

“The criminals who hung with Jesus”

Luke 23:26-43

Matthew 27:38-44 “Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left...Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing.”

Mark 15:27-28 “With Him they also crucified two robbers, one on His right and the other on His left. So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘And He was numbered with the transgressors.’”

John 19:17-18 “And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center.”

1. Background

- The story is rock-solid history.
- Jesus is condemned by a kangaroo court on trumped up charges of insurrection.
- Luke’s “criminals” are likely real “terrorists” committed to overthrowing the Romans by force.
- Both men watched the way in which Jesus handled his excruciating and unjust death.

2. The Story

- V.39 – At first, both men mocked and blasphemed Jesus.
- V. 40-41 – But one of the men has a change of heart – rebukes his comrade and defends Jesus.
- V. 42-43 – He believes in Jesus as King – and Jesus welcomes Him into His Kingdom.

3. What it means

- God is all about the lowly and the outcast.
- God loves us so much that He comes for us.
- God’s Kingdom isn’t about good deeds or theological knowledge – but grace.
- God’s Kingdom is less about “where” we are going and more about “who” we are going with.
- You and I have choice.