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**This Day
you will be with me in
Paradise.**

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

This Day You Will Be with Me in Paradise.

Topics.

- Today you will be with me in paradise.
- Paradise and the Kingdom of God.
- Three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

TODAY YOU WILL BE WITH ME IN PARADISE

- **Luke 23:43:** Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Upon first reading of this verse and at first glance it seems that Jesus not only expected an immediate presence in heaven for himself but also for the repentant thief on the cross, because of this the following words of Jesus:

- Today you will be with me in paradise.

Have been used to teach that upon death people will immediately go to heaven but the idea that Jesus and the repentant thief would immediately go to heaven upon their death is totally out of harmony with all other Scripture as the following study will show. Before we proceed to examine what Jesus meant it the following should be mentioned, this verse is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible and to build a doctrine off a single verse is against all good ethics of Bible study since no one verse should ever be used to establish a doctrine. The best place to discover where paradise might be is to begin at the following two verses in the book of Revelation:

- He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God (Rev. 2:7).
- In the middle of its street (of the holy city, new Jerusalem) (Rev. 21:2) and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:2).

From these verses we learn that the tree of life is in the midst of the paradise of God and that paradise is also in the holy city the new Jerusalem which means paradise embraces the following:

- The New Jerusalem that gloriously descends from heaven to earth.
- The Kingdom of God to be established on earth when Christ returns.
- The restored garden of Eden

This means that paradise cannot be in the heart of the earth, since it is obvious that the tree of life cannot be growing in the realm of the dead which means that it must be in the restored Garden of Eden which is another title for God’s Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace to be established on earth when the Lord returns as King of kings and Lord of lord (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God’s Holy city Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God’s Holy Mountain) to establish God’s Kingdom on earth during his millennial reign. During this glorious new age, the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his

people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth, or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God. The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age the paradise of God, God Himself descends to earth on a Great White Throne and the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Putting Jesus words, "Today you will be with me in Paradise" into the context of the story, the Romans have brutally and cruelly nailed Jesus to the cross and hanging on either side of him are two criminals, one of the criminals railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" While the other criminal rebuked him and said, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong" then he turned and said to Jesus, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom," and Jesus said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:39-43).

THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE HEART OF THE EARTH

This is a good place to begin our journey in discovering what Jesus actually meant when he said to the criminal "Today you will be with me in Paradise." Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees

- As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matt: 12:40).

This verse clearly shows us the following two truths:

- Jesus did not expect to immediately ascend into heaven.
- Jesus knew he would be in the tomb for three days, before he was resurrected to heavenly glory.

Peter citing a prophecy of David said:

- King David foreseeing the death of the Lord, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that his soul *was not left in hades*, nor did His flesh see corruption (Acts 2:31) (Cited from Psalm 16:10).

According to King David's prophecy of Jesus death which is cited here by Peter, Jesus was to be left in tomb until the resurrection. This means Jesus could not have immediately been in paradise on the day of his crucifixion. Added to this Jesus said to Mary:

- Do not cling to me, for I have *not yet ascended* to my Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to my God and your God' (John 20:17).

This verse shines a spotlight on the truth that even on the Sunday of Jesus resurrection when he appeared to Mary he had not yet ascended to his Father in heaven. The following is even stronger evidence that proves Jesus words, "Today you will be with me in paradise" cannot mean that Jesus and the criminal would ascend immediately to heaven upon their death because they show that even Jesus himself did not expect to immediately ascend to heavenly glory upon his death.

Jesus himself said:

- They will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day (Matt. 17:23).
- They will deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day (Matt. 20:19).

Paul wrote:

- After Jesus was buried, he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:4).

Since these Scripture show that Jesus could not have immediately ascended to heaven upon his death what did he mean when he said to the thief, "Assuredly, 'I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise'" (Luke 23:43). The solution to the problem posed by Jesus, promise to the thief, may will lie in the punctuation of Luke.

In the Old Testament we have the following expressions:

- I say unto you today.
- I testify to you today.

The following verses are some examples:

- Moses said; "Therefore you shall keep every commandment which *I command you today*, that you may be strong, and go in and possess the land (Deut. 11:8).
- Moses and the elders said; "Therefore it shall be, when you have crossed over the Jordan, that on Mount Ebal you shall set up these stones, which *I command you today*, and you shall whitewash them with lime" (Deut. 27:4).
- Moses said to them; "I am one hundred and *twenty years old today*. I can no longer go out and come in (Deut. 31:2).

Therefore, it would be perfectly natural to punctuate Luke 23:43 as follows:

- Truly I say to you today, you will be with me in paradise.

This then harmonises with all other Scriptures of the Bible.

Paul in the following verse uses a similar expression.

- Therefore *I testify to you this day*, that I am innocent of the blood of all men. (Acts 20:26)

In view of the thief's request, the reply of Jesus makes good sense to be punctuated in this way. The thief had asked that Jesus remember him when he came in (the power of) his Kingdom, that is, at the resurrection when the Kingdom is to be manifested in glory on earth. Jesus is assuring the criminal that he is remembered on that very day, in advance of the coming of the Kingdom and telling him that he will be with Jesus in the paradise of the future Kingdom of God when Jesus returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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