Skeptics and critics have asserted that the gospels contradict about whether one or two thieves who were executed with Jesus that afternoon mocked him. "Did one or two thieves mock Jesus?" Often, on the surface, what seems to be a contradiction, but upon close examination of the accounts in their context, things turn out to be different. So, let's see:

Here is the alleged contradiction:

The gospels say that two thieves were crucified along with Jesus. Did both thieves mock Jesus?

(a) Yes. "Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him" (Mark 15:32 NIV)

(b) No. One of them mocked Jesus, the other defended Jesus (Luke 23:39-42)

The public execution of the three men went for several hours that day. At first, both did mock Jesus, and Mark reported on this event.**"On execution-stakes with him they placed two robbers, one on his right and one on his left . . . Even the men nailed up with him insulted him" (Mark 15:27,32 JNT; Matthew 27:38,44).**

However, as time went on that afternoon, one of the two thieves changed his mind and attitude. We read Luke's report of this event, **"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.'"** (Luke 23:39-42 **NIV).**

Did one or two thieves mock Jesus as the three were being executed? Both the account in Mark and the account in Luke are true. They are complimentary, not contradictory. Both thieves did, at first, insult Jesus, but during the execution event, one of them changed his mind and corrected the other. Thus, another alleged contradiction is shown to be no contradiction at all.

Critics claimed "contradictions" turn out to be actually strong evidences of the Bible's authenticity when it is proven that the gospels provide divergent, but accurate, details.