

CRIMINAL: "WHO ARE YOU JESUS?"

The answers to that question will change a person forever.

(Luke 23:32-43) Two others - criminals - were also led away to be executed with Him. When they arrived at the place called The Skull, they crucified Him there, along with the criminals, one on the right and one on the left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing." And they divided His clothes and cast lots. The people stood watching, and even the leaders kept scoffing: "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is God's Messiah, the Chosen One!" The soldiers also mocked Him. They came offering Him sour wine and said, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!" An inscription was above Him: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then one of the criminals hanging there began to yell insults at Him: "Aren't You the Messiah? Save Yourself and us!" But the other answered, rebuking him: "Don't you even fear God, since you are undergoing the same punishment? We are punished justly, because we're getting back what we deserve for the things we did, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!" And He said to him, "I assure you: Today you will be with Me in paradise."

1. The Nature of Punishment

(Romans 13:1) Everyone must submit to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist are instituted by God.

(13:4) For government is God's servant to you for good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, because it does not carry the sword for no reason. For government is God's servant, an avenger that brings wrath on the one who does wrong.

(Luke 23:41) "We are punished justly, because we're getting back what we deserve for the things we did, but this man has done nothing wrong."

- A. For crimes against men, the guilty man's life is required.
- B. For crimes against God, the innocent Man's life is required.

2. The Nature of Life

(40) The other answered, rebuking him: "Don't you even fear God, since you are undergoing the same punishment?"

- A. We're all going to die.
- B. We're all going to face God.

3. The Nature of Faith

(42) Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!"

- A. "Jesus, I believe You are the victor over death."
- B. "Jesus, I believe You are the King of Heaven."
- C. "Jesus, please let me into Your Heaven."