

Salvation at the deathbed...who?...what?...when?...where?...why?

1. Study Luke 23: 39-43. List your observations: Who?

Who is the author? Luke the physician wrote both the book that bears his name and Acts, and was the only Gentile author of the New Testament. Believed to have come from Antioch of Syria, Luke, while not an apostle, was a close companion of Paul.

Who is being crucified? Two criminals and Jesus were being crucified, one on each side of Jesus. The Greek word for "criminal" can also mean "insurrectionist," and Mark 15:7 notes that Barabbas, who committed murder in a rebellion, was chained with fellow rebels. Romans generally reserve crucifixion for rebellious slaves and insurrectionists. Pilate declared Jesus innocent; however, the people wanted Him dead and Pilate granted their demand.

2. What?

Jesus forgives and "saves" one of the criminals just before they all die crucified.

3. When?

The crucifixion occurs when the Passover lambs are being slain and prepared for the Passover meal. Because Jesus' corpse "hung" on the cross (Acts 5:30, 10:39), the Jews saw this form of punishment as a divine curse and rejected the idea that Christ was the Messiah (Deut 21:22-23).

4. Where?

They are crucified on a hill just outside the walls of Jerusalem called Place of the Skull. In Hebrew, this hill is known as Golgotha.

5. Why?

The first criminal:

- a) mocked Christ, as the people did, for His claim of Kingship without any obvious possession or display of power.

The second criminal:

- a) rebuked the first criminal for his lack of fear for God.
- b) feared God.
- c) recognized and admitted to his sin and guilt.
- d) recognized Christ's innocence.
- e) recognized Jesus was God.

As a method, who what when where why, is a good start towards observation. From there you could probe more deeply into the passage in preparation of a better understanding of its context and then a better understanding of how this could apply.

"Overconfidence of familiar biblical passages can be the most overlooked bane of successful hermeneutics." Anonymous.

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