have no reason to believe that the thief was not saved. Jesus always keeps His promises and to know the thief went to Paradise w/o baptism is not unscriptural.

III. THEY WENT TO A PLACE CALLED PARADISE.

- A. When Jesus died, His physical body did not undergo decay while buried (Ac. 2:27).
...BECAUSE THOU WILT NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO HADES, NOR ALLOW THY HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY.
- B. Jesus' soul went to Paradise just as He said it would. This is the intermediate state of the dead spoken of in different places in the NT.
- C. Jesus went to Paradise, and returned to His physical body on the resurrection day. Paradise is not heaven, where God resides (Jn. 20:17).
Jesus said^ to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren, and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'"
- D. Paul speaks of this Paradise in 2Cor. 12:4 and so does John in Revelation 6:9-11.
(2Cor 12:4) was caught up into Paradise, and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.
(Rev 6:9-11) And when He broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; 10 and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt Thou refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" 11 And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, should be completed also.
- E. But the most convincing text in showing us the place called Paradise, in the Hadean realm is found in Luke, chapter 16. See Lk. 16:19-31.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Even while hanging in pain on the cross, Jesus took time to forgive and save.
- B. We should like the thief--looking at the crucified X, believing in Him, and confessing Him as the Son of God. And like the thief then humbly ask for forgiveness and remembrance.
- C. We receive forgiveness by being baptized for the remission of sins (Ac. 2:38-39).
Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.