

Last Things

The background is a dark, textured surface, possibly a night sky or a dark ground. In the lower right corner, there is a faint, dark cross shape, likely a grave marker or a religious symbol. The overall mood is somber and reflective.

Last Chance

Recap

Like Advent, **Lent** is a time to open the doors of our hearts a little wider and understand our Lord a little deeper, so that when Good Friday and eventually Easter comes, it is not just another day at church but an opportunity to receive the overflowing of graces God has to offer.

Ignatian Lenten Reflection



Recap

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."

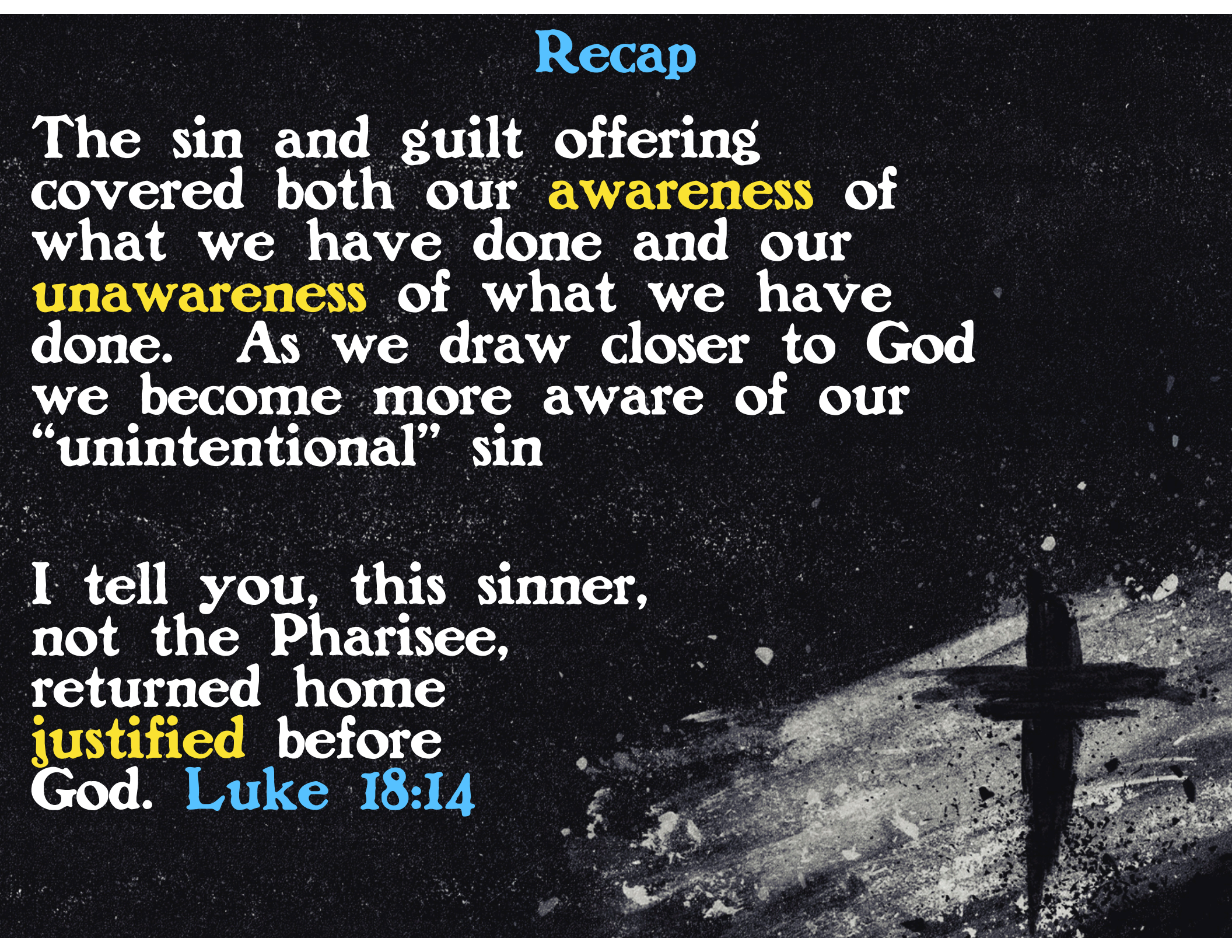
Luke 23:34



Recap

The sin and guilt offering covered both our **awareness** of what we have done and our **unawareness** of what we have done. As we draw closer to God we become more aware of our “unintentional” sin

I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home **justified** before God. **Luke 18:14**



And Jesus replied, "I
assure you, today you
will be with me in
paradise." **Luke 23:43**



The Crowd

The crowd watched and the leaders **scoffed**. "He saved others," they said, "let him save himself **if he is really God's Messiah**, the Chosen One." The soldiers **mocked** him, too, by offering him a drink of sour wine. They called out to him, "**If you are the King of the Jews**, save yourself!" A sign was fastened above him with these words: "**This is the King of the Jews.**"

Luke 23:35-38

Criminal #1

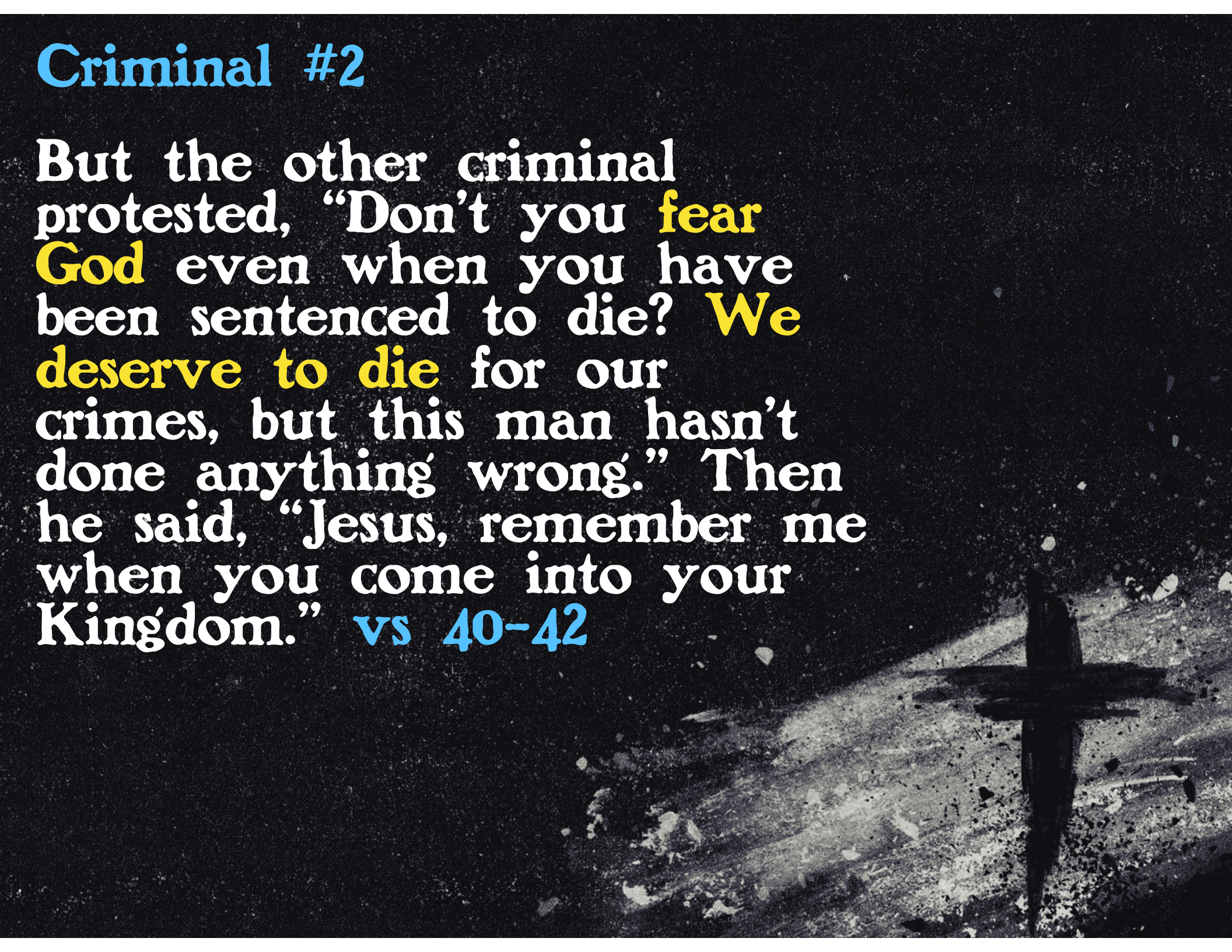
One of the criminals hanging beside him **scoffed**, “So you’re the Messiah, are you? **Prove it** by saving yourself—and us, too, while you’re at it!” **vs 39**

Then one of the criminals who were hanged **blasphemed** Him, saying, “If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.” **NKJV**

“to curse or insult God”

Criminal #2

But the other criminal protested, “Don’t you **fear God** even when you have been sentenced to die? **We deserve to die** for our crimes, but this man hasn’t done anything wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.” vs 40-42



And Jesus replied, "I
assure you, today you
will be with me in
paradise." **Luke 23:43**



In both statements so
far Jesus has exerted
His **authority**

"Father, forgive them..."

"I assure you..."



I assure you...

Many scholars have noticed that Jesus uses this as a **prefix** phrase when He is about to say something that should be listened to with care.

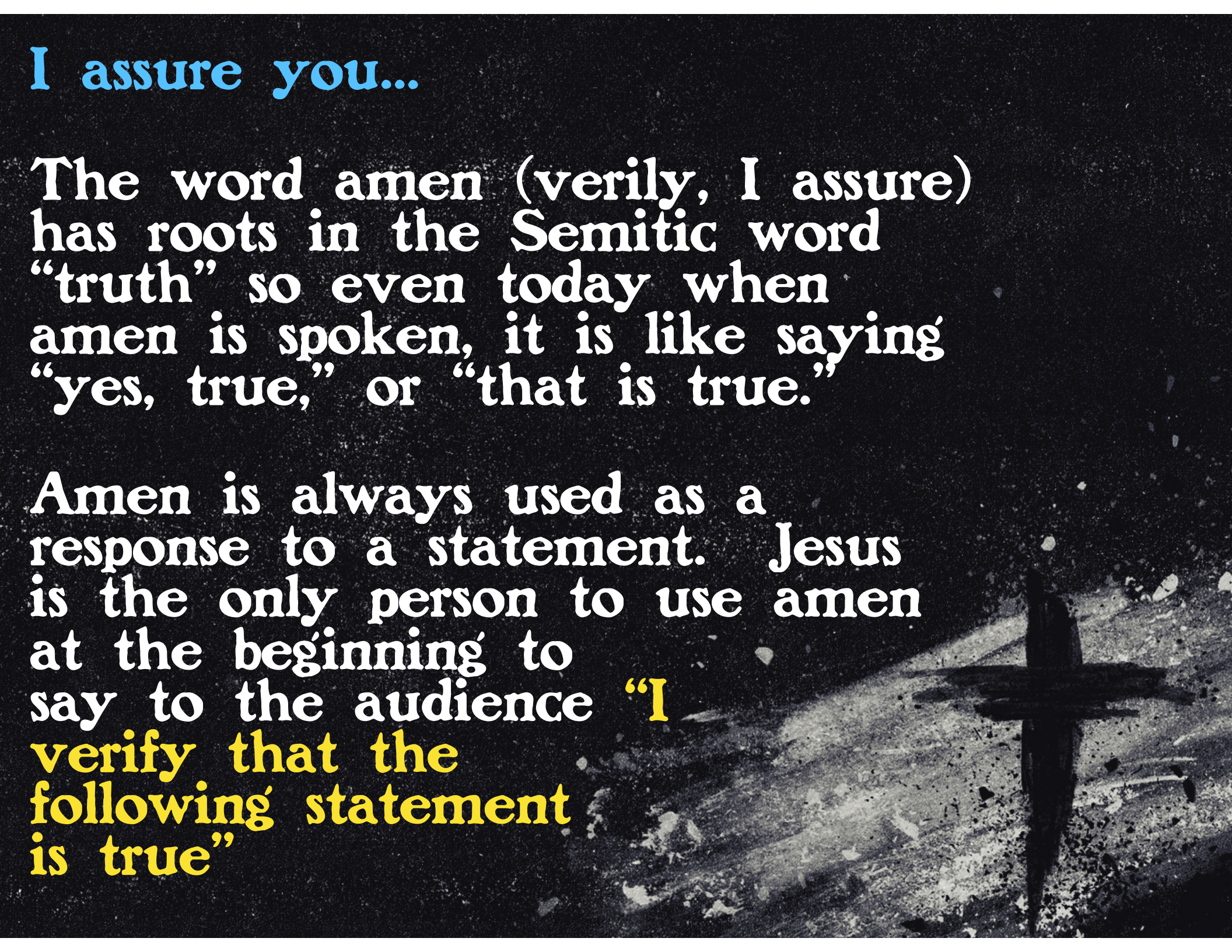
Seventy-six times in the New Testament, Jesus uses the phrase.

Interestingly, **no one but Jesus ever says it.** When the Lord says "I tell you the truth," He is affirming that what He is about to say is worthy of special attention. It was Jesus' way of saying, "Listen up! What I'm about to say is very important and should be listened to carefully."

I assure you...

The word amen (verily, I assure) has roots in the Semitic word "truth" so even today when amen is spoken, it is like saying "yes, true," or "that is true."

Amen is always used as a response to a statement. Jesus is the only person to use amen at the beginning to say to the audience **"I verify that the following statement is true"**



I assure you...

we note that every major Bible translation inserts the comma before the word today. Thus, the KJV, NKJV, NASB, NIV, ESV, and RSV all agree that Jesus was speaking of the time that the thief would enter paradise. **The thief would be in paradise with Jesus on that very same day.**

I assure you, today

A dark, grainy background image of a cross in a cemetery. The cross is a simple wooden cross, and the ground around it is dark and textured. The overall tone is somber and reflective.

today you will be with me in paradise

One thief thought nothing of the after life and was only concerned with the here and now, the other thief knew **judgement awaited** on the other side of life and wanted to be ready

self preservation vs soul preservation

the ability to see past our pain to our future



today you will be with me in paradise

“The next thing is, he had faith. Talk about faith, I think this is the most **extraordinary case of faith** in the Bible.” **D. L. Moody**

Whatever he witnessed about Jesus was enough to convince him of the truth of the claims made about Him

A suffering Christ is what he needed, not someone saving him from his suffering



today you will be with me in paradise

“Jesus, remember me when you come into your **Kingdom.**”

The sign of the Romans meant to mock, the taunts by the crowd meant to humiliate, had the opposite effect because of Jesus **response**. It convinced the criminal that Jesus was who He said He was

There is a difference between the Kingdom and paradise

Paradise is a place.
The Kingdom of God
is the rule of God.

Tangent Alert



Jesus claimed exclusive access to God/
Heaven in the afterlife

Yes, I am the gate. **Those who come in through me will be saved.** They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. **John 10:9**

Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. **NO ONE** can come to the Father except through me." **John 14:6**

What happens to the
Old Testament believers?



today you will be with me in paradise


παραδεισοῖς; Paradeisos (3x)

-among the Persians a **grand enclosure** or preserve, hunting ground, park, shady and well watered, in which wild animals, were kept for the hunt; it was enclosed by walls and furnished with towers for the hunters

-the **part of Hades** which was thought by the later Jews to be the abode of the souls of pious until the resurrection: but some understand this to be a heavenly paradise

Where did Jesus go after His death?

“Don’t cling to me,” Jesus said, “**for I haven’t yet ascended to the Father.** But go find my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” **John 20:17**

A dark, grainy image of a cross on a path. The cross is a simple wooden structure, and the path is a light-colored dirt or gravel path that leads towards the cross. The background is dark and textured, possibly a night scene or a close-up of a rough surface.

Across the Jewish and Christian faiths, there is general agreement that there is a separation of the spiritual being from the physical body at the end of our lives called **death**.

According to the Bible, what follows death is eternal reward for the righteous and eternal punishment for the wicked.

What lies between death and the resurrection is the "intermediate state" as the theologians label it or olam haba, the "world to come," according to the rabbis.



it is safe to assume we've all grown up to believe that it is all very simple— heaven for the good folks, hell for the bad folks. And yet the various Bible versions have words like Sheol, Hades, Gehenna, the Valley of Hinnom, Paradise, and **Abraham's Bosom** among others. Yeshua's (Jesus's) teaching on the **Rich Man and Lazarus** (Luke 16:19–31) is particularly confusing for Christians.

Finally, the poor man (Lazarus) died and was carried by the angels **to sit beside Abraham** at the heavenly banquet. The rich man also died and was buried, and he went **to the place of the dead**. There, in torment.. **Luke 16:22–23**

Most of the confusion comes not only from a lack of solid Bible study, but also from a lack of understanding the Jewish thoughts behind the text.
Jay Christianson

"In the world to come Abraham sits at the gate of Gehenna, permitting none to enter who bears the seal of the covenant" Jewish Encyclopedia, 1906, Rabbi Adda bar Ahaba, a rabbi of the third century



Abraham's Bosom (side):
became synonymous to the
**afterlife for a righteous
person.** This developed out
of the idea, based on the
Hebrew Scriptures (Tanach),
of "going to be with one's
fathers" at death. This can
be seen as far back as
Genesis 47:30 where Jacob
asks his son Joseph to swear
to bury his body in Canaan
once he has "joined his
fathers," i.e. died.



I was caught up to the third heaven fourteen years ago. Whether I was in my body or out of my body, I don't know—only God knows. Yes, only God knows whether I was in my body or outside my body. **But I do know that I was caught up to paradise** and heard things so astounding that they cannot be expressed in words, things no human is allowed to tell.

2 Corinthians 12:2-4

That is why the
Good News was
preached **to those
who are now dead—**
so although they
were destined to die
like all people, they
now live forever
with God in the
Spirit. **1 Peter 4:6**



According to Messianic (Jewish Christian) theology, Yeshua descended to Sheol on the day of His death, preceding the criminal to whom He had promised to meet in Paradise. Yeshua descends to Abraham's Bosom/Paradise to announce His victory over sin and death.

The actual place is not transferred, only **emptied** as the people are relocated.

Rabbi Tamah Davis



Paradise was removed from our intimate reach, but it still exists and the Tanakh (OT) places it in some subterranean location beneath the earth closely associated with Sheol the underground detention area of the unrighteous dead.

The Sages of Judaism taught that Sheol was comprised of **two compartments** existing side by side in the same dimension. In my opening remarks, we read from scripture that **the righteous inhabited Abraham's Bosom while the unrighteous the abode of the damned**, Hades. Abraham's Bosom is a euphemism for Paradise and Hades is the abode of the damned, hell, if you will, while both, are Sheol the holding place.

In our age, the B'rit Chadasha (NT) tells us that Abraham's Bosom, a euphemism for the abode of the righteous has left a sign on the gates of Sheol saying, Paradise has "moved" and the forwarding address is the Heavens.

Rabbi Tamah Davis

And Jesus replied, "I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise." **Luke 23:43**

This short phrase hints at God's plan to redeem humanity, in the past, His present and the future



For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, **the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay.** For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

Romans 8:19-21