

III. Petition Affirmative—Desire Affirmative:

1. There are several examples in Scripture where a believer presents a petition with confidence to the Father which is answered in the affirmative.
2. One which we noted in our studies on Jesus as Messiah is the Lord's relationship with two criminals crucified beside Him on Calvary.
3. In that scene, both negative and positive volition within the souls of the two criminals are displayed. The Roman soldiers mocked Him in:

Luke 23:36 The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour wine,

v. 37 and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!"

v. 38 Now there was also an inscription above Him, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS."

4. Mocking Jesus displays negative volition which is also expressed by one of the convicts:

Luke 23:39 One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!"

5. This man's mental attitude indicates he is ripe for a good long stay in Torments. He mocks the only Person that could do anything to help him. His only concern is for himself and deliverance from the cross.
6. The other criminal had an entirely different mind—set. He recognized Jesus as the Messiah and pled for His saving mercy in:

Luke 23:40 But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?"

v. 41 "And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong."

v. 42 And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!"

7. Quite a number of telltale remarks are contained in this man's response to his fellow criminal:
- (1) In verse 40, this man is described as "the other," the singular pronoun **ἕτερος (héteros)**: "another of a different kind." This shows that both were Homo sapiens but with a distinctive difference.
 - (2) The other criminal is an unbeliever while the second is a believer. The believer understands that not only they but all mankind is under the "same sentence of condemnation."
 - (3) These two men were under the condemnation everyone possesses since, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).
 - (4) The only way anyone can escape permanent condemnation is by faith alone in Jesus alone.
 - (5) In verse 41, the believer points out that both of these men deserve the punishment that civil authority required of them but contrarily, Jesus has done nothing wrong.
 - (6) In verse 42, this believer offers a plea to Jesus recognizing Him as Lord:

Luke 23:42 **And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."**

- (7) The words "was saying" are the imperfect active indicative of the verb **λέγω (légō)**: "to say."

The imperfect tense is iterative proper, "used for repeated action in past time ... in which the imperfect indicates *repeated action by the same agent.*"¹
- (8) This man was already saved and his repeated desire to Jesus is that he be among those who enter into His kingdom.

¹ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 546.

8. His repeated petition requested that he be among those who will be with Jesus when He enters into His kingdom.

9. To this the Lord responds to him in:

Luke 23:43 And Jesus said to him, “I am telling you the truth, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

9. Therefore, this man’s petition was answered in the affirmative while his desire was answered in the affirmative.

10. Following the Lord’s physical death, His body was taken down from the cross and by the efforts of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, His *corpus Christi* was released to them by Pontus Pilate and entombed near Jerusalem (John 19:40–42).

11. The Lord dismissed His human spirit in the care of the Father (Luke 23:46) while His soul was transferred to the Paradise compartment of Hades (Luke 23:43).

12. This compartment was the location of every Old-Testament believer’s soul prior to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

13. It was in Paradise that Jesus alerted those retained there that shortly they would be transported into the Third Heaven which would occur in about forty days.

14. The repentant criminal’s appeal to the Lord, “Remember me,” was an indication of his desire to be with the Lord in His heaven.

15. The Lord’s answer, “Today, you will be with Me in Paradise,” is confirmation that this man’s petition and desire were both answered in the affirmative.

IV. Petition Negative—Desire Negative:

1. The example of God denying a believer’s petition and desire is illustrated by the Apostle Paul’s appeal to be delivered from a “thorn in the flesh.”

2. Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” is much the same as the believer who prays to the Father while doubting.

3. The challenges we face throughout life are permitted in the divine decree as checkpoint tests to see how well we are advancing in the process.
4. The accumulation of biblical truth can lead some into arrogance, conceit, and hubris. These are negative mental attitudes that supersede the more appropriate ones of modesty, serenity, and humility.
5. The former are the result of reactor factors while the latter are common to doctrinal orientation. What Paul reacts to is what he describes as a “thorn in the flesh.” Here is an expanded translation of the passage in 2 Corinthians 12:7–10:

2 Corinthians 12:7 Therefore, that I be not arrogant by means of the abundance of revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, an angel from the source of Satan that he might punch me, that I be not arrogant.

v. 8 On behalf of this thing [**the thorn in the flesh**] I began to beg the Lord on three occasions, that it might depart from me.

v. 9 And he had communicated to me, “My grace produces contentment for you: for the power of God is carried out by means of helplessness.” Therefore, with the greatest of pleasure to a higher degree I will boast in the weaknesses, that the power of Christ may be bivouacked on me.”

v. 10 Because of which I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in pressures from needs, in persecutions, in anguishes on behalf of Christ: for on the occasion that I am helpless, at that time I keep on being strong. (EXT)

6. Paul had spent fourteen years in the presence of the Lord Who taught him the entire realm of systematic theology. This is confirmed by his using the third person to describe his experiences:

2 Corinthians 12:2 I knew a man who fourteen years ago in Christ—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a man was caught up to the third heaven.

2 Corinthians 12:3 And I know such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know—God knows.

v. 4 How that he was caught up to Paradise and heard inexpressible words that man may not be allowed to utter. (EXT)

7. These three verses present an explanation of why Paul was the preeminent theologian of the incipency of the Church Age. He leaned so much doctrine that a great deal of it is censured from us.
8. Paul indicates he was “caught up into Paradise.” Since the Lord emptied the Paradise compartment of Hades at His ascension, Paradise in this context refers to the third heaven.
9. Such an event is not unprecedented. It is recorded in Genesis that Enoch “walked with God”:

Genesis 5:22 After Enoch became the father of Methuselah, he walked with God for 300 years, and he had other sons and daughters.

v. 23 The entire lifetime of Enoch was 365 years.

v. 24 Enoch walked with God and then disappeared² because God took him away. (NET)

10. Chapter 5 of Genesis presents the messianic chart pedigree from Adam to Noah. In the synopses of those who lived before and after Enoch, they each end with the phrase, “and then he died.” Enoch is the lone exception.
11. Confirming this translation, the writer of Hebrews mentions Enoch in:

Hebrews 11:5 By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.

² “The Hebrew construction has the negative particle ‘en (“there is not,” “there was not”) with a pronominal suffix, ‘he was not.’ Instead of saying that Enoch died, the text says he no longer was present” (*The NET Bible* [Dallas: Biblical Studies Press, 1996–2005], 18tn18).