

What about the Thief on the Cross?

Luke 23:32-43

Introduction:

- A. The most popular thief in the world.
 - 1. Nearly everyone wants to be saved like him.
 - 2. Often cited as to why baptism cannot be a condition of salvation.
- B. To point to the thief as a pattern for salvation for us one has to make 3 unfounded assumptions

Discussion:

I. One must Assume That He Had Not Been Baptized.

- A. He could have baptized by John or a disciple of Jesus (Mark 1:4; John 4:1-2)
- B. Bible does not say he was or was not.
 - 1. I have as much authority to say he was as “faith only” person has to say he was not.
 - 2. To use him as an example of one saved without baptism, one would have to know he was not.

II. One must Assume That He Was under the Same Law as Us.

- A. The New Testament was not in effect when the thief died.
 - 1. For testament to be in force the testator must be dead (Heb. 9:15-17)
 - 2. The Old Testament was the law under which the thief lived (cf. Col. 2:14)
 - 3. The great commission was not given to around 40 days later (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16)
 - 4. The new testament will was not ratified until Christ entered holy of holies (Heb. 9:12)
- B. Jesus offered forgiveness of sins on a variety of conditions while living on earth.
 - 1. The man sick of palsy (Mark 2:2-12)
 - 2. The young ruler (Luke 18:18-23)
 - 3. Why not be saved like the rich young ruler could have been?
 - 4. I can give my goods anyway I please while I live, but after death my will kicks in.

III. One must Assume That His Example Is the Pattern for Everyone's Salvation.

- A. It was not the pattern for the Pentecostians (Acts 2:38)
- B. It was not the pattern for Paul (Acts 22:16)
- C. It was not the pattern for the Samaritans and the eunuch (Acts 8).
- D. It was not the pattern for the jailer (Acts 16:31-34).

Conclusion:

- A. I am thankful the thief was saved, but I cannot be saved like he was.
- B. I must be saved like all who are subject to the great commission and the New Testament.