

Pardoned

WHAT does it mean to grant a *pardon*? Perhaps a definition of the word will help us to understand it a little better. *Websters New World Dictionary* defines pardon as: “(1) to release from punishment; not punish for crimes or offenses (2) to cancel or not exact penalty for (an offense); forgive (3) to excuse or forgive (a person) for some minor fault, discourtesy, etc.” A **pardon**, then, does not remove the guilt or declare that the offense never happened, but rather it (the pardon) forgives the offender and thereby releases that person from the penalty so justly deserved.

The **true story** is told of two criminals who were sentenced to die for their crimes. One of the men publicly admitted that they were getting what they deserved. But that’s not the end of the story - there’s more to it. The crimes which brought about the physical punishment were caused by the person having a sinful nature. The physical punishment in this case, death, was just the beginning of a greater punishment to come - eternal damnation in hell. Of the two men about to die, one received a *pardon*, while the other did not. “Why?” you may ask. Because of what one man did, and that the other failed to do. The story is true, and here are the details.

In the Bible, God’s Word, in the book of Luke and chapter 23, we find the complete story of the two criminals. We also read of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ as He was on the Cross between the two criminals. The difference between Christ and the other two was that Christ did not do anything wrong; He was there willingly. The other two were getting what they deserved. God’s Word tells us that we are all sinners (Ro. 3:10-12, 23; Is. 64:6) because we inherited the sin nature from Adam (Ro. 5:8) as result of his disobedience to God in the garden of Eden (Ge. 2:16-17; 3:6), and as a result we commit the acts of sin. The penalty for being a sinner is death; not only physical death, but also spiritual death (Ro. 6:23). We were born spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1) and unless something happens we will die and spend eternity in the place the Bible calls hell. That’s why Jesus Christ, Who is not only God’s only begotten Son, but also God Himself (Mt. 14:33; Jn. 1:1) left Heaven’s glory to, “...seek and to save that which was lost.” (Lu. 19:10) That’s you and I. Because of His great love for us, Jesus Christ willingly laid down His life for us (Jn. 10:17-18) by shedding His blood and dying for us on the Cross (He. 9:14). He was in every sense of the word our substitute, **the** sinless person who became sin for us (2 Co. 5:21), that we should not have to go to a devil’s hell for all eternity. Three days after His death on the Cross, Jesus Christ bodily rose again (1 Co. 15:4; Ac. 10:39-41; Jn. 20:19), and at this very moment He is in Heaven. All those who repent of their sin and come to Him in faith believing, are forgiven of their sin and saved for all eternity, and will upon physical death in this life be with Him in Heaven forever (Jn. 14:3; 2 Co. 5:8; Ph. 1:3). That is why Jesus Christ went to the Cross.

What about the other two men being crucified with Christ? One, in the closing moments of his life, repented of his sin and trusted Jesus Christ as personal Saviour. The Bible tells us that he is with Jesus right now. The other man? He did not believe on Jesus, and he is in hell right now, for all eternity. One man was *pardoned* - the other was not. For the one man, he was still guilty and deserved punishment, but he was *pardoned* because he repented and believed. His sins are under the blood of the Lamb of God. You, too, can be *pardoned* if you’ll repent of your sin and by faith alone in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, receive Him as your personal Saviour. Christ has never rejected anyone who has come to Him in faith believing (Jn. 6:37), and those who do come to Him are saved for all eternity (Jn. 5:24). “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” (1 Jn. 5:13) With salvation come the responsibility to live in such a way that others will see Christ (1 Co. 6:19-20). Will you receive Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour today, right now? Then seek out a good, independent, Fundamental Baptist,

Bible believing and Bible preaching church. Attend it regularly that you might be spiritually fed from God's Word to help you grow spiritually strong.

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