

Placement of the Comma in Luke 23:43

While I will attach the work I've done on this Scripture in a few lines I would like to state, upfront, that EVEN Catholic Bibles and those approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (i.e., New Jerusalem Bible; Douay-Rheims Bible; New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition; New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised Catholic Edition; and Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition) **ALL** place the comma BEFORE the word 'today.' Even the Contemporary English Version (approved by the USCCB), which doesn't provide punctuation in the Scripture makes it abundantly clear that Jesus was telling the thief that he would be with Him (Jesus) on that very day by stating: "Jesus replied, "I promise that today you will be with me in paradise."

Further, the Douay-Rheims translators understood that the thief was promised he would be in paradise with Jesus that very day. This is shown by the fact of a footnote found therein:

"In Paradise: That is, in the happy state of rest, joy, and peace everlasting. Christ was pleased, by a special privilege, to reward the faith and confession of the penitent thief, with a full discharge of all his sins, both as to the guilt and punishment; and to introduce him immediately after death into the happy society of the saints, whose limbo, that is, the place of their confinement, was now made a paradise by our Lord's going thither."

Certainly, the translators have a different perspective than I do concerning 'why' said destination was to be considered paradise but, nevertheless, it shows that these translators (who were of the Catholic faith) dispute the presupposition that it was at a 'later time' the thief went to be in paradise with Jesus.

I say the above because some Catholics (very few) take issue with the placement of the comma due to their arguments concerning 'purgatory.'

Having said the above...

While it's true the original Hebrew and Aramaic translations of the Bible had no punctuation, the earliest Greek manuscripts do have some amount of punctuation though it is inconsistent.

However, the fact remains that our modern linguists (who have LOTS more manuscripts to work with and to translate from than even the scholars working under the rule of King James – circa 1604-1611 A.D.) have consistently translated the phrase (idiom) 'Truly I tell you'/'Truly, Truly I tell you' with the comma placed AFTER the YOU in the phrase.

The primary reason given by at least one scholar (Mantey) and which seems to denote the opinion of the majority of scholars (Catholic as well as Protestant) that have given one on this particular translation is that "placing a comma BEHIND the word TODAY would make no sense unless our LORD was making distinction of that which He said in the past and what He was saying in the present."

Further, when Jesus uttered the words, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise" is the only sentence construction that makes rational sense. Otherwise, it would be a redundancy (i.e., if you and I were talking TODAY I wouldn't have to tell you it WAS TODAY – it would be apparent).

So, since it would have been obvious to the listener (i.e., the thief) that it WAS TODAY that Jesus was speaking to him to utter the words thusly makes zero sense: "Truly I tell you TODAY, you will be with me

in paradise.”

In the Greek text (which is almost entirely what the Gospels were translated from), the word ‘today’ is the 1st word in the 2nd phrase of Jesus words in Luke 23:43. Thus, the translators have been consistent in rendering the phrase used by Jesus (and Jesus ALONE) as “Truly I tell you,” and THEN rendering the rest of the sentence.

Finally, the construction for “Truly I say to you today” is *amen lego soi lego semeron* and it appears only ONE other time in the Gospels (other than Luke 23:43) and is, again, spoken by our Lord. In Mark 14:30 we find Jesus telling Peter that on the very same night he (Peter) would betray Him: “And Jesus said to him, “Truly I say to you, that this very night, [*amen lego soi lego semeron taute te nykti*] before a rooster crows twice, you yourself will deny Me three times.”

So, the only time where Jesus uses the phrase ‘Truly I tell you today’ [today (Greek: σημερον; transliterated: semeron)] in a redundant manner to emphasize to Peter that it would be THAT VERY NIGHT [Greek: ταύτη τῆ νυκτι; transliterated: taute te nykti], He STILL uses it in the sense of, “I tell you, today.”

In English Matthew 26:34 seems to be strikingly similar to the above quote however, the verse contains ὅτι ("that") after σοι ("to you"), while Luke 23:43 does not. This means the two verses are dissimilar in comparison.

Before I actually list ALL 76 passages that use the phrase I’d like to note that the ONLY ‘scholars’ who place the comma BEFORE the word ‘today’ in Luke 23:43 are those who acted as sole translators rather than working on the translation of the Holy Scriptures in a committee (thereby working without checks and balances) or those who subscribe to an errant form of Christianity (i.e., Jehovah’s Witnesses, Seventh Adventists and, some, Universalists – although Joseph Henry Thayer (a devote Universalist who authored ‘Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon) placed the comma AFTER the word ‘today’ because, in his estimation, it could NOT go BEFORE the word ‘today’ and keep with the syntax of Christ’s speech.)

Truly, Truly I Say To You Sayings of Jesus

Note where the comma (when it was used) has been placed by scholars in each instance.

(New American Standard Bible)

1. **Matthew 5:18** “For **truly I say to you**, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”
2. **Matthew 5:26** **Truly I say to you**, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last cent.
3. **Matthew 6:2** “So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. **Truly I say to you**, they have their reward in full.”
4. **Matthew 6:5** “When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. **Truly I say to you**, they have their reward in full.”

5. **Matthew 6:16** "Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites *do*, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. **Truly I say to you**, they have their reward in full."
6. **Matthew 8:10** 'Now when Jesus heard *this*, He marveled and said to those who were following, "**Truly I say to you**, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel."
7. **Matthew 10:15** **Truly I say to you**, it will be more tolerable for *the* land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city."
8. **Matthew 10:23** "But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next; for **truly I say to you**, you will not finish *going through* the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes."
9. **Matthew 10:42** "And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, **truly I say to you**, he shall not lose his reward."
10. **Matthew 11:11** "**Truly I say to you**, among those born of women there has not arisen *anyone* greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."
11. **Matthew 13:17** "For **truly I say to you** that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see *it*, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it*."
12. **Matthew 16:28** "**Truly I say to you**, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."
13. **Matthew 17:20** "And He said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for **truly I say to you**, *if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.*"
14. **Matthew 18:3** "and said, "**Truly I say to you**, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven."
15. **Matthew 18:13** "If it turns out that he finds it, **truly I say to you**, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray."
16. **Matthew 18:18** "**Truly I say to you**, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven."
17. **Matthew 19:23** "And Jesus said to His disciples, "**Truly I say to you**, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven."
18. **Matthew 19:28** "And Jesus said to them, "**Truly I say to you**, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."
19. **Matthew 21:21** "And Jesus answered and said to them, "**Truly I say to you**, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it will happen."
20. **Matthew 21:31** "Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "**Truly I say to you** that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you."
21. **Matthew 23:36** "**Truly I say to you**, all these things will come upon this generation."
22. **Matthew 24:2** "And He said to them, "Do you not see all these things? **Truly I say to you**, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down."
23. **Matthew 24:34** "**Truly I say to you**, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place."
24. **Matthew 24:47** "**Truly I say to you** that he will put him in charge of all his possessions."
25. **Matthew 25:12** "But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.'
26. **Matthew 25:40** "The King will answer and say to them, "**Truly I say to you**, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, *even* the least *of them*, you did it to Me."

27. **Matthew 25:45** “Then He will answer them, ‘**Truly I say to you**, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’”
28. **Matthew 26:13** “**Truly I say to you**, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her.”
29. **Matthew 26:21** “As they were eating, He said, “**Truly I say to you** that one of you will betray Me.”
30. **Matthew 26:34** “Jesus said to him, “**Truly I say to you** that this very night, before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.”
31. **Mark 3:28** ““**Truly I say to you**, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter;”
32. **Mark 8:12** “Sighing deeply in His spirit, He said, “Why does this generation seek for a sign? **Truly I say to you**, no sign will be given to this generation.”
33. **Mark 9:1** “And Jesus was saying to them, “**Truly I say to you**, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.”
34. **Mark 9:41** “For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as *followers* of Christ, **truly I say to you**, he will not lose his reward.”
35. **Mark 10:15** “**Truly I say to you**, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it *at all*.”
36. **Mark 10:29** “Jesus said, “**Truly I say to you**, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel’s sake,”
37. **Mark 11:23** “**Truly I say to you**, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be *granted* him.”
38. **Mark 12:43** “Calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, “**Truly I say to you**, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury;”
39. **Mark 13:30** “**Truly I say to you**, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.”
40. **Mark 14:9** “**Truly I say to you**, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her.”
41. **Mark 14:18** “As they were reclining *at the table* and eating, Jesus said, “**Truly I say to you** that one of you will betray Me—one who is eating with Me.”
42. **Mark 14:25** “**Truly I say to you**, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”
43. **Mark 14:30** “And Jesus said to him, “**Truly I say to you**, that this very night, before a rooster crows twice, you yourself will deny Me three times.”
44. **Luke 4:24** “And He said, “**Truly I say to you**, no prophet is welcome in his hometown.”
45. **Luke 12:37** “Blessed are those slaves whom the master will find on the alert when he comes; **truly I say to you**, that he will gird himself *to serve*, and have them recline *at the table*, and will come up and wait on them.”
46. **Luke 12:44** “**Truly I say to you** that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.”
47. **Luke 18:17** “**Truly I say to you**, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it *at all*.”
48. **Luke 18:29** “And He said to them, “**Truly I say to you**, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God,”
49. **Luke 21:3** “And He said, “**Truly I say to you**, this poor widow put in more than all *of them*;”
50. **Luke 21:32** “**Truly I say to you**, this generation will not pass away until all things take place.”
51. **Luke 23:43** “And He said to him, “**Truly I say to you**, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.”

52. **John 1:51** "And He said to him, **"Truly, truly, I say to you,** you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."
53. **John 3:3** "Jesus answered and said to him, **"Truly, truly, I say to you,** unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."
54. **John 3:5** "Jesus answered, **"Truly, truly, I say to you,** unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."
55. **John 3:11** "Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony."
56. **John 5:19** "Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, **"Truly, truly, I say to you,** the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless *it is* something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner."
57. **John 5:24** "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."
58. **John 5:25** "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live."
59. **John 6:26** "Jesus answered them and said, **"Truly, truly, I say to you,** you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled."
60. **John 6:32** "Jesus then said to them, **"Truly, truly, I say to you,** it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven."
61. **John 6:47** "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life."
62. **John 6:53** "So Jesus said to them, **"Truly, truly, I say to you,** unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves."
63. **John 8:34** "Jesus answered them, **"Truly, truly, I say to you,** everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin."
64. **John 8:51** "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death."
65. **John 8:58** "Jesus said to them, **"Truly, truly, I say to you,** before Abraham was born, I am."
66. **John 10:1** "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber."
67. **John 10:7** "So Jesus said to them again, **"Truly, truly, I say to you,** I am the door of the sheep."
68. **John 12:24** "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."
69. **John 13:16** "Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him."
70. **John 13:20** "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."
71. **John 13:21** "When Jesus had said this, He became troubled in spirit, and testified and said, **"Truly, truly, I say to you,** that one of you will betray Me."
72. **John 13:38** "Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? **Truly, truly, I say to you,** a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times."
73. **John 14:12** "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do; because I go to the Father."
74. **John 16:20** "Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy."
75. **John 16:23** "In that day you will not question Me about anything. **Truly, truly, I say to you,** if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you."
76. **John 21:18** "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go."