



what if what happened then  
changes everything now?

*the easter experience*

## *Accept or Reject?*

**Life Savers candy was invented by a man whose daughter died choking on a mint. The hole in the middle allows you to breathe, even if it gets stuck in your throat. Reject. That's what I was told as a child—but I did a little research and that's not true.**



## *Accept or Reject?*

For more than thirty years, the International Olympic Committee required all female competitors to undergo a “gender verification” exam.

The Jelly Belly Candy Company makes jelly beans flavored like soap, spinach, and sardines.



## *Accept or Reject?*

**The kid who played “Mikey” in the Life cereal commercials died when his stomach exploded after consuming Pop Cocks candy and Coca-Cola**

**The combined weight of all the world’s ants is equal to that of all the humans on earth.**



## *Accept or Reject?*

**Swallowed chewing gum takes seven years to digest and pass through your system.**

**Jesus is the Son of God who died for the sins of the world and rose again.**

**How you answer that  
changes EVERYTHING**



# *People the Accepted Jesus*

**Mary stood at the foot of the cross**

**The Disciple John**

**Other Women**

**Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus**



## *The "Thief" on the Cross*

Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is God's Messiah, the Chosen One." The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself." There was a written notice above him, which read: this is the king of the Jews.



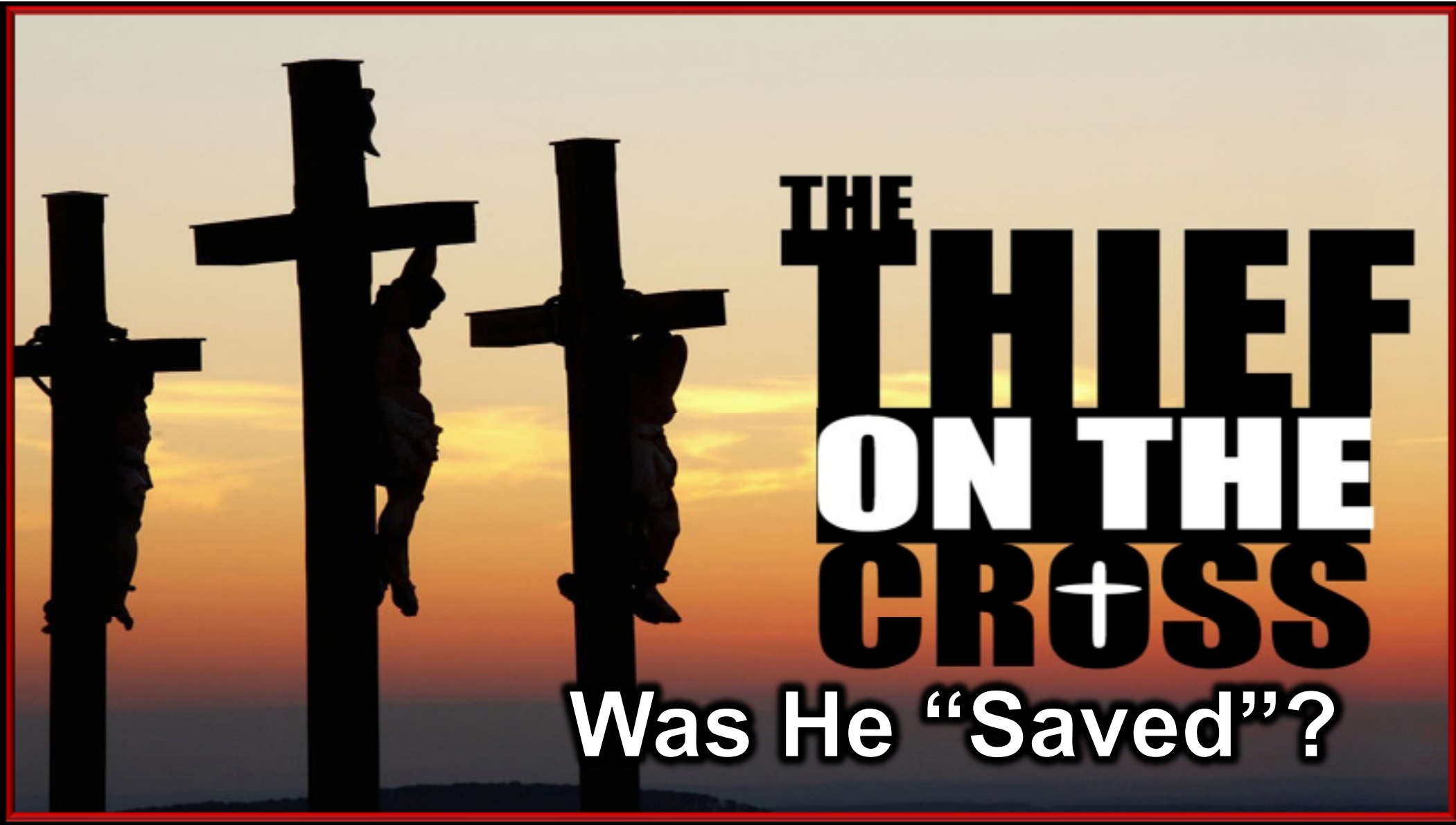
## *The "Thief" on the Cross*

One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Luke 23:32-43







**THE  
THIEF  
ON THE  
CROSS**

**Was He “Saved”?**

## *What Did Jesus Say?*

Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

**"Paradise"**

**Was Jesus promising this man heaven?**

**"Today, you will be with me"**



## *What Did Jesus Say?*

**Jesus clearly saw something  
in this man's statement  
that allowed him to offer the man  
a relationship with him**



*So what's the big deal?*

**Two themes come into play  
with this man becoming a  
“follower of Christ”  
and the way he accepted Jesus**



## *He Breaks Religion*

**But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”**



# *He Breaks Religion*

There is no “profession”

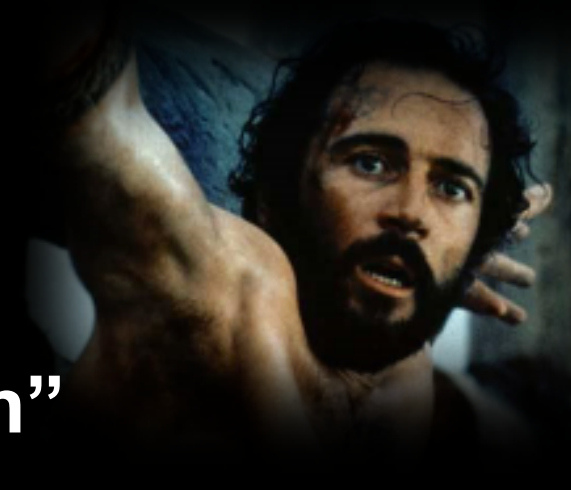
There is no “confession”

There is no “repentance”

There are no “works”

There is no “baptism”

It's ALL wrong -- He cheated



# *He Breaks Religion*

**It does not invalidate the  
actions of faith**

**What it does do is say  
first things first,  
What do you do  
with this Jesus?**



## *He Breaks Religion*

**When Jesus looked  
into his eyes  
and into his heart,  
he said good enough for me**

**Answer the question  
about Jesus correctly  
and all the other stuff  
takes care of itself**





## *He Breaks Religion*

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:2





**THE  
THIEF  
ON THE  
CROSS**

**It Doesn't Matter**

*It Doesn't Matter*

## Your Past

The fact we don't know this man's crimes is perfect because Jesus was unconcerned with what this man had done

We think Jesus can't forgive

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*It Doesn't Matter*

**Your Past**

**He was also unconcerned  
with the past decisions  
the man made about Jesus**



*It Doesn't Matter*

**Your Situation**

**His Life was a MESS**

**Jesus did not "fix"  
his situation**

**Many times we think if  
"I follow Christ my situation will  
all get better"**





**THE  
THIEF  
ON THE  
CROSS**

**The Ultimate Picture of Hope**



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