

Luke 23:43

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise. The crucified thief receives Christianity's most stunning gospel promise. Amēn legō soi (ἀμήν λέγω σοι)—Christ's solemn oath formula—introduces unconditional assurance. The placement of **To day** (sēmeron, σήμερον) demolishes purgatory and soul-sleep: immediate presence with Christ at death, before bodily resurrection.

Paradise (paradeisos, παράδεισος)—borrowed from Persian, meaning 'enclosed garden'—appears only three times in the NT (here, 2 Cor. 12:4, Rev. 2:7). Not Hades, not the final state, but the intermediate conscious blessed state of the righteous dead. This thief had no sacraments, no discipleship, no reformation—just faith recognizing Jesus as King while watching Him die. Pure grace.

Historical Context

Roman crucifixion was designed for maximum humiliation and deterrence. The titulus (charge placard) above Jesus read 'THE KING OF THE JEWS' in three languages (v. 38). Two lēstai (λησταί)—not petty thieves but insurrectionists or bandits—flanked Christ, fulfilling Isaiah 53:12 ('numbered with the transgressors'). One thief's confession (v. 40-42) shows remarkable theology: human sinfulness, Jesus's sinlessness, a coming kingdom, and Christ's authority even in death. This exchange became the Protestant Reformation's premier text for sola fide—the thief had no time for works, yet Jesus declared him saved.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does 'To day...with me in paradise' refute both purgatory and soul-sleep, and what does this reveal about the intermediate state?
2. What does the thief's salvation—without baptism, church membership, or opportunity for good works—teach about the sufficiency of faith alone?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	εἶπεν	αὐτῷ	ὁ	Ἰησοῦς,	Ἀμήν	λέγω	σοι
And	said	unto him	G3588	Jesus	Verily	I say	unto thee
G2532	G2036	G846		G2424	G281	G3004	G4671
σήμερον	μετ'	ἐμοῦ	ἔσῃ	ἐν	τῷ	παραδείσῳ	
To day	with	me	shalt thou be	in	G3588	paradise	
G4594	G3326	G1700	G2071	G1722		G3857	

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 2:7 (Parallel theme): He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Psalms 50:15 (Parallel theme): And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

Luke 19:10 (Parallel theme): For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Psalms 32:5 (Parallel theme): 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. Selah.

Hebrews 7:25 (Parallel theme): Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

John 14:3 (Parallel theme): And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Philippians 1:23 (Parallel theme): For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

John 17:24 (Parallel theme): Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

2 Corinthians 5:8 (Parallel theme): We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Micah 7:18 (Parallel theme): Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.