



Daily Verse and Comment

[Luke 23:43](#)

(43) And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

New King James Version

In [Luke 23:43](#), [Jesus Christ](#) tells one of the criminals being crucified next to Him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today [you will be with Me in Paradise](#)." This statement forms the foundation of belief for the majority of professing Christians that they will [go to heaven](#) as soon as they die. The common interpretation is that Jesus promises the malefactor he would be with Him in "Paradise"—assumed to be heaven—later that day, after both had died. From this scenario, they extract the theory that *all* of the faithful are likewise caught up to heaven immediately upon death. This verse has become the modern pillar of the ancient pagan belief that our soul lives on after the death of the body and finds its way to heaven to be with [God](#).

The only problem is that [Luke 23:43](#) does not support this at all!

Jesus gave only one sign that He was the One He said He was: that He would be in the grave for [three days and three nights](#):

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For 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.* ([Matthew 12:38-40](#), emphasis ours throughout)

If Jesus was not in the grave for three days and three nights, He is not our Savior! But since we know He was telling the truth, He must have been in the grave for exactly three days and three nights—thus, He could not have been in Paradise that day. Following this through, if *He* was not in Paradise on the day He died, neither was the criminal hanging next to Him.

The apostle Paul corroborates that Jesus did in fact fulfill His prophecy. In [1 Corinthians 15:3-4](#), he tells Christians: "For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received, how that [Christ died for our sins](#) according to the scriptures; and that *He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures.*" Notice that Paul says *Jesus* was buried, not that the body was buried and His consciousness went to Paradise. It reads that He—Jesus, Himself, entirely—was buried. He was dead for three days. He died for our sins, was in the grave for 72 hours, then came back to life after being resurrected by the Father.

John gives further proof of where Jesus was: "Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So there [in the tomb, the grave] they laid Jesus . . ." ([John 19:41-42](#)). Similarly, Peter told those present on Pentecost, "[David], foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that *His soul was not left in Hades*, nor did His flesh see corruption." ([Acts 2:31](#)) This states that Jesus' body and soul were in "Hades" (the grave) before His resurrection, not in Paradise.

Jesus Himself tells us He was not simultaneously in the grave and in Paradise. When Mary Magdalene stood outside the tomb, she encountered the resurrected Savior ([John 20:14](#)). After He identified Himself (verse 16), He told her plainly where He had *not* been: "Jesus said to her, '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](#)). Clearly, He had not been in Paradise with the Father during the time He was in the grave, thus the criminal was not either!

— David C. Grabbe

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