THE QUESTION

What did John Chrysostom teach about the thief on the cross (Luke 23:43)?

Asked by a THF member on September 3, 2026 · published November 9, 2026 · 5 numbered quotations · the 6 early Christian passages we kept are listed at the back, each with a link.

Read it online: thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/what-did-john-chrysostom-teach-about-the-thief-on-the-cross-luke-23-43

The short answer *From the text: says what the passages say*

John Chrysostom saw the thief's salvation as a mighty work of Christ on the cross. He said changing the thief and bringing him to Paradise was as great as shaking the rocks. He also used Christ's promise to show that Paradise is an honored place and a real reward.

LIBRARY ONLY	This study was written only from The Historic Faith’s library of early-Christian writings and the Bible, never from the web. Every passage we kept from what the library gave is listed at the back, with a link to read it.
HOW IT WAS MADE	Compiled by machine learning from The Historic Faith’s library of early-Christian writings and the Bible only. Every quotation was matched word for word against our stored text. Not yet reviewed by The Historic Faith.
SHARING WITH AN AI?	Every quotation here comes from The Historic Faith’s library. If you paste this study into an AI, anything it adds beyond these pages comes from that AI, not from us.

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POINT 1 OF 5

Saving the thief added to the Cross's glory

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

In his homilies on John, Chrysostom says Christ was crucified among criminals and the devil tried to hide what was being done. Instead, one of the two was saved. Chrysostom compares turning the thief and bringing him to Paradise with the shaking of the rocks at Christ's death: both were mighty works.

1 “For even one of those two was saved. So he did not dishonor the glory of the Cross, but added greatly to it. For changing a thief on the cross and bringing him to Paradise was no less a thing than shaking the rocks.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **John Chrysostom,** *Homilies on John* 85 (c. 386–407 AD)
THF's updated English

Source 1, page 4 Read it in the library ›

POINT 2 OF 5

Dying between thieves fulfilled prophecy

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Chrysostom notes that Christ was crucified with thieves as an insult. Yet he says this served the truth, because Isaiah had foretold that the Messiah would be numbered with the transgressors. What was meant for shame showed God's plan.

2 “For what they did as an insult served the truth, so that you may learn how great its power is, since the prophet had foretold long ago that He was numbered with the transgressors”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **John Chrysostom,** *Homilies on John* 85 (c. 386–407 AD)
THF's updated English

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POINT 3 OF 5

Only Jesus was glorified among the three

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Three men hung on crosses, but Chrysostom points out that no one credited the miracles to the two thieves. Everything pointed to Jesus alone, whose power did it all.

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3 “For the three were crucified, but Jesus alone was glorious, so that you may learn that His power accomplished everything.”

later in the same passage

“But no one credited anything that was done to either of those other two, but to Jesus only.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **John Chrysostom,** *Homilies on John* 85 (c. 386–407 AD)
THF's updated English

Source 1, page 4 Read it in the library ›

POINT 4 OF 5

Christ promised the thief a real reward

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

In his homilies on Matthew, Chrysostom explains that Christ's promises are real rewards, not mere figures of speech. He gives Christ's words to the thief as an example of such a promise.

4 “He offers a real reward that can be understood by the senses, just as Paul also does.”

later in the same passage

“And He Himself also said to the thief, "Today you will be with me in Paradise," in”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **John Chrysostom,** *Homilies on Matthew* 15 (c. 386–407 AD)
THF's updated English

Source 3, page 4 Read it in the library ›

POINT 5 OF 5

Paradise is a great and honored place

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

When Chrysostom explains why Paul was caught up into Paradise, he says the name of that place was great and honored everywhere. He links this to Christ's promise to the thief, showing how high an honor the thief received.

5 “For the name of this place was great, and it was honored everywhere. Therefore Christ also said, "Today you shall be with Me in Paradise.""

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **John Chrysostom,** *Homilies on Second Corinthians* 26 (c. 386–407 AD)
THF's updated English

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THE LIMITS

What these passages don’t tell us

- These passages are short references inside other sermons, not a full sermon by Chrysostom on Luke 23:39–43.
- They do not explain in detail what Paradise is or where it is.
- A word-for-word match shows that a quotation really is in our text. It does not show that our reading of it is right, or who wrote each work.

WHERE EVERY QUOTE CAME FROM

The Sources

The 6 early Christian passages we kept for this question (repeats and weak or off-topic search hits were left out): early Christian passages (sources 1–6, grouped by writer, earliest first). **Quote 1, page 2** beside a source shows where the study quotes it. Passages are in THF’s updated English unless marked “1885 English” (the Roberts–Donaldson translation, public domain). “… [continues online]” marks a passage the library gave only in part. **On paper?** At **thehistoricfaith.com**, Bible verses are in the **Audio Bible** and early Christian writings in the **Library** (search for the title).

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS *6 passages from 1 writer*

John Chrysostom, *c. 386–407 AD · sources 1–6*

1. *Homilies on John* 85 (1885 English) **Quotes 1, 2, 3, pages 2, 3** “it was not a less matter than shaking the rocks, to change a thief upon the cross, and to bring him unto Paradise… [continues online] **read ›**
2. *Homilies on Acts* (on point 3) “the thief on the cross had seen miracles. The wise men had seen a star… [continues online] **read ›**
3. *Homilies on Matthew* 15 (1885 English) **Quote 4, page 3** “He Himself unto the thief again, Today shall you be with me in Paradise. Luke 23:43… [continues online] **read ›**
4. *Homilies on Second Corinthians* 26 (1885 English) **Quote 5, page 3** “also Christ said, Today you shall be with Me in Paradise. Luke 23:43… [continues online] **read ›**
5. *Homilies on Acts* (1885 English) “you see not the thief (on the cross), in how short a time he achieved (his salvation… [continues online] **read ›**
6. *Three Homilies on the Power of Satan* (on point 5) restoration. Since after those things he did become better, He brings him back again and says, "Today you shall be with me in Paradise." Do you see that not the… [continues online] **read ›**

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Searched: Ante-Nicene Fathers volumes 1–9 and the Bible, including the Septuagint.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

A THF member asked “What did John Chrysostom teach about the thief on the cross (Luke 23:43)?” on September 3, 2026. The Historic Faith answered it as a public study on November 9, 2026.

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THE END OF THIS STUDY