

BEREANS Bible Institute Module III.

“Ghost Stories” in the Bible – Part 5

When Would the Thief See Paradise? (Luke 23:42-43)

I. **GRAMMAR:** Two translations are equally correct grammatically:

A. The adverb, “today,” can modify the verb “will be” as follows:

*“Truly I say to you, **Today** you **will be** with me in paradise.”*

B. The adverb, “today,” can modify the verb “I say” as follows:

*“Truly **I say** to you **today**, You will be with me in paradise.”*

C. Most of the time it modifies the preceding verb.

II. **STYLE:** Which translation is the most likely, based on similar statements of Jesus?

A. There are three similar statements in the Gospels: “say to you/him/them” + “today.”

1. Mark 14:30 CLV *“Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, **that today**, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you **will deny** Me three times.”*

2. Luke 4:21-22 CLV *“Now He begins to be saying to them, **that today** this scripture **is fulfilled** in your ears.”*

3. Luke 19:9 CLV *“Now Jesus said to him **that today** salvation **came** to this home, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.”*

B. Conclusion: In each case where “today” modifies the verb that comes after it, the word “that” (“oti”) precedes “today” (showing the declaration begins after “that”). Since this is not the case in Luke 23:43, “today” most likely modifies the verb that comes before it:

III. **ESSENTIALITY:** If “TODAY” modifies “I say to you” it adds an essential component.

A. “Today” was the day the thief would die, his last chance to be saved.

B. “Today” was the day when entrance into Paradise was made possible by Jesus’ sacrificial death.

C. As Messiah/Judge, Jesus could make His verdict “today” instead of waiting until the Judgment.

IV. **REDUNDANCE:** If “TODAY” modifies “you will be with me” it is completely redundant.

A. There was no question that the thief would die “today”

B. Was the length of the trip to the Ghost Lounge in question? 1, 2, or 3 days?

C. It is completely redundant and unnecessary.

V. **PARADISE:** What is “Paradise” and how is it related to Christ’s Kingdom?

A. The thief’s understanding of “paradise” was limited to the Old Testament (progressive interpretation requires that we look to the OT to define the term).

1. The Garden of Eden was called “Paradise” (LXX).

a. Genesis 2:9 *“And God made to spring up also out of the earth every tree beautiful to the eye and good for food, and the tree of life in the midst of the **Paradise**, and the tree of learning the knowledge of good and evil.”*

2. Christ’s Kingdom is called “Paradise” (LXX).

a. Isaiah 51:3 *“And now I will comfort thee, O Sion: and I have comforted all her desert places; and I will make her desert places as **Paradise**, and her western places as **the Paradise of the Lord**; they shall find in her gladness and exultation, thanksgiving and the voice of praise.”*

B. “Paradise” is the hope of believers – the Kingdom.

1. Rev 2:7b *“... To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of **the Paradise of God**.”*

C. Nowhere in Scripture is “Paradise” associated with Hades or an intermediate state.

V. **LOGIC:** Did Jesus affirm or ignore the thief’s request? Did He promise him something entirely different?

*“Then he said to Jesus, ‘Lord, remember me when You come **into Your Kingdom**.”*

*And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you today, You will be with Me **in Paradise**.”*