

What About the Thief on the Cross?

Introduction:

- A. When faced with plain passages concerning the necessity of baptism, our denominational friends often cry, “But what about the thief on the cross?”
- B. It is true the thief on the cross was saved. - Luke 23:32-33,39-43
- C. Does the thief on the cross nullify the necessity of water baptism?
- I. Does this one case nullify the plain teaching of Christ and His apostles?
 - A. Christ taught the necessity of water baptism. - Mark 16:16
 - B. The apostles did too. - Acts 2:38
 - C. The Bible does not contradict itself.
- II. Can it be proven the thief was not baptized?
 - A. The burden of proof is on those using this case as a pattern of salvation. - e.g., What if I preached salvation without repentance, since repentance is not mentioned in Acts 8:12-13?
 - B. No one can believe the thief was not baptized. - Romans 10:17
 - C. The evidence is against the assumption. - Mark 1:4-5; John 4:1-3; Luke 23:40-42 (How did the thief know Jesus was Lord?)
- III. Is the salvation of the thief a pattern for us?
 - A. We are under the New Testament. - Hebrews 9:13-15
 - B. When did the New Testament come into force?
 1. not until after the death of Christ - Hebrews 9:16-17
 2. not until after the terms of the covenant were announced. - Luke 24:45-47; Acts 2:38; 11:15
 - C. Before His death, Jesus the Testator could dispose of His estate as He saw fit. - e.g., Mark 2:1-12
 - D. The thief lived and died before the New Testament was in force.
 - E. The plan of salvation is not the same in every age.
 1. The principle of salvation by faith remains the same. - Hebrews 11:7 (hear, believe, obey, be saved)
 2. But the specific requirements have changed. - Genesis 6:14-16,22; 7:1; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4
 - F. But just suppose the Lord did in this one case choose to ignore His own law of salvation and save a man without His obedience (And there is no evidence He did so), what is that to you? - John 21:18-22

Conclusion:

- A. No, the thief does not nullify the necessity of water baptism.
- B. If you have saving faith, you will obey the Lord’s commands. - Luke 6:46
- C. Will you obey? - Acts 22:16