



“The Theology of the Thief on the Cross?”

Rev. David J. Bauer

Theology is a science that examines the existence, nature and attributes of God. But we study especially human relationships to God and His supernatural input into our human lives on earth, as well as His eternal relationship with mankind after death or the end of this present age. We value our pastors and church leaders who have pursued theological courses and studies of the Bible in original languages. Through the years, many of our church pastors have earned Master and Doctorate degrees in theology. There seems to be no end to the study of the Almighty and His great works in the lives of humankind.

*But the Bible narrative in St. Luke’s Gospel tells us of a thief possessing a simple theology, who died alongside Jesus, the Savior. He did not go to our schools or seminaries; yet he demonstrated the essential theology for an eternal relationship with God. **Just what did this thief believe?***

1. **He believed that eternal things matter.** He said to the other thief: “Do you not even fear God?” –Luke 23:40. See –Heb11:6.
2. **He believed that he was a sinner.** He spoke of “...the same condemnation and we indeed justly for we receive due reward for our deeds...” –Luke 23:40b-41.
3. **He believed that he could be saved.** He called out to Jesus in his dying breath: “Lord remember me!” –Luke 43:42 See –Romans 10:13.
4. **He believed in his own inability to save himself.** He was dying and his hands and feet were *spiked to the cross*. There could be no second chance here. Only God’s *grace and mercy* can save. –Ehes 2:8-9; Titus 3:5
5. **He believed in the sinless-ness of Jesus Christ.** “...but this man has done nothing wrong”–Luke 23:41b. Six times in this chapter Jesus’ innocence is declared. Even the centurion at the cross declared him innocent –Luke 23:47.
6. **He believed in the Deity of Jesus Christ.** “Do you not even fear God? He asked (V. 40). Then he addressed Jesus as “Lord” –Luke 23:42. This is significant as it is expressed in Romans 10:9.
7. **He believed that Jesus was heaven’s King.** When he addressed Jesus, he said: “Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom” –Luke 23:42. From all appearances almost all of Jesus’ followers were scattered, disappointed that Jesus was taken by soldiers, went through 6 trials and was hung on a cross. He died that same day, marking the end of any hope of an established kingdom as far as they were concerned. But this man saw the future kingdom Jesus would have. He knew and believed more than most of Jesus’ disciples.

8. **He believed that Jesus Christ was willing and able to save.** “Remember me!” He cried –Luke 23:42 Yes, Jesus is able to save “to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, because he ever lives to make intercession for them” –Hebrews 7:25. Fortunately for all of us we have a God who “is not willing that any would perish, but that all would come to repentance” –2 Peter 3:9.

9. **He believed in the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus.** He described Jesus as receiving the “same condemnation” even though He had done “nothing wrong.” Luke 23:40-41. Jesus was even substituted for Barabbas, a known murderer set free that day! –Luke 23:40. Likewise, *He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God through Him*” –2 Corinthians 5:21. The thief believed this too!

10. **He believed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.** The thief said: “When you come into your kingdom” while Jesus was dying –Luke 23:43. See Romans 10:9 and 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 for the importance of believing in Jesus supernatural resurrection. This thief clearly believed in it!

11. **He believed in the future kingdom of Jesus Christ.** “...when you come into your kingdom” he said. There is only one way to enter into this kingdom and paradise –John 3:3: And that one way is the way of the penitent thief!

Astronomer, scientist, and mathematician, Copernicus’s grave says this: “Lord, I do not ask the kindness Thou didst show Peter, I do not dare to ask the grace Thou didst grant to Paul; but Lord, the mercy Thou didst show to the dying robber, that mercy show to me. That earnestly I crave.”

This man lived as a thief and died as a thief, for he really was not deserving of the paradise granted by Jesus. But he died as a believer in the Savior!



Rev. David J. Bauer
Director Emeritus

RECIPES

Mom’s Strawberry Pretzel Salad

Ingredients

Crust -

- 3 Tbs sugar
- 1 Cup crushed pretzels
- ½ Cup softened margarine

Filling -

- 1 Large cream cheese
- 1 Cup sugar
- 1 Small Cool Whip

Topping -

- 1 Large strawberry Jello mix
- 2 Cups hot water
- 1 16 oz Package of frozen strawberries

Combine 3 Tbs of sugar with the crushed pretzels and ½ cup of margarine and pat into the bottom of a 9x13 glass pan. Bake at 350° for 10 minutes. Let cool

Mix 1 large cream cheese with 1 cup of sugar, and then fold in 1 small Cool Whip. Spread on the cooled pretzel base.

Stir the large strawberry Jell-O mix into 2 cups of hot water, then add the strawberries. Spoon over the cheese layer. Cover with plastic and let chill overnight.

Helpful Hints

Vinegar is a great household tool with many applications, from killing weeds, to cleaning coffee pots, to removing chewing gum, even as a catalyst for unclogging drains by pouring in a ¼ cup of baking soda and then a cup of vinegar, and covering the drain tightly. But there are also times when it shouldn't be used. Here's a list:

- Don't use vinegar on marble or granite countertops
- Avoid using vinegar where there is unsealed grout
- Don't use vinegar on wood surfaces or hardwood floors, or no-wax vinyl floors
- Never use vinegar on your cell phone or computer screen

Leave a legacy for your family & favorite ministries. When planning a legacy, give Terry L. Balko a call at 404-229-1645 or email Mr. Balko for forms and details at terrylbalko@gmail.com. **Don't let your hard earned life-savings go into a probate bureaucracy! NOT PLANNING is a plan, but it is NOT a very good plan!**

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Bible Related Ministries Newsletter

Fernando Garza, Interim President



2026

*"Who shall separate us from the
love of Christ?"*

-Romans 8:35

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BRM Interims and Associates Engaged in Ministry:

>Rev. Steve Barack, BRM Associate – Interim Pastor of Village Baptist Church, Lake Village, IN

>Dr. Al Carson, Sr., BRM Associate – Sr. Pastor of Edwards Corners Bible Church, Marcellus, MI

>Dr. Joe Stewart, BRM Associate – Sr. Pastor of Grace Bible Church, Dallas City, IL

>Rev. Darwyn Hassert, BRM Associate – Smyrna Bible Church (and vicinity), MI, preaches and assists as needed in nearby areas

>Rev. Don Zimmerman, Interim Pastor of Western Springs Baptist Church, IL

>Rev. Jim Vyleta, Interim Pastor of Appleton Community Evangelical Free Church, Appleton, WI

>Rev. Tracy B McConnell, BRM Associate – Monthly BRM Newsletter publication, Interim Pastor of Portage Bible Church, Portage, IN

On the Lighter Side:

A man took a vacation to Israel with his wife and mother-in-law, where his mother-in-law unexpectedly passed away. The next day, the husband met with the local funeral director to learn his options. "You can ship the body home for \$5,000 or bury her in the Holy Land for just \$150." The man took a minute to think, then decided to ship her home. The funeral director, surprised, said, "Why would you pay \$5,000 to ship your mother-in-law home when you can easily bury her here for \$150?" The man replied, "About 2,000 years ago, a man died and was buried here. Three days later, he rose from the dead. I can't take that chance!" subsplash.com/blog/humorous-easter-sermon-illustrations?

BRM Field Report #4

Our pulpit supply Pastors were busy last month, filling in for sick Pastors Juan Gil of Summit Bible Church, and Pastor Brandon Siwula of Cornerstone Community Church. Please pray for their recoveries, as well as for Pastor Danny Enright's.

Interim President Fernando Garza attended the Ministerium at River Grove Bible Church on March 16th, and will be speaking at Roberts Road Bible Church on Saturday, April 11th, for their Men's Breakfast, which meets from 8:15-10:00 a.m.

Associate Steve Barack, along with another BRM friend have spent the last few months preparing a member of La Grange Bible Church for ordination. The Ordination Council is scheduled to meet on April 24th.

BRM pulpit supply Pastor Steve Clark will be preaching at East Hazel Crest Bible Church on Easter Sunday. Our pulpit supply pastors are always ready to fill in when needed.

BRM is here for you! As we wait on God to provide BRM with a new Executive Director, Fernando Garza (BRM Interim President), along with Dolores and the BRM Associate Pastors, are working together to fulfill BRM's mission. The phone lines are open and manned. Don't hesitate to call with any questions, needs, concerns, or issues.

We would like to offer our condolences and ask for prayers for the family of our long-time BRM friend, Virginia Joy Hovey, who passed away on March 7th.

Please continue to pray for BRM:

1. For God to provide a new Executive Director
2. For God's wisdom and guidance for the BRM Board