

AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH THE TRANSGRESSORS

TEXT: ISA. 53:12

Introduction:

1. There were many OT prophecies fulfilled at the cross, and one of them is Isaiah 53:12, “And he was numbered with the transgressors” (cf. Mark 15:27, 28; Luke 22:37).
2. The word “transgressors” refers to the two men described in the Gospel of Luke as “malefactors.”
3. “And there were also two other, malefactors, led with Him to be put to death” (Luke 23:32).
4. Matthew 27:38 tells us these men were thieves.
5. “Then were there two thieves crucified with Him, one on the right hand, and another on the left” (Matt. 27:38).
6. These men were dangerous criminals. They were what we call “the scum of the earth.” Our Lord died a cruel and shameful death. He was crucified between two wicked sinners.
7. The great expositor Matthew Henry wrote, “It was a great aggravation of his sufferings that He was *numbered with transgressors*, that He was not only condemned as a malefactor, but executed in company with two notorious malefactors, and He in the midst, as if He had been the worst of the three.”

I. CHRIST BARE THE SINS OF MANY

II. CHRIST MADE INTERCESSION FOR THE TRANSGRESSORS

III. CHRIST SAVED THE REPENTANT TRANSGRESSOR

I. CHRIST BARE THE SINS OF MANY (53:12).

1. The word “bare” means to take away. We are reminded of the wonderful words of John the Baptist in John 1:29, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”
2. I said last week that this is the great theme of Isaiah 53 – the substitutionary death of Christ (Isa. 53:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11).
3. The apostle Paul said in I Corinthians 15:3, “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures....”
4. And in Romans 5:8, “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”
5. There is only one way to be saved, and that is through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. Have you been saved by the blood of Christ?

7. DL Moody spoke of a soldier who was dying on the battlefield, who was heard to say, "Blood, blood, blood." A chaplain, thinking that the scenes of bloodshed on the battlefield which the soldier had recently witnessed, were troubling his mind, went to him to lead his thoughts to brighter themes.
8. The dying soldier said to the chaplain, "I wasn't thinking of the battlefield, but of the blood of Jesus, which has covered all my sins."
9. That dying soldier knew he was going to heaven because of the blood of Jesus. How about you?

II. CHRIST MADE INTERCESSION FOR THE TRANSGRESSORS

1. Isaiah 53 ends with a beautiful prophecy. As our Lord was dying on the cross, He "made intercession for the transgressors" (Isa. 53:12).
2. The Lord Jesus is our great Intercessor. Hebrews 7:25 says, "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."
3. Romans 8:34 says, Christ "also maketh intercession for us."
4. First John 2:1 says Christ is our "advocate with the Father."
5. First Timothy 2:5 says, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."
6. Now let us look at the cross, and see how our Lord made intercession for the transgressors (Luke 23:32-34).

III. CHRIST SAVED THE REPENTANT TRANSGRESSOR

1. Matthew and Mark record that at first, both transgressors had been mocking our Lord (cf. Matt. 27:38, 44; Mark 15:32).
2. But one of the transgressors repented before it was too late (Luke 23:39-43).
3. This repentant thief said, "For we receive the due reward of our deeds" (Luke 23:41). All throughout the Bible we see this principle of divine retribution. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (cf. Gal. 6:7).
4. The repentant thief understood this principle of divine retribution.
5. He was hanging there on the cross and he admitted that he deserved it. He made no excuses. He did not try and shift the blame to others. He did not blame his parents or his friends or society. He offered no alibis or sad stories of a difficult upbringing.
6. He got right with God, and so Jesus saved him (Luke 23:43).
7. There are many lessons here:
 - This story serves to remind us that it is possible for a penitent sinner to get saved at the last minute.

- This story is also in our Bible to remind us how rare it is for a sinner to get saved at the last minute. This was a very unusual conversion.
- This also reminds us that repentant sinners who believe in Jesus go straight to “paradise” (heaven). Our Lord said, “Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43).
- Salvation is instantaneous. The Jehovah’s Witness teach that the comma was in the wrong place, and that Jesus really said, “Verily I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with me in paradise.” That is ridiculous.
- The Roman Catholics teach there is a place called “purgatory,” though you cannot find it in the Bible. But Jesus said, “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.”
- Some churches teach you have to be baptized in order to get into heaven. The dying thief was not baptized. He did not have the opportunity to get baptized (cf. John 3:16).
- Some churches teach you have to do good works in order to be saved. What good works did this condemned criminal perform?
- This dying thief was saved by the grace of God, not by his good works. How foolish to teach salvation by works! The Bible says, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8, 9).

CONCLUSION:

1. One day many years ago a preacher was talking to a young man about his need for salvation. The young man brushed him off and said: “I’ll get saved at the last moment just like the thief on the cross.”
2. The preacher reminded the young man that there were two thieves and that he could very well end up like the impenitent thief who went to hell.
3. The Holy Spirit used that warning, and the young man got saved.
4. The devil likes to fool people into thinking they have plenty of time when in fact they are getting closer and closer to hell.
5. The great evangelist George Whitefield wrote in his journal that during his first voyage to Georgia he tried to witness to the ship’s cook, a man with a bad drinking problem.

6. When Whitefield and others reproved the drunken cook, the man boasted that he would continue on in his sin until the last day of his life. Then he would repent and get things right with God.
7. What he did not realize was that was the last day of his life. Whitefield wrote in his journal that the man got sick and died six hours later from an illness related to his heavy drinking.
8. “There Is A Fountain Filled With Blood Drawn From Immanuel’s Veins.”
*“And sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains... **The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day; And there may I, though vile as he, wash all my sins away.**”*

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