

What about...the thief on the cross?

One of the criminals crucified with Jesus defended him against the taunts of the other criminal being crucified. Then he asked Jesus to remember him when he came into his kingdom. Jesus answered him saying, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." [see [Luke 23:43](#)] Jesus body was in the grave the following three days (we can safely assume the criminals' was too) so isn't this an indicator that some other part of them, perhaps their souls were in Paradise? It is important to understand that there is no punctuation in the Greek texts. The placement of the comma is entirely up to the opinion of the translator. If the comma is placed after "today" instead of before, the meaning is very different. The result is, "Truly I tell you today, you will be with me in paradise." [see similar usage of "today" in [Deuteronomy 30:18](#), [Acts 20:26](#)] Even though it seems obvious or unnecessary to use "today," in this manner; when used this way it adds emphasis to what follows. A more modern equivalent might be, "I'm telling you right now, you will be with me in paradise!" Of course it's obvious that while speaking it is "right now," or "today," but can you see how much more attention is focused on what is said after that.

That "day" and the next two days until Jesus was resurrected, his body was in the tomb. Placing the comma before "today," means that before Jesus resurrected some other part of him would have to be in Paradise. Not a problem for those who believe in a conscious soul that can be somewhere else after death. Well actually it is. According to the New Testament, Jesus' soul was in Hades, not Paradise after he died. [see [Acts 2:31](#)] To get around this, proponents of the comma before "today" say Hades was divided into two sections, one section for the unrighteous and the other section called Paradise for the righteous. The problem with this is, such a concept or a two part Hades is not found anywhere in the Bible. Consider Ecclesiastes 9:10, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do *it* with *all* your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol (Hades in Greek) where you are going." (NASB) This was a message to anyone who would listen, because at death activity and consciousness ceases and everyone ends up in Sheol or Hades (i.e. the grave) whether you are righteous or unrighteous.

Here's what the Bible does say about the location of Paradise. [Revelation 2:7](#) states the location of the "Tree of Life" is in Paradise. After the kingdom of God

is here on the new earth [see [Revelation 21:1-4](#)] we find the “Tree of Life” watered by a river coming out of the throne of God and Christ in the city that comes down out of heaven from God. [see [Revelation 22:1,2](#)]. So Paradise will be on the new earth when God establishes his kingdom here and before that it is in heaven not Hades. It's interesting that in response to the thief asking about the coming kingdom, Jesus mentioned Paradise. To me it sounds like this coming kingdom and Paradise on earth happens in the future not the day of Christs crucifixion. Where do you think the comma should go?