

# **Three Crosses**

Luke 23:32-43

## **Introduction**

- Text reminds us of three crosses at Calvary the day Jesus was crucified.
- Two criminals (thieves) were crucified – on either side of Jesus when He was nailed to the cross.
- Think about the significance of these crosses.
- Cross of Jesus ordained from eternity. (I Pet. 1:18-20; Gen. 3:15; Dt. 21:23; Gal. 3:13; Isa. 53:12)
- What was going on around Jesus as he died on the cross?
  - What did death on the cross mean for each of those?
  - And what lessons can we draw?

## **Discussion**

### **I. One Died In His Sins...**

- Hanging next to the One sent by God to bring salvation, make forgiveness possible. (Jn. 3:16)
  - Opportunity to know the Savior – teaching, works, the sign above the cross, the crowd, supernatural events, etc.
  - Yet when he died, he died in his sins. (Heb. 9:27; Heb. 10:26,26,30; v-31 → what a serious matter to fall into the hands of the living God.
  - Continued in stubborn rebellion and rejection.
  - Many do the same today. (II Cor. 5:10; Rev. 9:20-21)
  - Had opportunity to make a change; died next to the One who could forgive his sins.; Only self to blame. (Rom. 14:12)

### **II. One Died To His Sins...**

- Same circumstances. At first both thieves were ridiculing Jesus on the cross. (Matt. 27:44-45)
- Something changed:
  - Lk. 23:39-40 → He rebuked the other thief. The mocker becomes a defender of the sinless Son of God.
  - We are suffering justly. (Lk. 23:41)
  - He obviously has some knowledge of spiritual truth.
  - The gospel has the power to change hearts today. (Rom. 1:16; I Cor. 1:18)
- A great example of repentance: His change of mind leads to a change in his conduct.
- Remember me when you come in your kingdom. (Lk. 23:43)
  - Jesus response: Verily, I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise.
  - What words of greater comfort or blessing could one ever hear?
  - Response to those who want to be saved like the thief on the cross today:
    - Jesus on earth had power to forgive sins on any terms He chose. (Mk. 2:10; Matt. 19:21)
    - An argument from the silence of the scriptures. (Matt. 3:5,6)
    - We live under a different and far better covenant today: (Dt. 5:23; Jer. 31:31ff; II Cor. 3:7-11; Rom. 7:6; Col. 2:14-17)

### **III. One Died For The Sins of Others**

- The cross we focus on: the one on which Jesus died.
  - The crowd crying “crucify him...”
  - He was the One who didn’t deserve to be there. (Jn. 8:46; I Pet. 2:22; II Cor. 5:21)
  - God’s plan from eternity. (Col. 1:26-27; Heb. 2:14-15)
  - Jesus went willingly to the cross. (Jn. 10:17-18; Phil. 2:6-8); Burial. (Lk. 23:50-56)
  - His resurrection from the dead. (Jn. 2:20-22; Rom. 1:3-4; 4:25)