



# The Caller

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## 2018 VBS



## A FURTHER LOOK AT THE DIFFERENCES IN THE ACCOUNTS OF THE GOSPEL

Last Sunday I preached a lesson entitled, “The Gospel Times Four.” In that sermon I tried to point out that though four different inspired men wrote accounts of the Gospel, there was a reason for doing such, and the different accounts supplement one another. One such example that I did not get to address involves the thief on the cross in the Synoptic accounts of the Gospel (remember those are Matthew, Mark, and Luke who all take a similar approach).

Unique to Luke’s account of the Gospel is the extended section regarding the thief on the cross found in Luke 23:39–43: “One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: ‘Aren’t you the Christ? Save yourself and us!’ But the other criminal rebuked him. ‘Don’t you fear God,’ he said, ‘since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.’ Then he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’ Jesus answered him, ‘I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.’”

Matthew and Mark simply state that the robbers who were crucified with Jesus also heaped insults on him. Matthew notes, “Then are there crucified with him two robbers, one on the right hand and one on the left. <sup>39</sup>And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, <sup>40</sup>and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross. <sup>41</sup>In like manner also the chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said, <sup>42</sup>He saved others; himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him. <sup>43</sup>He trusteth on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God. <sup>44</sup>**And the robbers also that were crucified with him cast upon him the same reproach**” (Mt. 27:44). Mark writes, “And with him they crucify two robbers; one on his right hand, and one on his left. <sup>28</sup>*And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was reckoned with transgressors.* <sup>29</sup>And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah! thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, <sup>30</sup>save thyself, and come down from the cross. <sup>31</sup>In like manner also the chief priests mocking *him* among themselves with the scribes said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. <sup>32</sup>Let the Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross, that we may see and believe. **And they that were crucified with him reproached him** (Mk.15:17-22).

Luke records the words spoken by the robbers and indicates that one of them asked Jesus to remember him. In reply, Jesus stated: “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.” [“Paradise here is the place which receives the souls of the righteous departed after death,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. V (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), p. 771].

Throughout his Gospel account, as well as the book of Acts, Luke manifests an interest in outcasts. He records that Jesus brought the Gospel of the kingdom to publicans, sinners, and, in this case, criminals. Jesus saved a criminal hanging on the cross. Thus again we see the individual purpose in each inspired writer of the four accounts of the Gospel.

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